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CHAPTER VI

THE EDUCATIONAL PROBLEM

SECTION I

Introductory and Historical

ALL colonising nations are sooner or later faced with the problem of the education of the natives. It is a grave, a difficult, one may say a distressing, problem which cannot be evaded, and which involves a conflict between interest and conscience.

If conquerors refuse to subject peoples the benefits of that instruction which civilised nations value so highly, this amounts to an avowal that, in establishing themselves in savage or backward countries, they have had no thought of the general interests of civilisation. They have only had in view their own material interests, and the advantages to be obtained for their commerce and industry from a new, and often rich, country. If, on the other hand, to escape this reproach, or actuated, it may be, by a sincere desire for the diffusion of civilisation, they resolve not to make education a Western monopoly, but to impart in it a greater or less degree to the natives, they must realise that one cannot set bounds to knowledge. Once started on the path of learning, the native peoples are not likely to stop at any arbitrarily fixed stage. They will

go on further and further, until the day comes when they have become the equals and rivals of their former teachers, and they will then deny the legitimacy of a foreign dominion.

It is to the credit of the civilised peoples that, in this conflict between interest and duty, none of them has long remained deaf to the voice of honour. Sooner or later, according to the temperament of the ruling race, local circumstances, and the difficulties attendant on that pacification which is the first necessity of colonising nations, all have asked themselves whether they should or should not educate the natives under their sway, and all have replied in the affirmative.

But the decision of this primary question merely gives rise to a crowd of others, as important and difficult. I will indicate a few of these, without any pretension to making the list exhaustive. To what extent is the conqueror to turn schoolmaster? Is he to endeavour to influence the mass of the subject race—to infuse some elements of knowledge into an entire people, with the idea that each day has its own task, that time will do its work, that the fragments of instruction given to the fathers will cause these to desire greater knowledge for their children; and that in this way some genius may be produced whose arrival may be fraught with mighty consequences? Or, on the other hand, is it not better to deal only with a picked element of the population, so as to obtain there the subordinate officials whom colonising people find it useful and politic to recruit on the spot, or to shape the native auxiliaries of whom the agricultural, commercial, and industrial settlers have need? Apart from such utilitarian considerations, this method may also seem the best, and in the long run the most rapid, instrument for spread-

ing education. The mass of the people will surely acquire a taste for knowledge when they get visible evidence of the advantages which it brings to members of their own race.

This problem involves such grave consequences that every nation considers it afresh every fifty years or so, and on each occasion gives a somewhat different answer. When it has been determined for a time, a new question arises: What is to be taught these folk, whether it be the mass of the people or an *élite*? The answer is simple when they have not enjoyed any system of education, however elementary, before the arrival of the foreigner. But it becomes complicated when one has to choose between the system which already prevails, and which is inadequate both in principle and in application, and the education which the European peoples bring with them. How is one to reconcile (as a sound Native policy must seek to do) respect for the ideas, the traditions, and even the prejudices, upon which a people has subsisted, with the desire to introduce views and methods of which a constantly growing experience has shown the value?

Assuming this question to have been settled, is the system of education determined upon to be imparted by native or by foreign teachers?—a question which is specially embarrassing when, as will usually be the case, it has been decided to spread the knowledge of Europe. Native teachers will be more conversant with the mentality of their fellow-countrymen, with the limits of their intelligence, and with the best methods of awakening it. But as they themselves will have been recent pupils, will they not, of necessity, prove imperfect interpreters of Western science and civilisation, which can, at best, only be acquired by a process of slow

initiation? And if our knowledge has not been thoroughly assimilated by those who transmit it to their countrymen, will not the defective medium cause a failure which it will be difficult to repair?

Finally, programmes and professors having been settled, what language is to be used for conveying to the natives the treasures of knowledge—their own, or that of the ruling people? At first sight it seems clear that the decision should be for the vernacular. Assuming it to have been decided to employ foreign teachers, their number will necessarily be limited, and for men long accustomed to study, the acquisition, and even the full mastery, of a new language cannot be a serious difficulty. What an advantage they will have, too, if, while demanding from their pupils the forgetting of false notions, the sacrifice of false ideas, and a constant effort of will and intelligence, they can address them in their mother tongue, and thus win their confidence from the first. But language is a living organism, and not dead matter; and just as there is reason to doubt whether natives, however learned, intelligent, sincere, and devoted, can become efficacious interpreters of Western science, so, too, we have to ask ourselves whether the indispensable vehicle for conveying the elements of this science to the native mind must not be a European language, which alone possesses a sufficiently supple and extended vocabulary—one which has grown up concomitantly with the ideas which it expresses. On the other hand, the employment of a foreign language as a vehicle of foreign ideas involves the formidable obstacle that every lesson, whatever its subject, tends to become a lesson in grammar and translation. And this obstacle is but one of a thousand difficulties which the problem of educating a native

population produces. The object of the present chapter is to show how the English have dealt with this problem in India.

The first question, whether an attempt should be made to educate the natives, may be said to have received a definite answer in the affirmative about 1815. Some schools had at that time been opened by European missionaries, and the East India Company had told its then Governor-General, the Marquis of Hastings, that such steps might be dangerous, and lead to the creation of political aspirations which might one day place in jeopardy the rule of the Company. Lord Hastings replied, however, that it would be a betrayal of national morality to perpetuate ignorance for the sake of sordid political considerations, and from that time the principle of educating the people may be said to have triumphed.¹

But what sort of education was to be imparted? Some colleges had already been established by Warren Hastings or under his influence, such as the Calcutta Madrasa for Muhammadans (created in 1782) and the Hindu College at Benares (1791); but these institutions were consecrated to what was termed Oriental learning—the study of literature, philosophy, history, and religion from the Oriental point of view. After the above-mentioned decision of the Marquis of Hastings, further colleges were started by the Government and by missionaries; but they, too, were mostly of an Oriental character, or were intended (in the case of the missionary institutions) for the propagation of Christianity.

Matters remained in this stage, in spite of the demand

¹ The Charter Act of 1813 had also required the expenditure of a lakh of rupees a year on education.

of some of the natives for instruction in the arts and science of Europe, up to 1835, when a great change was effected under the impulse of the illustrious Macaulay, who, besides being law member of the Governor-General's Council, was also President of the Council of Education in Bengal. His opinion on the existing position was clear and concise: very little had been done, and that on wrong lines. He indignantly criticised the Oriental instruction given in the colleges, the books officially printed for use, and the complicity of the Government in the diffusion of error. "Our council," he said, "is obliged to print books which give artificial encouragement to absurd science, absurd metaphysics, absurd physics, and absurd theology." Starting from these premisses, and supported by two successive Governors-General, Lord William Bentinck and Lord Auckland, he completely triumphed over his adversaries, and obtained the recognition of the principle that Indians should be taught European science and civilisation, and through the medium of the English language. It necessarily followed that pupils were to be sought, not among the mass of the people, but in a special class. A number of the general questions indicated above were thus solved, and we shall have to consider whether the solution was a good one. To decide on reform, however, and to carry it out fully, are very different matters, and in India the English have always advanced with slow steps. In 1853, when the Company's Charter was renewed for the last time, it was found that education had progressed much more slowly than had been imagined, and in 1854 the Court of Directors, at the instigation of Sir Charles Wood, then President of the Board of Control, addressed the Governor-

General on the subject, in a despatch which may be rightly termed historical, and which evidenced new ideas, great breadth of view, and a disinterested policy. The Directors commenced by approving the methods already adopted—which were, however, to be more stringently applied—for giving education to the upper classes; but they proclaimed their intention of pursuing a further end which was even more important, viz. the instruction of the mass of the people, and the methods to be adopted to this end, towards which they were ready to sanction a considerable expenditure. The task of giving practical application to the famous despatch of 1854 fell to a Governor-General who has left a great name in India, Lord Dalhousie, and he threw himself into it with enthusiasm, for he, too, hoped for much from the spread of education, especially in the direction of improving the morals of the people, who might thus be weaned from such practices as the burning of widows and the marriage of children. Lord Dalhousie did all that he could to obtain success. A separate Education Department was created; training schools for teachers were established; the number of public schools was increased; and special efforts were made to encourage private schools by grants in aid. But to act on an almost inert population, which even then numbered 150,000,000 souls, is a formidable enterprise, requiring much money, numerous agents, and time. For a good many years the bold and active policy of Dalhousie produced very insufficient results. The defective recruitment of teachers, the lack of resources, the almost general indifference of the people—above all, the great Mutiny of 1857—all seemed to conspire against the success of that noble and arduous task—the diffusion of popular education—which he had

attempted. In 1868 one of Dalhousie's collaborators, Lord Lawrence, who was now himself Viceroy, had still reason to say that, among the dangers which menaced the stability of British rule in India, few were greater than those arising from the ignorance of the people. Some advance was made under the influence of Lord Lawrence, and his successor Lord Mayo; but progress was still so slow that, in 1882, the Government of India thought it necessary to have the whole system inquired into by a special Commission of twenty members, ten of whom were natives. The report of this Commission contained no less than 222 recommendations, of which 180 had been adopted unanimously. But here, again, the results were disproportionate to the goodwill and activity which had been displayed, and to the wishes of the Government. The Commission held that it was indispensable to educate the people; but that the poverty of a country, in which the average annual earnings were only some Rs. 20 per head of the population, debarred ambitious projects and new departures, and only admitted of the best possible application of existing methods. In fact, the practical results of this Commission, which had been mainly intended to develop the education of the masses, were chiefly in the direction of improving the education of the middle and upper classes—what the English call secondary or higher education. It would be unjust to imply that nothing has been done since 1882 for the development of primary education, for the creation of fresh organisms, and for the improvement of those already existing. But the task was vast and the difficulties colossal, and the Government had many other preoccupations, so that while we may regret the scanty progress made, we cannot strongly condemn it.

I shall apply myself in the succeeding Sections to a general review of the present state of education in India in its various grades, and I shall give special attention to the reforms energetically promoted by Lord Curzon, and to the criticisms to which these have given rise.

SECTION II

Primary Education for Boys

Primary education, as we have seen, was not organised in India till a system of secondary education had for long been adopted. There is nothing astonishing in that, since the original object of this so-called secondary education was to train up clerks and subordinate executive agents for the British Government. The State had here a limited task, and the classes to whom its education was offered were attracted by the prospect of Government employ. But to educate the whole people of a vast sub-continent is an immense task; above all, when the people themselves are indifferent. And even if the children had a taste for study, if they were pushed on by their parents, and if the Government gave its full support, a sound educational system would still be extremely difficult owing to the want of money and the lack of qualified teachers.

In the first part of the nineteenth century elementary education was not considered a State service. The primary schools which existed were, for the most part, private institutions, started by missionaries and others, and, owing to the Hindu caste system, those mainly intended for the lower classes were practically closed to the higher castes, and *vice versa*. The fees,

moreover, kept away pupils. In 1842 there were only 1400 elementary boys' schools, with about 30,000 pupils. In spite of praiseworthy attempts which had previously been made in the United Provinces and in Bombay, the real concern of the British Government with primary education may be said to date only from 1854. I have already referred to the famous despatch issued by the Court of Directors in that year. After indicating the necessity for improving the education of the upper classes, they pointed out that an even more important matter was primary instruction, which had hitherto been too much neglected. It was specially necessary, they held, to place the means of acquiring useful and practical knowledge within the reach of the great mass of the people, who were utterly incapable of obtaining education worthy of the name by their own unaided efforts. As I have said, Lord Dalhousie did his best to apply this instruction. He established a special department of education, founded public schools for the training of teachers, placed under the control of the Government a large number of the private schools already existing, and set himself to improve their methods. Their programme was to be directed to the teaching of reading, writing, arithmetic, and mensuration. Knowledge of these matters would, it was held, give the ordinary Indian a sufficient equipment for practical life. The efforts made were considerable, but great as was the enthusiasm of Lord Dalhousie in a cause which he justly deemed of the highest importance, progress was blocked by immense obstacles. Some of these were of a temporary character, such as the Mutiny of 1857, which for years concentrated the attention of the Government upon military, political, and purely administrative matters. Others were of a

more lasting character, and these I shall deal with later on. In 1870 the total number of primary public schools in British India was still only 16,500, with about half-a-million pupils.¹ By 1882 the number of schools had risen to 86,000, with over 2,000,000 scholars. These figures seem large, but become relatively small when we recollect that nowadays British India contains some 18,000,000 boys of school-going age. I have already mentioned the appointment of the Education Commission of 1882, and that its practical results led to the improvement of secondary rather than to that of primary education. Primary education has continued to advance slowly: in 1901-2 there were about 98,000 public schools with 3,200,000 scholars.

To what must we ascribe the extreme difficulty of organising primary instruction in India, and the scanty success of such repeated efforts? We Westerns, who live in the most civilised part of the world, and who, for the last century or more, have been convinced of the incontestable utility of the primary school, and of its influence as a factor in morality and civilisation, must endeavour, when we deal with the Indian problem, to realise the totally different state of things there. The Indian primary school does not exercise an attractive influence on the children of the country, save in relatively few cases, which ordinarily occur in schools directly maintained by the Government.² The schools lack space, air, light, and cleanliness: those in the most remote corners of our French provincial districts would seem palatial by the side of most of the Indian institu-

¹ The term "public school" in India includes all schools which are managed or aided by the State, or by local boards or municipalities, or which are recognised by the Education Department as competent to send up pupils for public examinations.

² Primary schools are, for the most part, aided or maintained, not by the Government direct, but by rural boards and municipalities.

tions. Often, too, there is no regular school building of any sort. The school is carried on in a dark hut or in an open court-yard, and the children squat round their teacher. Nor are the curricula much better. The simple educational programmes drawn up in 1854 and subsequently have undergone many changes for the worse, especially in the schools which have been created or controlled by the Government and its local agents. No proper care has been taken to adapt the teaching to the needs of native life. A school inspector not long ago made the following remarks: "The children seem far more intelligent out of school than in it. Why? Because at school everything is strange to them, and they meet nothing there that they knew before. A young villager knows most of the plants that he sees. He knows the uses to which domestic utensils are put. He can gather from the sky when it is going to rain. He knows, too, that for a wheel to roll properly it must be greased from time to time. Now these many aspects of practical life, the causes and relations of which he might learn, are entirely ignored at school, as if with the deliberate intention of withdrawing him from the surroundings in which he has lived. The school teaching endeavours to fill his mind with entirely new and strange ideas which, for the most part, he will never have occasion to apply." Primary school teaching, in short, if it is to become useful and attractive, ought to be brought much closer to life, and to what was intended in 1854. These defects have, however, been long emphasised. The English have the special merit of quickly discerning and confessing the errors of their methods: why, then, have they not reformed their primary instruction? There is more than one reason for that. The first is the mediocre quality of the primary

school teachers. These are practically all natives, and by no means the best among them. The small pay which they get, ordinarily Rs. 7 or Rs. 8 a month (and not more than Rs. 12, except in Bombay), is not, it may readily be conceived, sufficient to attract good men. Possessed of only half-developed minds, which have with difficulty received some rudiments of very elementary knowledge, these teachers are at most capable of repeating to their pupils what has been told to them. They cannot change the character of the lesson, even in the direction of simplicity. Nor have much better results been obtained by their undergoing courses in normal schools. A parsimonious policy prevents the enlistment of competent men, and the primary school teachers remain, as a body, far below their tasks. Another, and even more formidable, obstacle is that the schools charge fees. The dogma of our democracy—a questionable dogma, indeed, if applied too generally—that primary education ought to be gratuitous, has not been accepted in India. Mr. Gokhale, and other Indians of his school of thought, have, it is true, claimed in the Viceroy's Legislative Council and elsewhere the application of this principle of gratuitous education, from which they expect a large development of primary instruction. The English reply has been that the cost which this would involve to the State would be crushing to the Indian tax-payer, whose means are so small. Their concern for the tax-payer is, no doubt, praiseworthy, but one may well ask if judicious economies in other portions of the State budget might not permit of a more general endowment of primary education.¹ However that may be, the fact remains that education in the primary schools is generally

¹ The idea of making primary education free, at any rate in the towns, was suggested by the Government of India to the Local Governments in 1907, but the discussion has not yet evolved any practical results.

charged for. In the north of India about 15 per cent of the pupils are admitted free, but in the south the percentage is infinitesimal, and for the country as a whole it probably does not exceed 5 per cent. Unfortunately, too, the education thus sold does not find willing purchasers. Though the fees are usually very low, they are a serious burden on the purse of the native parent, and to induce him to undertake this burden, he would have to be convinced, as the French democracy is, for example, of the utility, nay, of the necessity, of education. In his eyes, however, education is useful and efficacious only when it leads to public office. That is the case with secondary and higher education, which is much sought after; but as primary instruction merely develops the mind, and does not open a career, it is little thought of and little desired. This might have been remedied by making primary education compulsory if not gratuitous, but so far from its being compulsory, it is not even adequately controlled. The Collector, as president of the district board, has a general responsibility for the schools. But he is so over-burdened with other tasks that he does little in this direction, and the supervision is left to the subordinate officers of the Education Department, or to an over-wearied beast of burden such as the tahsildar. Finally, the primary school succumbs to the competition of graver and sadder preoccupations, the fight for life and the struggle for daily bread. These give rise to almost constant cares, with which our Western peoples are no longer familiar. Floods or failure of rain, plague, or famine, too often compel the unfortunate Indian peasants to think of their bodies before they concern themselves with their minds. Such are the reasons which have caused primary education in India to give

much less favourable results than were expected from it in 1854, and again in 1882. On one point, however, it has caused no deception, it has cost the Government but little. It is difficult to obtain from Indian official documents the exact amount of expenditure from public funds on primary education ; but, so far as I can calculate, the total amount in 1901 did not exceed 120 lakhs of rupees, of which about half was directly provided by the Government of India and the Local Governments, and the rest by the local boards and municipalities. We must add to this, of course, the receipts from fees, subscriptions, and endowments. But the total is very small for some 98,000 schools with more than 3,000,000 pupils,¹ and these scholars represent only about 18 per cent of the boys of school-going age, *i.e.* 82 per cent are absent from the schools, while in France we should think an absence of 2 or 3 per cent unsatisfactory.² Here is another significant fact. The public educational expenditure is incurred, for the greater part, in the shape of grants in aid to schools under private management. Among the conditions of a grant in aid are : (1) That a school should follow the general curriculum approved by the provincial Education Department. (2) That it should be open at least four months in the year. (3) That it should possess at least four pupils able to read and write the vernacular language—4 pupils out of perhaps 40 ! The lower school classes are often really *crèches*, where the parents can deposit their children while they earn their livelihood.

¹ The Government expenditure on primary education has somewhat increased since the year mentioned in the text. In 1902, for instance, the Government of Lord Curzon gave grants amounting to 40 lakhs of rupees a year to the Provincial Governments for this purpose.

² The last Census, again, that of 1901, showed that in all India the proportion of persons able to read was 103 per thousand in the case of males, and 8 per thousand in the case of females.

A number of Anglo-Indians, however, hold that there is really nothing discouraging in all this. The English work for the future. They wish, first of all, to make native opinion regard the school as an ordinary institution; later on they will require the school to be attended. But to justify such a policy, the school must first prove its efficacy by the adoption of better methods and the recruitment of better teachers. That, it may be said, is already being accomplished in the primary classes of the secondary schools, which are in themselves numerous.

It should be added that Lord Curzon's reforms in university and secondary education, which will be dealt with later on, extended to primary education also, and that steps have been taken, in recent years, to make the primary school curricula more practical, as, for instance, by the inclusion of kindergarten methods and object-lessons. But such a change cannot produce real benefit unless it is applied by intelligent teachers.

SECTION III

Secondary Education

As already stated, the British Government commenced with concerning itself with secondary education, with the main object of obtaining native auxiliaries for its administrative work. It should be noted, however, that what is styled secondary education in India corresponds really to upper primary education (*enseignement primaire supérieur*) in France, while the secondary education of France (*enseignement secondaire*) corresponds to the collegiate education of India. Secondary education in India has two branches :

the lower, given in "middle" schools or in the "middle" classes of high schools, and the higher, in the "high" schools proper. For the bulk of the pupils who attend these schools, the education they receive there is a final training, which stops in the majority of cases at the "middle" stage! Only a small minority go on to the colleges. It is thus a really important element in the educational system of India.

Up to 1854, secondary education had a higher scope than is now the case, since the colleges of the present day had not then come into being. Subsequently, with the establishment of these colleges, the secondary programme became more restricted, with the object of appealing to a larger class. The Government no longer desired simply to train officials. It looked to making the pupils of the secondary schools more useful members of society; and, as I have already stated, although the original object of the Education Commission of 1882 was the development of primary education, the actual advance obtained has shown itself much more in the secondary schools.

The groundwork of the present secondary training consists in the study of English, as a special language if not as a medium of general instruction, of the local vernacular, of history, geography, arithmetic, and mensuration; with the addition, at the higher stages, of algebra, geometry, elementary science, drawing, etc., and a "classical" language, *i.e.* Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, or Latin. The principal question which the authorities had to solve in drawing up their programme was whether instruction should be given in English or in a vernacular, and this, as I have already explained, was decided in favour of English in the higher schools. There are, however, in Bengal and

elsewhere, a number of "vernacular" middle schools, in which instruction is given in a native language, and this method has been attended with satisfactory results. The general tendency, however, is to instruction in English, and this is the attitude even of enlightened natives, who are passionately attached to the study of the English language, which not only affords larger material advantages, but provides an easy means of communication throughout the whole country between men whose own languages are as different as those of Europe. We thus get the paradoxical result that it is the language of the conquerors which forms the bond between the conquered, and facilitates the diffusion of their common complaints and claims.

The whole course of secondary study may last for six or seven years, but clever boys go through the classes more quickly, and others leave before the end of the course, so that the bulk of the pupils remain only for about four years. Progress is tested by public examinations, which eventuate either in the matriculation of one of the universities or in a special school final examination. There are also some special secondary schools for the training of teachers.

It is difficult to praise the results of this secondary education, as regards its practical effect on the pupils, or even in respect of the number of these. The educational statistics of India are confused, and occasionally inaccurate, and distinctions between Government and aided schools, and "public" and private institutions, and the fact that a secondary school may also have primary classes leads to the production of figures which cannot be closely relied on. If we follow the statistics given at the close of the Education Chapter in the new *Imperial Gazetteer* we get the following results:—

In 1870-1	there were	3146	secondary schools	with	206,000	scholars.
„ 1881-2	„	4122	„	„	222,000	„
„ 1891-2	„	4872	„	„	473,000	„
„ 1901-2	„	5493	„	„	623,000	„

The majority of the schools and classes do not go beyond the middle standard. The middle schools in which teaching is given in the vernacular amounted to 45 per cent of the whole in 1886; but in 1901 only 27 per cent of the boys under secondary instruction were being trained in such schools.

Although the above figures show considerable progress, secondary education is still far from giving the results expected from it, and the British Government would find it advantageous to develop it further. Not that it has any special need to attract pupils who will serve to fill the subordinate ranks of the administration, for in India even more than in France, candidates for official posts are already innumerable. But the secondary schools are not merely intended to train public functionaries; they are looked to for the production of men who will develop agriculture, commerce, and industry. It is thought that such men, if scattered in increasing numbers over India, will show, by practical methods and example, the advantages of a system of education which goes so much beyond the small fragments of knowledge picked up in the primary schools. It is also hoped that the pupils who start active life from the secondary schools will differ from those at the colleges, where the system of education is again different, in not becoming (at least as a rule) discontented with the social and political organisation of their country, and a danger to British rule. The hope is rather that they will become pioneers of Western civilisation, and defenders of the established order.

It became evident, however, that if it were to attain such results, the system of secondary education needed a thorough reform, and in this, as in other branches of teaching, Lord Curzon endeavoured to apply the remedies which others had only spoken of.

The principal criticism levelled against the secondary schools, as against the Indian educational system generally, was that the curricula were too ambitious, with the result of encouraging superficial study, and that the education given was of too literary a character; further, that the employment of English as an instrument of teaching had been carried too far, resulting in lessons which degenerated into exercises in grammar and vocabularies, and to want of comprehension by the pupils. Finally, there was the usual vice of uniformity in methods and programmes.

An Educational Conference convened by Lord Curzon, and the inquiries which followed on this, led to the following results:—While the general principle of maintaining English as a vehicle of education was maintained for the higher classes, it was laid down that instruction at the lower stages should be given more generally in the vernaculars. The school teaching was to be more practical in character, and less dependent on the requirements of the universities, while efforts were to be made to promote studies of a practical, as opposed to a literary, character; to encourage technical and industrial education, to provide better training for the teachers, and to strengthen the inspecting staff. The general principle was, in fact, to be one of specialisation and distinction of programmes, with due regard to the circumstances of different districts and provinces. High-school training was to be an end in itself, and not merely a basis for

collegiate education, and the same principle was to apply as between the middle and the high schools. It was to be realised that the needs of rural areas and of towns were not the same, and that the Government should undertake the direct management of a secondary school in each district, as a model to the rest, while higher standards were exacted from private schools as a condition of grants in aid. Finally, the principle of public examination, which is carried to as absurd a pitch in India as in Europe, was to be modified, and the university matriculation examinations were no longer to be regarded as the one goal of high-school teaching.

Such, briefly, are the reforms which have been attempted in the matter of secondary education. It is as yet premature to judge of their scope and efficacy. Their application seems to have been somewhat dilatory, and they are, in any case, of too recent a date to have produced lasting results.

SECTION IV

Collegiate Education

The Indian universities have as yet been little more than examining bodies. The instruction which is tested by the university examinations is given in separate affiliated colleges; but the universities exercise much influence over these, not merely by their examinations, but by prescribing courses of study, and by permitting, or refusing to permit, a college to submit its pupils to the university tests.

There are five universities in India. The three oldest, those of Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay, date

from 1857 ; the university of the Punjab was created in 1882 ; and that of Allahabad, in the United Provinces, in 1887. These universities have, consequently, immense spheres of influence. That of Calcutta, for instance, extends over Bengal, Eastern Bengal and Assam, Burma, and part of the Central Provinces, Rajputana, and Central India. The Punjab University differs from the rest in that it endeavours to develop Oriental as well as Western learning, and gives diplomas which can be obtained without any knowledge of English. The number of colleges which teach merely Oriental learning is, however, very small. In 1901 there were only seven of these for all India, giving instruction in Sanskrit, Persian, or Arabic, or in more than one of these tongues, and they only had about 1000 pupils. The other Indian colleges, and (with the exception noted in the Punjab) the universities on which they depend, are devoted mainly to the teaching, by Western methods, of the letters, science, and arts of the West.¹

Such a conception is, I think, open to criticism, and it has had certain evil consequences, notably that at the present day England has not achieved the position which she ought to have attained in archæological, theological, and philosophical studies relating to Asia, or even to India.

The universities are isolated and independent bodies. They are subject to some general control by the Government, but this is mostly of an indirect character, and they are not under the Director of Public Instruction of the province in which they are situated. They act,

¹ Some of them, however, combine Western education with a distinctly religious organisation, as, for instance, the Anglo-Muhammadian college at Alighur, and the Hindu college founded by Mrs. Besant at Benares ; but generally Oriental civilisation receives very scanty attention.

moreover, at their own discretion, with very little regard to what is being done in the sister universities. Independent action of this sort has its advantages, but it is pushed to excess when the policy of one university is at variance with that of another. Each university has a chancellor, a vice-chancellor, and a senate. The Governor-General is himself the chancellor of the Calcutta University, while in the others the post is filled by the Governor or Lieutenant-Governor of the province. The vice-chancellor is nominated by the chancellor, and is very often a judge of a High Court. The senate consists of "fellows" who are, for the most part, nominated by the chancellor (*i.e.* by the Government), but a certain number are elected by Masters of Arts, or other specially qualified graduates. In 1857, when the Calcutta University was founded, the senate consisted of nine *ex officio* members, and thirty others, selected among the chief educational and scientific officers of the Government, the principals of colleges, and other leading officials and non-officials; and things were much the same in the other universities. Gradually, however, as nomination to the senate came to be regarded as a high distinction, the numbers increased, and in 1901 the Calcutta senate consisted of 190 members. Bodies of this size cannot, of course, deal at first hand with the administration of a university, and this is largely delegated to a "syndicate" consisting of the vice-chancellor and a certain number of fellows nominated by the various faculties (arts, science, medicine, law, etc.). These are, moreover, assisted by boards of studies.

The resources of the universities are mainly derived from examination fees and from private endowments. Till lately the Punjab University was the only one

which received a direct grant from the Government, but of late years similar grants have been made to other universities also. In 1901, the total expenditure of the universities was Rs. 746,000, while their total income was somewhat in excess of this amount. As surplus revenues accumulate, they are generally applied to the founding of scholarships. It should be added that these universities are all in relation with the great universities of England, and that their examinations are to a certain extent recognised by these, and regarded as equivalent to a portion of their own curricula. They all give degrees in arts and law, and most of them also in medicine, science, and engineering; and the colleges have to shape their curricula with reference to the requirements of the university examinations, and the text-books and courses of study prescribed by the university authorities, which can further grant or withhold the right of affiliation.

These colleges are for the most part arts colleges, which give a mainly literary education. There are also special colleges for law, medicine, and science. In 1881-2 there were 67 arts colleges with 6000 pupils; in 1891-2, 104 colleges with 13,000 pupils; and in 1901-2, 149 colleges with 17,600 pupils. In the latter year there were also 46 special colleges, teaching other than art subjects, attended by 5300 students. Of the total number of colleges, 145 were in British India.

Educationally, the three most advanced provinces are Bengal, Madras, and Bombay; and, superficially, Bengal has the lead. In 1901 there were 64 colleges in this province alone.¹

The Bengalis, of whom so much has been heard in connection with recent political troubles, are very proud

¹ Including the now separated portion of Eastern Bengal.

of their education. Gifted with a marvellous memory, which enables them to retain the phrases of a book, or the oral teaching of a professor, they excel in examinations. Lord Curzon's University Commission, of which I will treat later on, found, however, that the actual results were better in Madras and Bombay; and it is a significant fact that in the competitive examinations for the Enrolled List of the Civil Accounts Department, which affords one of the most lucrative and sought-after careers for natives in India, Madras candidates have of late years been more successful than those of Bengal. Religion and race also exercise great influence in the matter of scholarship. Here the Parsis easily hold the first place. In every 10,000 of these 471 are undergoing a university education, against 42 native Christians, 10 Hindus, 3 Musalmans, and 2 Burmese Buddhists.

The majority of the colleges are not State institutions. Out of the 149 arts colleges above referred to only 26 were departmental colleges maintained by the department of Public Instruction; 5 others were maintained by municipalities, and 3 by Native States, and all the rest were under private management. The State, however, while abstaining, as a rule, from direct management of the colleges, does not cease to concern itself with the education given there, and the teaching staff. It influences these directly by giving, or by withholding, grants in aid, and indirectly through the universities, the senates of which, consisting for the most part of Government nominees, can give or withhold the recommendation which alone enables a college to take part in university examinations. In deciding whether a college shall be aided, the Government takes into account its material equipment, its hygiene, the examinations for

which it prepares pupils, and the quality of the teaching. Those colleges which are the most satisfactory in these respects receive more liberal grants in aid, while in the case of those which are least satisfactory the Director of Public Instruction moves the university to withhold recognition. Colleges, whether State-aided or recognised, are divided into two main classes: the first grade, which prepare for a full university course, and the second grade, which only work up to an intermediate examination. Apart from grants from State funds, and in the case of missionary colleges, from the general funds of these bodies, the colleges depend on their fees, and on donations and legacies given during their life or by will of rich persons who are desirous to contribute to the development of national education, and to obtain praise and honour for themselves. As a rule, however, their income is small: the budget of the premier college of India, the Presidency College of Calcutta, is only Rs. 120,000 a year. The fees are small too. Those in the Government colleges run from Rs. 120 to Rs. 144 a year; in private aided colleges they average between Rs. 50 and Rs. 70, while in some of the unaided colleges they are as low as Rs. 15. Generally speaking, these are too low, even allowing for the low scale of living in India, and cast a grave doubt on the value of the studies thus scantily paid for. This defect is largely due to the fact that the majority of the students are not impelled to a university career by love of learning, or a disinterested taste for study, but by the hope that the knowledge they acquire will provide them with a career. Nor can we Europeans, so occupied in the struggle for life, condemn them for this. Are there many European schools whose students flock to them from the pure love of learning? Even in England,

where some disinterested love of higher study remains, where one sees the scions of great families working hard for the honour of their name, the bulk of the middle-class students at Oxford or Cambridge go there either to fit themselves for a livelihood or to obtain the friendship of fellow-students who will hereafter take a high place in the world. Native students regard the passing of examinations as a stepping-stone to public office, or to a private career, such as that of a lawyer or doctor. Their first objective is, as a rule, the State service. This attractiveness of a State career is a phenomenon found among nearly every people. In Eastern countries it was at first attributed to the influence of European nations who, coming into occupation of possessions which they had to administer with a very small number of officials from the mother country, had to seek local auxiliaries, and to attract, by the bait of pecuniary profit and social consideration, a crowd of candidates who were, at first, readily accepted. But when these nations, whether to improve the character of their services, or to diminish the excessive number of aspirants, raised their educational standards, it became clear, from the fact that the rush of candidates remained unchecked, that the seeking of public office was part of the native character. That is precisely what has been witnessed in India. As soon as the Hindus saw that to obtain situations under Government they would have to pass examinations, they started in pursuit of the diplomas which would effect this purpose.

These students who do not desire, or who fail to obtain, State service work for the liberal professions, and in the first rank of these comes the profession of law; next to that, medicine. There is still a considerable social gulf between the lawyer and the doctor.

With us that gulf has been gradually filled. The man of science has become the equal of the man of law, if he has not already passed him. In our contemporary drama the important personage of the piece is often a doctor, the head of a factory, or a scientist; fifty years ago he would inevitably have been a lawyer, a novelist, or a poet. The Indians are still in the stage where we were half-a-century ago, and in their marriage market, where competition is as keen as it is with us, the lawyer is more esteemed as a bridegroom than the doctor.

I do not propose to give any detailed description of the university examinations which the college students have to pass. It will suffice to note that the arts course begins with the matriculation, which tests the fitness of the high-school pupil for the college course; then comes the intermediate, or first in arts, which can be passed after two years at college, and finally the bachelor's degree (B.A.), which requires another two years' study, and the degree of Master of Arts, which can be usually obtained in two years more. Few candidates, however, go so far as this. For every 17 who pass the "intermediate" only 5 become bachelors of arts, and 1 only a master.

One of the striking features of the system is the obligatory attendance at lectures. A candidate cannot appear for the intermediate, the B.A., or a higher examination without certificates showing that he has attended the prescribed course of lectures in a recognised college, to an extent varying, in different provinces, from two-thirds to three-fourths of the total number of lectures given. Another point is the easy character of some of the examinations, and especially of the matriculation, where the candidates are numbered by thousands. The universities depend largely for incomes

on the matriculation fees, and this circumstance, the fear lest students should be attracted to some other university, and the internal pressure of the college and school teachers, who regard a large proportion of failure as a slur upon themselves, causes the standard to be lowered. The number of candidates, too, is so vast,¹ that the answers to a single paper have to be distributed among several examiners, and it is difficult, if not impossible, to obtain anything like a uniform standard. It follows that while some of those who pass are quite fit to follow any college course, others ought really to be relegated to the elementary school. Finally, some of the examinations, and especially those appertaining to the degrees in arts, can be passed too quickly. Boys have sometimes matriculated at 12 or 13, taken their full degree before they were 18, and then started to teach in colleges where they were often no older than their pupils.²

Such are the higher studies of India. But the name need not impose on the reader; they are, for the most part, of a mediocre description.³

In a subsequent chapter I shall deal with the reforms attempted by Lord Curzon in the matter of university education. But since it is to education of this character that the English have, by force of circumstances, given the greatest attention, I may as well state here the chief criticisms to which their work is open from a technical point of view.

¹ In 1901-2 the total number of matriculation candidates was 23,000.

² Efforts have now been made, in accordance with the proposals of Lord Curzon's Universities Commission, to fix the minimum matriculation age at about 15.

³ I should add that a limited number of Indian students, desirous of greater learning than their own universities can give them, proceed to those of England, where they often meet with distinguished success, and become capable of competing with the English for the higher posts in the administration.

The first element of weakness is in the quality of the pupils. The students, who work hard, have a prodigious memory, but, with some admirable exceptions, their faculties of comprehension and criticism are very mediocre, and this requires the lectures to be on a low level. That fact must be noted, and regretted, but the blame cannot be ascribed to the English. Where the latter are more evidently at fault is in regard to the number and quality of the teachers. The total teaching staff in the Indian colleges has been estimated at about 1000, of whom 350 are in Bengal, and 275 in Madras, and this *cadre* is too small. In the largest college in India the number of professors does not exceed 11, and the average is only 4 or 5. Such a small *personnel* involves large classes and want of attention to individual pupils. Nor does the quality of the teachers compensate for their numerical feebleness. On the contrary, defective quality is the weakest point in the college teaching, with the exception of some institutions which are well in advance of the rest and are largely conducted by French Jesuits. There are also some good English professors, but the bulk of the teaching *corps* is native, and its quality mediocre. In a group of 272 teachers I find that only 45 came from English institutions (and some of these may have been natives), and 157 from the Indian colleges, while 70 had still lower qualifications. With a teaching staff most of whose members never have been out of India, it follows that a course of study whose object is to spread the knowledge and civilisation of the West is almost inevitably doomed to failure. It may be said that many of our European professors have to speak of countries that they have not visited; of arts and manners which they only know from books. But no

serious comparison can be made between the mentality and professional qualities of these Western professors, formed by long heredity and by excellent and constantly improved methods, and those of the Hindus—very deserving men, considering their circumstances—who have to improvise themselves as teachers in matters relating to Europe of which yesterday they were themselves quite ignorant. And who would deny, moreover, that even the most eminent of our own professors would have gained much by studying the material for their lectures on the spot? Could Renan, to take a famous example, have made such a vivid and accurate reconstitution of the Judæa of 2000 years ago if his travels and his work had not led him to the country where Christ was born and died?

A visit to an Indian college suffices to show the truth of what I have said. I remember, for instance, and it is only one specimen out of many, hearing a lecture on the Reformation, and on the part which Henry VIII. and his daughter Elizabeth played therein. I can conceive nothing more rudimentary or poor, and more lacking in general ideas. It consisted merely of a certain number of facts, marshalled like pawns on a chess-board. There was no life or force; it was a mere skeleton of a lesson, lacking flesh, muscles, and nerves. The professor was simply repeating a text-book. The text-book, indeed, reigns over the Indian colleges in all its hideousness, and it is not only the students who are possessed of these manuals—more or less happy compilations—which they learn by heart and repeat imper- turbably. The professors themselves make use of them; and the elements of knowledge which they distribute among their pupils are unfortunately culled far more from these text-books than from any original works.

Vain efforts have been made to cope with this fundamental defect. The universities endeavour to prescribe courses of living lectures—not mere dictated lessons—from which the students would obtain real good; but the students, and too often the professors themselves, are incapable of such effort. The curricula, too, where science plays too small, and mere literature far too large, a part, lend themselves only too easily to an exaggeration of the original defects. When the examination day arrives, and it becomes necessary to test candidates who have obtained almost the whole of their knowledge from text-books learnt by heart, the examiners are obliged, in order to place them, to put ridiculous questions of this character: “What is the difference between ‘collision’ and ‘collusion’?” “How many Latin verbs do you know which have no supines?” etc. Even if the answers to such questions were correct, they could not be taken as evidence of satisfactory instruction, and it can easily be understood that methods of this sort have excited indignation and provoked a demand for reform.

SECTION V

Lord Curzon's Reforms

In 1899 Lord Curzon, who had then lately assumed the Viceroyalty, but who had previously given much attention to India, said that although he was aware that everything was not well with the Indian universities he refused to join himself with those who condemned them altogether. Such a condemnation was, in his opinion, unfounded and unjust. Three years later, however, he altered his tone, and declared that

India was receiving a faulty education through faulty agents, and with faulty results. In 1903, again, on the eve of the Bill for the reform of university education, of which I am about to speak, he put forward, as an absolute and irrefutable proposition, that the Indian educational system was defective in the extreme. How was it that a man like Lord Curzon, one of the most intellectual, as well as one of the most energetic, Viceroys whom India has known, came to modify his first impressions in so emphatic and unfavourable a way? It was because he had studied things on the spot, and having diagnosed the evil, he had, like a true Englishman, thought it better to proclaim it from the house-tops than to conceal it, persuaded that public opinion would thus give a more ready reception to the necessary reforms, while he could be trusted to apply the caustic unflinchingly.

I have already mentioned some criticisms to which the teaching of the natives of India give rise, and some attempts made by Lord Curzon's predecessors, as well as by himself, to meet such criticisms. In the present section I deal mainly with higher education, which, with its colleges and schools, still constitutes, in spite of all intentions to the contrary, the most important branch of the educational system; but I must beg the reader to bear in mind that the defects in higher education which gave rise to the legislation of 1903-4 were of a general character, and apply, analogously, to primary and secondary teaching also.

It follows, from all I have already said, that the system of instruction in India is mediocre. "That," say the English, "arises, in great part, from the defective mentality of our native pupils. They have admirable memories, but nothing more; they cannot comprehend

or apply." "No," say the Indians, "that is not the true position. If the teaching is bad, and gives poor results, the fault rests entirely with your own bad organisation. That is proved by the fact that those of our young men who go to the English universities take a creditable place there among the most brilliant of your countrymen." Some, who belong to an extreme class of political thought, add that the English secretly congratulate themselves on their faulty teaching, of which they are quite well aware, as being a sure method of hindering the intellectual, and consequently the political, emancipation of India. Having thus put the opposing points of view, let us proceed to the steps taken for reform. In 1902 Lord Curzon, after some months of preliminary personal inquiry, appointed a Commission to study the university and collegiate system, and to report thereon. This Commission, which was composed of 12 members, of whom 5 were natives, visited all the university centres, and, collectively or through some of its members, a number of the less important towns. It also endeavoured to ascertain how the Japanese had adapted Western methods to their needs. After an exhaustive inquiry, it submitted a report, which gave rise to the Universities Bill of 1903, a measure which passed into law in 1904.

From the Commissioners' point of view, nearly everything resolved itself into a question of money. The pupils were mediocre, the methods imperfect, the curricula and the examinations sometimes childish; but this was due to the fact that the teachers were, for the most part, mediocre also, and their mediocrity arose almost entirely from the fact that enough money was not spent on getting good men. I say almost entirely, for there was really another consideration at issue. Whether the

party in power in England be Radical or Conservative, the Government of India has always shown a greater or less degree of reluctance to a large admission of natives to the higher posts of the administration. In spite of the promises held out by the Charter of 1833, and the solemn proclamation of Queen Victoria in 1858, efforts are always being made to keep down the proportion of natives in these grades.¹ As, however, the authorities cannot openly break pledges which have been given, they seek side methods which will afford some satisfaction to the natives, without giving these a materially larger access to high political and administrative posts, a step which might, it is held, be dangerous to British rule. The compromise adopted is to give them a larger share of certain technical services, and accordingly, on the recommendation of a Public Service Commission which sat in 1886-7, the Government has admitted the native element to a larger share in the Education Department. That is why, in many colleges, English professors have given way to natives. The Budget, too, was relieved by this policy. India is a poor country, and cannot spend all that is necessary on public instruction. The Englishmen of to-day share the French reluctance to quit their mother country; £250 a year at home seems to them better worth having than £800 in India. Good men can only be obtained by large salaries, while Hindus, on the other hand, were content with incomes which seemed ridiculous to Europeans, and were loudly

¹ There has recently, however, been a more liberal tendency in this direction, under the inspiration of Lord Morley. Two natives have lately been appointed to the Council of the Secretary of State in London; and one has now (March 1909) been appointed as law member of the Viceroy's Council in India. The Councils of the Governors of Bombay and Madras are also to receive a native member, and it is in contemplation to provide executive councils, on which natives may sit, for one at least of the Lieutenant-Governors.

asking for posts which it seemed politic to accord to them. Political and financial considerations thus acted in the same direction, with the result that in recent years there has been a decrease in the English professorial staff, and an increase in the native element. A few years ago the Presidency College of Calcutta, the premier college of India, had only seven Englishmen in a teaching staff of twenty-two.

This reduction in the European element has had unfortunate consequences. The methods of teaching in India are mediocre, as is admitted by enlightened natives who have studied in England. But how can they be reformed with Indian professors, many of whom are incapable of anything but a repetition of text-books? There is also a moral element involved. The English do not expect mere teaching from their educational institutions. Their schools have as a main object the formation of character, and it is in that field that Oxford and Cambridge are most characteristically successful. Similar results are sought in India; but how can they be obtained with a native staff who mostly lack force of character.

These and many other salient defects were brought to notice by Lord Curzon's Commission, and the Bill of 1903 endeavoured to provide effectual remedies. I ought at once to explain, however, that Lord Curzon and his advisers did not attempt the root and branch reform which some persons would have desired. They contented themselves with attempting to modify and improve existing conditions, dealing in that direction with the most important factors of the problem, the colleges, the universities, and the governing bodies of these.

In the colleges, almost everything deserved criticism

and called for remedy. It was decided, in the first place, that affiliation to a university should not be allowed to a new college without full inquiry, and that the colleges already affiliated should be subject to surveillance, so that those which did not maintain their studies at a sufficiently high level might be disfranchised. To guarantee the efficacy of this control, the syndicate of each university was to organise a system of local inspection which should deal, *inter alia*, with the following points: Is the administration of the college capable and disinterested? Is it actuated by other than mere pecuniary considerations? Does the college possess a good teaching staff, and adequate material equipment? Is the internal discipline capable of forming the character of the pupils? What facilities are provided for the residence of the students, and their supervision out of lecture hours?

It should be explained here that the majority of Indian college students, and this applies in still greater measure to the case of schools, are mere day scholars, and are not under supervision in their own homes or lodgings.¹ Efforts are, however, being made to apply and extend a system of college hostels, in which the students board under the supervision of resident members of the college staff. But the Indian social system, which prevents students of different castes from eating together, constitutes a serious difficulty in the application of a reform of this character.

After the colleges, the universities. If the system of inspection, by which it was hoped to improve the character of the colleges, was not to remain a dead letter, the universities and their administration must be

¹ There are some exceptions, the best known of which is the Muhammadan College at Alighur, which provides rooms for its students on the English model.

reformed. The syndicate of each university was to have large and wide powers. But the syndicate was itself a committee of the senate, by which its decisions had to be confirmed ; and time had effected a change in the composition of the senates analogous to that which had taken place in the teaching staff. The senates, which in the beginning had been mainly European in character, had gradually, under the influence of perfectly natural circumstances, such as the death or retirement of European members, assumed a native tinge. In 1880, for instance, the Calcutta senate contained 137 Europeans as against 47 natives, while in 1901 there were 101 natives to 83 Europeans. Such native predominance was full of danger to education. The majority of the native members had had little or no preparation for their functions, which few of them were competent to exercise, and they showed undue complaisance to the private colleges.

Lord Curzon decided to reduce the number of each university senate to 100 ; and that the members should no longer hold office for life—a circumstance which gave the natives an obvious advantage—but for five years. Some of the members were to be chosen by qualified graduates, but the majority were to be nominated by the Government, and mainly from persons who had had actual experience of educational work.

The next point was to give the universities a more direct educational rôle. Hitherto they had been mere examining bodies ; hereafter they were to become teaching bodies also. As examining bodies, whose constitution necessarily inclined them to pass too large a number of candidates from the affiliated colleges, they could only exercise a feeble influence on the quality and the level of the studies of these colleges. But when they

came to be possessed of chairs of their own, with professors really worthy of the name, it would be *their* teaching, the standard of *their* lectures, which would fix that of their examinations, and consequently of the college instruction also.

In regard to the professorial staff, whether of the existing colleges or of the teaching universities of the future, the Commission of 1902 had not been able to formulate conclusions which could be expediently embodied in the Universities Bill. Nevertheless, the discussions on this point elicited a number of ideas which it is useful to note, because one day or other they must take practical shape. Everybody agreed that the staff, as a whole, was mediocre, and to this cause was ascribed the unsatisfactory character of the teaching given. But opinions differed in regard to the remedies required. Many of the natives themselves admitted the superiority of the European teachers, and asked for good graduates from Oxford or Cambridge. "Send us," said an Indian, who plays a large part in all practical questions, Mr. Gokhale, "send us young men who possess the double gift of knowledge which they can communicate to us, and of sympathy which they can show us." The English, too, were aware that something must be done. "We give to India," said Lord Reay, "some of our best generals and our best administrators. It is our duty to give them also some of our best educationists." But the cost of obtaining English professors of the calibre required would be enormous. At the 1905 meeting of the Indian National Congress, Sir Henry Cotton, who had been in his time a distinguished Anglo-Indian administrator, put forward an ingenious idea, which perhaps contains the germ of a satisfactory solution. "We must," he said, "have

picked men at the head of our colleges and universities ; and by picked men I mean Orientals who have been thoroughly penetrated by Western civilisation, but have, at the same time, not parted with the traditions of their own past." Orientals would, no doubt, cost less than Englishmen, but they can only be thoroughly permeated with Western civilisation if a portion of them—at any rate, the really picked men—have enjoyed the benefit of years of study in Europe. That, too, is the opinion of Mr. Gokhale. "It is essential," he says, "that men of this sort should be sent to Europe." And to the objection that they would risk losing their Indian personality, he replies: "That is so, if they go too soon. We desire them, however, to maintain the traditions, the tastes, and the customs of our country, but tempered by Western conditions. That may be accomplished if they do not go to Europe till the age of twenty. As soon as we are sure that Europe will not be able to detach them from India, we shall welcome their acquisition of European culture."

I have thus briefly described the genesis and the objects of the Indian Universities Act of 1904, which constitutes the real charter of present-day education in India, and the subsidiary discussions to which it gave rise. Will it prove really efficacious? There is no doubt that the present law, if well applied, will produce much good ; but it is also clear that such application will require an energy which cannot always be counted on. When the Act of 1904 was under discussion, all the menaced private interests coalesced, under the pretext of defending sound principles ; even men like Mr. Gokhale denounced the measure as one calculated to officialise the universities ; and it required the tenacity of Lord Curzon to guide the measure into law. But

Lord Curzon is no longer there, and though some steps have been taken to elaborate the principles which the law could only sketch in general terms, it seems doubtful whether his successor, who has had many other preoccupations, can give full attention to the development of his projects. The circumstances, too, are hardly favourable, and in political crises the tendency is to seek for some immediate palliative rather than a remedy whose effects can only be gradual. My own opinion is that the reform will languish.

SECTION VI

Female Education

It is no paradox to maintain that in any society the education of girls is a problem which is probably more complex, but certainly not less important, than that of boys. The wife and mother will one day have a decisive influence over her husband and children, over the public and the private conduct of the former, and over the moral and intellectual development of the latter. The impress of the mother on young minds is, indeed, in many cases ineffaceable. If it is true that the generations of to-day prepare those of to-morrow, it is still more true that the mentality of the mothers shapes that of the children. Though these truths apply universally, their application is less apparent in India than elsewhere. Here, though the women play a very important part in family life, they seem to have hardly any in society, where they are not seen. At the age of ten, and sometimes earlier, a high caste girl disappears into the zenana, where she lives secluded from those who can

instruct her. Nor is such instruction desired. As we have seen, boys only seek education as a means of livelihood, and the parents, except among Parsis or native Christians, attach no importance to their daughters obtaining knowledge. Nor is a husband affected by the ignorance of his wife. Early marriage, again, constitutes an additional obstacle to education. Many little girls of five, six, or seven years of age are not only nominally married, but have been taken away from their own people and placed in the husband's house, under the guardianship of the mother-in-law. At what age can young Indians of this sort go to school?

To the main difficulty, that of bringing girls to school, we may add a second, that of obtaining mistresses. Very few Indian girls are competent to teach others, and, as in the case of boys, the question of cost prevents any large recruitment of teachers from England. Efforts are made to recruit the *personnel* from local normal schools, and there are about 50 of these, attended by about 1200 to 1500 girls. A staff of this sort is quite inadequate for female education in a country which, to speak of British India alone, has 232 million inhabitants. If, as in the case of boys, we reckon 15 per cent of the female population as representing girls of school age, we should get a total of about 17,000,000 for British India, and 21,000,000 for India as a whole. It is difficult to say how many of these could actually attend school; nor, in truth, do people concern themselves on the subject. Female education is still in a very rudimentary stage; indeed, one might say that it is grossly neglected. In a country so strongly governed by traditional ideas, it would seem that the parents should have been offered entirely separate schools for their girls, whereas, in fact,

more than 40 per cent of the girls at school are learning along with boys. It is true that these girls are very young—ordinarily between five and nine years of age; but even so, the absence of separate schools cannot be calculated to attract Indian parents to the idea of female education.

Nevertheless, the total number of girls under instruction is not altogether to be despised. It may be said that in all there are between 450,000 and 500,000 schoolgirls undergoing educational training of some sort, and the immense majority of these are in primary schools. This gives a proportion of about $3\frac{1}{2}$ per thousand of the whole female population of India as being under instruction at any one time, and the last census showed that only 8 per thousand of the women of India were able to read and write.

As in the case of the boys, religion exercises a powerful influence on the school-going habits of the girls. In 1901, out of about 400,000 girls attending the public schools, 244,000 were Hindus, 48,000 were Musalmans, 30,000 Buddhists (in Burma), 46,000 native Christians, 15,000 Eurasians, and about 17,000 of different creeds and origins, among whom were 5700 Parsis,—an enormous proportion considering that the whole Parsi community, male and female, does not exceed 100,000 souls.

The total number of girls attending secondary schools may be roughly estimated at 45,000. The normal schools provide for 1400 or 1500, and there are about as many more in other technical and professional institutions. Finally, in 1901, the arts colleges included 177 female students (girls or married women), and there were 87 attending medical, law, and other special colleges. Of the 177 arts students, 55 came from Bengal,

49 from the United Provinces, 35 from Madras, 30 from Bombay, and 8 from Burma.

One of the professions which the Indian Government tries to induce women to enter—as we French do, also, in Algeria and elsewhere—is that of medicine. Its object is to provide medical care for high caste women who would not see a male doctor, to introduce improved sanitation and hygiene into the native homes, and to make the women doctors agents of Western civilisation. Lady Dufferin, the wife of a former Viceroy, had these objects in view, when, a quarter of a century ago, she initiated the National Association for supplying Medical Aid to the Women of India, which is supported by private subscriptions, aided by grants from Government, and maintains a considerable number of hospitals, or wards, where women receive treatment from members of their own sex. Lady Curzon and Lady Minto have also raised funds for the training of midwives and nurses. The female medical staff which has thus been organised consists in many cases of mere nurses, but also includes women who have obtained a real medical training. They are encouraged to attend medical schools by grants of scholarships. The universities, too, give some scholarships, and the total number of female medical students was 242 in 1901.

All these branches of education taken together reach, however, only a very small proportion of the women of India; and the main reason is, doubtless, that tradition, with which their relatives have not the courage to break, requires women of the higher social classes to remain in their own homes. In order to meet this prejudice, an interesting experiment has been made in the direction of zenana teaching, by means of which girls and young married women can obtain

instruction at their own homes. The mistresses who impart this teaching must have a variety of qualifications. They must be of sufficiently good family and high caste to be able to go everywhere, sufficiently educated to make their teaching valuable, and sufficiently lively to attract pupils. This system has, it is said, given some good results. At a distance it looks more romantic than serious, but as a similar method has succeeded in Constantinople, why should it not answer in India? As, however, this zenana teaching is a matter of private enterprise, the official statistics do not record the number of pupils which it reaches, and the expense involved.

The public instruction of girls costs about 40 lakhs of rupees a year, and the salaries of the women teachers vary from Rs. 20 to Rs. 150 a month. A total number of 500,000 girls under instruction for the whole of India is not very comforting to those who have the interests of education at heart, and a real development of female education will probably be a very long process. It will have to triumph over prejudices of every character, and especially those of a religious and social nature. In 1905, in one of the most advanced parts of India—the United Provinces, which have a population of nearly 50,000,000—a committee consisting of men of a certain social position set itself to discuss the question of female education. This unprecedented assemblage came to the conclusion, a startling conclusion for India, that the women should be educated. As husbands and fathers they declared themselves anxious to seek means for effecting this result, but, in their opinion, the indispensable condition of success was that the example should come from above. Now that is an almost unrealisable condition, since in India those who are at

the top of the social hierarchy, whether Hindus or Musalmans, are the most attached to religious prejudices. If then the middle and professional ranks wait for the example of the upper classes before they surrender to new ideas, success in this direction is very distant. It may be argued that among the representatives of these high classes are Hindu princes who have visited Europe along with their families, have mixed in our society, and desire, for their women, the education, the vivacity, and the charm which they meet with and recognise in European ladies. This argument, however, has no value, for when these same princes return to India, their wives at once re-submit themselves to all the exigencies of the *purdah* system. Others, again, endeavour to see an evolution of ideas in the fact that in Mysore two Brahman ladies have lately taken the B.A. degree of the Madras University. But an isolated fact of this description, occurring in a State which has 5,000,000 inhabitants, can raise no real hope: we can only trust to time.

APPENDIX

AN EXPERIMENT IN PRIMARY EDUCATION IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES

I have spoken of the necessity of making primary education in India of a more practical character. An interesting experiment in this direction has been applied to the rural tracts of the Central Provinces,¹ where the population is more backward, more purely agricultural, and ethnographically more mixed and less Aryan than in most parts of India. The principal feature of the method by which it has been sought to attract their children to school is

¹ The Central Provinces have an area of about 114,000 square miles, and a population of about 11,000,000, exclusive of Berar, which, though administered by the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, has traditions and systems of its own.

what is called the half-time system, under which the pupils are only taught between the hours of 7 and 10 A.M., and are at the disposal of their parents for field work during the rest of the day. The school course lasts usually for four or five years, and few children remain at school after the age of ten, or twelve at most. There are courses which involve longer school hours, and a greater number of years, but these are exceptional, and the half-time method is the typical one. The curriculum, which seems to be admirably adapted for the class of pupils for which it is intended, includes reading, writing, arithmetic, accounts, some study of land records, geography, and agriculture, as well as physical training. All this has to be got through in from four to five years, at the rate of three hours a day ; and in a country in which holidays and festivals are numerous, the difficulty is increased by the great number of languages spoken in the province—several dialects of Hindi, Marathi, Uriya, and Telugu, to say nothing of minor tongues, so that the same book has to be printed in a variety of vernaculars.¹ The teaching methods seem very ingenious, and have all been borrowed from Germany. The German kindergarten system, and the methods of Froebel, have indeed exercised a very great influence in India among English and native teachers.

The study of agriculture, as may be imagined, holds an important place in this province, which is essentially agricultural and pastoral. Agriculturists are taught by books and practice, in the school and in the fields. The pupils of each year have a separate reader, which gives a large space to agricultural lessons. A small separate treatise—Fuller's *First Year of Agriculture*—is inserted *en bloc* in the third and fourth years' readers, and contains lessons to be learnt on the spot as well as in the schools. Here are some specimens of the questions which have to be answered :—

Point out to us a field which has been manured, and another not manured, and note the differences.

Explain the best method of making manure from substances ordinarily available—bones, excreta, urine, etc.

Point out an irrigated field, and one which has not been irrigated, and explain the difference.

The attention of the pupil is also directed to facts which will be of importance to him throughout his life, and then to the causes of these facts. For instance, a poor soil is not suited to certain cultures : the pupil is taught why this is so. Every school has a garden with squares and beds, where the pupils and the teachers plant vegetable and other seeds distributed to them, and

¹ See an official report on the rural schools in the Central Provinces, by Mr. H. Sharp, Inspector of Schools, 1901.

watch their growth, receiving lessons on the spot as regards the soil, the different varieties and qualities of plants, and so on. When they leave school these young agriculturists cannot fail to remember a portion, at least, of what has been taught to them, and to apply it.

The geography they are taught is, again, of the most practical character. Around the school-room are maps showing the plan of the school itself, the village, the district, the province, India, and finally the world; and efforts are made to lead the boys on gradually from what they see and know to that which is distant and unknown to them. Here, for instance, is a series of questions asked :—

What village is this ?

On what road does it lie ?

What is the direction of this road ?

What is the next village it leads to, and how far off is that ?

And the next but one ?

Is there a mountain beyond that ?

To what range does it belong ?

What districts does this range divide ?

What river springs from it ?

Into what larger river does this flow ?

What becomes of the second river ?

And so on.

The arithmetic taught them consists of the four elementary rules, fractions, the rule of three, and calculations of interest—a very important factor with a people which has always to do with the money-lender. Book-keeping is also taught. Stress is likewise laid on the reading of manuscripts, a matter of special importance in a country where the Courts attach so much importance to written evidence of business transactions.

The most original feature of the teaching in these rural schools is, however, that which relates to the land revenue system, and the land records on which it is based. The boys are taught to understand the plans of the village, and of the fields which it contains; and the accounts which show the extent and character of each field, the crops raised thereon, and the holding and pecuniary responsibilities of each cultivator.

Finally, in the matter of physical exercise, use is made of a native system of gymnastics styled *deshi-kasrat*, which has the double advantage of being in conformity with the traditions of the country and, at the same time, very strengthening. The boys are taught, among other things, to imitate the position of a couchant lion, to squat like a monkey, to act like a man with one leg or one arm, etc.; and one must see them at these exercises in order to

realise the strength and agility which they can attain by constant practice. Schools of this character are mainly maintained through the agency of the educational departments of local bodies—district councils and small *tahsil* boards, whose members are largely elected by agriculturists and by members of the trading classes.

The schools are not entirely free. The fees charged vary with the means of the parent from one to eight annas a month; but at least 10 per cent of the pupils are admitted gratuitously, and the main cost of upkeep has to be defrayed from the public funds. The chief items of expenditure are the buildings and the salaries of the teachers, and in both cases the individual figures are low: it is the large number of schools which swells the amount. The average pay of the masters is Rs. 10 a month, which may rise to Rs. 20 a month in important schools; but they may add to their income by managing a village post-office and selling stamps and quinine, or, occasionally, by acting as sub-registrars. Though the masters draw such modest salaries, they belong generally to high castes. 50 per cent of the pupils in the normal school at Nagpur are Brahmans, and about 8 per cent Rajputs.

Thanks to incessant effort, education in the Central Provinces is in a considerably better condition than it was twenty or thirty years ago; but there is still much more room for progress. Out of a total population of about 11,000,000 the number of pupils under instruction in all public educational institutions was only 167,000 in 1903-4, and the Census of 1901 showed that only 57 men and 2 women in a thousand could read and write. Such progress as has been made, and it is relatively appreciable, is due to the improved quality of the teaching, the more careful recruitment of the masters, and the better management of the schools; and not the least change for the better is in the substitution of practical for mere literary teaching in the primary schools, which makes even the half-time scholar the better for his school training. Let us not, moreover, be astonished at the slowness with which education spreads in these backward areas, and at the little profit which the boys draw from attendance at school. No child in the world is less prepared for learning than the young native of these tracts. The European boy learns everywhere—at school, at home, in the world, and even in the street. But let us think of the condition of the Indian boy. His father and mother know nothing; his home ordinarily contains not a single book or article of furniture, not even a chair (the household utensils consist of pots for cooking and drawing water); while he gets no instruction whatever at his mosque or temple. His neighbours are like himself, and he comes into contact with the outside world only through occasional fairs, or, it may be, by making a pilgrimage with his parents to some sacred spot.

The schoolmasters, again, as has been stated in the body of the chapter, are exceedingly poor teachers. Given the calibre of the pupils, even the best qualified European teachers would meet with insuperable difficulties. Now the staff of the primary schools is entirely native, and the methods of the native teacher are absolutely defective. Knowing very little himself, he transmits this little knowledge not by explanation, but by simple appeal to the memory. Whether the child understands or not matters little, and the master's own comprehension is but slight. He deals in words, and it is very doubtful whether the realities underlying the words appeal to his mind. As regards this, the following anecdote, related by a British official, is significant. Entering a village school, he said to the master, "What is your lesson of to-day?" "About the earth, the sun, and the moon," was the reply. "And what do you teach?" "That the earth goes round the sun." "Are you sure?" "Quite sure." "But what is your private opinion?" "Well, I think that the sun goes round the earth!"