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WOMEN OF MODERN INDIA SERIES

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**GRADE V. TORU DUTT THE BEGUM OF BHOPAL,
and THE MAHARANI OF TRAYANCORE**

WOMEN OF MODERN INDIA

Toru Dutt,

The Begum of Bhopal

and

The Maharani of Travancore

GRADE V



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TORU DUTT

1. FAMILY

TORU BUTT came from a family of poets, though none of them was so famous as she became after some years. Her father and some of her uncles and cousins were poets, and so from her childhood she learnt to love poetry.

The Dutts were Kayastha Hindus, a rich old family of high position, and they were one of the chief families of Calcutta. They had come there from Burdwan about two hundred years before Toru was born. Her great-grandfather, Nilmoni Dutt, was well known because he was so kind and honest and good to strangers. He was a strict Hindu, but very broad-minded. His sons were clever and well-educated. They took a large part in the spread of education in Bengal, and tried very hard to help the people. They all loved to read and got together a good library of books in their house, which later on was a great joy to Toru. At this time few people knew the value of education.

One of Niljnoni's sons, Rasamoy Dutt, was Toru's grandfather. He had five sons, who were all very clever. Toru's father was Govin Chunder Dutt. He was a student, and loved to read poetry and to learn languages; and his daughter was like him in these things. He held a high position in government service, but later he left it. He spent the rest of his life in studying religion

and books- He was one of the best Indian writers of English of the time. In 1870 he brought together his poems and also those which his brothers and cousins and nephew had written. He made a book of them, which he called the Dutt Family Album. Toru liked this book very much.

Tom's mother, Kshetramoni Mitter, was also well-educated, and from her the girl learnt all the Hindu stories. She came to love them greatly, and also to love her own language. Later on, her mother learnt English, and translated some religious books. She was very kind to poor people.

The Dutts were a Hindu family, but in 1854 Toru's father and all his brothers became Christians. Their wives remained Hindus for some time. Toru was brought up as a Christian, and her mother also became one.

2. CHILDHOOD

Toru was the youngest of the three children of Govin Chunder Dutt. The eldest child was a son, Abju, and after him came a daughter, Aru. Toru was born in Calcutta in 1856, and from her earliest days she was a very intelligent child. At first the children were educated by their parents. Their mother taught them the old songs and stories of India, and gave them religious teaching. Then a tutor was found for them, an old man whom they liked very much. They used to trouble him by asking him many questions at the beginning of the lesson. They asked him about all the people whom

they knew. This meant that sometimes there was not much time left for the lesson itself. But they all liked their studies, and were very clever children. They began to read English, and also to learn singing, which a lady used to come to teach them.

The first seven years of her life Toru spent in Calcutta. Then for a year the family left Calcutta and went to Bombay by sea, sailing all round the coast of India, You can understand how much the three children must have enjoyed this.

Then came a time of great sorrow for the family, for the boy Abju died at the age of fourteen. His parents and sisters, missed him a great deal, and his father wrote a very sad poem about the loss of his son.

A few years later, Toru's father and mother took her and her sister to Europe. The two girls and their mother were the first Bengali ladies to visit Europe. You must remember that this was a long time ago, in the year 1869, before so many people had started going to Europe. Then the voyage was not as quick and as easy as it is now.

When they reached Europe, they landed from the boat at Marseilles, and went to stay at Nice in the south of France. Here the two girls were sent to school. This was the only time in their lives that they went to school. As Nice is in France, the girls had to learn French, for all the lessons in the school were given in that language. Toru came to love the French people and their language very much, and became a very good student of French. They made many friends

in Nice, and soon learnt to speak French easily. Everyooe whom they met was surprised to find how well-educated the two girls were. After a few months the family left Nice and went to Paris, where they stayed for some months.

From Paris they went to London. Here they spent most of their time in the study of books and religion. Here Toru began to translate poetry, and later to write some herself. They soon made new friends in London, and met some famous people. After some time they went to live in Cambridge, for the sake of the girls' education, and the two sisters studied hard and went to classes. In Cambridge too they made friends. They used to enjoy visiting them in their houses and going for walks.

The two sisters loved each other very much and liked to work and play together. Although she was the younger of the' two, Toru was the leader in everything, and Aru, who was not strong, used to follow her. Toru was very clever, and had a worfderful memory. She was a great reader, and read very quickly, but carefully. She wrote many letters, while she was in London, to her cousins in Bengal, telling them about her life there. She wrote to them how in the winter when the snow fell she made snowballs. She told them about the music which she learnt at her music lessons, the books which she read, the plays which she saw and the people whom she met.

3. RETURN TO INDIA

Mr and Mrs Dutt and their children returned to India after spending nearly four years in Europe, and for the rest of her short life Toru lived in Calcutta. From there she wrote many letters to her greatest friend in England, Miss Mary Martin, who lived in Cambridge. Miss Martin kept these letters, and it is from them that we are able to learn so much about Toru and about her life in Calcutta.

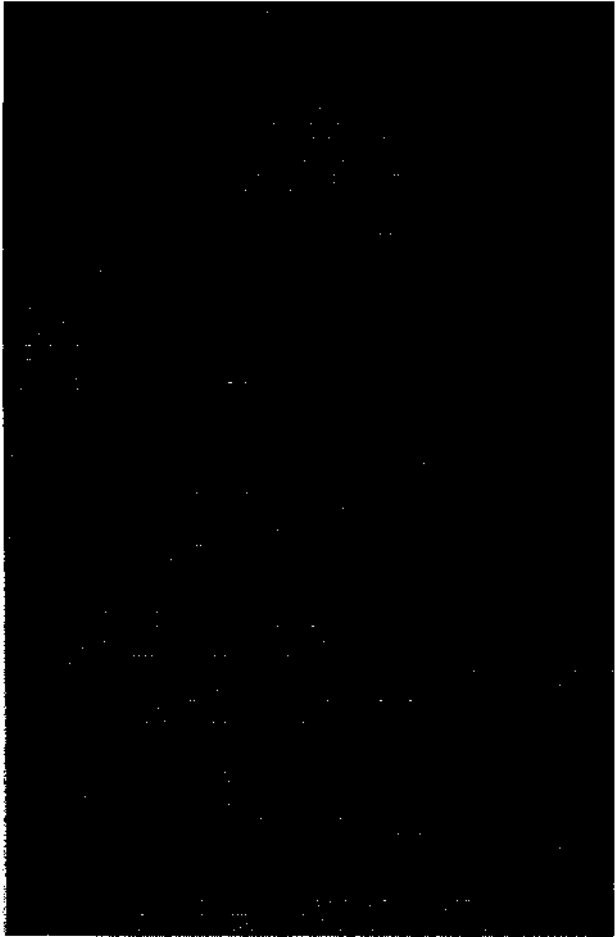
Mr Dutt had two houses in Calcutta, one in the city; and one, called Baugmaree, at some distance outside. This house had a very big garden, and Toru and her sister liked to look after it. They were always sorry to have to move into the city house, and were full of joy when they could go to live in the garden house. In the garden were all kinds of lovely flowers, which Toru described to her friend in her letters. Miss Martin was surprised to hear of flowers blooming in the middle of winter, for in England there are no flowers at that time of the year. 'While you are in deep winter,' Toru wrote, 'with snow on the ground and the roads hard with frost, we are enjoying a cool summer. For here the coldest winter is like an English summer. Mamma has planted many English flowers in our garden. She brought a packing-case full of bulbs and roots and seeds from England. Our tanks look very pretty with white water-lilies and blood-red lotus.'

Toru told her friend of all the things which she knew would interest someone who had never seen India. She wrote about the kinds of fruit which she

ate, and which grew in her garden, because they are so different from the fruit of England. 'We get plenty of fresh fruit now; guavas which are something like the English pears, plantains, Granges, and other kinds of Indian fruit. Aru and I long to taste a mango from our own garden. Our garden is famous for its mangoes. Mangoes will soon be in season; unripe ones are already to be got. Then we now have the lokut, with its bright orange colour; and the water-melon, and the sugar cane, and the bael. This bael is very good, strained and made into a drink with ice and sugar.'

Toru was very interested in birds and animals and other living things, such as the fish and the snakes which lived in the garden. 'We see plenty of wild monkeys; it is very pretty to see the young ones play with each other; the mothers are very fond of them, and embrace them as affectionately as any human mother.. They sometimes eat up all the young leaves of the rose plants.' Another time she wrote: 'The rainy season will soon be upon us, and then we shall have to move to our town residence, for the garden gets very unhealthy at that time. It is very jolly during the rains, when the tanks overflow in our garden, and the fish come out on the grass. It is such fun catching them with a piece of rag, or even with a handkerchief.'

Toru and Aru kept many animals and birds as pets. When they came back from Europe they brought a great many with them. Aru brought thirteen birds, but five of them died on the ship, because



From 'The Life and *Letters of Toru Dutt*' by courtesy
of the author, Harihar Das

TORU DUTT

of the heat. The two sisters also kept geese, hens and several cats. Toru named the cat she liked best Baguette, and often wrote about it. She used to spend a lot of time playing with it. She gave her friend news in every letter of the pets which she and Aru had brought from England. Later she kept a parrot and trained it to speak. 'Polly has learnt a big sentence now; she says "Toru dear, give me some bread" quite plainly now; she says it to me whenever she sees me with any hint in my hand. Mamma has a kitten called Judy, and Polly calls it so prettily -"poor Judy, poor Judy" and then Polly says -"sweet Polly". Mamma is teaching it now a long sentence--"Tom dear, don't cough, take a little milk".'

When Mr Dutt bought a new carriage and a pair of horses, Toru was very pleased, and made the horses her particular care. She gave them French names, Jounette and Gentille, and waited very impatiently until they were trained, so that she could go in the carriage. Then she used to go for a drive almost every day. 'I get up early now, at five in the morning because I have Jeunette and Gentille led before me. They come at six, so I am dressed and ready by the time they come. I wanted very much to have a book about horses, and Mamma gave me one [yesterday](#). It is very interesting and gives so much information. I have been reading it all yesterday. Mamma says I am mad about horses, and gives me a scolding now and then for getting up so early.'

Toru also wrote to Miss Martin about the visits of her friends and relations, particularly about her uncles and grandmother, and one of her small cousins, caljed Varuna, all of whom she liked very much. Her sister Aru was never strong, and in September 1874 she died, after a bad illness. Now Toru was left alone without either brother or sister, and she missed the gentle girl sadly, for she and Aru had loved each other greatly. Aru was such a bright and happy girl. 'She seemed to fill all the large garden house with life. Now without her the place seems so lifeless and lonely that Mamma can hardly bear going there. It makes me sad looking at her pets.'

Tom's own health was never good, and she was often troubled with a cough. But in spite of this she worked very hard at her studies and -at her writing. She and her father studied French, German and Sanskrit together. She read a very large number of books, most of which were in French or English. She often wrote to her friend about parcels of books sent from England. She told her how excited she was when they were opened. 'The books we sent for from England have at last come. I have only read two or three as yet. I was so glad to receive them that a whole fortnight was passed in looking at them and hugging them.' She read all the French books which she could find in the Calcutta public library. At one time she began to study mathematics with her father, but she soon gave it up. *Papa means to go on to geometry and algebra, but I am afraid I am too thick-

headed for that.' She also kept up her study of music, which she liked very much. Her father gave her a piano and later, when she was so ill that she was not able to come out of her room, the piano was put there near her bed, so that she could play it.

At the beginning, soon after her return to Calcutta, Toru was very anxious to go back to England, and she and her father used to make plans about it. 'We all want so much to return to England. We miss the free life we led there. Here we can hardly go out of our own garden. It is a big place and we walk round and round our own garden as much as we like. But before we go to England we have to get quite well and then sell our house and garden here.' Later the doctors said that Toru should be taken to England for her health, and her father tried to sell his garden house so that they could all go and live in England. But unfortunately Toru never became strong enough to make the journey, and was never able to leave Calcutta. 'We often talk about the places we shall stop at, the things we shall see and hear, the English fruits we shall eat, the English fishes and foods we shall taste on our next visit to Europe.'

In one of her fetters, Toru described how she spent her days. 'We lead a very quiet life here. I get up at half-past four and prepare two cups of chocolate, one for Papa and one for myself. Then I go to dress and by the time I come out from the dressing room Papa and Mamma get up. Then I go to the roof of the house; it is very cool early in the morning up there.'

After that she used to feed her two cats, which were given some fish each morning. Then she came down and sat in a window, from which she could watch the two horses being fed. After that she went to breakfast. When the breakfast was finished there were prayers for the whole family. Then her mother went to do her household duties, her father read the newspaper, and Toru read a book or played with her kittens. At twelve o'clock they had lunch, and then Toru would read and write till three, when she would eat some fruit. In the evening she used to go out for a drive. She came home at seven for dinner. At ten o'clock she used to go to bed*

Besides telling her all about her own life, Toru used to write to her friend about all the important things which took place in Calcutta and the rest of India. Though she was so young, she was interested in her country and in what went on in the world. When a big new bridge across the Hooghly was opened, she told her how all the ladies went in their carriages to see it, and everyone talked about it. Then there was a famine in Bengal, and she described how men and women and children, very thin and hungry used to come to the garden to be fed. They were so hungry that mothers would even take the food out of their children's hands and eat it themselves. They used to stay in the garden for some days for the sake of the rice and dal which was given to them in the morning. She also told her how noisy and happy Calcutta was at the time of the Poojah holidays. The streets were crowded with people who were going to bathe in the

Ganges, and music was played all day and night* Then she described the visit of the Prince of Wales to Calcutta, and what everyone thought about it. What she says about the different governors and officials shows how intelligent she was, and how interested she was in all that went on in the world. She also wrote about kings in Europe. When France was beaten in the war with Germany in 1870 she was very sad, and wrote a beautiful poem about it.

Toru made another friend to whom she wrote many letters. This was a French lady, who had written a book on the women of ancient India, which Toru read. Toru liked the book very much and wanted other Indian women to be able to read it. But as they did not know French this was not possible. So she wrote and asked to be allowed to translate it from French into English. She told the writer how much she had liked it. The French lady was very pleased to receive such a letter from an Indian girl. She had a great admiration for the Indian women of the past, and now to make friends with an Indian girl made her very happy. So she was quite willing that Toru should translate her book. They wrote many letters to each other and became great friends, although they never met.

Then she could not write so many letters because of her bad health. She often had to explain to Miss Martin that she had not written for a long time because she had been ill. 'It is a fortnight or more that I have been obliged to keep my bed. There is nothing serious at present but my lungs are very

delicate. I do not feel strong enough yet to be able to sit up and write.' In the summer of 1876 she was ill much more often, and she had to spend most of her time in bed. She was very sorry that because of her illness she could not read much, and she had to give up the study of Sanskrit. She was ordered to keep very quiet and to lie down, and she said that she felt so weak that she could do nothing else but keep quiet and lie down. 'You will guess how ill I have been when I tell you that I have to be taken downstairs in a chair when I go out for a drive. Your letters are a great comfort to me. I sometimes feel very tired and lonely, and this illness has made me suffer, very much.' Her last letter to Miss Martin was written on 30 July 1877, and she died on 30 August of the same year. When she died she was aged only twenty-one and a half years. She was very brave when she knew that there was no hope of her becoming well again. She never lost her interest in her books and in the life around her. She went on reading when she was too ill to write, and when she could not even read she used to recite poetry from memory.

4. TORU'S CHARACTER

Toru was a very sweet and lovable girl. She was very quiet. Even when she became famous because of her writings, and when people praised her for them and for her learning she was never proud. In her letters we can see that she was like a happy child, enjoying playing with animals and watching the life

around her in the garden. She had a kind heart and was sofry for all suffering people and animals and tried to help them. She had a mosquito curtain put round her birds' cage so that they should not be troubled by mosquitoes. She loved her parents and relations very much, and even the people who had never seen her came to love her from reading what she had written.

Her greatest love was for her father. It was her father who had helped her to study so much and had taught her to love poetry. They used to study together, and he took a great interest* in her writings, and helped her in every way. He also took great care of her health, for he was very much afraid for her, particularly when he had already lost two children. Whenever there was even a mild cold wind he ordered warm clothes to be brought for her to put on. He also watched to see that she did not work too hard, and told her to rest when he thought she had been working too long. If it had not been for the interest which he took in her studies and for all the Jbooks which he always bought for her, she would not have been able to read so much. She wrote: 'Without Papa I should never have known good poetry from bad. He used to take such pains with us. He never thought it was trouble at all, but was only too glad to help us in our reading. I wonder what I should have been without my father.'

5. TORU AS A WRITER

Though Toru died at the early age of twenty-one, she had written some books. She began by translating French poems into English verse, and at first she published each of them as it was written in the *Bengal Magazine*. She was very happy when her father said that he would publish them in a book as soon as there were two hundred of them. Then one day she wrote in great joy to Miss Martin, telling her that she had finished her book, and that it was to be published. She said she would call it *A Sheaf Gleaned from French Fields*. There were one hundred and sixty-five pieces of poetry in it, and to each piece -Toru had added many careful notes. These showed how much she knew about French literature.

After this, Toru went on with her writing, both in English and French, but she did not live long enough to see any other book of hers printed. Her father had her other works printed after her death. It was a great comfort to him after he had lost her to have her works published and to see how well they were liked. Toru wrote two novels, one in English which she never finished, and one in French. It was wonderful that she could write a whole long story in good French, which she had learnt for a very few years, and that she could write about French life as if she was a French woman herself. It was very hard for anyone who read the book to find out that it was not a French woman who had written it. Besides this she also translated many more French poems, which her father

had printed in a book. She made translations of some political speeches from the French also.

But, though she loved French and English, Toru loved her own country more, and her best book is about India. It is book of poems called *Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan*, in which she translated some of the famous stories of India from Sanskrit into English poetry. This she did very well indeed for she wanted to help English people to understand and see the beauty of these old stories, which her own mother had taught her to love. She had studied Sanskrit only for about one year when she did this. This shows how clever she was at learning languages. She translated seven stories, mostly from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, among which were the stories of Savitri, Sita, Lakshman and others. She liked Indian stories very much and was very proud of her country. She wanted to make the people of other countries know the greatness of India. She also wrote a few English poems, about her house and garden, and about her love for France.

Toru Dutt is famous both because of what she wrote, and because of what the world lost by her early death. She was able to do such good work at such an early age and if she had lived longer she would have been a great poet indeed. By the age of twenty she had learnt quite well different languages, English, French, and Sanskrit. She could write in two of them so well that it was hard to know that what she wrote had not been written by an English or a French person.

She was very clever at learning languages, and besides this she had read a great number of books and was very learned. If most of the other famous women of the world had lived such a short life, they would have had very little work to leave behind them. But Toru's greatness was seen very early, and that is what makes her life so interesting. It was a great loss to the whole world that she died so young, and particularly a loss to the three countries to which she belonged and for which she wrote,

A poem was written about her soon after her death, which shows that three countries, India, France and England had all had some part in her education and that all owed much to her for what she had written. In the poem the three countries are made to talk. England says:

'This song bird . . .
Though it come from far over the sea,
Is mine own, for its heart true and loyal
And its feelings were moulded by me.'

Then France replies:

'Nay, sister; it is mine; by this token
That it loves me the best'

Then India speaks, and says that Toru was born there and is India's daughter, and it is to her that she really belongs.

THE BEGUM OF BHOPAL

HER HIGHNESS NAWAB SULTAN JAHAN BEGUM of Bhopal is famous as a great ruler. People think that to rule is a man's work, and in it women cannot succeed, but in the history of the world there have been some women who have ruled successfully.

1. THE RULING FAMILY OF BHOPAL

Bhopal is, as you must have learned in your geography lessons, in Central India, and is one of the chief Muslim states in India. It is ruled by a family which was founded in 1708 by Dost Mohammed Khan, an Afghan, who came to India and served under Aurangzeb. When the Mogul Empire broke up, he founded a state of his own. The early history of Bhopal tells us that fighting was always going on there. After some years the people stopped fighting. Then everything was quiet and there was order in the kingdom. Four times the ruler of the state was a woman, and while they were the rulers the state was very prosperous.

Kudsia Begum was the first woman ruler of Bhopal, and she ruled for eighteen years. After this she gave it up and her son-in-law, Nawab Jahangir, Mohammed Khan, ruled in her place.

Nawab Sikander Begum, daughter of Kudsia Begum, ruled for twenty-three years, and it was towards the end of her time of rule that her grand-daughter, Nawab Sultan Jahan Begum, was born. Nawab

Sikander Begum had very difficult work to do when she began to rule. Her people loved fighting and there was no money in the state. She was a very successful ruler, and kept down the quarrelsome nobles who had done whatever they pleased in "the past, and who did not want peace and order. She reformed many things, and first of all she made the army better. She cared deeply for the poor and tried to help them as much as she could. At first, on the death of her husband, she ruled in the place of her baby daughter, but later, in 1560, she was herself made ruler. She was clever and patient and full of wisdom, and very helpful to her subjects. She saw that what they needed most was peace.

When Nawab Sikander Begum died, she was followed on the throne by her daughter, Nawab Shah Jahan Begum, who ruled for a very long time, from 1868 to 1901. Her work was not so difficult as her mother's had been, because of her mother's wise rule. When she came to the throne she found that Bhopal was a very well-managed state. She, too, was a good and kind ruler. During her time of rule Bhopal was joined to the rest of Central India by railways, and this was a great help to the people of the state. She was very interested in education. She opened schools for boys and gave them scholarships, and tried to open schools for the education of girls also. She herself was well educated and was a good student of history, and wrote some books. Her history of Bhopal, called in Urdu *Taj-ul-Ikbal*, is a very well-known

book, and gives the history of the state from its foundation by Dost Mohammed Khan down to 1872. She was also a student of Persian and Arabic and many learned men come to Bhopal in her time.

2. CHILDHOOD OF SULTAN JAHAN BEGUM

Nawab Sultan Jahan Begum was born in 1856 and was the daughter of Nawab Shah Jahan Begum. For many years no son had been born to the ruling family of Bhopal, but everyone heard the news of the birth of the little princess with great joy even though her parents had hoped for a son.

Sultan Jahan Begum's grandmother loved her very much and took a great interest in her education. Whenever she went away on business, news of the baby's health was sent to her each day. She used to write many letters, full of love, to the little girl, though of course she was too young either to read them or to write replies. These letters were carefully kept, and were given to her after her marriage, and gave her great pleasure. When she was a child she was put under her grandmother's care, and spent all her time with her, except for three evenings a week, which *she* spent with her mother. The company and the love of the little girl gave great joy to her grandmother. In spite of all the hard work which she had to do as ruler of the state, she watched the education of her granddaughter carefully. For this she was well rewarded by the very great love which

the little girl felt for her. We can see that her grandmother was an example to her throughout her life, particularly when, later on, she too had to rule the state and was head of the family.

Until she was about five years old, most of Sultan Jahan Begum's time was spent in play. Then her education began, and her *bismillah* ceremony was held to mark the beginning of her studies. Her grandmother arranged a regular course of studies for her. Each day she rose at five o'clock, and had an hour's walking in the open air. After this she took her morning meal, and then from eight to ten o'clock she studied the Holy Koran. At ten she had breakfast with her grandmother, and after this she was free to play till noon. In the afternoon she had lessons from different teachers. She learnt handwriting, English, Persian, arithmetic, and Pushto. After this came more walking, riding and games. At six she had her evening meal, and then went to bed at eight.

When the little girl was six years old, her grandmother went to Mecca. This was a long journey, which was to take her a whole year. So she was very sad at leaving her granddaughter for such a long time. She meant at first to take her with her, but the child's mother, was afraid of the sea journey, and so the idea had to be given up. The parting was very sad for the little girl. By every post her grandmother sent her letters, giving her advice about her lessons. Even though they were separated by so many miles of the sea and land, she still could follow the little girl's pro-

gress carefully. At first, as the child was still too young to write letters, someone else used to write replies to her grandmother, but this did not satisfy her. She wrote to the little girl that she should ask someone else to take down her replies so that her own words could reach her.

At Aden her grandmother bought presents to send to her little granddaughter, 'a box with a small space to hold an inkpot, and another to keep letters in: also a small tooth-powder casket, a tea-kettle, a cup, a sweetmeat basket and some real sea flowers that grow in the sea\ In another letter she wrote: 'I should like to know what words you are learning to write now, so send me some of your copy-books. When you dictate your letters to me, say everything that comes into your mind. . . .

*I hear that you still cry whilst reading the Koran, and that you have to be punished. You must remember that you are almost grown up, and that it is therefore a great shame for you to cry when you are reading, and to have to be punished. It is quite time you gave up this bad habit.'

When the time came for her grandmother's return to Bhopal, the little girl was very happy. She had been counting the days for her grandmother to come back. In a letter her grandmother had comforted her by saying: 'I told you before I left Bhopal that, God willing, I would return after a year. Now there are twelve months in a year, and thirty days in a month. If you go to the Raja Sahib he will help you

to find out how many days there are in a year, and then you will know when I am coming back.' We can imagine how excitedly the little girl worked out this sum and waited for the day when she would see her grandmother once more. She was very pleased that she was allowed to go to meet her grandmother three miles outside Bhopal, along with her father and the nobles and the chief officials of the state. She describes how both she and her grandmother were riding on elephants, and saw each other from a long way off. 'I remember how I wished that I had wings that I might fly to her', she said. Then soon their elephants were side by side, and her grandmother took the little girl to her knees.

Soon after her return, there was an examination to find out how much the child had learned during her grandmother's absence, and she was very pleased when Sultan Jahan Begum passed the examination very well. Whenever any English gentleman came to Bhopal, he was asked to examine the little girl in English, and to tell her grandmother what progress she had made.

When the little girl was nine years old, her father, Nawab Umrao Dula, Bakshi Baki Mohammed Khan, died, and she was very sad. While he lived the family were all very happy and united. Then, a year later, in 1868, her grandmother died, and the little girl, who felt her loss greatly, went to live with her mother. She was now her mother's only child, for her little sister had died of smallpox a few years before.

Now that the little princess was in her mother's

care, the arrangements for her education were changed. Her mother thought that a different kind of education would be more useful for her. She said that it was more necessary for her to learn to be a ruler and a wife and a mother than to study books. So her lessons in handwriting were stopped, and only four hours a day were spent in study. Already she had read through the Holy Koran once. She now studied it for the second time, and its meaning was explained to her for an hour every day. Then she had lessons in English for two hours, and in Persian for one hour. Besides these, from two o'clock to four, her mother used to send her official papers. She had to read these and to write orders on them, so that she might be able to do her future work well.

When her mother came to the throne a durbar was held, at which the little princess had to make a speech for the first time in her life. Everyone was pleased and surprised that the little ten-year-old girl spoke so well.

Three years later, the *nashrah* ceremony, to show that she had finished the reading of the Holy Koran, was held, and went on for a whole month.

In the same year, her mother married again, and an unhappy time began for the girl, for her stepfather, Sidik Hasan Khan, made trouble in the state by trying to get all the power for himself. He also made trouble between Sultan Jahan Begum and her mother, so that to the end of her mother's life she never was very friendly with her daughter. This caused both of them much unhappiness.

3. THE MARRIAGE OF SULTAN JAHAN BEGUM

The marriage of Sultan Jahan Begum was very important. She was the future ruler of the state, and she had to have a husband who was a good man and who would help her in her work. There was an order that the husbands of the Begums of Bhopal should have the title of Nawab, but should take no part in ruling the state. Her grandmother had been very anxious to find a suitable husband for her. She wanted to choose one early, so that she herself could watch over his training. She wanted him to understand the people of the state, in order that he should be able to help his wife. When the little girl was only seven years old, her grandmother began to look for a suitable boy to be her husband. She decided to choose someone from outside the state, and looked for a boy of a good family. He was to be good looking and well behaved, but not in the habit of spending too much. He was to be young enough to be trained for his future work. *A few boys were chosen, and were shown to Her Highness, and she chose Ahmad Ali Khan of Jalalabad. He was then brought to Bhopal and began his training under the care of the Begum. For four years the two children, Ahmad Ali Khan and Sultan Jahan Begum, played and studied and had their meals together. When her grandmother died, the girl's mother called a meeting of the chief men of the state, to ask their opinion of the marriage. They all agreed that Ahmad Ali Khan was a suitable

husband for their future ruler. Then the Viceroy's permission was asked for; and, when this was given, the betrothal ceremony was held in 1873, when Sultan Jahan Begum was fifteen years old, and Ahmad Ali Khan was sixteen. It was arranged that the boy's character should be tested for one year more after this. This was done and he came out of the test well. The marriage took place in 1874, and there was great joy. The bridegroom was given a title and jagirs.

Nawab Ahmad Ali Khan was a very suitable husband for Sultan Jahan Begum. Their married life was very happy, and he was a great help to her in her work. He had a gentle voice and pleasant manners, and everyone respected him. He had simple habits and was always cheerful. They had five children. Two of them were daughters, Sahibzadi Bilkis Jahan Begum, and Sahibzadi Asaf Jahan Begum, both of whom died at an early age, to the great sorrow of their parents.

When her eldest son was born, Sultan Jahan Begum was very happy for he was the first boy to be born in the family after many years. This meant that once more there would be a man to rule the state. The eldest son was named Nawab Nasarullah Khan, and the other two sons were Sahibzada Mohammed Obaidullah Khan and Sahibzada Hamidullah Khan, who was many years younger than his brothers.

4. THE HOME LIFE OF SULTAN JAHAN BEGUM

From the time of her mother's second marriage, Sultan Jahan Begum took no part in the management of the state. So state papers were no longer sent to her for orders, and she gave all her time to her family and her own work. This separation from her mother made her very unhappy, and she tried many times to make friends with her, but her stepfather would not allow it. But in spite of this the daughter's love for her mother remained as great as ever.

Sultan Jahan Begum sometimes went with her mother when she attended important gatherings outside the state. When the Prince of Wales came to India, they went to Calcutta to meet him. She also went with her mother to the Delhi Durbar of 1877, when it was announced that Queen Victoria was to be the Queen-Empress of India.

Sultan Jahan Begum was very hard working. She spent her time, not only in managing her own jagir, but also in reading, needle-work, the training of her children and the care of her household.

In the education of her children she took a great interest. Her elder daughter, Bilkis Jahan Begum, had been looked after by her grandmother from the age of four. Her two elder sons were taught together, as there was only two years' difference in their ages. They were taught Urdu, Persian and handwriting, and were also given religious education. They also learnt

the work the soldiers did. For all these subjects teachers were taken into service but their parents also taught them a great deal. The Begum and her husband wished very much that one of their sons would learn the whole of the Koran by heart, and so become Hafiz. As they found that their second son had a particularly good memory, he was chosen for this. So he gave more time to the study of the Holy Koran, while his elder brother began to learn English.

Their mother always said that the most important things in the training of children were health and good manners and habits. The education of the youngest son began, according to the Mohammedan way, when he was four years and four months and four days old. As in the case of his brothers, his parents watched his studies carefully, and great attention was paid to teaching him how to behave and to have good manners. His mother herself taught him the First Urdu Reader and the Koran, and then teachers were brought for his further studies in Persian, handwriting and English. His mother still watched his studies very carefully, and for a long time herself taught him the Holy Koran and its meaning. She also began to make a translation of it with him. As she wanted to go on with his education on more modern lines, for some time she thought of sending him to the Mayo College at Ajmer. But later she decided that he was too young to be sent away from home, and so an Englishman was sent for as a teacher for him. Later he was sent to the school for the sons of nobles which his mother started in Bhopah

When her two elder sons were twenty-two and twenty-three years old, it was time to make arrangements for their marriages. As usual her mother chose their brides. She chose their cousins, the two daughters of their father's sister. Everyone was pleased with this choice, and the *nikah* ceremony was held. Sultan Jahan Begum did not like show and the habit of spending too much money on ceremonies. So she herself always set an example, and held no unnecessary or costly ceremonies. In this she was following her grandmother, who, before her death, gave orders that her own death ceremony was to be very simple, and that there was to be no costly show. Her mother, too, did not like to spend money on ceremonies which were not really needed by the Mohammedan religion. This example set by the rulers of the state was followed by the people of Bhopal.

The *nikah* ceremony, or the religious part of the marriage of her two elder sons, was, as you have just read, performed, but the *shadi*, or the marriage ceremony had to be put off for a long time. This was due first, to the death of the grandmother of the bridegrooms, and then of their father. When at last it took place, it was held very quietly, because the family was sad.

5. THE REIGN OF NA[^]AB SULTAN JAHAN BEGUM

Nawab Sultan Jahan Begum came to the throne on the death of her mother in 1901. Her mother was ill for some time, and did not like to have doctors with her. Her death was sad, for she began to find out that the friends and officials around her only cared for their own good. They were not really loyal to her, though she knew that it was for them that she had quarrelled with her only daughter, who now was her only near relation." She wanted to see her daughter very much, when she knew that she was dying; but she would not send for her, and she died without seeing her daughter.

When he heard of the death of Nawab Shah Jahan Begum, the Political Agent wrote saying that her daughter should now go to live in the palace, and look after the State. So she left her home, and went to live in the palace, which seemed very dark and empty to her. At first she did not like the change for she was troubled by the thought of the hard task which lay before her.

Very shortly afterwards, a great ceremony was held to mark her coming to the throne, to which many friends were asked. Both the inside and the outside of the palace were beautifully painted. In the hall where the durbar was to be held, there was placed a golden platform, on which were two chairs of gold. These were for the Begum and the Agent to the Governor-General. On the left of the platform were seats for the Political

Agent, Nawab Ali Khan and the chief officers of the state. The Agent to the Governor-General arrived followed by a large number of people. First of all he was met at the station by the Begum, who wore a burkha, and by her three sons. She went with them part of the way, and then left them and went straight to the palace. The whole way was lined with soldiers, standing beside big elephants and camels. The soldiers and a band went in front and behind them came an elephant bearing the *khilat*. Then came the carriage in which sat the Agent to the Governor-General and Nawab Ahmad Ali Khan. After these followed the carriages of the chief guests. As soon as all were seated in the hall, a letter from the Viceroy was read out. Then the Agent to the Governor-General made a speech, to which the Begum replied. The *khilat* on a plate was then placed before the Agent to the Governor-General. He took a pearl necklace from it and put it round the neck of the Begum. He placed another round the neck of her husband, who was also given a sword. Then the Nawab Sahib and his three sons presented *nazar* to the Agent to the Governor-General, and the *darbar* came to an end with the giving of *itr* and *pan* and flowers. The Begum's speech greatly pleased all who heard it. She did not show that she was afraid at having to speak to so many people, particularly as she had to speak while wearing a burkha.

The Begum's task when she came to the throne was very difficult. The government had become very bad, and reform was needed. What made her work even

harder was that, because her mother had been displeased with her for so many years, she had not had much training in the work of a ruler. Whatever she knew she had taught herself from her work in her own jagir. Though she could at once see that there was need to change many things, she very wisely decided that she would make no great changes at first. She needed time to learn more about the work, and to find out which of the officials were able and honest. She had great patience and was a very clever ruler, and so she slowly made Bhopal into a very well-managed state.

Early in her reign her difficulties were added to by the death of her husband, which was very sudden and very sad for her. After his death she felt that there was no one who could give her advice and help her in her hard task. They had been married for twenty-seven years and had lived happily.

While her mother was alive there had been one man who was head of everything, and he was very powerful. The Begum did not like this, for she thought that no minister, however good, could understand and love the people of the state as their ruler could. So at first she said she would be her own minister. This meant that she had to work very hard indeed, but she gladly did so for the good of her subjects. For a year and a half she ruled the state by herself, without any help. So she was able to learn all about the work of everybody which was a very useful thing for a ruler to learn. Later, she divided

the work between two ministers*, when she found good men.

Slowly she began to make the government of the state better. This work took a long time, and could not be done quickly. One by one she reformed all the different departments.

First of all she counted the money belonging to the state and examined how it was spent. There was hardly any money left with which to carry on the work of the state, not even enough money to pay the debts which had to be paid at the end of the month. This worried her greatly and she made up her mind to put it right, and in this she succeeded.

Then she turned her attention to the Revenue Department and found that a new form of land tax was needed. She herself made a careful examination of the books in which the tax was noted down and the people who had to pay the tax. She found that the books were not up to date, and it would take ten years to put them right. The officials who got the tax were not honest, and so the peasants were very unhappy. She decided to make a new arrangement, for five years, while a proper one was being made. The farmers and peasants were very well pleased with this plan.

In order to see for herself how her people lived and to find out the best ways of helping them, she decided to make a tour of her state. This she did also because the poor people were always complaining that they were badly treated. At first she could not go on tour herself, because she was in mourning for her husband.

So she sent her two elder sons in her place. The eldest son toured the eastern and the northern parts of the state, and the second son went to the south and the west. Before they went, their mother had notices sent to all the villages, saying that the people were to tell all their troubles to her sons without fear. Wherever they stopped, they saw the crops, the offices of the *tahsil* and the police, and the schools. They sent letters to their mother telling her about everything which they had seen. These tours did good. The poor people learnt that their ruler loved them and was ready to help them. They felt that she would listen to all their complaints. Also, many bad officials were sent away.

Later on, the Begum herself made some tours in her state. She took with her the chief officers of the state, so that the work of government could be carried on. She planned her tour in such a way that the peasants should not be given any trouble, as was usually the case when an important person went on tour through their lands. She ordered that no camps were to be put up in those places where they would spoil crops, and that everything used was to be paid for. She was always very kind to the poor people, for her grandmother had taught her that it was their hard work which made the state rich, and that her chief duty was to help them. When she was on tour she worked very hard, for eighteen hours a day, even though the hot weather was beginning. She started work at seven a' clock in the morning and began by holding a durbar,

which lasted till ten o'clock. In this durbar she met the officials of the place and talked about the work of their districts with them. Then, after eating her morning meal, she worked until six o'clock in the evening, giving orders about all the complaints of the people. After six o'clock, more papers were brought to her, and she worked at these for two hours. At eight o'clock she had her evening meal. Kven then, after so many hours, her day's work was not finished, and she was often busy until after midnight.

When she was on tour, the Begum liked to meet and talk with the women of the villages through which she passed. She did this in a friendly way, which gave great satisfaction. She thought that it was her duty to please them and to help them in all their troubles, and she found that she could learn much about her state from their talk. As soon as they knew that she was near, the women of a village would come out in crowds to meet her, carrying their children in their arms. They brought little bowls of water which they sprinkled to bring good luck, and into these she threw money for them. They sang songs of welcome. She let them come into her tent and talk to her quite freely about their families and the life in their villages. This shows us how simple she was in her ways. She would talk to the wives of the poor villagers in such a friendly way, that they did not feel afraid of her.

The Begum set up police stations in each district and improved the police, so that there were fewer crimes. She also improved the laws of the state.



By courtesy of His Highness the Ruler of Bhopal

NAWAB SULTAN JAHAN BEGUM, 1901

She was very much interested in education, which she found in a very bad condition. Her mother had opened a school for the children of rich parents, but it soon had to be closed, as the attendance was very poor. Another school was opened for poor children, and also some fifty or sixty primary schools in different parts of the state. But the people did not understand the need for education and did not send their children to the schools. When the Begum visited some of the village schools, she was pained to see their condition. A little of the Koran was taught and not much else, and the people did not seem to care for education. Her tour showed her that one of the very first of her duties was to spread education, particularly the education of girls. The people of Bhopal were willing to have their girls taught in their homes, but all they learned there was the Koran and some Urdu. They did not like their girls to go to school. The Begum thought that such education was of little use. In addition to studying books, they ought to learn needlework and the best way of managing their houses. In this way they should be made happy and should be able to make good homes in the future. She made up her mind to open a school where the girls of Bhopal would be taught these things. In order to make people interested in it, she called a meeting of the chief state officials and leading citizens, and most of them were pleased with the plan. It was not easy to find teachers for the school. The Begum said that the education of Muslim girls could only be improved

by educated Muslim women themselves, for they alone would know what kind of education was suited for their girls. A beginning was made with classes in a house, where lessons were given in arithmetic, geography and domestic economy and the Koran was taught regularly. The school was named the Madressa Sulaimania, and at the opening ceremony all the big Muslim ladies were present. Forty girls joined the school in the first year, all of whom were under ten years of age, and there were three teachers. Nawab Sultan Jahan Begum took a great interest in all the questions for the good of women. She herself studied domestic economy, and even learnt to make lace and baskets. In this way she thought others would be more ready to learn these subjects.

She was also interested in the education of the sons of the nobles and the jagirdars of the state, and in 1903 she opened the Alexandra Nobles School. She had been very sorry to find that there was not even one person in the state who was a graduate of a university, and there were very few who had passed even the matriculation examination. She had hoped to find able men among the jagirdars who would help her in her reforms, but she found instead that they were less interested in education than any other class of her subjects. They were lazy and showy and spent far too much money on marriages and festivals. For the sons of the jagirdars, she said, something more than a university education was necessary, for they needed to learn how to manage their lands.

Nawab Sultan Jahan Begum set up a separate school for them in Bhopal, and, as you have already read, she sent her own youngest son to this school, in the hope that this would make the jagirdars follow her example, and send their sons there too.

Some years latter the Begum went to Europe in order to see for herself what kind of education was given to the children there. She wanted to judge how far it was suitable for the people of Bhopal. Soon after her return a party was given at which many ladies of the state were present, and the Begum made a speech. She told them that she had travelled in many countries and studied the habits of their people. She said they should copy what was good in the West, particularly the education of women, and the way the women were all able to train their children. She told them that one of the things that she had seen was that¹ in England in the homes of the rich and the poor alike the children were carefully taught by their niotliers. Their mothers built up their characters and habits. But so few Indian women were educated enough to do this, and this is what she wanted to help them to do. But, she said, they must not think that she wanted them to give up their own religious customs and Indian habits. They must hold on to all the best of the Indian ways, and not give them all up to copy the West. Even while keeping *purdah*, women can be educated and can learn to help others, she told them, and she wanted all women to lead useful lives. 'I want you to be able to fill your lives with some-

thing more than useless talk and foolish ceremonies.' she said.

There was plague in Bhopal in 1902 and 1903, and the people were very afraid. When strict rules were made to stop it, many people complained. The people were ordered to leave their houses, and their houses were then cleaned. They did not understand that this was all for their good, and so they became very frightened. The Begum understood what the people were thinking. She saw the most necessary thing was to stop their fear, for, while they were so afraid, little could be done to stop the spread of the plague. So she gave an order saying that nothing which was against their customs and religion would be done. Nothing would be done which could make them more afraid. She herself toured the state in 'spite of the danger,' and this helped to make the people less afraid.

The Begum had many a time to go to durbars outside the state along with other ruling princes. We have already seen how she went with her mother to Calcutta and to the Delhi Durbar. Soon after coming to the throne she went to Delhi to take part in the durbar for the coronation of King Edward VII and there she sat with the other princes, wearing a *burkha*. This showed her great courage, for she must have been naturally very shy to sit among the princes where no other princess was present. When arrangements were being made for the durbar, the Government wrote to her saying that if she would feel shy sitting among

all the other princes, a seat could be arranged for her with the ladies who were going to watch the durbar, in the *purdah* portion of the hall. But she replied that she would sit wearing a *burkha* with the other princes. At the durbar the princes one after another went up to the Viceroy to be presented to him, and the Begum went up in her turn, with her sons.

The Begum was very happy when, in 1903, she became a grandmother, for a daughter, Birjis Jahan, was born to her second son. Then later in the same year, a son was born to her eldest son. There was great joy, for the baby was, after his father, the next man to sit on the throne. The news was brought to her when she was in Medina, and she was asked to choose a name for the child. She named him Mohammed Habibullah Khan. She was all the more glad because she had been the only one of the Begums of Bhopal who had had sons. Now she also had a grandson.

Both her two elder sons wanted to enter the army. The eldest son, of course, had to learn his work as ruler of the state, and so he could not become a soldier. But the second son was able to do what he wished, and joined the army.

6. THE HAJ

You have read how Nawab Sikander Begum went on a Haj to Mecca, and was the first Muslim ruler of India to do so. Then her daughter had also been anxious to do the Haj, but she was not able to do so. Like her mother and grandmother, Nawab Sultan Jahan Begum had the same wish and in the third year of her reign, she was able to carry it out. The journey took her in all five months and ten days. It should be remembered that her grandmother Tiad taken a year. This shows that travelling had become much less difficult and slow in the forty years which had passed between the pilgrimages of the two ladies.

Nawab Sultan Jahan Begum has herself told the story of her journey in her book, *The Story of a Pilgrimage to Hijaz*. Her two younger sons and her daughter-in-law went with her, while her eldest son had to stay at home to look after the state. Before leaving Bhopal, she asked her people to forgive any mistakes which she had made and she advised her ministers and officers to be kind and just to her subjects. The prayers of her subjects for her safe return showed how much they loved her. She left Bhopal for Bombay, and sailed on a ship called the *Akbar*. This was the first time that she had been on the sea. Eighteen days later, they landed at Jedda, in Arabia.

She was received there with great honour by the officials. Special arrangements were made by the Sultan of Turkey, who then ruled over Arabia,

for her safety on the journey to Medina. A guard of Turkish soldiers was sent for her, and then the caravan set off. They were attacked a few times by Bedouins, and the camp had to be well guarded at night. As she neared Medina, more Turkish soldiers were sent to receive her. After staying there for some days, she put on her pilgrim's dress and went on to Mecca, and reached there on 23 February 1904. She was met outside the city by the chief nobles. She stayed in Mecca for sixteen days, and then returned to Jeddah and sailed on the *Akbar* once more. When on 20 March the *Akbar* entered Bombay harbour, the Begum was met by her eldest son, her granddaughter Birjis Jahan, and the state officials. After a few days' stay in Bombay she returned to Bhopal.

Nawab Sultan Jahan Begum ruled over the state of Bhopal for twenty-five years, and will always be remembered as one who loved her subjects and helped them. She ruled them wisely and well and was a very noble woman.

THE MAHARANI. OF TRAVANCORE

You have now read about many famous women in the different parts of India, and about the difficulties which they had to face in working to* help other women. Her Highness Maharani Setu Parvati Bai of Travancore comes from a part of India in which the women have much more education and freedom and have not to fight against such difficulties. She is, therefore, trying to help women in the rest of India to make the same progress.

1. HER COUNTRY

Travancore is a very beautiful country, and has been called the Garden of India. Many travellers from all over the world go to see it. Travancore is right in the south of India, and is shaped like a triangle. On the west is the Arabian Sea, and on the east are high mountains, the Western Ghats. In some parts of the state there are thick jungles, where many wild animals live. The Maharaja has made what is called a game sanctuary. It means a place where wild animals may live in safety, because no one is allowed to kill them. It is on the shores of a very beautiful lake, the Periyar Lake, which is eight miles long, and in which are some beautiful islands. People visit the lake to watch the animals; As they sail on the water they can see elephants, deer of many different kinds, boars, bears, panthers, leopards and

tigers walking in the forest or coming to the edge of the lake to bathe and drink. The number of elephants in Travancore is very large, because *no* one is allowed to shoot them. The birds and the flowers in the jungles are very beautiful.

Besides the jungles, the canals and the rivers and the backwaters of Travancore are famous for their beauty and usefulness. Backwaters (or lagoons as they are sometimes called) are lakes of sea water running into the land behind the coast. They are very useful because boats can go inland on their waters. Much of the trade and travelling in Travancore is carried on by boat, for besides the backwaters there are the rivers and canals. The rivers are also being used to make electricity. Visitors to Travancore are very interested in watching all the different sorts of boats which sail on the backwaters, and also in seeing the life of the people on the shores. On the shores of the backwaters there are villages and coconut palms, and the people can be seen at their work, fishing or spinning. They are also very fond of boat racing.

Travancore has a sea coast one hundred and fifty miles long, and a long piece of land divides the backwaters from the sea. There are some ports on the coast, of which four are the most famous—Alleppey, Quflon, Colachel and Trivandrum. The first three of them have been famous for many hundreds of years, because of the spice trade. Travellers from Europe wrote about them nearly seven hundred years ago. Alleppey is now the chief port and market of the state. It has a very

good place for ships, and ships on their way from Karachi to Rangoon stop there. From Alleppey coconuts and coir matting, *copra*, rubber, tea, pepper, sugar and turmeric are sent out. So many coconut palms grow in Travancore that the making of coir mats and the milling of coconut oil are very important industries.

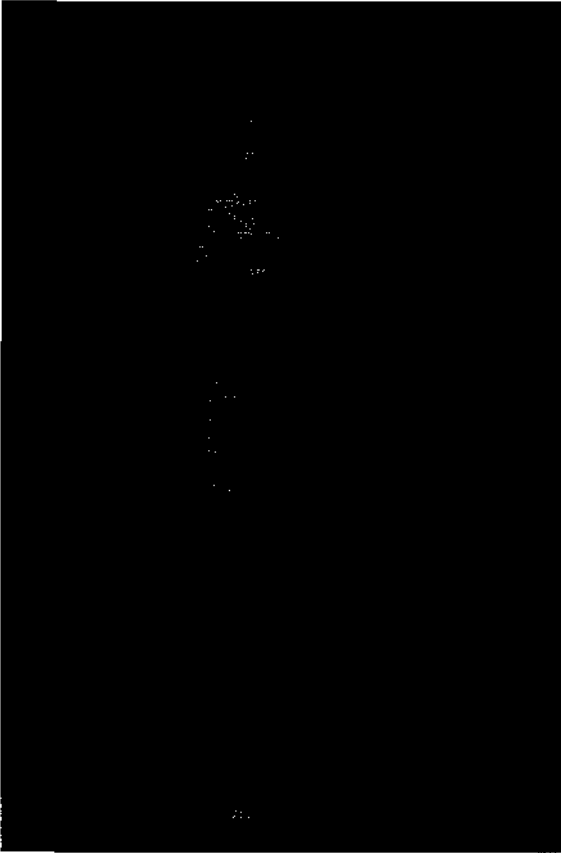
Trivandrum is the capital of the state. The sands there are a mile wide. In Trivandrum is the Maharaja's palace and some famous temples. There is also a zoo and an art gallery. Thirty-three miles away is the old capital of the state, called Padmanabhapuram, where there are old palaces. In the south of the state is Cape Comorin, the most southerly point in India, where many pilgrims go, and where there is a famous temple to the goddess Kanya Kumari. There are many other places of pilgrimage in Travancore to which pilgrims go from all over India. There are over two thousand temples, in the state some of which are very old indeed.

2. HER FAMILY

The ruling family of Travancore is the oldest in India, and is said to be descended from Manu, the great law-giver. Most of the states which were famous in olden times are no longer to be found and many of the old ruling families have lost their thrones. But Travancore and its rulers have not changed. The Chera family was one of the three great ruling families of South Indian history. The sea on the west and the mountains on the east have defended Travancore from attacks and so have the courage of her people and her

rulers. So the country has never been taken by an enemy. In early times the Chola and the Pandva armies attacked the state, but were beaten. Later she had to defend herself against the empire of Vijayanagar. Over six hundred years ago one of the rulers of Travancore, Maharaja Ravi Varma Samgramadhina, led his army beyond the Ghats. He beat the Cholas and the Pandyas and crowned himself Emperor of South India at Conjeeveram. When the Portuguese came to Travancore, she still could not be conquered. She also drove the Dutch settlers out of Malabar, and so ended their hopes of power in India. Later the state became friendly with the East India Company and helped the English much. Travancore soldiers helped them bravely in many famous battles, and together they defeated Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan. About three hundred years ago a famous maharaja ruled the state, called Maharaja Marthanda Varma, and he brought all the smaller rulers under him.

The rulers of this family, besides being great soldiers, were also famous students of Sanskrit and Malayalam, and did a great deal to help writers and artists. They were very interested in education and in the improvement of their state. Travancore was peaceful and well governed long before the rest of India had peace. Justice was given quickly, and the *rulers* spent much money for the good of their people and very little on themselves. They ruled so well that Travancore became a very good state. A Legislative Council was started in 1888, and was the first to be set up in an



HER HIGHNESS MAHARANI SETU PARVATI BAI
OF TRAVANCORE, 1937

Indian State, In 1933 it was improved and made into two councils, the Sri Mulam Assembly and the Sri Chitra State Council. The rulers of Travancore always treated people of other religions well, and were very kind to the first Christian priests who landed in their state. They gave them money and land to build churches. They also tried to help the depressed classes. The present Maharaja of Travancore is the son of Her Highness Maharani Setu Parvati Bai.

3. HER CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION

She was born on 8 November 1896 at Mavelikara. When she was four years old, she was adopted from the Mavelikara family into that of the rulers of the State, along with Her Highness Setu Lakshmi Bai, the Senior Maharani of Travancore. Her early education was given by Indian teachers and she learnt Malayalam and Sanskrit first. Later she started to study English and French. When she was still very young she came to like reading, and read a large number of books in English and Sanskrit. Like all the rest of her family she was very good at music, and studied both Indian and Western music with great interest.

4. HER TRAVELS

The Maharani has travelled much for she believes that travel is a very useful part of education. She has visited many places in Europe and Asia, not merely for the sake of enjoyment or seeing new things, but so that she might have a wide knowledge of the world. She has travelled to see for herself what life in other countries is like. She has tried to learn what is good and useful in each country, in order to be able to help her own people to improve. She was the first member of the Travancore ruling family and the first woman from any of the ruling families of South India to visit Europe, and so it was a very brave step for her to take. Her first visit to Europe was for the sake of her health, and she took with her her only daughter, Princess Kartika Thirunal. The Maharani's daughter is even more important in Travancore than in other Indian States, for according to custom it is her son who will be the next ruler of the State.

When she returned to India, the Maharani was very pleased at the warm welcome which everyone gave her. Many speeches were made in the different places through which she passed. These showed how brave people thought she was in making the voyage and doing* what nobody in her family had done before. Her subjects loved her because she did so much to help them. She hoped that others would follow her example and not be afraid to do things just because no one had done them before.

She visited Europe a second time in 1933, taking

her son, the present Maharaja, with her so that he too might learn by travel. She saw many countries in Europe besides England, and met many famous people, including the King and Queen of England and the Pope at Rome. When she reached London, she was welcomed by the students from Travancore who were studying there. Then a big party was held in her honour, and women from all the countries of the world made speeches.

- Her travels in Europe only made her love for India greater. But she wanted to find out what the differences between India and Europe were, and what lessons India could learn. Most of all she was pleased to see the progress which women had made. They were taking their part in the work of the world-and were always trying to find more and more kinds of work which they could do. They were taking a keen interest in their country and its progress. One thing which pleased her in Europe was the love which the people had for old things, old pictures and statues and stories and everything which has come from the early days of their countries. She has tried to help the people of her state to take the same interest in old things and to try to keep them.

Another thing which she noticed and which she would like the people of India to copy is the way the people in Europe are always ready to work together for the common good. Again she saw how well they made people know all the beautiful places and health resorts in their countries. She felt sad to think that in India

no one tried to make people visit the many beautiful and famous places. People hear much about the beauty of Europe, but no one tells them that there are as good places in India. The Maharani told her people that they must in the same way make the beauties of Travancore known to the world. When she came back to India she told the people all about these things. She wanted them to learn what was good from other countries, but not to give up their own Indian ways.

Besides travelling in Europe the Maharani has visited many parts of India. She also went with her son and his younger brother to the Dutch East Indies. Java, and Bali, the two Islands which they visited, are places where there are very famous temples and statues, the work of Hindus who went there long ago. On the way she and her sons were given a great welcome at Colombo and Singapore.

5. HER WORK FOR WOMEN

The Maharani has done a great deal for the women in Travancore, by her own example as well as in other ways. But, as you have read, the women in Travancore are more educated than those in the rest of India, and so the Maharani has also done a great deal to help the women of other parts. She has tried to make them help themselves. She has been President of the All-India Women's Conference in Calcutta and again when it was held in Travancore, which was the first time that it had been held in an Indian State. The speeches which she has made at these and other

Her Work for

conferences show us what the M must do to help India and to in

She says that women have a great work to do for India, and without their help men will not be able to make India into a great nation. Men are so busy with politics and with eafning a living that they look on each other as enemies and forget that they are brothers. So women must help them by working for unity. Women can also help by training their sons to be brave and to be fit leaders of the people, and by teaching them to have noble thoughts. They should teach their children to value all the good old Indian customs, but to be ready to give up those which are no longer useful. She said: 'Let us not forget the words of the Vedic hymn that a woman should be the mother of *Veer as*, of men of courage and power.'

In her speeches Her Highness has also pointed out in which ways the position of women needs to be improved and what they must do to help themselves. The greatest need is that women should be educated, for men cannot make progress while women are backward. She would like to see compulsory education for women tried everywhere very quickly. The women of Travancore are much more educated than those in any other state and in most of the provinces of India, and for every two educated men there is one educated woman. The people of Travancore do not object if girls and boys are taught together.

The women of Travancore have also escaped the difficulties which keep back so many women of India,

and this is why they have been able to become educated. In Malabar (of which Travancore is a part) there is no custom of early marriage and therefore there are no child widows. The women here have a very important position, for the mother and not the father is the head of the family, and the children get property through their mother and not through their fathers. A boy will get the property of his mother's brother, instead of that of his father. Women are treated as equal to men in every way.

There is no purdah in Travancore, and the Maharani in her speeches has said that the women in other parts of India should try hard to end the purdah system. She has told them that though it once was useful it is so no longer. When a purdah woman is left alone through the death of her husband or father or son, she is quite helpless. She cannot look after her property as she could have done if she were not in purdah. Also she cannot train her children properly when she is in purdah, for she knows nothing about the world. However well-educated she may be in books, she cannot form their characters as she should. This is the kind of work which a mother can do much better than a father, and so it is a great loss to the children to have a mother who keeps purdah.

The giving of very large sums of money to the husband on the marriage of a daughter is another custom which Her Highness would like to see ended.

The women of India have a very hard task before them if they are going to put right all these things,

but the Maharani has told them not to lose hope. They must remember that the women in Europe have also had to fight hard for their freedom. In the past the position of women in India used to be very good,, much better than it was in Europe. It was not in olden times but later on that the troubles of women in India began. It was then that they were not educated, and that purdah and early marriage became the custom. But to put these things right now women must learn to be interested not only- in their homes but in their country and in the good of other women. They must learn to work together and be brave enough to do what they think right. 'The clouds are lifting.' she has said, 'and the dawn is breaking. May it be given to us to see the sunrise.'

6. HER SON

The present Maharaja of Travancore, His Highness Bala Rama Varma, is the son of Maharani Setu Parvati Bai. She has trained him well and through him has done much for the people of Travancore. He himself has said how much he owes to her, and what a great help she is to him in his task of ruling his state. She has taken a very great interest in his education and has taught him to think always of his duty as a ruler over so many people.

He was born on 7 November 1912, and came to the throne in 1924. As he was then still too young to rule, the Senior Maharani, Her Highness Setu Lakshmi Bai, ruled for him. Then in 1931, when he was

nineteen years old, he was given full ruling powers, and in the few years which have passed since then he has done much good to his subjects. His most important act has been to order that all temples in the state are to be open to all the Hindus of every caste. This was very important for the whole of India as well as for Travancore. It has helped in the progress of the Depressed Classes everywhere, and has led other people also to work for their good. In August 1937 the Hindu women of Travancore thanked the Maharani for the part she had taken in this reform.

The Maharani is very happy to see what progress the state is making under her son. Education and industry are becoming bigger and new factories have been opened for rubber and for clay for making pottery. Electricity is also being used more. In the new Travancore which is being made, Her Highness the Maharani has played an important part. By the example which she has set and the advice which she has given, she is also doing much to build up a new India.

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EXAMINATIONS IN INDIA

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HIND KITABS

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PREFACE

The thoughts contained in this pamphlet have been expressed in different places and on different occasions during the past ten years, mostly in teachers' journals and before teachers' meetings. An attempt is now made to put them together after cutting out the technical portions and bringing them up to date.

I believe that no reform of education in India would be possible until examinations by marking were reformed almost out of shape. I hope that the discussion contained in this booklet will make clear many of the essential features of examination reform, and will prove easy if not interesting reading even to the general reader.

I thank the Progressive Club of the University of Allahabad for taking up the publication of such a booklet on Examinations, a subject which usually fails to touch the imagination although it never fails to muddle the life. It will be a source of great satisfaction to the author if the post-war reforms in Indian education reflect some of the ideas contained in this booklet.

D. N. MUKERJEE

1. INTRODUCTORY

THE 'SARGENT SCHEME'¹

The report of the Central Advisory Board of Education on Post-War Educational Development in India is a momentous document which for the first time in the history of the country tries to envisage the problem of education for the whole of India in all its aspects and state some of the fundamental principles, as distinct from the policy of expediency and conservatism which has characterized the actions of the State during the better part of a century of educational practice. It is a poor compliment which the report pays to the existing state of affairs, in the following words:

'...the present system does not provide the foundations on which an effective structure could be erected ; in fact much of the present rambling edifice will have to be scrapped in order that something better may be substituted.'

Is it then not a fact that valuable time, energy, and money expended for a whole century on this system have been utterly wasted ? How is it possible to counteract the loss of faith of the people of the land in the efficacy of education as an important means of making their children better and more efficient human beings, able to live worthy lives and hold their own in any situation in life ? If much of the present system has to be scrapped, it is but common sense to begin the scrapping at once, lest the harmful practices further eat into the vitals of the system and make recovery well-nigh impossible.

It is rather unfortunate that this Report cheaply dismisses the important subject of Examinations, which should have received the first attention. Is it not a fact that an old and unscientific system of examinations has steadily come to sway and control the curriculum and teaching at all

stages of the educational ladder? Is it not a fact that the results of examinations are the only criterion by which judgments have been passed on schools and colleges, and the employment of their products determined? And all this, in spite of the fact that the superstition of '*examiner's marks*' has been thoroughly exposed and methods of reform repeatedly suggested for at least twenty-five years. Everybody would have felt happy if the latest expert pronouncement on education had at least said that the whole country should be prepared for a drastic change in the examination system leading on to a situation in which *marks* will have only a minor value and perhaps the last place in the matter of judging the progress and ability of the products of education.

WASTAGE IN EXAMINATIONS

No one except perhaps those who have some advantage or income to derive can possibly feel happy or satisfied with the intricate, wasteful and unproductive paraphernalia of printing, correspondence, form-filling, checking and cross-checking kept in constant motion between September and July every year in the obscure atmosphere of a suspicious, though time-honoured, '*confidential*' theory. No one can but have all admiration and sympathy for the groans and agony of the time-worn machine which throbs and toils to perform its out-of-date and thankless functions, but no brief can be held for the system which continues to permit this machine of muddle and wastefulness to cast its dark shadow constantly on the educational institutions by working on the indefensible supposition that setting of question-papers, marking of answer-books, and the final declaration of results, in the manner in which they are practised at present, are reliable or satisfactory in any sense of the terms.

One really wonders why no serious effort has ever been

made to discover whether all this trouble is really worth taking over examinations, both inside and outside schools and colleges, and whether the traditional system of examinations, judged by the real value of its results, does or does not make for waste of time, money and effort which the country can hardly afford to indulge in. From the point of view of national waste only¹, if not from any other consideration, our examinations should have been simplified and rationalized long, long ago.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL EXAMINATIONS

For the sake of convenience we shall primarily refer to school examinations as internal, and to the High School (or Matriculation) examination as an external examination. The discussions can with slight modification be applied to the other parallel examinations.

The fact that the traditional practices connected with external examinations have gradually filtered down to the lowest classes in schools has caused perhaps the gravest harm to teachers and their methods of instruction. If such a situation has been allowed to grow, the responsibility primarily lies with the directing and inspecting authorities who have never warned the heads of institutions against the evil or told them exactly what to do. If education, and

1. In the fifth year of the war examining bodies are all feeling the acute shortage of paper and mounting cost of printing, and yet there has been no state effort worth mentioning to reduce the number of papers in the various subjects, to abolish written examinations in certain subjects, or to introduce the system of comprehensive attainment tests of the 'standardized* or 'new-type ' form—matters which would at one stroke have improved examinations and reduced wastage to a considerable extent. This temporary modification of examination procedure, as a war measure, would have produced valuable data for expert investigation later on, leading certainly to important steps in the reform of the whole system of internal and external examinations. There is no dearth of such experts in the country even at the present time to suggest interim reforms of the nature suggested here.

particularly school education, is to fulfil its duty towards the growing manhood of the country, the idea must be thoroughly impressed on all concerned that internal school examinations, at least up to the end of the middle stage, must be absolutely different in form and detail from the external or public examinations. The aim of the former is to act as a necessary supplement of instruction by recording the progress of scholars at suitable intervals, while the latter cannot but be an instrument for passing judgment on the results of a certain period of educational training.

If it be argued that students have to be prepared for the latter, the process of preparation, if at all necessary, can easily begin from Class IX, leaving all the previous classes to enjoy and profit by a well-co-ordinated and complete course of training rather than be made to feel periodically the undesirable dread of a future ordeal. This dread at present prevents teachers from teaching, (and students from working) at their best, and with due respect for what is called the psychology of individual differences; with the most unfortunate result that the genius of the race is retarded and mediocrity perpetuated with far-reaching consequences to the well-being of the whole nation. It is inconceivable that with a scheme of education applicable to the whole country the state should allow the present state of affairs to continue.

AGE-LONG DISSATISFACTION

(1) The Report of the Indian Universities Commission, 1902, contains the view of the Commissioners that it was 'beyond doubt that the greatest evil from which the system of university education in India suffers is that teaching is subordinated to examination, and not examination to teaching.' (p. 43)

(2) The Government of India resolution on educational policy of 1904 says:

*In recent years they (the examinations) have grown to extravagant dimensions and their influence has been allowed to dominate the whole system of education in India, with the result that instruction is confined within the rigid framework of prescribed courses, that all forms of training which do not admit of being tested by written examinations are liable to be neglected, and that teachers and pupils are tempted to concentrate their energies not so much upon genuine study as upon the questions likely to be set by the examiners.'

(3) The Calcutta University Commission, 1917-19, says: 'It is impossible to peruse the evidence on the examination system as it exists today in Bengal without a feeling of profound sadness. The immensity of effort, disproportionate to the results; the painful anxiety of the candidates; the mechanical award of marks encouraging the least fruitful efforts of the mind; a leniency sometimes neglecting the grave responsibility of the University to the public and tending to class the less with the more deserving students; the number of failures in spite of that leniency; the sterilising influence of the whole system on both teachers and taught, and the consequent crying waste of the intelligence of the youth of Bengal; these are evils which have been brought home to us by the most convincing evidence from witnesses of every section of the community, as well as by what we ourselves have seen. These evils can only be eradicated by resolute and determined reform' (Vol. II. Pt. I, pp. 224-5)

(i) Professor Amaranath Jha in the course of his presidential address delivered before the Examination Section of the 13th All-India Education Conference held at Calcutta during Christmas 1937, observed:

⁴ Should the examination be mainly a paper examination? Should all school examinations be on strictly academical lines? And should there be no contact between the

mysterious shadow of the examiner and the pupil trying to satisfy his demands from a distance ? How are character, physical fitness, cleanliness, record of social service, healthy instincts, to be appraised ? The obvious answer is, *trust the teacher more*. The testimony of the teachers should carry more weight. The present system is satisfactory up to a point for testing scholarship ; but the whole man—a compound of memory, intelligence, emotion, physical and moral qualities—needs a modified test.!

(5) The Zakir Husain Report, 1938, makes the following statement:

'The system of examinations prevailing in our country has proved a curse to education. A bad system of education has, if possible, been made worse by awarding to examinations a place out of all proportion to their utility. As a measure of the work of individual pupils or the schools by a consensus of expert opinion, examinations are neither valid nor complete. They are inadequate and unreliable, capricious and arbitrary. We shall take care to guard against their baneful influence.

'The purpose of the examination can be served by an administrative check of the work of the schools in a prescribed area, by a sample measurement of the attainment of selected groups of students conducted by the inspectors of the Education Board. The tests so administered should be constructed in close consultation with the specialists responsible for curriculum revision. They should be long enough to cover the whole range of curriculum and should be in a form which makes marking objective and independent of individual judgment.'

(6) The Report of the Primary and Secondary Education Reorganization Committee, U. P., 1939, contains the following observations:

'The frequency of examinations and the manner of

conducting them exercises an adverse effect upon the aims and methods of education. An unhealthy and forced concentration upon memorisation of facts and isolated bits of knowledge prevents the development of sound judgment and organic view of things. Under the strain of examinations students are left with little opportunity to think for themselves or to follow out the ideas which arise in their minds. Thus their individuality remains undeveloped. Both teaching and learning tend to become mechanical and even the curricula and courses are drawn up more to suit -the purposes of examinations than educational needs. Examinations tend to create among students the evil habit of neglecting work during the course of the session and of concentrating on it right at the end. They toe injurious to the health of the pupils and lead to over-strain. Individual differences are ignored and it is not possible through the traditional type of examination to discover the different types and ranges of ability for which education has now to be provided.

* In fact it is notorious that the marking of examinations is largely unreliable and that the examinations themselves do not furnish an adequate measure of the achievements of pupils. The element of chance is always present in the examinations in a large degree. The standards which examiners adopt are mainly subjective and, therefore, liable to great variation from person to person and year to year. In the case of even the same examiner it is not possible to maintain the standard of uniformity...'

(Ch. IX, pp. 87-88)

(7) For several years past, the New Education Fellowship, through its International Institute Examinations Enquiry Committee, has been making valuable and striking contribution towards the reform of public examinations in most of the civilized countries of the world. I offer no apology for quoting some extracts from the reports of the

World Conference of this Fellowship :

(i) 'Many existing educational systems regulate the activities of the normal pupils by the needs of those who may hope ultimately to specialise in the study of a few academical subjects. Examinations usually have been devised to set or to improve academic standards with the result that courses have become more intensive and at the same time more narrow. General education involves a perception of the interrelationship between subjects which academic examinations actively discourage. The premature specialisation to which they often lead is destructive of broad understanding. Thus even to the able pupil the intensive but restricted study which they suggest is harmful. With regard to pupils of less ability we have in all civilisations multitudes of those young people engaged in tasks for which they are not really equipped,

(ii) 'Further.....the academicism and narrowness of our system has been imposed on non-European nations and races with calamitous results. The evidence Dr. Rugg has adduced from the Phillipines is comparable with that received from India and Africa at the British Commonwealth Education Conference, and *examinations appear to have been the means whereby those false standards have been imposed** The books available to these pupils have been designed for examination use and are occidental in their contents and outlook, ignoring native conditions, native traditions, and native habits of thought,

(iii) 'It is to be feared that even in the West the curriculum shows a similar disregard for essential realities. The examination system of most countries has hitherto been of conservative influence tending to the retention of primitive conceptions of education. (Nice, 1932)

(iv) 'Oppressive examinations and rigid curricula are the attempt of society to obtain a guaranteed product in the

face of large numbers and a huge machine, but you cannot play for safety in education. Every advance is here gained by the creative acts of free individuals. Every way out of the present tangle leads in some measure to a loosening of the bonds, to experiment and therefore uncertainty, to elasticity and therefore variation, to trust and therefore risk. An educational system can be made to a considerable extent failure-proof in turning out a product that comes up to certain minimum specifications, but that product will not be the wise and cultured personality we seek, but a standardised human being without the initiative or individuality which constitute the salt of human life. Let us therefore turn our backs on such a method of controlling the free spirit of education and run instead the risk employed in trusting those we have made responsible for class teaching...

(v) 'The use of the same examination for a variety of incompatible purposes, such as assessment of ability, determination of attainment, selection of the specially gifted, and control of curriculum and teachers, is a system productive of grave confusion and harm as long as external examinations are used as a chief means of evaluating schools and pupils, in that they will lead to deplorable over-emphasis upon the more external and easily examined parts of the curriculum together with a neglect of those less easily assessed, and ignoring of creative and social activities and gifts, besides attending to stereotyped curriculum and methods. The present examination system is a handicap to the normal progress and development of education throughout the world.

(vi) 'The opinion seems greatly to be growing that externally imposed examinations should be abolished and their place taken by a system of record-keeping and internal examinations, which maintain standards and make for uniformity where such is desirable while allowing to each

school and teacher freedom for invention and experiment—a freedom which is essential if schools are to be living entities and education a cultural process* This system of record-keeping, based upon an extension and elaboration of that already in vogue might finally cover the whole of a child's activity and interests, describing physical development and family history, enumerating special interests and hobbies and making some evaluation of creative and social activities. It should also record the percentages obtained of "intelligence", vocational and temperamental tests (and in all probability in certain achievement tests) as well as the results of internal examinations and the teachers' estimates of past work.'

(Report of the Enquiry Committee, 1935)

Thus we see that not only in India but almost all over the world grave dissatisfaction has been expressed in responsible and authoritative quarters with the traditional system of examinations. It is natural and legitimate, therefore, to look for ways and means for doing full justice to the Indian child from the point of view of his possibilities as well as limitations and pointing out to him the way of life to which he is destined by nature and may be entitled by nurture. The stern fact that constantly glares at us is that no reform of education is possible in this country without a root-and-branch reform of the current examination system and bringing the latter down from the high pedestal to which it has so long laid a claim without inherent right or moral justification.

The real tragedy of the situation in India lies in the fact that the same complaints have been repeatedly recorded from all quarters for thirty years without anything being done to remove them. The Calcutta University Commission called for 'resolute and determined reform' in 1919 but there has been no effective or tangible reform of examinations in any part of the country during two decades. Is

this fatal impotence itself a glaring consequence of the deadening influence of examinations ?

2- THE PROBLEM

PURPOSE OF EXAMINATIONS

It is rather unfortunate that the purpose of the High School Examination in the United Provinces is not defined anywhere. It is doubtful if it is adequately or clearly defined in any other part of India. If we want to understand it we must draw upon prevalent tradition and usage.

The High School Certificate is the recognized minimum qualification for entry into government service and into different types of general, vocational and professional institutions. Hence it has a special value and importance of its own. This value has been acquired not through any virtue or merit inherent in the examination, but really through a convenient supposition that because it has taken the place of the now defunct Entrance, Matriculation, or School-Leaving Certificate Examinations, it has automatically inherited the advantage which those examinations were enjoying in their own days. The extensive widening of the scope of education and the complex needs of changed times have never been allowed to influence the structure and methods of this important examination.

There is, however, no doubt that a public examination is needed at the end of the school or 'secondary' stage of education, to assess the quality and value of the training imparted during the previous six years or so, and to test the fitness of the pupil for further training or for the needs of life and livelihood.

But these are two distinct purposes, closely interrelated but not wholly interdependent, and, now that the examination does not clearly indicate whether either or both of

these purposes have been satisfactorily achieved, it is very necessary for the administration to state precisely what the aim or aims of the High School Examination will be in the coming order of things, *i. e.* whether the High School (or any corresponding) Certificate will continue to remain a vague and uncertain index of a candidate's attainment as at present, or whether it will state his abilities, attainments, deficiencies, and possibilities in a clear and comprehensive manner.

On this important question of the purpose of an examination, the Calcutta University Commission has the following telling remarks to make:

'The present confusion of the examination systems is largely due to uncertainty as to their purpose. It may be asked why universities are content with such confusions and uncertainty if we are right in thinking that they exist. The reply, in most cases, is simple. They are often concealed by the apparent definiteness and mathematical precision of the marking system. The university defines the percentage of marks which a candidate must obtain in order to succeed and if he obtains that percentage, why, it may be said, should any further questions be asked? Ought not every one concerned to be satisfied ?

* Yet it is clear that in order to convey any intelligible meaning to the general public, and even to an enlightened public, a minimum percentage of marks ought to be translatable into some form of words; and it is unfortunately true that the examining body would in most cases be hard put to it to give the translation. There is, as a rule, no want of good faith on the part of the examining body. It is itself deceived by the illusory appearance of certainty conveyed by figures to which it is nevertheless unable to attach any precise meaning.'

TEACHING AND EXAMINING

Since teaching and examination are complementary processes, it seems necessary here to point out some essentials of instruction before we can think of the machinery by which that instruction can be subjected to the process of testing.

Sir Percy Nunn, late Professor of Education at the London University and one of the greatest educational philosophers of modern times, explains the distinction between the various stages of education in the following words :

' We now recognise, at least in principle, that "youth is the time for education", and that youth, even the youth of the poor, lasts until the age of eighteen. University education excluded, there are three educational periods corresponding to the three major waves of physical and mental growth. First, there is infancy merging into childhood between 6 and 8. This is the period for education in the home or the nursery school, where Froebel and Montessori should be the presiding deities. Next comes the wave of childhood, whose force is normally spent at the age not far from twelve. This should be for all children the period for "primary education", that is, for a common scheme of instruction and training that meets the intellectual and moral needs of childhood and supplies the indispensable basis for the education of youth. Lastly, there is the wave which carries the boy or girl through adolescence to the dawning of manhood or womanhood about the age of eighteen. This marks out the period of "secondary education". The extension of this name to all forms of post-primary education is admittedly a violation of present usage, but is nevertheless highly desirable. For, it emphasises a fact whose full recognition would be one of the greatest of educational reforms 5 namely, that the

problems of educating youth—whether the youth of the aristocracy or the youth of the slums—are but variants of a single problem, the problem of dealing fruitfully with a life-period whose central fact is adolescence.' (*Education: Its Data and First Principles*)

The veteran Paul Monroe, presiding over the third Conference of the International Institute Examinations Enquiry Committee held at Binard (France) in September 1938, speaking on behalf of the Committee said:

'We agreed that the secondary educational field was probably the field of the greatest importance and of the greatest lack of assurance or settlement of the problems, and that it was the field in which most of our modern educational problems had their immediate bearing; largely because secondary education, in whatever country it may be considered, has for its purpose the selection of the leaders who are to dominate or to direct the social, political and cultural movements in the future. The major problem was the function of the secondary school in selecting these leaders. We also agreed that the crucial problem was this process of selection which was essentially what we called the examination system.'

The 'Sargent Scheme' too, has recorded its thought in somewhat the same strain in Chapter III on High School Education:

"The function of the High School is to cater for those children who are well above 'the average in ability. It has been well said that the chief purpose of higher education is to form an *elite* not for its own sake but for that of society. Character and intelligence, which are the essential attributes of the *elite*, are not confined to any particular class in the community; hence the selective principle by which children should be picked out for higher education...is of the greatest importance... Any reorganisation of the High School system, therefore,

should treat High Schools as distinct units...'

Thus, the purpose of *secondary' school is not merely to 'afford a higher general education' as defined in the Educational Code, IL P., but something more definite and tangible than what 's implied in this vague statement. The Hadow Report (1927) of England calls it a 'realistic or practical bias' while the Hartog Committee's Report puts it as 'varied forms of training for life and employment suitable for the large number of boys of varied attainments and circumstances in the secondary stage \

Without going into the details of the theory of secondary education I may state that the period of secondary education, in order to fulfil the varied needs of the complex stage of adolescence, should be a period of training through *intense physical and mental activity in a carefully organized social environment*, so that, after 6 to 8 years of training of this kind, the pupil may be equipped to meet intelligently *any situation* which may fall to his lot when he leaves school. During this period he is not only to acquire knowledge of the kind he has so long been acquiring but also a mastery over his own physical, intellectual, and emotional nature so that he may not be out of element in any novel situation.

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL*

Whenever we think of the purpose which dominates the practice of education in our schools and colleges we cannot but feel that it is at best narrow, meagre, thoughtless, and almost unworthy, with hardly anything to do with the vital interests of the scholars' lives. Even the imparting of knowledge, of which so much has always been made, is hardly anything more than the imparting of scrappy bits of information which are mostly forgotten as soon as

* The writer is indebted to Sir Philip Hartog for the highly suggestive manner in which these two terms are used here.

the examination is over and which are seldom woven into a unified and permanent system of knowledge. In fact, hardly any emphasis is laid on the process by which knowledge is acquired and applied by pupils, with the result that their natural abilities are invariably left to themselves. What a poor attitude shown by the teachers towards the children placed under them !

If, however, teachers can be held responsible for this poverty of outlook with a consequent poverty of education in their pupils, the blame is also to be shared by the curriculum-makers, who are completely swayed by examination considerations and nothing else. Teachers do what they are required or expected to do, and they would certainly continue to fail to do those things which are only vaguely expected of them. Memorized knowledge, being more tangible and more easily examinable than other educational results, has steadily come to occupy the most important place in our educational scheme. But the process by which all knowledge is acquired or applied—all those *abilities* or *skilU* which are at once the basis and product of education,—is seldom tackled consciously, deliberately, and systematically by educators. It would certainly receive more attention if less emphasis were laid on information or knowledge which had already been acquired and hence had served its purpose, and greater importance attached to the children's ability to acquire new knowledge, to tackle new problems, and to face new situations. It is this ability which should be the principal purpose of teachers to develop, and of examinations to test, in a sensible, systematic, and scientific manner.

It is most unfortunate that the word ' skill' is misunderstood in much the same way as the word ' knowledge ', for it is generally believed that subjects like the three R's, History, and Geography impart ' knowledge', whereas Drawing, Manual Training, and other practical arts impart

'skill*' to the pupils. A little thought would show that the theoretical or informational subjects have a good deal of skill to impart,—the skill to speak and write in the most appropriate language, to think and analyse facts, figures, and events correctly, to command the intellectual processes in different situations, and so on; while the so-called practical subjects have a considerable amount of knowledge or information to impart to the learners. In fact, the two terms 'knowledge' and 'skill*' can hardly be separated from each other during the process of education, and the curriculum-makers as well as teachers would do well to believe, and do better to act constantly in the belief, that the prescribed or suggested courses of study are to be used as the *means* for developing 'skill'—the term being used in a mechanical as well as intellectual sense—rather than promoting the retention of a body of disjointed and memorized knowledge in the children.

AIM OF THE HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION

I now come back to the question of the purpose which the High School Examination should have clearly in view. If we clearly realize the two aspects of teaching just explained, viz. 'knowledge' and 'skill', the conclusion would be irresistible that instead of examining knowledge it would be far better to examine skill in pupils so that their essential powers and real possibilities may be found out. It is well known that education in our secondary institutions has always suffered on account of teaching being cramped by means of prescribed curricula and textbooks, teachers never being able to let themselves go and inspire their pupils with their own individual knowledge and intellectual qualities. Subjects like poetry, literature, history, hygiene, art and philosophy cannot be taught from the cultural or inspirational, or even an informational point of view, unless teachers are free to introduce their own individuality in

their methods of instruction. It will be a real gain to the country as a whole and to education in particular, if the knowledge elements in such subjects are clearly separated from the skill elements with a clear understanding that, while the latter would be subjected to an outside examination in conformity to a certain standard, the former would be left to the teachers themselves, so that they can bring in their own inspiration while teaching classes and influence them with their own knowledge and individuality.

From another point of view it is necessary to define the purpose of the High School Examination. As explained at the outset the High School Certificate may mean a sort of judgment passed on the training received by its possessor during the previous six years or so, or it may mean a sort of declaration of his fitness for some future training or career. These, however, are two distinct aims. They could have been mixed up in the past when the courses of study in our schools were limited by an academical outlook and all students in the normal course were expected to pass on to colleges. But now that the secondary school course has been widened, and practical, aesthetic, industrial and physical considerations have led to the introduction of a large number of new subjects into the curriculum, it is no longer possible or desirable for the same certificate to mean a large number of things even by implication. I make bold to suggest that this certificate should be given as a judgment passed on the candidate's previous training only, and that the number of entries on it should be increased so as to include various types of information, e. g. the abilities, aptitudes and limitations of the candidates, in addition to their attainments at one particular examination. Even then it should never be taken as qualifying the candidate for entrance into any particular type of institution or profession. It automatically means that arts, science, technical and professional colleges, and various employing agencies will have

their own tests of fitness to be administered to candidates whom they want to admit or select.

THE PROBLEM OF FAILURES

Sir Philip Hartog, while addressing the National Union of Teachers, England, in 1936, said:

'The greatest harm ... that the examination did was to those who failed in their endeavours. It was not unfair to say that from the moment a boy entered his preparatory school his training was directed towards this examination. A careful study of school records has shown that one-half of the boys who started fell out by the way, and never reached First School standard. It was a very sad thing to watch their struggles towards the end of their career, and to see the deadening effect that failure had upon them.'

Declaring a candidate as 'failure' on the basis of one public examination is a most risky procedure, which would certainly lose much of the risk if there were other examinations or records to check the results of the first examination. But this is not done anywhere in India. Moreover, the curriculum has been considerably widened in recent years and the advent of such non-literary subjects as Manual Training, Drawing, Music, Spinning & Weaving, Metal Work, etc. clearly indicates that the primary emphasis cannot any longer be maintained on only the literary aspect of training or only the essay-type examination requirements. In such an atmosphere the present system of declaring failures cannot stand its ground.

Since we cannot say with definiteness what a first divisioner is capable of or in what way he is superior to a second divisioner, we cannot for the same reason say what a so-called failure is not capable of. It is quite imaginable that, among these failures there are potential artists, artisans, technicians, sportsmen and physical culturists, and even

leaders of men who can easily stand their ground in their own special spheres, perhaps with much better prospects of success than the so-called first-class candidates. It may, therefore, be asked whether the examining bodies have any justification for ploughing them and thus compel them to suffer from dejection and a sense of inferiority.

Hence an educationist is constrained to suggest that, at the High School Examination, we should stop declaring 'passes' and 'failures' or awarding Divisions on the basis of the aggregate marks, for the present system conceals rather than expresses the strong and weak subjects of the candidates. All should go into the world with a certificate showing the actual marks gained in the different subjects. This will be enough information for the subsequent employment agencies.

TRUST THE SCHOOLS

I do not know in how many civilized countries there is an Intermediate Examination midway between Matriculation and Graduation, but there is no doubt that the Intermediate Examination in India has always been used solely for the purpose of shutting out a large number of candidates from getting the benefit of higher education. There is a good deal of justification for substituting only one public examination at the end of the secondary stage of education for the two held at present, and this suggestion is borne out by the recommendations of the Reorganization Committee, U. P. I do not quite agree that this reform should be introduced at once; it can come only when the entire High School population is enabled to get the benefit of a varied and comprehensive system of training right up to the present Intermediate stage—a situation which this poor country cannot financially meet. Before this important reform is enforced there should be a period during which the schools should be equipped and trained so as to be able to test **all**

their pupils **with** the object of eliminating in a sensible and satisfactory manner all those who are unfit and undeserving—a task for which they are not prepared at present.

A. middle course may be adopted by which the steadily increasing number of High School candidates can be kept within manageable dimensions. The following table clearly shows that about two-thirds of the total number of candidates appearing at the High School Examination from recognized institutions are lost to higher education commencing at the Intermediate stage:

High School Exam, of	No. of school candidates appearing	Percentage of passes	Inter. Exam, of	No. of candidates appearing	Casualties
1933	9302	57.8	1935	3640	5662
1934	10485	66.6	1936	3768	6717
1935	10744	63.6	1937	3833	6911
1936	11327	55.7	1938	3973	7354
1937	11983	63.3	1939	4173	7810

If it is the function of this public High School Examination to maintain this two-thirds casualty year after year no harm will be done if the educational institutions themselves are trusted to exercise this selective function. They may be required to conduct a fairly stiff and searching test examination in Class X and declare passes and failures in this as in the other classes. If at all necessary, each recognized institution may be required to adopt the same question-paper and follow the same examination technique as the present High School Examination, and for the purpose of competition, send up a certain percentage of its scholars for a public scholarship examination. This system will relieve much of the mechanical pressure at present endured by the examining body without in any way affecting the standard of those who seek admission into higher institu-

tions. Details aside, the time has come when our schools and colleges must be empowered to pass judgment on their own products not only at the end of every year but also at important stages, and their judgment must be read side by side with the result of a single public examination conducted within its own limitations.

Since the result of a single public examination can never be a true or complete picture of a candidate's ability or attainment, it is inevitable that the High School or any corresponding certificate should be accompanied by a comprehensive school record indicating the progress of the scholar from one end of the school to the other. The present Scholars Register which is in use in the United Provinces is absolutely unsatisfactory from this point of view. Its form should be revised and widened so that place may be found on it for recording the scholar's progress from class to class in *all* those activities to which they and their teachers are required to devote time and attention at school. I have deliberately used the word 'activity' because, in spite of the fact that a widened curriculum is required to be practised in our schools at the present time, teachers and students still continue to devote more attention to the examinable parts of subjects than to those parts which, although extremely important from the educational point of view, are not easily amenable to examination. They also gravely neglect all those activities which cannot be subjected to any formal examination, but which have been introduced with the sole object of training the body, mind and character during the adolescent stage.

The following extract from a recent communication will show how progressive opinion in the West is emphasizing the same idea :

' That no departmental examinations be set in Art, Music, Vocational Subjects and English Literature, and that specimens of work or school records in these subjects,

whichever is the most practicable in each case, be accepted from all schools for the purpose of the leaving certificate.

' The essay-type examination papers be drastically remodelled, so that they may allow creative ability and independent judgment to be shown by the pupils; and that, whenever possible, the examination should require pupils to perform activities listed as desirable in the printed courses of study. To this end, we recommend the adoption of oral tests as part of the examinations in all modern languages, and the use of dictionaries, in foreign language examinations, textbooks for at least part of social studies papers, and tables for scientific and mathematical papers. In Science and English composition we recommend that students be required at the time of the examination to submit, respectively, laboratory notebooks and theme work done during the year.

*That carefully constructed short-answer tests be used to a limited extent for subjects in which the possession of information, as such, and routine skill is to be encouraged.

*That when internal examinations are accepted, the Departments give careful thought to the development of a school record card, on which the individual interests, personal characteristics, and other relevant data regarding the pupil may be entered in addition to the usual records of school work.'

(International Bureau of Education : Press Communications 142.R. 893, Geneva, November 1937)

With such a comprehensive school record containing considered opinions of almost all teachers of the school and the headmaster, and available for reference at all times, it should be comparatively easy to make the High School Examination a far more simple and satisfactory affair than it is at present, and a real administrative check on the work of the school as suggested by Dr Zakir Husain. It should

be noted that the Reorganization Committee, T.J. P., 1939, **has** also emphasized the need and importance of school records in the following terms:

'The use of cumulative records has, therefore, been recommended and cards are to be maintained on which is recorded all information derived from tests, examinations, marks, and details about [the students'] aptitudes and inclinations, his physical condition, his social and economic background, his character and whatever affects his personality. Such a cumulative record provides a true basis for making educational guidance effective.'

(Ch. IX- para 12)

Now we are in a position to suggest how the public examination at the end of the secondary stage can be simplified without minimizing its efficiency. The whole curriculum should be considered as consisting of two parts, viz.: (1) Examination subjects, and (2) Non-examination subjects; and while the latter would be fully covered by comprehensive school records including clearly the amount of work done by individual scholars out of the work prescribed, the former would constitute the basis of the public examination, which should arrange to test the 'skill element' in the various subjects rather than the 'knowledge element*' which should only be used as the medium for testing the former.

Put in a different and practical way the matter comes up to this. It is not necessary to have a public examination in any subject other than Language and Mathematics, unless fad or fancy requires a sort of General Knowledge paper to test information of an elusive nature and at best of secondary value at this stage of the scholars' lives. In the various languages, and certainly in the modern Indian languages, and in English, written papers should be primarily concerned with the testing of *comprehension* and *expression* of written (printed) matter by means of writing, **and** must be supplemented by an oral test. It is not necessary,

except in an indirect manner, to test knowledge of poetry and literature or their appreciation and criticism, which are all dominated by highly subjective considerations* In Mathematics the papers should consist of a large number of simple questions to cover the entire course, and unnecessary complicated problems and processes must be avoided. Standardized papers of the form used by Ballard and various American framers of attainment tests will be found to be quite adequate for satisfactorily testing the essential products of mathematical training.

Public examinations are not necessary at the High School stage in such subjects as History, Geography and Science; but, if they are to be held at all, the papers set should severely avoid expecting essay-form answers. They should invariably be of the standardized short-answer form so that a wide field of study can be covered by them. In all 'practical' subjects, as has already been suggested, a full school record clearly showing the work prescribed and actually done should suffice for all practical purposes.

If education as a normal function of a civilized social life is to command genuine respect and is to be accepted as a real living force, it must allow more freedom to schools and show a more respectful consideration for their methods and judgments. The two main suggestions which have been made in the foregoing line's, viz. (a) consideration of cumulative school records along with the High School certificate as a single record of judgment of the candidates' achievement up to the end of the secondary stage of education, and (b) allowing schools to pass (and eliminate) a certain percentage of their scholars at the end of this stage, will certainly strengthen these educational institutions and raise them in public esteem. They will incidentally compel our schools either to prove worthy of the trust or be condemned at the bar of public opinion, according as they develop worthy or continue to practise unworthy methods of instruction and examination.

3. TECHNIQUE

VITAL QUESTIONS

We are so familiar with the details of our present system of examinations that we do not feel the need of asking such questions as: ' Why should a question-paper be set for three hours V * Why should six questions for three hours be a sacred routine requirement ?' ' Why should the maximum marks in certain subjects be 100 and in others 150 or even 50?' 'Why should the minimum pass marks be 33% in all subjects ?' and so on. Setting of papers and marking of answers, together with such matters as tabulation of marks and calculation of the final results, have become so rigidly mechanical and every one has become so accustomed to the traditional practice that any suggestions for reform, however sensible, sound, and scientific they may be, are quite likely to be dismissed with a sneer. And yet, the fact is that the system is almost intolerable, being faulty, unscientific, and unworthy of the noble purpose which it is intended to serve. Like all other educational practices our examination system is, in the inimitable words of Rusk, in "a ritual or a superstition or a dodge'.

Taking the case of our examiners first, there is no doubt that their performances with the candidates' answers are highly subjective and hence liable to wide variation, with the inevitable result that their judgments are not reliable. This fact has been proved all over the world and need not be proved again. Personally, I believe that it is useless to try to bring about what is called a uniformity of standard among the various examiners in the same subject, because it is never possible to do so in a sensible manner; and also because the differences of judgment shown by them are perhaps *educationally* more important and hence should be considered more seriously than the mechanical requirements

of a rigid uniformity. It is our fault if we fail in satisfactorily converting human effort into numerical figures; and the fault is greater if, after giving some sort of numerical value to the candidates' performance, we fail to handle that numerical value in a sensible manner.

WHAT EXAMINERS MUST KNOW

In these days when the science of statistics is accepted as the basis of all matters which depend on the manipulation of numerical data, it is unthinkable that any teacher or examiner should be allowed to continue his educational work on the basis of examination marks without being properly equipped with an elementary knowledge of statistical methods. What is really required is much more than this elementary knowledge and the following words of Prof. Burt are worth the most serious attention in this connexion:

' Finally, I would venture to urge' that every examiner should acquire, as part of his training, some *knowledge of the elementary statistical principles* involved in such work. Every examining body and every chairman of an examining board knows how each new member, fresh to his task, has slowly to pick up the requisite technique. There is a growing custom for preliminary instruction to be defined and set down on paper ; and it would be a great advantage if the experience of expert examiners could be generally formulated, systematized and recorded for the benefit of the novice. To be of real value, however, such instructions must, so far as possible, be couched in exact and quantitative terms. The art of examining, as of all forms of mental assessment and measurement, rests on scientific principles and involves a scientific technique; and this technique must, to a large extent, be statistical. Even so simple a task as combining marks

for different questions cannot rightly be undertaken without a knowledge of what must occur when marks, more or less uncorrected, are averaged or summed. Nor can a proper allocation of marks be made without some explicit theory as to the curve of distribution¹ which the marks should approximately follow.

'Again, examining authorities continually claim that the innovations which they have introduced must to a large extent eliminate the errors and uncertainties to which examinations in the past have been liable; but rarely if ever do they attempt a statistical experiment to verify how far the expected improvement has, in fact, been achieved. In the preceding pages I have limited my discussion solely to problems of consistency, i. e. to the correlation of examiners among themselves. This must be the first step in all such inquiries. But it is equally essential to investigate the accuracy of the results as judged by some external criterion, i. e. the correlation of marks with independent first-hand evidence as to the merits of the candidates in the particular field with which the examination is concerned. These two lines of inquiry are always followed in estimating the value of any

J. For question-papers where the marking must largely turn on the subjective impressions of the examiner—those requiring answers of the essay type, for example, there is no device which increases accuracy and oomparability so effectively as the plan of defining marks and their relative frequencies in terms of a distribution curve. But when any suggestion to this effect is made, almost invariably the normal curve is put forward as the ideal; and critics, therefore, rightly object that, since most higher examinations are taken by a selected batch of candidates only, a normal curve must in theory be inapplicable. The proper reply is that, given adequate data, it is always possible to find a better fitting ourve, e. g. by taking some form of hyper-geometric curve (of which the normal curve is only a limited case), or by adjusting the normal ourve itself by means of a logarithmic scale. In practice, however, it is usually found that seleotion (no doubt because it is so imperfect) introduces very little asymmetry or distortion.

psychological test; and the same procedure should be adopted for every examination.'

[*Marks of Examiners* by Hartog and Rhodes.
Memorandum by C. Burt, para 603 (10)]

NATURE OF SUBJECTS

Our examiners have always shown, although unconsciously, great ignorance of the fundamental differences existing in the nature of the various subjects, or more correctly speaking, of groups of subjects. Perhaps they never discovered that this difference leads on to a remarkable difference in the nature of marks awarded to candidates. For example, there are such subjects as Languages or History in which the examiner can never award very high or low marks; a candidate, provided he writes something in answer to a question is sure to get some marks. But, in a subject like Mathematics, if the distribution of marks gained by all the candidates appearing in a public examination be studied, it will be found that the number of candidates securing very high or very low marks (even full marks or no marks at all) is much larger than that in the other subjects.

'It is possible for a candidate to get full marks for every question in Mathematics ; all he has to do is to get the right answer in the right way. But in English or History, what is the right answer? How often is a teacher or examiner going to give ten marks out of ten for an answer in History? He will always say to himself, " Well, I think so and so ought to have been mentioned." Similarly for the poor answer.....It is a fact then, from differences inherent in the subjects themselves, that in any normal distribution of marks the percentage of candidates obtaining 75 per cent of the maximum marks in English is less than the percentage obtaining the same marks in Mathematics. This obviously is

not fair to the students of English when distinctions or scholarships are to be awarded.'

(*Secondary School Examination Statistics*,
by Crofts and Jones)

The investigation which is the subject-matter of the above reference shows that Mathematics, Foreign Languages, and the Sciences form one similar group, while English, History, Geography, Scripture, Art, etc. form another group. I am not aware that any scholar in India has ever cared to study the distribution of marks in the various subjects with the object of clearly bringing out the fundamental differences inherent in the subjects or groups of subjects, from the point of view of marking. I feel, however, that the subjects which are offered by our High School candidates should broadly fall into three groups from the point of view of marking. In one would fall the Languages, History, and Geography; in the second would fall Mathematics and Science; while the third would include the predominantly *practical* subjects, e. g. Manual Training, Drawing, Domestic Science, etc. If injustice to candidates is to be avoided, it should be the first duty of the examining body to work out and enunciate a *Principle of Equivalence of Marks* by laying down particularly at important levels, e. g. the pass level and the first division level, the marks which correspond to particular marks in particular subjects. In other words, the marks awarded by examiners in different subjects cannot, and should not be accepted at their face value until they have been modified on the basis of two statistical considerations, viz.: (a) *Correlations* between different subjects indicating the marks corresponding to certain marks in other subjects, and (b) *Probable Error* of each mark. It should not be difficult to calculate these two constants, for any person having acknowledge of elementary mathematics can easily learn the method of finding them. (Cf. Appendix 1)

ARBITRARY LEVELS

At the present time all examination results are declared on the basis of 33%, 45%, 60%, and 75% of the aggregate marks being prescribed as the minimum levels for a third class, a second class, a first class and a Distinction respectively. How these levels, arbitrarily prescribed as they are in; all the subjects and rigidly applied with only minor modifications here and there, cause unfairness and even injustice to the candidates will be clear from the following objective studies:

(A) A survey of the marks gained by about a thousand High School Examination candidates for each of the years 1928, 1929, and 1930 is summarized in the following¹ table, the statistical figures being expressed in whole numbers:

Subject	Mean	Standard Deviation
English ...	37	10
Mathematics ...	47	15
Urdu ...	42	10
Hindi ...	46	8
History ...	39	9
Geography ...	42	9
Grand Total ...	42	8

This table shows that with an arbitrary 33% prescribed as minimum 'pass' marks in the various subjects and in the aggregate, the average majority (or the middle 68%) of the candidates appearing at the High School Examination generally secure marks between 47 and 27 in English, 62 and 32 in Mathematics, 52 and 32 in Urdu, 54 and 38 in Hindi, 48 and 30 in History, 51 and 33 in Geography and 50 and 34 in the aggregate. It was remarkable that these figures kept fairly constant from year to year and hence, pending findings to the contrary, may be tentatively accepted as the normal state of affairs in the province.

1. Of. *Teaching*, Bombay, December 1936

The conclusion that the average marks are different in different subjects, in spite of the prescription of the same 33% as the minimum pass marks, should warn us against using this arbitrary standard as an absolute line of demarcation between passes and failures. It should be considered as only an arbitrary starting point and the actual results as 'passes' and 'failures' should be decided on the basis of the achievements of the 'average group', i.e. in the light of the (Mean \pm Standard Deviation) figures.

The importance of the figures tabulated above can never be emphasized too much, for a serious question arises here. Are we really justified in adhering to the same standard of marks in the various subjects for the purpose of declaring results in the first, second, and third divisions, and as distinctions? It is evident that until the policy of 'Equivalence of Marks' referred to under the section *Nature of subjects* is adopted, marks in different subjects will fail to maintain their correct levels in relation to one another and marking will continue to be lenient in certain subjects (e. g. Mathematics) and stiff in the case of others (e. g. English).

(B) Another enquiry¹ conducted on the examination marks of the High School Examination of the T. J. P. Board for the year 1939 points of similar conclusions, viz. that marks in different subjects are not comparable directly without adopting some principle such as that of the Equivalence of Marks; that there is an unduly large variation in the standards of different examiners; and that some papers and examinations in these papers do not fulfil any useful purpose and are a mere farce or superfluity.

The papers selected in this investigation were the four papers in English, the two papers in Mathematics, and the papers in the Vernacular (Hindi or Urdu). Four random

I. Bhatia: 'A Study of High School Examination Marks of the U. P. Board, I, General', Published in *U. P. Education*, May and June, 1940

groups of 200 examinees in each group were selected. Each group had been examined, in a particular paper, by the same examiner. The four groups had each a different examiner in the same paper. The investigation was conducted paper-wise, and pointed to the following conclusions:

1. The standard of marking in the different papers and subjects is not at all the same. The means of the first three papers in English are round about 35%, but in English IV it shoots up to about 65%, and, in the different papers in Mathematics, Hindi and Urdu also, the means vary from paper to paper and subject to subject. Again, the Standard Deviations from subject to subject (and even from one paper to another in the same subject) show great fluctuations.

Both these factors point to the great variability of the standard of marking in the different subjects in spite of detailed instructions from, and checks of, head examiners.

2. In the case of the *same* paper, different examiners appear to have much too diverse standards. This is seen by examining the S. D.'s in the case of the four groups for a particular paper. Take the case of Hindi II (S. D.'s vary from 7.8% to 13.0%) or Urdu II (S. D.'s vary from 7.1% to 14.9%), where the variation is extremely high, but in most papers there appears to be sufficient variation to make the standards of marking of different examiners non-equivalent and almost unreliable.

3. English IV and Urdu III appear to be quite unsatisfactory from statistical considerations.

(C) Reference may also be made to another paper in which the *relative merits* of the different papers as tests of knowledge in that subject were examined¹ by the method of Multiple Factor Analysis.

The four papers in English were taken up for investiga-

1. Bhatia: 'A Study of High School Examination Marks of the U. P. Board—II, English', in *U. P. Education*, July, 1940

tion and the examination marks of 458 candidates for the year 1939 were utilized.

The conclusions were that to *have four* papers (neither more nor less) to test the candidates' knowledge of English is perfectly arbitrary, and that *two* papers appear to serve as useful a purpose as four —

* On the basis of the assumption that the four present papers test the whole field of the English ability of a pupil, we find that this field is uniquely determined by means of two "factors", one of which would appear to be of the nature of "a general intellective factor applied to the English language " and approximated best by the present second papers and the other would appear to be of the nature of a test to examine a pupil's ability in English in relation to set language material. Further, that in the present scheme of papers, the Fourth Paper is the most amenable to local uncertain influences, while, if one were to select the one paper, out of the present four papers as the most satisfactory test of a pupil's ability in English, one would unhesitatingly select the present Second Paper, The present analysis would therefore lead one to suggest the desirability of having two tests instead of the present four in order to examine a pupil's ability in English; the more these two new tests approximate to the two factors as above discussed, the more satisfactory will the examination be.'

(D) A random calculation of the number of first classes for the years 1928, 1929, and 1930 yields the following figures:

Year	English	Maths.	Hindi	Urdu	History	Geog.	Aggregate
1928	14 (1)	145 (37)	23	34 (5)	7	18 (2)	14
1229	9 (1)	205 (37)	9	35 (4)	13	4	18
1930	4	210 (47)	25	7	5	5	12

[iVofo.—The figures within brackets indicate 'Distinctions'.]

The **number** of candidates **was** arbitrarily **taken** from Boll No. 1 to Roll No. 800 in each case, but the findings are worth serious notice, for the number of first classes and Distinctions in Mathematics is out of all proportion to those in other subjects and in the aggregate. What I suggest is that, in Mathematics, the interpretation of 33%, 45%, 60%, and 75% marks can never be the same as in other subjects. Here, again, there is need for applying the principle of Equivalence of Marks to allot each subject to its proper place in relation to other subjects and to the aggregate, especially when awarding first classes and Distinctions, which no examining body can afford to make cheap. There is no doubt that these awards are objectionably cheap at present.

EQUIVALENCE OF MARKS

What must be clearly understood is that the examining body has the right, arbitrarily or otherwise to prescribe the pass marks (and the minimum marks at the different levels) *but in one subject only*. Once that is done the corresponding marks in other subjects follow as a matter of course from the principle of '*Equivalence of Marks'. As far as I know, this principle was enunciated and illustrated for the first time in India in the *Sankhya* (Indian Journal of Statistics), in its issue of August, 1934, by Professors Mahalanobis and Chakraverty. They followed up their analysis of the marks of over 2,500 candidates who took the S. L. C. Examination, U. P. of 1919, by making suggestions for finding the equivalence of marks by statistical methods and gave the following two tables as illustrations:

Equivalent Marks in different Subjects

English (standard)	...	30	33	36	40
Mathematics	.	33	37	42	48
Vernacular	...	45	48	51	55
Hist-Geog.	.	30	33	36	40

Equivalent Marks in English and Mathematics

English	Mathematics (Approx.)	Correction
10	2	8
20	17	3
30	33	3
40	48	8
50	64	14
60	81	21
70	96	26

If tables of such equivalent marks are prepared in different subjects for a number of years they will certainly show whether adjustments will not be possible within very narrow limits of variation and whether it would not be worth while making them.

While on this important question of standardization of marks, it seems necessary to discuss the present system of getting such standardization done through Head Examiners' instructions. It is an open question whether these instructions are, or can be, followed in the case of each and every answer-book to be examined by an assistant examiner and whether most of the marking of examiners has not* been done so long at the discretion of the examiner himself. It should also be seriously considered whether satisfactory results would not follow if examiners were left to themselves with only a few broad instructions.

A FUNDAMENTAL POINT OF REFORM

It is very desirable that, after an examiner has been found fit to be appointed as such he need not be worried too much by rules, regulations, and Head Examiner's instructions. The paper-setter may be^required not only to set the paper but *also to supply a model solution* of it, with alternative solutions where they are reasonably possible. And, to be on the safe side, he should also be

required to mark his own model solution to show his standard of marking. Thus, the Moderating Board will be in a better position to scrutinize the paper and its solution together than at present and to issue instructions for marking each question for the guidance of the examiners. These instructions are to be issued to all the examiners who should now be able to mark the answer-books allotted to them without the need for exchanging marked answer-books with the Head Examiner a number of times as at present.

I feel, however, that the examining body should supply one more condition to the examiners, viz, the percentage of passes expected in the subject and in the paper. It is certainly a fundamental function of an examining body to lay down that a certain percentage of the candidates should be eliminated due to their being below the required standard, and the pass percentage in any paper or subject can easily be calculated on the basis of the records maintained in the office of the examining body and published in the reports on examinations every year. This requirement may preferably be in the form $p \pm v$, where p stands for the average pass percentage and v for the permissible variation in the case of bright and weak groups of candidates. It will be understood, however, that variation beyond the limits of $p \pm v$, being a natural phenomenon, will be allowed provided full explanations are given.

VAGARIES OF MARKING

It is also very necessary to take serious notice of what may be called vagaries of marking. It has been proved again and again that different examiners award different marks to the same answer and that even the same examiner has been found to allot different marks to the same script examined at different times. There is nothing surprising in this in view of the natural individual differences which affect such affairs. But what is really surprising is that

examining bodies have seldom taken note of the existence of such differences, and tried to evolve a sensible system for an intelligent interpretation of examiners' marks, especially when combining them for the purpose of declaring results.

It is a common practice in most examinations to award what are called 'grace marks' to candidates who fail by a very narrow margin of marks, provided they earn fit prescribed number of marks in the aggregate. This is a sound principle in its own way, for it accepts, perhaps without knowing it, the need for giving due consideration to the 'Probable Error' of the various marks. But it is doubtful whether examining bodies have been right in applying it only in the case of border-line failures.

If these weak and mediocre candidates can receive so much consideration, it certainly stands to reason that those who miss the first division or Distinction by one or two marks should also get the benefit of the same consideration. It cannot be honestly affirmed that a re-examination of their answer-books would not place them in the upper division, and I am sure that examining bodies do not want to do anything which will retard the 'genius of the race'. Consequently, I suggest that the principle of grace marks should be applied to the first division and the Distinction levels too. I consider it a reflection on the examination system, rather than on the ability of a candidate, when he is constrained to produce a certificate showing that he missed a first class by one or two marks.

It has been found that while a candidate failing by even 5 marks in one subject has got through with the help of grace marks, another failing by one mark in each of three subjects has not been declared successful in spite of his having earned more than the required number of grace marks in the aggregate. In certain examinations like the Intermediate, the Science and the Agriculture candidates are required to pass separately in theoretical and practical

portions of science subjects; and sometimes more than one science subject has been combined to form one composite subject. In such examinations it often happens that a candidate passes quite well in the aggregate of that subject (and in the whole examination), but cannot be declared as a pass for having failed by one mark in a part of the subject. I may also quote a remarkable case of a High School candidate who secured first class marks in four subjects, obtaining Distinction marks in English, but who could not be declared a pass because he failed in Mathematics by 6 marks and hence could not get the benefit of grace marks which could not be awarded beyond the prescribed maximum limit of 5.

These illustrations have been quoted to show that a Strict and mechanical application of rules in such cases is sure to cause real hardship, if not positive injustice, to the candidates. The situation calls for giving a wide discretion to the authority empowered to declare the final result.

In connexion with this question of grace marks as a necessary corollary to the theory of 'compulsory' and 'optional' subjects the following extracts from the Report of the Calcutta University Commission (Vol. II, Ch. XVII) will be found quite suggestive:

'It is clear that a candidate might pass who knew either no algebra or no geometry; and we have come across cases of schools in which algebra is either not taught, or seriously neglected, because it is regarded as unnecessary for the examination. Even supposing that one knew that a candidate had passed in arithmetic and geometry, it would be very difficult, without having dealings with a large number of successful candidates, to guess the probable attainments of a person who had "passed" the matriculation in these subjects. It is only by the experience gained by contact with a large number of such students that one gets an inkling of the kind of guarantee

that the University offers.....(para 50)

'For good or for evil, an examination at the secondary, and even at the higher secondary, stage is often used not so much to ensure that each candidate shall acquire a knowledge of each subject that shall be of real use, as to ensure that the subject shall not be neglected, and that those candidates to whom it is congenial or useful shall have a fair opportunity of studying it; and the curriculum is apt to be rather over-weighted in certain cases on this account. In such cases a pupil may consciously or unconsciously have to choose between special excellence in one or more subjects for which he is particularly gifted and a fair average of attainment all round which will ensure his passing in all subjects. We think that at the matriculation (or, as we prefer to call it, the "high school examination") stage it would be wise to allow a board of examiners, or of representatives of examiners in all subjects, to apply at their discretion and within definite limits the principle of compensation and to allow special excellence in one branch of study to compensate for some degree of failure in another. (para 80)

'We think that excellence in an intermediate examination as a whole might quite reasonably be allowed to compensate for deficiency in a non-essential subject; but that it might be a cruel leniency to allow such compensation in the case of an essential subject, involving the student in future waste of time and money. In any case, we feel, in pursuance of this principle, that grace marks to the extent of 5 per cent should not be allowed in subjects which are compulsory... A candidate marked 5 per cent below a minimum cannot be regarded as a "border-line" case. He is clearly below any reasonable border-line. Possibly, at all examinations examiners might be instructed to mark "border-line candidates" with a special symbol so that these cases might be individually considered in the

light of their aggregate marks, or of special excellence in another subject.' (Para 81)

It is neither possible nor desirable to discuss all the details of the process of examination; they had better be left to evolve under intelligent scrutiny and study. What is very desirable, however, is that a scientific outlook should pervade the whole scheme of examination. The present system has become extremely mechanical and worn-out and examining bodies do not seem inclined to introduce the methods of statistics or the findings of technical researches from advanced countries into their hide-bound schemes. In the foregoing pages some of the glaring faults and flaws have been indicated and suggestions given for revising and improving the present system at a number of vital points. I believe that judgments on candidates, if based on the principle of equivalence of marks and if passed after giving elastic and human consideration to numerical marks at important levels, will be more sound and will do a greater amount of justice to the candidates than at the present time.

4. SUMMARY OF SUGGESTIONS

(A) INTERNAL SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS

If the principles of teaching and examining discussed in Ch. 2 are accepted, it inevitably follows that the tangible instruments for training in secondary schools are : (i) academic subjects, (ii) practical subjects, (iii) health education, and (iv) extra-curricular activities, leaving aside intangible instruments like personal influence, general tone, etc. This again means that the question of class promotion must be based on the progress shown by scholars in all the four items mentioned above and not merely in (i) as is done at present.

The suggestion makes it inevitable that schools should be required to so modify their * Progress Report' forms as

to include all these four items in a brief but unambiguous manner. Such forms will vary from school to school; but the following items appear to be the minimum :

- (i) *Academic Subjects.* The marks obtained in written (essay-type) and oral examinations in Languages, and the scores obtained in new-type tests in Mathematics, History, Geography and Elementary Science,
- (n) *Practical Subjects.* No formal examinations, but a statement in the form: 'Number of exercises done.' Number of exercises prescribed' in such subjects as Nature Study, Science, Manual Training, Drawing, etc.
- (iii) *Health Education,* (a) Height, weight, and chest measurements;
- (b) Attendance at games played ; and
- (c) Report of school medical officer : ailments, deficiencies and stamina to be noted.
- (iv) *Extra-curricular Activities.* Report on participation and special interest in activities provided by the school.

In short, class promotion must be based on progress made by scholars in all those matters on which teachers devote time and attention, and school examinations must mean not only the marks acquired in (i) with a certain minimum prescribed but also a percentage of attendance and actual participation in the other three items. Detention will be justified only if a scholar has not received the benefit of training, say through absence from school for whatever reason. Mechanical detention due to failure to secure certain marks in written examinations is a reflection on the inability of schools to discover clearly the strong and weak points in their children. Of course, they must be detained at the stage where detention will do them good through a year's additional training. It naturally follows that detention in Class X, or even in Class IX is proof that the school failed to give proper training at a much earlier stage.

In addition to the method of recording progress in what

is called 'Attainment'¹ noted above, efforts should be made to devise and apply standardized 'Intelligence Tests', so that the intellectual capacity, inherent in individual scholars, may be correctly recorded. In the absence of such tests -we shall continue to suffer from a large quantity of wastage of time and effort over numerous students who are misfits in our schools. Proper diagnosis and helpful guidance at the right age are the inherent functions of school education, and not the blind imitation of public examinations whose purpose has so long been the separation of sheep from goats, as has been erroneously emphasized in England until very recent times.

(B) THE HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION

The following suggestions are actuated by four main considerations, viz.: simplification of paraphernalia, all-round economy, efficiency in the ultimate results, and a recognition of the right of schools in the declaration of final judgment on their own products:

1. Only one question-paper in language tests should suffice to test general language ability, viz. comprehension and expression. Attention has to be diverted from book knowledge to the acquirement of a certain standard of this essential language ability.
2. In all languages there must be an oral test accompanied by dictation, which may be conducted by the schools themselves, if necessary under outside supervision.
3. In all other subjects comprehensive 'new-type' tests should be used, so that the whole field of study may be covered and the present evil of 'selection method' of preparation for an examination may be totally eliminated. It is needless to add that, if schools get into the habit of using such tests regularly, many of the examinations for the High School Certificate may safely be discontinued.

This system will have the additional advantage of doing away with separate answer-books.

4. There should be no declaration of 'passes' or 'failures' at the High School Examination. On the other hand, the certificate should show the marks or scores obtained in the various subjects of the examination, thus clearly indicating the strong and weak points which are at present concealed in the vague Division noted on the certificate.

5. This certificate by itself, it must be clearly understood, will not be the whole judgment on the candidate, but must always be accompanied by the comprehensive school certificate or 'Record of Progress' maintained throughout the school career of the student.

APPENDIX

(From *Marks of Examiners*, by Hartog and Rhodes, Memorandum by Cyril Burt, Para 603)

(1) *Quantitative methods* of investigation are already available for studying the accuracy of marking in examinations of a scholastic or academic type: these methods will indicate how closely the marks of a given examiner or board of examiners are approximating to the hypothetical true marks and how far each is influenced by irrelevant factors of various types.

(2) Under certain specifiable assumptions, which can be approximately verified in actual practice, the methods of *factor analysis*, worked out for researches upon the validity of mental and scholastic tests, may, with slight modifications, be applied to the investigation of examination results. The simplest assumption is that the marks of any given examiner may be resolved into two hypothetical components : (i) the true value of the work to be marked, a component influencing all examiners but in different degrees, and (ii) residual errors, a component independent of the first and peculiar to each

examiner. The difficulties that embarrass the investigation of mental factors for the most part do not arise in investigating examination results. In particular, by adopting a broader mathematical basis (treating the variable as coordinates in hyperspace), it can be shown that the seemingly divergent formulae hitherto put forward are in their essential nature merely variants or alternative simplifications of one general conception.

(3) It appears that the simpler and speedier methods give *reasonable approximations* to a true result. With the rough data at present furnished by examination marks the more elaborate methods would be out of place. Such methods are in the main of theoretical interest, enabling us to justify, and occasionally to correct, the results secured by the more rapid short cuts.

(4) The degree to which an examiner's marks agree with those of his colleague or colleagues may readily be measured by a *coefficient of correlation*, which can be calculated (if a simple and approximate formula be used) in a few minutes.

(5) The discrepancies between the marks awarded for the same scripts by different examiners may be due, not only to imperfections in their powers or modes of judgment, but also to differences of scale, i. e. to individual differences in the general standard of severity and in the degree to which the marks are spaced out; these differences can be measured, and if necessary allowed for, by calculating *averages and standard deviations*.

(6) In theory the accuracy of a given examiner may best be measured by calculating a general *factor coefficient*, that is, by estimating the degree to which his marking correlates with the hypothetical true value taken as a standard. When the inter-correlations have been calculated, such coefficients can be determined at once by means of a simple formula.

(7) Where the correlations between the several examiners and the true marks are not likely to differ widely, the *un-weighted average* of the marks allotted by all the examiners yields a fair and quicker estimate of the ideal or true mark.

(8) From the examiner's correlation with the true mark may at once be derived & *coefficient of non-relation* which measures the relative amount of random variation characterizing his mark, Le, the degree to which he has failed in eliminating the influence of sheer chance.

(9) Where the correlations between the several examiners and the true marks differ widely, *the marking of the best examiner* is almost as accurate as the average marking of the whole Board, and may even be more accurate. Accordingly, in certain types of examinations, it may prove easier to increase the accuracy of the marking by trying to increase the accuracy of one or two examiners than by increasing their number and then averaging the results. Multiplying the number of examiners is of great value when their correlation with the true mark is high and their correlation with each other is low.

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SIR SYED AHMED KHAN

I. A STRICT MOTHER

'Do you often go to see Mirza Shamas-ud-Din?' asked King Akbar Shah.

'Yes, my lord. I see him almost daily,' replied Mir Taqui.

'I do not wish you to see him so often,' said King Akbar Shah. 'Do you not know that we are not on the best of terms? Although he is my brother he is always plotting against me.'

'I do not think so, my lord,' said Mir Taqui. 'I do not think you have been told the truth. He is very loyal to you, and so am I. Do you doubt my loyalty to you that you forbid me to see him?'

'No, I have never doubted your

loyalty for even a minute,' said King Akbar Shah. ' I think you are one of my most trusted friends.'

' If that is so,' said Mir Taqui,' please do not ask me to break off my friendship with Mirza Shamas-ud-Din.'

' You may do as you please,' said the King.

Who was Mir Taqui?

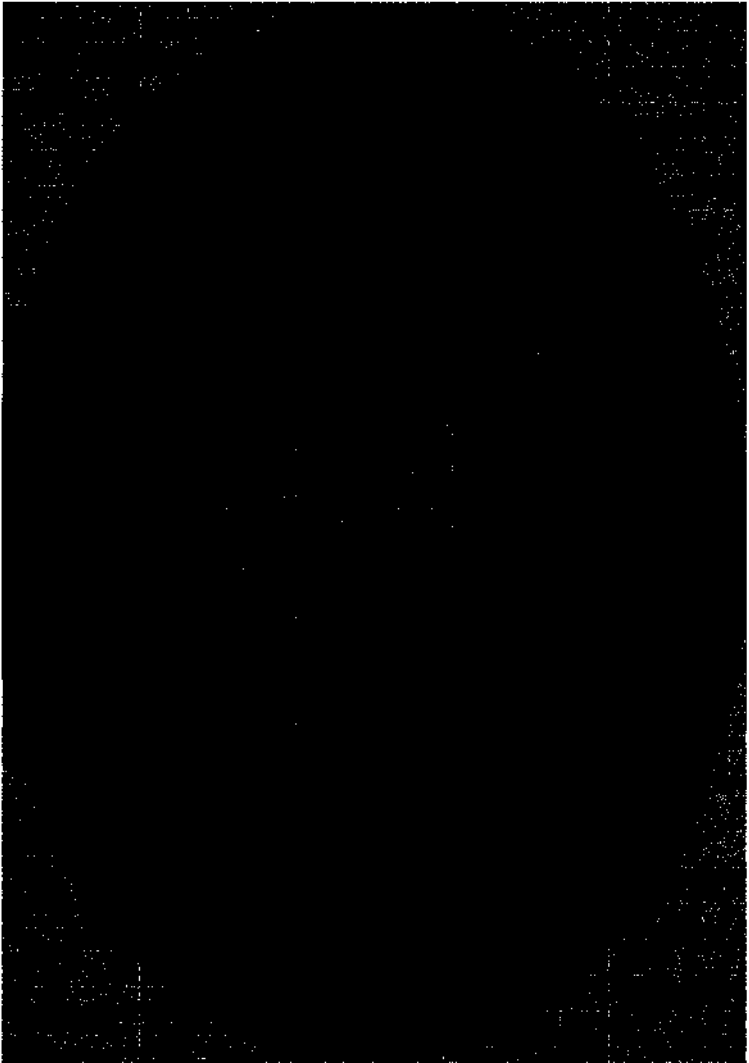
Mir Taqui was the father of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. He lived at Delhi, and was one of the most trusted ministers at the court of the Mogul Emperor. He was a man of pleasant manners and great courage in speech.

Sir Syed's mother was a remarkable woman. She was the eldest daughter of one of the ministers at court. She was not very highly educated, although she knew a little Persian, and could read

the Holy Quran. She was a very pious woman, and used to give away a great deal in charity. She was a very capable manager of her house, and knew how to live frugally.

She looked after the education of her children. She made Syed Ahmed read out his lessons to her every day. She also saw that he formed good habits early in life. Although she was gentle by nature, she could also be hard when any of her sons did anything wrong.

Once when Syed Ahmed was eleven years old, he slapped a servant in the face. This servant was an old man, and had been, with the family a long time. When Syed Ahmed's mother heard about this she was very angry. She sent for her son at once. * 'Leave the house this minute,' she said. 'You are not fit



SIR SYED AHMKD KHAN

to live here. You may go where you like.'

Then she told a maidservant to take him out of the house. The servant did as she was asked, and left the boy in the street. At first the child did not know what to do.

Now, Syed Ahmed's aunt used to live in the same street, so he went to her and told her what had happened. The aunt was a kind-hearted woman, and gave the boy shelter in her house. There he stayed for three days.

Then his aunt took him back to his home, and asked his mother to forgive him. 'I will do so,' his mother replied, 'only if he apologizes to the old servant. It is for him to forgive the boy, and not for me to do so. If he does this I will take him back into the house. He must

learn to respect his elders even if they are humbler than he in life.¹ When the boy heard this, he went up to the servant and asked him to forgive him. The old man gladly forgave him, and the boy was taken back into the house.

This was one of the many lessons that Syed Ahmed's mother taught him. She was always kind to the poor. She often went out of her way to help them. Syed Ahmed saw this for himself many times. Once she fell seriously ill. All the best doctors in the town were called in to attend on her. One of them prepared a medicine which he said would make her -well again. This medicine cost a great deal, but she never took it herself. She gave it away to one of her maidservants who had also fallen seriously ill at the same

time. The maidservant recovered; so also did Syed's mother.

When his mother was quite well again, Syed Ahmed said: 'It was that medicine that cured you.'

'It was not the medicine that cured me,' his mother replied. 'It was God who cured me. I never took that medicine. I gave it away to one of the maidservants, for I thought she needed it more than I.' Everybody marvelled at her generosity.

She taught Syed Ahmed never to hurt anybody. This is how it came about. There was a man who had become his great enemy. He always spoke ill of Syed Ahmed, and wanted to hurt him. Syed Ahmed put up with this for a long time. But once he had an opportunity to teach that man a lesson. He said to

his mother:' Now you will see how I will revenge myself upon my old enemy.'

His mother was not at all pleased to hear this. 'Why do you try to harm a man because he has been harming you?' she asked. 'You must leave the whole thing to Sod. He is the Great Judge, and He will judge between you and him. Let Him punish the man if He chooses. You must not do anything to hurt him.'

She showed Syed Ahmed how he must behave, even towards his enemies.

Syed Ahmed's grandfather was very fond of children. He was especially fond of Syed Ahmed. He often made the boy come and dine with him. The boy said that the company of his grandfather did him much good. First of all he taught him how to be clean. He had

to see that there were no ink stains on his clothes. He had to be careful that his feet did not soil the white sheets on which they sat. He could not let any crumbs of bread fall, nor could he soil his fingers while eating. He was also forbidden to make a noise while eating. These were the first lessons Syed Ahmed received in good manners.

Syed Ahmed went to school quite early. He was taught Persian and Arabic. Every day he had to read out his lessons to his mother. Sometimes his grandfather also inquired about his studies. The old man was very pleased when the boy was able to reply to all the questions that were put to him.

Syed Ahmed was twenty-two years old when he first thought of finding work. His father had died, and the

family had very little money. His friends advised him to seek service at the Mogul court, but he made up his mind to get work in one of the British courts. As he did not know anything about the kind of work he had to do there, he had to learn it for some time as an apprentice. Then he passed an examination and was appointed a *munsif* at Mainpuri. From there he was transferred to Fatehpur Sikri, where he worked for four years. When he was at Fatehpur he lived in the same big house which had been the rest-house of King Akbar.

From Fatehpur Sikri Syed Ahmed went to Delhi. He was earning only one hundred rupees a month, but whatever he earned he gave to his mother. He afterwards wrote: 'I used to give all my

salary to my mother. Out of this she gave me five rupees a month for my personal expenses. I wore the clothes she made for me, and ate the food she prepared for me. I had to do this because the expenses of our family were high, and we had very little money. My elder brother had died, and we were thus deprived of the money which he used to give towards the expenses of the family.'

This shows what a good son Syed Ahmed was: it was very generous of him to help all the members of his family with his money.

2 A FRIEND IN NEED

Syed Ahmed read and wrote a great deal at this time besides doing his work as a *munsif*. He wrote some books on

Law in Urdu. His most interesting book was the one on the history and old buildings of Delhi. He spent much time in writing it, and visited every place he wrote about. The book was very popular when it was published. It was afterwards translated into English and other languages. The work done by him was so valuable that he was made a member of a very important society in England.

Some years later Syed Ahmed Khan was transferred to Bijnaur. While he was there he wrote a book about the reign of Akbar. It was one of the best books that he wrote. It showed that he was a historian as well as a man of letters. He was asked to write a history of Bijnaur, which he did. He did many other things for the people.

He had many buildings constructed. He built a bridge, and had a road made. All these things made him very dear to the people.

He was at Bijnaur when the Mutiny broke out. He acted with great courage and wisdom, and was able to save the lives of many English men, women and children. He gave them shelter, and by so doing put his own life in danger. He himself guarded their houses, and saw that they were all taken in safety to Roorkee. He even asked the rebel chiefs not to harm them. One Englishman feared for his life at that time. 'You need not feel anxious as long as we are alive,' Syed Ahmed Khan told him. 'You need only fear for your life when you find we are dead and gone.'¹

The rebel chiefs tried their best to win him over to their side. One of them even promised him a gift of land, but Syed Ahmed Khan refused it. 'If you want to fight the English,' he said, 'I am not with you. I cannot help you if you want to conquer this country. I do not like to see innocent men, women and children hurt. If you will not do these things, I will support you.'

In spite of the Mutiny Syed Ahmed went on doing his duty. When he went to Delhi he found all his people shut up in one house. They had had no food for three days. Worse than that, they had not had water to drink for two days. As soon as these people knew that Syed Ahmed Khan had come, they asked him to go back. 'You must not put your life in danger for our sake,' they said.

' We know what the rebel chiefs will do, and are prepared for it. But you must return at once.' Syed Ahmed Khan refused to return. His first duty was to get water for them. This he was able to do in spite of the danger. They drank the water, and their lives were saved.

When the Mutiny was over, everybody admired the courage of Syed Ahmed Khan. All the English officers wished to reward him for his services, but he did not want any reward for himself. He only wanted to see his people treated with sympathy and kindness. One of the officers offered him a *jagir* which had first belonged to a rebel chief. Syed Ahmed Khan would not have it. ' How can I make myself rich at another man's expense?' he asked.

' I cannot take what belongs to others.'

He wrote a book in which he explained the causes of the Mutiny. In it he expressed his views very courageously. Afterwards it was translated into many languages. This helped the English to understand what Indians wanted.

From Bijnaur, Syed Ahmed Khan was transferred to Muradabad. There he helped many people. One of these was a Muslim jagirdar. He had given some Englishmen shelter in his house at the time of the Mutiny. The rebel chiefs had come to know of this. They therefore came to his house and tried to harm the English. The man did his best to save them, but he was helpless. He was afterwards accused of trying to harm the English, and they wanted to

punish him. But Syed Ahmed Khan felt sure that the man was innocent. He went to the magistrate, and explained to him the facts of the case. At last the magistrate saw that the *jagirdar* was really innocent, and sent him away. In this way Syed Ahmed Khan served many people who were in need of his help.

He knew that ignorance is the cause of all evils. If Indians had been properly educated they would not have taken part in the Mutiny. It became the greatest desire of his life to spread education among Indians. With this object in view he started a small school in Muradabad. It will be seen how afterwards he founded a college at Aligarh.

Syed Ahmed Khan was at Muradabad

when a great famine broke out. It was a very severe famine, and nothing like it had been seen before. The Government tried to help the people in the best way possible. They put Syed Ahmed Khan in charge of the relief. He was the very best man they could have chosen. One of his friends said afterwards: 'Syed Ahmed Khan owes his rise in the world to the good work he did during the famine. God has rewarded him for the sympathy he showed to the poor.'

Syed Ahmed Khan organized the relief work very capably. There were about fourteen thousand people in his care, and he served them all equally well. If they fell ill, they had doctors to look after them, and they were given whatever food the **doctors** ordered for

them. He took special care of the children. He gave them milk to drink. He was very good to those children who had been left without father or mother. He brought them up very carefully, and saw that they were well treated. They were brought up as useful citizens.' able to earn their own living.

He had separate kitchens for Hindus and Muslims. There were some Hindus who would not eat food cooked by others. He gave these people separate kitchens in which to cook their own food.

Syed Ahmed Khan visited the relief centre himself every day. He went to every sick person and inquired about his health. He was equally kind to everybody. Although he did much

work, he had only a very little money with which to do it.

3. WORK FOR THE COUNTRY

Syed Ahmed Khan was at Muradabad when his wife died. She was a very good and kind woman. She left two sons and one small daughter. Syed Ahmed Khan missed her very much. He was then only forty-four years old. Many of his friends advised him to marry again. 'No,' he said. 'I will not marry again. I shall never find another wife as good to me as my first wife. I must look after my children. I must not make their lives sad by marrying a second wife. Besides, I want to devote myself to the good of my country.' He did not marry again, and spent the rest of his life doing good

work for his country.

One of the things Syed Ahmed Khan did was to start a school at Ghazipur. He collected seventeen thousand rupees for it. There were very influential men to manage its affairs. It was his great desire to raise the school to the college standard, but he was not able to do so.

He knew that the way to educate people was not through schools and colleges alone. Books and lectures were also useful. He therefore started an institute at Aligarh. There many lectures were given every month. He also had many books translated into Urdu. Afterwards he had a newspaper of his own. In it were published many useful articles. This paper was different from most papers of those

days. In the first place it was published regularly. In the second place it never attempted to hurt the feelings of anybody.

In this way Syed Ahmed Khan went on working for the people of India. He believed Indians could never become great unless they were educated. He knew that most of them were not educated, and were therefore backward. He wanted very much to start a Muslim University. But he wanted first to visit England and see the great universities there before he started a university in India.

It was not so easy to go to England in those days. It cost a great deal, and he did not have much money. Traveling was also very hard' and was not so easy and comfortable as it is now. But

soon he had a chance to go. His son, Syed Mahmud, was granted a scholarship by the Government to go to England for his studies. Syed Ahmed Khan made up his mind to go with him. It is said that to get money for this purpose he had to sell his lands and one or two of his houses.

Why did he visit England? 'I want to go to England,' he wrote at the time, 'to find out how that country has become great and rich. I want to see how Englishmen have been able to build up their trade. I want to see how they run their factories and hospitals, and how they keep their cities clean. I want to see the farmers of England. I also want to see their schools and colleges.'

Syed Ahmed Khan stayed in England

for seventeen months. During all this time he was very busy. He visited many places, and met many people. He attended many dinner parties and delivered speeches. But most of his time he spent in the reading room of the British Museum. There he read many books, because he wanted to write a book on Islam. One of his friends wrote about him: 'Other people go to England to see all the theatres and parks and grand buildings, but Syed Ahmed Khan went there to read and write. He visited schools and colleges to find out how they should be built in India. He also visited the great universities of Oxford and Cambridge. He went to England for the good of his country, and came back to do good to it.'

While in England he took note of everything that he came across. But he did not keep his ideas to himself. He shared them with friends in India, when he wrote to them. Here are parts of a letter which he wrote to one of his friends in India during his stay in London. It shows how carefully he observed everything and how keen he was on improving the conditions of his community.

' I am at present living in a comfortable house. I have six rooms, four of them bedrooms—one for each of us. In my bedroom there is only bedroom furniture—better, however, than any I have seen in India. Perhaps there may be better in Bombay and Calcutta. One of the other rooms I use for reading and writing. The sixth room is a

large one and serves as our sitting room, in which we all meet occasionally. Visitors are received in this room. My kind landlady has taken on two servants especially for my service—one is called Anne Smith, and the other Elizabeth Matthews. Elizabeth is very young and modest, and is a maid-of-all-work.

'Anne is very clever and well-educated; she is a good writer, and a thoroughly good servant. She reads the papers and enjoys them, and does her work like a watch or a machine. She receives all letters and sorts them and gives them to the right persons. Newspapers she places on the table so that they can be read by anyone who wants to.

'At about nine o'clock, she knocks at the door, and on being told to enter,

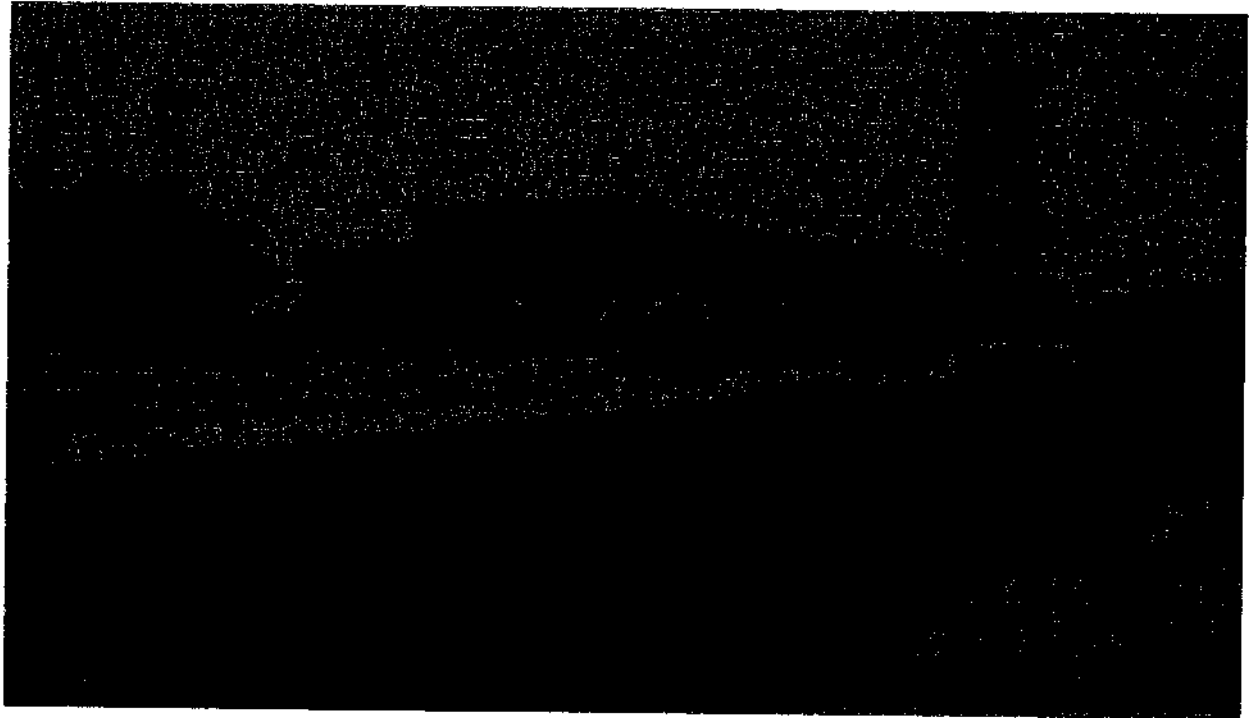
comes in and lays the table for breakfast. Her language is clear and respectful, her manners good and polite—she calls us all "Sir" when speaking to us. Dinner and supper are also set by her, with the same careful attention as breakfast. This is the result of education. Elizabeth Matthews, in spite of her poverty, always buys a half-penny paper called the *Echo* and reads it at her leisure.

¹ All the shops have the names of their owners written in front in splendid golden letters, so that you know what you can buy at a particular shop. Cabmen and coachmen keep a newspaper or a book under their seats and take it out and read it whenever they are free. Remember that the rank of a cabman

corresponds to that of the ekkawallas of Benares.'

4. THE ALIGARH COLLEGE

On his return to India he wanted to start a college at once. But it was not an easy thing to do. He found his countrymen did not like the idea very much. He called a meeting of some Muslims to think over this. But he felt all the time that they would not support him. One of his friends who was invited to the meeting wrote: 'I went to Benares to attend the meeting which Syed Ahmed Khan had called. I stayed with him there. He was kind enough to let me share his own room. One night I woke up and was surprised to see that Syed Ahmed Khan was not in bed. I saw him walking about on the verandah. I



ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY

also saw that he was weeping. I asked him if he had received any sad news. He said that there could be no sadder news to him than that his friends would not help him to start a college. When he said this, I felt how great he was. He really loved his people, and wanted to do good to them.'

At last after many years of patient work he persuaded the people to help him to found a college.

When he retired from service, Syed Ahmed Khan went to live at Aligarh. There he chose a site for the college, and had buildings constructed. These buildings are really grand, and several lakhs of rupees have been spent on them. All this money was collected by Syed Ahmed Khan himself. He travelled all over the country to collect the

money. Wherever he went he asked the people not to invite him to dinners. He thought that it was wasteful to spend money on dinners. He believed that the same money could be given to him for building the college.

Once a gentleman wanted to give a garden party in his honour. Syed Ahmed Khan did not wish this. 'Give me the money that you are going to spend on the party,' he said. The gentleman said he would give him the party, as well as money for the college. But Syed Ahmed Khan would not go to the party. He was therefore given one thousand rupees for the college.

Although he did much work for the college, he did not want any reward for it. Some people wanted to name the college after him, but he would not hear

of it. Then they suggested that a tablet bearing his name should be placed above the big door of the hall, but he did not want that either. After the college had been started; people wanted to celebrate the Founder's Day, but he would not agree. He was a modest man.

Syed Ahmed Khan was much respected by the people. He was also honoured by the Government, and a title was conferred upon him. Afterwards he was made a member of the Viceroy's Council. There he delivered many thoughtful speeches. He also gave evidence before a Commission about the education of Indians. He did much to show that Indians were capable of holding high posts.

Sir Syed was now an old man, but he

had succeeded in building the college. His life, however, was not an easy one. He had to collect money for the college, which was not easy work. He had also to face a great deal of opposition. Last of all, it was a great shock to him to find that someone had misused the funds of the college. It was said that this evil deed broke his heart.

Sir Syed fell seriously ill in 1898, and died after a short time. His death was mourned by everybody, by both English and Indians. On his death a friend said: 'A good friend is like a shady tree that bears fruit. As long as the tree is green people sit in its shade and eat its fruit, but when it decays its wood is used in many ways. Such was Sir Syed. As long as he lived he worked for his people, but now that he is dead they will not

forget his greatness and goodness. They will all try to complete what he has begun.'

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GRADE III



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1. HOME AND SCHOOL

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, generally known as Mahatma Gandhi or Gandhiji, was born at Porbander in Kathiawar on 2 October 1869. His father was Kaba Gandhi, who rose to be the Prime Minister of the State of Rajkot. He was not a very learned man, but he possessed a great deal of common sense. He managed the affairs of that State ably and was respected by everybody.

He was always proud of his loyalty to the State. Once a high official happened to speak ill of the ruler of the State. This made Kaba Gandhi very angry. He asked the official not to say such things, but the man still went on saying them. The official even felt angry at the boldness that Kaba Gandhi showed in speaking to him. He asked Kaba Gandhi to apologize, but he refused to do so. Kaba Gandhi was then kept under detention for some hours, but even this did not make him change his mind; so finally they had to release him. Such was the courage and loyalty of Kaba Gandhi.

Gandhiji's mother was a very noble lady. She was very religious. She went to the temple every day and was fond of listening to readings from the sacred books of the Hindus. She was very strict in the observance of the vows she made. She very often went without food for a whole day. Even if she fell ill and people advised her to take her meals, she would not do so. Sometimes she vowed not to take any food without seeing the sun. Often during the rainy season the sun could not be seen for days on end. But she would not break her vow and would gladly go without a meal until the sun was seen again.

Gandhiji was seven years old when he was sent to 'school. He was a shy boy and did not like to mix

with other schoolboys of his age. He reached school just when it opened and left it as soon as it closed. At school he always tried to be honest, truthful and obedient.

Once an Inspector of Schools paid a visit to his school. He examined all the boys in their studies, especially in English. He gave the students of the class to which Gandhiji belonged an exercise in dictation. He made them write down some words, one of which was 'kettle'. Gandhiji could not spell it correctly. The teacher who was in the room saw this. He wanted the boy to have all his words correct. He gave him a hint to copy the correct spelling from his neighbour's slate. But the boy did not understand the hint; nor would he have followed it if he had done so. The teacher afterwards tried to explain to him what he should have done. But Gandhiji hated dishonesty.

Another boy in his place would have come to despise his teacher, but not so Gandhiji. He continued to respect him. He believed it was his duty to respect and obey his elders. It was not for him to find fault with them.

At school Gandhiji worked very hard at his studies. He never failed to do his daily lessons. He thought it his duty to work at his books. He once saw two plays performed.—*Shravana Kumar* and *Harishchandra*; but he went to see them only after getting permission from his father.

These plays moved him much. *Shravana Kumar*, as we know, was a young man who took his blind father and mother to all the places of pilgrimage in India. He made each of them sit in a sort of basket and carried both the baskets on his shoulders with the help of a bamboo pole.

Once Shravana Kumar went to a stream to get a little water for his father and mother. King Dasharatha, who was out hunting, happened to be near that spot. When he heard the sound made by Shravana Kumar he thought some animal had come to the stream to drink. He drew his bow, and shot an arrow in that direction. This pierced the heart of Shravana Kumar, who sank down to the earth with cries of pain. The king realized at once, what he had done and ran to the spot whence the sound came. He found the young man, and asked him to forgive him. Shravana Kumar turned his dying eyes upon the king and forgave him, and then with his last breath asked him to take some water to his thirsty parents. The king did as he was asked. But when the parents came to know that their son was dead, they would not take any water. The king then led them to the body of their son, where they both died, broken-hearted with grief.

This play moved Gandhiji greatly. He wanted to be like Shravana Kumar, and obey and serve his father and mother like that young man.

In the same way *Harishchandra* had much influence on him. Harishchandra was famous for his love of truth. He was a king but he gave up his throne. He gave up his wife and also his only son. He did all this because he loved truth even more than his own life. When he had seen this play Gandhiji resolved to be like Harishchandra. He resolved to love truth as the king had done. No sacrifice would be too great in the cause of truth. We know how he always remained a lover of truth. He always placed truth above everything else. He wished to be known only as a seeker after truth.

While at school Gandhiji learnt many things. It

was, however, a pity that he took no interest in games. He would not play cricket, nor take any part in gymnastics. To the end of his life he felt sorry that he had not paid more attention to games while he was a student. He believed that every student should play some game. He kept up his health, however, by taking long walks. He was always very fond of walking, and took long walks as long as he lived.

Gandhiji was not only sorry that he did not take part in games. He also felt that while at school he should have learnt to write a good hand. He did not pay attention to his handwriting at that time and was sorry for it ever after. He thought that good handwriting is the sign of an educated person. Everyone should therefore try to have good handwriting.

He was thirteen years old when he was married. This early marriage was bad for him in some ways, but still worse things were to follow.

He fell into bad company. He made friends with a boy who tried to make him eat meat. It should be remembered that eating meat is forbidden among the Vaishnavas, and Gandhiji's father and mother were Vaishnavas; it was therefore very wrong for him to eat it. But after many days the friend had his way, and one night the boys went to a feast, in a quiet and lonely spot on the banks of a river, at which meat was served. Gandhiji ate the meat, but he was very uneasy that night. He felt as if a live goat were bleating inside his stomach.

The boys held a few more feasts like this, at all of which meat was served. They all ate meat with great joy, but Gandhiji did not feel happy while doing so. In fact, he had been taking meat for quite different reasons. He had been told that meat-eaters were usually brave and bold people. It was

also said to him that one improved one's health by eating meat. Similarly, he had been told that people acquired courage by the use of meat. Being a shy, weak and timid boy he had taken to meat because he had felt that by doing so he would be able to overcome most of his weaknesses. It was because he believed this that he had yielded to the temptation to eat meat.

He was, however, mistaken. Meat did not bring with it any of these advantages. On the other hand, he found that he yielded more and more to other temptations. Soon he took to smoking in secret. Since he could not afford to buy cigarettes he smoked **bidis*. But he did not always have money enough even to buy these. So he stole money sometimes. This went on for many months, until finally he realized that it was wrong to smoke, to steal money and to eat meat. Then he made up his mind to get over these weaknesses. But before he did so, he wanted to confess everything to his father.

His father was ill at the time. He was usually a short-tempered man, and Gandhiji feared that when he heard his confession, he would grow very angry and perhaps beat him. So he wrote out what he had to say. He then handed the piece of paper to him. The father read everything that his son had written. Then without saying one word of reproach he began to weep. These were tears of love and they purified the hearts of both father and son. They made Gandhiji determined all the more in his resolve not to do such things again. And we are happy to say that he was never found guilty of doing them again. It was indeed his courage to confess his faults to his father that made him able to shake off these weaknesses. It is good to confess one's weaknesses to

one's elders. But it is also necessary that we should resolve not to commit the same offences again.

This taught Gandhiji many things. He came to believe in *ahimsa*, that is to say, he believed that no one should inflict any injury on any living being. His faith in God grew stronger. He resolved to be good, but he knew that he could not be good unless he loved truth. He wanted to be truthful in everything that he did or said. At the same time, he came to realize that one must have toleration for all faiths. The belief thus grew upon him that the noblest thing was to return good for evil. He was very fond of repeating some Gujerati verses which say: 'If a man gives you a glass of water, give him a good meal in return. If a person greets you kindly, you should touch his feet. If somebody gives you a pice, you should give him gold in return. If a man saves your life, you should be prepared to sacrifice your life for him. You should thus pay a man tenfold for whatever he does for you. A noble person regards all men as one and is always happy to return good for evil.'

2. IN ENGLAND

Gandhiji passed the Matriculation examination in 1887. Then he joined a college; but he could not take any interest in his studies there. People therefore advised his mother to send him to England. But it was not very easy for her to do so, because there were so many difficulties in the way. In the first place, money was scarce and she did not know where to get it from. It was also very difficult for her to part from her son who was so young. Then she was told by ignorant people much about life in London and this filled her with fears for her son. She was afraid he would get lost there. She did not want her

son to eat meat, and she was told that one could not live there without meat. She did not want her son to take any strong drink, and she had heard that drinking was very common in England. Some people even whispered that he might come back with a new wife. All these doubts prevented her from sending her son to England.

But gradually the difficulties began to disappear one after another. Her eldest son promised to give her money for Gandhiji's education. A Jain monk said that the boy should take three vows: he should vow not to eat meat; not to take any strong drink; and to lead a pure life. A day was fixed when Gandhiji took the three vows according to the rites of his religion. He kept these vows ever after.

He sailed for England in 1888, but he felt very shy and nervous on the ship. He found it difficult to speak English. He also found that he could not eat the food that was served to him. He did not mix with the other passengers, nor did he dine at table. An Indian friend who was on the same ship advised him to mix with other people and to learn to speak English, but he could not overcome his shyness.

One day, however, a kindly English gentleman drew him into conversation. In the course of this conversation Gandhiji told him that he was a vegetarian. The Englishman laughed at this and said that before long he would have to eat meat. The climate of England, he said, was very cold and trying and one could not live there without eating meat. This was only a friendly warning which the gentleman gave, but Gandhiji could not eat meat because he had promised his mother not to do so.

On reaching England he found it very difficult to take the usual meals. He did not like boiled vege-

tables without salt and condiments. He lived for a time on the sweets he had brought from home. He also found that he was spending too much. When he went to London he tried at first to become a fine gentleman. He took lessons in French and dancing, and started to learn how to play the violin. But one day, after he had thought for a long time about his elder brother's saving money so hard to keep him in England, Gandhiji felt ashamed that he had been spending the money on such things. He gave up the study of French, ceased to learn dancing, and sold his violin. He began to plan to live more simply. He cut down his expenses in several ways. He took cheap rooms and began to cook for himself. He never wasted a moment of his time, and spent it all in serious study. He began to take in a journal which was run by the vegetarians of England. He soon met some of these vegetarians and joined their society. Under their influence he gave up the use of even coffee and tea. He then lived mainly on vegetables, cocoa, and fruit. They had a good effect on his health. He was able to study better. He used to get all the exercise that was necessary by going for long walks.

This brought him its own reward, for he did well at the examinations. But his chief rewards were moral. It was during his stay in England that he learnt the value of time. He thought it a sin to waste a minute of his time. His stay in England also taught him the value of plain living and high thinking. After he had passed all the examinations necessary for him to become a barrister, he came back to India.

3. IN SOUTH AFRICA

On reaching Bombay he met his eldest brother at

the docks, but he had to hear very sad news from him. Their mother had died some time back, but he had not written to Gandhiji about the sad event lest it should interfere with his work in England. This was a very bad shock to Gandhiji, but he bore it with great courage. He felt her loss greatly. It was to him a greater loss than even the death of his father. He remembered her often and thought always of her goodness.

He now set up practice as a barrister in Bombay, but he did not succeed there. So he went back to Rajkot, where he was able to make three hundred rupees a month. But soon he was given a chance, which he took, to go to South Africa. A Muslim firm had a lawsuit there and they engaged him as their lawyer. He left for Durban, but on reaching that place he found that the Indians there were not treated properly. He himself had some experience of their hardships.

He once went to the Durban courts. There the magistrate asked him to take off his turban, but he refused to do so. He had therefore to leave the court. It was afterwards explained to him that if a man wore a turban along with an Indian costume he could keep it on, but he had to, take off his turban if he wore it along with English clothes.

After a few days he left Durban for Pretoria. On the train he had an unpleasant experience. He had a first class ticket, but he was asked to leave the first class compartment and go to a lower class compartment. He refused, and a policeman came and pushed him out of the compartment. He refused to travel any further in the train and stayed on in Durban. Next day, however, he was allowed to travel in a first class compartment.

In the meantime the work which had brought him to South Africa was finished. He thought, therefore, of going back to India. The Indians of Durban arranged a farewell dinner in his honour, and at that dinner he was told about the problems that faced the Indians there. He was requested to change his mind and stay on. He did so. Three years later he went back to India to bring his wife and children with him. He stayed for six months in India, and then he received a cablegram from Natal asking him to return at once; and so he did.

Now it so happened that the ship on which he was a passenger was overtaken by a storm. It lasted for many hours and all the passengers felt very much afraid for their lives. So they joined together to offer their prayers to God. Thus they forgot their differences in religion. Muslims, Hindus, and Christians, all prayed together for God's help and mercy. And God listened to their prayers, for the sky cleared. Then they forgot about God and began to eat and drink, to sing and make merry as before. But the storm did one good thing. It made Gandhiji known to all the passengers. He alone had been able to keep up his spirits in the moment of danger. He had been able to comfort and cheer everyone on board the ship. Through this opportunity he made many friends who were of much help to him later on.

When he reached Durban he rented a house which he furnished with great care. But he found that his expenses were very high and so he had to look around for a way in which to reduce them. He found he was paying too much to the washerman, who did not wash his clothes very well. - So he became his own washerman. He bought a book on washing,

studied it and taught it to his wife. He gained much pleasure from washing his own clothes.

One day he went to court wearing a collar that he had washed himself. He had put too much starch in it, and the starch kept falling off the collar on to his clothes. The other barristers noticed this and started to ridicule him, but he did not care.

'This is my first attempt at washing my own clothes', he said. 'That is why I have made such a mistake. But I don't mind, especially when it provides you with so much fun.'

'But why don't you get your clothes washed at a laundry?' asked one of them. 'I cannot afford to pay the laundry bills,' answered Gandhiji. 'I must therefore wash my clothes myself.' In time, and with practice, he learnt to wash and iron his collars very well. The other barristers did not like the idea very much. But to Gandhiji it was a lesson in self-help. He always believed that one must learn to do things with one's own hands and that one must not regard any kind of manual labour as degrading.

In South Africa Gandhiji kept open house. All were welcome in his home; whether friends or strangers, Indians or foreigners, coloured men or white. Whoever stayed in the house was looked upon as one of the family and each was expected to serve the others. One of the persons staying with Gandhiji was a Christian, who was born of so-called untouchable parents. Gandhiji did not make any difference at all between him and the others. His wife did not like this, however. She had a prejudice against the so-called untouchables and felt reluctant to serve them. One day Gandhiji saw this for himself and lost his temper with his wife. She was a patient and gentle woman, and reasoned

with him till at last he felt ashamed of what he had said and done. This quarrel, however, led in the end to a better understanding between the two.

Gandhiji was in South Africa when the Boer War began. Though his sympathies were with the Boers, he felt it his duty to help the English. He did it also to show that Indians were not too selfish to take risks. He organized an ambulance corps which consisted of eleven hundred men. This corps served both in and outside the firing line and did much for the wounded soldiers. Their work was much appreciated and people thought a great deal more of the Indians than they had done before.

After the war Gandhiji thought of going back to India. He asked his friends to allow him to go. They agreed to do so if he would come back whenever they needed him. He agreed, and so they allowed him to go. The Indians then arranged a farewell party for him. Before he left they presented him with many gifts of gold and silver and jewels. He felt very grateful to them for these gifts, but he did not know what to do with them. His wife wanted to keep them; but he did not like this. He gave them all back to the people, for he felt that public workers should not accept gifts.

When he was back in India Gandhiji began once more to practise as a barrister. He met many famous Indians, among whom was Gokhale who looked upon him as a younger brother. He had not, however, been in India long when he received an urgent cable calling him back to South Africa. He left India at once and reached South Africa, much to the joy of the Indians there. This time he was more determined than ever to serve and help his people.

4. A NEW LIFE

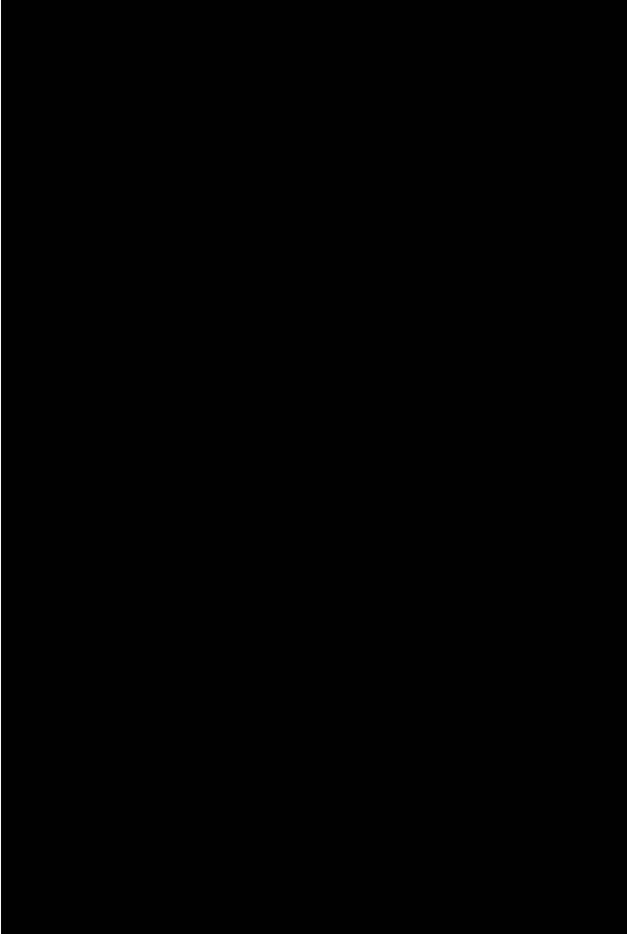
Two books that Gandhiji read at this time had much influence on him. One of these was the 'Gita' and from it he learnt to give up everything, and to cultivate calmness of disposition. He resolved to spend all his savings for the good of his people.

The other book was by an English writer and had been given to him by an English friend when he was a student. It influenced him so greatly that he determined to change his life, and follow its teachings. What did this book teach him? It taught him that one should not place one's own good first but place first the good of all. It taught him that all work is the same. It does not matter whether a man works as a lawyer or as a barber, because both aim at earning their living. It praised a life of labour and said that the life of a farmer or a handicraftsman is the only life worth living.

To put these ideas into practice Gandhiji started a settlement when he arrived in South Africa and bought about a hundred acres of land near Durban. There he lived with a few friends and relations. It was essential for them all to practise simplicity and self-help. They planted orange and mango trees, and lived on the fruit and vegetables which grew on the land. They made their own bread, and swept and cleaned their own houses. At first it was very dangerous to live there because the place was infested with snakes, but soon as a result of all their hard work it was made habitable.

At this time Gandhiji took the vow of *brahmacharya* which means the control of all the senses in thought, word and deed. It meant that he was to live like a recluse and give up the life of the head of

a family. He was to cut himself off from all frivolity and all kinds of mirth. He was not to tolerate



M. K. GANDHI IN 1906

any kind of gossip or keep late hours. In other words, he was to be a servant of God. He was to spend

most of his time in prayer and service and meditation. Above all, he was to be pure in whatever he did or said or thought.

This was not by any means a new thing for him. He had always tried to live a noble life. He had always avoided untruths. Even though he was a lawyer and followed what is described as a 'liar's profession', he still managed to avoid untruths. Once he was conducting a case in one of the courts in South Africa. As the case was being heard he found that his client was not in the right. He therefore asked the magistrate to dismiss the case. Everyone was astonished at this, although the magistrate was pleased. But Gandhiji knew that he was doing the right thing. He could not support any kind of untruth. His conduct in this case did not in any way have a bad effect on his reputation or practice. Indeed it made his work easier. People saw that he was an honourable man, and one to be trusted.

In South Africa he knew a very wealthy merchant. This man had a great deal of influence among the Indians. He was, however, not always honest in his dealings. He sometimes smuggled goods into South Africa without being discovered. But on one occasion he was found out. This frightened the merchant. He knew that he would be ruined and all his money would be lost. He was in great distress and went to Gandhiji with tears rolling down his cheeks and explained his fears to him. Gandhiji advised him to confess everything that he had been doing if he wanted to be saved.

'But don't you think I have confessed everything to you?' asked the merchant.

'It is not enough to confess to me,' said Gandhiji. 'It is not me that you have deceived but the Govern-

ment. You must go and tell everything to the Government.'

For some time the merchant could not see the wisdom of this course of action. He felt sure that it would lead to his complete ruin. His friends also advised him not to do anything of the kind. He did not know what to do. He again went to Gandhiji and explained the difficulties to him. But Gandhiji told him that there was no other way out of the difficulty except the one he had already suggested. At last the man made up his mind to act upon the advice of Gandhiji. He went to the officials and told them everything. Gandhiji also spoke to them on his behalf. They said that they would let the man off if he paid a sum equal to double the price of the goods he had smuggled. The man paid the money, and nothing further was done about the matter. He then had the confession put in a frame and had it hung up in his office. He wanted it to be a warning to his own people as well as to other merchants.

In 1906 trouble again broke out between the Government and the Indians in South Africa. Gandhiji took an active part in it. He even went to jail, along with many other Indians, to have the wrong put right. In jail they underwent many hardships, but they bore them 'because they felt they were in the right. While in jail he arrived at a compromise with the Government, which promised to remove the grievances of the Indians.

A very unpleasant thing happened as soon as Gandhiji came out of jail. He was assaulted by a Pathan who did not like the compromise. This man struck Gandhiji on the head with a heavy stick so that he fell down, and he and his companions continued to beat him with their sticks. Soon the

police arrived on the scene and arrested the Pathan and his companions. Gandhiji himself was taken to the house of an English friend who was a priest. There he was looked after by the priest and his wife until he became strong again.

Gandhiji, however, did not want the Pathan to be tried and sent to jail. He expressed this wish to some Government officials, but they said that they could not let off the offender, who must be punished. Gandhiji issued a note in which he said: 'My English friend and his wife are looking after me with great care and kindness. I hope I shall be well very soon and take up my duties again. None should, however, feel angry with the Pathan and his companions. They thought that I had done wrong. They wanted to punish me for it in their own way. But I do not believe that they should be hurt. As it was a Muslim who assaulted me, my Hindu friends might be angry, but I do not think they should be anything of the kind. The Hindus and the Muslims should always remain the best of friends.'

Gandhiji recovered, but he had to go to jail again along with many other Indians, because they thought that the Government had not granted their demands. On his release he moved to Tolstoy Farm where he lived in the company of many Indians, who had all been in jail with him. There he made his life even more simple than before. Everything on the farm was done by the people themselves and no servant was allowed on this farm, which covered an area of over a thousand acres. There were nearly one thousand fruit trees. There was water from two wells, and a spring. Oranges, apricots and plums grew abundantly. Two houses were built, one to accommodate the women and the other to accom-



A GROUP AT THE TOLSTOY FARM

moderate the men. There was also a school house, as well as a workshop for carpentry. All the food was made on the farm. They ground their own flour and made their own bread; they made butter from groundnuts, and sweets and jams from the fruit grown on the farm. Most of the people learnt to make sandals and work as carpenters. Gandhiji himself learnt to make these things and sold some of the things made by himself and others. In whatever he did he had the support not only of the men but also of the women.

During the time that he was in South Africa he went to jail many a time to get the grievances of the Indians set right. At last some of them were set right through the efforts of G. K. Gokhale and of Lord Hardinge who was then the Viceroy of India.

5. WORK IN INDIA

In 1914 Gandhiji left South Africa where he had spent twenty-one years of his life. He came back to India where he lived till his death, except for two short visits to England. Back again in India, he made up his mind to place himself in the hands of his political guru, Gokhale. In other words, he wanted his public activities in future to be guided by Gokhale. Gokhale also felt glad that he had taken such a resolve. He asked him to become a member of the Servants of India Society, of which he himself was the president. But it was soon felt that there were sharp differences between Gandhiji and the other members of the Society with regard to the aims and methods of political work. Gandhiji therefore thought it best not to join the Society. This did not mean any kind of breach with Gokhale. He still continued to look upon him as his political guide.

Then Gokhale got a promise from him that he would not speak or write on the political condition of India till he had been in the country for a year, and had seen everything with his own eyes. Needless to say, Gandhiji kept this promise even though Gokhale died only a short time after.

It did not, however, mean that Gandhiji was to be utterly idle for a year. Though he did not deliver political speeches or write articles, he went from place to place in order to study the conditions in India. In the course of his travels, he paid a visit to Shantiniketan, the world-famous school of Tagore. He was pleased with what he saw there. But he regretted to find that the students were not given any practical lessons in self-help. As a beginning in this direction he asked both teachers and students to cook their own food. Everyone, including the Poet, welcomed the suggestion. They threw themselves into this work with great zeal, though later on they had to drop it.

In the meantime Gandhiji found many things to do. The Kumbh fair was held that very year at Hardwar, and Gandhiji went there with a party of workers to serve the pilgrims. He was at Rangoon when he thought of going to Hardwar, and he did a part of the journey in an open cattle-truck. It was not a very pleasant experience for him, for it was summer, and the sun shone with amazing fierceness. He was thus exposed to the heat of the sun from above as well as from beneath, because the iron floor of the truck was hot. At Hardwar he and the members of the party did the scavenger's work, showing thereby that the work was as honourable as any other, and that it did not pollute or degrade high-caste educated Hindus.

Gandhiji had thought of founding an *ashram* in India, and in 1915 he founded the *Satyagraha Ashram* at Ahmedabad. This ashram is a home or settlement, where the residents lead a life of simplicity and self-denial. All support themselves by hard labour, and do their utmost to live up to the principles of their master. Before joining the ashram a person has to take a number of vows. He goes there with only one aim, and that is to serve his motherland. As long as he is there, he has to learn how to serve it. The inmates of the ashram include men and women, boys and girls.

First of all, a person has to take the vow of truth. This does not merely mean that under no circumstances is a lie to be told. He has to see that he never practises untruth or deception of any kind even for the good of his country. He will stick to truth even though by doing so he has to oppose those whom he loves and respects.

Another vow that has to be taken is the vow of *a himsa* (non-violence). According to this, a person will not only refrain from killing any living being, but he will not even think of hurting those whom he thinks to be unjust. He will not be angry with those who try to injure him but will love them. If a person offends him, he will try to remove the cause of grievance without doing any harm to the offender. He will thus try to conquer every one by love, even though it costs him his life.

The vow of celibacy requires that a person will not look upon any woman so as to desire her. If he is married, he will look upon his wife as a companion with whom he should have the purest of relations. He will not live to eat, but eat only to live. He will so regulate his diet that he will give up food which is unnecessary or over-stimulating.

The vow of non-stealing is another vow that has to be observed. It does not mean that one is not to commit theft in the ordinary sense of the word. One has also to give up the use of those articles which one does not really need. The vow of non-possession does not really mean that one should not possess too many things. It means that one is not to keep anything which is not absolutely necessary for one's bodily wants. One has therefore to try hard to simplify one's life, and to cut out all unnecessary things.

In addition to these vows, one has to take the vow of swadeshi and the vow of fearlessness. The vow of swadeshi requires that only simple, and Indian-made, clothes are to be worn. One has also to be fearless, that is to say, to be free from the fear of kings, people, caste, family, thieves, robbers, ferocious animals and even death.

The ashram had only twenty-five inmates, but gradually the number increased. Gandhiji lived in the ashram with his followers for many years. Some years ago he left it saying that he would not return to it till India had attained Swaraj. But he did not go back to the ashram even when India became free.

Gandhiji had learnt in South Africa how to get the grievances of the people righted. In India also he found many an opportunity to serve his countrymen. He found that the indigo labourers of Champaran in Bihar were not being properly treated. He went to Champaran, and saw their condition with his own eyes. He worked for these labourers, and after some time was able to get justice done to them. In the same way, he helped the peasants of Kaira when, owing to tile failure of their crops, they were unable

to pay their revenue. When there was a dispute between the mill-owners and the workers of Ahmedabad, he was able to persuade the mill-owners to yield to the demands of the workers. Thus Gandhiji lived, helping the poor people of the country as much as he could.

In the meantime, in August 1914, war had broken out in Europe. The Viceroy called a conference at Delhi to secure the co-operation of Indians for the prosecution of the war. Many well-known leaders were invited. Gandhiji was also asked to attend, but he was not keen on going. He was persuaded, however, to go. There many resolutions were passed asking Indians to help the British Empire in its hour of need. Gandhiji seconded a resolution in Hindustani calling upon Indians to enlist in the army. After the conference, he wrote a letter to the Viceroy in which, among other things, he stated the political demands of India. Then he started the recruiting campaign, and went about from place to place enlisting soldiers for the army. This was not altogether a pleasant experience for him. Very often he had to walk long distances and carry his own food. The campaign also told heavily on his health, and he was ill for a long time.

Soon in 1919, Gandhiji was drawn into a fight for the freedom of his country. He was not, however, alone in this. Thousands of men and women came forward to obey him and to suffer with him. He went to jail many a time, and was never afraid of anything. In fact, he changed the history of the country. His fight, however, was based on non-violence and truthfulness. He was always prepared to own his mistakes, whenever he or any of his followers committed them. He often fasted for

many days in order to atone for his own or other people's mistakes. Once he undertook a fast of twenty-one days, because there were Hindu-Muslim riots. This fast did much good, because the members of all communities in India joined together to find out ways to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity. He undertook another fast when he found that wrong was being done to Harijans. He ended this fast only when the wrong had been righted.

It is necessary to describe in as few words as possible what Gandhiji did in the political field on coming back to India. A few of these things have already been mentioned, but others must also be made known. It is only then that we can understand why, even in his life-time, he came to be called the Father of the Nation. He returned to India in 1915 and the same year he went to attend the session of the Indian National Congress in Bombay but, strange to say, he was not elected even a member of the Subjects Committee. It was Sir S. P. Sinha, afterwards Lord Sinha of Raipur, who nominated him, but even so, no one took much notice of him. Little did they know at that time that in a few years he would be the soul and the spirit of the Congress.

Two years afterwards he wanted to agitate against the system of indentured labour, according to which Indian labourers were taken abroad to work on terms which were degrading. But before he did so, the Viceroy of India put an end to this evil which had gone on for about a hundred years. The same year the Montagu Reforms were made known. Mr E. S. Montagu was the Secretary of State for India at that time and he gave self-government to India of a limited kind. Gandhiji did not like it very much. He was for the scheme of Swaraj

which the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League had put forward. It was that very year that he learnt about the sad condition of the peasants of Kaira in the Bombay Presidency. There was a famine and the people were unable to pay taxes to the Government. But the Government would not listen to their pleas. So Gandhiji, along with others, decided upon satyagraha. All the satyagrahis vowed that they would rather lose everything they had than pay any tax to the Government. The Government became very strict and attached the cattle and the standing crops. Even movable goods were taken away. But these things did not shake the people's spirits. In the end, the Government had to give way. This was the first trial of satyagraha in Gujerat and it succeeded. Later on, it was tried several times with success all over India.

Gandhiji was fifty years old when the Rowlatt Bill came to be passed. Indians opposed this Bill very strongly for it deprived them of freedom in many ways. Then an idea came to Gandhiji in a dream that he should call upon the country to observe a general hartal. This was done and a hartal was widely observed. The police, however, fired on the people at such places as Lahore and Amritsar, because it was believed the crowds had got out of control. Gandhiji wanted to go to the Punjab but the Government prevented him from doing so. The same year the Jallianwala Bagh Tragedy took place at Amritsar. A public meeting was going on when General Dyer fired on the people. According to the Government report about four hundred were killed and between one and two thousand wounded. This tragedy made a deep impression on the people of India. The Government appointed a committee

to inquire into all this, but the Indian National Congress set up a committee of its own. When the report of the Hunter Committee came out, Gandhiji was shocked. Before this he had been a co-operator, that is to say, he wanted the Montagu Reforms to be accepted and the Prince of Wales to be welcomed when he visited India. But after this he advised his Muslim and Hindu friends not to cooperate with the Government.

In 1920, a special session of the Indian National Congress was held in Calcutta where it was decided to boycott schools, law courts, foreign cloth and several other things. A resolution demanding Swaraj was also passed. Gandhiji vowed not to eat his daily meal till he had spun for at least half an hour. He also founded a University in Gujerat which gave national education in the mother tongue. From this time on Gandhiji became the voice and the heart of the Indian National Congress and of India. He asked people to take to *khadi* and to spinning. He himself gave up wearing a shirt and a cap and wore only a simple loin cloth.

That very year the Prince of Wales arrived in India. On the day of his arrival rioting took place. Indian leaders were sent to jail which made everyone very angry. In Bardolj, Gandhiji started a civil disobedience movement based on truth and non-violence. But at Chauri Chaura, in the United Provinces, the people got out of control and some policemen were burnt to death. Such violence was completely against Gandhiji's principles, so this movement was stopped. Gandhiji himself was arrested, tried and sent to jail for six years. He asked people to be peaceful, to remain non-violent and to be prepared for suffering. In jail he fell ill with appendicitis

and was operated upon by an English surgeon. He got well again and was released from prison. Soon at several places in the country trouble broke out between Hindus and Muslims. To stop this, Gandhiji undertook a fast for twenty-one days. He broke it only when the Hindus and the Muslims promised that they would live like brothers.

After some time the British Government appointed a commission to report on the problem of self-government for India. This was the famous Simon Commission, but the Congress boycotted it. At the Lahore Session of the Congress, the goal of India was defined as independence. In 1930 it was decided to call the 26th of January Independence Day. Celebrations were held all over the country and have been held every year since.

Soon afterwards Gandhiji set out on a march, along with seventy-nine volunteers, to break the salt law at Dandi. His object was to have the Government tax on salt removed. 'Either', he said, 'I shall return with what I want or else my body will float over the ocean.' This salt satyagraha went off well, but Gandhiji was arrested and taken to Yerwada jail. The British Government then called a Round Table Conference in London, but no representative of the Congress attended it. Soon a pact was arrived at between Gandhiji and Lord Irwin, who was the Viceroy of India at that time. Gandhiji agreed to go to London to attend the Conference but he was not satisfied with the results. He again started the civil disobedience movement and was again arrested. In an effort to solve the problem Mr Ramsay Macdonald, the British Premier, gave his Communal Award which fixed the number of seats in Councils and Assemblies

and the public services which the various communities might hold. Gandhiji did not agree that the so-called depressed classes should be looked upon as separate from the Hindus. He therefore undertook a fast unto death to secure a change in the Communal Award. As a result the British Government changed its mind and Gandhiji broke his fast. Afterwards he worked to improve the lot of Harijans. He wanted every temple to be thrown open to them.

All these years were full of events which led to the Congress taking office in 1937 as a result of their great victories at the elections. After two years the second World War started in Europe. The Congress, under the leadership of Gandhiji, did not like to take part in the war, so the Congress ministers resigned. Another satyagraha movement was started. The British Government sent Sir Stafford Cripps to talk with the Indian leaders on the future of their country, but the Indian leaders rejected his plan. In 1942 Gandhiji started the Quit India movement. Many Indians were arrested. Gandhiji was also arrested and taken to the Aga Khan Palace in Poona. There his beloved wife, Kasturba, died. Gandhiji undertook a fast and his condition became serious. In view of his illness he was released.

In 1946, a Cabinet Mission came to India under the leadership of Lord Pethick-Lawrence. The Congress again agreed to form ministries and run the government in some parts of India. Soon trouble broke out in East Bengal and Bihar between the Hindus and the Muslims. Gandhiji went to these places and brought about peace. Then came Independence, and the Partition of India which Gandhiji did not favour. In Calcutta conditions became so bad between the Hindus and the Muslims that

Gandhiji undertook a fast in an effort to restore peace. But soon after peace had come to Calcutta, the same trouble started in Delhi. Once more Gandhiji strove for peace but when his efforts did not succeed, he fasted yet again. Only when everyone promised to work for friendship between Hindus and Muslims did he agree to break his fast. He said that he would not rest content till every Muslim who had left India and every Hindu who had left Pakistan was again settled in his own home. He was carrying on his mission of love and peace when, on 30 January 1948, he was fired at by a young man while he was going to address his prayer-meeting. The shots proved fatal. The next day his remains were cremated at Raj Ghat in Delhi. His ashes were taken to many rivers in India as well as outside it. A wave of sorrow swept all over the world. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was right in saying that there was darkness everywhere and that a light had gone out of the world. Though Gandhiji is dead, his message lives.

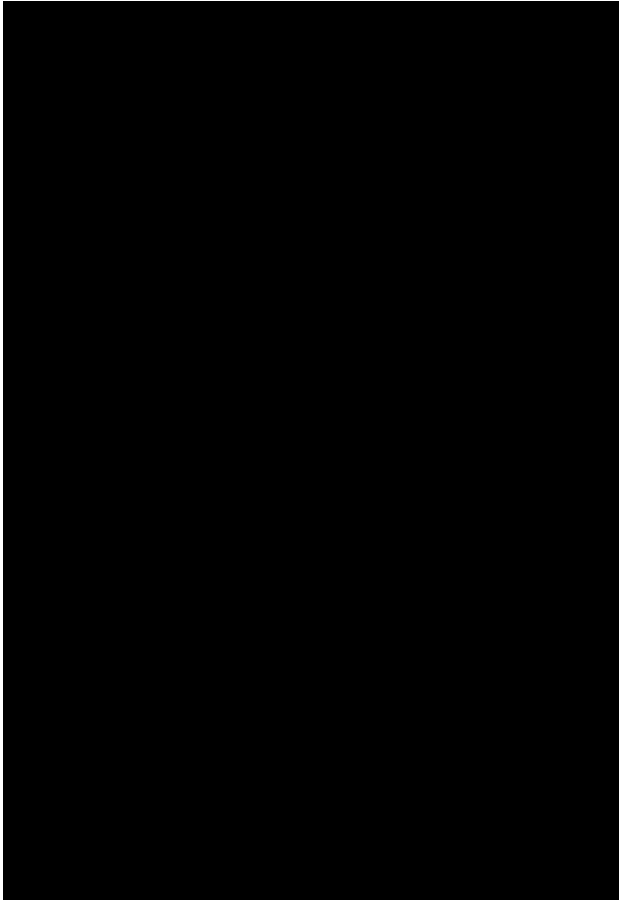
It must be remembered that Gandhiji was, above all things, a man of peace. He was always ready to come to terms with the Government, provided the terms were honourable. For instance, he suspended his political agitation when Lord Irwin, a noble Christian Viceroy, offered him honourable terms. Again he went to London to attend the Round Table Conference to put the case of India before the British people. Whenever he was not engaged in political work, he tried to do things which would improve the condition of the masses. He did a great deal for Harijans, and was ever busy helping to revive the village industries of India.

What Gandhiji wished to be is beautifully expressed in a hymn which he was very fond of singing.

:Y2

M. K. GANDHI

It says : 'He is the true Vaishnava, who knows and feels another's woes as his own. Ever ready to serve,



(The Times of India, Bombay)

M. K. GANDHI IN 1930

he never boasts. He bows to every one and despises no one, keeping his thoughts, words and deeds pure.

Free from greed and deceit, passion and anger—this is the true Vaishnava.'

Though he took part in many political battles, he was at heart a saint. He was a God-fearing man and always lived a pure and unselfish life. Himself very poor, he loved the poor most. He wanted them to live good lives. It was for this reason that he was always doing so much work for Harijans and the inhabitants of the villages of India. He loved children and was very happy in their company. Though he was known all over the world as a politician, he was in reality a godly person. Even though he might be forgotten as a politician, he will always be remembered as a saint and a patriot.

He worked more than anyone else for the freedom of India. He staked his life for the good of Harijans. He worked for peace between Hindus and Muslims and died for it. He did everything to make Indian villages better. He wanted peace in the world and goodwill amongst men.

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ISHWARCHANDRA VIDYASAGAR

I. FATHER AND SON

A young man sat in front of a shop in Calcutta. It was a very small shop in one of the darkest lanes of the city. An old woman owned it. Only cheap food like cooked gram was sold there. Only poor coolies and needy workmen came to buy the food

The young man had been sitting there for many hours, but no one had spoken to him or looked at him. People came and people went, but the young man still sat there. Sometimes he looked at the things in the shop. But he only did so when

nobody was looking at him. He was hungry and tired. He wanted to have some of the things in that shop. But how could he buy them when he had no money ?

The old woman had seen the young man sitting there. She knew that he had been there for many hours. She felt that he must be hungry. She also felt that he had no money to buy food with. She was very kind, so she went up to him and said : 'What do you want, young man ?

'Nothing, good woman,' he replied. She said again: 'You are looking tired. Will you have some water to drink ?'

'Thank you', replied the young man. It would be very kind of you

to give me some water. I am very thirsty.'

'But would you not like something to eat, also ?' asked the old woman.

'How can I eat ? I have no money¹, said the young man.

'Never mind. I will bring you something to eat,' said the old woman.

Then she went inside the shop, and brought him a little gram to eat. He ate this, and drank some water. Then he said to the old woman: 'You are very kind. I was feeling very hungry, and did not know what to do. I had no money. I did not want to beg for food. You took pity on me and gave me, some-

thing to eat. I will never forget your kindness.'

The old woman listened to these words. Then she asked, 'Do you often feel hungry like this ?'

'Oh yes,"replied the young man. 'Often I have to go without food.'

Then come to me whenever you feel hungry,' said the old woman. 'I will give you something to eat.'

Who was this young man ? He was Thakur Das Banerji, father of Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar. He had left his home, and had come to Calcutta to look for work. After waiting for a long time he had found a post. He was paid two rupees a month. He was getting ten rupees a month when his son was born on 26 September 1820, at their village

home at Birsingha. His father and mother were very poor, but Ishwar-chandra was always proud of them.

When he was a child, Ishwar-chandra was very clever. He learnt things much more quickly than other boys of his age. He was also able to learn more quickly than many boys older than he was. At school he learnt in three years what the other boys needed five years to learn.

But he was also very naughty. It was very difficult to keep him out of mischief. He would go where nobody else dared to go. He would climb trees and pull their fruit off. He would go into fields and eat the things growing there. Once he went into a barley field. He began to eat barley stalks. One of these stuck in

his throat and choked him. He very nearly lost his life, but his grandmother quickly pulled the stalk out of his mouth and thus saved his life.

He was a hero among the other boys of his own age. They followed him wherever he went. They did what he asked them to do. He was friendly with everybody. But he did not like bullies. Once an older boy began to give trouble to his friends. Ishwarchandra was a way in Calcutta but his friends wrote to him about that bully. He wrote back that he would come and teach him a lesson. True to his word, he came. Then there was a fight between him and the bully. The bully was defeated and never gave trouble again.

He helped his friends in this way.

After he finished his studies in the vilfege *pathshala*, he went to Calcutta with his father. They were very poor and they had to walk all the way. But some good came even of this. The boy learnt all the English figures by looking at the milestones. When they were near Calcutta his father asked a man, 'How many miles is it to Calcutta from here ?' Before the man had time to reply, the boy said, 'It is only two miles.'

'How do you know ?' asked his father.

'I have been reading the milestones,' said Ishwarchandra.

'But **you** cannot read them,

said his father. 'You have only learnt Bengali in your *pathshala*.'

'Yes, but now I know the figures in English as well. I have been reading them on the milestones,' said Ishwarchandra.

2. IN CALCUTTA

In Calcutta the boy went to school. He did not read English. He read only Sanskrit.« Hemastered this in a short time, although his life was very hard. Both father and son lived in a small house. It had only two rooms. They were a living-room and a kitchen. The house was in one of the narrowest and darkest lanes of Calcutta. It was so dark that they had to use a lamp even in the day-time. It was



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THE SENATE HOUSE, UNIVERSITY OF CALCUTTA.

one of the worst places you could think of. It was full of foul smells, and all sorts of insects and mosquitoes were found there.

Both father and son worked very hard. Thakur Das Banerji went out to work early every morning, and came home late every night. The son studied at the Sanskrit College, and looked after the house as well. He cooked the meals and cleaned the pots and pans. He never slept for more than four or five hours a day. He spent most of his time on his studies.

Ishwarchandra did very well in his studies. He mastered all kinds of Sanskrit learning. All his teachers were amazed at his cleverness. He

was by far the best student in his class. He won many scholarships and prizes. He once got a special prize for writing an essay.

He wrote Sanskrit verse as well as he wrote prose. He once went to Birsingha. While he was there a *shraddha* ceremony was performed in the house of a very rich man. All the learned Brahmins of Bengal had been invited to it. It was said that they would recite verses of their own on the occasion. Somebody asked Ishwarchandra to compose some verses as well. At first he refused. What chance has a young man in a place like this?' he asked. 'All the elderly and learned Brahmins will be there, and nobody will care for anything that I write.'

At last they persuaded him to write something. He wrote some verses which were read at the ceremony. They were so good that everybody wanted to know who had written them. They were all amazed when they were told that the verses were written by a young boy.

Ishwarchandra read all the different branches of Sanskrit learning. He finished his studies at the Sanskrit College, Calcutta, when he was still quite young. He was so learned and such a well-known scholar that everybody admired him for his cleverness. Soon after he left the college, all the scholars of Bengal held a meeting. They wanted to give him a special name. They decided that

he should be called ' Vidyasagar'. This means that he was an 'ocean of learning', a very, very learned man. This is how Ishwarchandra became known as Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar.

Soon Vidyasagar became a teacher in the Fort William College, Calcutta. The Principal of this college was a noble Englishman. He knew that Vidyasagar was very learned. He also wanted to know if he was honest. One day he said to Vidyasagar: 'You know that our college is meant for the education of civil servants. All these students come from England. If any one fails he has to go back to England. Don't you think it will be good if you try to pass as many as possible ?'

'How can I do that, Sir ?' asked Vidyasagar. 'I can pass only those who deserve to pass. I will not let any one pass who does not deserve to.'

'Just think it over again,' said the Principal. 'You know if any one fails he suffers very much. You will not find it difficult to help one or two students every year.'

'I will never do it, Sir. I want to be just and fair to every one. I will never show favour to anybody,' said Vidyasagar.

'Well said, Vidyasagar,' replied the Principal. 'Your words please me very much. Always try to be just and fair.'

Thus the Principal found that Vidyasagar was honest as well as

learned. He now came to think more highly of him than he had done before.

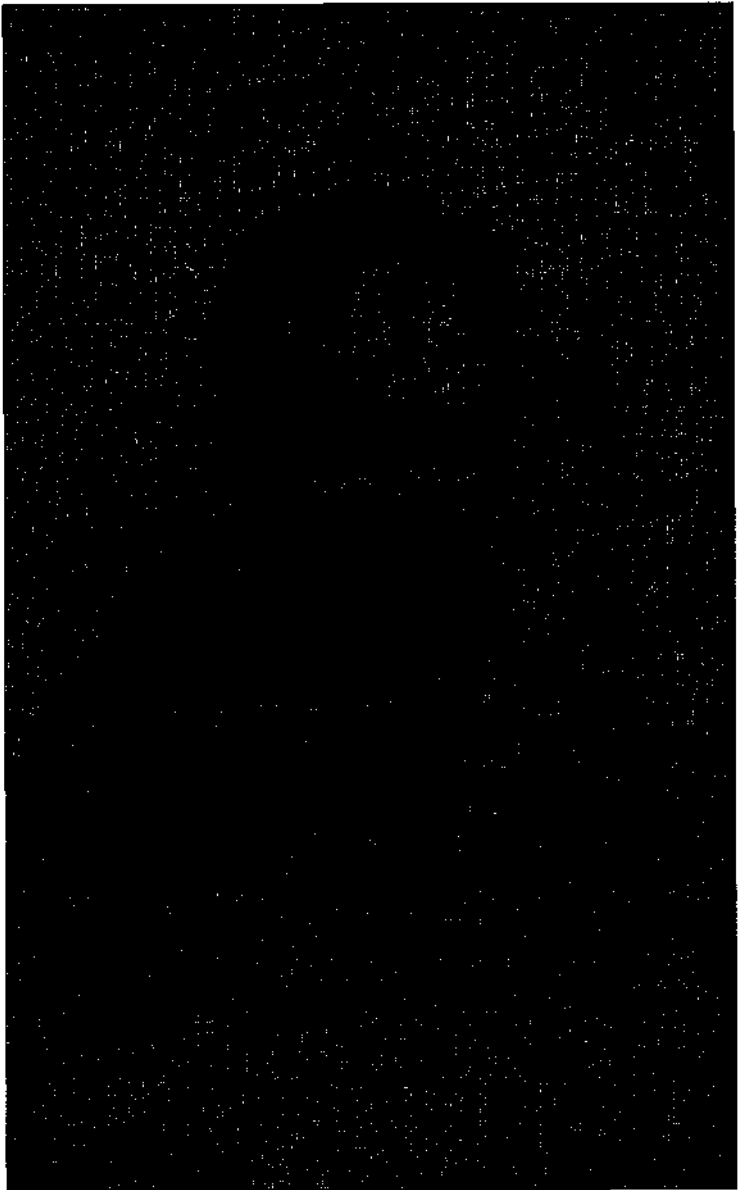
Vidyasagar was known everywhere as a good teacher. Many students came from all parts of the country to study under him. One of his pupils was a very old man. He wanted to read Sanskrit, and Vidyasagar promised to help him. But soon he found that Sanskrit grammar was too difficult for the old man. So he wrote a short grammar for those beginning the study of Sanskrit. This book is still used in all parts of India.

Vidyasagar was good to all his students, but he was especially kind to the poor. Once he had two pupils. One was the son of a rich

man, and the other was very poor. Both of them wanted to sit for an examination for a scholarship. Vidyasagar knew that the rich student was cleverer than the poor student. He said to himself: 'If the rich student sits for the examination, he will surely win the scholarship. The poor boy will therefore not be able to continue his studies.' So he said to the rich boy: 'I must ask you not to sit for the examination.'

'Why, Sir?' asked the boy. 'I am fully prepared for it. I hope I shall do well'

'I know that', said Vidyasagar. 'But I ask you not to sit for the scholarship. Let the poor boy sit for it and get it. You can sit for the higher examination next year.'



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ISHWARCHANDRA VIDYASAGAR.

This scholarship is worth only eight rupees: the higher one is worth twenty rupees. I am sure you will get it*.

'All right, Sir. I will do as you ask me to do. I hope you will help me next year in my studies', said the boy.

'Certainly I will do so', said Vidyasagar.

A few years later there was a post vacant in the Sanskrit College, Calcutta. This was the same college where Vidyasagar had studied. Everyone thought that he was the best man to fill the vacant post. But Vidyasagar did not think so. He knew that another man was better than he was. - So he travelled one hundred and fifty

miles to tell the other man about the vacant post. The man was amazed. 'You are acting,' he said, 'as people used to in the Golden Age. I didn't think there was any one so good in this Iron Age of ours. Nobody wants to help another at his own cost in our time. But you are doing so, and I thank you for it'.

'I am only doing my duty', said Vidyasagar.

3. THE SANSKRIT COLLEGE

After some time Vidyasagar became the Principal of the Sanskrit College, Calcutta. Everybody respected and loved him. This does not mean that he was not strict. He did many things to make the

college better. At first the teachers came late every day, but soon he made them come in time. At first only Brahmin students were admitted to the college, but he wanted Shudras also to learn Sanskrit. For a long time the people did not like this idea, but he won in the end.

He interested himself in many other noble reforms also. One of these was the remarriage of Hindu widows. It is interesting to see how he became interested in this subject.

There was an old teacher at the Sanskrit College. He was a very learned man. He liked Vidyasagar very much, and looked upon him as his own son. He

consulted him whenever any difficulty arose.

This teacher lost his wife. He then had no near relations to look after him. His friends wanted him to marry again. They said, 'A wife will cook for you and look after you.' At first the old teacher did not agree to marry again. At last his friends persuaded him to agree.

One day he told Vidyasagar all about it. He said to him. 'You know I am very old. I have no near relations to look after me. I have been told to marry again. Please tell me what you think of it.'

Vidyasagar said. 'I can see you are not happy as you are. But if you get a servant, most of your difficulties will go. You must re-

member that you are very old. You have only a few more years to live in this world. You should not therefore think of marrying now. You will only leave behind a young widow.

These words of Vidyasagar did not make the old man change his mind. He still thought of marriage. At last the old teacher married a young and lovely Brahmin girl. From that day Vidyasagar would not show any more interest in the old teacher. They often asked him to visit the house, but he did not.

One day the old man succeeded in taking him to his house. There Vidyasagar saw his teacher's wife. As soon as he saw her, he fell at

her feet. He felt the same respect for her that he had felt for his mother. For, according to the Hindu shastras. the wife of a man's guru is like his mother. The old teacher asked Vidyasagar to eat or drink something, but he refused. 'I cannot eat anything, in this house,' he said, 'for you did not listen to me.' With these words he left the house,

Soon the old teacher died. His wife was still very young, and was now a widow. This made Vidyasagar very sad. He always thought of the hard lives of poor widows. He wanted to find some way to put an end to their troubles.

He thought over this problem for a very long time. He wanted to

show that the shastras did not object to widows marrying again. In the end he wrote a book to prove that the shastras were in favour of widows marrying again. Most Hindus did not like this book at all. Vidyasagar became very unpopular. But he did not mind. He was determined to put an end to the miseries of widows. And he won in the end.

4 NOBLE WORK

Vidyasagar was Principal of the Sanskrit College for many years. Most of the teachers who were at the college when he was a student were still there. The old head clerk, who had been his friend when he was a student, was still

there. He treated all these men with great kindness. He was especially kind to the old head clerk. One day the head clerk rose from his seat when Vidyasagar came into the room. 'Please do not get up when I come into your room,' said Vidyasagar. 'I am still your little Iswar, the poor boy to whom you were so kind'

After some years Vidyasagar became an Inspector of Schools. He opened many schools in the villages of Bengal. Then he resigned his post. He had already written several books. Now he became the editor of a paper as well. His books and his paper brought him some money. But do you think he spent it only on himself? No, he always

helped other people when they were in need.

Vidyasagar is still remembered as a very generous man. He started a school in his village, and paid the expenses of the school himself. Then he started a night school, a girls' school and a hospital in his village. He believed that 'charity begins at home'.

He had a very tender heart, and was kind to the poor. There are many things which show this.

One day Vidyasagar was on his way to bathe in the river. He met a man who seemed to be in great trouble. His body was covered in rags, and he had no shoes. He seemed very poor. Vidyasagar went up to him and asked, What is

troubling you ?' But the man did not reply. Vidyasagar was determined to find out what was troubling the old man. He asked him again and again what was wrong. At last the old man said. 'I am in debt. I owe a man two thousand and four hundred rupees. I do not know how to pay back this sum. I have asked many rich men to help me, but none has cared to do so. I am in great trouble. If I do not pay the money by the day after to-morrow I shall have to go to jail. I borrowed this money for my daughter's marriage.'

Vidyasagar asked the old man what his name was. He also asked him where he lived. Then he went home and thought over the matter.

He found that he himself had not much money. So he borrowed the sum from a friend. He sent the money to the poor man through another friend. The poor man tried very hard to find out who had given him the money, but he never knew who he was.

Once he received a letter from a young man in France. He was a Bengali who had gone to study in France. But he was a Christian and not a Hindu. He wrote in his letter: 'I have no money. My friends will not help me! "If no one sends me money I shall have to go to jail. My wife and my little boy and girl will have to live in some home of charity.'

This letter made Vidyasagar

very sad. He was not very rich, but still he sent that young man some money.

Vidyasagar died in 1891. If you go to the Sanskrit College at Calcutta some day, you will find a statue there. It is the statue of Vidyasagar. It was put up to keep his memory alive. But he still lives in the hearts of the people of India. He was a good, noble and charitable man. Therefore the people of India remember him still. They are grateful to him for what he did for them.

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OXFORD PAMPHLETS ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

No. 2

THE POSITION
OF WOMEN

LAKSHMI N. MENON



HUMPHREY MILFORD
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

INDIA'S biggest minority is its women. Only 2 per cent of **them** are able to read and write, their health is undermined by early marriage and seclusion, their wages are lower than **those** paid to men doing similar work, their rights to property are much restricted. Yet as wives and mothers they wield great influence in the home, they are the arbiters of feasts and marriages, and in public life they have taken their place as equals of men with an ease and assurance that is almost unparalleled in Western countries. The women of India are looking forward to many changes for the better, and are working for them through their organizations.

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THE POSITION OF WOMEN

Two thousand years ago Medea lamented how of all beings born to life and intelligence women are the most unhappy. In many respects this is more true, even today, of the position of Indian women than of those of almost any other civilized country. The contrast becomes still more poignant when we compare their position with that of their sisters in other Asiatic countries like China, Japan or Turkey. The persistence of harmful social customs such as child marriage and purdah, the continuance of antiquated and unequal laws relating to marriage and property and the absence of adequate provision for education and medical aid are responsible for this. And yet in some ways the women of India have had a past of which they may justly be proud; and today there is a ferment among them which points to a hopeful future.

Background

There is little reason to doubt that the position of women in Indian society was a good deal better in the early ages than it has been in modern times. In women like Sita and Savitri classical Hindu literature has personified some of the finest ideals of womanhood that human imagination has created. In society, child marriage did not exist. *Stoayamvara*, the Maiden's Choice, was at least one kind of marriage among the ruling families. Women held their dowry as their private property, the husband could be punished for cruelty, and a second marriage was allowed only if the marriage was childless. Widows could remarry and, though voluntary suttee was permitted, it was confined in practice to the Kshatriyas. Many women were educated and some, such as Gargi and Maitreyi, were famous scholars who took their part in public discussions in learned assemblies. In the Buddhist period their position was even better, and we know that the Buddha admitted women into his Order. Hiuen Tsiang (A.D. 600-64) mentions that, when he came to Harsha's court to deliver a homily on the Mahayana doctrine, the king's widowed sister sat beside him and took a leading part in the discussion.

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But from the tenth century onwards the condition of women steadily deteriorated as a result of foreign invasions* By the time of al-Biruni's visit to India (A.D. 1017-30) the age of marriage for girls had become earlier, the custom of suttee more usual and the remarriage of widows forbidden. Muslim rule brought in the custom of seclusion of women and soon it became universal among the well-to-do classes of both the Hindus and Muslims. However, the women of the richer classes, especially among the Muslim rulers, were well educated and many of them were patrons of culture, poetesses of distinction and administrators of remarkable ability. The memoirs of Gulbadan Begam, Akbar's aunt, are well known. Akbar's wife, Salima Sultana, Shah Jehan's queen, Mumtaz Mahal, and Aurungzeb's sister, Princess Jehanara Begam, were all gifted poetesses; and Sultana Razzayat of Delhi and Chand Bibi of Ahmednagar were distinguished as warriors and administrators.

Among the Hindus, at least Rajput women enjoyed great freedom. *Swayamvara* was still practised and the Rajput wife even accompanied her husband to war; or, like the brave Padmini of Chitor and her companions, she ascended the funeral pyre at her husband's death lest she should fall into the hands of the enemy.

And in more recent times, there are names celebrated in song and story, like those of Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi and Ahalya Bai of Indore.

The Home and the World

The Indian woman and her position in the home have often been idealized. Sita and Savitri are still ideals of Indian womanhood. The Hindu is taught that the gods forsake the hearth where women are not respected; and the Muslim, that heaven lies at the feet of the mother. But the tragic contrast between the ideal and the actual must not be forgotten. As wife, mother and widow the Indian woman's position is one of dependence. Her property rights are limited by law and blacked out by ignorance. Her education is indifferent and incomplete. Her primary duty is in the home. The daily round of drudgery, the mean and interminable duties and worries that fill her days, the constant bearing of children that ruins her health, the lack

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of education that darkens the world to her, are hardly remembered in this connexion. One admires the plumage, and forgets the dying bird. It is not surprising that most of this idealization has been done by men. It is not even questioned how far these ancient ideals as ideals are adequate in modern times. Nevertheless, the Indian woman's position is not all misery or her life entirely colourless. Within the circumscribed dominion of her home she enjoys as daughter, wife and mother, a certain freedom, respect and even authority which is unmistakable. The procession of the months with their feasts, fasts and festivals, and of the years with their marriages and anniversaries, with occasional visits in the neighbourhood or a rare pilgrimage to a distant place, all lend joy and colour to her life.

But an increasing number of women are ceasing to confine their activities to the home. Large numbers are already attending universities, engaged in the professions and taking an active part in the social, political and literary movements of the country. If in India there is not that peculiar tradition of chivalry which exists in the West, perhaps there is also not the active opposition to their extra-domestic activities which goes with that tradition; to take but a single instance, one notes how easily women secured the franchise in India.

Some Census Figures

India's biggest minority is its women. Unlike other countries, there is here an excess of males over females in the population. Out of a total of 389 millions in 1941, females constitute 188 millions; that is, they are 13 millions less. The proportion of the sexes is 93·5 females for every 100 males and this figure is actually less than it was in 1931 when there were 94 females for every 100 males. The ratio varies between places, strata and communities. The number of females is relatively low in north-western India; it is 84 in the N.W.F.P. and 84·7 in the Punjab. It is relatively high in the Peninsula—100·9 females for every 100 males. There are also variations in the different strata of society; the lower the social status, the greater being the proportion of women. Thus, for the advanced castes, the ratio of females to males is 87·8 per cent, for the intermediate castes 93·5, and for the

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depressed classes 98·2. Communitywise, the percentage is only 78·2 for Sikhs, 90·1 for Muslims, 93·8 for Parsis, 94·1 for Jains, 95·1 for Hindus and Christians and 102·5 for Buddhists.

But the meaning of these figures should not be exaggerated. Many of the problems affecting Indian* women are, as we shall see, common to all communities, areas and strata. And it is significant that, notwithstanding the increasing fissiparous tendencies of communal politics, women's organizations co-operate among themselves for the redress of common grievances. Doubtless they could do more in this direction.

India has also the lowest proportion of unmarried women in the world. It was estimated in the Census of 1931 that 49 per cent of women were married, 35 unmarried and 16 widowed. Out of the unmarried women as many as 91 per cent belonged to the age-group under 15. Between the ages of 15 and 40 the percentage of unmarried women was only 5, as against 35 in England and Wales.¹ It is clear that such a universality of marriage, especially early marriage, must tend to shorten the Indian woman's period of education, affect her health and restrict both her professional and public activities.

The Health of Women

The health of women is one of the major problems of national welfare in India. The custom of early marriage, the habit of secluding women, especially prevalent among the middle classes, both Hindu and Muslim, and the absence of adequate medical aid are primarily responsible for this. While nature, everywhere, for biological purposes, endows the female of the species with greater powers of resistance to infection and of survival than the male, in India society has contributed much towards undermining this natural advantage.

Expectation of Life

A low female birth rate is a universal phenomenon. In India 108 male children are born to every 100 females ones.

¹ It is regrettable that the corresponding figures for 1941 have not been published. This applies also to many other matters including literacy, health and occupation.

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In civilized countries this disparity is corrected by the higher death rate among male children and by death due to strain of work and exposure to dangerous tasks of men in later life. In India, on the other hand, this disparity is accentuated by high maternal mortality rates among the women of the age group 15-40 due to the lack of essential medical aid during child-birth. Hence the average expectation of life for women in India is actually shorter than that for men. The expectation of life is the lowest among leading countries, 26·9 years for men and 26·6 for women. The corresponding figures for some other countries are: New Zealand 65·4 and 67·9, U.S.A. 59·1 and 62·6, Germany 59·9 and 62·7, England and Wales 58·7 and 62·9 and Japan 44·8 and 46·5. Thus not only is the average expectation of life in India very short in relation to other countries, but it is also less by four months for women; in the countries mentioned women usually live two to four years longer than men.

Maternal Mortality

India has perhaps the highest maternal mortality figures of civilized countries. Records in India on the subject are indeed unsatisfactory and the estimates usually quoted are based only on the records of sample areas. Sir John Megaw's well-known estimate of maternal mortality in 1933 fixed the rate at 24 per thousand. Since then detailed inquiries have been made in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. The Special Committee appointed by the Central Advisory Board of Health to report on maternity and child welfare work in India came to the conclusion in 1937 that the rate of maternal mortality is probably somewhere near 20 per thousand live births. Sir John also estimated that the total maternal death rate was 200,000 annually or 20 per hour, that a vast number of these deaths occur to girls in their teens and twenties, and that of every 1,000 young mothers, 100 are destined to die in child-birth before they cease having babies. The maternal mortality rate for England is only 2·76 per thousand. The figures tell their own tale of misery.

Diseases of Women

Over six millions die every year in India from diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, cholera, plague and smallpox.

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In addition there are the diseases peculiar to women, connected mainly with child-birth and largely due to lack of ante-natal care. Mortality as a result of puerperal fever and convulsions is not uncommon. Early marriage and immature maternity are responsible for osteomalacia, the softening of the bones due to the strain involved in child-bearing at a young age. This is most common in the northern parts of India. Although child marriage is not universal, and notwithstanding the Child Marriage Restraint Act, about 25 millions of girls under the age of 15 are married and babies are born long before the mothers reach physical maturity. Lack of birth-control knowledge makes unrestrained child-bearing a common thing, and the constant drain on the limited vitality of the young mother produces anaemia and attendant ailments. Added to this is the effect of purdah. It is estimated that nearly 40 million women live in seclusion in India and this in a large measure is responsible for the mounting rate of tuberculosis among purdah women. The incidence of tuberculosis among purdah women has been calculated to be as high as 44.46 in the 10-14 age-group among the Muslims as against 18.81 among their Hindu sisters. And this death rate soars during the critical period of child-bearing.

Medical Aid

The amount of medical aid that is available is very limited. Over the whole of British India there are about 7,000 hospitals and dispensaries, and each on the average serves 13,000 persons in urban and 53,000 in rural areas. Special women's hospitals are few and are ordinarily found only in the district headquarter towns and other large urban centres. There are only 226 such hospitals, distributed as follows: United Provinces 82, the Punjab 40, Madras 42, Central Provinces and Berar 12, Bengal 18, Bombay 14, Sind 8, Bihar 5, N.W.F.P. 4 and Assam 1. Most of the women's hospitals are run either by foreign missions or out of the Countess of Dufferin Fund for medical relief to women in India. This latter organization also encourages medical education among women by the grant of scholarships for education in India and postgraduate studies abroad. Maternity and child welfare work is carried on by voluntary

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and semi-Government agencies like the Red Cross Society and Presidency Councils and Associations for infant welfare* Surely the Government can do much more than it does at present in this respect.

The paucity of women doctors is another handicap. The number of women in the Women's Medical Service is less than 40, and the number of women medical practitioners in India is about 3,000, of which less than half are graduates. Quite a number of these marry and lapse into domesticity and their services cease to be available to a great extent* Also, India has very few welfare centres and health visitors. In England, at the end of 1938, there were 3,261 welfare centres and a staff equivalent to the whole-time services of 2,877 health visitors for a population of 41 millions. In India, on the other hand, for a population ten times as large, there were in 1939 about 1,020 centres employing health visitors. The position regarding midwives is still more deplorable; the total number of trained midwives (registered) is 6,135. And the number of women doctors employed in maternity and child welfare work throughout India is only about 75 or 80. Of these only 50 per cent have had special training on the subject.

Major-General Hance, giving the minimum of medical aid required by women, said recently that 'to every woman there must be provision for, (1) adequate care and advice when pregnant, (2) adequate obstetric assistance during labour with facilities for full institutional care, and (3) adequate qualified care of mother and infant during the lying-in period'. But the available facilities are far from adequate. The woman living in the city or district town may avail herself of the ante-natal clinic of the local women's hospital. But ignorance and poverty keep many away from seeking medical aid even in them. In the villages, and the large majority of women live in villages, medical help is invariably conspicuous by its absence. And it is there that the menace of the indigenous *dai* is particularly rampant.

The Health of School Girls

Two special problems are those relating to the health of school girls and of women working in factories.

In every modern State the medical inspection of school

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of literacy among women is only 2.' The history of girls' education in India has been one of tragic neglect.

Literacy

Between 1931 and 1941 total literacy has risen from 8 12 per cent and male literacy from 14 to 22 per cent. But female literacy has practically remained unchanged at 2 per cent. As between different areas, female literacy is highest in Travancore with 36 per cent, and Cochin follows it with 26·5 per cent. Among the provinces Bombay leads the rest with 9 per cent, and Bengal comes next with 7 per cent. Conditions in other provinces and States are very bad.

It is an incontrovertible fact that the education of girls has been considerably hampered by social customs and prejudices in the two major communities of India. Early marriage, the habit of secluding girls after the age of puberty and the slowly dying feeling against the education of girls account for the very low literacy figures for women.

It is only in a few progressive communities that female literacy is relatively high and the disparity between literacy figures for sexes not so great.

PERCENTAGE OF MALE AND FEMALE LITERACY,
' COMMUNITYWISE'¹

COMMUNITY	MALE	FEMALE
Parsis	84·5	73·4
Jews	48·8	33·8
Christians	35·2	20·3
Jains... ..	58·2	10·6
Sikhs... ..	13·8	2·9
Hindus a*	144	2·1
Muslims	107	1·5
ALL INDIA	23·8	2·3

¹ Census, 1931.

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These figures tell their own tale.

This disparity is also due to the unequal treatment meted out to girls' education, especially in the primary and secondary stages. Primary education is in the hands of the local bodies. That it has not thrived in their hands is proved by its transference back to the Government in Mysore State, and by the recommendation in the Sargent Report that the same thing should be done in the provinces as well. It will be pointed out in the following paragraphs how in equipment, in the number of institutions, in the quality of teachers and in the amount spent, the existing provision for girls' education is inadequate in itself and inferior to that already available for boys both in quality and quantity.

Primary Education

Primary education is the foundation on which a national educational structure is built. In India that foundation is not only weak but also lopsided, both because of the inadequacy of girls' education and of its relative inferiority to boys' education. There are 86 lakhs of boys receiving instruction in primary schools; the corresponding figure for girls is only 28 lakhs; or, to put it differently, while 51 per cent of boys of school-going age are actually in schools only 16 per cent of girls of the same group attend school. Further, as regards the question of 'wastage', on which the Hartog Committee focussed attention, it is estimated that, while 26 out of every hundred boys who begin in Class I reach Class IV, with the girls it is only 13. In respect of the number of institutions there were about 161,000 primary schools for boys in the provinces to 26,000 for girls. Of these 60 per cent of girls' schools and 46 per cent of boys' schools are single-teacher schools. Forty-two per cent of teachers in girls' schools are untrained. There is also difference in the amount spent on girls' and boys' education; the total expenditure on girls' primary education is Rs. 1.5 crores while the amount spent on boys' education in the primary stage is Rs. 7 crores. In all these matters, conditions in the States, except in a few progressive ones, are much worse than in the provinces.

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Compulsion

Mass literacy can be achieved only by means of compulsory primary education for boys and girls and also by the strictest supervision and enforcement. Even in progressive States like Travancore and Cochin, where social evils prejudicial to girls* education do not exist, and where primary education is free, illiteracy could have been completely liquidated if the present system were reinforced by compulsion. The meteoric progress made by Russia and the great strides taken by Turkey in this respect during the last 25 years should be an example and hope to all striving towards such an objective. In British India, however, as far as girls are concerned, compulsion is non-existent except in 23 areas in certain provinces. In Madras 7 urban areas and 2 rural areas and in Bombay 7 out of the 12 compulsory areas have compulsion for girls. In the United Provinces, while there is compulsion for boys in 393 areas it exists for girls only in 6 areas. The only other area where education is compulsory for girls is in Bengal.

Secondary Education

If the provision for the secondary education of girls is more adequate, it lacks more in unity of conception and uniformity of control. Secondary education for girls, from the beginning, has been largely left in the hands of private agencies. The missionary societies were the first in the field, and many of the secondary schools for girls are still in their hands, the Government giving them grants and other aids. In course of time this effort was supplemented by other agencies, individuals and organizations who also started schools for girls. The result is that the Government is relatively indifferent to its responsibility for maintaining schools for girls' higher education. Today, this phase of education not only needs more reorganization but also more uniformity than any other stage of education. The education of girls and boys and the development of their character are more and more falling into the hands of sectarian and communal organizations without any national or modernistic idealism and this must ultimately produce more harm than good. The total number of secondary schools for girls is 1,300 as against

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the 12,000 for boys. Of these 1,300 schools only 200 are Government institutions. Very few are under the management of local boards. More than 80 per cent are aided and private institutions with a strong communal bias.

University Education

Women are freely admitted and freely join men's institutions for university education. Of the 325 colleges only 45 are institutions specially meant for women. Even now large numbers of women prefer to go to mixed colleges where the staff and equipment are better than what is to be found in women's colleges. There are nearly 15,000 women in the universities in British India and their numbers are steadily increasing every year. Of these, 788 are in the medical colleges and 120 in the law colleges. There has been one woman in the Madras Engineering College.

Adult Education

Very little attempt is made to promote literacy among adult women. The Government's efforts in this direction have been negligible and almost everything has been left to private effort. Indeed during the period of the Congress Governments a great effort was made, but it was short-lived and still depended a good deal on voluntary effort. The usual institutions are night schools and literacy classes for small groups during the day, but the former are inconvenient to women. Bombay and Bihar appear to have done most for adult literacy among women. However, literacy by itself does not constitute adult education; as it is understood in other countries, adult education means mainly post-school education for adult workers who are denied the chance of higher education. In this form, of course, it hardly exists in India. It is also possible to educate the adult woman by means of popular lectures and visual education, thus opening the gateways of knowledge to her even without making her literate; this would naturally mean a huge organization, which does not exist in India.

Co-education

Co-education is very common in India in the primary and university stages of education. Owing to the paucity of

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girls' schools or their complete absence in certain areas* girls often attend boys' schools. In fact over 60 per cent of girls in the primary stage of education attend boys' schools and the percentage increases as we go south. Mixed schools are less common in the secondary stage of education. Most girls discontinue school after the primary stage, and the idea of sending adolescent girls to boys' schools is not popular. In the university stage, naturally enough, it is the other way about. Those who seek university education, sometimes by choice and often by necessity, join institutions originally the preserve of men. There are now in these mixed institutions double the number of women that generally attend women's, institutions for university education. As far as professional colleges are concerned there are no special institutions for women, except in medicine.

The question of co-education has never roused any controversy in India, partly because in the higher stages there are so few girls who are being educated. As we have seen, innumerable girls attend boys' primary schools, many also attend the secondary schools for boys. For the rest there has never been any prejudice against women being admitted into the universities or the professional colleges. In the medical colleges they were admitted as early as in 1875 in Madras and 1883 in Bombay. In this India is far in advance of the old English universities, which have separate women's colleges, and more like the continental universities where separate women's colleges for university education are practically unknown. It is increasingly felt that special women's colleges for university education are wasteful, unnecessary and meaningless.

Differential Curriculum

Whether women should have a separate kind of education altogether from that of men is still widely discussed, mostly by men. The Indian Women's University, founded by Professor D. K. Karve and inspired by a similar institution in Japan, is based on the assumption that the present system of higher education in a foreign medium, with a strong literary bias, bad as it is for men, is still more unsuited for women. The change is planned by making the mother-tongue the medium of instruction and following a curriculum

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looking to utility. A more specialized result of the dissatisfaction felt towards the present system of education is seen in the Lady Irwin College of Home Science in New Delhi, started under the auspices of the All-India Women's Conference, Instruction is in the English medium in Home Science and allied subjects. There are similar institutions in Allahabad and elsewhere to meet the growing demand for teachers of domestic science in girls' schools. The movement is still in the incipient stage. The large majority of thinking women, however, feel that a modicum of intellectual training—which the present system, with all its faults, gives—is highly essential and should not be given up in favour of a less difficult course which excludes mathematics and the physical and social sciences. They value the training that a literary and scientific education guarantees and would rather widen the curriculum by including such subjects as Fine Arts and Home Science than eliminate the more difficult subjects. If women believe in equal opportunities, surely they must have the same kind of training that men have. A real comradeship of the sexes is unimaginable with different training and different attitudes. It is interesting to note that the clamour for a different curriculum comes mainly from men, mostly *from* fathers who want an inexpensive short cut to some education to enable their daughters to get married while yet young, and much less from women themselves. However this may be, the problem is not yet a serious one; nor is it an urgent one when we remember that the percentage of literacy among women is only 2 and that of women literate in English is even less than one-half.

Women at Work

The percentage of female workers to all women in India is 25 according to the Census of 1931. Since then the position has not changed appreciably. This percentage is almost the same as in some of the Western countries, notwithstanding the fact that in India 40 millions of women are in purdah and therefore practically unoccupied in gainful work. But there is this peculiarity in the Indian situation that most of the women wage-earners are employed in unskilled manual work of one kind or other. When one comes to the liberal professions the numbers of women become microscopically small.

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Also, according to the Census of 1931, out of a total of 154 million workers 49 million women, that is 32 per cent, are wage-earners.

Fields and Factories

A large percentage of women workers are employed in manual labour of all kinds. Their number is greatest in agricultural labour and domestic service and least in organized industries. Women form 33 per cent of agricultural labour and 82 per cent in service. In field labour their number is not very much less than that of men, being 46 per cent of the total male labour similarly employed. They take an almost equal share in all the village industries. In the plantations women are employed in large numbers and their proportion is the same as in field labour.

Nearly 85 per cent of the people live in villages and work in the fields. The village women are not only far removed from the amenities of urban life but also deprived of the chances of education and training for skilled work. Necessity drives them to share the burden of existence equally with men. And this has enabled them to live a life of relatively greater freedom without the social disabilities of the well-to-do classes.

The number of women employed in the factories subject to the Indian Factories Act is 24,300, out of a total of 1.8 million workers. Women are always paid lower wages than men in all grades of work, as in all the other trades and professions; but they are beneficially affected to the same extent as, if not more than, men. By the Factories Act of 1911, women are prohibited from employment in dangerous processes, and from employment between 7.0 p.m. and 5.0 a.m. The Act of 1922 prohibited their employment in certain lead processes injurious to health. By the Act of 1934 their hours of work were reduced from 11 to 10 hours in both seasonal and non-seasonal factories. Although there is no All-India Maternity Benefit Act for women working in the factories, there are provincial Acts for maternity benefit in Bombay, the Central Provinces, Madras, the United Provinces* Assam and Bengal. The amount of the benefit is at the rate of As. 8 a day, and the period is four weeks before and four weeks after child-birth. Women factory inspectors,

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welfare officers and creches have followed only slowly on the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Labour.

In 1928, when the prohibition of employing women underground came into existence, nearly 30 per cent of the labour force employed underground consisted of women. The process of eliminating women from such work was completed in 1936. But in August 1943, to maintain adequate coal supplies in war, the Government by a Notification lifted the ban on underground work, first in the Central Provinces and later in other mining areas as well, on the ground of paucity of labour and partly to prevent the married men from drifting away from the mines. This was met by a storm of protest in both India and England, which has had no effect on the decision taken by the Government.

Business and Professions

- The economic dependence of women and the lack of any incentive to assert equality with men are responsible for the exclusion of women of the richer classes from business. For, earning a living by entering a business or profession is looked upon with disfavour even among the educated classes and it is regarded as an attempt on the part of the woman to escape parental control by asserting economic freedom. Such a prejudice of course is absent among the poorer classes, and when we remember that 95 per cent of India's women belong to this category, it is not surprising that the number of women in charge of small businesses is very large. In the villages, gurr-making, rice-husking and grain-parching are all done by women. They are also dealers in pottery, in charcoal and firewood and in dairy produce. In urban areas, they transact business in small shops, handling toys, bangles, vegetables and provisions; or they may be seen as shop assistants, saleswomen, hair-dressers, insurance agents, typists, hotel managers and confectioners. There is no prejudice against women entering the economic field although few possess the capital for such ventures.

But there are certain restrictions as far as the liberal professions and services are concerned. The Government of India Act of 1935 prescribes that a person shall not be disqualified by reason of sex from being appointed to any civil service or civil post under the Crown in India other than

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those specified by any general or special order made to that effect by the Governor-General or Governor of the province or the Secretary of State. The following have been so debarred under rules made by the Government of India: the Indian Civil, Medical, Forest, Police and the Audit and Account Services, and Railways and Aviation. Since the beginning of the war the Indian Medical Service has been open to women. There is no restriction in the Engineering Service, but at present there is only one woman undergoing even training for engineering. In England women got themselves qualified for jobs long before they were declared eligible for them. It would be well for Indian women to do the same thing and thus prove their claims for equality. Nor has any woman been admitted to the judicial service other than as an honorary magistrate, the only exception being Travancore where a woman has been recruited to the Bench from the Bar. In Bombay, women are allowed to serve as jurors. The war has given employment to many women in the commissioned posts as well as in the administrative departments. In the railways they are employed in the inferior grades as ticket collectors and waiting-room attendants.

As regards the liberal professions, very few women are in the legal profession. A considerable number are in the teaching and medical professions. Ever ere the majority are in the lower grades of the professions as primary school teachers, or as nurses, midwife compounders and health visitors. In 1940 it was estimated there were only 3,000 medical women in India of whom less than half were university graduates. The same is the case with the teaching profession; the number employed as university teachers and professors can be counted in scores. In every case, while the qualified woman starts on a fairly high salary, seldom, if ever, is she given the same salary as the man in the same grade of service. In the various provincial services there are women's and men's grades, the latter being the better paid of the two. The underlying idea is that the woman, since she has no family to support (which is not always true), does not require the same emoluments as the man.

According to the Census of 1931 the proportion of women *in* the liberal arts and professions is 13 per cent of the total. Here it is not out o[^]place to point to the great

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Progress made in Russia in this respect. ' The women of the USSR now [1935] supply not only two-thirds of all the teachers but also two-thirds of all the doctors, and a large proportion of the specially trained agronomists. They often fill a majority of the places in the numerous research institutions in every branch of science. They furnish nearly one-third of all the qualified industrial technicians. . * . They supply a large contingent of the train-working and railway administrative staffs. They are to be found, in fact, working in every occupation, not excepting the army, or the mercantile marine or the extensive aviation service.¹

In India, while industrial labour is organized into trade unions with representation on the legislatures, the women in the professions are unorganized and there is no incentive for organized effort. They have kept themselves aloof from the women's movement and their indifference to their own interests has been largely responsible for their hardships. A much larger percentage of women in the higher grades of the professions and services, while desirable, does not seem easy of achievement as long as the social outlook remains unchanged.

Art and Literature

In the sphere of art and literature, the number of women who have achieved any kind of national or international reputation is indeed very limited. There are quite a number of distinguished women writers in the various Indian languages but hardly any has attained the distinction of Toru Dutt and Sarojini Naidu. In the field of painting *death has* cut short the great promise of Amrita Shergill. Sculpture and painting have their promising pupils and time alone can show the fruition of their talents. Journalism has many followers, but that is another sphere where women have still to come into their own.

Film acting, singing and dancing have chimed a great number of educated and talented women. Considering the popular attitude towards these it is necessary to mention the names of Menaka, Rukmini Devi, Devika Rani, Sadhona Bose and hosts of others who have come in their wake to rescue art, from its traditional haunts of doubtful respecta-

¹ S. and B. WEBB, *Soviet Communism ! A New Civilization.*

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bility. Although a good number of university men and women have chosen film-acting as their career they have not quite succeeded in rescuing the screen from the distressing monotony of conventional themes; yet their entry presages something fine for the future.

Politics and Public Life

In the sphere of politics and public life India shows a strange contrast, Here there is the spectacle of social reaction existing side by side with political radicalism. There has never been any prejudice against women sharing the burdens of public life with men. Both Mrs Annie Besant and Mrs Sarojini Naidu were presidents of the National Congress* Women have always attended its sessions as delegates and the Working Committee invariably has a woman on it. During the days of the Civil Disobedience Movement there were many women dictators and leaders. Women have showed no inhibition from venturing forward into the storm and dust of the struggle. The comradeship of the sexes, already recognized in other spheres of life, was accepted as a natural concomitant of the national struggle for freedom. In the elections of 1937, the Congress Party put up women candidates for many general electorate seats and when ministries were formed the portfolio for Local Self-government and Public Health in the United Provinces was given to Mrs Vijayalakshmi Pandit.

Women were also appointed as Deputy Speakers and Parliamentary Secretaries. The greatest stimulus to the awakening of Indian women has come from the political struggle and there is no doubt that their final emancipation from the thralldom of social evils and unequal laws and their recognition as citizens and equal partners of men can come only at the successful termination of the same struggle.

If proportionately fewer women have entered public life in India the reason is not far to seek. The very small percentage of educated women and the microscopically smaller percentage of women who have the leisure to devote to public work account for their fewness. Such as there are shine like good deeds in a naughty world. But only a revolution in social outlook and education can increase their numbers

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or help the natural desire of women to serve their country. India can not only afford, but also needs, this. Goodwill alone is ineffective; women must have opportunities and training. Will they have these in the near future?

Legal Rights

There is no national civil code regulating personal relationships in India. Marriage, divorce and property rights are governed by what are called 'personal laws', that is, customary laws to some extent modified by legislation. And these personal laws are pretty hidebound and prevent the free intermingling of individuals belonging to different communities, intermarriages between members of the different communities, even when possible, being full of legal complications. The Special Marriage Act of 1923, known commonly as the Civil Marriage Act, attempts to bridge the gulf that separates communities from one another; but the absence of compulsory registration of marriages under this Act for purposes of the citizenship rights of parents and children makes it inadequate.

Marriage and Divorce

To the majority of Indian women marriage is the only career they know, and therefore the most vital thing in their existence. The unmarried woman is the exception rather than the rule, especially among Hindus and Muslims. Marriage is regarded as necessary for the woman not only for the supposed social status she attains thereby, but also for her physical existence, and, for the Hindu woman, for her spiritual destiny as well.

Hindu marriage is a sacrament and therefore indissoluble. Scriptural laws and customs regulate the prohibited degrees of consanguinity and affinity, but they have no universal validity as is seen in the different customs among Hindus living in different parts of the country. An immemorial custom, according to the Hindu law-giver Manu, is transcendent law, and therefore supersedes all texts. Although caste is an endogamous social unit, inter-caste marriages are recognised and are not uncommon. For purposes of validity and inheritance such marriages are nowadays performed under the Special Marriage Act and hence outside the pale of the Hindu code. Divorce is recognized, but actually it is

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not easy to obtain it except by a change of religion. The hardship on women has been very great indeed.

Muslim marriage, on the other hand, is purely a contract between the parties concerned, the terms of which may be set down in a *nikah nama*, which also lays down the amount of dower (bride-price) which the husband is to pay in case of divorce and which is charged on his estate in case of death. Divorce by mutual consent and also by judicial decree has always been recognized in Islamic law. But the husband still has the right of pronouncing *talak* (divorce) whenever he pleases without assigning any cause. This is unfair to women. And, as a result of their demand for the recognition of their right under the Shariat law, the law was revised by the Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act of 1939. This Act entitles a Muslim married woman to obtain a decree for dissolution on certain grounds such as neglect, imprisonment of the husband for seven years or more, cruelty, desertion for four years together, disease, etc. But renunciation of Islam by a married Muslim woman or her conversion to another faith by itself will not operate to dissolve the marriage. On the whole Muslim law is very liberal except for the arbitrary right of *talak* which is still vested in the man.

The Parsis are governed by the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act. Marriage is monogamous, divorce is permitted and remarriage is legal. The Christian marriage is also a sacrament: the tie is indissoluble for Catholics, but other Christians are governed by the Indian Divorce Act. Inter-caste marriages are valid if registered under the Special Marriage Act of 1923 which applies to Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists. When a marriage is performed between parties who do not profess any of the above-mentioned religions they have to declare that they do not belong to any of the recognized religions. The Indian Divorce Act applies to all such marriages and divorce is granted on the ground of apostasy, adultery, bigamy and adultery with cruelty and adultery with desertion for two years and upwards. The Parsi Divorce Act is framed on the same lines but adds rape and unnatural offences as further grounds for granting divorce.

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Property

Women's status in any society depends not merely on her legal rights but also on her economic freedom, which can be assured only by her capacity to earn, inherit equally with her brothers, to own property without restraint, and to alienate it with freedom. The mode of transfer of property in India is governed by one uniform law, namely the Transfer of Property Act, but the right to own, inherit, and alienate property is governed by the various personal laws and differs in different communities.

Among Hindus when they live together in a joint family, the woman has no right to the property of her husband or father and she is entitled only to maintenance, residence and marriage expenses. When the property is separate the son* grandson and great-grandson inherit to the exclusion of the other heirs, namely, the widow, daughter and daughter's son. The widow's estate, when she does inherit in the absence of other near heirs, is not absolute; she holds it in trust for her husband's heirs with very limited right of alienation. The variations under the Hindu law are as many as the divisions within the creed itself; and the rights of women vary slightly under the different schools of law as they exist at present. The two main schools are the Mitakshara, with its sub-schools in the United Provinces, Bombay and Madras, and the Dayabhaga in Bengal. The uncertainties and vagueness of the texts lend themselves to different interpretations according to the background, education and Prey lices person who interprets them, and it has been a perennial source of litigation lucrative to the lawyer and impoverishing to the unfortunate litigant.

But Hindu law has already been modified in Baroda in respect of marriage, divorce and inheritance. An attempt has been made in British India also to codify the Hindu law on a reformed basis and a committee has been appointed by the Government with Sir B. N. Rau as its chairman. On the recommendation of this committee the Government has introduced two bills on Intestate Succession and Marriage. The former recognizes the rights of the widow and the female descendants for absolute estate over the property which they will inherit as heirs. The latter will not only legalize inter-caste marriages but also reduce the number of

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the prohibited degrees and bring civil marriage within the ambit of the Hindu code. On the whole it improves the position of the Hindu woman, but not greatly.

Under Islamic law, which has hardly any of the distressing indefiniteness of the Hindu code, woman's rights are clearly defined. She is entitled to a definite share in the inheritance and she has absolute estate over the property which she inherits. On her marriage, unlike her Hindu sister, she does not lose her interest in the family property; she has absolute right to sell, gift away and alienate her property in whatever manner she desires.

Those who are not governed by the Hindu or Muslim law, and those who are married under the Special Marriage Act, are governed by the Indian Succession Act in the matter of inheritance. The provisions of this Act do not recognize any sex distinction in the matter of inheritance, and daughters and sons take an equal share in the estate of the parents. The widow gets a definite share of one-third of her husband's estate if he has left any lineal descendant, and the share is raised to one-half if there is no lineal descendant, the other half going to the kindred. In the absence of kindred the widow takes the whole of it, absolutely. The legal position of the Christian woman is similar as long as she comes under the Indian Succession Act. Only the Parsis have deprived the daughter of her right by Section 50 of this Act by which the share of each son is double that of the widow and the latter double that of the share of the daughter, *But* when a daughter succeeds to her mother's estate she takes an equal share with the brother.

In Malapar, Travancore and Cochm, where matriliney is the rule, women enjoy the same rights as men in marriage, divorce and inheritance. The customary law, however, has been modified by the Marumakkathayam Acts which give the iprife and children a share in the self-acquired property of the husband and father which they did not have under the earlier customary law.

Franchise

Indian women did not have the franchise till the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919. The new political consciousness in the country during the last war, and the interest roused

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by the Suffragette movement in England during the years before the last war, led to a deputation of women (Mrs Sarojini Naidu and **Rani** Lakshmibai Rajwade among them, and Mrs Annie **Besant** with them) being sent to wait on **Mr** Montagu in Madras, to claim equal rights with men. The National Congress in its Calcutta Session in the same year, under Mrs Besant's presidentship, had adopted a resolution for the first time in favour of women's franchise. **When** the Southborough Committee was formed to investigate the question of franchise in India every attempt was made to bring to their notice the claim of women to be **included** in the franchise reforms. Mrs Annie Besant, Mrs Sarojini Naidu and Mrs Hiraben Tata were heard by the **Joint** Parliamentary Committee. Parliament, however, **decided** that it was for Indians to decide whether their women should have the right to vote. So, although the Act did not confer the franchise on women, the rules framed **under** the Act gave the provinces the power to extend the vote to them; and this was done in Madras and Bombay in **1921**, in the United Provinces in 1923, and in the Central Provinces, the Punjab and Bengal in 1926. Thus in 1923 women for the first time voted for the Legislative Assembly and the provincial Councils. By 1926 they were also made eligible for seats in the provincial Legislatures. In 1927 Dr Muthulakshmi Reddi of Madras was nominated the first woman member of any provincial Legislature.

But the franchise was based mainly on property qualifications, and as they were the same for men and women very few women had the requisite qualification. Therefore the number of women enfranchised between 1921 and 1933 remained very small indeed, 315,651 women as against 6.8 million men. Women were better organized to agitate for their rights when the Lothian Committee on Franchise came to India in 1932—sent out as a result of the Round Table Conferences in which two women had sat as members, Begam Jahanara Shah Nawas and Mrs Radhabai Subbarayan. Owing mainly to the joint efforts of the three women's organizations in India, the Women's Indian Association, the National Council of Women and the All-India Women's Congress and the representations of Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Begam Hamid Ali and Dr Muthulakshmi Reddi before

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Joint Parliamentary Committee, the franchise for women was widened under the Act of 1935. Six million women were enfranchised as against 29 million men. This was effected by the introduction of a wifehood qualification and lower educational qualification for women. Forty-two seats were also reserved for them in the legislatures without precluding them from contesting general seats. Eight Women were elected from the latter in the elections of 1937. Five were also nominated to the Upper Houses. When the ministries were formed six women took office, one as Minister and the others as Deputy Speakers and Parliamentary Secretaries. In 1938 Mrs Radhabai Subbarayan became the first woman member of the Council of State through unopposed election from a general constituency; and in 1943 the first woman sat in the Legislative Assembly in the person of Mrs Renuka Ray, nominated by the Government in connexion with the Hindu Marriage and Inheritance Bills.

The Women's Movement

The Women's Movement in India owes much to men who have been pioneers in the cause of social reform. Long before women had become conscious of their position in society, of the evils and inequalities to which they were victims, of the hardships from which no escape seemed possible, male reformers had taken up the standard for them. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the founder of the Brahma Samaj, not only helped to save the Hindu widow from the funeral pyre of her husband, but also hoped to make her position safe by legalizing widow remarriage. The Widows Remarriage Act was added to the statute book in 1856 as a result of the agitation carried on by Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. The first enactment of the Age of Consent, which was fixed at ten, was also due to his efforts. Vidyasagar devoted his whole time to fighting the social evils of Hindu society. He was also one of the first to realize the full implications of girls' education and was for a long time connected with the Bethune School, the first girls' institution in Calcutta. B.M. Malbari, a great Parsi reformer, was instrumental in raising the age of consent from 10 to 12 in 1891 and removing certain restrictions on the remarriage of widows. Among their successors were the great Mahadev Govind Ranade

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and Sir Narayan Chandavarkar, who succeeded him as the leader of the Indian social reform movement. Later Mr IL Natarajan did yeoman service as the editor of its organ the *Indian Social Reformer*. The apostolic succession is unbroken as is testified by the names of Professor D. K. Karve, the founder of the Indian Women's University at Poona, and Dewan Bahadur Har Bilas Sarada, the author of the Child Marriage Restraint Act, still happily living among

'The torch first lighted by men was soon taken up by women. Among the earliest of them was Ramabai Ranade, the wife of the great Mahadev Govind Ranade. In more recent times there have been such inspiring leaders as Mrs P. K. Ray and Lady Bose of Calcutta, Dr Muthulakshmi Reddi of Madras and Shrimati Anasuyaben Sarabhai of Ahmedabad. But there also have been great names like those of Toru Dutt and Sarojini Naidu, the late Nawab Begam Sultan Jehan of Bhopal, Bi Amman, the great mother of the Ali brothers, and H.H. Maharani Chimnabai of Baroda, who in different ways have added to the dignity and self-confidence of Indian womanhood in recent times. Gradually the unobtrusive work of individuals and groups in different ways and in more or less limited directions and spheres became a great national movement of Indian women.

The first organization of Indian women on a national scale was the Women's Indian Association which was founded in Madras by Mrs Annie Besant in 1917. It was an aspect of the great national movement of the time in which, too, Mrs Besant had taken a leading part. Its Charter of Liberties aimed at the educational advancement of women, the abolition of social evils and the securing of equal political rights with men. It also aimed at the organization of women for social service. It may unhesitatingly be called the mother of women's organizations in India. The useful pioneer work it did during the franchise agitation in the early twenties still stands out as its great achievement. In 1924 it had 51 branches, 18 centres and an active membership of 2,700. Its official organ was the *Stri Dhartna*. Its part in the abolition of the *Deva Dost* system in Madras and in the opening of the Rescue Home, the Madras Seva Sadan and the Children's Aid Society is too well known to need recapitulation.

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tulation here, The All-India Women's Conference and the All-Asian Women's Conference are also largely due to the efforts of Mrs Margaret Cousins a close collaborator of Mm Besant and for a long time secretary of the Association and editor of the *Stri Dharma*. However, in recent years its activities have been confined to the Madras Presidency owing to the growth of the Women's Conference itself and perhaps also because of its earlier association with the Theosophical Society. Its president since Mrs Besant's death has been Dr Muthulakshmi Reddi.

The National Council of Women of India was founded in 1925 as a branch of the International Council of Women and is affiliated to it. Its object is also the advancement of women. It has now five provincial Councils in Delhi, Bombay, Bihar, the Central Provinces and Bengal. It publishes a monthly bulletin giving women's news in India and all over the world. Its membership is largely confined to English-knowing women and women from the richer and official classes. Although it is extremely vigilant in its own sphere and watches women's interests, it has not been able to capture the imagination of Indian women as the Conference has done.

The All-India Women's Conference came into existence in October 1926 and the first session was held in 1927 as a conference on educational reform. Very soon there was a strong demand for the widening of its scope and its aims, have become so wide and comprehensive that they include all forms of activity for educational and social advancement, promotion of national unity and welfare and international understanding and goodwill. It has, along with the Women's Indian Association and the National Council of Women, played its part in raising the age of consent, in creating public opinion in favour of restraining child marriages, widening the franchise for women and getting a committee appointed for the codification of Hindu law. The Lady Irwin College of Home Science in New Delhi, started under its auspices and mainly through its efforts, imparts education in Home Science and trains teachers for the same. Besides granting diplomas it has done a good deal to familiarize women and even men with the advantages of a scientific education for training women as home-builders. There is also

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an All-India Save the Children Fund Association formed under its auspices for the purpose of founding homes for destitute children—a problem created by war and famine. Its membership is very much larger than that of any other women's organization in India and more representative of all classes and communities. Its branches and sub-branches, about 120 in number, exist in all the provinces and many of the States. The conference is strictly non-partisan on political questions, but it has a certain national outlook which makes it popular. It publishes a journal, the *Roshni*, which is now the leading women's journal in India. Its annual sessions have always been regarded as events of importance and its proceedings rouse considerable interest in both official and non-official circles.

The above-mentioned organizations are wisely non-sectarian and, while maintaining their separate identity, have from time to time joined together to present a united front of Indian women when it was considered necessary. During the franchise agitation they formulated their demands jointly and joint action proved effective.

There are other organizations of women which do not have the same importance but require mention. The National Y.W.C.A. confines its activities to educational and social work, mainly within the Christian community. The Muslim League and the Hindu Sabha have recently started women's sections, but as yet their work is only in its early stages. One wonders how far such communal organizations, even if they become important, can work for the common welfare of Indian women. There is also a Federation of University Women. Notwithstanding its great possibilities its activities are comparatively small and confined to the cities of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras.

By the very nature of the educational and social backwardness of women in India, these associations can and do touch only a very small percentage of the country's women. The large majority which lives in the villages, works in the fields and drudges in the factories, lives beyond the influence of these organizations. For them the problem is not one of legal rights and civil liberties or even of political freedom, but the more insistent and inexorable one of eking out an existence. Till the women's organizations are able to con-

tact them, the movement will remain excluave and largely ineffective.

Looking Forward

And so to the future. One condition of **progress** undoubtedly is that the women's movement in India should, *m* was said above, become a more vital one than it is today. One has only to compare it with the unexampled sufferings undergone by the women of England during the Suffragette agitation, or with the intense organizational efforts Of American women in connexion with all questions affecting their sex, to realize how much more Indian women can do in this respect. But the success of their efforts cannot be complete unless the Government does its part by the enactment of necessary legislation. To a certain extent the Sargent plan for the future of education, the Rau Committee's Bill for Hindu law reform, and the investigations of the Central Health Survey Committee are beginnings in the right direction. But they are hardly more than beginnings. In any case plans, like words, are only children of the earth, it is deeds that are the daughters of heaven. Further Govern* ment efforts in this direction have always been hampered by its historic policy of neutrality in religious and social matters, and, for the time being, its belligerency in the international war. But in England the new Education Act has been passed and the new Social Security and the National Health plans have been formulated in circumstances of far surpassing gravity. It is true that a national government has done these things; but that too has its lessons for India.

It is however not only England that has lessons for us. What has been accomplished in Japan, Russia and Turkey during the last 25 years in the way of education, health and the social advancement of vast masses has perhaps even greater lessons for India as an Eastern country.

For the women of India, then, if the present may not be without its fears, neither is the past without its inspirations) nor need the future be without its hopes.

No. 1 Double Pamphlet As. 12

THE CULTURAL PROBLEM

A. J. APPASAMY
SIR ABDUL QADIR
SIR RUSTOM MASANI
SIR SARVEPALLI
RADHAKRISHNAN
SIR JOGENDRA SINGH

OXFORD PAMPHLETS
ON INDIAN AFFAIRS



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No, 1—DOUBLE PAMPHLET

THE CULTURAL PROBLEM

BY

A. J. APPASAMY

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INDIAN BRANCH

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How is the unity of India to be maintained in the face of cultural diversity? This is the question which five contributors members of the major communities of the country, set out to answer in this pamphlet. Such cultural differences as exist are associated with religion, but religious differences ought never to give rise to communal strife: 'the great religious teachers speak with one voice.' Sir Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Sir Rustom Masani see hope for the future in a new world-religion, the religion of Humanity, but Dr Appasamy points out that 'neither the Christian nor the Muslim will agree to a complete synthesis of religions'. Nevertheless, though they would not go all the way with Sir Jogendra Singh in his assertion that it would be hard 'to prove any difference in culture among ninety per cent of our population', all the contributors are agreed that to create separate cultural regions would be as deplorable as it is unnecessary. In the words of Sir Abdul Qadir, the surest approach to the goal of a united Indian nation is by 'a frank recognition of the existing differences, and a serious effort to minimize them and to accelerate the process of fusion of cultures'. Several ways in which cultural divergences can be reduced are suggested.

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By A. J. APPASAMY

RECENTLY a distinguished Indian Christian said at a conference: 'My ideal for India is *one* Indian society with *one* Indian culture.' These words are quite significant in view of the pressing problem of national unity in India. Men of all shades of thought are seriously concerned with this question today. There are many different communities in India—Hindu, Muslim, Parsi, Sikh and Christian—each with its own cultural background and heritage. In this paper I shall consider the differences in the cultural life and traditions' of the various communities and their bearing on the question of national unity. We may begin with the possibility of the emergence of one type of culture for the whole country.

Cultural Differences are Religious Differences

The cleavages in the culture of India follow mainly religious lines. There are different types of culture associated with Hinduism, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Sikhism and Christianity. Cultural differences might have followed provincial, linguistic or racial lines but they do not. There is a great deal of difference between a strong, well-built Punjabi with his vigour and energy and a Tamil, short of stature and dark in colour, with his religious fervour and his face 'sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought'. And yet they are both Hindus. There is a real unity in their

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culture.* They have both been brought up on the same old stories from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabhdrata*. They have both gazed on the same symbols and images in the temples. Again and again one is impressed by the intimate association of the culture of India with its different religions. Recently I saw the performance of a play called *Rup-Sanatan*. Some Government officials of Madras formed themselves into an* amateur dramatic society and acted it. They had a large and interested audience. The play centred round the Bengali saint, Chaitanya. It showed how a man called Sanatan, a minister under a Nawab of Bengal, was so attracted by the figure of Chaitanya that he decided to give up his political work. The Nawab was loath to lose his services and imprisoned him. Sanatan's wife begged him not to leave her. But neither his respect for the Nawab nor his affection for his wife could counteract the great attraction which he felt for Chaitanya. The whole interest of this play is religious. The ideal of the renunciation of all worldly ties in response to the call of religion belongs to the very core of Hinduism. Not only in Hindu drama but in Hindu poetry, architecture, music and dance, the religious motive is predominant. In perhaps no other country is religion so truly the heart and soul of culture.

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Can there be a Synthesis of Religions?

The close affiliation of culture with religion has an important bearing on the question of the unification of culture in India. The different cultures in India can really become one only when the different religions become one. On the question of the unification of religions there will immediately be sharp and vigorous division of opinion. Christianity and Islam will never agree to merge in the other religions of India. They both claim to be the supreme revelation of God and regard it as their primary duty to preach their message to all those outside their own fold.' Hinduism is not rigid in this respect. It is willing to accept the prophets and seers of other religions and to follow them. Buddhism originally began as a protest against the priestcraft, caste and animal sacrifices of Hinduism. For some centuries Buddhism flourished in India and its message of love captured the hearts of many, but gradually it was absorbed into Hinduism. Buddha became an incarnation of Vishnu. The final victory of Hinduism was achieved when the philosophical tenets of Buddhism were given a new setting and exposition by Sankara, the great Hindu philosopher. The Hindu declares that God cannot be really known and understood. There is not a single prophet or even *avatar* who has known God as He actually is. Prophets and seers catch only glimpses of the Divine Being; these glimpses are not necessarily consistent; there can*be entire

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consistency only when the whole truth about God is known, and that is not possible. With this idea that Truth is many-sided and that different prophets may understand different aspects of it, Hinduism is quite willing to regard all religions as equally true and valid. Where there is a synthesis of religion, synthesis of culture will become easily possible. But, as I have pointed out, neither the Christian nor the Muslim will agree to a complete synthesis of religion.

As a matter of history no such synthesis of religion or of culture has taken place in India. The beginnings of Hinduism are lost in the dim past, Christianity has been in India practically since the days of the Apostles, Islam has been in India from the twelfth century onwards. Though these three religions—Hinduism, Islam and Christianity—have existed side by side for several centuries, they have not become one. With their different types of culture they have always lived apart.

The American Example"

This matter of the synthesis of the different types of culture in India may now be looked at from another angle. America has been called the melting-pot of the nations. To be quite accurate, it is the melting-pot of the European nations. One may see at work there the process of the unification of different cultures— in a real sense all European culture is one. The Englishman will visit Paris to hear operas and spend days in

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Florence studying the great paintings there. In the realms of music, drama, poetry and architecture there are many features common to all Europe, While this is quite true, there are subtle differences between the cultural heritage of Germany, France, Italy and England. In America we can see these subtle differences merging together. The people who have settled down in America have come from all the countries of Europe with their diverse cultural traditions and ideals and yet they have practically ceased to be French, Germans or Italians and become Americans. Their culture has attained a distinctive and unified character. Every year several thousand immigrants enter the country. The State makes it a special task to enable these new settlers in the country to become one with the older inhabitants in their political and cultural life. With this end in view ample facilities are provided for the education of the new settlers. They are all taught carefully the use of the English language, which immediately serves as a common bond between the new arrivals from the different countries of Europe. The political and social ideals for which America stands are instilled in them. The new generation of settlers gradually becomes assimilated with the older stock and there is a genuine fusion of different cultural traditions. Year by year the process of assimilation goes on slowly and surely. The conditions which prevail in India are altogether different. The men who follow different types of culture have lived side by side

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for centuries. No serious or steady attempt has been made to bring these diverse streams of culture together.

It is clear, then, that no fusion of different types of culture is possible in India. We may even go a step further and say that no such merging of cultures is even desirable. India is such a fascinating country to live in because of its wide divergences in thought and in practice. Without leaving the shores of India we may see many living religions at work, hear a multitude of languages, some of them with books written far back in history, and note immense varieties in architecture ranging from the beautiful mosques and palaces of North India to the stately temples of South India. On no account do we want a diminution of this wide variety of types. It would be a great pity if we could travel from one end of India to the other and hear the same songs or see the same dances. The many differences among the cultural types of the land give a real zest and interest to life.

Fissiparous Forces

If, then, different types of culture should remain in India, what is to be their relation one to the other? I am afraid that so far no serious effort has been made to bring about mutual understanding and sympathy between the different communities. Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Parsis have lived side by side. Often they have mingled together in the office, the court-house or the

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market-place, but they have not gone beyond such surface relationships and have lived apart in the cultural realm. The Hindu knows little or nothing about Muslim poets and thinkers. The Christian is equally to be blamed; he is ignorant of the traditions and ideals on which his neighbours, whether Hindus or Parsis, are brought up.

When missionaries from Europe came to India and baptized converts, they were particularly anxious that the new Christians should live alone and apart. They were taught to worship in churches which were built exactly like the churches in Europe and America; they were exhorted not to read Hindu literature, for it contained stories about Hindu gods and saints. In these and other ways the difference between Christians and the followers of other religions was marked out as carefully as possible. I am glad to say that a new outlook has come among Indian Christians now. It is felt that such attempts to separate Christians from others are unwise. In a country with many different groups it would be sad to establish another community which would cherish its exclusiveness. The Indian Christian of today feels that he has a real share in the heritage of India. Music, poetry, architecture and literature have been developed in India through long centuries by men of rare intellectual and spiritual gifts. The Christian in India is as much an heir to these ancient and beautiful treasures of literature and art as others living in the country. He will not accept all the religious stories and doctrines

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behind* the culture of India, but he will sing Indian music and offer his praises to Christ in melodies racy of the soil. Lyrics are written by Christians who have a real command of the vernaculars and an accurate knowledge of the laws of Indian poetry and who express their Christian experience in forms which are in harmony with the best literary traditions of India. This is not a synthesis of Christian and Hindu culture but a living adaptation and transformation of Hindu culture for Christian purposes.

There have always been divergences between the religious groups in India. In recent years, however, these divergences have been increased and multiplied. We may well ask who are responsible for deepening the gulf already existing between the different communities in India. In every religion there are narrow-minded people who refuse to see anything good outside their own circle. Some of them are quite sincere in their conviction. They really believe that they possess knowledge and experience which others cannot attain. In present-day India we find also many politicians who feed the flame of communalism. To put the best possible construction on their motives, some of them genuinely think that in a country like India, with such large and divergent groups, democratic forms of Government are really impossible to work. Others add to the confusion already prevalent in the country among the different communities and seek to make political capital out of it; some of these are probably in quest of

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high and responsible offices as leaders of their respective groups.

Cultural Harmony

There is no reason to fear that men of different communities cannot live in peace under a common Government. The supreme example of peace and harmony among the different religious groups in India is furnished by the reign of Akbar the Great. In his days no man was penalized because of his religion. He repealed the hated *jizia*, which Muslim rulers collected from their non-Muslim subjects. He treated all his subjects alike. He had many friends and allies among the Hindu princes. Among his ministers was a distinguished Hindu, Todar Mai. Akbar had the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* translated into Persian. He held that every religion contained elements of good. In the beautiful city at Fatehpur Sikri which he built, he brought together devout and learned men of all faiths—Jesuit fathers, Parsis, Brahmans and Muslim doctors. In the south of India in the Hindu State of Travancore there is an ancient Christian community. Syrian Christians have lived in Travancore for several centuries in peace, holding their own beliefs and following their own methods of worship. Though a minority community following a different religion from that of the State, their position has always been one of high prestige and rare privilege.

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Cultural Regions and Nationalism

The proposal to establish cultural regions such as Pakistan is extremely dangerous to the future well-being of India. Instead of welding the people together, which ought to be the ideal of every lover of India, these cultural regions will only bring about more confusion and discord. Some of the best Christian opinion in India is opposed even to special provisions for communal representation. These again introduce and accentuate the fissiparous tendencies unfortunately already inherent in Indian life. The Christian claims the right of freedom of worship and is willing to concede this right equally to the followers of other religions. Further provision for his separate well-being he does not require. He is eager to remain a citizen of a free and united India taking his chance along with others for political and social leadership. He is convinced that real merit will always win its way in the long run. If he fears in any way that he will be overwhelmed by the majority communities in India, he is willing to immolate himself on the altar of India's freedom and unity. He does not seek position and privilege for himself as the member of a special community, because all such communal representation, whether in legislatures or in offices, is sure to retard considerably the growth of a united India.

In this paper I have been concerned primarily with the question of cultural unity. National unity is of many degrees and types and embraces

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several spheres of political, social and economic activity. Unity in culture is really an important step forward to political and social unity. If men following different modes of culture come to know each other intimately and understand and sympathize with other points of view than their own, they have advanced definitely on the road to political unity. The consciousness of national unity which surges through the country makes it imperative that people holding different traditions and ideals of culture should not live apart, ignorant of the deeper significance of their differences, but should understand each other clearly and move with each other with respect and tolerance.

The Diffusion of Culture

It may be said, however, that this type of cultural unity can only prevail among educated people. While every educated man is not a cultured person, generally speaking, no cultured person is uneducated. It is quite true that there are, for instance, many Indian women who, while they are ignorant of letters, are steeped in literature. They may not be able even to read or write, but they know by heart many of the beautiful poems, lyrics and stories of India; these make them truly cultured. Such exceptions, however, only prove the rule. It is quite true that, on the whole, cultural unity of the type of which we have been speaking prevails only among the better educated section of the people. And yet

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where there is such a large percentage of illiteracy, some of the most philosophical and abstruse ideas such as *Karma* and *Advaita* sink into the mass-mind through popular expositions of the religious classics by wandering preachers and singers. The cinema is now mediating to the masses some of the finest culture of the country in a form which they can understand and appreciate, I saw a Tamil film entitled *Sakuntala*. This is based on Kalidasa's famous Sanskrit drama. The setting of the story—the life in the forest hermitage, the devotion of the disciples to the *rishi*, the constant prayers and meditations in which they were engaged, the close contact with beautiful Nature and the love and tenderness for animals—shows Hinduism in some of its finest aspects. Against this distinctive Hindu background the story of the love of Sakuntala and Dusyantha is acted. The human interest of this love-story, shown on the screen with all the skill and beauty which the modern film-maker knows how to use, drew together a large audience including men and women, the educated and the illiterate, and various representatives from the different faiths. Few of these could have or would have read Kalidasa's play in the original Sanskrit or even in a translation. The film-makers had no intention of playing any part in bringing the different communities together, but they did succeed in creating interest and knowledge among people of different communities of some of the deepest and noblest truths for which India has stood through the ages.

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The Influence of the West

We may close with a reference to the place and importance of Western culture in India today. Its impact upon different levels of social and intellectual life in India has been altogether for the good. The study of English has played an immense part in welding men from all over India together and in creating a sense of solidarity and unity. Some of the highest ideals of freedom and democracy have now become a valuable part of our intellectual possessions. The indirect influence of Western culture on the different vernaculars and arts of India is incalculable. Among Hindus a writer like Tagore and among Muslims Muhammad Iqbal have reacted in a striking way to the impact of Western culture. They are truly Hindu and truly Muslim respectively, but their outlook has been influenced by common Western ideals and they are much nearer together because of this debt to Western culture than they would have been if each had pursued his own way independently.

By SIR ABDUL QADIR

THE cultural problems of every country are complex; but they are particularly complex in a country like India, with its vast heritage of many cultures resulting from the intermingling of many races of humanity and many types of civilization, during the long course of its history. There are two schools of thought at present on the question of Indian culture. One of them emphasizes its essential unity and holds that there is really one culture in India, in spite of superficial differences noticeable here and there. Adherents of this school believe that the stream of this culture may have been formed by the flowing together of currents, coming from different directions and sources, and particularly by the two main currents of Hindu and Muslim culture, influencing and enriching one another, but, according to them, the culture of India is now the common property of all its inhabitants, and any efforts to represent its component parts as distinct cultures are to be deprecated. The other school holds that Indian culture is divided into several sections, existing side by side with one another, the two most important of these sections being the Hindu and the Muslim culture. It appears that the truth lies between these two extreme views. There is, indeed, a culture which the two principal communities existing in India have in common, *but it is no use shutting one's eyes to the fact that in

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many important respects the two cultures have preserved their separate entities and have defied the process of fusion.

I think it would be helpful to have before us some definition of the word culture, which is a somewhat indefinable and elusive term. Someone has observed that when we have forgotten much of what we have read in books taught in our schools or universities, the residue of knowledge that is left with us may be called 'culture'. This is an interesting definition, but it would apply only to intellectual culture. There is a good deal of knowledge which we do not get from books. Some of the best elements of the culture of an individual are imbibed by him with his mother's milk, or are acquired from the example of his father and elders. His surroundings in childhood and his associations in youth also affect his culture and form part of it.

The Way of Life of Different Communities

Among the instances of a community of culture in our country may be mentioned the more or less common mode of life of the bulk of the people of India. They believe generally in 'plain living'. Though it cannot be said that the proverbial counterpart is equally common among them, yet India has been as conspicuous as any other land for the number of people who have been distinguished for 'high thinking'. The dress of Indians is generally simple and, with the exception of a small number belonging to the

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wealthy classes, they have always tried to restrict their needs to the minimum and to be content with the few luxuries and comforts that they may be able to get. The ideas prevalent among different classes of Indians on questions relating to rules of good conduct and morality, as well as their notions of charity and neighbourliness, are also the same to a large extent. There is a good deal that is common among all classes of people in the ceremonies observed on the occasions of marriages and deaths. The development of a common language and literature in Upper India and in some parts of the South has also been one great source of a common culture among Hindus and Muslims and other smaller communities. Another feature, representing a common ideal, is the approach of each to the realm of the spirit.

Along with these similarities, however, there exist many distinctions, and there is a desire in each community to maintain its respective peculiarities. It is difficult to say why it was thought necessary to adhere rigidly to these distinctions, but as indications of separatism they cannot be ignored.

In the domestic life of Hindus and Muslims, for instance, there is a distinction between the utensils used by them in their households. The metal favoured by the Hindus is brass, while the Muslims use copper utensils with a silvery coating of tin. You may occasionally come across individuals in each community who may use both

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these metals, or, if they are westernized, they may be using utensils of aluminium or china or glass, but the broad distinction mentioned above between the two modes of life continues in most parts of the country.

The food of each community furnishes another striking instance of diversity. The majority of Hindus are vegetarians, while the Muslims are non-vegetarians or take a mixed diet of meat and vegetables. Of course there have always been some groups of non-vegetarians among the Hindus as well, and they are increasing under modern influences, but the description of their community as a whole as vegetarian applies truly to the vast majority of the community.

In the matter of dress also distinctions are noticeable, particularly in the way in which a piece of cloth is tied round the waist. A distinction is observable at some places in the style of the *kurta* (a shirt) worn by a Hindu and by a Muslim. There is distinction even in the way in which one's hair is to be cut or kept, and in the shape or style of what is used as head-gear.

Another point of divergence, which has persisted for centuries, is the difference between names of individuals in each community. A citizen of India can, with a fair amount of ease, distinguish a Hindu, a Muslim, a Sikh or a Parsi by his name. I do not think any other country in the world can produce an instance of this kind of difference in names to an equal extent. It is also significant that notions of nomenclature bring out, in one way or

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another, the characteristic features of the cultural background of each community. For instance, among the Parsis, whose main occupation is commerce, you will find that the names mostly represent their occupation or profession. The use of occupation as the basis of proper names is not uncommon among Hindus also, except that among Rajputs and Sikhs the martial spirit of these people finds expression in the names of individuals. This last feature is also to be found in Muslim names among those classes who have military traditions in their families, but the feature which particularly distinguishes the Muslims is that they often include one of the many names of God as a part of their names. Prefixes are added to show that the individual takes pride in calling himself 'the servant' or 'slave of God'. Similarly the name of the Prophet is introduced in Muslim names as a source of blessing.

The Cultural Bonds of Literature, Music and Religion

In drawing attention to the above divergence between the cultural background of different communities, it is not my purpose to discourage in any way the laudable aim of trying to have a united India, held together by the bonds of a common culture. This purpose can be served best by a frank recognition of the existing differences, and a serious effort to minimize them and to accelerate the process of fusion of cultures.

It has been observed already that the nucleus

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of a common literature exists and can offer a fruitful field for cultural fellowship between different parts of India. If Urdu literature continues to develop as it has done since the latter half of the last century, it has in it vast potentialities as a bond of cultural kinship between the various communities inhabiting this vast country. Though Delhi and Lucknow are regarded as the chief centres of the Urdu language, and some of the best-known masters of Urdu literature belong to these celebrated towns, yet by force of circumstances its influence has spread far and wide, and places like Hyderabad (Deccan) in the south, Lahore and Peshawar in the north, and Patna and Calcutta in the east, have made valuable contributions to its progress. Eminent Hindu writers have worked along with distinguished Muslim literary men to raise this literature to its present status, and it is noteworthy that even the numerically smaller communities in India have made their own contribution to its development. In the nineteenth century there were many Europeans who acquired such a good knowledge of Urdu that they could write Urdu verse, and many collections of their verses are still available. Christian missionaries from Europe have also had a good deal to do with popularizing the Urdu language by using its prose and verse, because they found in it a convenient medium for influencing a very large number of people. The Parsis, who are mostly settled in the Bombay Presidency, and have adopted Gujarati as their common language,

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were not long in finding out that their language was akin to Urdu, and they had no difficulty in picking up enough Urdu for practical purposes. They were the first to start dramatic performances in Urdu and to procure Urdu translations and adaptations of well-known English dramas, and to stage old Indian stories. In consequence of this, Bombay has also done much to develop the dramatic branch of Urdu literature. Calcutta, the erstwhile capital of India, has also played an important part in the advancement of Urdu literature. If we take advantage of the natural growth of this literature, which is common to so many parts of India, we shall take a long stride towards cultural unity.

Music is a powerful ally of poetry—still the most popular branch of literature in India. Music has long provided common ground on which Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and Christians can meet and forget for a few moments that they bear different names or wear different head-dresses or profess different religions. The art of music suffered because it had become practically the vocation of a small minority of professional men and women, who were looked down upon in society. Educated and cultured people enjoyed performances given by professional artists, but they did not ordinarily venture to play or sing themselves. Notions on this subject have now undergone a complete change, and educated young Indians are trying to cultivate the art of music. The community of tastes in this branch of art; is

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conducive to happy results in bringing about cultural affinity.

Another means of bringing together the different communities in India, and creating among them a genuine spirit of broad-minded human sympathy, is through religion. In spite of the fact that there are radical differences between the tenets of the many religions prevailing in India, there is an underlying unity among them, especially in the sphere of spiritual mysticism. The mystics of Islam, known as Sufis, have so much in common with the Vedantists among the Hindus that sometimes it is difficult to distinguish their main doctrines from one another. The ritual and the practices of each are also similar. A few centuries ago, the leaders of this school of thought among Hindus and Muslims saw the vision of an India united in spiritual culture, and men like the distinguished Muslim saints of Ajmer and Delhi, and other holy men like Guru Nanak and Kabir, worked for a unity of religious culture. In our time great men like the late Raja Ram Mohan Roy and the late Keshab Chander Sen saw the same vision, but unfortunately, under the stress of the present days of struggle and strife, a process of disintegration is at work, which threatens to endanger the good work done by these great men in the past. It is to be fervently hoped that the good seed, sown by such holy hands, will not be wasted, and India will one day attain that unity of the spirit which rises above purely material gains and considerations and

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believes in the essential oneness of the human-race and desires the combined advancement of the whole human family.

What of the Future?

This dream of cultural fellowship among Indians, through religion, is not a new ideal. Asoka had it long ago and Akbar visualized it again many centuries later. All credit to such great lovers of their motherland for having dreamt such a dream, and for having made an effort to materialize it in their own lives. Their plan was to evolve a common religion for the whole of India. Asoka desired to put this ideal into practice with Buddhism as the religion of the country, but the effort did not succeed because Brahmanism, though overpowered for some time, re-asserted itself with such vigour as to drive Buddhism out of the country. The effort of Akbar was to introduce a new religion, which was to be a synthesis of all the known systems of faith, with himself as its arch-priest. This effort also died with him, because Islam as a dynamic force was too strong to be driven out of the field so easily. I am afraid it is a mistake to imagine that the different religions in India will disappear or merge into one synthetic combination of all. In my opinion the best ideal will be to seek unity in the midst of diversity, and to recognize that diversity of religious thought is bound to remain. There is a passage in the Holy Koran which says that God could have so moulded humanity as to have only

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one religion, but He preferred to test mankind, to see how they use their gifts of understanding and discernment. It appears that this diversity of thought is a part of the scheme of things and is quite in keeping with the scheme of Nature in other directions. The trees, the flowers and the fruits are a significant illustration of Nature's love of variety, with their different colours and flavours and perfumes. Let us recognize that all religions have a right to exist. With this broad basis of fellowship let us study them and respect them. This is what the Sufis and mystics of India, who based their spiritual conquests on sympathy and love, did in the past, and this is the spirit in which India may find the best solution of its cultural problems in the future.

By SIR RUSTOM MASANI

The Impermanence of Cultural Differences

THERE is only one species of man the world over. The fundamental structure of the human mind is uniform in all races and human nature is also the same everywhere. Not a few, no doubt, are the differences in hygiene, economic, educational and ethical standards among the different members of the human family, resulting in cultural diversity. There are also apparent, on the surface, not a few contrasts between the cultures of one group of people and another. At the same time there are resemblances too. Man's emotions and feelings as well as his intellectual ideals, his love of beauty, his longing for harmony, his striving for perfection, his attachment to his country, are the same everywhere. Despite differences of tribe or race, clime or environment, the core of every culture is the same—the fundamental humanity of man.

The differences that exist are due to historical circumstances, passing social conditions and arrested stages of development. Undue emphasis is, however, laid on such diversity as appears on the surface, and impenetrable barriers are needlessly raised, owing to certain conventional beliefs of civilized society which are generally regarded as scientific truths and are propagated with an air of scientific knowledge but which, as a matter of fact, are based on a fragile framework of

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superficial anthropological study. Of such beliefs the most harmful is that concerning the innate inequality of different peoples, their irreducible differences, physiological divisions and psychological limitations. It divides the human race into two types, one superior and the other inferior, and draws fantastic distinctions between men with white and black skins, those with broad and narrow skulls, those with thick and thin joints, those with straight and curved foreheads, those with small and large nostrils and those who are tall and those who are stunted. It is the mission of the scientist and the sociologist to correct such errors, and not a few true votaries of science have protested against such fallacious theories of inequality and immutability as having been based on incomplete investigation or inaccurate data. But false theories, like popular superstitions, die hard, so that the study of human varieties has suffered and still suffers owing to errors in observation and investigation and more, perhaps, owing to the racial bias or conventional prejudices of the student.

Examined in the light of the intellectual life of the so-called superior and inferior races, their psychology reveals remarkable unity of mind. Their overworked physical peculiarities and divergences appear to be mere accidental modalities attendant on their evolution in the past, in no way effacing the substratum common to all humanity. All the branches of the human family, according to recognized authorities, seem to be

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equally good or bad, and equally improvable or susceptible to deterioration. Their virtues and vices are merely the consequences of changing circumstances or the influence of environment. Given a number of generations, the 'lavage' may equal, perhaps even transcend, the civilized man of today. Cultural diversity should, therefore, be regarded as but a passing phase. While a fairly uniform cultural level is desirable to ensure fellow-feeling and harmony, national unity is not and need not be conditioned by it. The sense of fellowship and world community is latent in man. Left to himself man has always felt kinship with creation. What is true of individuals is true of groups also. Moreover, so far as India is concerned, such diversity of culture as now exists may be regarded as only skin-deep. Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and Christians have met and mingled so long in India that they have been greatly influenced by the cultural ideas, art, architecture and the mode of life of one another. Let us examine the problem from the point of view of Hindus and Parsis.

Aryan Origin of Hindus and Parsis

In the dim old days the Aryan ancestors of the present-day Hindus and Parsis lived together in a region not yet definitely located. According to the *Avesta*, the Aryas (the noble ones) had their original home in the fair land of *Airyana Vaejah* (the cradle-land of the Aryas). Some locate it in the northern steppes of Turkestan, others in

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Central Asia and others in the Arctic regions. According to the Parsi scriptures there was such a large increase in human beings and animals during the reign of King Yima that *Airyana Vaejah* could no longer contain them. Thrice the illustrious king, surnamed the Shepherd, led his overflowing flock towards the south, 'on the way of the sun'. Thus were the boundaries of their homeland extended. But Angra Mainyu, the Evil Spirit, inundated the country with an icy deluge, compelling the shepherd-king to migrate with his men, his flocks and herds, to a temperate clime. The same beloved name *Airyana* (Iran) was given to the new home, and it still remains the name of the country where the progenitors of modern Hindus and Parsis once kept together as one race, spoke the same language, followed the same religion, performed the same ceremonies and observed the same manners and customs.

Society in Iran was then unsettled. People were constantly on the move *in* search of fresh fields and pastures new. Even so, the type of civilization prevailing in those days may be said to have passed the stage called 'primitive'. The social organization was so far developed as to have led to the functional classification of the population into three grades, *Atharvan Rathaeshtar* and *Vdstriya*, priests, warriors and the rest, who in that age were almost all agriculturists, corresponding to the three Vedic classes, Brahman, Kshatriya and Vaisya. Tradition associates the name of Yima with this classification, but the Avestan

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works, which speak of these graded social orders in their earliest formation, show the prophet Zarathushtra as their originator. These three classes are usually mentioned in the Avestan texts, whereas the fourth class *Huiti*, the artisan, is mentioned only once. It is only late in the Pahlavi period that we are introduced to the complete group of the four orders.

Cultural Contacts

With such scanty material as is available in the sacred literature of Iran and India, it is difficult to say with any degree of precision when the two groups of the Aryan race parted company. Common references to rivers and places in the sacred books of both the countries point to Afghanistan as the last place where they had at one time lived together. Thence the two branches seem to have separated between 2000 and 1500 B.C., one settling itself in Bactria and the other migrating south-eastward behind the Hmdukush and entering India by the passes of the north-west and thence spreading eastwards towards the Gangetic valley. Since that time they appear to have been in touch with each other. References to the Iranians of the Parthian dynasty are found in *Manu* (x. 43-44) and in *Natrayashastra* (xxv. 89). Similarly, there are direct references to India in the *Avesta*. The name Hindu itself is Iranian. The country watered by the seven rivers of the Indus, *Sapta-Sindhu* (seven rivers) of the *Vedas*, is mentioned in the *Vendidad* as *Hapta Hindu*, by which name India was known

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to the ancient Iranians. The Indus had then seven branches and not five, which subsequently gave the country through which it flows its later name Panjab. Then the prefix *hapta* came to be dropped. The Avesta word Hindu for Sindhu reached Greece, and as the Ionians had no aspirate, they spoke of the river as Indus and of the people inhabiting the country as Indians.

Scholars testify that the Ahura, God, of the *Avesta*, is the Asura of the *Vedas*. Varuna of the *Vedas* is the same as Ahura Mazda of the *Avesta*. In the *Rigveda* Varuna is credited with omniscience; so is Ahura Mazda mentioned as the all-knowing in the sacred books of the Iranians. The civilization of each group stressed the harmony between the individual and the universal life. Both taught man that he was in close relation with things around him and that he should pay his homage to the rising sun, the flowing water, the fruitful earth and the sacred fire as manifestations of the same Eternal Soul that has created all and governs all. It is unnecessary to overlay this paper with details concerning the parallelism of thought or the correspondence in the mythology, observances and customs of the two most important branches of the Indo-Iranian stock of people. What is of greater importance for our present purpose is their influence on each other after their separation till this day.

About twenty-five years ago, the attention of the world was pointedly drawn to the influence of Iran upon India by two memorable archaeological

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excavations of the ruins of the ancient cities of Taxila and Pataliputra (modern Patna) by Sir John Marshall and Dr D. B. Spooner respectively. The discoveries made at these seats of ancient civilization furnished archaeological evidence to establish that there had been from the earliest times an interchange of treasures of mind and spirit between the Iranians and Indians and that the Mauryan Empire was influenced largely by Iranian polity and civilization not only in regard to architecture but also in regard to various features of administration and court customs.

To Lord Curzon belongs the credit of instituting a new era in the organization of the study of Indian culture. India owes the creation of the Archaeological Survey of India, as it exists today, to his fervent desire and determination to be a faithful guardian of the treasure-house of art and learning committed to his charge during the term of his viceroyalty. Under Sir John Marshall's guidance site after site was excavated, including the key sites of Sanchi, Taxila, Sarnath and Bhita. These and the later excavations at Pataliputra, at Harappa on the Ravi and at Mohenjodaro on the Indus give us a picture of civilization adapted to local conditions and adjusted to specific environment but revealing at the same time a remarkable resemblance in cultural traits common to the civilization which flourished in the fourth millennium in Sumer and Babylon.

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A Melting-pot of Cultures

After the invasion of India by Alexander, Hellenistic culture springing from the union of Iranian with Greek influence dominated north-western India. Then, a little over thirteen hundred years ago, Parsi fugitives from Iran settled in Gujarat and other parts of the country, and from about A.D. 1000 Muslim conquerors, particularly the Moguls, brought Islamic culture to bear on Hindu life and thought. The regeneration of Hindu painting and the synthesis of what we call Hindustani music are the most outstanding illustrations of such cultural affinity. During more recent times Christian missionaries introduced Christian ideas. Thus India has been, so to say, the melting-pot of different cultures from the fourth millennium to the present day. During this period she has also been in close political, economic and cultural contact with the West.

The Empire of Cyrus and Darius extended from the Mediterranean to the Indus. When the Iranians exercised sway over north-western India, the association of the two kindred peoples led to a fusion of religious ideals and cultural concepts. The excavations referred to above bear testimony to such unity of outlook and interests. When, after a lapse of sixteen centuries, the Parsi emigrants sought shelter in India and lived with Hindus as refugees, they adopted Hindu ideas and customs and allowed even some of their religious cere-

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monies to be influenced by corresponding Hindu rites to such an extent that one could hardly distinguish a Hindu from a Parsi either by name or by costume, by religious rite or by mode of life. Whether the rulers were Hindu, Muslim, Dutch, French, Portuguese or English, they lived together in peace as good neighbours on most friendly terms. The tide of nationalism had not yet set in. It mattered little who ruled. What held the two people together was a healthy sense of neighbourliness and civic brotherhood.

Intensification of Communal Differences

It was only after the apple of discord was thrown in their midst during the latter half of the last century in the shape of an official appointment, or membership of a local body or legislature, that there was a rift in the lute and people began to hear, although mostly in whispers, of Hindu-Parsi jealousies. The Muslim was out of the picture for several years, as he took to English education long after his Hindu and Parsi brethren had begun scrambling for posts and positions in the public life of their province. When, however, he did appear on the scene, the contest for loaves and fishes and economic competition incidental to an industrial age intensified what religious differences there were between the followers of the Hindu and Islamic faiths. Gradually these differences assumed a political colour, and since the birth of the Indian National Congress a section of the Muslims, along with the Anglo-Indian community,

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has remained in constant fear of being submerged under a Hindu *raj*.

The ears of the chronicler are deaf to harmony. He records only the discordant notes. If two members of a family or two groups of people within a community or a nation live together in peace for ages, scarcely anyone takes note of it. But the moment they fall out, the story of their feud forms an interesting theme for gossiping neighbours and the press, and through these channels it reaches the historian. For hundreds of years Muslims and Hindus have fraternized with one another and lived in peace in villages and even in cities, conscious of the essential unity of their cultural life and tolerant of the differences in regard to matters admitting of diversity. Those long chapters of history are forgotten, but the episodes of passing prejudices and disturbances stirred up by religious bigots or other mischief-makers are presented in lurid colours.

It may, indeed, be asserted without fear of contradiction that it is not religious divergences between the different groups of the population but political and economic rivalries that militate against national unity. Religious divergences there are, no doubt, and religious bigotry persists even amongst the educated people. It may seem an anachronism but it is nevertheless true that in India, as elsewhere, despite progress in education and development of social and economic organization, the old-time religion of emotion, forms and dogma still unhinges the minds of persons of

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high intelligence and culture. Their anti-social instincts and racial jealousies, inheritances of a savage past, continue to disturb the harmony which the founders of all religions wished to promote. It may yet take years of progress before the religion of emotion and irrationalism gives place to the religion of reason and the doctrine of humanity and dedication to the love and service of one's fellow men. Meanwhile, in different spheres of life, bigots will continue to hamper the fellowship of men and the fellowship of faiths. But despite such obstacles the world will forge its way, as it has in the past, to the goal of human unity.

Who are the Communal Exclusionists?

Within the large groups what classes prize communal exclusiveness? Fanatical priesthood in each group may wish to keep the different groups apart, but in the political life of India priesthood scarcely counts. The most vocal and influential classes working for exclusiveness are the intoxicated communalists, pseudo-nationalists and puny politicians who feel that they can thrive only in an atmosphere of strife. The worst exclusionists, one has to admit with shame, are some of the educated men and women prominent in public life. They are the most bare-faced disturbers of the peace of the country, shattering all hope for unity.

There is another class of exclusionists, less sordid and less aggressive but nevertheless most

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harmful. Just as religious bigotry is still rampant in the world, there is such a curse as cultural bigotry. Pride of pedigree, false notions of national greatness and perverted loyalty to a glorious cultural heritage lead some people to arrogate cultural superiority to themselves. Their culture, they believe, is the only culture, and they would either have others embrace it or have nothing to do with them. They forget that no one civilization is complete in itself and that different communities have something special to contribute, according to their genius, to the common culture. Civilization is fellowship, and fellowship knows no religious or racial barriers. In India there are more religious divergences than anywhere else in the world. Even should they continue, there is no reason why they should constitute a bar to national unity or communal co-operation. There is certainly no need for 'minority provisions' or cultural regions' to keep together the different groups of people. The growth of the idea of human unity is the only line along which humanity can progress, and anything perpetuating or tending to perpetuate the division of people into religious, regional, functional or cultural groups must be regarded as an obstacle to progress.

The Doctrine of Humanity

The next question is: 'If it is desirable to overcome religious divergences and exclusiveness, how can this be brought about?' The obvious

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answer would appear to be: *Unite the different communities under the standard of a universal religion.' The pages of history, however, bear testimony to the impracticability of achieving such unity so long as religion means to people what it has meant to them in the past. The most notable attempt made in this country towards the enlistment of all people under the standard of a common faith was that of Akbar. It failed, and so would other attempts to secure uniformity of belief in the realm of religion fail. Various churches and faiths have existed and will, it seems certain in the light of the history of human evolution, still exist for ages. But so have people been divided in the past and will continue to be divided in regard to their political creeds and group loyalties, and yet they have marched forward to the goal of national unity. Their love for and their loyalty to their country have been the most potent factors in uniting them despite differences in regard to social, economic and political problems.

The gospel which can unite all human souls under one standard of universal religion is the gospel of Humanity. It will not be a religion in the ordinary sense of the term. It will not be a revealed religion. It will have to be evolved by the combined effort and co-operation of men of good will on earth. Man cannot be transformed overnight. The transition from the old-world tribal religions to the new and universal religion will take ages of human progress upon the earth. But the process

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has already commenced. The new faith is being evolved slowly and steadily, modifying men's outlook on life and their attitude concerning problems of human relationship and conduct. In the past, religion has dealt with the next world rather than with this world. Its principal concern has been the salvation of individual soul^ the individual and his attitude of faith and conduct directed to a power without, rather than the individual and his relation to his fellow-creatures. The religion of the future will, however, deal with this world more than, if at all, with the next world. It will aim at the salvation of human society through the perfection of human intercourse brought about by a fellowship of faith, by which is meant all forms of consciousness or conviction and all ideals of human conduct and relationship which influence the lives of people.

According to Hindu philosophy self-knowledge is man's highest mission, self-fulfilment his highest destiny. Knowing his true self, he comes to know the Universal Self, of which he is a spark, and to realize the harmony of man's spirit with the spirit of the Universe. In the light of such knowledge he apprehends also his kinship with his fellow-creatures. The profound significance of the formula *tat twam asi*, 'That art Thou,' is then crystal clear to him—'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, because thou art thy neighbour.'

Herein we have the core of the world religion, the doctrine of Humanity, the highest expression of advancing civilization. Not by political pacts,

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nor by constitutional devices, but by the acceptance of this larger and nobler conception of religion may man hope to overcome the differences that divide people. In proportion as this concept of religion penetrates society, the stereotyped racial and retrograde distinctions will fade away and the different groups of people now kept apart will be instinct with that spirit of love and charity which neither fears, nor loathes as alien, people of different colour or creed but knits them together as sons and daughters of the same family and sharers in the same destiny.

By SIR SARVEPALLI
RADHAKRISHNAN

WE are witnessing today the end of an era, the agony of a whole civilization, the liquidation of forces in which we have all been steeped. This world war which is heaping gratuitous and senseless horrors on helpless and harmless people is not to be traced to the malevolence of a few individuals, nor is it to be dismissed as the conflict of rival imperialisms. It is the proclamation of the bankruptcy of the present world order which is marked by the decline of spiritual life and the degradation of moral values. The great instruments of human welfare like science, technology and organization have failed to achieve their purpose. The ideals of peace and good will have not been able to stand the test of reality. Our life is secularized and we are engaged constantly in a struggle for material ends, for the control of markets and territories. To succeed in our aims, we degrade ourselves to the animal level. The marvellous feats of our mechanized world are not distinctively human. They are tricks which highly intelligent animals can be trained to perform. The more we perfect the process of mechanization, the more do we approach the impersonal life of bees and ants. We are inclined to overlook the truth about human beings that they are persons who know and love, who hope and pray. The values of life, the domestic decencies, the

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simple affections, the savour of friendships, the pursuit of holiness are all delicate, fragile and contingent, and do not get a chance in a blind and insane world from which spiritual qualities are evacuated. Where spiritual knowledge is lacking, there is nothing which prevents society from falling into decay. This civilization which is abandoned by grace is like a body without a soul. It has a brain but no heart; it has a will but no soul. The mind is active but the spirit is asleep. Instead of the pursuit of sanctity, we have the cult of power, which is an intoxicant beside which other intoxicants are light and soothing. Hitler is the naked expression of the bad tradition in all its frenzy and hideousness.

Thinking, sensitive men are feeling terribly lonely and scared in a world which has lost its meaning. They feel that the world of modern man, built on agnostic reason, is falling to pieces. Out of the throes of agony must be born a new vision and a new mood. If the world's trend towards barbarism is to be checked, we must return to faith in spiritual values. Only such an access to spiritual reality can transfigure the world and restore its health.

The Spiritual Basis of All Religion

Hindu culture has emphasized for nearly fifty centuries the primacy of the values of spirit. This primacy of spirit has its roots in the very depths of India's history and has penetrated and dominated everything. The vitality of a culture is

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established by the fact that it produces, from time to time, men who from their personal experience confirm and correct truths enunciated by those who preceded them. When the springs of experience dry up, the culture becomes an affectation, belief a dogma and behaviour a habit. The uninterrupted continuity of Indian culture is demonstrated by the apostolic succession of saints, who assert that they speak from experience. The Vedic seers claimed it, and the modern representatives of that tradition urge that their lives and works are a commentary on the great truths of the *Vedas* and the *Upanisads*, a new formulation of the ancient wisdom of India, *prajnd purdni*. The Vedic canon on which the Hindu religion is based registers the experiences of the seers who realized that the eternal longings which man bears in the very fibres of his being cannot be satisfied by any changes in the empirical world of passion and action. The recognition of the Supreme Spirit which is also the Universal Self and submission to that spirit of the individual in thought, feeling and will is the essence of religion and the true destiny of man. Religion consists in such a transformation of the human individual as will enable him to establish contact with the Supreme (*brahmasamspuria*). It is not so much belief in God as experience of God. If, in spite of centuries of religious teaching, we have not been able to bring about an adequate re-education of the human race, it is because we have looked upon religions in an external or objective way. The Hindu religion

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requires us not only to believe in God but realize God in our life. Hindu culture and religion are based on this pure tradition of mystical enlightenment, which is incorporated in the great treatises of the *Upanisads* and the *Bhagvadgītā*.

While other religions are inclined to emphasize dogmas and authority and thus divide humanity into rival camps, the Hindu religion lays stress on the subjective features of religion to the realization of which all dogmas and rites are pathways. Though the Hindu believes in the authoritative-ness of the *Vedas*, he affirms that other scriptures which record the insights of seers who have attained *dṛṣṭi* (God-realization) are also authoritative. The *Agamas* are declared to possess canonical authority along with the *Vedas*. The canonical scriptures of the Hindus are not closed books. They are interpreted liberally and are added to as spiritual life evolves. With its empirical basis, the Hindu religion is in accord with the spirit of science. We are not called upon to believe this or that book because it is the revelation of God. The authority of the *Vedas* is derived from the validity of the experiences which they record.

If a world-society on healthy lines is to be built it can only be on the basis of a world-religion. The ground-plan of such a religion is to be found in the mystic tradition of India. But religions as ordinarily understood are unable to come to an understanding with each other and

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interfere with the development of human fellowship. Hinduism, however, represents an effort at comprehension and co-operation. The different dogmas give imaginative presentations of the basic truth of the divine in us. We cannot dispense with them, as they are the ways by which we envisage the eternal under the forms of time, the unchanging counsels of God under the forms of the changing world. Poetry, myth and symbolism have their place in religion. Their purpose is to serve as pathways to spiritual awakening and development. The creed is the starting-point. Belief is the precursor of action. It directs the will. All creeds are attempts of the finite mind to grasp the infinite. They are all valuable in so far as they help us to reach the ultimate goal. They are different because they are adapted to the different needs of the people, their race and history, their sex and temperament. But they are all tentative and so there is no justification for intolerance. Religion should not be confused with fixed intellectual conceptions. Any religion which claims finality and absoluteness desires to impose its own opinions on the rest of the world and civilize other people after its own standards. When two or three systems of belief attempt to bring all people into their own frames, they are bound to clash, for the world has place, if at all, only for a single absolute. We do not see the ludicrousness of these clashing absolutisms simply because we are so familiar with them. When religious life is

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confused with the profession and acknowledgement of revealed truth, it becomes dominated by outward machinery. The priest, the church, or the book takes the place of the spirit, and subscription to the creed is the one thing universally demanded. If you profess the creed and join the group, certain privileges and immunities belong to you now and for ever. Compared with life, the machine is too simple, its action too obvious, its results calculable in an absolutely definite manner by means of census reports and statistics, but its influence is directed only to the surface of our nature. If we think that it is right for us to propagate our religion at the expense of others through the employment of force on the ground that ours is a higher religion, we are guilty of moral contradiction since oppression, injustice and cruelty are the very negation of spiritual wisdom and sublimity. Hinduism has no fixed creed by which it may be said to stand or fall, for it is convinced that the spirit will outgrow the creed. For the Hindu every religion is true, if only its adherents sincerely and honestly follow it. They will then get beyond the creed to the experience, beyond the formula to the vision of the truth. Sarhkara, for example, speaks of six orthodox systems of religion.

The common goal of all religions is spiritual life. All religions are quests in search of this goal. They do not differ in their aim but only in the extent of the progress which they are able to make with the aid of their varying lights. If we

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compare one religion with others, we shall see that the differences relate to the formulas and practices. When we go behind dogmas and creeds and get down to the depths of our own religion we discover that all religions draw their strength from the same unfathomable source. The recognition of this fundamental unity should make possible a certain measure of co-operation on a common basis for the good of mankind as a whole. Even in regard to the theological formulation^ there is now a possibility of larger uniformity. Like the nation-states the great religions arose and developed in restricted areas of the world when intercourse with the rest of mankind was difficult. But now, through the influence of science and trade, a world culture is shaping itself. All religions are now attempting to express themselves in a new idiom and so are approximating to one another. The relevant elements of modern thought are vitalizing all religions and a community of outlook is growing up. Untenable doctrines are not so much refuted as set aside, and the universal elements of religions on which there is agreement are emphasized. Whatever our religions may be, we are describing them in terms of modern thought and criticism. This process will be speeded up in years to come and the gradual assimilation of religions will function as a world faith.

The principle of toleration has been an accepted tenet of the Hindus, *Asokz* and his successor Dasaratha patronized the atheist Ajivakas. Manu

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requires us to uphold the usages of heretics,¹ Yajñavalkya recognizes the customs of the heretics.² In short the duty of protecting men of all creeds and of none was enjoined on the rulers.

The Need and Opportunity for a Reformed Hinduism

As social beings it is our task to maintain the values of spirit in the sphere of human life, home, society and polity. Through this human world we have to progress to the kingdom of spirit. The *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* states that family life, property and other possessions are to be used as the apparatus for the realization of our spiritual resources, *atmanastu kamaya*. The whole cosmic process has for its end, to use Samkara's expression, *avagati* or spiritual freedom. The earthly is the raw material to be moulded into the likeness of spirit. The essence of religion does not consist in mere ecstasies or ascetic mortifications but in humility, sweetness and charity, in going through the day's work with patience and calm.

Hinduism has suffered in recent times from a lack of elasticity in regard to social rules and institutions. It has overlooked the cardinal feature of the evolution of Hindu society, that while the truths of spirit are eternal in their value, they are elastic in their application. The result had been a diseased condition of social organization,

¹ IV. 61.

* IL 192.

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where disunity and suppression of individuality are the prominent features. We have exalted rule and routine over life and feeling. The Hindu *dharma* has been changing in response to the changing circumstances, and through these changes has succeeded in remaining its ancient self. Nothing is so subversive to society as a blind adherence to outworn forms and obsolete habits which thrive by mere inertia. It is our duty today to discover the true countenance of Hinduism and let its spirit penetrate the structure of our society. Manu says: 'Know that to be *dharma* which is cultivated by the learned, the elect, those who are always free from hatred and passion, and which is at the same time readily responded to by the heart.'¹ Such a view gives us ample room for liberty of action in social matters. In this fateful hour, we must listen to fresh notes as to ancestral voices. The price of social freedom is not only eternal vigilance, but perpetual renewal, the ceaseless activity of the creative spirit. If our society is to progress, radical changes in the social order are obligatory. Old creeds have lost their power, and old institutions their prestige, and yet the spirit of India's past is a living one and reveals its secret anew to each succeeding generation. We must purge our society of man-made inequalities and injustices and provide for all, men and women, high and low, equality of opportunity for personal

¹ vidvadbhiih sevitaḥ sabbhiih nityam advesaragibhiih
hrdayanabhyānūjāto yodharmas taṇ nibodhata.

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well-being and development, *Dharma* is an elastic tissue which clothes the growing body. If it is too tight, it will give way and we shall have lawlessness, anarchy and revolution; if it is too loose it will trip us up and impede our movements.

The Hindu system of religious thought and practice, I have no doubt, will evoke a response from the inquiring minds of the present generation. It is an outlook on life which satisfies the intellect, stirs the feelings and spurs the will to action. It gives India a new soul in harmony with that of the new world, makes it into a living organism with a vision and a will. It can reconcile the deep-rooted and diverse traditions and enable them to live in amity and freedom. India is still in the making. Public opinion is unfortunately confused, hesitant, divided, not clearly led, almost pathological, and yet Hinduism by its emphasis on the true spirit of religion, inward harmony and outer fellowship, provides the corrective to our distracted age.

By SIR JOGENDRA SINGH

CULTURE! What visions of immeasurable achievements it conjures up with its promise of moral and material progress and its fruit—happy and healthy living.

To cultivate the mind is a peculiarly human prerogative, and the result of such cultivation is the inheritance of the culture of mankind. The process is unending: just as a husbandman continuously ploughs the soil and prepares the seed-bed, so is mankind continuously engaged in purifying the mind and sowing it.

Culture reflects itself in conduct. A well-cultivated mind is free from malice. It learns to forgive and forget and grows strong along the paths of virtue, of clean thought and correct action. It knows how to adjust itself to changing circumstances. An ill-cultivated mind, on the other hand, is always at conflict with itself—dominated by discord, disappointment and despair. The five enemies of human peace—passion, anger, greed, attachment and conceit—spread their gloom and drive man relentlessly to his doom. True culture frees it from their subjection and constantly endows it with the spirit of beneficence, giving it the power to discriminate between right and wrong.

True Culture

It is not possible, therefore, to restrict the field of true culture and confine it within the narrow

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limits of a country or community* Indeed, it is the futile, contentious spirit of sect, of creed, of party and the wrong sort of self-esteem, combined with the fatal power of inherited tradition and inveterate prejudice, which clog like wild weeds the field of true culture and effectively prevent its growth.

We speak of Eastern and Western, Hindu and Muslim culture merely to mark the stage which a country or community has reached in the cultural sphere as the result of its religious, social, economic and political achievements. The spirit of national unity and religious tolerance indicates a high stage of development, and the spirit of disunity a low stage. In truth the differences merely mark out different ways and stages of approach to the temple of truth.

Half-hatched ideas and convictions reared in the soil of national, economic and political rivalries prevent the recognition that all those who toil to serve the higher cause of humanity, which is true service of God, are friends and complements of one another. Guru Gobind Singh says, 'Know that this whole creation is His\

It is difficult to discover any distinct cultural differences between the various communities inhabiting India. Where there is light there is no darkness and where there is bitterness there is no culture. A cultured mind is full of light and sweetness.

It is true that the people of India profess not one religion but many religions, and that their

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ways of worship differ. They quarrel over many matters. The Hindu blows a conch, the Muslim sings his call to prayer; the Hindu burns incense and rings bells, and is demonstrative in his ordinary modes of worship; the Muslim offers his prayers in silence turning his face towards the Kaba. Each of them holds that his way is the best and they snarl at each other because their ways of approach to God differ. They object to the outer garments of religion, in which each denomination clothes itself; but, in their everyday relations with each other, men of different creeds carry on as good and helpful neighbours and follow the code of behaviour handed down to them by their ancestors.

Men pay reverence to their parents, respect the village elders and regard the mothers, sisters and daughters of the village as their own. The culture of the women is well exemplified by their good manners and their cultivation of industry and thrift and in the domestic arts of cooking and general household management. Neither men nor women expect much from life. They are satisfied if their small needs are met, and, when bad years come, they show an unparalleled spirit of resignation.

Life in the Villages

Nearly 80 per cent of India's population lives in over half a million villages. The most powerful microscope applied to a village would reveal no great diversity of culture except in the outward appearance of those living in it. A Hindu may be

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clean-shaven, a Muslim sport a beard and a Sikh wear his five distinctive symbols. But Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs rise with the dawn and occupy themselves with the same daily occupations; the agriculturist ploughs, sows and reaps, the carpenter and the blacksmith mend and repair the implements of agriculture, the women spin and the weaver weaves the cloth, and others perform their allotted task in perfect harmony, revealing an identity of interest and a steadfast spirit of neighbourliness.

The village people share the joys and sorrows of one another and help each other in their hour of need regardless of any differences in their religions. Hindus and Muslims do not eat together, nor do they intermarry; this is no part of their cultural achievement but marks its failure. It is clear, therefore, that the level of culture among the vast bulk of our population is fairly uniform and that divergence in their religious beliefs does not affect the neighbourly feeling existing among the people. The villages still retain some semblance of a well-balanced self-sufficing economic unity.

Life in the Towns

Then there is the urban labour population. Here again men of all creeds share the common culture of industrial labour, which differs only slightly from rural culture. In the villages, there is a larger spirit of helpfulness and open hospitality; in the towns, Competition entrenches upon the spirit of giving, and the cost of living narrows

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the scope of hospitality. Then again, the various religious communities dwelling in the towns are affected by political currents and are made aware of new political creeds. They fight when any of their established customs, such as taking out a procession, are threatened with interference. It is such ceremonial occasions which lead to quarrels, rioting and other unpleasant incidents.

Now when we lift our eyes to the upper strata of society, to the captains of industry and the business class, here again community of interest permits no large distinctive cultural developments on communal lines. Captains of industry employ workers who have the necessary skill, regardless of the religion they profess, and trade depends on supply and demand and makes no distinction between the religion of producers and consumers. Indeed, business relations soften all angularities of temper and character and establish links which are so intertwined that Norman Angell believed that owing to this growing international community of interest the days of wars were over.

There is also the small professional class—doctors, lawyers, etc. They render common service and draw their clients from all classes and creeds; their cultural environment does not ordinarily permit of their cultivating antagonistic tendencies which some communal-minded politicians, who depend on the suffrage of separate electorates, regard as the hall-mark of a distinctive culture. Recruitment to the various public services takes

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place on communal grounds, and here self-interest nurses the communal microbe, and as a result the services are losing the tradition which required all public servants to be above communal considerations. Happily the Indian Army, drawn from all classes and creeds, represents unity and affords a bright example of what common ideals and discipline can achieve.

No Diversity of Culture in India

In my fairly long and eventful life, I have not been aware of any diversity of culture. I passed my infancy and childhood in the arms of a Muslim nurse; my boyhood spending long hours with my father's Muslim falconers; my youth with Muslim friends—and one of these was no less a person than Dr Iqbal, who sang of 'My India', who aspired to raise a 'Shivala' New Temple to draw all the people to worship at the shrine of the motherland, who exclaimed,

Religion does not teach hatred.
We are Hindees
And Hindustan is ours.

His inherited culture expressed itself in songs of unity, till political currents, unfortunately, carried him to the communal camp.

It must, however, be admitted that some of our politicians preach the gospel of separation in the name of distinct differences in culture, but they will be hard put to it to prove any difference in culture among ninety per cent of our population,

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nor can they in their own selves conceal the gifts of a common heritage and evade the dictates of their own conscience.

Material and Spiritual Culture

Culture has a twofold aspect just as man has a dual personality. It partakes of both the* material and the spiritual. On the material side, it fosters the growth of individuality which endows man with faith in himself and drivea him to seek his own profit and pleasure regardless of the rights of others. Nations under the sway of material culture, in spite of their professions, are all the time apprehensive of losing their position and constantly engaged in rattling their swords, manufacturing armaments and keeping their powder dry. This is the root cause of war. People who fight shy of making the sjnallest contribution, in time of peace, to promote human happiness, readily give away their lives and their all to uphold the, independence and freedom of their countries. They worship at the shrine of Mars in preference to worshipping at the shrine of Christ. The war which was fought twenty years ago, and the war of which almost the whole world is a victim today, are the result of tendencies which modern culture has failed to overcome.

The achievements of material culture have left no plage safe from destruction on the earth,, sea or air. Science has found means of catching the voice of the world. It has subjected electricity

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to human service. It has enabled man to dive deep into the fathomless seas. Under its influence man has found wings, though the old saying, 'When an ant puts forth wings, it approaches its doom', seems very near the truth. Culture that carries us away from our fellow men is not God's culture. The kings and captains depart after their meteoric career, but the truths that the prophets have brought to this earth suffer no eclipse and the word of God remains.

In strange contrast with material culture is the culture of the spirit. It releases the soul of man from domination of the self and awakens sympathy with every form of human life. It converts self-affirmation into self-renunciation, violence into non-violence, desire into contentment. It teaches how we may enter the kingdom of God on earth and enjoy the treasures of earth as well as of heaven.

The Concord of Religions

Religion unquestionably refines our nature, enlarges the sphere of our sympathies in time and eternity and our relations to the great beneficent cause of all—the one God. Religion, therefore, cannot be a source of discord, since it is the true source of concord. The great religious teachers speak with one voice. There is no discord between the sweetness of Buddha and his eight-fold path of salvation, the love for humanity that lighted up every word that Jesus Christ uttered, the declaration of the prophets of Islam that

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⁴ whoever rejects evil and believes in God hath grasped the most trustworthy handhold', and the Sikh *guru's* affirmation:

In the company of saints,
All sense of otherness departs.
There is no stranger, there is no enemy,
There is a feeling of oneness with all.

Alas! It is the uncultivated soil of the human mind which fails to nurse the seed of religion and transforms religion into a sect, and, by doing so, rejects without examining the truth of religion and its saving power. Sect breeds pure prejudice, rendering sterile the soil of spirit, killing life's worth and humanity's advance. It is because of this sectarian spirit that followers of Islam concentrate more on outer observances, and followers of Hinduism, with their declaration that 'God is One*—in complete accord with Muslim belief—and their metaphysical conception of the Absolute, still pursue paths of separation, which in their social and moral consequences are so inexpensively disastrous, and so powerful in keeping the ordinary achievements of life at so low and meagre a level. They have reduced religion to a mere ritual and to the observance of taboos. A very high caste Brahman would consider his food polluted if cooked by a man of a lower sub-caste. It was this practice of untouchability which the Hindus extended to the Muslims. Its ridiculous consequences are seen in water being distributed as Hindu or Muslim water at all the railway

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stations. Guru Nanak protested against this many years ago.

You call grain and water Divine
And butter the prime purifier.
How can these be defiled
But by contact with impure bodies ?

These taboos have been, and are today, responsible for schisms which would have been bridged long ago if Hindus had shown the same tolerance in the matter of eating and drinking as they did in permitting freedom of belief. It is because of these day-to-day material contacts, which count for more than the true conversion of spirit, that Hindus and Muslims, who belong to the same race, who have a common cultural heritage, have failed to find a fusion and to become a united nation.

The question whether Western culture is dowered with the gift of a larger understanding cannot be easily answered. It must be admitted that new thought currents have progressively brought about many changes in the outlook of modern society. They have, as a Sikh *guru* puts it,

Broken the shell of superstition
And set the mind free.

Human nature can expand and express itself in innumerable ways, but to what purpose? As an uncultivated soil secures no gifts from the sun and the rain, so man freed from responsibility to God has found no anchors and has become subservient to Moloch.

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The Role of the Central Government

The East will do well to follow the light that never fails; the light that has travelled and will continue to travel from the East to the West. Britain, too, will find salvation in the age-old policy of doing right, which gave her an empire over which the sun never sets. They who gradually built the British Empire in India instinctively discovered the secret of uniting India. They resolved to ignore all differences of creed and community and guaranteed equality of treatment to all under a reign of law. They wisely permitted the enjoyment of their personal laws to Hindus and Muslims. They readily shouldered the responsibility of protecting all communities in the legitimate performance of their religious ceremonies. They recognized merit in recruiting the services, and by their own example required all public servants to rise above communal considerations. They refused to recognize any difference in the culture of various Indian communities or to entertain any majority or minority claims. They established a strong Central Government which enforced its will in the provinces under the supervision and control of the Government of India. It was thus that India was placed on the path of nationhood. It is departure from this policy and the encouragement of communal and minority claims that has created the present situation. My own community, small in numbers but not so small in its contribution to the

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defence of its 'motherland, claims no class exclusiveness.

If India is to progress and realize its immense potential powers it must have a strong Central Government—strong and impartial, representative of all interests. It must not follow models of pure democracy or any exotic system, but with singleness of purpose must so constitute its government as to bring the most worthy men to serve the common weal, giving security to prince and peasant alike and assuring to minorities the full enjoyment of their special privileges. The Government of India must become and remain the vitalizing centre, guiding the provinces and assisting them to make a larger economic well-being more universally possible.

It is not in discovering and demarcating separate cultural regions* but in ignoring them, not by dwelling upon divergences but by making them subservient to unity, that Britain can fulfil her mission and help India's millions along the path of self-government. Power will prove the most effective solvent and resolve all difficulties. Just as in the Indian Army discipline and control awaken an *esprit de corps*, so will strong government—in the future as in the past—draw all people together and obliterate all passing political differences.

Britain's Opportunity

In this, the hour of the world's greatest need, a united and self-governing India could be* the most effective factor in leading all the people to

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return to the paths of peace, 'for now sits Expectation in the air'.

In all times and all climes sages and saints have spoken with triumphant unanimity on the cardinal principles of religion and good government. Abul Fazl, who adorned the court of Akbar, quotes with approval the verse of the Persian Sufi poet:

Let the apostate glory in apostasy,
The faithful in his faith;
For Attar a share in God's love is enough.

Akbar, by continuous discourse with Abul Fazl and the learned men whose company he frequented, discovered that 'the light of God is in all religions, with more or less shade in all'. He was convinced that a king could fulfil his kingly functions only by becoming a shadow of God on earth. This illumination gave him the key to the heart of peasant and prince alike. Her Majesty the late Queen Victoria inherited this gift of understanding from Akbar, when she declared her purpose and polity in the proclamation promising India equality of treatment and position, which became India's Magna Charta. It is because of this policy that Indian soldiers are giving their lives, without inquiring what they are fighting for, in the far-flung fields of the Empire.

It is also the result of the new policy of feeble-minded politicians dwelling on differences—which are in their power to overcome—that, while war

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is at India's door, her men of light and leading are waiting to know whether, in fighting for the Empire, India will also win her own freedom and become self-governing. To this British statesmen have given no clear answer

The shortest and surest way to unite all communities is to endow British policy with one purpose only, to safeguard the integrity and security of India, and to rejoice in her march towards self-government. All human virtues increase and grow strong when practised.

If you have enjoyed reading this pamphlet please see the complete list on the back of the cover. There may be others dealing with subjects in which you are interested.

Continued from front cover

SIR SARVEPALLIRADHAKRISHNAN, Vice-Chancellor of Benares Hindu University, and Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics in the University of Oxford, was for nine years a member of the International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation. Perhaps the best-known of his many publications are *Indian Philosophy* (1923), *The Hindu View of Life* (1927), *An Idealist View of Life* (1932) and *Eastern Religions and Western Thought* (1939).

SIRDAK SIR JOGENDRA SINCH, Member for Education, Health and Lands of the Viceroy's Council, was for eleven years the Minister for Agriculture in the Punjab Government. He is the President of the Sikh Educational Conference, and the Editor of *East and West*. His publications include *Kamla*, *Nurjahan* and *Thus Spoke Guru Nanak* (1934).

SOME OPINIONS OF THIS PAMPHLET

'The writers reveal a liberal approach and show considerable vigour in their expression. While there is considerable difference of opinion among them as to the proper "diagnosis" of the nature of the cultural problem in India, there is a reassuring degree of agreement as to "prescription" of appropriate remedial action. The pamphlet makes very stimulating reading.'—*Journal of the University of Bombay*

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