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EDUCATION IN PRACTICE

EDUCATION IN PRACTICE

BY

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In Reverential Gratitude

This Book is Dedicated

To the Memory

of

SIVASANKARA PANDYAJEE

Teacher-Founder

of

The Hindu Theological High School, Madras,
who by the establishment of this Pioneer
Institution on the 14th of January 1889, in the
face of terrific odds, has demonstrated that
the School Master is not a poor pitiable
creature with a shrivelled soul and
wrinkled will but a great and noble
servant of the nation, endowed with
exalted idealism and tremendous
moral force.

PREFACE

A word of explanation is necessary regarding the publication of this book, "Education in Practice". It is brought out in its present form at the repeated suggestion of earnest friends. It embodies a selection of Talks given at Teachers' Assemblies and Papers read at Educational Conferences on different occasions. A few special Articles contributed to periodicals and journals, have also been included.

In presenting the subject-matter, which covers different aspects of Education, under four comprehensive heads, unity of thought rather than chronological sequence of topics, has been the guiding principle. Naturally enough, there is reference off and on to the ideals and activities of the Institution which is the inspiration behind what has been said and written. It is this aspect which is bound to give the several statements made, an air of reality and invest them with force. To the ordinary readers, the various details offered may appear to be superfluous, but discerning teachers and enlightened critics interested in Education, will doubtless welcome them since they demonstrate the possibility of the realization of cherished ideals in the field of practical educational endeavour. A few statements here and there may seem to need modification in view of the changes that have come about as a result of the efflux of time. They have not been, however, interfered with since they have

an academic and historical value, when viewed against the background of their context. It will be agreed that occasional repetition of essential ideas, especially when they are in the nature of crystallized convictions, is inevitable in a work of this kind which is a compilation of topics having the same central theme, though viewed from different angles and dealt with independently at distant intervals.

What is expected to make a special appeal to the readers is the fact that the thoughts and feelings expressed in the book are not based upon mere theories but are the outcome of long experience, garnered in a pioneer institution. The book would have served its purpose if it strengthens in fellow-teachers faith in their calling and evokes in the lay readers the feeling that Education is one of the noblest forms of national service, deserving the devoted attention of all agencies.

S. BALAKRISHNA JOSHI.

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EDUCATION IN PRACTICE

EDUCATIONAL REORGANIZATION*

Education To-day

It is common knowledge that education to-day is in the melting pot. The old scheme devised by foreigners to serve their own needs has in it devitalising elements : it deserves to be overhauled in the interests of national regeneration. But our zeal for reform should not sweep us off our feet and land us in fresh follies. 'Hasten slowly,' is a sober caution which is specially applicable to educators. One false step on our part, though inadvertent or unwitting, will adversely affect the country's progress. Moreover, while we may profit by the experience of other progressive countries, we should guard ourselves against the temptation of mechanically transplanting principles and practices in vogue elsewhere. Our Motherland has now been startled out of her stupor of subjection. She has to quicken herself into dynamic activity and move into the larger life of the wider world. The agony she is now experiencing is an inevitable stage through which she has to pass in the wake of Freedom's birth. It is but a temporary phase, and soon she will have to launch on a career of all-round

*Extracts from the Presidential Address delivered at the Annual Educational Conference of the Anantapur District Teachers' Guild on 12-4-1948.

progress. Education which is the most important phase of national activity, has necessarily to be given re-orientation in a manner which would suit the genius and the needs of our land. But it has to be admitted regretfully that theories are glibly talked about and experiments hastily made without proper coordination and integration of the various factors that really count in education.

It is unfortunate that, while all other departments are vigilantly guarded by specialists who brook no interference by strangers, education alone is regarded as a no-man's land into which anybody can stray and offer gratuitous advice. We do realise that several agencies and institutions have to function in the matter of the education of children and that people in different walks of life have a right to take intelligent interest in the training of youngsters. But the ultimate direction and guidance must necessarily come from teachers who have specialised in teaching, which is as much a science as it is an art. All and sundry cannot dabble in it, though suggestions may be welcome from different quarters on broad principles.

The Re-organized Scheme

The academic year has well-nigh drawn to a close. The Re-organized Scheme of Secondary Education, introduced at the beginning of the year, with a view to eliminating the defects inherent in the old system, has run its course. It will not be out of place, therefore, if at this stage we examine

its features and try to understand how far it has served its purpose. The question of languages has necessarily to be taken first. There can be no two opinions regarding the fact that the Mother Tongue should be given greater prominence and that facilities should be given to children to acquire proficiency in it. To force children to learn through the medium of a foreign language is like compelling them to breathe through borrowed lungs. Knowledge is assimilated best when it is imparted through the natural medium of the child's Mother Tongue. Only when pupils are in a position to study in their Mother Tongue the great classics which enshrine the noble ideals of our culture, can they grow to be patriotic and remain true to the hoary traditions of our land. But in actual practice we find that much has not been done to inculcate in children love of the Mother Tongue. The only noticeable change is that at the S.S.L.C. Public Examination the Mother Tongue has been given the pride of place. Technically, 40 per cent is insisted upon for a pass in English, while the minimum for the Mother Tongue is 35. In Colleges, English continues to be the medium of instruction. The result is that pupils find themselves under a great handicap when they leave the High School and go to College for prosecuting their studies. The logical culmination of the reform is that Mother Tongue should be the medium of instruction at the University stage also. In the transition period, before suitable books are prepared and the right

type of teachers are trained, there is bound to be great inconvenience and positive difficulty. But these should not stand in the way of our taking a step, conducive to the highest interests of educational progress.

English

English has long dominated our educational stage. It has played a gallant part in our progress. We are not unaware that English has international currency and that a knowledge of it is necessary if we wish to keep ourselves abreast of the times. We have no quarrel with the language as such. It has a noble literature of its own which has exercised a profound influence on the minds of some of the greatest men of our own land. Yet it has to be borne in mind that it is a foreign language. Our ideal now is to make all the men and women of our land literates so that with the dawn of knowledge, ignorance, superstition and poverty may be banished from the land and the standard of living raised. A knowledge of English appears necessary only for those that go in for higher studies and not for the common man to whom a modicum of culture is enough. According to the scheme now adumbrated, English makes its appearance only in the Second Form stage. But the syllabus that is sought to be covered before the pupil appears for the Public Examination, is very ambitious indeed. It is almost the same as was expected to be done when the study

of English was spread over a longer period. The argument that is generally advanced to justify the position taken is that, when the Mother Tongue is made the medium of instruction, assimilation of knowledge becomes easy and greater time and energy are released for the intensive study of English. This may sound all right as a theoretical proposition. But in actual practice we find that at this stage skill in the Mother Tongue has not been highly developed in the pupils and it is too much to expect of them that degree of proficiency in English which we would like them to have. Hence, no effort should be wanting on our part to give pupils a good grounding in the foreign language. Sickly sentiment or puerile prejudice should not blind us to the importance of its study. In view of its acknowledged cultural value, it deserves to be taught effectively and learnt diligently without prejudice to our Mother Tongue.

Hindustani

The ardent votaries of English who vehemently plead for its retention in the school curriculum often state that English has been a great unifying force. There is no doubt that a common language promotes solidarity and unity in a land especially like ours which is inhabited by peoples speaking diverse tongues. The common language, however, need not be a foreign language if its purpose is to facilitate social and commercial intercourse among the people living in different parts of the country.

For very valid reasons our great leaders who have nothing but the highest interests of the nation at heart, have laid down that Hindustani should be 'Lingua Indica'. If it is possible for us to master a foreign language with all its intricacies and wield it with greater ability than those to the language born, it should be quite easy for us to learn an indigenous language which is akin to several of the languages in vogue in our land. As teachers and educators who have nothing to do with controversial politics but whose sole aim is to train the children committed to our care for cultured citizenship in an enlightened democracy, it is up to us to welcome the introduction of Hindustani into the school curriculum.

Social Studies

The two new subjects in the re-organized scheme which have come in naturally for a good deal of comment and discussion are Social Studies and Citizenship. "Social Studies" is a substitute for History and Geography, taught in the past. Its object, they say, is to give youngsters a synthetic view of the evolution of human institutions through the ages. It is also meant to quicken their imagination and to implant in them right attitudes by helping them understand sympathetically and interpret intelligently the various factors that contribute to social well-being. The new conception is that the School is a well-organized State on a miniature scale, preparing pupils for the res-

possibilities and rights of citizenship by providing life-experiences. Thus the subjects taught become meaningful and relevant only to the extent they interpret the evolution of human progress and of social institutions. History, Civics, Geography, Politics, Economics, Sociology, etc., have, therefore, to be viewed not as isolated subjects, utterly unconnected with one another but as inter-related parts of a composite scheme of studies. "Social Studies" is thus an attempt at harmonising several subjects which convey a knowledge of different phases of man's life and activities and of the various forces and institutions that have influenced man's progress.

The inspiration for the introduction of this subject, we are led to think, has come from America where, we are told, there is a "fusion course." For aught we know, there is scope for a good deal of improvement in the organization of the subject as introduced in our Province. We are all familiar that the Courses of Study are drawn up under three categories — Social Studies, Social Training and Social Activity. It is wrong to imagine that Social Training can be imparted only through this subject. Moreover, there does not seem to be any coherence or underlying unity in the topics suggested for study. They look more like a patch-work of disjointed topics. Some of the subjects suggested are so comprehensive that they admit of different interpretations and different methods of approach. Chronology, which is the

eye of history, seems to be lost sight of. There is very little of the history of our own Motherland. It is well for us to remember that in several institutions in America, the example of which we often cite, patriotism is taught as a subject. Current events receive great attention and local history is dealt with at length. Before we make our youngsters familiar with events and trends in foreign lands, it is but proper that we should acquaint them with the movements and institutions that have moulded the history of our own Motherland. Moreover, social activities have to be carried on with sustained interest throughout the year as occasions arise. To attempt, however, to devise an activity for every lesson would be making the work unnatural. It is also not feasible to do it.

Citizenship

We may now pass on to consider briefly the second subject newly introduced into our curriculum, namely, Citizenship. One primary object of education at all times and in all countries is to prepare pupils for the duties and responsibilities that await them when they blossom into citizenry in the fulness of time. This task has to be shared by all the teachers of an institution and, therefore, it is not advisable to delegate it to a few so-called specialists. Instruction in Citizenship, if it is to be fruitful and purposeful, has to be incidental and natural, but not formal and stereotyped. Every subject in the school curriculum lends itself

to citizenship-training as it does to moral instruction. A number of opportunities arise in the course of instruction which the discerning and resourceful teacher can exploit with advantage for imparting useful knowledge pertaining to citizenship, without going out of the way. We are, however, in agreement with the spirit of the reform, which is that earnest attempts should be made by educators to teach their wards in the impressionable period of their lives those fundamental principles and skills which form the bed-rock, as it were, of enlightened citizenship. But to state that youngsters should be entirely left to themselves to manage their own affairs and should be given the freedom to organize and conduct all their activities, is frankly to betray a lack of a sense of realities and to shirk our own responsibilities. When all is said and done, it is the teacher's personal example, influence, direction and guidance that count far more in education than any other factor. It is as much his duty as it is his right to keep the children under healthy control and to suggest to them the lines along which they should carry on their work. It is true that he should not make himself an obsession to pupils and attempt to lead them by the nose ; but to leave them to themselves in the name of freedom is to do a distinct dis-service to the youngsters whose minds are much too immature to reason and judge properly and who may easily stray into paths of indiscretion under the influence of the several agencies, unconnected with educa-

tion, that operate outside of the school. The loving parents at home may occasionally consult the youngsters and give consideration to their opinions, but they do not allow themselves to be swayed by the whims and fancies of the inexperienced young ones. The school is an extension of the home and the same attitude that exists between the parents and children at home should characterise the relationship between the teachers, who are the second parents, and the pupils.

There is a good deal of overlapping between the activities suggested under Citizenship and under Social Studies. There are also practical difficulties in giving effect to some of the suggestions laid down with regard to the organization of citizenship activities. More than all these, one is afraid that in the name of carrying on activities, groups of pupils may lapse into intellectual inertia without diligent study of their books.

Craft Education

A craft is also to be taught in every school according to the Re-organized Scheme. The one that is usually taken up in Boys' Schools is Weaving. But in teaching a craft it is to be remembered that it is introduced only for its educational value and not that it may help the boy make money. One major criticism against the old type of education is that it was lop-sided, with its over-emphasis on the study of a foreign language

and a few other subjects. It is to give the hand and the eye the necessary scope for the acquisition of knowledge and the development of skills that craft education has been thought of. Adequate space, availability of materials and the presence of qualified instructors can alone make it serve its purpose. There is a good deal of loose talk about the correlation of craft to other subjects in the curriculum. It is impossible to weave instruction in all subjects round the craft. Even if it were possible, it will make life dull and monotonous in an institution. The correlation has to be natural, meaningful and relevant. The resourceful teacher knows when to connect knowledge of the craft with the instruction he imparts in different subjects. Under the circumstances, we have simply to catch the spirit of the reform and strive to infuse it into our work to the extent possible.

Visual Education

We have also been advised to make arrangements for Visual Education. We learn that in progressive countries where education has taken rapid strides, organized attempts are made to supplement and strengthen the instruction imparted in the class room by projecting on the screen suitable pictures bearing on different school subjects. There is no doubt that children have a more vivid and lasting impression of what they see graphically represented against appropriate background than what is communicated by means of

feeble words or cold print. While we do fully realise the value of Visual Education, it is to be stressed that films can serve as an aid to instruction only if they are intelligently prepared with an eye to the needs of children for whom they are intended. A haphazard display of available pictures, produced for consumption elsewhere, which do not take into account conditions of life prevalent here and the mental level of children of our land, may possibly be entertaining but cannot definitely be educative. Only when the Government takes upon itself the responsibility of preparing films suited to class requirements and of distributing them among schools, will Visual Education become really useful.

The Teacher's Responsibility

The teacher's responsibility which is always grave, has become graver now in view of the trying times our country is passing through. Unprecedented economic depression has distracted men's minds and led to a confusion of issues. Their attitudes and approaches to problems are not the same as before. Strange ideologies have seized them, provoking unhealthy courses of conduct. A new outlook has come into being. Youth is at the cross-roads. Serious changes in the educational system are being talked about vaguely. But the success of any reform, however well conceived and wisely planned, depends ultimately upon the teacher and his attitude to work. It is a tragedy that his time

and energy which are by far the most precious national asset, should be callously suffered to be expended upon the solution of problems which should not touch the fringe of his mind if he is to discharge effectively the onerous duty legitimately expected of him. The teacher is the noblest symbol of the country's culture. In his suffering is the nation's humiliation. He may not and shall not hanker after special recognition and clamour for exclusive privileges. He may not and shall not stoop to sensational tactics which would pitchfork people into pity or coerce them into commiseration. But it is the supreme duty of the public and the State alike to treat him with the regard due to him.

Only at a critical time, however, when the higher values of life are put to an acid test should teachers show their steadfast faith in the noble ideals of their profession. If, dazzled by the glittering but doubtful prospects dangling elsewhere in other fields, they quit their posts of responsibility, they do a great disservice to the institutions which have nourished and sustained them and to which they are morally bound to give of their very best. More than that, they jeopardise the interests of the children committed to their care.

On our part, therefore, let us, teachers, not allow the gloom which surrounds us at present to blind us to the sanctity of our vocation and to misdirect us into any act which may permanently impair the reputation built up for the profession

by our predecessors by their sweat and tears, sufferings and sacrifices. They have by their devoted labours kept bright and trim for centuries the lamp of learning without being extinguished by the whirlwind of political upheavals or dimmed by the shadows of social revolution. Let us prove ourselves worthy of our sires, remembering that, whatever may be said and done, we must be living models to our pupils who have to shape the destiny of the nation. With faith and hope

“Let us be up and doing
With a heart for any fate,
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labour and to wait.”

We are living in stirring times indeed. History is made before our eyes. The tremendous progress of Science has shrunk the world. We can no longer hope to stand still in the sheltered backwaters of isolated indifference. Significant and far-reaching changes will have naturally to take place in the field of education. Syllabuses, examinations, equipment, aids and appliances have all their own place in any scheme of reform. It is wrong to vaguely disregard them as of little value, but to harp upon them continually as of the utmost consequence is not wise. The prime factor in any scheme of educational orientation, let it be repeated again and again, is the teacher. Let us therefore reconstruct our personalities and attune ourselves to the new spirit of duty and service that is sweep-

ing over the land, so that we may be able to mould the children entrusted to us into the right type of citizens who will play their parts worthily in the New Order that is rising out of the ashes of the old.

Eternal vigilance is the price of hard-won liberty. While in the thick of the struggle, the combatants do their duties with concentrated energy and devotion lest one false step or indiscreet act should deprive them of the fruit of success. But when victory is well within their grasp, they are prone to lapse into lethargy. Hence the real crisis comes only after the battle has been won. Teachers are the pillars of the nation and they alone can stabilise Free India, straggling till lately under the dead weight of age-long shackles. In the true missionary spirit, let us, therefore, go about our tasks with that immortal faith :

“ God’s in His heaven—

All’s right with the world ! ”

OUR EDUCATIONAL EDIFICE*

It is the educational edifice that lends real dignity and charm to a nation. Needless to state, therefore, that it has to be reared with care and caution, devotion and determination. The ultimate progress of a land depends upon the intellectual and moral standards of the people that compose it. These receive their training and equipment for life and citizenship mainly in educational institutions, in their impressionable period. The various parts that make up the educational edifice have to be strong and secure, resting on solid foundation, so that the structure may be a spiritual Taj Mahal, a power-house radiating knowledge, wisdom, joy and peace.

The most important agencies that have to function in protecting and fortifying the educational edifice of a nation are the Government, the public, the parents and the teachers. It is the Government that has to enunciate policies and principles regulating the conduct of educational institutions. The members of the public have to take an intelligent interest in matters educational and offer helpful suggestions on the basis of common sense. It is the duty of the parents to extend their fullest co-operation to the authorities that conduct educa-

*Address, delivered on the occasion of the Joint Inaugural Meeting of the Teachers' Associations of the National High School (Boys) and the National High School (Girls), Madras, on 26-7-1950.

tional institutions. Teachers, however, are the real builders of schools and the architects of the nation.

Let us try to understand how these play their *role* in our land. Until three years back, it was an alien government that formulated our educational principles and chalked out our education programme. Whenever anything went amiss, all of us murmured in the seclusion of subjection that ours was not to question why but ours to do or die. The foreign Government was not frankly very much interested in our progress. They naturally, therefore, evolved a pattern of education that would help them retain their power and prolong our serfdom. Not psychological principles but political considerations weighed with them in adumbrating educational policies. It was not very much their desire to devise a system of education that would quicken the imagination and resourcefulness of children and develop their personalities. But happily conditions are now changed and to-day we meet under a flag that flutters gaily, fanned by the breath of freedom. We are the members of a Free Sovereign Republic, ushered into existence by a noble band of gallant martyrs who have struggled, suffered and sacrificed for several decades. Those that rule us today are our own kith and kin. But it has to be painfully admitted that though three years have now passed since we attained our longed-for freedom, we have not made adequate progress in the field of education which is a very important phase of national activity. We are today not far from

where we were three years back. It is true that in the period of transition when we switch on from the old order to the new, there is bound to be delay, confusion and a little chaos too. Even allowing a fair margin for this inevitable phase in the evolution of a nation, we do feel that the ground covered by us is far too inadequate and unsatisfactory. The success of any reform depends upon intelligent, effective and patient planning. We have been feeling — there is no hiding the fact — that policies are enunciated and programmes are drawn up in bewildering succession, and before they are fully comprehended or given a fair trial, they are condemned or jettisoned. Clarity of thought and soundness of judgment do not often seem to be much in evidence. Addressing the City Head Masters the other day, the Hon'ble Minister who presides over the educational destinies of our State, observed that three factors which ought to influence the decision of Government in any matter were enlightened public opinion, expert advice and the guidance of Departmental officers whose patriotism was not inferior to that of any others. There is profound truth in this, and if only our educational policy had been based upon these there would not be the unrest and the suspense that we now experience. It seems as if in trying to overhaul the old system of education, which had doubtless serious defects, we have deprived it of some of the desirable features and created fresh problems. I feel frankly that there is no reason

for us to feel jubilant or exultant over the new scheme that has been offered to us as a solution to the thorny problem of language-study in our State. It may satisfy isolated groups who may favour the study of a language or discountenance the study of another language, but it does not certainly guarantee the progress of children on sound lines. I am afraid it would lead to dissipation of energies on the part of youngsters or cause an undue strain to their fragile minds. Somehow, for causes that we may not be able to fathom, there is a lowering in the level of efficiency in all departments of life. If those that exhibit this fall are the products of educational institutions, does it not mean that there is something wrong in the system that has nurtured them or the policy that has licked them into shape? If it is conceded that on pedagogic principles the study of too many languages is unsound, then all children must be guarded against that defect. Or if in larger national interests it is felt that the knowledge of a language is essential for children, then provision should be made for the study of it by all. The alternative, however, that is suggested to the study of an extra language is the practice of an additional craft or the pursuit of some 'approved school activity.' To call upon schools to provide some approved activities is to give a very vague direction. One feels that in trying to engage themselves in the so-called approved activity, children will lapse into inactivity because under the existing circumstances it is not

possible in several institutions to make provision for healthful activities. Even in the matter of craft, on account of the lack of adequate facilities, many schools are not able to give the requisite benefit to children. It is well-nigh impossible, therefore, to provide for an additional craft when training in one craft itself is not satisfactory. It may all sound very grandiloquent on paper to say that pupils must be left to themselves to grow as they choose, following their own bent and engaging themselves in activities suited to their tastes and temperaments. But it is a grim reality that in our institutions very often we do not have even reasonable facilities for carrying on normal work and giving the minimum benefit of schooling to children. It is, therefore, not so easy to introduce ideal conditions. Moreover, it is not proper to leave institutions far too much to evolve their own pattern of instruction. There has to be a core of uniformity in the broad principles though, in the matter of working out details, each institution may be left to its own initiative and resourcefulness. We do need wise direction, enlightened guidance and sympathetic supervision.

There is yet another feature which has to be adverted to in this connection. We have certainly to be guided by the systems that prevail in progressive countries abroad. It is our duty to study their models. But it is not wise to transplant them mechanically into our own land where conditions differ. We have to effectively blend all that is

desirable in foreign models with all that has been proved to be good in our own system, and to evolve a synthetic scheme which will suit the needs and the genius of our land. To be enamoured of foreign models simply because they are novel, is as much an error as to condemn them simply because they are foreign. We wish, therefore, that the Government would proceed cautiously in the matter of educational reforms and be guided more by the advice of those that are in the field and are conversant with the realities of the situation.

Until very recently the public was apathetic to education. It is a happy augury, however, that they have begun to take real interest in, and to express their opinions regarding, the reforms that are contemplated and introduced. Enlightened public opinion can alone be the most effective corrective to the policy of the Government, imposing a healthy restraint on them and preventing them from rushing to extremes. In the category of the members of the public have to be included those that are in charge of the management of Institutions. In the context of the present national and international situation, when there is a growing tendency that affairs should be regulated on a democratic basis, Managements should shed their superiority complex and feel that they are co-partners with teachers and other agencies in the administration of public institutions and not the proprietors of private concerns whose pleasure it is to dole out largesses to needy employees. Unless their

attitude towards teachers is one of respect, cordiality and good-will, educational institutions cannot thrive and be the agencies for good which they are intended to be. Today we witness the sorry spectacle of teachers migrating from one school to another for the sake of bettering their prospects and getting their due. Under ideal conditions, when vacancies arise in an institution, appointments would not take the form of the engagement of teachers doing service elsewhere. The truth is that the dearth for teachers continues as before but, if educational institutions are able to carry on work in a way, it is because of an unnatural distribution of existing teachers and not always because of fresh appointments of competent and qualified teachers. Institutions have to develop a common code, and there has to be inter-school etiquette which would prevent teachers from roving from one place to another yielding to the temptation of a bait. It is true that local conditions vary and that supply has to be regulated on the basis of demand. Yet it is the duty of the Managements of all aided institutions to come to an understanding and evolve a plan conducive to harmonious relationship among sister institutions. Where they experience practical difficulties, it is up to them to create public opinion and seek and obtain the aid of the Government for permanent solutions instead of their having recourse themselves to temporary palliatives.

Education is a synthetic unit and a continuous process. It is wrong to imagine that knowledge is gained only through books and in schools and colleges alone. During every wakeful minute the child learns things and adds to its stock of knowledge through a variety of sources. No doubt the teacher's part in the process of the child's education is the most important one, but it is not the only factor that contributes to the training of the child. The parents are the *first* teachers and they profoundly influence the growth of the child. They cannot absolve themselves from the responsibilities of moulding the child's mind, emotions and morals on the score that it has been put to school and it is the duty of teachers to take care of youngsters. Without close co-operation between the home and the school and without intelligent understanding between the parents and the teachers, the child's education cannot be complete or fruitful. Parents have thus to take a deep and abiding interest in the activities of educational institutions to which they send their children and give their unstinted support to the teachers in all directions, realising that the work they do is far too sacred and onerous to be treated lightly or with indifference.

The key-stone in the educational edifice is doubtless the teacher. On him depends much more than on any other the progress and the prosperity of children. Nobody can effectively take his place or influence children in the manner and to the degree which it is possible for him alone to do.

His responsibility is tremendous. Teaching is a calling and not a craft ; a vocation and not a mere profession. To be a teacher is to be the member of a Holy Order. We often hear it being said condescendingly on ceremonious occasions by people who imagine themselves to belong to a higher hierarchy that " teaching is the noblest of professions but the sorriest of trades ". There cannot be a more inconsistent statement than this. It is true that we teachers are not materially so well off as the members of other professions. It is true that as individual members of society with physical needs and social obligations, we do require reasonable amenities. We cannot live on mere ideals. A famished teacher cannot be efficient. Society has a moral duty by him. It has to place him above want so that he may give of his best to children and devote all his time and energy to their uplift. Yet, on our part, let us not clamour for rights and privileges. They shall come to us not because we *desire* them but because we *deserve* them. The plight in which we are at present as a class is largely due to our own making. It is neither desirable nor helpful to go into the causes of this state of affairs. It is for us to recover the prestige which was ours and which is bound to come to us.

In the first place, let us realise that our profession demands exacting standards of life and conduct. We cannot quarrel with the situation. The nature of our work is such that we have to be sober models to the youngsters who are placed

under our charge and who are going to be profoundly influenced by what we are. Whether we like it or not, idealism has to be the breath of our nostrils. By choice or by accident we have got into the profession. Being in it, it is our duty to maintain the high standards associated with it. If we feel that temperamentally or for any other reason we cannot do our work efficiently, it is for us to quit the profession gracefully and to seek happiness elsewhere. To be in it and to do work half-heartedly with discontent, is to render a disservice to ourselves and to the profession. We have to calmly realise that there is some suffering for us on the physical plane not because we are members of the profession but because of other causes beyond our control which affect others also, though not to the same extent as they do us. The world itself is in the throes of a re-birth. Our country is also passing through a crisis. There is no economic stability. Until the major national issues are solved, distress and difficulties will attempt to dwarf our spirits. But brighter days are ahead of us. It is a good sign that other people have taken up our cause realising that suffering has been the badge of our tribe all along. At this stage we must keep ourselves away from excitement and carry on our work quietly and with faith in God. Our time is much too precious to be expended on acrimonious wranglings. All our energies have to be directed to the betterment of children who are the greatest national asset.

Efficient and dedicated service is the foundation on which our reputation rests. It is not so much genius as earnestness that we require. Faith in the sanctity of our calling, a burning passion to give of our very best to children, steadfast determination to train them on healthy lines — given these, all other things will follow of their own accord. If we are slipshod in our work, pupils shrewdly enough understand that we have not much interest in what we do, and their respect for us suffers and our influence over them wanes. When they observe that we are in dead earnest about our work, they simply idolise us. Children may be intellectually far inferior. But we have a moral obligation to do our best by them by straining every nerve of ours. We have no business to enter the class without thorough preparation. It is our attitude much more than our scholarship that affects them. Our enthusiasm and earnestness become infectious. They plunge themselves into work and put forth their best and grow to their fullest stature. A teacher who is only one lesson ahead of his class is a *live* automaton and not an inspirer. We must be regular; we must be punctual; we must be neat; we must be elegant; we must be dignified, realising that our thoughts, our feelings, our gestures, our movements, our words, our attitudes and our activities profoundly influence our wards, albeit unconsciously. It is no good saying that too much is expected of us. We have to do it if we wish to be worthy members of the pro-

fession. It may not be the business of others to set a model to children. But it is definitely the duty of the teacher to instruct by his own example rather than by precept.

Our dealings with parents must be characterised by the utmost vigilance and dignity. For no reason should we demean ourselves before them and make them feel that we are appendages to their household establishments. True status depends not upon power or pelf but upon the dignity of the soul. It is possible for us to be rich without money and wrest the respect of those that may be favoured with affluence. Personality is the efflorescence of culture. If the teacher cannot have it, who else can ?

Our main purpose is to teach and train children. To the extent our time is taken away from this, to that extent we are betraying the interests of the gods-in-the-becoming. I have no business even to write a personal post-card during the working hours of the school. I am given leisure so that I may equip myself for work and go refreshed to the class. I have my holiday so that I may energise myself and go back to the scene of my labours with redoubled zeal. This may sound fanaticism. But there is no solution for our land unless we have dedicated workers who are willing to bury themselves like the seed underneath the ground, so that life-giving plants bearing luscious fruits and fragrant flowers may sprout out. Never

before in the history of educational progress in our land was there so much need as now for vision, imagination, idealism, service and sacrifice. Shall we rise to the occasion and display these noble qualities that the nation may prosper? It is for you to answer.

THE SCHOOL FAMILY*

I like to call the School a family for very special and pertinent reasons. Nowhere else is there greater need for oneness of purpose, identity of interests and harmony of feeling which characterise an ideal family than in a school. Each member, whatever his age or position, has in domestic economy a definite place which cannot be usurped by another. Each one has to do cheerfully and efficiently the duties that fall to his lot. He must also co-operate with the other members and contribute to general peace and prosperity. In the same way, the different limbs of the school organism have to function harmoniously in happy co-ordination blending themselves into a composite personality like the different rivulets which join together and flow with swollen majesty and unified momentum in their career of fruitful service.

The first and foremost members of the school family are the pupils. They are the children of the *Alma Mater*, the darlings of the mother's heart. Without these prolific sons who with eager steps and gay hearts betake themselves to its premises day after day, the school is a fit rendezvous for cheerless ghosts. It is the presence of these youthful spirits, afire with enthusiasm, that transfigures the school from a mere brick and mortar structure

*Commemoration Address, delivered on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee Celebrations of the District Board High School, Poonamallee, on 3rd March, 1944.

into a veritable *El Dorado* of joy and wisdom. It is their innocent laughter and purposeful activity that make the school a smiling garden humming with life. They are the greatest asset of the nation. When a great Greek General demanded of the Spartans twenty youths, they refused to part with youngsters. They said that they were prepared to surrender any number of grown-up statesmen, politicians and soldiers but not youths. Verily, the destinies of the morrow lie in the palms of the young, in the way in which they are moulded and fashioned. The school has, therefore, to do all that lies in its power to teach and train aright these budding citizens, so that when they blossom into manhood they may play their part worthily as members of their community, society, and country.

Boys, on their part, must regard the school not as a prison-house where they are confined for five hours every day, where their activities are watched with suspicion by eagle-eyed teachers who delight in punishing them whenever possible. No, the school is a home — larger than the one which they call their own — consisting of hundreds of brothers, younger and older, all of whom desire and deserve to be loved by them : the school is a *Brindavan*, a place of recreation where healthy activity is to be carried on in congenial atmosphere : the school is a State on a miniature scale which trains them although unconsciously for self-government and inculcates in them the spirit of true democracy, of co-operative effort and mutual tolerance. Hence

boys should come to love their school, feel proud of its traditions in the building up of which they have had a hand, and shudder to do anything that would besmirch the fair name of the institution. It should be their endeavour to add lustre to it by their work and worth.

Next in importance come the teachers. A school is what the teachers make it. This statement bears repetition any number of times. Teaching is a most sacred calling. It is not the mechanical transference of soulless facts entombed in books but the liberation of moral force, the release of spiritual energy which vitalises and galvanises the young. Education in its truest sense is the nourishment of the body, mind, emotions and spirit. The teacher's work is, therefore, the most onerous though the least observed. People must not embrace this calling unless they have the urge within.

Why should a very high standard of equipment and conduct be expected of the teacher alone? It is because of the nature of the work that he has to do. It is entirely different from, and highly superior to, the work of the members of other professions. He deals with the most precious material — the souls of pupils — in their plastic period. His mistakes and errors affect an entire generation and the harm done by him percolates down to succeeding generations also. His most important duty is to be an exemplar,

a model to children. Having chosen the profession, he must rise up to its expectations, to be true to his salt. A man who desires to be an interpreter in a court has to learn many languages if he does not know them already. In the same manner, the teacher has to equip himself for his task. It is not the direct duty of other people to teach. The teacher alone professes teaching to be his immediate duty. Hence even if he has been otherwise before joining the profession, he must reform himself to be worthy of the calling when he has embraced it. A teacher whose soul is wrinkled and whose heart is atrophied, who is devoid of energy and enthusiasm, capacity and character and who simply marks time, his eyes fixed on the calendar, is a disgrace to the profession and a curse on society. A teacher must not regard himself as a mere wage-earner whose job begins at 10 A.M. and ends at 5 P.M. when he can shake the dust off his feet and walk out of the bread-giving factory. No, he is a spiritual alchemist charged with the sacred work of creating cultured citizens.

It is no use always clamouring for our rights and privileges and complaining that we are not treated properly by society. We do want creature comforts to function efficiently but to be always harping upon them as if they were the *summum bonum* of existence is to deny the supremacy of the soul and to betray the dignity of our calling. Money is not the sole criterion of a man's worth. A clever burglar may earn much more than a care-

ful merchant. The teacher must estimate the compensation for his labours not in the remuneration he gets but in the hearts he has won and the minds he has moulded. His work is the most enduring one : he leaves behind him a priceless legacy for generations. His memory is cherished for ever and ever. Even today we hear affectionate and reverential references made to great teachers and professors like Dr. Miller, Pandiyaji, Skinner, Davey, Porter, Gopal Rao. Is not this fragrant memorial more enduring than oil portraits or statues ? After all, fame is slow death. Life itself passes away and so does fame ; but they never die who live in the hearts of men. They transcend the limitations of human personality. They become institutionalised and concretised into definite systems of thought, strains of feeling and modes of life which the world will not willingly let die.

Some of the world's greatest men have been the bequest of the teaching profession. We have in our own country the shining examples of Mahadeva Govinda Ranade and Gopala Krishna Gokhale, two stalwart sons and ' Servants of India ' who toiled for the Motherland in the realm of politics. Swami Rama Tirtha and Sri Arabinda Ghose — two of the tallest trees in the magic garden of spirituality — started life as teachers. Sri C. Rajagopalachariar whom even prejudice cannot deny a title to intellectual brilliance and moral eminence, was asked what he would like to become when he laid down his office as the Premier of the Province.

Quick came the reply to the agreeable surprise of his friends that he would like to become a school master. I cite these examples only to show how coveted and honourable the teaching profession is.

The teacher who displays a vulgar craze for cheap popularity is unfit for the profession. Why should he be anxious to win favours at the hands of people who more often than not find themselves perched on eminence, blown by the gale of adventitious aids? The teachers of old were sought after; but if today we are regarded as an appendage to the establishments of the opulent, we are to be blamed. We have need to shake off our inferiority complex and hold our heads erect not in a spirit of brazen arrogance but out of a consciousness of the dignity of our calling. Teaching is spiritual adoption. The teacher, when he accepts a pupil, adopts him as his son and undertakes the synthetic development of his whole personality. To do this, he has to identify himself with a pupil thoroughly and create for him an atmosphere which would draw out the best in him. He must satisfy all his natural cravings by finding healthy channels of expression for creative work. If he tries to suppress them, they will burst with volcanic vehemence and find manifestation in undesirable directions. Brute force cannot enforce discipline. It makes cowards of the weak and rebels of the strong. The teacher must therefore appeal to the nobler feelings and finer instincts of the youngsters, educate their over-strung emotions

and divert their enthusiasm and energy to healthy channels by means of persuasion, appeal and advice.

Parental co-operation is quite essential if the training given to pupils at school is to be fruitful. It cannot be got by merely talking about it, by delivering lectures to parents or by issuing periodical pamphlets to them. Parents cannot be coerced into co-operation. Teachers must secure it by their hard, earnest work. They must band themselves into an Order of Service and discharge their duties efficiently and conscientiously. As it was said of a ruler of Russia that his character was the constitution of his land, so is the teacher's earnest work his best medium of publicity. The pupils are his greatest propagandists. They are sure to carry into their homes their affection and respect for the teacher, and all the members of his family are bound to get deeply attached to the teacher. The boys must feel that the teacher takes real paternal interest in them and that, even when he chastises them, the mother's heart throbs in him. The parents must realise that the good of the boys is the sole concern of the teacher. Then parental co-operation will rush to the teacher. The teachers must lose no opportunity to get into intimate contact with the parents and to give them frequent opportunities to visit the school. The school should become a vibrant centre of social activity and capture the imagination of

the public of the locality. The parents are then sure to take an abiding interest in the school.

On their part, the parents must feel that it is their duty to stand by the school and to give unstinted their co-operation to the teachers in their arduous work of training their children. They should not think that their responsibility ceases the moment they have put children to school. Even as they expect the teachers to play the *role* of second parents, they must remember that they are the first teachers.

Last but not the least come the members of the School Management. They should regard the teachers as honourable co-partners in the common work of educating the young and not as their pitiable employees to whom it is their privilege to dole out largesses. They should not vitiate the atmosphere of the school by breathing into it partisan spirit. Party politics and scholastic life are poles apart. The school is a secular shrine, dedicated to the Goddess of Wisdom. Teachers and pupils are all worshippers at it, knowing no man-made difference. Recently, I happened to hear of an incident in a District Board School. Without meaning any offence to anybody, I wish to narrate it to you for the ripping fun it provides and the incidental truth it points out. It seems the President of a District Board paid a surprise visit to a school in his jurisdiction. He found a few teachers in the Reading Room glancing through newspapers and

chatting pleasantly. He could neither understand nor brook such a situation! He questioned the Head Master why he had carelessly allowed those teachers to get out of their classes and keep idle. He was told that they were having 'leisure'. The President thundered that they had no business to be quiet. They had to be found some work from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. They were paid for it!

It is well to remember in this connection that the Sargent Committee whose scheme is now discussed everywhere, has definitely stated that they do not believe in the sack-cloth-and-ashes ideal for the teachers. They feel that teachers should be paid well if they are to do good work. How could teachers turn out really useful work if their life is a grim struggle with want?

Even as the family is the unit of social life, the school is the unit of national life. It is the first social institution with which youngsters come into contact. A school is not a market place where knowledge is dumped upon unwilling consumers. It is a seed-bed of culture. It is a symbol of unity. It is an arsenal of democracy. It is an epitome of the world. It must lay in youths proper and secure foundation in the spring-time of their lives.

Family is the centre and not the circumference of love. Charity may begin at home but it ought not to end there. In the same way, schools must prepare boys for the larger life outside. Ever-widening service to the nation and love of human-

ity should be the fulfilment and fruition of true education. Community consciousness is laudable but communal exclusiveness is abominable. Community feeling may be an aid to collective progress but communal rancour is an enemy to national regeneration.

I am glad that these celebrations have brought together all the limbs of the school family. The very purpose of marriages and other social functions is to draw together all the members of the family to patch up all feuds and to fortify faded friendships. I am sure that the richest legacy of this festivity will be a greater understanding among the various members of the school family, which will ultimately redound to the progress and prosperity of the institution.

PARTNERSHIP IN SCHOOLS*

A school of the right kind is not a brick and mortar affair. Nor is it mainly a place of instruction. It is a vibrant centre of social and national life, a living and growing organism with distinctive characteristics of its own. The main parties that, in one way or another, influence the vitality and the growth of a school are the Board of Management, the Head Master, the Teaching Staff, the Parent Class and the Pupils. Only when these regard the school as a joint concern and are permeated by the spirit of partnership, can it hope to fulfil its lofty purpose.

Such a state of affairs does not, however, generally exist in our schools. The Manager adopts towards the teacher the superior attitude of an employer towards a helpless and resourceless employee. The Head Master is said to show scant consideration to the views and feelings of the teachers, and to play the role of the little autocrat. The teachers, coming under the double lash of the Management and the Head Master, rapidly develop an inferiority complex, lose zest and energy, and regard their work as super-imposed drudgery. The parents, who are the ultimate paymasters, are practically out of the picture, their existence being felt only on the eve of promotions or 'selection'.

*Paper read at the Provincial Educational Conference, Tanjore, 7th May, 1937, under the Presidentship of Sri C. Rajagopalachari.

The pupils look upon the school more as a prison-house than as a nursery where their minds mature, hearts quicken, vision expands and character develops. Thus, it is evident that there is in general no partnership worth the name in the prevailing system of school organisation.

It is possible, however, to transform this mechanical and centralised system into one actuated by the spirit of partnership. Only the human element needs to be brought more into play than authority. In other words, mutual trust, confidence, respect and sympathy must prevail among the parties concerned.

How is this idea of partnership to be worked out in practice? In the first place, it must govern the relationship between the Management and the Staff. Managements should provide teachers facilities to give expression to their views on matters affecting the progress and welfare of the institutions, and should give due weight to their considered opinions. Next comes the Head Master-Teacher Partnership. Head Masters ought to feel it their duty to consult their colleagues as regards the details of internal organisation and to share with them the responsibility in the conduct of activities — curricular and extra-curricular. The third aspect is the Teacher-Parent Partnership. Parents are the first teachers and teachers are the second parents. If the work of the school is to bear fruit, the enlightened co-operation of the parents is a

necessity. Hence earnest attempts must be made to enlist such co-operation. The last but by no means the least, is the Teacher-Pupil Partnership. Education is a co-operative endeavour, involving two parties — the teacher and the taught. The emergence of 'Individual Methods' in recent times is an emphatic recognition of this basic educational truth. Pupil-participation in the learning process is but the minor aspect of the Teacher-Pupil Partnership. The major and the more vital is the enlistment of the active co-operation of the pupils in the larger life and the nation-building activities of the school. It is the duty of teachers to afford pupils every opportunity to manage their affairs and to express frankly their views on matters affecting them. They should also try to give effect to such views when found feasible and practicable. These steps indicate the way in which the spirit of partnership can be infused into school life.

During the last ten years, an earnest, strenuous and persistent attempt has been made in our School to put into practice the ideal of partnership. My sole object in briefly describing the experiment carried on by us is to share with brother-teachers our joyous experiences in this connection and to make it clear that the ideal sketched above is not impossible of achievement.

The Management-Staff Partnership: The Management's position has been stated in clear and unambiguous terms by the Honorary Secretary and

Correspondent of the School, Mr. Narayana Doss Girdhar Doss, in the following terms: "Managements should undertake their work in a spirit of public service. They should not regard teachers as mere mercenaries or wage-earners but should consider them as *co-workers in a common cause* and treat them with the respect due to *Acharyas*. Further, teachers must have on the Board of Management direct representation in consonance with the democratic spirit of the day. They, in their turn, must merit the honour by their work, worth, character and devotion to the welfare of children." This enlightened policy is not a mere paper declaration, but has been carried out in letter and spirit. The revival of the good old practice of showing honour to the *Acharyas* on the occasion of the *Deepavali* by entertaining them at dinner and offering them presentations, is a typical instance of the spirit that actuates the Management in its dealings with the Staff. The election of one of us, and that rightly the Chief of us, to the Board of Management in December 1932, has been an important step in the fulfilment of the Management's idea of taking teachers into partnership. Another significant move was the constitution some years ago of an Arbitration Board to decide the issue when a teacher's services were to be dispensed with. When one or two such occasions arose, the Management made it a point to consult the general body of teachers before arriving at the final decision. If, however, it is under

a cloud now, it is not the fault of the Management. The constitution of a committee of teachers to frame Leave Rules, embodying the teachers' views in the matter, is yet another step. Besides, teachers have been given not a little freedom to work out educational ideals without let or hindrance. In these ways has the Management taken the teachers into Partnership in the work of the School.

The Headmaster-Staff Partnership: The same spirit of Partnership characterises to an intensified degree the relationship between the Head Master and the Staff. A few typical instances may be cited to illustrate the nature of the Partnership. In the matter of selecting Text-Books, the teachers have had all these years a free hand. Early in March every year, the Head Master appoints Committees for selecting Text-Books, giving them only the general direction that books should be chosen on account of their intrinsic merit, suitability and comparative cheapness. All possible care is taken to see that no extraneous influence is brought to bear on the Committees in their work. The Head Master accepts the recommendations of these Committees, and they meet with the final approval of the Management. The matter of deciding school promotions is another joint responsibility. Teachers meet two or three days prior to the commencement of the academic year, hold prolonged sittings, study the marks, frame rules, consider each individual case and make their final decisions, the pro-

motion list being signed by all, the Head Master being the last signatory. The framing of the Time-Table is done by a Special Committee of teachers after consulting those who wish to have their say in the matter.

It may appear from what has been stated above that the Head Master is a mere automaton, simply dotting the i's and crossing the t's of his colleagues. But the truth is far from it. He exercises effective and continuous supervision over the work of the teachers. His object in doing so is to offer helpful criticisms to level up the general efficiency of his colleagues. This he does by constantly meeting the teachers. At the end of each of the three courses of the school year, he convenes special meetings of the Staff when members are given full freedom to point out administrative defects and to ventilate grievances, if there be any. It will thus be seen that the principle of Partnership between the Head Master and the Staff has been incorporated into the internal working of the School.

The Teacher-Parent Partnership: A series of steps have been taken by the teachers to bring the Home and the School into fruitful contact. The genesis of this contact lay in the issue of periodical Pupils' Progress Reports to the parents. In the words of the illustrious educationist, the late Father Bertram, these reports are "precious human documents". The inspiring convention has

been established that Class Masters should pay at least three visits to the homes of their pupils in the course of the year and make an effort to study the environment in which the boys are brought up. Parents, in their turn, have got into the habit of visiting the School and interviewing the Head Master and the Class Masters regarding the conduct and progress of their children. The parents have formed themselves into an Association, under the auspices of which the Parents' Day is held every year. On the day short talks are given by teachers on topics of practical educational interest in which parental co-operation is at once desirable and helpful. They have an opportunity to study all the school records and documents like the Class Progress Registers, Teachers' Individual Study Pocket Note-Books, Pupils' Punctuality Register and Teaching Notes which are exhibited for their scrutiny. Their intimate knowledge of the work of the School has convinced them that the teachers sincerely strive to do their utmost for the children. It is the barest truth to state that there has not been during the last ten years any case of misunderstanding worth recording between the teachers and the parents of our School. On the contrary, the parents have been uniformly extending to the School their whole-hearted co-operation. They make it a point to attend in fairly large numbers the various public functions of the School. They eagerly await the release of each issue of the School Magazine because of their intelligent inte-

rest in the work of the School and their genuine desire to watch its progress. Perhaps the most striking instance of their co-operation is their solid material support to the School on the occasion of the enactment of a drama year after year in aid of the School Funds and their continuous contributions in cash and kind towards the feeding and clothing of the poor boys of the School under the auspices of the Deena Bandhu Sangham. The parents have come to feel that the School is as much theirs as it is the teachers'.

The Teacher-Pupil Partnership: The most vital aspect of partnership in schools is, however, the partnership between the teacher and the pupil, the others being ancillary. Extra-curricular activities alone provide ample scope for this partnership. The various Organisations like the Boys' Union, the Athletic Association, the Bhajana Sangham, the Deena Bandhu Sangham (Association for feeding poor boys), and the other Associations have active committees of boys besides teachers in charge of them. The pupil-members practically manage them, the teachers stepping in only when their help is necessary. The Boys' Own Bharata Mata Mart, a concern to encourage Swadeshi and Khaddar spirit, is manned, managed and financed entirely by the boys themselves. Special mention must be made of the Service Corps of the School, consisting of the senior boys, who actively co-operate with the teachers in the maintenance of school discipline. The brunt of responsibility is borne by

them during the annual excursion of the School when nearly 500 members — pupils and teachers — go to a place of pilgrimage and live there the family life for four or five days. All details regarding the Excursion — which is perhaps the most onerous of our undertakings — are mostly decided by boys themselves.

Partnership of the most effective kind is exercised by the pupils through the Boys' Representative Council which has been functioning for the last six years as their Parliament. It is the forum from which the members voice forth the pupils' point of view on many school matters. The suggestions put forward by the Council cover a wide range from asking for better chalk for class use and for *Swadeshi* pencils with the school name on them to running a raffle to augment the resources of the School. Even a superficial perusal of the very interesting minute books of the successive Secretaries would give an idea of the very intelligent and practical interest which the Council takes in the affairs of the School. This Pupils' Parliament has made the boys realise in a very vivid sense that the School mainly exists for them and that it is a partnership in which they have their due share. The Council has been showing an increasing sense of responsibility, with the result that the Head Master has thought it fit to consult it during the last two years even in the matter of framing rules of promotion and 'selection'. It is a fact, though it may sound strange, that the rules recommended

by the Council have been stricter than those eventually adopted.

There is also the Boys' Court of Honour, consisting of ten elected members. Cases of grave misconduct on the part of boys are placed before it. More royal than the king, this court discharges its magisterial functions promptly and without fear or favour. It may be mentioned in passing that these two pupil organisations were singled out for special commendation by the late Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar, the distinguished Editor of 'The Hindu'. It will thus be seen that the Pupil-Partnership in the affairs of the School has been of a very real and fruitful kind.

Results

A few results that have accrued from this four-fold partnership may be stated here to demonstrate the desirability and the necessity for its general adoption. Our School has carved out for itself the reputation of being "a premier institution" "with a distinct personality of its own", to quote Mr. N. S. Subba Rao, an eminent educationist and the Vice-Chancellor of the Mysore University. The teachers have been able to give of their very best in the service of the School and to experience the joy of creative effort into the bargain. The Management, on the one hand, and the parents, on the other, have come to show increasing confidence in, and regard for, the teachers. The tone and the

atmosphere of the School have remarkably improved as is borne out by the fact that the Boys' Court of Honour has had no cases at all to try in recent years. It was Dr. A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar, another well-known educationist, who remarked at one of the meetings of our Boys' Union, "As far as I know, this is the only school in South India where the tone and the atmosphere of Eton prevail". The boys have learnt to love the school and to be jealous of its honour and fair name. Even after they leave school and become Old Boys, they continue to show their abiding love of their 'alma mater'. The growing feeling of *Guru Bhakti* is yet another visible result. The offering of *Guru Dakshina* in the shape of fruits, flowers and *pansupari* by the outgoing pupils of VI Form has become an annual fixture in recent years. Boys willingly submit themselves to the discipline of the school because they have had their due share in its evolution. A striking instance which occurred three years ago will bear testimony to this fact. The Boys' Representative Council had decided that the School should work on a particular day, though under normal circumstances it should have been declared a holiday. The decision had to be taken to make up the minimum number of working days in conformity with Departmental regulations. There was a kind of general strike of pupils that day. A hostile crowd gathered in front of the school and demanded its closing, causing it damage. The boys manifested their sense of

exemplary discipline by calmly minding their work as if nothing had happened.

Factors contributory to the Success of the Experiment

If the experiment sketched above has proved successful in our School, it is not a little due to the community life that it has developed. Daily congregational prayer, weekly *pujas*, celebration of Hindu National festivals, pilgrimages, excursions and, more than all, the daily meeting of the pupils and the teachers on the sports-field have made us all feel that we are members of a joint family. An atmosphere has thus been created, conducive to good feeling, amity and cooperative endeavour.

The ultimate factor in Education is, however, not any system but the personality of the teacher. Only a band of earnest and enthusiastic teachers, who have faith in their work and calling and who have the good fortune to enjoy wise, sympathetic and dynamic leadership, can work out any educational experiment. Head Masters, no doubt, hold the key position in the matter of educational reform in Secondary Schools. They form the nexus, linking Managements, Staffs, Teachers and Pupils in the common work of schools. It is superfluous for me to state that, to the foresight, initiative and, more than these, to the continuous and consecrated service of our Head Master, we owe

the inauguration and the prosecution of the experiment in Partnership in our School.

Conclusion

Let us not forget that this idea of Partnership is the very foundation of the Hindu Joint Family, in the affairs of which the son has an undivided interest along with the father. The School is an extension of the Home, and the same spirit of Partnership must needs prevail in it. Hence it was that in ancient India when the *Guru* took up the boy, he continued the tradition of the joint family. The opening words in which the *Guru* greeted the pupil were, "Let us live together, work together and *grow in heroism* together." May we profit by this great *Upanishadic* saying and take our boys into partnership with us in our schools! Only then can our educational institutions become in a real sense the nurseries of the nation. Only then will the work of the teacher become the highest national service which a citizen can render.

RELIGIOUS TRAINING IN SCHOOLS*

There is an initial fallacy in the common conception that religion is an extraneous factor that has to be imported into life. Life and religion are closely interlocked like flower and fragrance. Man is essentially a spiritual being. He cannot be secular and spiritual by turns at convenient intervals. Shorn of religion, he degenerates into a thinking animal. The ultimate purpose of life is to realise God — the Soul of Perfection, Truth, Wisdom, Beauty. Religion cannot, therefore, be divorced from any aspect of life. Human existence is a caravan of thoughts, feelings, emotions and actions. All these have to be inspired by religion, if the destined goal is to be reached.

Religion is different from religiosity. It is not a sanctimonious show; nor is it a mechanical observance of dry rituals. It is a natural mode of life; it is a correct attitude to ourselves, to the universe around us and to the Unseen Power above, Whose existence we dare not deny. It implies a proper understanding of the laws of Nature and of the forces of the mind; it also means regulating our conduct in a manner that would help our evolution and the progress of the world.

‘The soul of culture is the culture of the soul.’ The entire educational edifice has, therefore, to rest on the bed-rock of religion. Any system of training for the young that does not make specific provision for religious instruction, stands self-

*Article, originally contributed to “The South Indian Teacher” — September, 1954.

condemned. It is defective, imperfect and unreal. In fact, the supreme mission of education, as of any other activity, is to discipline the mind for the comprehension of Truth. Our elders conceived of Education as *Aksharabhyasa*, the practice of immortality. They looked upon it as a progressive course of sublimation of the senses, leading finally to the highest beatitude. The teacher of the right type knows that religion is found intricately woven into the fabric of every subject. There is wide scope for him in each lesson to nourish the religious spirit in youngsters. History proclaims that there is a divinity that shapes the ends of nations as of individuals. Geography points out that the vast variety of countries and climates with their wonderful fauna and flora, owe their existence to the Master Craftsman. Science leads to the realisation that, far beyond its discoveries, there is an Unseen Power that controls all phenomena in a mysterious manner. Literature through its inspiring thoughts, chastens the mind and makes it a fit receptacle for the highest knowledge.

The religious spirit is evoked, however, only incidentally through the media of other subjects. But it has to be inculcated and strengthened by means of a definite programme, wisely planned and intelligently co-ordinated. It is absolutely essential that all pupils should have an accurate knowledge of the fundamental principles of their respective religions. It must be imparted through a series of graded lessons. We need not fight shy of

the situation if the school draws youngsters from different faiths. Provision has to be made, at any cost, to minister to their needs in this vital direction. After all, different religions are different vehicles leading to the same Destination. In essentials, they are all agreed. They have a substratum of uniformity in spite of surface differences. An enlightened study of one's own religion need not engender want of respect for other faiths. It is an imaginary fear. On the contrary, it promotes a catholicity of outlook and paves the way for true friendship with members of different persuasions. Love of one's own mother-tongue does not imply hatred of other languages; consideration for the neighbour does not warrant neglect of the home. Faith is not fanaticism; belief does not necessarily mean bigotry.

A theoretical knowledge of doctrines and dogmas cannot, however, make one religious. Religion is a continuous experience: it is a perpetual awareness of the presence of God, the might of His love and the supremacy of His law. It has to manifest itself in every little act that is done. The school has to provide the requisite atmosphere wherein the juvenile mind would grow naturally in the true religious spirit. Such an atmosphere is a subtle and imperceptible entity. It cannot be artificially created by the hanging up of divine pictures, displaying of edifying mottos and the burning of incense. It is the pervasive aroma that emanates from the dedicated service of

teachers, pure in thought, truthful in speech and selfless in action. It is strengthened by every breath of the "good" teacher. His life is the most valuable Text-Book on Religion. His presence is the noblest sermon. From him flows unconsciously an influence that purifies and elevates the mind. The personal example of the teacher is thus the most potent factor in any scheme of religious training. Other devices may supplement but can never supplant his miraculous work.

The dynamic aspect of religion is service. In a school community, there is a world of scope for its expression. It is the supreme duty of teachers to impress upon youngsters, both by example and by precept, the sanctity of such qualities as love, helpfulness, charity. To lift the spirit Godward when alone or free from work, to love all, to sympathise with those in distress, to share with a hungry brother the mid-day lunch, to contribute unasked a little to the tuition fee of a poor friend, to voluntarily spring to the assistance of others even at personal inconvenience — this is religion in practice, possible in the miniature world of the school. These traits which make up the spiritual fibre of a man, grow of their own accord in a congenial atmosphere. They are not forcibly taught. Without them, mere memorisation of catechism or recitation of hymns makes religion a dry academic affair, devoid of all charm, grandeur and vitality.

Our School — the Hindu Theological High School — owes its very inception to the holy zeal

of a great teacher, Sivashankara Pandyaji. Religious training forms an integral part of its normal work. A passing reference may be made to the devices adopted by us in this direction. Work begins every day with congregational Prayer, participated in by all the pupils and teachers. In pin-drop silence, each member offers worship in the sanctuary of his heart. A verse or hymn from the Prayer Book, specially compiled for the school community, is then chanted. The 'Thought For the Day' is next given by one of the teachers. It focuses attention on a noble idea or ideal in a few pithy sentences. In addition to these, *Puja* is performed to the Patron Deity of the School on every Friday. The lesson in each period is commenced only after silent prayer. Important religious festivals, fraught with great spiritual significance, are celebrated in due form and solemnity. Scholars, steeped in religious lore, are invited to give discourses on such occasions. Scores of pupils learn hymns in Samskrit, Tamil and Telugu on Friday evenings after regular work is over. Batches of pupils are taken periodically to the temples near by. The pilgrimage aspect looms large in our mass excursions. In all the cultural centres we visit, we make it a point to go in our hundreds to the shrines and offer worship like the devout members of a disciplined family. Under the auspices of the Sath Sangham, eminent *savants* talk to us on religious topics. The anniversaries of the sages and saints of the land are observed with fervour. Two periods

are set apart every week for religious and moral instruction which is imparted in an organised manner on the basis of a definite syllabus. The lessons often cluster round inspiring anecdotes, drawn from the biographies of the great of all lands and climes. Off and on, teachers impress upon the young the need for observing those essential religious practices, handed down to us from time immemorial.

Such sincere and systematic efforts have borne rich fruit. The general "tone" of the School is most satisfactory, as intuitively sensed and testified to repeatedly by discerning and distinguished guests. "There is a religious spirit in every section of every class," observed Lady Hope, after having kindly gone round the School. "Every pupil in this School is God-minded", remarked Swami Sivananda Saraswathi who sanctified the School by his visit. Other great saints whom the School has had the good fortune to welcome, have expressed that they experienced in the Prayer Hall a peculiar peace and subdued joy which they had not felt elsewhere. That is one tangible result which arrests the attention of every visitor. There is goodwill, cordiality and friendliness all round. Due respect marks the attitude of pupils to teachers. The dealings of the latter towards the young are naturally characterised by love.

It is not wise to push away religious training entirely from the School. It is true that the home

is the cradle of religion and that parents are the greatest preceptors. But unfortunately most of the homes to-day are "broken arcs". Modern life has become so complex that elders have neither the time nor the moral temper to attend to the proper training of the young. The coarse cinema posters and cheap magazines which aggressively brandish before the mind indecent suggestions bordering on vulgarity, are a great menace to the moral growth of the young. It is a tragedy that the wise tolerate such a situation. To combat and counteract vicious influences that corrode youthful minds, organised religious training is therefore imperative. If educational institutions cannot do it effectively, who else can? Namby-pamby ideologies, however grandiloquent they may sound, and new-fangled schemes, however catching they may appear, will not help us. In the golden age of our nation, religion illumined every aspect of life — individual and national. If we desire to revive our ancient glory, religion must become once again the dominant note.

DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS*

‘ It is significant that the word, discipline, should be derived from ‘disciple’ which means a learner. This close association only indicates how essential it is for a student to possess those noble and desirable qualities, connoted by the term ‘discipline’. In fact, discipline is the hall-mark of culture : it is the crown and glory of education. Without it, man is no better than a savage who often acts under the impulse of the moment, reckless of consequences. ’

It has to be painfully admitted that lack of discipline is almost a national defect with us. History is replete with instances which show how time and again this drawback has been responsible not only for great disasters but also for the loss of freedom. ‘ We all now naturally rejoice that at long last we have attained independence. But this hard-won freedom will not be worth a moment’s purchase if our attitudes and activities are not informed by a sense of discipline. ’ Unfortunately, however, we find all around evidence of indiscipline. The pent-up feelings of people, almost crushed under the yoke of alien rule, manifest themselves in unhealthy activities which disturb the peace and arrest the progress of the Motherland. Liberty does not mean licence : rights necessarily involve responsibilities. Greater than ever before is the need now for restraint and sobriety. Circum-

*Paper presented at the 38th Provincial Educational Conference, Tiruchirapalli, 14th May, 1948.

stances which provoked and justified excitement in feelings and actions, have now disappeared. At present, we are ourselves the architects of the destiny of our country.

' The foundations for a healthy discipline, which alone is conducive to peace, progress and prosperity — individual and national — have to be well and truly laid in our educational institutions. They are the real nurseries of the nation. In them are trained youngsters, the Citizens of To-morrow, in their most impressionable period when habits and attitudes which will persist through life, are formed.

Education is not the suffocation of the mind with a medley of facts, divorced from realities. ' It is a vibrant and arduous process of the unfolding of the personalities of the youngsters and of equipping them for the responsibilities and duties of life and citizenship. In the words of Ruskin, " Education does not mean teaching people to *know* what they do not know : it is teaching them to *behave* as they do not behave." It is of happy augury that this aspect is kept in the forefront in the schemes of re-organisation of education, now under contemplation, and that great stress is rightly laid on the need for, and value of, discipline.

The best of reforms will be productive of small good and the most earnest efforts of teachers will be of little avail if there is no discipline in an institution. A school without discipline is no better

than a noisy mart, astir with commotion, into which young and old jostle their way to buy and sell ill-assorted knowledge. It ceases to be a shrine of wisdom, instinct with peace, the congenial atmosphere of which helps the innocent young grow to their fullest stature — physical, mental, moral and spiritual. \

(What is discipline ? To put it in a nutshell, it is decent and decorous conduct which contributes to harmony, joy and success. An exalted sense of responsibility, respect for authority, love of orderliness, eagerness to discharge duties with regularity, promptitude and efficiency, a desire to be agreeable and helpful to others by exercising, if necessary, a wholesome check on individual proclivities, and a capacity to maintain equipoise in the face of the most trying circumstances — these constitute discipline. It is wrong to imagine that discipline which is essentially self-restraint, implies a surrender of individuality. On the contrary, it is a mark of superior strength.)

The general feeling among the public, largely shared by educationists, is that in recent years there has been an unfortunate tendency on the part of our youngsters to deviate from approved standards of discipline and to resort to courses of conduct which ill become them. Unwieldy numbers that are huddled into schools, unsuitable environments that fail to quicken healthy emotions, mechanical grouping of boys and stereotyped

methods of imparting instruction, having no regard for diversity of tastes and temperaments — these are often held responsible for the unsatisfactory state of affairs. It is true that these defects deserve to be remedied. They militate against discipline. But to make much of them is to pay little regard to the human factor, supplied by the pupils and teachers of an institution.

In this connection, it may be stated in all humility that distinguished visitors to our Institution — official and non-official — have thought it fit to single out for special reference the high standard of discipline shown by the school community. It is our conviction that indiscipline can never rear its ugly head if the necessary favourable conditions are created in our institutions. The following remarks are entirely based upon our own experience and are offered for what they are worth.

Nothing can be farther from truth than to think that discipline can be maintained only by the adoption of repressive measures, calculated to frighten pupils into submission. Craven fear can never make an honest convert. It turns the strong rebels, and the weak, cowards. Moreover, true discipline is self-discipline and is a matter of inner evolution. It cannot be enforced at the point of the bayonet by an external agency. Hence the first positive step to be taken is to create in the institution a healthy atmosphere which would engender

in the young noble impulses and evoke in them right attitudes. The possibility of any negative and harmful suggestion would thus be eliminated, and youngsters would come to have a natural and instinctive aversion to anything that smacks of indiscipline. In this as in any other vital matter connected with education, it is the personality of the teacher that tells. By his work and conduct he must be able to exercise the maximum moral influence on his wards. He can effectively do this only if he has intense faith in his mission and is possessed by a holy zeal to give of his very best to children. Conscientious and efficient discharge of duties is thus the very bed-rock on which discipline rests. Though young and artless, pupils are keen and shrewd critics : they easily detect the worth of teachers and form their own estimate of them. Where the pupils realise that a teacher is in terrific earnestness about his work, has perfect mastery of his subject, enters the class after thorough preparation, spares no pains to teach and train them on right lines, is thoroughly impartial in his dealings with them and labours hard, inspired by the loftiest motive to confer on them the utmost possible good, the problem of discipline gets automatically solved. They know they cannot trifle with him : much more than that, they simply idolize him. His presence is a signal for peaceful work : his gesture is command : his word is law : his approbation is benediction : his righteous indignation is holy wrath which may not be incurred lest it should

land them in harm. Even if perchance he should slip into severity and give visible expression to it, they meekly submit to the punishment without a murmur, feeling that it is to their ultimate good. They know that genuine love and not wilful malice is behind the apparent harshness. It was such abiding human interest and parental solicitude that armed the *Guru* of old with supreme power and helped him exercise perfect control over his *Sishya*.

But conditions of life are quite different now. A handful of earnest students no longer seek the teacher in his forest hermitage, nestling in idyllic surroundings. Hundreds of pupils crowd into schools, situated in the midst of din and bustle. They have to learn a variety of subjects from different teachers. (Teachers have, therefore, to evolve a corporate personality and exercise their cumulative influence on youngsters, if discipline is to be maintained. They have to band themselves into a brotherhood of service, sinking their petty differences and pooling their intellectual and moral resources. A desire to pull together like the members of a happy team, under the leadership of their captain whom they love and respect, should characterise their attitude to work. Without identity of interests, homogeneity of feeling and harmony of action, they cannot evolve that atmosphere in which indiscipline cannot thrive. It behoves teachers, therefore, to recognise and appreciate talents in one another and to harness

them to the service of the children committed to their conjoint care. Eager to profit by one another's experience, they should develop corporate life by means of an Association, exchange notes frequently and devise together ways and means of making their work fruitful and effective. Sectional or sectarian feelings should not touch the fringe of their beings. They should stand forth as a solid and united body before the pupils and their parents, feeling and acting like one man. There is no doubt then that students who unconsciously imbibe the qualities displayed before them, will grow in the image of their mentors and become patterns of discipline.

Thus, as schools are situated at present, the maintenance of discipline becomes a corporate responsibility and a co-operative endeavour. The Head Master, however talented he may be, cannot do it by himself. Each teacher has to contribute his own share to the orderliness of life in the school. This becomes possible only if provision is made for healthy extra-curricular activities. Teachers who participate in these, have occasion to exercise profound influence on pupils other than those under their immediate care. Intimate personal contacts are established between large numbers of teachers and pupils and they learn to draw closer together in mutual love and regard. It becomes possible for the teacher of the lowest class to command the esteem of the pupils of the highest class. In this connection, the value of wisely-

planned and properly conducted games cannot be over-estimated. Besides teaching lessons of enduring value, they afford priceless opportunities for the teachers and the taught to commingle and to develop community feeling which in a subtle manner promotes discipline.

Perhaps, more important than all these, is the creation of a healthy public opinion in the school. The unwritten moral code of the institution must be more binding on the members than the formal rules of conduct in vogue. Every one — pupil or teacher — should be made to feel that he is the guardian of the fair name of the institution and that, if he is guilty of any act of indiscipline, his compeers would give him no quarter. He then conducts himself in a disciplined manner not because he desires to ward off punishment at the hands of the authorities, but because he dreads the disgrace of being regarded as an unworthy member of the school community.

Such a state of affairs can be brought about only if the various factors that count in education co-operate with one another and look upon school administration as a conjoint responsibility. A well-conducted school is a happy family. Each member has a definite place in it and is charged with distinctive duties to perform for common weal. Pupils who are the most vital limb of the institution, become active partners in the management of its affairs. They are made to feel that they have a

legitimate part in the efficient conduct of the school, the glory of which is their pride.

It is wonderful how exceedingly well youngsters acquit themselves if only they are entrusted with responsibility in spheres well within their management. They show a high sense of duty and conduct themselves with becoming dignity. Our experience in this direction has been singular. The Boys' Representative Council, consisting of five elected representatives from each Section of the Higher Forms, is consulted by the Head Master on all important school matters. It voices forth the pupils' points of view very sensibly and offers helpful suggestions which reveal that the members are swayed only by the highest interests of the school. For instance, the rules of 'selection' and promotion framed by them, turn out to be stricter than those finally adopted by teachers. The Boys' Court of Honour consisting of ten pupils, is a judicial tribunal set up to try cases of juvenile lapses. During the long years it has been in existence, it has not had many occasions to function and, particularly in the last few years, it has had no need at all to meet, which incidentally reveals the growing volume of healthy public opinion in the School. But, when cases are referred to it, it condemns guilt in no uncertain terms and views the offenders very sternly. The Volunteer Corps which is the Watch and Ward Force of the School, attends to the orderly marching of pupils during recess, looks to the sanitation of the premises, does vigilance

duty restoring lost articles to the owners, and maintains discipline on all public occasions. It may be mentioned in passing that our mass annual excursions to distant places with parties numbering 500 and more (which unfortunately have been suspended now owing to lack of transport and other vital facilities), owed their phenomenal success to the gallant co-operation of our Volunteers.

There is yet another factor which goes a great way in determining the discipline of an institution. It is the co-operation between the School and the Home. Parents are the first teachers, and teachers are the second parents. These two important agencies have to act unitedly on the basis of an intelligent understanding if youngsters are to grow in discipline, especially in these days when they come under the influence of a number of forces outside of the School. In this matter also teachers have to take the initiative and enlist the enlightened co-operation of parents. It is not at all true to state that parents as a class evince little interest in the training of their children and that their attitude to teachers is generally marked by indifference, if not disrespect. If only teachers discharge their duties with devotion, they will wrest the confidence and regard of the parents who will be much too glad and willing to extend to them their fullest support. Again, reference has to be made to our institution just to substantiate the truth of the statement. The tradition in our School is that each Class Master should pay at least two visits to the

homes of his pupils in the course of the year and establish fruitful contacts with the parents or guardians. In practice, he meets them more often when the pupils happen to be backward in studies or remiss in the discharge of duties, and discusses and devises ways and means of pulling up the youngsters. The issue of the Progress Reports three times in the course of the year, embodying not only the marks obtained by the pupils in the Tests, but also the definite impressions of the Class Teacher and the Head Master on their work and conduct, affords the much-prized opportunities for parental contacts. The result is that seldom does a parent plead with the authorities on behalf of his pupil who may be detained or 'unselected.' During the stormy days of the anti-Hindi agitation, when our School was chosen as the target, our parents gave unmistakable evidence of their confidence in the school authorities. They stood loyally by the institution and affirmed their faith in the good work done by the teachers. In spite of the raging propaganda done and the great excitement caused, not a parent withdrew his boy from the School, nor did any pupil swerve from the path of disciplined conduct. Similarly our pupils have demonstrated their devotion to the ideals of the School by sticking to their posts of duty and carrying on their work normally and peacefully on all occasions when there was so much of commotion in the student world outside ending in strikes all round. It may not be out of place to state here

that our Corporal Punishment Register has remained blank for many years now, and that not a pie is collected in our institution by way of disciplinary fines.

Let me conclude with two extracts just to indicate whether it is possible to create the conditions mentioned above for the maintenance of discipline. One is from the speech delivered in our institution by the Vice-Chancellor of our University and the other is culled from the Annual Inspection Reports.

“The great feature about this School is the team spirit, that essential oneness of feeling between the teachers and the taught. It is gratifying to see the emphasis on unity laid in the activities of the School and the sense of discipline that prevails here. It certainly was not a mere accident that, in the troublous days when the student atmosphere was surcharged with a spirit far from what it ought to be, this institution came off with flying colours. That was possible because of the co-operation among the three entities who ought really to weigh in the work of educational institutions — students, teachers and parents.”

“Discipline : Excellent. Pupils are made responsible for the maintenance of discipline, and the system is working most successfully. The Students’ Representative Council is actively associated with the School and the Council is consulted on matters like selection

of pupils for the Public Examination, promotion of pupils, School celebrations, examinations, etc. It is very pleasing to note that the Students' Council has expressed sound views. The entire organisation of this Institution looks like a happy and healthy partnership between the teachers and the taught. The fundamental aim of the Institution is to give sound education with suitable training so as to inculcate in the minds of the pupils the ideals of sacrifice and service as conceived by the Hindus. The motto — 'Love, Learn, Serve, Sacrifice' — is amply demonstrated in the everyday life of the School."

MOTHER-TONGUE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION*

It appears to me that it is stressing the obvious to state that in our schools all non-language subjects should be taught through the medium of the pupils' mother-tongues alone. Even at the outset, let me assure you that my remarks are not based upon vague theories propounded in pedagogic textbooks, unrelated to realities, but that they rest on the solid foundation of actual experience gained in the course of three years, during which period the mother-tongue medium has been in vogue in our School.

At this stage of our country's evolution, when the entire nation is pulsating with a new life, throbbing with a vivified vigour, when there is a persistent and passionate desire on the part of people of all persuasions to give a new orientation to the several departments of our activity — especially the educational system which has been weighed in the balance and found woefully wanting, — for us teachers, who should be in the vanguard of progress, to pathetically cling to traditions, simply because usage has woven cobwebs round them, is to betray a bankruptcy of professional idealism and a lack of sense of values.

The effort to convey or assimilate knowledge through the medium of a foreign tongue is as gro-

* Substance of an Address delivered at the Lady Willingdon Training College — 29th October, 1941.

tesquely unnatural as the attempt to breathe with the borrowed lungs of another individual. To argue in favour of a foreign tongue medium for the communication of facts is to advocate the use of crutches for teaching walking. Perhaps, in no other progressive country are children taught through the medium of a foreign tongue. This fantastic phenomenon prevails, sadly enough, in our motherland.

Education is a partnership concern, a bilateral affair, involving two parties — the educator and the educated — and consists of two processes — the communication of knowledge on the part of the teacher and the acquisition of knowledge on the part of the taught. That system of instruction is alone fruitful and effective which enables the teacher to produce the *maximum effect* with *minimum effort* and which enables the pupil to derive the *utmost benefit* with the *least difficulty*. With the almost opaque medium of a foreign tongue, the teacher, who is not to the language born, finds his work an uphill task ; and the pupil, who is a stranger to the genius of the language, feels his duty a drudgery. Thus the foreign tongue medium is doubly cursed. It blesseth neither him that gives knowledge nor him that takes it.

Teachers of all climes and times fall into three categories : those of the mason-type who heap ill-assorted bricks of knowledge in the chamber of the pupil's mind and convert it into a lumber ; those of

the sculptor variety who chisel their pupils into a stereo-typed pattern after their own heart ; those of the gardener group who allow their pupils to grow in their own way and blossom into wisdom in a natural manner, pruning them only when necessary. Being at the mercy of a foreign tongue, the teacher perforce slips into the first order and shoves in, within the scheduled time, facts into the minds of pupils. The latter, helpless victims to the aggressive and vociferous activities of their mentors, tend to become literally and metaphorically sleeping partners. Learning is not mechanical appropriation but intelligent assimilation of facts. But, when facts are conveyed through the imperfect medium of a foreign tongue, comprehension, on the part of pupils, becomes difficult. They are not able to express themselves and convert their knowledge, vague as it is, into power ; for there can be no expression without impression. No wonder, therefore, that the rate of the intellectual progress of our children is far slower than that of children elsewhere though we have it on the authority of eminent educationists that our children are no whit inferior to others in native intelligence or resourcefulness.

If teaching is not to be mere mechanical communication of soulless facts encased in cold print, if teaching is to be an intimate heart-to-heart contact between the teacher and the taught, if teaching is to be an expression of the teacher's personality, if teaching is to be a vibrant act vitalising the pupils,

drawing out their dormant faculties and diverting them to healthy channels of useful activity, in one word, if teaching is to touch the hearts of our pupils and develop them into their full stature, then the foreign tongue medium must be mercilessly thrown overboard. No nation has ever expressed its genius in a foreign tongue ; no nation has ever mirrored its soul in a foreign tongue. A Rabindranath Tagore and a Toru Dutt, a Surendranath Bannerjee and a Sarojini Devi are but freakish flowers that blush at the fitful fecundity of the exotic graft of English influence, spread over nearly two centuries in our country. It may be a matter of surprise to most of you to learn that Tagore's genius found its first manifestation in a Bengali poem, entitled "The Lotus," when he was barely a lad of eight ; that he took to English poetry only late in life ; that most of his celebrated English writings are but translations of his original Bengali works, and that his literary output in Bengali is greater in quantity and higher in quality than that in English. We know that English gained vitality and became a potent factor in the promotion of national unity only when Chaucer, hailed as the father of English Prose, discarded Latin and took to English. Our most intimate thoughts and sublime emotions find natural expression only in our mother-tongue. Hence, all our feverish attempts to arrest the growing intellectual imbecility of our children and to encourage creative activity on their part will be a mighty mockery and a significant sham as long as the

foreign-tongue medium is encouraged and tolerated. They will be the symptomatic treatment of a deadly disease which, canker-like, has been eating into the very vitals of the body.

Friends, it is a sad fact that English continues to have a strange glamour, a weird fascination for the enlightened as well as the illiterate brethren of our country. We are not purblind to its greatness and glory. We do realise its utilitarian and cultural value. We do remember that it has a noble literature which enshrines some of the best thoughts the human mind has conceived. We are also aware that it has international currency. Hence, we do not view it with the jaundiced eye of prejudice, and condemn it like the narrow-minded politician whose morbid love of motherland makes him taboo everything alien. We have nothing to do with politics. It is too dangerous a game for us pacific teachers. We have neither the time nor the temperament to dabble in it. But as educators, as teachers, charged with the mission of training aright the young, as the fashioners of the future citizenry of our country, we feel that English is not fit to be the medium of instruction in our schools as it dwarfs the minds and shrinks the spirits of our pupils. We have no quarrel with the language as such. Who that has studied it to some purpose can help loving its lilt and melody, its cadence and charm? But should an appreciation of it mean that we should allow the genial currents of the indigenous languages of our country

to be frozen into immobility or to stagnate into sterility? Indifference to our mother-tongues means not only a betrayal of a lack of love for them but also a denial of their glorious possibilities, their inherent potentialities. A living language is a dynamic institution, capable of adaptation and assimilation, of expansion and improvement. Hence, the charge that our mother-tongues are weak vehicles of modern thought, is a base and baseless one. As a matter of fact, Hindi, Gujarathi, Bengali, and Urdu have, in recent times, enriched their vocabularies. Their literatures have enormously grown. After all, a language is a tool, an instrument, an artifice devised for convenience. It has the limitations, incidental to any institution set up by imperfect man. Let us remember, it is a means to an end, and not an end in itself. It is a vehicle of thought, and the knowledge content it conveys is more important than its external form. Hence, undue fondness for a language simply because we have long been familiar with it, is as harmful as it is meaningless.

Another argument advanced against the mother-tongue medium is that it is a handicap to those who go to colleges. We know that the percentage of pupils — especially girls — who go to colleges is comparatively small. Even granting for the sake of argument that a large number do go to colleges, is it right to eternally postpone a much-needed and long-delayed reform? Secondary Education must be complete in itself, preparing pupils

for life and citizenship. Our schools cannot afford to look constantly to the university for guidance and inspiration. Fashioning our system to suit the fancy of the university is like twisting children to fit them into the garb prepared by a whimsical tailor to serve his own ends. It is for the university to adjust itself to meet the requirements of its entrants. So, the fulfilment and the logical culmination of this reform is the introduction of the mother-tongue medium in colleges also. They cannot fight shy of the reform. That it is feasible has been demonstrated by progressive States like Hyderabad. The interests of children are dearer and more sacred than anything else. Hence, the foreign tongue medium must be jettisoned.

Yet others argue that the mother-tongue medium may result in a fall in the standard of English. That there is progressive deterioration in the standard of English, is an acknowledged fact. But it is wrong to ascribe it to the mother-tongue medium. The rot set in long before the introduction of the reform. The causes for it lie elsewhere in inevitable circumstances over which we have no control. Even then, why should we feel frightened and aggrieved if there is a fall in the standard of English? English has dominated the stage of our educational system for a pretty long period and has played its part most nobly. The time has come for it to gracefully recede to the background, leaving behind fragrant memories of its glorious contribution to our national culture.

The fact that, in spite of the frantic attempts in some quarters to bolster up English, it is fast declining, is an unmistakable indication that it has outlived its purpose, outgrown its usefulness. Some of the most ardent admirers of the English language among our countrymen have themselves rightly recognised its utter futility as a means of popular education, and have taken to the mother-tongues instead. Yet others feel that it is enough if Basic English is taught in our schools. It is for the examining bodies to note these facts and to lower the minimum required for a pass in it. While the study of the language as that of any other subject should be sedulously fostered and earnestly encouraged, it must be made to yield the place of primacy.

Another reason given for the retention of the foreign tongue medium is that it solves the problem of the multiplicity of mother-tongues. No doubt in some areas several languages are spoken. But we cannot be making mountains of mole-hills. If people migrate to a linguistic area different from theirs for pleasure or for profit, it is for them to pool their resources and to make the necessary arrangements. For instance, Madrasees who have settled in Bombay and Delhi have set up schools to suit their children. With greater inter-school co-operation and understanding, this problem is sure to be solved though there is bound to be difficulty in the transition period. The difficulty will be much lessened, however, if exemption is not grant-

ed to any school to continue the old order. Let us remember that no great reform was ever introduced, no healthy innovation was ever made, without opposition and difficulty. It is for us to face the difficulty and overcome it even if it involves personal sacrifice. There is nothing which human will, supported by terrific earnestness, cannot conquer : nothing which human effort, backed up by faith in God, cannot achieve. If in stray and isolated cases, the reform has been found unsuccessful, it is not due to any inherent defect in the reform but due to want of faith on the part of those that worked it. After all, we are our worst enemies. Laziness, indifference, diffidence, doubt, which lie within us, are the most obstinate obstacles to progress.

As Bernard Shaw so forcefully puts it, those who can, *do* ; those who cannot, *talk*. All the talk about the dearth of mother-tongue equivalents to scientific terms, absence of suitable text-books, difficulty in the matter of framing time-table and distribution of work among teachers, is puerile. The reform is running the fourth year of its course in our School which is multi-lingual. Our teachers are now happy and feel quite at ease in the classes : our boys are no longer like fish out of water, struggling for expression. No old teacher has been sent out and no new one has been taken in to meet the exigencies of this reform. Our averages in all the subjects have shot up. Our results at the Public Examination last year, when

the boys answered their non-language subjects with the mother-tongue medium, were as bright as ever before. Out of the 155 that appeared, 128 came out successful, securing for the School 83% of passes and a top-rank among the big institutions of the Presidency. 6 out of the 6 Gujarathi and Marwari boys that sat for the examination came out with flying colours. Our average in English was as usual very high.

If all this has been possible for us, would not greater things be possible for you, working with more malleable material? Selfless love which counts no sacrifice too great; steadfast loyalty which successfully stands the most fiery test; supreme patience which sweeps away mountain-high obstructions; sweet sympathy which is not ruffled by the most violent hostility; calm courage which perseveres under all conditions and conquers in the end — are not these at once the glory and the privilege of womanhood?

[The saying that the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world, is as true as it is familiar. You are, in a very real sense, the makers of the nation. It is the mother-heart that throbs in you when you handle children in the classes. You combine in yourselves in a most natural manner the gentle love of the mother and the stern discipline of the teacher. Your power is great even as your responsibility is grave. Hence, you can make or mar your *protegees*.

Remember that the teaching profession cannot be the last refuge of never-do-wells in other walks of life : it cannot afford to shelter all and sundry who tumble into it because they have nothing else to do. Teaching is a vocation, a calling, a mission ; and the teacher is the most enlightened citizen of the State ; the most progressive leader of thought ; the most sober-minded reformer ; the most reliable repository of culture ; the chosen channel of wisdom.

When the history of educational endeavour in our Province comes to be written, shall the chronicler condemn us as rusty, fossilised back-numbers, trudging along worn-out ruts, lagging behind our compeers in more advanced countries, unwilling to move forward, to look ahead, — in short, as animated anachronisms fit to inhabit a museum of educational curios, — or shall he glorify us as men and women with vision and imagination ; dynamic teachers, abreast of the times ; live wires, afire with enthusiasm ; practical idealists who took courage in both hands and introduced a reform which they were convinced was essential, and who worked it successfully with a determination and a will and thus accelerated the pace of the country's progress ? It is for us to answer ; and that answer shall decide and determine whether or not we love children, the wealth of the nation, the hope of the future, the builders of tomorrow, the architects of the glory that shall be resurgent Ind.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MOTHER-TONGUE*

In the first place, I would earnestly entreat you to refrain from using the expression 'Vernacular' when referring to any indigenous language. Its derivation is not quite happy and its usage has acquired an odium about it. It was employed in derision to denote the tongue of the home-born slave. In my opinion, it is not so much the political dominance of the English as the cultural aggrandisement effected by them that we have to grieve over more. Political bondage is a historical doom which we deserved and which we could not avoid owing to our national weakness, inherent and acquired. It is but a passing phase, perhaps necessary in the evolution of a virile nationalism. We are sure to come to our own in the fulness of time when we are chastened by suffering and purified by sacrifice. But the freedom which we eagerly long for, will not be worth a moment's purchase if we continue like imbecile slaves to tolerate an alien culture to shackle our thoughts and stifle our minds, if we continue to strut about with the mental cloak of a foreign nation sticking to us like adhesive plaster which we dare not remove. The most tragic feature of the history of our motherland in modern times is that we should have lost our national moorings and strayed into the puddle

*Address delivered at the Lady Willingdon Training College, Madras, to the B.T. students on 27-10-1944.

of an unnatural system of thought and mode of life, utterly strange to the land and not at all germane to the genius of our people. Even in the days of our worst political degradation before the advent of the English, it was our pride that culturally we had conquered our conquerors.

It is neither my desire nor my purpose to cause offence to, or wound the feelings of, anybody. But I feel I must give expression to the agony of my heart. The educated women of our land stand in the way of the nationalisation of education. (With due apologies to those present here, I must say that it is women that frantically cling to the foreign medium of instruction.) Somehow they have come to entertain the wrong notion that culture means knowledge of English, education means the ability to converse and write in English and that their unfortunate sisters who cannot imitate the manners and customs of the English and think and feel in the foreign tongue are intellectual outcasts whose company should be shunned. I am not overdrawing the picture or painting it with an unduly thick brush. It saddens one's heart to see our girls moulding their lives on outlandish patterns and our women showing an undue fondness for English, sedulously teaching even their babes to say, 'Good morning', 'Papa', 'Mamma', so that they may be considered decent folk fit for fashionable society. I have no quarrel with the Englishmen or with the English language. I yield to none in my admiration of the noble English literature.

I read Tennyson, Wordsworth and Shelley with affectionate respect. But I must emphatically declare that this irresponsible glamour for the English language which has denationalised our people must give place to a sober recognition of the imperative need for the employment of the mother-tongue in teaching our children.

I am not straying away from the subject. I am not making a tirade against any section irrelevantly. A few months ago, when I was invited to talk to the girls of a big and well-known institution, I was shocked to hear that they preferred to hear me in English instead of in Tamil or Telugu. Again, a few days back when on invitation I attended a religious function in another big girls' school, I was pained to observe how one mistress, a very capable and intelligent woman for aught I know, struggled for expression and could not articulate a couple of sentences in her own mother-tongue in welcoming the speaker who unfortunately knew not English. What a tragedy ! She was a stranger to her own language, a foreigner in her own home, a cultural exile in her own country ! I am sure she would have mouthed English delightfully well had she been allowed to have her own way. While on my rounds of visits to the homes of my boys all these fifteen years, it has been my unpleasant experience to come across mothers, eager for the progress of their sons, dabbling in faulty English without a blush or interspersing their remarks in the mother-tongue with a medley of English words

and requesting me that I should make their beloved boys particularly proficient in English.

I have come here today to plead with you for a change of heart. The proposition that all non-language subjects should be taught through the mother-tongue medium needs no elaborate argument for being accepted by any sensible person. It is so absurdly simple, so provokingly reasonable that any serious attempt to support it is ridiculous. It is as unnecessary as the piece of advice that a person should feed upon the kind of food that nourished and sustained his forefathers for generations and that God in His Infinite Mercy and Wisdom has caused to be produced in his own country. In the telling words of Mahatma Gandhi, it is tragic that such an obvious truth requires arguing. The mother tongue, he says, is as natural for the development of the man's mind as mother's milk is for the development of the infant body. Learning through the medium of a foreign language is like learning to walk with the help of crutches : or in the expressive and humorous phraseology of Mr. Jayakar, wooing one's sweetheart with the help of a *vakil*.

Each thing in its place and a place for each thing, is a sound adage, applicable most to education. English has exercised a profound influence on our countrymen for a long time and has come to stay. It has acquired international importance, and a knowledge of it is helpful for various

reasons. But it need not be given the undue prominence it now enjoys to the detriment of the intellectual progress of our land. Judged by results, education in our country during the last 150 years has been mostly barren. It is not because of the want of earnestness or efficiency on the part of those that have been imparting it or because of the lack of intelligence or interest on the part of those that have been receiving it, but because of the faulty medium employed. A few stalwarts have appeared here and there not on account of but in spite of the defective system of employing a foreign medium, and they are a tiny drop in the surging sea of India's teeming millions. The educated classes have been completely cut away from the masses and are not able to reach their hearts. Today 92% of the people are illiterate. What more proof do you want that the system of education which mechanically relies upon a foreign medium, has failed to serve its purpose ?

Our country has never been backward in the matter of intellectual and educational progress. If we read the history of our motherland to some purpose, we see unmistakably how the importance given to the mother-tongues accelerated the pace of the country's progress. Buddhism was more a cultural protest against the unsuitability of Samskrit as the vehicle of the highest ideas than a religious revolt against the Vedic philosophy, for the chief doctrines of the new faith were based upon the fundamental tenets of the existing reli-

gion. The cryptic language of the Vedas could not be comprehended by the common people. They were eager to enjoy the blessings of the sublimest thoughts of the noblest minds enshrined in the Vedas. So it was that the Buddha and Vardhamana Mahavira taught their tenets in the mother-tongues of the people. If Jainism and Buddhism spread swiftly and became remarkably popular, it was because they were preached in Pali, Ardha Magadhi and Prakrit, the languages of the masses. These touched their hearts and inspired them.

Asoka who is universally regarded as one of the greatest emperors the world has seen, had Buddhistic inscriptions carved on stupas and pillars in the language of the land. Would he have done it unless he felt convinced that it was the surest method of broadcasting religious principles? Incidentally, that is an indication that there was a high degree of literacy in the land because of the encouragement of the very natural medium of the mother-tongue.

In mediaeval times, there was a tremendous outburst of religious and cultural activity in the wake of the Muslim conquest of our land. Quite a galaxy of religious reformers arose in different parts and roused the people to the highest pitch of national consciousness and religious awakening by the impetus they gave to the mother-tongues by composing songs, giving discourses and writing books through them. Who has not heard of

Chaitanya and Mira Bai, 'Tukaram and Ramdas, and a host of other religious reformers? Their ballads and songs continue to be popular even today and to be sung by all classes of people. The Chola kingdom in the days of Raja Raja and the Vijayanagar kingdom in the days of Krishna Deva Raya attained the pinnacle of glory and the people, the peak of culture because of the encouragement given to Tamil and Telugu respectively. In modern times, in South India the songs of Ramalingaswami, the poet-monk, have exercised a wonderful influence on the masses. In our own days, the poems and songs of Subrahmanya Bharati and Suddananda Bharati are read and sung with the greatest avidity. Why? — because these being in the mother-tongue make a straight appeal to the hearts and touch the tenderest chords.

Coming nearer home, some of our greatest countrymen in whose sincerity and sagacity we have the utmost confidence, have expressed themselves in unequivocal terms in favour of the mother-tongue medium because they have realised that the foreign tongue medium not only hampers the intellectual growth of children but also corrodes their natural faith in national traditions. Rabindranath Tagore than whom you cannot expect a greater lover of the English language in which he attained such proficiency, was the first to raise his protest against the foreign medium of instruction. In the earlier days, addressing the Calcutta University, he passionately pleaded for

the mother-tongue medium though just then his voice was one in the wilderness. He was ached at heart to see young Bengalis becoming utterly anglicised not only in their dress and manners but also in their ways of thinking and feeling. He felt that the tendency was a dangerous one and so set afoot a movement to counteract it. He fervently appealed to the youngsters to take a vow that they would talk to their kith and kin in their mother-tongue alone and would write letters to their friends in Bengali, even as the great Roman orator, Cicero, entreated the young men of his day to employ simple home-spun Latin. Residents of Shantiniketan have told us again and again that the great poet Tagore delighted to talk in Bengali. We know that some of his greatest works were originally in Bengali and only later they were translated into English. His earliest attempt at versifying was in his own mother-tongue and he took to writing in English only late.

Sir P. C. Ray, one of the great scientists of India, nay, of the world, one whose life of utter simplicity and absolute dedication to the cause of learning is a beacon-light to teachers, thought, reasoned and expressed himself in his mother-tongue. In 1931 when I had the privilege of seeing him in his laboratory at the Calcutta University, I was struck with surprise to observe that he was noting down the results of his experiment in Bengali. When questioned, he remarked with legitimate pride that it was always his habit to

record his observations in Bengali. What a crushing lesson to us South Indians with our infatuation for English !

The Right Hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastri whose flawless and facile English speeches at the League of Nations earned for him the reputation of the silver-tongued orator of the British Empire and Sjt. C. Rajagopalachariar who is able to wield with ease and elegance the English language, have begun in recent years to write in Tamil and contribute articles to popular Tamil magazines. Srimathi Vijayalakshmi, a lady steeped in western culture, addressing a women's conference some time back deplored the needless partiality her sisters showed to the English language and western culture, thus receding farther and farther from the poor and illiterate of the land. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, delivering the Convocation Address at the Oosmania University, expressed his grief over the neglect of the mother-tongue by the educated youth of the land.

The reports of the Sadler Commission and Hartog Committee as also the Abbot and Wood report have all stressed the imperative need for introducing the mother-tongue medium. The Sargent Scheme, the latest plan suggested for the orientation of education in our land, a document which is being freely discussed by all educationists today, as also the Wardha Scheme, evolved under the guidance and inspiration of Mahatma

Gandhi, state definitely that the mother-tongue should be the medium of instruction in all High Schools. Well-meaning English friends of India have criticised strongly this abnormal and unnatural practice of imparting instruction through a foreign medium. Our own countrymen who have returned from foreign countries have stated time and again that foreigners have the greatest contempt for Indians who cannot carry on conversation in their own mother-tongue.

Supposing the Minister in charge of the portfolio of Education in England, has a law enacted that, in view of the growing intimacy between England and India and the need for greater cultural link between these two countries, Samskrit which best embodies Indian thought should be taught as a compulsory first language and that the medium of instruction should be Samskrit to boot. What would you think of such a project, not to speak of the reaction of the Englishmen to it? You will simply knock the proposition on the head as indiscreet. Well, what cause withholds you then to think in similar terms of English, a foreign language, as the medium of instruction in India? The fact is that we have become soaked and saturated in that unnatural practice for such a long time that our reason has become clouded and our judgment warped and we are like helpless and confirmed slaves, afraid to disentangle ourselves from fetters, or like chronic

invalids long confined to bed, being unwilling to depart the hospital.

We have it on the authority of the greatest educationists and psychologists that the children of our country are perhaps the most intelligent in the whole world. This is the land where the human intellect soared to the highest regions of metaphysics and philosophy even in the dawn of the world when other races were groping for knowledge. This is the land where the Vedas and the Upanishads have been preserved in their pristine purity with the right accent and intonation for thousands of years in the memories of people without being printed or published, the sire orally transmitting them to the son. This is the land where instruction was imparted by the teacher only once which in turn got itself carved on the mind of the pupil whose concentration was marvellous. But alas, what is the fate of the descendants of such students today ! A large percentage of them fail in the University examinations, develop inferiority complex, lose faith in themselves and allow their originality and initiative to be dried up. The knowledge that they acquire is imperfect. What a colossal waste of national time and energy ! In no country other than India would such a thing be tolerated.

Let us remember that language is only a vehicle of thought, that we learn it not for the sake of merely acquiring mechanical proficiency in it

but for gaining the knowledge to convey which it is employed. If one may use the comparison, language is the vesture of the body; and the thought content or the knowledge which it conveys, the soul. Showing over-much fondness to acquire mastery of the language and in the attempt gaining vague and indefinite knowledge, is like pampering the body and losing sight of the soul it enshrines. Familiarity with a language without an adequate degree of useful knowledge, is like a goodly apple rotten at the core.

I shall now briefly answer the objections raised by indolent critics against the introduction of the mother-tongue medium. In the first place, they say that the multiplicity of languages in our land makes the adoption of the reform a difficult job. Nothing can be more wrong than to imagine that English can be a universal language in India. It can never hope to be *lingua indica* as it bears no affinity to any Indian language. Mr. Sargent himself, speaking at a conference in London in May last, remarked that there was need for a universal language in India and that Hindi bade fair to play that role. The diversity of languages is made much of even as the variety of religious faiths is done against the introduction of religious education in schools. If only the Government sets its face definitely against the foreign medium, the problem would automatically solve itself. Schools will be regrouped on linguistic basis and pupils will gravitate to institutions where instruction is through the

medium of their mother-tongue. It is only a matter of adjustment. People who decide to live in a particular province or locality for reasons of their own must either learn the language of the place or make provision for the establishment of a school which would cater to the needs of their children in the mother-tongue. This is not an impracticable suggestion. In Bombay, Delhi and Calcutta, South Indians who have settled down in large numbers have actually established schools to suit their own children.

Another argument advanced against the reform is that there are not adequate and suitable text-books in the mother-tongues. In the words of Professor Agarwal, this is putting the cart before the horse. If we sincerely work the mother-tongue medium, very shortly text-books are bound to come. It is a well-known economic law that, if there is a keen demand, there is bound to be supply. It is up to us as practical-minded teachers to prepare proper text-books so that our pupils may not be under a handicap. (That it is quite possible has been demonstrated by the Andhra University under the auspices and patronage of which a number of text-books have been written in Telugu for the various science subjects. That it is possible to convey instruction in the mother-tongue even at the college stage has been proved by the Oosmania University) and Karve's Women University.)

A third argument is that there are no standard equivalents to scientific terms. It is for us to con-

stitute boards of teachers and to prepare glossaries of terms. Even apart from that, what harm is there if we bodily incorporate foreign scientific terms into our languages as Pandit Jawaharlal suggests? Living languages must and do grow by the addition of new expressions and words.

A fourth argument is that it is not possible to distribute work among teachers and frame the time-table. Let me straightaway state that this is the eighth year we are running the reform in our School and that we have not experienced any such difficulty. We have not sent out any teacher or employed any new member because of the change from the English to the mother-tongue medium.

Yet another argument is that without a knowledge of English we cannot be abreast of the times and assimilate the best thoughts expressed in it. Nothing can be farther from truth. Knowledge is not the monopoly of any one people and no single language enjoys the exclusive blessing of conveying it. Great men and women, wherever they be, belong to all races. They transcend the limitations of nationality and religion. The thoughts and feelings expressed by them are the common property of the entire world. These will and must be translated into all languages and made available to all peoples. It is absurd to state in this enlightened twentieth century when the world has become wonderfully shrunk and when science has demolished barriers that keep nations aloof, that, if a

great Englishman has discovered a new truth or expressed a wise thought, it must remain sealed in English alone and that those who wish to profit by it must perforce learn English.

Again, it is stated that if the mother-tongue medium is adopted the standard of English would go down. The deterioration in the standard of English has nothing to do with the introduction of the mother-tongue medium. Even before the adoption of the reform, the rot set in. Let us by all means try to improve the standard of English. That is altogether a different proposition. But we cannot on that score stand in the way of a salutary reform. If in spite of our earnest efforts, as a result of certain irresistible natural forces, the standard goes down, surely it is not our fault.

Let us not be discouraged by all these arguments advanced by people who cannot look ahead and think in terms of the best interests of the nation. Difficulties there are bound to be in the initial stages when a reform is introduced ; but it is for us by patience and perseverance to crush them under foot and stand up with faith in the ultimate triumph of our sincere efforts. Success shuns those who wait and wail ; it woos those that will and work.

THE TEACHER'S ROLE*

'Schools are the nurseries of the Nation' and 'Teachers are the architects of the Future' are no mere figurative expressions but truthful statements, as significant as they are suggestive. Victories are gained, peace is preserved, progress is achieved, civilization is built up and history is made not on the battle-fields where ghastly murders are committed in the name of patriotism, not in the Council Chambers where insipid speeches are spun out in the name of debate, not even in factories where are manufactured novel instruments to strangle life, but in educational institutions which are the seed-beds of culture, where children in whose hands quiver the destinies of the future, are trained. From their ranks will come out when they grow up, statesmen and soldiers, patriots and philosophers, who will determine the progress of the land. In their attitude to life and their approach to problems, they will bear the imprint and the influence of the training they received at the hands of their mentors. The teacher's *role* is thus as important as his responsibility is onerous.

Parents who are the first teachers and who have a legitimate part to play in the education of their children, often shirk or abdicate their responsibility. They are much too engrossed in their

*Address delivered at the Teachers' College, Saidapet, to the B.T. students on 12-2-1947.

own pursuits and problems and have neither the time nor the inclination to attend to their children. Like the cuckoo which transfers its eggs to the nest of the crow to be hatched by the latter, they feel that their duty is over the moment they send their children to school. It is unfortunate that most of them regard educational institutions as welcome shelters to which children whose meddlesome curiosity and ebullient energies constitute a menace at home, may safely be driven. Thus the training that children receive at home is unsystematic, haphazard, sporadic and perfunctory. This heightens the responsibility of the teacher under whose gaze the children spend the best part of the day in their impressionable period, and he becomes literally and figuratively their second parent.

Education in its truest sense is nourishment — nourishment of the body, mind and spirit. The teacher who has to impart education has, therefore, to feed the bodies of the pupils, supply them mental pabulum and nurture their spirits. He has thus to play the parent, physician, psychologist and philosopher to his pupils. His is a multiple *role* which he may not treat lightly.

The three expressions used by our elders to denote teachers, indicate the evolutionary process through which a preceptor has to pass if he is to be true to his calling. They are *Upadhyaya*, *Acharya* and *Guru*. *Upadhyaya* is one who leads a pupil to the brink of the fountain of knowledge that he may

drink deep of the sparkling and energising waters that gush forth in spontaneous profusion. *Acharya* is one who does not rest content with bringing the pupil into close proximity with the treasures of wisdom but who teaches him by his *example* and who embodies in himself the great and noble truths of life and conduct. (*Guru* is one who scatters the spiritual gloom that envelops the pupil and guides him to the Highest Beatitude. (The teacher has therefore to **instruct, inspire and illumine.**)

That beautiful hymn in Samskrit, dedicated to the preceptor, which has come down to us from immemorial times, gives in a nutshell the teacher's *role*. The teacher is spoken of as Brahma, the Creator ; as Vishnu, the Preserver ; as Siva, the Destroyer ; and finally as the Parabrahman, the Supreme Being. The idea seems to be that he combines in himself the duties of these three great Gods, namely, creation, preservation and destruction. (He has to create and quicken in the pupils noble ideals, preserve in them with tender care healthy tendencies and destroy in them ruthlessly all that is unholy and ugly.) After all, it is the right attitude to men and things that forms the hallmark of culture, and not the quantum of knowledge. Factual knowledge has only a limited purpose to fulfil in the career of humanity towards its destined goal. It disciplines the mind and makes it fit for the comprehension and assimilation of the highest truth.) So it was that our elders spoke of education as *Aksharabhyasa*, practice of im-

mortality. (Education thus becomes preparation not only for life here but also for Life Beyond.)

The Greek derivation of the word 'school' is said to be "skole" which means leisure. (The idea seems to be that children must be allowed to grow in the school in an atmosphere of freedom, in their own way, taking their own time without being hustled or harassed.) That was the essence of the ancient *Gurukula* where the home and the school stood blended in blissful union, where the pupil formed a member of the teacher's family and where the teacher combined in himself the solicitude of the parent and the strictness of the teacher. It is not possible for us, nor is it necessary to transform the modern schools into ancient hermitages. (But we can catch the spirit of the forest universities and breathe it into our present-day schools.)

(It is the teacher's personal *example* that is the greatest factor in education. He is a living model to his pupils in the full blaze of whose penetrating and critical observation he lives and moves. His very thoughts, looks, words and gestures influence them in a manner that he may not be aware of. Youngsters, in the artlessness of their nature and the exuberance of their loyalty, invest the teacher with a halo of divinity, and therefore expect of him a very high standard of life and conduct. Hence, he has to be very sober and dignified in his speech and actions. He should conduct himself with decorum and never become an object of pity or

ridicule at their hands. He should shed his inferiority complex and be in every respect a hero, worthy of emulation by the pupils. \

[It may be felt that too much is expected of the teachers. But there is no helping the fact. Idealism is inextricably interwoven in the very texture of the profession. To become a teacher is almost to put on the ochre robes of the *sanyasin* and to court a life of dedication and sacrifice. Teaching is not a craft but a calling, not a profession but a mission. All and sundry cannot tumble into it. It cannot be the hospitable receptacle and the last refuge of never-do-wells in other walks of life. Only men and women afire with divine enthusiasm and ablaze with a passionate desire to serve and, in the process, wear themselves out, should step into it. If men and women are going to gravitate to the profession because it holds out bright prospects, then they do very little credit to themselves and to the calling. It is not their innate and irresistible love for the profession but the glittering prize that it dangles before their cupidity, that attracts them. They should feel drawn towards the profession and embrace it instead of its bewitching and ensnaring them, as it were.]

Those who aspire for money bags or lime-light should not commit the blunder of entering the profession. (A true teacher is rich without money. His wealth is to be reckoned not in terms of bank balances but in the bounteous love and loyalty he

has evoked in his pupils. (He is an Emperor whose empire is carved in the grateful minds of his pupils, which no power on earth can shake, no atom bomb destroy. | The anecdote of the teacher who would not even take notice of the king of the land when he entered the class room, sums up the dignity and the greatness of the teaching profession. In the intimate and divine relationship that exists between the teacher and the taught, there is no place for an interloper, however exalted he may be. "If you want to see my monument, look around,") said a teacher pointing to the band of his devoted pupils. It is beneath our dignity to hanker after public recognition. Society is after all our creation. The so-called leaders and luminaries are our own products who have passed through our hands and who have been influenced by us. (Respect shall come to us if only we do our duties conscientiously, not because we *desire* it but because we *deserve* it. '

Whatever may be said and done, teaching is a divinely-ordained mission. ` To talk of it in terms of trade union and craft guild is to degrade it ; to adopt tactics intended to frighten people into pity, is to desecrate it. (Love the children committed to your care ; clasp them to your bosoms as you would those sprung of your loins ; identify yourselves with them in all ways ; sincerely strive for their all-round development. You will grow young in spirits as you grow old in years. Age will not wrinkle your soul or damp your enthusiasm.

(Our responsibilities are very great now : they are tremendous.) One false step on our part may lead to great havoc. We are passing through critical times. Men's minds are confused. Nobody seems to know definitely what to do or what is going to happen. We appear to be drifting, being blown like blades of straw by the furious gale of events over which we have no control. The world seems to be in the throes of a new birth. Spiritual gloom hangs over it like a pall. We have need now more than at any other time to chant the hymn of Cardinal Newman,

“Lead, kindly light, amidst the encircling gloom,

Lead thou me on.”

(Let not the momentary depression which holds us all in its vicious grip, provoke us to betray the lofty ideals of our calling. If members of other professions err, there is hope : the error may be rectified and the wrong repaired, but if the teacher falls, there is no redemption, no salvation for the race : the community falls, the nation falls and humanity falls because children are going to carry the virus the teachers inject into their spirits, and the repercussions of it would be seen in their attitudes when they become citizens and in the attitudes of the unborn generations too who are going to inherit their traditions. You will have undone the work of those that have gone before you and you will be giving a wrong lead to those that come

after you. You have no right to tamper with or sully the reputation that teachers have built up in the past. It is a trust which you dare not despoil.

Modern life has become so complex and has set free a number of forces and agencies which threaten to neutralise and undermine the work of teachers. Do not lose faith in your profession. Do not be carried away by the catchwords and shibboleths of people who know not what they say. Let me exhort you with all the earnestness I am capable of, not to indulge in the statement which is patronisingly uttered on ceremonial occasions: "Teaching is the noblest of professions but the sorriest of trades." A more inconsistent and incongruous statement was never made, because a sacred vocation can never be a sordid trade.'

[A new order is being evolved out of the seeming chaos. The human race will soon become a huge brotherhood living in a state of spiritual democracy. Co-operation and not competition, emulation and not envy, perfection and not power shall be its Pole Star. To this end have we to train our pupils. We teachers are the very pivot of the beautiful Taj Mahal of educational edifice which will send out the right type of people. Let us make our schools not cockpits of controversies, but seminaries of culture: let us remember that the school is not a market place astir with commotion and confusion where knowledge is bought and sold for sordid lucre but a temple of learning instinct with

peace, where teachers and pupils congregate for worship at the Altar of Wisdom. Let us cling to these temples as High Priests and guard them jealously by our devotion. Let us sink our differences and subordinate our individualities to the larger interests of the institutions which nourish and sustain us. So shall we have played our *role* worthily.)

The immediate objectives of education may change now and then to suit the spirit of the times, but the important part the teacher has to play shall ever remain the same. He shall continue to be the custodian of culture and the chosen channel of wisdom. Society shall always look to him for the preservation and promotion of those lofty ideals which sustain, sweeten, sublimate and sanctify life. Blessed is he who is a teacher : twice blessed is he who is born a teacher in this great land of ours where the preceptor has been loved, honoured and lifted to the rank of the gods, where prince and peasant have vied with each other in showing him reverence : thrice blessed is he who is a teacher here in this glorious dawn which is flushed with the possibilities of unprecedented progress and prosperity, when the Motherland is on the threshold of a Golden Era !

THE MISSIONARY ARCHITECT*

At the outset, I wish to disillusion your minds by telling you that I am not going to talk of anything strange or sensational. I wish to place before you certain commonplace ideas which are apt to be overlooked because they are common but which are none the less important. Truth is as old as the hoary hill, but it never grows stale: it bears repetition any number of times without losing its charm or grandeur.

All the world over today, most of the trouble is caused by the so-called specialists in different walks of life. They are frantically wedded to some pet theories and wish to dump them upon others. Being lopsided, they have a partial and defective vision of the goal. For instance, among doctors there are dentists who swear that all the ills the human system is heir to are caused by bad teeth, as if we were merely grinding machines. The throat specialists declare that the throat being the gateway to health, deserves to be guarded most; the neurologists want us to believe that human happiness rests on the nervous system, as if man were only a bundle of nerves; the dietists would impress upon us that vitamin deficiency is the parent of all diseases; the heart specialists warn us to be cautious about that vital organ as if man were a mere throbbing automaton. In this connec-

*Address delivered at the Y.M.C.A. College of Physical Education on 23rd November, 1942.

tion, I am reminded of the account of an American magnate which I cannot help passing on to you. It is as instructive as it is interesting because it is a page from real life. The gentleman in question was subject to pricking pains in the head and he frequently felt that his temples would burst. He consulted his family physician, who was a capable and conscientious member of the profession. Examining him thoroughly the doctor found no palpable defect in him and advised him to go to his friend, a throat specialist. The latter diagnosed the trouble to be due to infectious tonsils and removed them. The gentleman got no relief and was next directed to a dentist. The latter extracted two or three teeth which he suspected to be the cause of the trouble. Yet the trouble persisted. The gentleman went to a surgeon who felt that something was wrong in the intestinal region and performed an operation. The patient continued to feel uneasy and he decided to commit suicide. One day business took him to another town. He happened to step into a shop to make some purchases. He selected some collars and wanted to know their price from the salesboy. The young fellow quite casually told the gentleman that the size of the collars he had chosen would not suit him — they would cause headache and discomfort in the ear — and suggested to him to go in for collars slightly bigger in size. The man was startled and acted on the suggestion of the boy. For a wonder, his headache and the noise in the

ear disappeared ! The gentleman realised that he had been befooled by specialists.

Similarly in the field of education also there are faddists. People there are to tell us that environment makes the man and that he is absolutely a creature of circumstances. Others believe that nature is stronger than nurture. Yet others solemnly aver that man's behaviour and intelligence are determined and guided by the secretion of certain glands in the human system. These theories simply bewilder us. They may be strange, learned and interesting but they do not help us in dealing with the knotty problems that confront us in the class room or on the sports field. It is no good trying to explain away difficulties and problems : some solution must be suggested to overcome them. The teacher is face to face with the stark realities of life in all their grandeur and hideousness. He has to deal with children buoyant with life and bursting with activity. He has therefore to steer clear of these grandiloquent theories and reach the haven of right understanding.

To do this, he has to bear in mind that the pupil — for that matter any human being — is composed of three elements, — the body, the mind and the spirit. He has to educate the whole personality, not in part or fraction of it exclusively and partially. You that are engaged in physical culture activities know that overmuch attention to one part of the body or one muscle will atrophy

or have an adverse influence upon others. Hence you have to aim at the harmonious development of all the limbs so that you may be the proud possessor of a body beautiful.

In the same manner, the teacher has to bear in mind the three aspects of human life — body, mind and spirit.

We hear so much talk about the reformation of education, the re-organisation of society and the rehabilitation of life. When the terror and tumult of the present war shall cease, when life is re-fashioned on the anvils of peace, when out of the agony of attrition and the dreariness of desolation, a new society shall be evolved, it is the teacher who has to plan the new order. It is his duty as it is his privilege to reconstruct the manhood of the world in such a manner that it would not degenerate into bestiality. Great is his task: tremendous is his responsibility. Verily he is an architect, an inspired architect who builds not brick and mortar structures which are soulless things, — the agony of toil, — but who helps the evolution of perfect beings — spiritual entities — the crown of creation.

We are all teachers. Whether we are physical culture instructors, Art masters, pandits or subject-specialists, each one of us has an important *role* to play in training the children who are the real wealth of the land. We cannot afford to shove our responsibility to others or do our work in a shilly-shally manner. In all our endeavours let us

remember that we are teaching the child and not the subject. It is a pity that the pupil should be crushed under the weight of an over-loaded curriculum, each teacher making extravagant claims for his own subject. For the nonce, we have to step into the shoes of the pupil to realise where they pinch. We want him to do physical exercise at home in the morning and participate in games in the evening to keep himself fit. We want him to do home-work in lessons so that his mind may not grow rusty overnight: we want him to pursue a hobby so that he may learn some useful craft: we want him to read books other than the prescribed ones so that he may gain additional knowledge in various subjects: we want him to go through the newspapers so that he may keep himself abreast of the times: we want him to listen to the Radio which has come to be regarded as the Fourth 'R' in education: we want him to attend to household duties so that he may become self-reliant and be a source of some help to his parents: we want him to devote some time to prayer and meditation so that he may save his soul, which will be the one remnant reality when the body with all its paraphernalia has disappeared. What is the poor pupil to do?

The hall-mark of true culture is synthesis and balance. Education is preparation for livelihood, leisure, life and the life beyond. Hence let us co-operate with one another and co-ordinate our efforts and pool our resources so that the result of

our labours might be young men and women who will be as near perfection as is humanly possible, who will be the pride of our country and the torch-bearers of our civilization. It is in this respect that I regard the teacher as a Missionary Architect, as one who realises that his God-given mission in life is to rear with the rare skill of a spiritual architect a race of individuals — strong, wise, noble and godly.

In this great and magnificent man-making and nation-building task, the physical culture instructor has to play an important part. He should not keep himself aloof from the rest of his colleagues regarding himself as a part-time worker: he should fraternise with them and fit himself into the scheme of the school community.

The crying need of our country at this hour is physical strength. "Strength, strength — that is what we want." "Be strong, my young friends, that is my advice to you. You will be nearer heaven through football than through the study of the Gita....." These immortal words of the patriot-monk, Swami Vivekananda, who was himself the picture of sound health, robust optimism and sturdy independence, are as true today as they were nearly four decades ago when they were uttered. You are here to equip yourselves to make he-men of our frail youngsters, to metamorphose the feeble youth of our land into virile manhood. Much depends upon the result of your work. Shall

it be too much if I state that as a result of your earnest, persistent and well-directed efforts, illumined by a sense of proportion and inspired by balance of judgment, you will be able to transfigure our young men and women and usher in the dawn of the golden age of our country which in the past was the power-house of the world, radiating light, energy and strength and which bids fair to become once again the harbinger of a new civilization which will heal the world of the frightful ills threatening to throttle it ?

Attention to the body should rightly and naturally come first in any scheme of training the young. We are aware of our bodies before we learn that we have minds to develop and souls to evolve : we must exist before we can acquire knowledge or become noble. Hence the body is the basis on which the Taj Mahal of life's glories can be built up. It is a divine instrument given to us to serve society and to help the world to progress. 'We must leave the world a better place than what it was when we came into it', said Ruskin. To do it, the least that we should have is an efficient body. Else, instead of being of assistance to others, we will be a drag on society — groaning through life, objects of pity, commiseration and disgust.

More than that, the body enshrines divinity and hence is as sacred as the abode of God. Physical fitness is the foundation of all virtues. A weakling who cannot stand on a pair of steady legs

and go about his work with vigour cannot be expected to exercise control over his mind, the very essence of which is vacillation and vagrancy. Generally, strong men have robust optimism, great strength of mind and tremendous will-power. Bhima, the mighty epic hero, is an instance in point. He typifies physical prowess of an extraordinary kind. Such was his intense concentration that the silent prayers he offered in the sanctuary of his unruffled mind were more pleasing to God than the elaborate worship conducted by Arjuna on the altar of vain ostentation. Hanuman is the eternal ideal of the youth of our land. Hanuman is the very soul of Brahmacharya — that magic word which cannot be translated into any language, which comprises within itself a world of significance, which stands for all that is best and noblest in Hindu Dharma — strength of body, vigour of mind, purity of spirit, humility, service, sacrifice.

Our ancestors were not indifferent to the importance of the body. Those who are brought up in western traditions in their feeblest form develop a tendency to sneer at everything old. They hypnotise themselves into the belief that the glory that was Ind existed only in the feverish imagination of poets who passionately loved their country. They are enamoured of everything foreign when it is attractively dressed up. While we should be progressive in our outlook and keep our minds open and responsive to new ideas and ideals, it ill

becomes us as sober beings to fall in love with everything that is novel. If we take the trouble to understand the ancient system of our education, we will realise that our forbears paid the greatest attention to the body. The *Guru* or the preceptor, as soon as he accepted a *chela* or a disciple, taught him *asana*, the correct sitting posture. We that have work in the class room know how clumsily our boys sit. There are as many postures as there are individuals: they find it difficult to sit at a stretch for 45 minutes. Each one frequently turns and twists his body in an ugly manner. To sit erect without any contortions and allow the mind to repose in concentration, is a strain for them. In a word, they seem to be spineless, literally and metaphorically. Rightly therefore did our elders attach great importance to correct posture. Then the pupils were initiated into that grand science of *pranayama*, breath-control, which is unrivalled for its powers of purifying the blood, developing the body and quieting the mind. Then came *surya-namaskar*, — perhaps the best form of exercise devised in our country — prostrating before the rising sun with the body exposed to the ultra-violet rays.

The Ashrams of old were situated in sequestered spots in vernal woods amidst sylvan surroundings, far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife. The youngsters spent most of their time in the open holding communion with nature. The blue sky was their canopy: the emerald lawn was their

carpet: the majestic mountains, the gurgling brooks, the smiling flowers and the winking stars, all of which whispered into their ears secrets which no printed book can give or spoken word convey, were their kith and kin. Little wonder that they understood the meaning of life, grew to their fullest stature and expressed their personalities in creative joy. When we look at their descendants who crowd our schools and colleges, we cannot but sigh in sorrow. They look like tiny ghosts, pale and cheerless, who have strayed into the light of life and who are anxious to get out of it unceremoniously.

I plead for a synthesis of the western and eastern methods of training children committed to our care. A base and blind imitation of others is an insult to our national genius and a betrayal of our hoary traditions. Activities which may be useful elsewhere may not be suitable to our country. For instance, cricket which is hailed as the king of games and a craze for which has been inoculated into us, has its own merits like any other innocent pastime, but I feel that it is not suited to our land. It is a luxurious activity fit for the leisured aristocracy. The very idea that thousands of people should be passive spectators, most of them standing in the scorching sun on hours together for two or three days while thirteen men are engaged in the game, is revolting. It is a criminal waste of national energy and the manpower of the country. That is by the way.

More than the activity provided for on the sports-field, we must inculcate into our boys an earnest desire for physical culture ; body-building is a life-long process and it cannot be taken up by fits and starts. The real benefit of physical culture is seen only if it becomes an important item of the daily programme of activities. *Vyayam Mandals*, physical culture institutes, must be set up in every locality even as we have free reading rooms, dispensaries and clinics, to afford facilities to boys to develop their physique.

But the body is not the man. Man is something higher than the body. It is only a tool : it should be made a willing and patient one : it must not be pampered and made lazy, nor overworked and made weak. The pendulum in favour of physical culture should not be allowed to swing too far. To glorify the cult of Hercules and neglect the worship of Minerva, is to betray a lack of a sense of proportion. A beautiful allegory in the Upanishads comes to my mind. The *Asuras* and the gods once went to the Creator to learn from him the highest truth, the path to realisation. He told them, "You are that which you are : understand it". The *Asuras* turned round and found that they could see only their bodies. They immediately rushed to the conclusion that they were the bodies and fattened them. Yet in the fight with the gods they fell. They went to the Great God once again for advice, and He repeated the same statement. This time they identified themselves with the mind and developed it, but again they were outwitted by the gods who,

understanding that their true nature was the *Athman*, the self, contemplated upon it, realised it, and acquired real strength.

Man has mind also. He has to develop it to make intelligent activity possible. Without corresponding mental development, physical strength becomes brute force, often the cause of mischief.

The soul of culture, however, is the culture of the soul. Any educational system that ignores moral and religious instruction stands self-condemned. Strength of body and alertness of mind are necessary to help us understand the value of life and work towards its fulfilment, but any instruction, if it is to be fruitful, must be rooted in religion. Man is man only when he takes his stand on the bedrock of morality. The most stalwart figures in the history of mankind derive their inspiration from purity of character. For instance, Bhishma, the matchless hero of the Mahabharata, was the personification of purity. Jesus Christ, whom we revere as one of the greatest *Rishis* of the world and who has well nigh passed into the Hindu pantheon as an *Avatar*, owed his tremendous power for good to the utter purity of his life. In our own days Mahatma Gandhi, that little great man who weighs less than 100 lbs., that "half-naked fakir of Hindusthan," who is the cynosure of the world, is able to exercise extraordinary influence on his contemporaries by the transcendent beauty of his spirituality.

Be you, therefore, missionary architects, rearing a race of good men and true.

THE IDEAL HEAD MASTER*

An ideal is not a vague abstraction but a spiritual concept which spurs us on to higher endeavour and nobler effort. It inspires in us a holy zeal to better our best performance and attain perfection. It is, therefore, not only desirable but also essential that every one should know clearly what the pattern is into which he has to evolve himself to be of the utmost benefit to society in his own sphere. As for the teacher, whose duty and privilege it is at once to be a living model, idealism has to be the core of his existence. A divine discontent must characterise his attitude, and he must ever march forward. It does not matter if the goal seems to be "beyond the rim of the sky".

A School is what its teachers make it: the teachers are what the Head Master influences them to be. It is the man at the helm of affairs that ultimately decides the nature of the institution and the quality of its work. His personality sets the tone and determines the atmosphere of the School. He can make or mar the institution.

The Head Master is the pivot of Secondary Education. By virtue of his office, he has to be a nexus between the Government and the School authorities, the Management and the Staff, the masters and pupils, and the parents and teachers. His is a very delicate and responsible position: the

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work he is called upon to do is of an arduous nature.

It is not so much academic brilliance that an ideal Head Master needs as the possession of those moral and social virtues, essential for vibrant, dynamic leadership. He is much like the head of the Hindu Joint Family. Character rather than capacity, tact rather than authority, sympathy rather than severity, are his *forte*. His enthusiasm is infectious: his energy is restless. Having entered the profession by deliberate choice, his faith in the sanctity of his calling borders on fanaticism. The work he does in a spirit of joyous service, nourishes and sustains him. By it he feels re-created and rejuvenated every day. It necessarily follows, therefore, that he is ever alert and active, and seldom stays away from the post of duty. The progress of the School community is his thought by day and dream by night, and his aching passion is to wear himself out in the service of the shrine to which he feels spiritually wedded. It is his conviction that, while the life of a teacher is one of consecration, that of the Head Master should be one of immolation. Responsibilities and not rights, duties and not privileges, ever loom large in his mind because he regards himself as the humblest servant of the School. Aware that he has to deal with several agencies like the Department, the public and the parents, he strains every nerve of his to guard the reputation of the institution and to maintain the prestige of the profession

to which he is privileged to belong. He does not stoop to exploit school influence for private gains because he realises that, if he does it, he signs his moral death-warrant. The result is that no amount of pressure can wean him from the path of duty and justice. Authority cannot coerce him ; nor can temptation seduce him into any course of conduct, not conducive to the highest interests of the School.

He is dignified in his deportment, and maintains a wise reserve in his manner without being distant or cold. While willing to be friendly with all, he is not familiar with any one because he knows that indiscriminate fraternisation will land him in embarrassing situations which in turn will adversely affect his work.

He rises equal to any occasion, and by his resourcefulness and readiness to render service, solves knotty problems. To him it is not beneath his dignity to strike the gong in time if the peon is engaged otherwise or to lead a band of devoted Volunteers to flush the latrine if the scavenger is absent. Again, he is prepared to ' referee ' a match if the umpire has not turned up or step into a class and teach any subject if a teacher is called away suddenly. Thus his willingness and ability to do any piece of work pertaining to the school, wrest for him the confidence and regard of all concerned. Since he ceaselessly strives to be a model to others, he regards no aspect of his work as

trivial or insignificant which can conveniently be shoved on to others to be done well or ill. He is too well aware of the truth of that wise statement : "Trifles make perfection, and perfection is no trifle". Hence every item — be it the folding of a sheet or the writing of a circular — is done with meticulous care as if it were a religious act.

The ideal Head Master does not forget for a moment that he is a teacher first, a teacher next and a teacher last. It is in teaching, which is not mere communication of dry facts but the transmission of moral force, that he finds his soul's joy. The administrative work he has necessarily to do, cannot stifle the teacher in him. He is fully aware that the perennial source of all his strength and inspiration is the energising and vitalising contact with children, "Gods-in-the-Becoming." So he is ever on the *qui vive* to meet the lads, watch and study them and share their feelings and aspirations. He does not let slip any opportunity in his way to get into close touch with groups of them to teach and train, influence and inspire them. It goes without saying, therefore, that he eagerly monopolises 'acting' work whenever teachers are absent. Though the children are drawn from diverse homes, they speak different languages and belong to varying strata of society, all of them in the School fold are equally dear to him. He makes all humanly possible attempts to know each one of them intimately, and follows with true parental solicitude the progress they make under his loving

gaze and fostering care. With unerring instinct he spots out those that need and deserve help and encouragement, and affords them all facilities unsolicited. Yet he is relentless in enforcing the rules of discipline because he is anxious that they should imbibe in their impressionable period those qualities and habits which alone contribute to peace, joy and success. In a word, he is to them like a father, strict and impartial, albeit tender and affectionate.

To his colleagues on the Staff he feels naturally drawn. They are his fellow-workers who have to share his responsibilities and lighten his labours, and not errand-boys, to be kept in perpetual dread of his brief authority. Their progress is his pride, their prosperity, his happiness. Cordiality marks his relations with them. Though conscious of his power, he does not brandish it vulgarly or allow the human aspect in his nature to get smothered under its dead-weight. Gentle but firm in his dealings with them, he knows the strength as well as the weakness of each one individually, and strives sincerely to pull them up to a reasonable standard of work and conduct. He is quick to generously recognise talents in them and to afford reasonable facilities for their display and development. Intuitive wisdom and robust commonsense alike point out to him that he cannot by himself achieve much without the willing and whole-hearted support of his colleagues. Successful school management is possible only if there be

team spirit and corporate effort. By his personal example, he inspires in the teachers a passionate desire to give of their very best to the institution, the object of their common allegiance. On their part, they give him their co-operation cheerfully, take pride in his captaincy and follow his directions faithfully, strangers to sectional feelings and divided loyalties which are the bane of institutional life.

The ideal Head Master is not frantically attached to any pet theories. School work is a composite whole, and he takes a synthetic view of it. There is no aspect of it with which he is not thoroughly acquainted. He has a firm grip over every detail to which he pays personal vigilant attention. He has no prejudices and does not play himself into the hands of a few, aggressively interested in particular phases of work alone which they wish should dominate school life. On account of his versatility, every one knows that he can confidently look to him for guidance in the department of activity which it is his privilege to pilot. He brings to bear the most earnest and prayerful thought on each school problem and has definite opinions and crystalized ideas. Therefore, while he welcomes suggestions from his colleagues whom he takes into his confidence and discusses freely alternative view-points with them, the decision in all important matters is his because he knows that he alone can harmonise apparently conflicting interests.

So far as the day to day work of the teacher is concerned, his duty is threefold — to direct, guide and watch. He has to tell them definitely along what lines work has to be carried on. To those who do not come up to the standard of expectation, he has to give helpful guidance instead of merely finding fault with them. Human nature being what it is, all are not swayed by an over-mastering sense of duty. Hence, supervision and scrutiny of their work in a friendly spirit becomes part of the responsibility of the Head Master which he can ill afford to abdicate in the interests of all concerned. If done on healthy lines, this piece of work is welcomed by teachers themselves as helpful.

He gives the parents the respect due to them and successfully gets their co-operation. He helps them realise that, as the first teachers, they have their own part to play in the training of children.

By his attitude and work he enlists the enlightened support of the members of the School Committee of Management in all his labours for the uplift of the School.

Due courtesy characterises his attitude towards the Department. He does not needlessly antagonise the Officers for cheap heroism, nor does he compromise his dignity by frequent visits to them. When occasion arises, he asserts himself without being arrogant. He looks upon the Inspecting Officers as guides whose duty it is to transmit to institutions the knowledge and experi-

ence they have garnered. So he discusses with them candidly the problems affecting his School and seeks their helpful opinion.

A word about extra school activities may not be out of place. The ideal Head Master is not a frog in the well. He keeps himself abreast of the times. He is responsive to new ideas and likes to be profited by the experience of others. But as the guardian angel of the School, he has enough work in it. It is a miniature State with its peculiar problems which need the concentrated attention and devoted care of the Head. It is improper, therefore, for him to distribute his time and energy among other organizations unconnected with education. He may gain popularity and come to be known as a social figure but to that extent he betrays the interests of children committed to his care. It is not for him to hanker after limelight. Recognition is bound to come to him sooner than later. But he ought not to step down from his high pedestal to court it.

The hypercritical reader may knit his brows, twitch his lips and ejaculate that the ideal Head Master portrayed above can exist only in the pages of fiction. The reply is that the fault is that of the Editor who has failed to invite an article from an ideal contributor !

THE TEACHER'S MISSION*

For obvious reasons, our motherland needs now more of educational institutions of the right type with the right aim and right activities. The progress of a nation is decided and determined not in legislatures where passions and prejudices warp judgment and vitiate the laws that may be framed; not in courts where punishments more often harden than reform offenders; not in factories where men become mechanised and think of their individual interests instead of the common weal; no, but in schools where the minds of the future citizens are moulded, where the habits, attitudes and outlook of those that are to shape and preside over the destinies of the nation, are formed.

Therefore, it is no easy task that we, teachers, are called upon to do. Let us be aware of this fact: let us remind ourselves of it every day. Our responsibilities are really great whether we are in the profession by choice or by chance. If we mean sticking to it, prudence and wisdom alike require that we should reconcile ourselves to our lot. Being in it, it is neither helpful nor graceful to be complaining against the inadequate material rewards offered to us. The nature of the profession is such that it definitely demands a spirit of service and sacrifice. After all, what lends real dignity to any

*Address delivered to the teachers, Sri Tiruvateeswarar Free High School, on 5-8-1948, while inaugurating the Masters' Association.

person is his attitude to work and not the emoluments of his office.

“Honour and shame from no condition
rise :

Act well thy part : there all the honour
lies.”

The so-called sweeper who addresses himself to his task with devotion may have more joy than the sovereign who goes through his duties without zest. In fact, the ideal placed before a king in our land is that he should regard himself as the humblest servant of the State.

“Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive” — said the poet referring to a memorable period in history. It is our unique good fortune and privilege that we are teachers in these stirring times and that we are entrusted with the task of training youngsters, the richest wealth of the land, in this momentous epoch when history is made. Our responsibilities are greater than ever before. We can no longer blame others if things go amiss : we can no longer afford to be indifferent or cynical : we can no longer complacently explain away defects and drawbacks as due to the impact of foreign influence, as due to the domination of alien agencies. We must make amends for the deficiencies of the past by working at a terrific speed and with phenomenal energy, so that we may overtake those that have stolen a march over us and we may be in the vanguard of progress. It is no use gloat-

ing over our past glory and feeding upon our vanished reputation. We must forge ahead, fired with determination and devotion.

Every teacher must endeavour to make his school a brighter institution — a fragment of Heaven on earth, an El Dorado of peace, joy and wisdom. After all, a school is what its teachers make it even as a nation is what its patriots make it, a religion is what its prophets make it and a home is what its women make it. Mechanical advantages like spacious buildings, adequate equipment and requisite facilities are necessary no doubt for the efficiency of our institutions. Nobody can despise them as of little value. But these by themselves cannot make a school 'great' in the real sense of the term. Without a band of devoted teachers who are inspired by a holy zeal, an institution with the paraphernalia of modern conveniences will be like a beautified corpse without the spark of life; a carcass without soul. When we have all the advantages, it is no virtue if we manage to turn out tolerable work. If we do not do it, it is a disgrace. But it is only when there are handicaps mocking at enterprise should the human spirit triumph and establish that the will is an all-conquering force. The greatest teachers of the past and the present who have profoundly influenced men's minds have been indomitable spirits who have struggled against tremendous odds.

Inner strength which is not cowed down by adversities, is what we want. If that noble quality is to be ours, we must have tremendous faith in our mission. Teaching is not a craft but a calling; not a profession but a vocation. To be a teacher is to have been summoned by God to render a piece of noblest service to society. If I cannot enthuse myself in that manner, I should gracefully quit the profession instead of jogging along in a whining mood. Cynicism helps neither the teacher nor the children entrusted to his tender care. Sincerity of purpose and earnestness of endeavour are the two wings that will bear aloft the teacher to the tower of success. Given these virtues, other qualifications will follow of their own accord. Thus it is right attitude and not academic brilliance that is an essential pre-requisite for a teacher. In fact, too much of bookish knowledge will act as a dead-weight and make instruction soulless. It is enough if we are able to teach well and effectively what little we know. Conditions and environments differ from school to school, from class to class. We have to evolve our own methods. No books can guide us. A stereotyped plan cannot be employed in all cases.

Next comes loyalty to the institution, which is the object of our allegiance. It is a cold and irresistible fact of logic that we exist for the institution and that the institution does not exist for our convenience and profit. It sustains and nourishes us, and it is up to us to cling to it with

steadfast loyalty and to toil to promote its highest interests.

When all is said and done, the teacher's personal influence it is that is the most important factor in education. We have therefore to rise to our fullest moral and spiritual stature, to keep our minds open and be ready to assimilate all that is good and noble. "From good to better, daily self-surpassed," has to be our motto. Man is made in the image of his Maker: pupils are made in the image of their teacher. So we have to present very healthy and sober models to our wards. We cannot be overcautious in our gestures, words, looks and deeds. We deal with children who are sent to us in their most impressionable period. We must evince human interest in them, love them, understand them and find our greatest joy in their all-round growth. Passion in their progress and not a dry academic interest in the subjects taught, should be our *forte*.

But conditions of life are today different from what they were in the past. Gone are the days when pupils used to flock to the forest hermitage, bask in the sunshine of a sage's company and grow in knowledge, wisdom and character. Diversity of languages and variety of subjects, individual limitations and vastness in the number of students, have made it obligatory that there should be a team of teachers engaged in an institution. We have, therefore, to develop a corporate personality

and exert our cumulative influence on the wards that throng our institutions. That way alone may we cover up our individual deficiencies.

Herein comes the need for a Masters' Association. A well-knit organization is any day stronger than an individual. Knowledge is a composite whole and cannot be compartmentalised. Education is a co-operative effort. The teachers teaching various subjects have to pool their resources and exert their combined influence on pupils. The Drawing Master, the Drill Master, the Pandit and all categories of teachers have an important role to play. It is foolish to make any distinction among them and to state that one belongs to a higher caste and another to a lower caste. We all form a glorious band engaged in the common work which is a sacred one — of training aright youngsters. We must sink all our petty differences and regard ourselves as members of a great fraternity, wherever we may be and whatever our cadre may be. Then the Masters' Association becomes a homogeneous body promoting solidarity. It becomes a laboratory to carry on experiments in practical educational endeavour. It gives us the much-needed and most valuable opportunity of consulting one another, enriching our experience and devising ways and means for concerted action in the best interests of the institution and children.

A word about the Head Master in this context is necessary. He is the first member and, therefore,

the humblest servant of the School family. His guidance and advice are absolutely necessary. The Masters' Association is not intended to weaken his authority. Any good decision taken by the Association, has to be implemented. The Head Master's co-operation is thus quite essential. The Association is not intended to bamboozle people but to improve our professional equipment and promote goodwill amongst us. All the members should work in a spirit of harmony. Discipline must be its watch-word : the all-round progress of the institution, its ideal.

The Head Master on his part must recognise that the Association is a democratic organization intended for the good of the School. He must allow it full scope to carry on its healthy activities. It must also be a kind of corrective to him. He must be prepared to justify his actions at the bar of the Association.

THE TEACHER AND THE TIMES*

We are passing through critical times : all the pent-up passions of our people, forcefully suppressed under the yoke of foreign rule, are finding ugly expressions. Loose thinking and confused planning are in evidence everywhere. There is a deterioration in moral standards. Much store is not set by the higher values of life. Idealism is at a discount. The one ruling passion of people seems to be to get on somehow, irrespective of the means employed and the methods pursued. This shrinkage of the soul is perhaps the greatest tragedy of the times. Again and again, it has seemed to me that our nation is like a chronic invalid, long kept under regimen, indiscreetly and indiscriminately violating dietary rules the moment he is freed from the physician's control. There seems to be a mad rush for power and pelf. Self-aggrandizement instead of a spirit of helpfulness, competition instead of co-operation, scramble for authority instead of a zeal for service — these have seized men in a death-like grip. I am often reminded of an anecdote in Indian History. Humayun, that luckless monarch of the Moghul Dynasty, once happened to be snatched from the jaws of Death by a water-carrier. In token of his gratitude, he made his saviour Emperor for a few hours and invested him

*Address delivered to the teachers of the S. K. P. D. Boys' High School on 8-7-1949.

with regal authority. All that the water-carrier could do in that all too short period was to have coins minted in his name and to distribute them among his relations. Self-adulation and loss of balance seem to characterise people dressed in brief little authority.

In the field of Education also, policies and programmes are changed rapidly. Fortunately or unfortunately, Education is a subject about which everybody feels he can say something. A doctor will not allow you to dictate your prescription. A lawyer will not argue the case as you please. An engineer will not draw up a plan in accordance with the dimensions you suggest. These will not brook any interference with their line of thought and course of action. They regard themselves as experts in their own respective fields. But anybody can undertake to teach a child — a Railway Sorter, a Post Office Clerk, a *Vakil Gumastha* or for that matter anybody who has time but not as much money as he wants — and offer gratuitous advice to the trained teachers regarding their craft. This is because teaching is looked upon as a side-business and not a sacred calling. There is no use blaming society in impotent rage. "The fault, dear Brutus, lies not in our stars but in ourselves that we are underlings." In a sense, Education is not the monopoly of teachers alone. It is a comprehensive and life-long process. Several forces and agencies have necessarily to contribute to the education of children. But their influence

should only be indirect, incidental and subdued. It is a pity, however, that Education at present is a hotch-potch instead of being a clearly-defined programme. It is perhaps because teachers do not make themselves felt and those that step in to shape policies do not betray an adequate knowledge of educational affairs. The result is policies are enunciated, programmes are drawn up and schemes are adumbrated in a manner which more often bewilders than enlightens teachers. Things will be like this in this hectic state until we settle down to normality and sobriety. The teachers' responsibility is now greater than ever before.

A school is what its teachers make it. Efficient class-work is the foundation of a teacher's reputation. Hence he should spare no pains to equip himself and be up-to-date in his knowledge. A teacher who is one lesson ahead of his pupils is only an animated Text-book. He must be a perpetual student and bring to bear energising freshness and intellectual honesty on his work. Ultimately, it is the personal day-to-day contact of the teacher that matters in education. Text-books, aids, Cinema, Magazine, Radio, have all their own place and may not be discarded, but they can never displace the vibrant personality of the teacher. His sway over the pupils is very great. He has, therefore, to give of his very best to the children committed to his care since his influence will become part of their nature.

Under modern conditions, the best way in which teachers could discharge their duties is by forming themselves into a homogeneous organization which will enable them to exchange notes and enrich their knowledge and experience. The Masters' Association of a school should become a laboratory, as it were, for pedagogic experiments to be carried on. Each school has its own peculiar problems, and these can be satisfactorily solved only by the teachers in it who are intimately acquainted with its conditions. In a spirit of harmony and co-operation, they must sit together, hammer out the problems and evolve methods and devices that would best suit their conditions. In this great and important task, every teacher must take a vital share because school work is a common concern and depends for its efficiency and success on the co-ordinated efforts of all the teachers.

A teacher who has no faith in the sanctity of his profession, should not stay in it. In his own interests and in the larger interests of national progress, he must gracefully quit it and take to other jobs which may be more lucrative though less dignified. As I have repeated several times, teaching is not a craft but a calling, not a profession but a mission; and to become a teacher by choice or accident is almost to court a life of toil and sacrifice. Educational institutions are set up for the specific purpose of affording training to children, the greatest asset of the land, and definitely not for the purpose of sheltering adults who are

without jobs and who have to be paid whatever the nature of the work they do, may be. We teachers have to realize that our highest reward lies in the solid satisfaction we get of having done our duty to the best of our lights and abilities. The true teacher's lot has been one of silent sacrifice, of dedication, of immolation, in all ages and in all climes. Unfavourable conditions should never entice him from the path of rectitude.

Economic depression we share with the members of other professions. Acute suffering is not the isolated experience of our nation alone. The whole world is in the throes of a great crisis owing to wrong attitudes in individual and national lives. Hence, it is neither reasonable nor justifiable for a teacher to resort to unprofessional practices on the ground that he is economically not well-off.

I feel prompted to say a word about the teacher's attitude to parents. He must maintain his self-respect before them and should by no means demean himself in their estimation; nor should he play himself into their hands. His transactions should be above board. "Caesar's wife should not only be innocent but above suspicion," is specially applicable to the teacher in view of the nature of the work that he does.

To the pupils, he has to present a noble and dignified model, worthy of emulation in every respect. The teachers of a School must present to the

gaze of their pupils a unified personality and by their attitude towards one another and towards the School must offer, consciously and unconsciously, positive helpful suggestions to their wards and instil into them feelings of love, loyalty, tolerance and sympathy. This objective can be achieved if the teachers are loyal towards the Head and feel that, in the glory of the institution, lies their prosperity.

It is not so much knowledge-content that the teacher has as the moral influence that he exerts, that makes his work fruitful and successful. Faith in the profession and earnestness of purpose are the twin eyes of a teacher. Given these, all those qualities that make for success will come of their own accord. He will become a great force, a power for good, a vibrant centre, radiating peace and light all around.

Ere I close, I wish to place before you two incidents, one drawn from our Epics and the other from the History of our Motherland to illustrate the great influence the teacher wielded in ancient times.

A poor pupil, having finished his tutelage in a *Gurukula*, desired his preceptor to tell him what he could offer as *Guru Dakshina* to betoken his reverence and gratitude. The *Guru* replied that he did not expect anything from the youth since he was not in affluent circumstances. The youth per-

sisted in his request. Just to teach him a lesson, the *Guru* mentioned quite a fabulous sum of money. The youngster was in no way frightened or disheartened. He straightaway repaired to King Raghu and demanded the amount to be offered to his *Guru*. The noble Emperor had just then divested himself of all his riches and was practically penniless. But yet he felt it his supreme duty to help the *Brahmachari* to pay his *Guru Dakshina*. The teacher had to be honoured at all costs. So he challenged Kubera, the God of Wealth, and compelled him to rain as much gold as the youth wanted to fulfil his promise to the *Guru*. Such was the high esteem and veneration in which teachers were held in days of yore in our land that even mighty emperors felt that nothing that was offered to them for the gift of knowledge they gave, was too much.

It was the sage advice of Kautilya, a teacher, that helped Chandragupta Maurya to vanquish the foreigners and build up a powerful empire. After the kingdom had been established on a stable basis, Kautilya withdrew into his forest hermitage to carry on his peaceful avocation as a teacher. Emperor Chandragupta besought him very earnestly to stay on with him in the palace and to continue to guide his policy. But Kautilya, like a true teacher that he was, said that his mission was to lead a life of simplicity and service in seclusion and not one of ease and luxury in the midst of pomp and power.

Who that has heard of Sri Vedanta Desika, an ideal teacher, can fail to be thrilled and inspired ? His contemporary, Sri Vidyaranya Swami, who was his boyhood-companion, invited him to the Vijayanagar Kingdom, promising to get for him royal favours. But in immortal words that vindicate the sovereignty of the spirit, he spurned the offer and chose to lead a life of voluntary poverty, content to teach and inspire those that came to him. The true teacher's life and conduct are their greatest legacy which the world prizes most and which humanity will ever cherish.

TEACHERS' WORK AND TEAM SPIRIT*

The Teaching Profession in our country commanded in the past the respect of society. It has now fallen from its high pedestal, and the generality of its members have become so many human door-mats for all and sundry to rub their shoes on. The position would have been worse but for the organizational efforts put forth by the constituents of the profession to raise its social and material status. The work that has been done in this direction is a tribute to the team spirit that animates the members of our fraternity at the present time. But an enduring foundation for our professional solidarity and reputation can be laid only when that spirit manifests itself to an equal extent in the sphere of our academic organization and enables us through our corporate activities to improve our teaching efficiency. If our School has been able to achieve the success which it is repeatedly credited with having done in the matter of intra-mural work, extra-curricular activities and wider professional service, it is undoubtedly due to the excellent team spirit that inspires the entire staff. I mean no disparagement to my valued colleagues when I state that, as individuals, we are not very much different from brothers in sister-institutions, but our *forte* is team spirit, homogeneity of purpose.

* Paper read at the Provincial Educational Conference, Calicut, 11th May, 1945.

If there is one profession, more than any other, in which there is need and scope for the play and growth of family feeling, harmony of hearts and a unified will, which form the quintessence of team spirit, it is the Teaching Profession. It does not mean that members of other vocations will not stand to gain by the cultivation and development of these desirable traits. But the lack of these on the part of others may not result in such grave consequences as in the case of teachers. A school is not a soulless factory monotonously manufacturing on a large scale stereotyped candidates for examinations, but a vibrant spiritual organism, the various limbs of which have to work in unison. Even in a factory, engaged in the production of inanimate things, efficient and expeditious work cannot be turned out without co-ordination and co-operation among the various departments. In schools we deal with children bubbling with life and pliable enough to be moulded into any shape. The task that the teacher has to address himself to, of fashioning and training aright the future citizenry, is indeed a sacred one which may not be discharged in a light-hearted mood.

In this connection, it is well to remember that teachers of the present day stand on quite a different footing from their ancestors. In ancient times, a handful of pupils lived in a forest hermitage as members of the teacher's family, away from the din and distraction of feverish activities, amidst charming sylvan surroundings. The teacher was himself

a spiritual volcano who could by a mere look or touch ignite them with wisdom of the highest kind. He exerted his utmost influence on the pupils every moment of their wakeful hours and could shoulder, alone and unaided, the responsibility of equipping them for life, here and hereafter. But mass instruction, rigid regulations, diversity of languages and subjects and specialization of branches of knowledge which characterise the present system of education, have resulted in the establishment of extensive piles of buildings in the place of the cottage 'Ashrams' of old and in the employment of bands of teachers to coach up the crowds of pupils who throng educational institutions. The responsibility of teaching and training successive streams of students at different stages has to be shared by a number of teachers. Unless they pool their mental, moral and spiritual resources together and act in perfect harmony, on the basis of a definite understanding, education will be an ill-organised and incoherent process, lacking definiteness, purposefulness and unity. Teachers are expected to set an example to their pupils in every respect and influence them by their life rather than by mere precept. They should, therefore, display *esprit de corps* and present themselves as a unified team if they desire to nurture in the young community feeling and team-spirit. The teachers in the service of an institution must needs develop a corporate personality which is not a vague abstraction but a spiritual reality representing the synthesis

and summation of the multiple talents and diversified powers of the entire staff. It is this corporate personality which determines the tone and the atmosphere of a school and influences its progress and prosperity.

Team spirit is not inconsistent or incompatible with individual growth or freedom. In fact, it emphasises and enriches individuality and provides the fullest scope for the development of personality. It simply implies that every member possesses some special talent, distinctively his own, and has a definite place in the school economy, that there is cordial relationship and goodwill among all the members who are knit together by community of interests, and that, for the smooth and successful conduct of the work which they all love equally, they carry out the directions of the captain in whose capacity and character they have confidence. Concerted action on the part of teachers, in a spirit of perfect co-operation, is all the more necessary at the present time because of the existence of extraneous factors which threaten to impair the instruction imparted in educational institutions and to neutralise the influence exerted by individual teachers. Only when all the teachers pull together with united hearts and hands in the common task of regenerating the youth of the land, can they prevent the implantation of wrong ideologies and the importation of unwholesome influences into the minds of youngsters.

In this context, it is well to bear in mind the appeal made by one of the former Presidents of this Conference that "teachers' organizations should convert themselves into educational laboratories in which systematic investigation and research in educational problems are carried on from year's end to year's end." The members of the staff of each school form for all practical purposes, a natural and convenient group. They must organize themselves into an Association and get into the habit of acting together as a team in the matter of teaching and training the pupils entrusted to their joint care. They must hold frequent consultations among themselves not only as regards the content of the subject matter that has to be taught but also the mode of its presentation. Such consultations do take place in a haphazard and informal manner. But, if they are to yield any tangible benefit, they must be regularised, systematised and organized on a definite and well-understood plan. It lies in the hands of Head Masters to take the lead in the matter by stimulating in their colleagues the desire for such team work. If they have the vision to look ahead, they will take their staffs into their confidence, constitute them into 'de facto' autonomous academic bodies and allow them freedom to carry on educational experiments of a practical character, so that each school may evolve a technique of teaching suited to it. Just to illustrate that such work is

practicable, a bare narration of certain of the activities of our School has to be made.

The machine of our academic organization is set in motion every year early in March when Committees for selecting Text Books for the ensuing school-year are constituted. The only direction given to them is that books should be chosen solely for their intrinsic merit, suitability and comparative cheapness. All possible care is taken to see that no extraneous influence is brought to bear on the Committees in their work. The Head Master accepts the recommendations of the Committees. The Committees also frame in detail the Courses of Studies in their respective subjects, before the School closes for the long vacation and hand over the lists to the Calendar Committee, the members of which put them into shape and are able by their willing and selfless labours during the Summer Holidays, to bring out the Calendar for the new year before the School reopens. The Committee of the Book Depot, consisting of about 15 teachers, now comes on the scene, works most strenuously for about a month and vanishes, leaving behind a trail of blessings. Thanks to it, our pupils are able to get at short notice all their school requisites at prices below the market rates. What is far more important, they learn to appreciate the educational advantages of maintaining uniformity and method in the books and notebooks which they use. In the second week after

the re-opening, the High School masters meet and after due deliberation tender proper advice to Fifth Form pupils on the choice of their Optional Subject which is a ticklish problem to deal with. In the meanwhile, the Time-Table Committee meets, discusses and decides the principles of distribution of work after consulting those who wish to have their say in the matter. The Time-Table comes into force in the last week of June when the work of the new year commences in right earnest. Teachers come to school daily sufficiently early so that they may consult one another, if need be, as regards the lessons to be done during the day. Every Friday evening, soon after Puja, or whenever there is an opportunity they hold a brief meeting to review the work of the week and to come to an understanding as regards that of the coming week, so that parallel section teachers in each subject may keep abreast of one another in the progress of lessons. The Class Progress Register is of considerable help to them in this direction. Each section of the Forms and Classes maintains its own Progress Register. In it is recorded by the teacher concerned under appropriate heads the portion covered in each period in any subject. These registers are scrutinised by the Head Master and the Superintendent every fortnight, and instructions are given to those who go a bit too fast to moderate their speed and to those who lag behind to accelerate their pace. In the matter of imparting information to pupils regarding the national

and international affairs in the Citizenship Classes, a definite plan is followed. The teachers meet beforehand and discuss in detail without passion or prejudice the content of the subject matter so that boys may have accurate and definite knowledge and get proper guidance. Similarly, with regard to Physical Education, Class Masters actively collaborate with Physical Education Masters. Before each Terminal Test takes place, the teachers discuss all relevant issues and come to a definite understanding as regards the portions to be covered in each subject and the principles to be observed in the setting of questions and the valuation of answers so that impartiality, equity and fairness may characterise the examination as a whole. Such a practice becomes absolutely necessary when instruction is imparted through the medium of more than one language and when different examiners have to value answer papers of the same class in the same subject.

Tutorial help on a systematic plan to the pupils who are backward in studies, is another benefit that has accrued from the development of team spirit. The masters who handle each subject divide among themselves the boys who are weak in it, give them assignments prepared by them jointly and pay them individual attention out of school hours.

The promotion of pupils at the end of the school year is also a joint responsibility. A Special

Committee studies the tabulated marks, frames rules and draws up the preliminary list. A full meeting of the masters reviews the list, suggests alterations, if necessary, and makes final decisions of a unanimous character which are accepted by the Head Master who is the final authority in the matter.

There may be nothing striking about the work which is outlined here but no one can fail to be struck with the smoothness, the celerity, the orderliness, the clock-like regularity and, more than all, the spirit of co-operation that characterise it. It has resulted in the creation of an atmosphere favourable to the peaceful pursuit of academic studies.

The transactions of the Masters' Association, carried on from month to month and year to year, cover, however a wider field in the domain of pedagogics. In the investigation and study of important class-room problems, guided by the Study Circle which goes through standard up-to-date books, the Association has been of inestimable benefit to the members. The valuable light thrown by these studies has lit up for us several dark corners in the realm of practical teaching. The great service which the Demonstration Lessons have rendered in this direction, deserves special notice. They have been in the nature of a series of experiments in practical pedagogy, helping teachers who follow them to get an insight into the

different modes of approach to a subject. The lessons as well as the pointed, constructive, critical observations that follow, have enabled minds that think differently to converge towards a common line of thought as a result of which individual variations have been minimised while uniformity and standardisation have been maximised. This is indeed an invaluable gain to a big school like ours where pupils have to be taught in the mass.

The idea of team work underlies the Guide System also. Briefly put, it is this : Teachers who handle a particular subject are formed into a subgroup. Such of the members of the groups as have higher academic qualifications and longer experience than the rest are called Guides. It is their duty to supervise the teaching work of the other members and to give them helpful guidance in a spirit of brotherly co-operation. It is not to be supposed that in every instance such a Guide is a better exponent of his art than one who is guided by him. But under normal conditions, no other method of choosing the Guides is so feasible as the one that has been recommended. The Guides, on their part, should not assume a dictatorial attitude towards the other members of the group. They should give thought to the principles and methods to be employed in teaching the subjects, discuss them with the members concerned and give them practical guidance. The members of the group while showing proper respect to the Guides, should

not develop an inferiority complex but give free expression to the points of view held by them. It may be mentioned here in passing that our Association is divided into 'Faculties' or groups consisting of members who teach the same subject and that at the monthly Conferences these Faculties are 'at home' to the General Body by turns.

The items of work sketched above, illustrative and not exhaustive, represent only the pedagogic phase of the Association's activities. Limitations of space oblige us to skip over its other aspects which are of equal importance—social, athletic, institutional and professional. Our Dramatic activities which sail smoothly, giving valuable training to scores of boys and teachers and substantially enriching the School coffers, our major annual excursions in which 500 or 600 pupils including many children under 8 take part, have been a triumph of sheer team spirit. These corporate activities, informed by team spirit, have enabled us to add to our stock of general equipment, improve our teaching technique, gain the confidence of the Management and the regard of the public, establish fraternal relations with brother-members of the Profession and do our bit by the Professional Organizations which we have joined.

The pupils of a school differ from one another in their tastes, temperaments and talents. Education must afford them the fullest possible scope for their individual development. But it has a higher

aim yet. It must organize them through a process of mental and moral discipline into a coherent whole, animated by unity of purpose and spirit. That object can be fulfilled only when the teachers of each school who have wide and varied talents, unite and exert the maximum of their cumulative intellectual, moral and spiritual influence upon their pupils.

Let us remember that we, teachers, wherever we may be, whatever our cadre may be, form one great fraternity, knit together by bonds of common work and identical interests. We should sink our petty differences and band ourselves together through our Associations which in turn must be affiliated to the wider professional organizations. None of us should be outside the pale and influence of these bodies which are any day more powerful than the best amongst us. Only then can our spokesmen speak with authority and strength on matters affecting us in a manner which would command for the profession the respect of the public. May that day dawn soon !

TEACHERS' ORGANIZATION*

Right reason have you, teachers of the School, to feel glad at the completion of a quarter of a century for your Association. That it has been able to function uninterruptedly for a period of twenty-five years is an achievement of which you may be legitimately proud. It is also a tribute at once to your homogeneity of feeling, spirit of solidarity and professional consciousness. I say it without meaning disparagement to anybody because it is common knowledge that many educational institutions do not have an effective and efficient teachers' association. In a few which lay claim to have one, it springs into existence at the beginning of the year when the inaugural meeting is convened, bursts into prominence at the time of the Annual Inspection and then swoons into inactivity to be startled into a brief spell of fitful life at the end of the year when the Valedictory Address is delivered. But if your association were to have had steady and sustained activity for well-nigh quarter of a century, it speaks volumes for the devotion and enthusiasm of the members comprising it.

A home is what its women make it : a nation is what its patriots make it : a religion is what its saints make it : a School is what its teachers make

* Commemoration Address delivered at the Silver Jubilee celebration of the Kellett High School Masters' Association on 12-4-1947.

it. An educational institution is not a market place with its attendant clamour and confusion where a motley crowd jostle their way day after day to buy and sell knowledge. No ; it is a sacred temple instinct with peace and bliss where ardent devotees congregate to offer worship at the shrine of wisdom. The teachers are its high priests whose divinely-ordained mission is to fashion the plastic youth into patterns of perfection. It is well, therefore, that we teachers often remind ourselves of the responsibility of our calling which we are prone to forget in the passion and heat of the present moment when we are easily perturbed and provoked.

The nature of our work is far different from, and superior to, that of other professions with whose material status we are sometimes tempted to compare ours. A doctor steps in only after a person has fallen a prey to some disease. He ministers to the needs of the body which is important no doubt but which by the very nature of it is subject to decay. The caustic statement of G. B. Shaw that the medical profession is a conspiracy to exploit popular credulity and human suffering is an uncharitable exaggeration, but it indicates the limitations of the profession. A lawyer appears only after a person has got himself entangled in a suit. His chief interest lies in making the client win the case. He sharpens his ingenuity to help him to wriggle himself out of the inconvenient situation he has got into. Rarely do

we come across lawyers of the type of Abraham Lincoln and Mahatma Gandhi, who would take up causes which were absolutely righteous and just. An engineer agrees to construct a bridge or build a structure only if all the articles he requires are available. Even then the structure is materialistic which may crack to-day, go to pieces tomorrow. But the teacher deals with children aglow with life and afire with divinity. He moulds their minds, chisels their character and shapes their souls. His work is by far the noblest and the most important one.

Great teachers of the past in all climes who exercised a profound influence upon all those that had the good fortune to come into contact with them, were spiritual volcanoes who could by a mere touch or glance ignite their followers into the highest knowledge and wisdom. But conditions of life have now completely changed and with the march of time and the so-called advance of civilization, new situations have arisen by which knowledge has become compartmentalised. Education has become a mass affair and instruction has to be imparted by teams of teachers. Gone are the days when teachers gathered round them a band of earnest disciples whom they taught amidst idyllic surroundings. Variety of languages, diversity of subjects, rigidity of curricula and frequency of examinations characterise the modern system of education. Individual teachers, by themselves, however stalwart they may be, can exercise only

a limited influence on a small section of the huge numbers of children that betake themselves to educational institutions. But if the present-day education with its drawbacks and deficiencies is to be fruitful to some degree at least, if our schools are to cease to be mere factories of learning and become transfigured into seminaries of culture, then the teachers must develop a corporate personality and exercise their cumulative influence on the entire community of children that seek instruction in their schools. A corporate personality means the summation of all that is best and noblest in each of them, a synthesis of their different talents and diversified gifts, a fusion of their mental, moral and spiritual resources. This will be possible only if there is Associational life in an institution which alone can give the fullest scope for the development of that right understanding which is the bed-rock of true comradeship and fruitful team-work. If teachers are earnest about their work, if they love their calling and if they are on the *qui vive* to give of their very best to children and in the process joyously wear themselves out, so that out of the consuming blaze of service, in which they immolate themselves, may be scattered sparks that will light a hundred lamps of wisdom and virtue, they must band themselves together into a Brotherhood and draw their strength and sustenance from it.

Under the present circumstances, associational life which encourages corporate activity can alone

set the proper tone and atmosphere to a school. It means recognition on the part of every individual member of the Association that each one has something which is uniquely his own, that each one is endowed with some peculiar talent or power. It means the realisation of the fact that every one has a definite place in the institutional economy and a distinctive contribution to make towards its progress and prosperity. It means the comprehension of the grand truth that, if the squirrel cannot carry a forest on its back, the mountain cannot crack a nut, that if the nightingale can sing, the glow-worm can shine, and that, therefore, wisdom consists not in feeling envious about others' gifts but in rejoicing over them and offering our own talents at the altar of the institution which is the object of our common love and loyalty, so as to make it fulfil its mission in a more effective way.

A Head Master, however talented he may be, by himself can achieve very little without the willing, enthusiastic and sustained support of his colleagues. It must ever be his endeavour to enlist their co-operation and harness their time and talents, energy and enthusiasm, in the common work of the school. He must regard himself as the humblest servant of the School Community whose responsibility far outweighs his rights, whose duties are greater than his privileges. The teachers on their part should look upon the Head Master as their elder brother and professional leader under whose fostering care and wise guidance they are

bound to be happy, efficient, contented and noble. Such a happy feeling can exist not in the stiff official relationship between them but in the intimate and informal attitude that associational life alone can bring about.

After all, we teachers, wherever we are, whatever our cadre or category, form one great fraternity, one peaceful phalanx, knit together by bonds stronger than those of blood. The distinction that is often made on the basis of the subjects taught, is highly artificial and unnatural. Knowledge is a synthetic whole and education is a unified process. Only by the conjoint labours of all the teachers can the instruction imparted be complete and real. The distribution of work among various teachers is only an arrangement for convenience to secure the maximum benefit, based on the principle of division of labour. The Drawing Master or the Physical Education Teacher plays as important a *role* as the Mathematics teacher or the Head Master. Hence petty feelings of superiority and inferiority ought not to mar the solidarity of the profession.

The teachers of a school form a happy, homogeneous family. They are not miscellaneous members who have strayed into a Railway Platform to go different ways after their work is over. They are fellow-workers, comrades-in-arms, inspired by identical interests and similar ideals. They must, therefore, constitute themselves into an organiza-

tion with the Head Master as its natural leader and learn to think, feel and act like one man. It must also become a live laboratory where experiments are conducted and new methods evolved to suit the conditions of the school. The larger professional organization of the city or province must only be a federation of such units functioning autonomously in their own respective spheres in consonance with certain well-established traditions.

The advantages of such an Association are manifold. Each member may have his own limitations but when he merges his individuality in the larger life of the association, and acts as the member of a team, his deficiencies become dissolved and his merits get heightened. He shares with others credit for the success which co-operative effort certainly yields.

Any day an Association is taller than the tallest individual and its influence and power lie not in the numerical strength that it no doubt implies but in the moral force that it subtly generates.

An Association, when run on healthy lines, is able to evolve a moral code which is more binding upon the members than any statutory law. The noble traditions that cluster round it, act as a wholesome restraint upon the unhealthy tendencies of members and as a powerful brake upon the possible vagaries of the Head Master. A sound public opinion is created and every member

including the **Head Master, comes to realise** that he has to justify his conduct in the eyes of the members of the Association.

The world is in the throes of a new birth. The darkest night is passing and the sky is flushed with the dawn of unprecedented progress. The privilege and the joy and the glory of ushering the New Era will be ours. Let us not at this supreme moment betray the trust reposed in us. The oppressive gloom that surrounds us now is only a temporary phase which will pass away. It is the herald and the harbinger of the genial sunshine that will bring cheer and contentment to us ere long. Suffer we must in the transition period. The seed of the church is in the blood of the martyr, they say. From out of our agony is bound to come lasting good for the profession. (Perhaps, it is the will of God that our profession should become chastened by our sufferings and that by our anguish, we should make amends for its sins of commission and omission in the past. Patience is the badge of our tribe; idealism is the breath of our nostrils. We are not mere physical creatures, mere economic entities but spiritual beings with a high degree of culture. Let us not allow our grievances and difficulties, just and legitimate though they are, to mar our attitude to work. Let us by our life and conduct, personal and professional, prove ourselves worthy of the exalted standard legitimately expected of us.

TEACHERS AND PROFESSIONAL SOLIDARITY*

The 2nd of November is a great day in the calendar of the teachers in this part of our country because it was on that day six and fifty years ago a band of earnest educationists, endowed with vision, imagination and professional consciousness, brought into being the Madras Teachers' Guild under the protecting wings of which we are assembled here this evening. It is a day of Thanksgiving, of rejoicing, of stock-taking and of planning ahead. To an individual, a birthday with all the halo of joy that surrounds it, is but a painful reminder of advancing age ; but in the case of an organization which symbolises the cumulative strength of a large number of people, it is an indication of growing vitality. Right reason have we, therefore, to feel happy that the Madras Teachers' Guild is 56 years *young* today. Let us, in all humility, offer thanks unto the Lord for having protected and guided this organization through its eventful career of 56 years now. It is a significant coincidence that this day synchronises with a Christian festival, All Souls' Day, which evokes grateful remembrances.

It is a healthy tradition that has been established that on this memorable annual festive occa-

* Commemoration Address delivered on the Madras Teachers' Guild Day on 2nd November, 1951.

sion when we draw closer together to rekindle our lamps of faith in the effulgent ideals of our profession and to re-affirm our loyalty to the professional organization, we should be reminded of the aims and achievements of the Guild by means of a Commemoration Address. If the privilege of delivering it has been accorded to me this year, I interpret it not as an honour done to me as an individual but as a tribute paid to the Masters' Association of my School.

Let me now share with you my feelings regarding some of the modern trends as they relate to the sphere of our work. In the evolution of human affairs we have now reached a stage when we have to act in terms of organizations and groups: the world has now become so much shrunken in size that it is but a compact family of nations. The problems of individuals are linked with larger national issues, and unless these are solved, individuals cannot hope to have contentment and happiness. Disciplined activity on the part of corporate bodies and not spasmodic efforts of isolated individuals can achieve anything worthwhile. Democracy, pure and simple, where all people or, for that matter, all the chosen representatives, have a chance to take their full share in discussions and influence decisions, is an illusion. A small body of earnest individuals can alone give their concentrated attention to important problems, discuss them frankly, clinch the issues and arrive at decisions. Unfortunately, a long spell of foreign

rule has atrophied our individuality. We have been acting mechanically as under suggestion: the gift of freedom has startled us as it were and brought about not a little of confusion. Most of us are off our balance, confusing want of restraint for liberty and irresponsibility for independence. Rigid standards of life and conduct have yielded place to superficiality and ease. The bane of public life seems to be loose thinking and vague talking. Our reaction to situations is very often the blurred outcome of conflicting ideologies. Either we are so much carried away by some people whom we have idealised that we simply echo their feelings and sentiments or we develop an attitude of needless criticism and challenge every statement made by certain others, determined that what they say ought not to be accepted. We also allow ourselves to be enticed by expressions that are much in currency and that suggest themselves to us easily, forgetting that words are but our tools and that we are not their slaves. For instance, it is sickening to hear people saying often that 'in the present national set-up, a thorough re-orientation of the educational policy is necessary and that steps should be taken to nationalise the system.' One wonders what exactly according to them is the present national set-up, what the re-orientation they contemplate is and what the positive and helpful steps are that they would suggest to nationalise the system of education. This kind of beating about the bush, fencing in the air, will not take

us nearer the goal. It is not verbal fireworks that end in smoke but constructive thinking that results in illumination, that we want: not rhetoric but action is the need of the hour. Let us sit down, be true to ourselves, understand our own minds, speak in simple sober words and attempt sincere work. Our time, talents and energies are meant for serious purposes and not for being expended on fruitless talk.

We have to keep our minds open. It is not reasonable to cling to worn-out theories and condemn everything that is new; nor is it proper to clutch at new-fangled ideas and hug them frantically to our bosoms simply because they are novel. We have to steer clear of the two extremes, examine every innovation on its merits, accept it gladly if we feel it is good or express in unequivocal terms how it is defective if we think it is so. There is no use playing hide and seek with our own feelings. We are entitled to our honest opinions based upon experience. It is as much our duty as it is our right to express our views. A change for the sake of change, is no good. By simply throwing overboard what was obtaining before, we may not be effecting an improvement. Let us learn to express our clear-cut views on important problems through our Guild. We are not hostile to anybody. The Department and the public are sure to pay heed to our suggestions when they go with the imprimatur of the Guild.

Again, there is all-round dissatisfaction regarding the present system of education. People at the University level murmur that things are not proper at the secondary stage: High School teachers complain that the foundation is not properly laid in the initial stages: Elementary School teachers feel that with the pay and prospects they have, a better quality of work cannot be expected. Private Managements plead that they have their own limitations and that they are doing a bit of community service by running institutions. The Government argue that individual benefactions and private enterprises have a large part to play in the matter: education is not their only concern and there are more vital problems claiming 'top priority,' to use another convenient expression often repeated. Where then is the solution if we are going to simply apportion blame and throw up our hands in despair, complaining that everybody else excepting ourselves is in the wrong? If we were really serious and sincere, would we allow things to drift like this? If everyone has reason to feel dissatisfied, then there is the greatest need for all to draw closer together and to hammer out a solution on the anvil of mutual understanding. There has to be greater co-ordination in educational policy at the different stages. The University continues to employ English as the medium of instruction and expects of its alumni a high standard of proficiency. Pupils in the High School stage learn their subjects through the regional languages. Hence

they feel like fish out of water when they enter college. The University Professors and High School teachers have therefore to evolve together some device by which the gap between the High School and the College might not be so yawning as it is now.

The complaint is heard everywhere that there is a deterioration in moral standards and that efficiency is going down all round. It is an unmistakable indication that education is today not the power, the force and the influence that it ought to be. The baneful effects of a false sense of liberty which has sprung up in Freedom's wake, are seen in the sphere of education also. Agitation for the abolition of examinations and the desire for easy type of questions which would minimise the disciplinary value of studies, are some of the indications of the path of least resistance which everybody wants to tread. It is very unfortunate that the provision that was hitherto made for the memorisation of noble lines in languages at the S.S.L.C. stage should have been removed. At this rate, the phenomenal memory power which has been the pride of South Indians will disappear ere long. Our forefathers versified even sciences so that they may be easily committed to memory. The Vedas live to this day thousands of years after they have been composed, enshrined in the memories of people. It is up to the Guild to see that, in trying to give momentary satisfaction to certain sections that may agitate, larger interests are not sacrificed.

Yet another painful factor is that at public functions we ourselves start the elegy on the profession saying that teaching is the noblest of professions but the sorriest of trades. Even if the statement be true, it does little good to be repeating it *ad nauseam*. If we cannot inspire respect, let us not invoke pity. Values have now changed : culture is debased : sense of proportion is conspicuous by its absence : people who pander to low tastes or employ themselves in ephemeral work of doubtful value, earn fabulous sums which men with high academic distinctions cannot dream to get : there is constant conflict between aspiring genius and risen mediocrity. Wealth is not always the result of honest toil. Riches do no longer go hand in hand with nobility. If we have no faith in our calling and if we are not sincere about our work, not all the social status that increased emoluments we may get, can give us that moral fibre which alone counts in a teacher. It is wrong to imagine that members of other professions are always better off than ourselves. Possession of amenities which money can purchase, need not carry with it any special respect. We are opulent in a real sense. For the gift of knowledge, the blessing of culture and the inspiration of character, the richest and the noblest have necessarily to lead their children to teachers. He that gives is always on a higher spiritual pedestal ; the greater his humility, the greater his exaltation. Let us not, therefore, feel dissatisfied with ourselves.

Nothing stultifies the growth of personality as loss of self-esteem. It has to be admitted that through the efforts of the Madras Teachers' Guild and other professional organizations, the teacher's lot has improved to some extent. The public has become aware of its duty by the teacher. Dearth of teachers and other factors have made the Government too realise the important *role* of teachers.

A well-knit organization is any day stronger than the strongest individual. In association lies our strength; in disciplined conduct, concerted action and loyalty to leadership lies the success of our schemes. The Madras Teachers' Guild which is our own institution, needs to be vitalised and re-vivified. When I make that statement, I am not casting any aspersion upon any one. You and I who love the Guild will admit that it is not to-day what it ought to be. The nature of our profession is such that we have not only to impart knowledge to pupils but also to set an example to them in conduct. Our acts, everyone of them, from the drafting of a meeting notice to the delivering of a presidential address, must be models to others. It is our duty to demonstrate how harmony of hearts and united action can achieve great things. We must therefore close up our ranks and present ourselves as a solid phalanx to the outside world. It is unfortunate that the separatist tendency should be growing amongst us and we should feel the need to form ourselves into different sectional

groups. It may all sound nice to say that each group has its own peculiar problems which can best be discussed and solved by it independently. We have to be frank in these matters. These problems have existed all these years and we have got on exceedingly well, understanding them and helping one another. We cannot hide the fact that deep down beneath the formation of the various organizations, there is an element of distrust. Each group feels aggressively that its material interests can best be safeguarded by itself. So far as education goes, it is the concern of teachers of all grades and there is a core of uniformity in the fundamentals of the problems that immediately confront us all. In this responsible and onerous task, each teacher has an important *role* to play — the Head Master, the physical education teacher, the art master, the craft master and the pandit. After all, all of us teachers, whatever our cadre or category, are engaged in the sacred task of fashioning the minds and spirits of the young. Common work is the silken tie that knits us together. Let all the groups therefore be affiliated to the Guild and carry on their activities as its limbs in a spirit of harmony and mutual understanding. Such a happy consummation is possible and must be possible at an early date if we teachers are to make ourselves felt.

As it is, we have now the Managements' Association, the Head Masters' Association, the Gradu-

ate Teachers' Association, the Secondary Grade Teachers' Association, the Elementary Teachers' Association, the Pandits' Association, the Art Masters' Association, the Physical Education Teachers' Association, etc. I do not want to offer the suggestion but I am afraid that at this rate there will soon be an Unqualified Teachers' Association, because their number is fast increasing and they have their peculiar problems! All the groups are genuinely interested in education and the well-being of teachers. On this holy occasion, I wish to make a very fervent appeal to all of them to get coalesced into the parent organization, the Madras Teachers' Guild, and to function as its component parts. While individual sections may discuss their special problems, let the representatives of all the categories meet once a month in a spirit of *camaraderie*, think about common problems, come to an understanding that is binding upon all and present specific proposals to the Government, instead of each group hurling different recommendations, often at variance with one another, which may baffle the Department. I make a very earnest entreaty to the members of the Managements' Association and the Head Masters' Association to actively join hands with the Guild and to strengthen it. So far as Managements go, they know full well that without the willing and whole-hearted co-operation of teachers, school work and administration cannot be efficient. As for Head

Masters, most of them have been teachers and they are aware of the conditions under which their colleagues have to carry on work. A Head Master is primarily a teacher, an educator, a preceptor, an inspirer of the young. He is not a diminutive tyrant dressed in brief little authority whose business is to play the policeman in the school ; nor is he a glorified head-clerk whose soul is to be crushed under the dead weight of official routine. He has to be in living touch with pupils and teachers. His guidance and advice are bound to be valuable to Teachers' organizations. How I wish, therefore, that the Head Masters' Association, most of the members of which are already attached to the Guild, sets an example by getting itself affiliated to the Madras Teachers' Guild ! It is inspiring to learn from the records of the Guild that in the early years it sometimes convened meetings of Managements and of Head Masters to ascertain their views on important matters, and enlisted the co-operation of publishers also.

The Madras Teachers' Guild has rightly and naturally grown in size and strength. Its numbers have increased and the schools attached to it, lie scattered. That is perhaps one reason why it is not able to function vigorously though to my mind it does not seem to be a very valid one. The problem cannot be solved by simply increasing the number of Vice-Presidents who may have no occasion to function at all. Instead, schools in different

localities must be grouped into homogeneous units of the Guild so as to be able to carry on vigorous work on zonal basis. Monthly meetings may be held in different schools of the locality by rotation, important academic and professional topics may be discussed and the findings may be forwarded to the central organization. At periodical conferences of the Guild, representatives of the different units may present their view-points and all could come to a decision then. That way should we pool and mobilise all our knowledge, skill and talents, raise the standard of our profession, arrest and focus public attention on matters educational and enlist enlightened co-operation.

We need to develop club life too. The authorities of big schools in different centres may be requested to set apart a room or a hall for teachers in the locality to meet in the evenings. The provision of newspapers, magazines and materials for indoor games will give us an opportunity to draw together and strengthen the bonds of fellowship. The Guild had three such Reading Rooms even during the first years of its existence.

I have spoken out frankly what I have been feeling because I love the profession and I love the Guild. I am sure you will take my remarks in the right spirit because I am one of you and have long been one such. Let us rally round the professional organization and do our best, Head Masters and

teachers, to make it a shining symbol of strength and solidarity. Recognition will come to us not because we *desire* it but because we *deserve* it. God willing, in 1955 the Diamond Jubilee of the foundation of the Guild will have to be celebrated. By then may it become a real power for good, unifying the members of our fold and inspiring in them idealism and faith which form the twin eyes of our profession !

TEACHER-PARENT CO-OPERATION*

Close co-operation between the parent, who is the first teacher, and the teacher, who is the second parent, is the very foundation on which rests the fruitfulness of the training imparted in our institutions. Without it, a school, however well manned and managed it might be, cannot hope to create that atmosphere which is alone conducive to the maximum efficiency, success and joy. Education is neither stuffing the brain-box with borrowed and ill-assorted ideas nor drawing out information from an ill-formed and vaguely defined mind. In its truest sense, Education means nourishment. In that case, the home which feeds the body with nutritious diet and the school which energises the mind with mental pabulum and nourishes the soul with sublime specimens of character and conduct, are the two most important institutions which contribute to the make-up of man. The teachers then become literally and figuratively second parents who have to act in unison with the parents, if education is to fulfil its highest purpose.

Moreover, it is wrong to imagine that education begins only when the child is put to school, and that all the knowledge he has acquired is the sole bequest of the teacher. Several unhealthy institutions, which have a seductive stimulus, have come into being in the wake of modern civilization.

*A talk given to the members of the Teachers' Educational Camp at Ponneri on Sunday, 3-10-1943.

They conspire to mould the mind and shape the soul of youngsters. There has to be close co-ordination and right understanding between the home and the school if the officious influence of the vicious agencies is to be nullified or neutralised.

In ancient times, in our land, the *Gurukula* was the centre of learning. It was situated in sequestered spots amidst sylvan surroundings, far far away from the madding crowd's ignoble strife. The *Guru* who was the embodiment of wisdom and the *Gurupathni* who was the model of motherhood, presided over it. The disciples who stayed with them throughout the period of learning, looked upon them as their parents and thus the home and the school merged into a blissful entity. The disciples led clean, pure and simple lives without any distraction which could vitiate the influence of the noble life and teachings of their *Guru*. But conditions of life have become revolutionised now. The school and the home are two different institutions, often at variance with each other and pulling between them the pupils in diverse directions. The need for co-operation between the home and the school is now greater than ever before.

Education is the manifestation of the divinity latent in man — so spake Swami Vivekananda, the patriot-monk of India. Our immortal Upanishads have defined education as a process of spiritual intercourse, the fruition of which is illumination. The teacher and the parent, who are the chief

channels of wisdom, have to clasp their hands in harmony and work with a unified purpose and conjoint will, if the pupils are to be fashioned aright.

The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world. A wise father is more than a hundred school masters. The mother's face is the child's first lesson-book. Home makes the man — we are familiar with all these trite sayings and we repeat them mechanically on an occasion but we have not fully realised their significance and educational importance. The school is but an extension or projection of the home even as the home is a replica or epitome of the school. There ought not to be any yawning gulf between the home which is the cradle of character and the school which is the nursery of citizenship. The Greek derivation of the word school means leisure. It means that a school has to provide that restfulness for the mind which is congenial for its free growth and healthy expression. A school is not a mere brick and mortar structure housing a miscellany of pupils and teachers ; a school is not a market place where knowledge is doled out to unwilling consumers of varying capacities ; a school is not a railway platform where a heterogeneous crowd gathers with diverse objects ; a school is not a rigorous reformatory where juvenile suspects are kept under vigilant watch ; a school is a spiritual organism with a distinctive personality of its own ; a school is a large luminary round which revolve

in rhythmic harmony a number of planets which draw their sustenance from it ; a school is a vibrant community centre, radiating life and energy all around ; a school is a wonderful edifice, resting on the foundation of goodwill — goodwill of the public, goodwill of the parents, goodwill of the pupils. In a word, a well-conducted school is a happy home, a sacred shrine, a social centre, a State in miniature and a bewitching Brindavan, all beautifully blended into a synthetic structure.

The parents are our ultimate paymasters, and there is a moral obligation cast upon us to keep them informed of their pupils' progress and to seek their co-operation in training their children aright. This is the ethical aspect of parental co-operation. Apart from it, prudence and practical necessity alike demand that we should wrest parental co-operation to tide over the several ills that school life is heir to. There is a tendency on the part of irresponsible youngsters in their misguided love of ease and indolence to set up teachers against parents and parents against teachers, to dodge both and to shirk work. These erring lads cannot be rectified into a realisation of their duty unless there is close contact between the teacher and the parent.

It behoves us, therefore, to get into touch with the parents in the interests of the children, dear to both of us. How then are we to enlist parental co-operation which is necessary and useful ? In

the first place, we must shed our cynicism and misanthropy and dehypnotise ourselves from the baseless belief that parents as a class are a tribe of hostile critics, incapable of deferential treatment and indifferent to the education of their children. Such an attitude betrays lack of fundamental faith in human nature which is not really so monstrous as we in our imperfect knowledge are apt to imagine. Is not the world a mirror which reflects our own image? If only we touch the proper chord and appeal to the right sentiments, the parents are sure to extend their co-operation to the fullest degree. The pupils are the nexus between the school and the home, the connecting link between the teachers and the parents. If only we do our duty by them properly, love them with all the ardour of a parent, serve them with all the zeal of a devotee, paying homage to the divinity enshrined in them, we carve out in their hearts an empire which no earthly power can shake. They become our most faithful followers and powerful propagandists. We do not, we may not and we shall not crave for lime-light, publicity and recognition for the consecrated service we render in utter selflessness. But the young fanatics are sure to carry into their homes the message of our devoted work and convert the attitude of their parents into one of grateful admiration and reverential love for their masters.

A teacher who does not feel drawn to his pupil as to his own son, sprung of his loins, a teacher

who does not burn with the aching passion to give of his best to his pupils, a teacher who is not eager to wear himself out in the joyous service of the pupils, is an animated automaton. He cannot make himself felt and exercise his influence on boys and through them win the co-operation of parents. A teacher of the right type pants for opportunities to get into intimate personal contact with his boys to discover, draw out and develop their varied talents, and creates situations which make them feel that they have an important place in the school community and a noble part to play in school life. They are infused with a spirit of confidence and a sense of importance. They rise in their own estimation. When the parents watch with pride and joy the perceptible improvement in their pupils along their own lines, they naturally overflow with gratitude to the earnest teachers who toil silently for the progress of the youngsters.

Parental co-operation cannot be had by learned disquisitions on the subject or by periodical pamphlets posted to the parties. It cannot be created overnight. We cannot wake up one fine morning and find the parents pitchforked into co-operation. It is based on a series of silent acts of sincere service to children. It is the natural consummation of devoted deeds of dedication at the shrine of Duty.

Another important factor is that the teachers of a school should band themselves together into

a holy missionary order, under the captaincy of their Head Master. They should stand and act like one solid phalanx which has a corporate personality of its own. This alone will win the reverence of the pupils and wrest the co-operation of the parents. The school will then by its brilliant achievements capture the imagination of the parents, specially of the mothers whose co-operation is by far of greater value.

We, teachers, should treat the parents as co-partners in the education of their children. Whenever possible, we should invite them to actively participate in school functions and give their children opportunities to demonstrate before their parents their talents and the training they have received. Their suggestion and advice may also be sought on important matters. There is no fear that they will develop dangerous powers and cause inconvenience to teachers. If only we are dignified in our deportment and tactful in our attitude and do not degrade ourselves before them, they are amenable to reason. Nor are they likely to resent the advice we proffer them on behalf of their children, when they are convinced that the good of their children is our only concern.

Our own experience has been that parents extend to us whole-hearted co-operation. Our relationship has been one of mutual respect and cordiality. They never raise a protest or express a grievance against our acts. They never cause us

any embarrassment at the time of promotion or 'selection'. We have a virile Parents' Association which is a vital limb of the School. The parents freely give monetary contributions to the School. Whenever the call goes, they send the boys in hundreds to join our excursion parties, and read with delight our School Magazine. They respond to the invitation we send to visit the School in connection with the issue of Progress Reports and attend our several functions. Whenever there is a happy festivity in their homes, they do not forget the poor boys of the School. They send handsome donations to feed them. They make it a point to invite the entire Staff and single it out for special respect, even though it may be years since their children had left the School. They attend in their hundreds the Parents' Day celebrations, and disclose in their speeches a marvellous knowledge of the minutest details of school life. When in connection with the Golden Jubilee we had the Mothers' Day, nearly a thousand mothers flocked to the School. It was a sight for the gods to see. It was not merely a feast to the eye but a banquet to the soul, an education, to see hundreds of them, human manifestations of divine energy, packed to the full in that beautiful pavilion, perfuming the atmosphere with the breath of Heaven.

It is not right to say that parents do not co-operate with us. We should bestir ourselves and do the needful. We should pay periodical visits

to their homes to discuss the progress of pupils, to devise ways and means of improving them when they go wrong, to cheer them up when they are ill and to share their sorrow and relieve it if some misfortune overtakes them. We are sure not only to get the parents' whole-hearted co-operation but also to win their spontaneous respect bordering on reverence. So shall we transform and transfigure our secular schools into spiritual seminaries, beautiful fragments of heaven on earth, instinct with the peace and power of the *Gurukulas* of old, which made our motherland the store-house of wisdom and virtue, the torch-bearer of civilization and culture and the proud preceptor of the nations of the world.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONALITY*

“Man is a social animal,” remarked the wisest man of Greece centuries ago. That statement which has gained additional significance as it has rolled down the ages, indicates in a nutshell the purpose of all educational endeavour. Man is essentially an animal, a brute, a biped, more easily susceptible to passion and prejudice than to restraint and reason, sharing with the denizens of the forest which are governed by the Law of the Jungle, elemental instincts which, in spite of his thin veneer of culture, he is ill able to conceal. The aim of education, therefore, bluntly is to metamorphose the animal in man into human and ultimately to transfigure the human into divine.

Naturally enough, the gregarious instinct is pronounced in man. He longs to live in company, in the midst of the members of his own species, either because he is terribly afraid of his own company or because he is at a loss to know how to engage himself when alone. He, therefore, craves for society.

In fact, the evolution of society marks the first stage in the transition of man from savagery to civilization. Social consciousness dawned upon him

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when he realised from practical experience that it was convenient and advantageous to him to work in unison with others and to regard himself as a member of a group rather than to act as an isolated individual and to feel that he was a law unto himself. The logical sequel to this attitude was the emergence of the institution of regularised matrimony. This in turn led to the natural desire to amass and hoard the necessities of life. Protection of person and property then became essential, and the State was set up to safeguard the interests of society. Thus, man having come to look upon himself as a vital limb of a larger organization, society or community became the unit of civilised life, and social activities, that is the performance of acts calculated to promote the growth and well-being of society, began to loom large in the mental horizon of individuals. Since then social activities have assumed growing importance.

The very expression 'Social Activities' implies that there are other types of activities like intellectual and physical. Life, however, is a composite whole, and all our activities are but different manifestations and external expressions of the mind. It is for convenience that we compartmentalise them and call them by different labels. A purposeful unity and an inherent coherence run through all our activities though they may not be visible to superficial observation. It is wrong to imagine education as a spasmodic process. It is

continuous *sadhana*, continual activity. Education is life itself. To educate ourselves is to evolve ourselves. Not without reason did our wise forefathers refer to it as *Aksharabhyasa*, the practice of immortality, which is the ultimate goal of all existence. Nothing can be farther from truth than to imagine that education begins at a certain stage and is imparted exclusively by the teacher who thrusts himself upon the child. It is age-long inheritance, carefully preserved and built up through successive births. We in our glamour for everything foreign fly into raptures over the practical wisdom of the westerner who has devised the nursery to educate children in their tender age. Little do we realise the sagacity of our ancestors who went many many steps farther and wonderfully conceived that the influence of education began even when prospective life was an embryo, hidden in the womb of uncertain Destiny. How significant are the stories of Prahlada and Abhimanyu ! The spiritual influence imparted by sage Narada to the mother percolated to the unborn child, Prahlada, and shaped his life and attitude later. Abhimanyu was initiated into the mysteries of martial science by Sri Krishna even before his unformed eyes opened to the light of life. Hence the belief is current amongst the Hindus that only soothing sights, attractive objects, melodious music and sublimating stories should be presented to women who are *enceinte*, who are on the glorious threshold of motherhood, so that the unborn

children, when they emerge into existence, may have the potentialities of radiant personality.

Let us at this stage pause for a while and try to understand what the term 'Personality' connotes. Perhaps the one word that brings out its full import is its Samskrit equivalent, 'Paurusha'. It means that distinct and distinctive quality which lifts a person far above the other species of creation and invests him with a peculiar power which is irresistible. Often it is mistakenly confused with animal magnetism, personal make-up, physical contour. It has nothing to do, however, with that anaemic barber-aided, tailor-made, washerman-emphasized external appearance. Personality is the halo of the soul, the perfume of character, the aura that is shed by the cumulative influence of strength, beauty, wisdom, purity, service. In the presence of a man with personality everyone instinctively feels reverence, and the whole world bows before him to kiss the dust of his feet though he may have none of the vulgar glamour that makes a sensuous appeal. Mahatma Gandhi — that micky-mouse martyr — wearing aluminium-rimmed spectacles, what charm did he have that all those that came into contact with him should have doffed their hats? It was his personality, his character of great spiritual beauty that extorted the reverence of all alike.

The final and fundamental purpose of all education is always the same though, owing to political

conditions, economic reasons and the spirit of the times, emphasis may be shifted from one aspect to another from period to period. It is to make of the educands men and women in the right sense of the term, to help them grow to their fullest stature and to brighten the multi-faceted gem of their personality, so that its scintillating brilliance may be a source of joy and inspiration to all round.

But, as matters stand now, children are primarily sent to school so that their mental boxes may be stuffed with ill-assorted facts and figures which in course of time may help them to mint money. Thus intellectual activities form the foundation on which the edifice of our educational system rests. The worth of a school is judged both by the vulgar laity and the learned intelligentsia by the number of tall intellectual poppies it is able to rear. Though we talk of harmonious development and synthetic conception of education, we have not yet outgrown the idea of a pupil being a prodigy who carries far too much in his little brain! The highest honours are yet reserved only for the intellectually brilliant. On the Prize-Distribution Day when the school whips itself into a mood of enthusiasm, the distinguished President with a forced simile congratulates only the diminutive youths who snatch away the trophies which they are ill able to carry, and with a sympathetic air exhorts the less fortunate to emulate the example of the intellectually bright prize boys who are

not unoften physically puny and emotionally starved.

In recent years another aspect has been receiving increasing academic interest. It is the development of the physique of our pupils. It has to be regretfully admitted that precious little has been done in this direction in spite of the grandiloquent theories of the social and moral values of body-building activities. The fault is not, however, that of schools completely. Children do not live within the gaze of the teachers all the hours and amidst ideal surroundings. Most of them come from homes which are little better than hovels, dark, dingy, ill-ventilated, over-crowded. When children come from such unhealthy surroundings with stunted growth, with no physical stamina, like pale ghosts that have skulked into the light of life and are anxious to beat a hasty retreat, to attempt to give them physical education is nothing short of a tragedy. Sporadic gyrations of limbs and fitful participation in games without adequate nutrition and health-giving facilities, will do more harm than good. Hence there are other vital factors which have to come into play if the physique of our children, which is alarmingly deteriorating, is to be built up. For obvious reasons, the school cannot take up the entire responsibility in this matter. It is a vital national issue which deserves the earnest consideration of the powers-that-be. In this context it is interesting to note that in the latest edi-

tion of the book, "Social Studies and World Citizenship," the authors refute the theory that the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playfields of Eton. They characterise this statement which is often repeated with gusto, as absurd. They remark that most of those who took part in the memorable battle were ordinary folk who had no chance of going to Eton or indulging in organized sports and games.

Unfortunately the tendency is growing in our country to expect everything to be done for the children by the school. We somehow forget that, in progressive countries, the example of which we cite whenever it is convenient, agencies like the Government, the Municipality, the public and humanitarian institutions co-operate with schools in teaching and training children. Again, when it comes to a question of drawing up the syllabuses, the specialists who are entrusted with the work emphasise the need for a high degree of proficiency in their own respective departments and strive to elbow out others. The result is there is very little co-ordination in their efforts: the patch-work of their unrelated labours causes undue physical and mental strain to children, and the central aim of education is lost.

It is of happy augury that the ideals of education are fast undergoing a healthy change in view of the changed surroundings and situations we are now in. It is now recognised that the school is a

happy family, a well-knit community, a well-ordered society, a democratic State on a miniature scale. Life in it has, therefore, to be fashioned in such a way that pupils love to get into it and are not anxious to escape from it with howls of joy at freedom won. Its activities, rich and varied, purposeful and fruitful, must be so planned and integrated that they implant right attitudes in children, give them a healthy outlook on life, and prepare them for enlightened citizenship. In the fullness of time they must blossom into adolescence and take their proper place in society. To that end they have to be equipped. They have to be taught to respect the rights of other members of society, to discharge their duties efficiently and joyously, to realise that they have a responsibility in promoting the happiness and strength of the society to which they have the privilege to belong. They should feel and act in terms of social welfare and not individual predilections. In short, they must rise to their fullest heights and give of their very best to society.

Owing to reasons beyond our control, this aspect has long remained in the background. It has to be painfully acknowledged that the hybrid system of education bequeathed to us by the foreigners with its undue emphasis on literary activities and with its exaggerated importance to the English language, bred for the most part a class of intellectual snobs who formed themselves into a

caste and sniffed at the other members of society. While on the one hand they assumed an air of contempt towards the so-called uneducated, they revelled on the other in their servitude under the alien rulers and helped them to stiffen their hold on the illiterate masses and to exploit their helplessness. In schools and colleges also, the intellectually forward alone dominated the stage and were in the lime-light. Those with mediocre intellectual abilities but pronounced social qualities were almost always at a discount and could not make themselves felt. But intellectual brilliance is not the only component of personality. Vibrant dynamic social virtues like affability, adaptability, sympathy, serviceability and resourcefulness go a great way in determining that magnetic influence for good which personality possesses. Since the immediate objective of education was the creation of an army of intellectual subordinates, facilities for the development of imagination, initiative and qualities of leadership were not thought of and devised. It need hardly be said that slavery which stifles the soul and personality which grows in an atmosphere of freedom, ill go together.

Since we are now out to evolve a new society in the wake of freedom's birth, the swing of the educational pendulum is naturally towards social activities. Strictly speaking, all types of activity are essential for the development of personality and they are not fundamentally opposed to one

another. Man is a physical creature, an intellectual being, an economic entity, a social animal, and, above all, a spiritual force, and he has to function as a whole and as a combination of all these aspects. Therefore, all activities are physical, intellectual, social and moral. It is easy to fit the activities of a well-conducted school into the framework of any appellation, but for academic purposes social activities may be defined to be those activities that are calculated to quicken the imagination of youngsters, so that they may understand and interpret sympathetically the environments and events around them, to arouse in them a consciousness of their obligation to society and to awaken in them a desire to be sociable and serviceable by the development of skills and talents for which they have an aptitude.

How can these activities ever help to develop the personality of pupils? In the first place, they serve to discover, draw out and develop the dormant faculties of pupils and encourage them to grow along their own lines, affording them the joy that creative work or unselfish service can alone yield. They infuse in them a sense of self-esteem and make them feel that they too have a place in the school economy and that they too have a share in enriching life in the institution. They inculcate in them those desirable traits which make for complete life and enlightened citizenship. They round off the angularities of the present educa-

tional system which by its over-emphasis on factual knowledge, tends to make pupils lop-sided in their development. They implant right attitudes in youngsters and lay the foundation for their harmonious development.

As in all vital matters pertaining to education, in the matter of organizing social activities and making them effective media for the development of human personality also, it is the teachers' enthusiasm and earnestness that count. They have to set an example to the pupils by organizing themselves into a well-knit brotherhood and evolve a corporate personality. They must feel and act like members of one family, sharing with one another their weal and woe.

Against this theoretical background, let me give you a bare and brief account of some of the organizations of our School, relevant to the subject. Our School is synonymous with social and citizenship activities. I shall, however, mention the more important of them, classifying them under four heads.

In the first place, I shall take up the activities which promote family feeling among the members of the School, which is the purpose of all social activities. The place of pride has naturally to be given to the daily morning congregational prayer. This is a unique institution, the unifying influence of which is incalculable. All the members of the School family — boys and teachers — gather in the

Prayer Hall, which is the *sanctum sanctorum*, before work begins and in reverence offer silent prayer in the sanctuary of their hearts. In that brief moment of perfect pin-drop silence the soul of the School is reflected and every member of the congregation feels his spiritual kinship with every other. The great national festivals are celebrated in due form and solemnity when young and old join alike to conduct worship with devout hearts beating in unison. The anniversaries of the great of the land, past and present, are observed. The members of the School family meet together to pay the homage of their hearts to those hallowed figures whose names shine deathless in the pages of the History of our Motherland. Off and on pupils and teachers go on pilgrimage to local temples and like members of a happy family invoke God's blessings on the efforts of the School. For about two months before the S.S.L.C. Public Examination, pupils of the School Final Class who have no facilities for quiet and concentrated work, make the School their home in a very real sense and carry on their studies within its premises at regulated hours under the vigilant watch and supervision of the Head Master and one or two other teachers. Towards the end of the academic year a series of pleasant functions come off which not only enrich life but also emphasise the community feeling. Just before the Public Examination the teachers entertain the pupils and bid them adieu with words of advice and exhortation. The pupils of Forms IV

and V get up a happy function in honour of the Sixth Formers, convey their good wishes to them and betoken their love by the presentation of flowers and fruits. The outgoing pupils, in their turn, take leave of their teachers by offering fruits and flowers in right Hindu style. After the Examination is over, the test-tired youngsters meet their mentors at a pleasant function called *Conversazione* and over a cup of tea confide to them their hopes and expectations. After the annual examination, all the children gather under the maternal roof on the Boys' Own Day. It is a day of fun and frolic, mirth and merriment, when their joy runs riot, of course within the limits of decency, discipline and decorum. They have their Fancy Dress competition and feast. In between these celebrations come the Old Boys' Day when there is a re-union and rejuvenation of hearts, the past and the present mingling in sweet reminiscences. There is then the Parents' Day when a very large number of parents including mothers, pay their annual visit to the School and get a review of the work of the year and watch with pleasure and pride the varied activities of their children. To these we have added a new activity, namely educational camps, at which pupils and teachers live and learn, play and play together.

Next come organizations and institutions intended to implant right attitudes in youngsters. The Boys' Reading Room which contains news-

papers, periodicals and magazines in different languages and the Bulletin Board which contains important items of news, keep the budding citizens informed of the salient events of the day and evoke intelligent interest in what takes place around them in a swiftly moving and rapidly changing world. The citizenship classes, held under the auspices of the Boys' Union, supply the pupils accurate details regarding events of national and international importance, so that their attitude to men and institutions may not be vitiated by prejudices. The Deena Bandhu Sangham which feeds 120 poor pupils every midday, makes the richer among the boys regard their less fortunate brethren with sympathy, and the indigent feel that poverty is no crime and that it need not stunt the growth of personality. They shed their inferiority complex and look upon the School as their second home. The election of a model pupil by the students of the S.S.L.C. Class at the end of the academic year, gives them an opportunity to recognise and appreciate merit wherever it is found and to exercise their judgment with care. The Stotrapatam Groups infuse in youngsters faith in the religious classics of the land and enable them to memorise intelligently the outpourings of the Godmen of our land, which constitute our richest heritage. The Sath Sangham which organizes discourses by savants makes the pupils interpret our religious lore properly and approach it with reverence. The Sangeetha Sabha by its musical con-

certs, educates the emotions and helps the cultivation of a refined appreciation of art. In addition to the Scout Troop and the Cub Pack, there is the Volunteer Corps which instils the spirit of service by its many-sided activities like regulating boys, supplying water during recess, restoring lost articles to owners, looking after the sanitation of the School and maintaining discipline on public occasions. Minor excursions to places of interest near about give a first-hand knowledge of institutions and social activities and widen the mental horizon of pupils.

Then there are activities which develop skills and talents. The Boys' Union activities which form an integral part of the time-table, help the development of the art of public speaking and debate. The competitions held under its auspices in essay-writing, elocution and extempore-speaking in different languages, in painting, drawing, music, buffoonery, draw out and develop the hidden talents of youngsters. The Decoration Committee gives an opportunity to the artistically-minded youths to show off their skill on occasions when there are public meetings. The Hobby Club with its painting, fretwork, cardboard and spinning sections helps pupils who have an aptitude for them to develop skill in these directions. Their handiwork is exhibited on the day of the Annual Exhibition. The Musical Choir trains the musically-inclined to learn to sing individually and in chorus

national and devotional songs. The Dramatic Association gives pupils training in histrionics and in understanding the subtleties of life as mirrored in great and noble themes. The Class Manuscript Magazine and the printed magazine create and sustain in youngsters the desire to learn and improve the art of writing.

The fourth group of activities are intended to train youngsters for leadership. Boy-Chairmen preside over class meetings and learn to conduct them efficiently. The Boys' Representative Council consisting of elected members from different sections, offers helpful suggestions to the Head Master on matters affecting the School. All organizations and associations have boy-members who share with the teacher-guides the responsibility of running them.

In the course of desultory reading, I happened recently to light on two passages, one dealing with Eton and the other with Switzerland. I was agreeably surprised to learn that at the famous Public School of Eton which celebrated in 1940 the fifth centenary of its foundation, there is a network of social activities which sustain the interest of pupils and give the senior boys training in leadership. It is these that impart to the Institution the distinctive tone that has been its hall-mark. Equally did it fill me with surprise to read that in Switzerland a small village was being built up named after the famous educationist, Pestalozzi, where children

belonging to different nationalities were encouraged to live together in huts, learning three different languages and managing their own affairs. The idea is to inculcate in youngsters a healthy international outlook even from their tender age.

In this connection, it becomes necessary to define the term 'Society'. Social activities become meaningful only in reference to our conception of society. The startling advances made by science in recent years have swollen the limits of society or, shall we say, shrivelled the compass of the world? We are tired of being reminded that distance has been conquered and time, annihilated. No part of the world can now afford to live in isolated indifference. The enunciation of a policy in Russia or the crash of a bank in America profoundly affects life and activities here in India. Society has now become synonymous with humanity. That is why social studies have been introduced in the place of the histories of individual nations, so that children may have sympathy, tolerance and goodwill for the whole world and prepare themselves for world citizenship. We have now to think in international terms and, as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru so truthfully remarked on the memorable midnight when we got independence, we have to dedicate ourselves to the service of humanity as a whole. How wonderful that, after centuries of our vaunted progress, we should be veering round to the old conception of the Hindus who look upon

the entire human species as their kith and kin ! The simple prayer has gone forth from the heart of every pious Hindu for thousands of years that all people, irrespective of caste, creed and colour, should be happy. (*Sarve Janath Sukhino Bhavanthu*). If this is not dynamic social consciousness, if this is not practical social activity, what else is ?

SCOUTING — ITS PHILOSOPHY AND PURPOSE*

I am glad you have named your organization a Fellowship because, if the philosophy of Scouting is understood aright, it is meant to help those attached to it transcend the barriers of caste, creed and colour and to unite them all into a Brotherhood of Service, into a Fraternity of Faith in the basic realities of Life. In these days when among teachers the fissiparous tendency to form themselves into castes and sub-castes, owing allegiance to narrow interests, is sickeningly on the increase, if you succeed in bringing together members of the profession belonging to various institutions and categories, provide a Forum for the discussion of common problems in a dispassionate spirit and promote harmony among them, you have done a great deal and you deserve the congratulations of all those that are interested in the solidarity of the teaching profession and the efficacy of educational endeavour.

Friends, Scouting and speech-making go ill together ; for Scouting, as I understand it, is the summation of practical creative work, most effective and eloquent when done unostentatiously and in silence. I wish, therefore, to share with you in

* Valedictory Address delivered at the Anniversary of Scouters' Fellowship and Patrol Leaders' Forum on Wednesday, 6th February, 1953.

quite an informal manner some of the thoughts that come to my mind, relating to education in general and Scouting in particular.

It has been my privilege to be a teacher for well-nigh twentyfive years now, and I have had occasion to watch actively the progress of Scouting during this period, having myself undergone the Scouters' training long years ago. I am, therefore, one of you in a real sense and my remarks are based upon observation and experience.

You will agree that Scouting has not taken deep roots in our land and has not made that impression which it deserves to make. The reasons for this state of affairs are manifold. In the first place, the movement is considered to be of exotic origin though, owing to historical necessity, it has assumed an international character. In the initial stages, no attempt was made to adapt it to our national genius and temperament. It was therefore looked upon with suspicion as an additional aid to strengthen foreign hold and influence on us. In spite of the fact that it was accorded official recognition and the Department of Education encouraged it, Scouting did not make much headway in our institutions. A Scout Troop was formed in schools more often as an ornamental appendage than as an educational agency, just to please the Departmental officers who felt favourably impressed if there was Scouting in an institution. Apart from making youngsters figure in

their trim uniform on public occasions to lend colour and charm to them, no serious and systematic attempt was made to exploit the movement for educational purposes. Greater importance seemed to have been attached to the external aspect like the uniform than to the inner philosophy of Scouting. The uniform is not only desirable but also essential ; but to make much of it to the exclusion of the inner significance of the movement, is to defeat its very object. Ochre robes by themselves cannot make a *Sanyasin*. In the same manner, the mere donning of a uniform is no guarantee that the wearer is a Scout in the real sense of the term. The uniform which is very necessary, is but an external symbol of the inner life. The natural insistence on the uniform which, at the beginning, did not seem to be germane to our land, precluded a number of desirable youths from getting into the movement either because they did not have the resources to have an extra set of dress or because the uniform did not make an appeal to them. Unfortunately, the best pupils were not attracted to the movement. When those that joined it did not distinguish themselves in studies and compare favourably with those that kept out of it, the movement seemed to exercise but a limited influence on the youths. But, by far the most important reason for its slender strength is, in my opinion, the fact that it has all along been dominated by non-teacher public men who have found in it a welcome opening for publicity and

lime-light. Teachers who are the natural leaders of the young and who alone can understand the delicate symphony of their heart-beats, have naturally kept themselves aloof, being relegated to a position of secondary or tertiary importance. No wonder, the movement has not grown in the proportions in which it ought to have.

The attitude of parents to education has also been to some extent responsible for the movement not gaining adequate strength. The old conservative outlook that education is the acquisition of factual knowledge encased within books, has not much changed. Proficiency in school subjects is yet considered to be the be-all and end-all of schooling. The bent and bespectacled bookworm who struggles his way to the dais on the Anniversary Day and carries away the largest number of prizes, continues to be regarded as the model boy worthy of emulation by others. Pupils with abundant enthusiasm and ebullient energy, not brilliant in studies, look small in the eyes of the prodigies, develop an unhealthy complex and fritter away their time and talents in fruitless activities. A few who are neither good at studies nor at other kinds of work but who have enough leisure and convenience, very often crawl to the movement more for entertainment than for education. A careful study of the youngsters that join the Troop year after year, has been very revealing. It is rarely that the best boys take kindly to it and join it.

Most often pupils of mediocre mettle seek refuge in it just as a sort of protective colouration to make up by their enthusiasm here what they lack by their earnestness in studies. We do not blame these lads or belittle their eagerness to be in the movement, but the total effect is that parents seem to feel that youngsters who get into it are likely to miss the most important aspect of schooling, namely proficiency in subjects.

Only very recently is a change in the outlook on education perceptible. It is being slowly but surely recognised that education is a synthetic process and that it has to address itself to the development of the pupil's entire personality, taking into consideration his body, mind, emotions and spirit. Hence a number of activities have been woven into the texture of school work. It is realised that mere class-room instruction, however well organized, does not go the entire way in training the child. The most successful teacher is he who stimulates enthusiasm, encourages self-expression, directs natural activities along healthy channels and recedes into the background making himself less and less indispensable in the pursuit of knowledge which has necessarily to be to a great extent a conscious deliberate individual affair.

Out of the spiritual debris caused by sinister ideologies, which almost eat into the vitals of civilization, a new order is being evolved today. Men's faith is being revived in those fundamental moral

principles that really sustain life and invest it with dignity and charm. The concept of education has also become widened. It is now regarded as a vibrant dynamic activity that goes on continuously. It is not confined to school alone nor is its aim spectacular success at external examinations. Its supreme purpose is to develop the body, nourish the mind and vitalise the spirit so as to equip the individual for life here and hereafter.

In the present context, therefore, Scouting has a definite place. New education is child-centred. It lays emphasis on aptitudes and abilities. It believes in the fulfilment of the inner urge for creative activity. Modern life has become so complex that it has released so many forces and agencies that seriously threaten to undo the good work sought to be done in schools. The cheap magazine and the popular film, which masquerade as means of entertainment, ravage the innocent minds of youths. It becomes the supreme duty of all those interested in the proper training of the young to provide for healthy and innocent diversions for them. It is here that Scouting steps in as a very useful adjunct to the sober instruction that is imparted in schools. Scouting is essentially a mode of life, an attitude to men and things. A good Scout is as near perfection as is humanly possible. It is unfortunate that in some quarters a doubt should be entertained if Scouting is necessary in view of the fact that citizenship-training has been

made an integral part of the school curriculum. It is my personal opinion that citizenship-training has to be informal and incidental. It is not proper to imagine that it could be imparted only in the periods specified for it in the time-table. A wise and resourceful teacher knows that he has a world of opportunities to inculcate citizenship traits in the minds of the young every time he faces them in the class room or outside of it. Moreover, the adumbration of the scheme may be all right on paper ; but, when we come to stark realities, we see that big schools with large numbers find it difficult to put into practice the several suggestions offered, owing to practical difficulties. It is not right, therefore, to think that all the pupils get the maximum benefit out of citizenship-training. The mere provision of a few items of Scouting in the citizenship-training programme does not mean that the essence of Scouting has been incorporated into it and that Scouting is superfluous. The very fact that the number of Scouts in schools is for natural reasons limited, gives it all the advantages which citizenship-training imparted on a mass scale lacks. Again, character-training on which leaders in all parts of the world are now repeatedly harping as the cardinal aim of education, is best possible only when we deal with individuals in a homogeneous group. The efficiency of a movement depends not upon its numerical strength but upon the quality and the temper of those that compose it. The usefulness of a Troop is therefore to be judged not by

its size but by the subtle influence it exercises on others. The true Scout spirit should permeate the atmosphere of the school and everyone must be a Scout in the real sense of the term. Thus there is no reason to feel depressed if only a small percentage of pupils get into the movement in our schools. Scouting is only one of the several activities open to the teacher to mould the character of youngsters. There have to be other organizations as well in a well-conducted school to provide opportunities for youths to rise to their full stature.

On this occasion I should like to say a few words to the Scouters. If Scouting is to be popular in your schools, you have to give the correct lead. You must be a moral force and power for good in your own spheres. By your loyalty and devotion to the school and by your loving and sincere ministration to the needs of children entrusted to your care, you must transfigure the atmosphere of the school and create a mental climate which will be congenial for the growth of the movement. The other teachers must learn instinctively to feel that they have in you models of life and conduct. Not by vociferous shouting and vehement argumentation is a cause popularised but by earnest and determined work, carried on in a spirit of selfless dedication. The movement must gain strength and lustre by your being in it: you must not expect your position as a Scouter to give you some additional advantage which could be used for the

advancement of personal ends. Recognition will come to you not because you hanker after it by trying aggressively to please others but because it is yours on account of the silent and substantial work you do.

I should like to offer a piece of advice to patrol leaders. You must take the fullest advantage of the training you receive. The country has a right to look to you for enlightened leadership when you grow to be full-fledged citizens in God's good time. Equip yourselves for the responsibilities that lie ahead of you. You must do exceedingly well in your studies if you desire to win respect for the movement. Without adequate progress in them, your enthusiasm for Scouting will not make any impression. Remember that all your skill, talents, knowledge and experience are intended to be harnessed in service. Your Proficiency Badges are not for personal ornamentation to satisfy your vanity: they are an indication of your willingness and capacity for service in different directions. "Be prepared" is your motto. Service should be the breath of your life. Where there is difficulty and danger, where there is suffering and sorrow, there is your opportunity for service — sincere, smiling, selfless service. By your deportment and attitude, by your skill and service it must be possible for people to spot you out as a Scout in a crowd wherever you are.

My best wishes to you for a career of useful Scouting!

CITIZENSHIP-TRAINING*

New Education rightly lays emphasis on Citizenship. It is wrong, however, to imagine that Citizenship is an altogether new subject which has to be squeezed into our curriculum. Not unoften do we come across such expressions as Education for Citizenship, Education for Social Harmony, Education for Personality, Education for Peace. An impression is likely to be left on the mind of the laity that perhaps there are different systems of education, each of which addresses itself exclusively to one of the diverse aspects of children's training. The truth, however, is that life is a composite whole and Education, a synthetic process which concerns itself with the development of the entire child. Thus a teacher, whatever be the nature of his work, is expected to train the 'whole' child through the medium of his subject.

Citizenship-Training should not be regarded as the sole monopoly of a privileged few who have undergone the prescribed course. All teachers have to share the responsibility in the matter. Like moral instruction, Citizenship-Training can be imparted in almost every class without the teacher unduly deviating from the main trend of his lesson, because Citizenship is the quintessence of all important subjects. The work that is envisaged to be done under it clearly indicates that it has to

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draw inspiration from Religion, Literature, History, Hygiene, Geography, Languages, Sociology, Politics, Craft, etc. The discerning and resourceful teacher knows that opportunities present themselves in quite a natural way for imparting training in Citizenship in every subject, though in an incidental and informal manner.

From the queries made and the discussions held, one is led to think that the scope and the content, the purpose and philosophy of Citizenship-Training have not been fully grasped as yet. The Department has very wisely indicated only the broad features, leaving it to the discretion of individual Heads of Institutions to work out the details. It is up to us, teachers, to evolve our own plans, methods and activities, suitable and germane to local conditions, for implanting into juvenile minds desirable Citizenship traits.

The spirit underlying Citizenship-Training is briefly this. The school is to be a well-knit community of which children form the most important members. In the fulness of time they must ripen into citizens and take their proper place in society. It is at once the right and duty of the teacher to prepare them for the great tasks that await the pupils as citizens of to-morrow. Even in the formative period of their lives, youngsters must be trained to put their shoulders to the wheel of common work, so that when they grow up they may realise that it is neither proper nor

profitable to get things done by a few. Thus the emphasis is on *responsibility* rather than on *rights* and on *duties* rather than on *demands*. It is, therefore, a very delicate and arduous task that the teacher has to do in this direction. He is expected to enlist the co-operation of the pupils to the extent it is feasible and helpful and not to surrender his will to the caprices of undeveloped minds. In the name of namby-pamby freedom, pupils may not be left all to themselves to determine what is good for them. They do not have the necessary background of knowledge and experience to arrive at decisions on vital and crucial matters that affect their permanent interests. It is unfair to expect it of them. Hence, they have to be kept under healthy restraint and guided to think along constructive lines and to express freely and frankly their feelings on problems relating to them. Their views have naturally to be ascertained and due regard should be given to them. Discreet direction and judicious consultation on the part of teachers, give the pupils a sense of self-esteem and self-confidence which in turn beget a high sense of responsibility.

The foundation for those qualities essential for enlightened Citizenship, has to be laid in educational institutions by means of a net-work of organizations and activities, carefully planned and wisely integrated. A few of the more important devices, adopted in our School for well-nigh two

decades with highly satisfactory results, may be interesting to readers.

The Daily Silent Congregational Prayer in the morning, recitation of Hymns from the Prayer Book specially compiled, weekly worships, pilgrimages to local temples and observance in due form and solemnity of all great national festivals, instil into the minds of the young a deep and abiding faith in God, the *sine qua non* of a well-ordered and disciplined life. The celebration of Anniversaries of the great of the land, monthly Flag Salutation functions and the Bharatha Matha Mart, manned and managed by pupils themselves, and supplying *Swadeshi* articles required by youngsters, are intended to inculcate love of the Motherland. The Volunteer Corps, an indigenous organization, independent of the Scout Troop and the Junior Red Cross Group, is meant to give effective training in service. Its members look after the regulation of pupils during recess, maintain discipline on public occasions and in other ways render aid to the school community. Under the auspices of the Boys' Union, the activities of which form an integral part of the Time-Table, Class Meetings are held almost every week and 250 pupils of the 36 sections of the school on an average, figure on the platform and articulate their ideas on specified subjects. Boy-Chairmen with Class Masters as Observers, learn to conduct meetings with dignity and decorum. The Class Manuscript Magazines

and the printed Magazine with its two issues, afford scope for the cultivation of the art of writing and the display of special talents. The Dailies, Periodicals and Magazines in the Reading Room, the Bulletin Board and the News-in-Pictures Board keep the budding citizens posted with knowledge of current affairs and help them follow events with intelligent interest. The Boys' Representative Council, which is the Pupils' Parliament, meets once a month, reviews the work done, plans out the programme of activities ahead and offers helpful suggestions within well-defined limits. The Hobby Club in its several sections, teaches a variety of useful crafts to those pupils who have an aptitude for them. Educational Camps, conducted off and on, provide valuable opportunities for corporate life and co-operative effort.

The cumulative effect of this diversified training is that life in the School is bright, fruitful, harmonious and disciplined.

HOBBIES*

Education is training not only for life and livelihood but also for leisure. Purposeful and profitable use of spare time is the hall-mark of culture. Very often we find that pupils feel time hanging heavily upon them when they are not engaged in their normal duties. That is why they are tempted to fritter away their leisure in the pursuit of unhealthy activities which affect their health, vitiate their minds and lower their morals. It is up to educators, therefore, to include in the programme of the training of the young some scheme which will help youngsters realise and appreciate the value of leisure and utilise it fruitfully and profitably. In this connection, it is well to remember the lines of the poet :

“ Absence of occupation is not rest :

A mind that's vacant is a mind distressed.”

Rightly, therefore, has New Education included Hobbies in the curriculum.

The purpose of teaching Hobbies in schools is to round off the training imparted to youngsters. While engaged in Hobbies, not only the mind but the hand and the eye also are educated. If, however, a Hobby is to be really beneficial, it should be one which is after the pupil's heart. Unless

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there is the element of interest and joy in it, it will not be pursued steadfastly. It becomes necessary, therefore, to devise a variety of Hobbies to suit the tastes, temperaments and talents of different types of pupils. To introduce a stereo-typed activity under Hobbies and to expect all pupils to pursue it, is to make the work dull. Moreover, it is not always possible to expect the same degree of skill in the matter of Hobbies in all pupils. So our duty lies in creating the proper facilities and providing the necessary equipment and atmosphere. Much has to be left to the initiative and aptitude of youngsters.

It is not necessary to have always qualified teachers to teach the more common Hobbies. It will be well if we are able to secure their services. But their absence need not be an argument for not providing scope for the pursuit of Hobbies. It is common experience that very many teachers have latent talents and remarkable skill in different directions. These are innate and natural. Training may emphasize and strengthen them. But even without it, teachers are quite competent to put youngsters in the way. We have only to mobilise and harness all such talents and powers.

We have a Hobby Club in our School. At the beginning of each academic year we enlist members for it. Pupils who have an attitude for Hobbies or who desire to learn them join the club voluntarily. They meet on all available Saturdays

for about two hours. There are on the Staff ten teachers who, though not technically trained, have skill in different kinds of activity. They engage the pupils in different sections.

Last year, children of the Middle School learnt weaving. Book-binding was introduced in the High School in accordance with Departmental regulations. But we were able to offer nearly thirty Hobbies to our pupils unofficially which they pursued with pleasure after school hours or on holidays. More than a third of the total number of pupils came under the optional scheme and derived benefit from it. This is perhaps the utmost that we could attempt to do in big schools. Representative pupils of our Institution were able to demonstrate a variety of Hobbies at the Educational Exhibition held at Guindy and at our own School Exhibition held in connection with the Annual Parents' Conference last year. They evoked a good deal of interest and effectively indicated the potentialities of pupils.

In experience it has been found possible to provide for the following Hobbies to the advantage of pupils and without much expenditure or inconvenience :

Spinning ; Painting ; Glass Painting ;
Pottery Painting ; Painting on Gramo-
phone Records ; Rattan Work ; Fret Work ;
Card-board Work ; Paper Work ; Wax

Model-Making ; Wire Work ; Dry Cell
Making ; Coir Work ; Photo Framing ;
Knitting ; Embroidery.

Now that the scope for activities has been much expanded, it is up to schools to make as much provision as is reasonably possible for the pursuit of a variety of interesting and useful Hobbies which have an educational value. That way youngsters will be encouraged to engage themselves profitably instead of idling away their time.

TYPES OF SCHOOLS

In God's wonderful creation, each child is an independent entity with an individuality all its own. It is impossible to set up schools suited to the multitudinously different types of children. No ready and reliable method is available to us to discover and understand the varied abilities of children that lie dormant in them. In a normal school, if only the right atmosphere prevails and there is wise encouragement, the latent abilities of children will find scope for expression and development.

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Residential schools can be thought of only when the strength is well within manageable limits. They are necessary only for pupils who live away from their parents. The wholesome chastening influence of the home is essential for children in the Secondary Stage. Unless manned and managed by the right sort of teachers, residential schools will do more harm than good.

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Taking all facts and factors into consideration, nothing can be more indiscreet than having in our land co-education in Secondary Stage, when children pass through a very delicate phase in emotional evolution. It is no good citing the example of the West in this matter. Our outlook on life and our evaluation of conduct are entirely

different from those of the West. To challenge the fundamental laws that govern human nature under the consoling pretext that one should be progressive and not prudish, is to act unwisely. Girls must have separate schools where they will feel at home in every sense and grow in a congenial atmosphere.

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It is not wise to shut out private benefaction in the matter of setting up schools ; but all institutions should come under the purview of State control and conform to State regulations in essentials. Unrecognised private schools should not, however, be encouraged. Effective control must be exercised on tutorial schools, many of which make a trade of education and collect heavy tuition fees, all the while stifling initiative on the part of candidates.

RECENT TRENDS IN EDUCATION

The latest trend seems to be to lay emphasis on the provision of life situations for equipping youngsters for citizenship. In theory it may sound grandiloquent to state that the school is a democracy in which youngsters should have self-determination. In actual practice, however, those that are conversant with the inner philosophy of school life and administration know that, conditioned as we are, it is neither possible nor purposeful to convey all instruction through activities. One is also afraid that there is the danger of a large section of our pupils slipping into intellectual inertia. Acquisition of knowledge through intelligent study and organized instruction has its own disciplinary value and cannot be discarded. It is only against the background of appropriate theoretical knowledge that any activity becomes meaningful and fruitful. When all is said and done, it is the teacher's personal example, influence, direction and guidance that count far more in education than any other factor. In our anxiety that our children should no longer be mere bookworms we should by no means suffer a deterioration in their intellectual attainments or efficiency. Equally is it our duty to make sure that participation in activities does not stifle a healthy passion for knowledge by means of diligent application to books.

Loose thinking and confused speech seem to be the order of the day. Unfortunately, this baneful tendency is much in evidence in the domain of education wherein the need for clarity, sobriety and a sense of realities is imperative. There is no gainsaying the fact that there is deterioration in our educational standards. It is wrong to imagine that our youngsters have suddenly lost the native fertility of their minds. The cause for the present state of affairs obviously lies elsewhere. We often find people bemoaning in one and the same breath the decline in the intellectual attainments of our youth and pleading for minimising the legitimate strain involved in the pursuit of their studies. We forget that education which, among other things, is the nourishment of the mind through knowledge garnered from different sources and in different ways, is a rigorous process of intensive discipline, essential both for individual evolution and national advancement. Wisdom lies, therefore, in devising helpful methods to pull up our youngsters to a reasonable level of efficiency and not in lowering our standards to be on a par with the growing degeneracy.

One tragic result that is perceptible in the wake of freedom and that is felt to our vexation in all spheres, is a false sense of individual liberty which not unoften expresses itself in indifferent easy-going attitudes and slovenly slipshod work. Slothful superficiality on the one hand and a hectic desire on the other to afford maximum satisfaction

by artificial production of spectacular results, can never contribute to educational progress.

The first General Elections after independence by which was set so much store, have come and gone. We are on the threshold of a new Political Order, fraught with the possibilities of great changes, inevitable in democracies. All those that are charged with the sacred task of fashioning educational policies must bring to bear their most earnest, anxious and prayerful thought on their work, so that the youths in whose hands quivers the destiny of the nation may have reason to feel thankful when they blossom into citizens. The Citizenship-Training Scheme, the fusion of histories and geography into one subject, the vague emphasis on practical work and activities, the feasibility of correlation of craft with other subjects, the relative importance of the different languages of study, the bewildering new type tests and the yawning gulf between the school and the college — these aspects deserve and need a frank, sincere, critical and thorough examination if we are keen on safeguarding and promoting the highest interests of children.

SCHOOL INSPECTION

Conducted by men of the right calibre, School Inspection is bound to be an inspiration, an incentive to nobler efforts and better achievements ; if not, it tends to become an infliction, a mechanical routine that has to be gone through. The most essential qualification for a member of the Inspectorate is adequate teaching experience. He must be conversant with the several knotty problems that crop up in the course of practical teaching work. He must also be familiar with the inner working and philosophy of school administration. Mere academic brilliance or theoretical knowledge of pedagogy is of little avail. A greater insult to a body of trained and qualified teachers cannot be thought of than subjecting them to inspection at the hands of one who has not faced pupils in a class room and handled any subject. It is my firm conviction that, if the standard of education is to be improved, the reform must begin with Teachers' Colleges and the Inspectorate. These should be manned by the most competent teachers who have rich and varied experience in the field of practical educational endeavour and who are imbued with a spirit of service. The members of the Inspectorate should not be mere official fault-finders who delight in passing stereotyped and jejune remarks, based on superficial observation. They must be in a position to guide, instruct and inspire teachers in a spirit of helpfulness. Inspection should be intensive and intelligent, providing scope for a free and frank discussion of methods and technique of teaching and training the young.

EDUCATION — A SYNTHESIS

It is significant that the word 'School' should be derived from 'Skole' which means leisure. The implication is that educational institutions should offer ample scope for the natural growth and spontaneous evolution of youngsters in an atmosphere of freedom and tranquillity. Unfortunately, all our vaunted progress has resulted only in making life so complex and complicated that confused hurry has become its dominant feature. Men often act mechanically in hectic haste as if helplessly caught in a whirlwind. Unhealthy distractions, masquerading as harmless diversions, degrade the mind and debase the emotions. After all, what imparts halo to an educational institution is the quality of the subtle influence that it sheds and not the quantum of ill-assorted knowledge that it hurls; the sincere toil that is put in day after day and not the spectacular demonstrations that are got up occasionally. It is well to remember that education is not a spasmodic process but a 'total' activity, the ultimate purpose of which is the sublimation of the entire individual. It is a pervasive influence which touches all aspects of life. Only to the extent that educational institutions shed a synthetic influence on youngsters by the creation of a healthy atmosphere and the provision of wholesome activities, conducive to the development of an integrated personality, do they fulfil their lofty mission.

It is a pity that those who have to shape educational policies often lose sight of the elementary truth that the child is a composite entity and that a co-ordinated effort should be made for its harmonious development. The result of their narrow outlook is that school organization, instead of being viewed as a unified whole, gets split up into isolated fragments without cohesion and a common purpose running through it. Education to-day is a social necessity. No effort should, therefore, be wanting on the part of those who bear the permanent interests of the nation at heart, to metamorphose our educational institutions from being rigorous factories of knowledge into sunny seed-beds of culture wherein youngsters would flower into wisdom and character, without being hustled, in a joyous atmosphere of purposeful leisure, with plentiful opportunities for the direct acquisition of knowledge through personal observation and study of life and the intuitive comprehension of truth through calm reflection and meditation.

EDUCATION — A CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

Education is a dynamic continuous process, not a vague fitful influence. It has necessarily to draw vitality from the deliberate and conjoint efforts of several healthy agencies. There cannot be a greater mistake than to imagine that the acquisition of bookish knowledge is the sole purpose of education, that the teacher is the exclusive channel of instruction and that the school is the only place which holds out possibilities of learning. The teachers, the parents and the Government have each a specific *role* to play in building up the bodies, moulding the minds, ennobling the emotions and sublimating the spirits of youngsters.

The teacher, however, is by far the most potent factor in the training of children. Observation and experience only serve to strengthen and confirm the conviction that, if the teacher is of the right temper, the many problems that baffle attention and hinder progress, will find smooth solution. It is not only his moral responsibility as a cultured citizen but also his professional duty as the member of a Sacred Order that the teacher should serve as a worthy model of life and conduct to his wards. His time and energy are much too precious to be frittered away in sordid activities. A holy passion for dedicated service, not an aggressive desire for cheap heroism, should be the guiding principle of his life. His is not the business to rest content

with explaining away the limitations and lapses of the young ; his is the sacred task to mobilise all powers, talents and experience to reform and reconstruct the personalities of the young. The memory of great teachers is cherished with reverential gratitude not for the quantum of knowledge they doled out but for the aroma of inspiration they shed about them by their character and attitude to work. Unfortunately, the sickening craze for publicity which is in increasing evidence in public life, seems to have crept into the domain of Education also. Spectacular demonstrations put up on occasions may for the nonce dazzle superficial observers ; but it is solid work alone, carried on with sustained devotion, that can transfigure a school into a true centre of culture and confer lasting good on the young.

[The parents too have an important obligation to fulfil. In fact, they are the *first* teachers even as teachers are the *second* parents. Their responsibility does not cease when they put the children to school. They must watch and guide them while in the domestic surroundings. It is neither proper nor pertinent to lay at the door of the teachers all the blame for the folly and indiscretion of children. Home-life must be organized in such a manner as would help them grow in a healthy atmosphere.]

The Government has to realise that Education is the most important department of national

activity. Any frantic effort to reform society and improve standards without vitalising the system of education, would be as puerile as the attempt to nourish a plant by watering its branches. Permanent national interests, instead of momentary political considerations, must be the motive force behind the formulation of policies. If in a so-called Democratic State, individual members have the freedom to act as they choose, educational institutions which fashion the future citizens of the land, have a right to expect protection against baneful influences and sinister ideologies which insidiously ravage the minds of innocent youths and neutralise the wholesome effect of serious training. Education of the young, the hope of the Future, is a sacred trust: it is the supreme duty of all concerned to preserve it jealously and guard it vigilantly.

