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ENGLISH TEACHERS' CONFERENCE

Presidential Address

By

PROF. S. K. YEGNANARAYANA AIYAR, M.A.

Ladies and Gentlemen—You would excuse me if I have not got copies of my address to be distributed to you. I am going to follow the illustrious example of the President of the Conference and speak out a few words. But I differ from him in this that he had his address printed and distributed though he spoke from notes, but I am going to speak only. There are just one or two other matters in which I differ from him. He was unanimously elected to preside over the Conference as a result of the first choice. I was not so fortunate: somebody else was elected; he was not available and so I have been put in. Another point of small difference between myself and Mr. Subba Rao is this: the Chairman of the Reception Committee for the Conference gave a very short address and left the major points to be dealt with by the President. But in my case my enthusiastic Secretary has exhausted the thing. (Cheers.) I have very little to add to what he has said.

I should like to clear one position before I begin the address proper. Somebody questioned whether I have had any touch with High School English, and whether I am duly qualified to speak with authority on the teaching of English in schools. At the beginning of my career as a teacher I was for three years in a High School before I was drafted into the Collegiate Department. And when from the Maharaja's College, Trivandrum, I came as Principal of Salem College, I had to do English teaching for about 6 years. Some of you perhaps gentlemen, know that I am not a qualified teacher; that is I am not an L. T. One very enthusiastic District Educational Officer wanted to see the teaching of English by this raw, unqualified man. He said: "Mr. Principal, have you any objection to

my being in your class when you do English work?" I said: "I have absolutely no objection." And so I gave a model lesson and the Inspector was there to watch me. Towards the end of the lesson he said: "Your lesson was very good. But there was too much of lecturing. You are a College man." Such was the criticism he passed upon me. So I may say I had some teaching experience in High Schools and therefore if I speak, I speak with first-hand experience and not merely as a theoretical student.

I am going to discuss to-day the place of English in the scheme of education of India to come. My distinguished friend, Mr. Subba Rao, in his address this morning, laid emphasis upon the adjustments that had to be made in our educational system to suit the requirements of the changing period. What position English is likely to occupy in the educational system of Changing India is the subject I should like to dwell upon. In the Federal India to come—because we are hoping that it would be the Federal India—English is sure to occupy an important position. The President of the Conference himself in his address dwelt upon this aspect. He said that, coming as he does from Mysore with Canarese as his mother-tongue, he could not speak to us who have Tamil and Telugu as ours unless through the common medium of English. There are others who say that we must replace English by another Indian language and that Hindi should become the *lingua franca*. We are hoping it would be. But even if Hindi becomes lingua franca, English will continue to be the medium of instruction at least in collegiate and higher educational institutions. English will also continue to be the medium of our contact with the races of the outside world. We must have some European language for that purpose. An old History Teacher of mine used to say that it was unfortunate that the French were defeated by the English in the Carnatic War. If the French had succeeded and if at least a part of India had been under France, we would have had the inestimable advantage of having another European language. But history has turned otherwise and we are left with only one European language—English—as our medium of communication with the rest of the world. And taking the number of people in the world who use English you would find that it occupies a very high place, and, therefore, I am of opinion that English is likely to occupy a very important place in the Federal India to come.

In our scheme of education what place is English to occupy? I think it would occupy a very important place even as a medium of instruction, if not in schools, at least in colleges and higher university institutions, because we cannot afford to shut out all Europeans and outsiders. And if European professors were to come, English will continue to be the medium of instruction and of communication between us and those professors.

But even in schools and colleges, English will occupy a high place as a subject of study for its own intrinsic worth and importance. English literature is a great subject for study, and as a humble student of that noble literature for over three decades, I may say it is a perennial source of inspiration, and we would all be the poorer if we have to cut ourselves away from that rich source of inspiration. If you take our vernacular literatures of the present day, you would find that the most active, the most virile and forcible writers have drawn their inspiration ultimately from English. Take Bengalee for example. You would find most of the great writers of modern Bengalee have had their inspiration from English. And taking our own Province—I speak subject to correction because in my college career I studied only Sanskrit

as my second language—so far as my knowledge goes, you would find that most of the prominent writers of living Tamil of the present day have had their inspiration from English. Take the late Prof. Sundaram Pillai, Pandit Natesa Sastri, the late Rajamier, the author of the immortal "Kamalambal"; or Madhaviah or Subramania Bharathi; or Mr. Vedanayagam Pillai or Mr. P. Sambantha Mudaliar among the living; and we would find all these men have drawn their inspiration from English literature and have tried to introduce a new element of life in the Tamil literature. And therefore I am of opinion that even in years to come, even in the Federal India of to-morrow, English will occupy a very important place as a source of culture, of inspiration, of life-giving ideas.

Now comes the question about the formation of an English Section of the S. I. T. U. and the holding of Sectional Conferences like this. I am afraid the S. I. T. U. Conferences are becoming somewhat unwieldy. You would find that originally we had one or two days' session, and this time the Reception Committee almost threatened to have five days, and later on there was a cut somewhere and we are now having four days, almost a sort of marriage festival going on for four days. Along with the Main Conference we find ever so many activities going on, and it is quite in the fitness of things that there should be a sectional conference devoting special attention to the teaching of English. Whether there should be an annual conference like this or whether English could be left to be taken care of by the newly formed English Association in Madras is a matter I leave to you. Some of you perhaps would have read that in Madras an attempt has been made to revive what is known as an old English Association. There is an English Association in England intended for the promotion of the teaching and study of English literature. The late Sir Mark Hunter was a very enthusiastic member of that Association, and he formed a Madras Branch of the Association; but unfortunately it died when he left our shores to Burma. Recently when there was a move to do honour to his revered memory, somebody suggested that perhaps the best way of commemorating him would be to revive the old English Association. The idea was taken up with great enthusiasm and an English Association has been formed in Madras, and we hope that in course of time English teachers all over the Presidency will become its members. Whether a separate English Section of the S. I. T. U. or whether this newly formed English Association will take charge of English studies in the Province is a matter for the future to decide.

I should like to confine my remarks to one or two observations on what I may call the current problems of the day, that is to say, what place English should occupy in schools and at what stage English should be begun, to what extent English should be taught and by what method it should be taught. I agree with the majority of people who in reply to the questionnaire said that in the earlier stages information should be imparted to the young exclusively through the medium of their mother-tongue in all subjects, and it is only when they come to the age of 10 or 11 that English should be begun. Of course it may appear to be somewhat heretical if I were to make a remark like that. In these days when English is demanded to be taught from the earliest classes and when there is so much of fuss about what is called the direct method of teaching, it may look somewhat unorthodox for me to suggest that English should be begun only at the age of 11 or 12. I know it is within the experience of most of you that if you could send

your boy or girl to a Convent School or a European School where English is the medium of instruction even in the lowest class, the girl or boy picks up English in the most natural way and becomes very soon an expert in the use of that language. But such an advantage could not be given in the ordinary course of things to every boy and girl, and therefore, I am of opinion that every boy or girl should have his or her intellect well formed up to 11th or 12th year before he or she is taught English.

And then comes the academic discussion as to the method of teaching. We used what was in former times called the translation method, and we now adopt what is known as the direct method of teaching. I am of opinion that there should be no hard and fast rules in these matters. Everyone should have an opportunity to conduct experiments and suit the methods to the requirements of his pupils.

The next question is whether there should be prescribed any non-detailed texts. But unfortunately like so many good things, this has degenerated, mostly through importunate publishers and impecunious authors. The study of non-detailed texts, if you take it only as an opportunity for reading extra books, is a very fine institution and ought to be encouraged. Only there should be no compulsion and it should not be made the subject of examination. Students should be encouraged to browse as it were in the fields of literature.

I do not see why students should ever be asked to study oldish poetry or eighteenth century prose. They should be brought into contact with living English. Then boys will take it in with gusto and appreciate English literature. Boys must be encouraged to read and appreciate the short stories of the "Strand Magazine" and of popular authors like P. G. Wodehouse and Edgar Wallace. That is what I mean by non-detailed study. It is useless to get one or two books prescribed and subject it to the same drudgery of reading and explaining and doing all those to which you subject an ordinary text-book in a classroom.

There was one other matter referred to by one of the previous speakers—the unpopularity of English study. There are ever so many causes, but there is one cause referred to in the answers to the questionnaire but not expatiated upon, which I consider to be the most important cause, what is called the anti-English spirit. We all know that in recent times there is a surging wave of nationalism passing over the land which makes us proud of our past and which has a tendency to look upon knowledge of English as a badge of inferiority. In my opinion English language and English literature open a new vista of ideas to us and are an inspiration; but the rising nationalism makes us somewhat proud of our past and makes us look upon our knowledge of the foreign language as a sign of inferiority. That is the real cause. And there are of course so many other causes also. There is, moreover, the economic reason, namely that the market value of a graduate has gone down very much especially in fertile tracts like Tanjore and Trichinopoly, (Cheers.) and everyone is prepared to do just the minimum reading necessary for a pass.

Another vexed question that engages our attention at present is whether grammar should be taught or whether examinations should not be confined to pure grammar and so on. Grammar is necessary, but too much of it is bad, and insistence on the study of grammar of a foreign language, is after all, not the best way of making that language popular. The student should be brought into contact with the living language which is the medium of expression, and should be made to express his ideas in it in the natural way. Do not

make him cultivate a sort of distaste for it. Introducing too much of formal grammar is the surest way of making English unpopular with our boys. Very often the teaching of English grammar makes us write grammatically correct sentences, but not good, idiomatic sentences, which comes only with the intimate acquaintance with the living language.

In this connection I would like to draw your attention to a very sad phenomenon that came to my notice the other day. Some of you are aware that the Madras Library Association has tried to inculcate the reading habit among the boys by holding competitions among them with a view to find out how many boys have read extra books. And this competition is thrown open to boys in all the schools in the Province, nearly 500 in number. It seems only six schools took part in it. That is a great pity. I appeal to you on behalf of the Madras Library Association to take greater interest in the activities of that Association which is doing its best to popularise the reading habit.

And lastly I would plead that we should not be bound down by hard and fast rules and conventions. We must have the right to perform experiments and to gather data. We must americanise our methods of teaching. In this imperfect world there is no one panacea for all evils. We must try experiments and we must be always seekers after truth. We must be learners ourselves.

Now, Gentlemen, I do not go into the details of the resolutions that you find placed before you. I have just thought aloud on a few points, and if I have been somewhat unorthodox, you would kindly excuse me.

ADDRESS OF WELCOME

BY

MR. L. R. NATESAIYAR.

Mr. President and Gentlemen,—In the unavoidable absence of Mr. Thiagaraja Aiyar, Principal, Maharaja's College, Pudukottah, I have been asked not only to give my statement as Secretary of the First Conference of Teachers of English but also to welcome you all to this city of Trichinopoly, and I do so with pleasure.

I shall try to place before you a brief statement of the work done so far, and then some of my own personal views on the outstanding questions arising out of the questionnaire sent round and the replies received.

As early as October, 1932, at a meeting of the Trichinopoly District Teachers' Guild, held in the E. R. High School, it was resolved to arrange for a Conference of Teachers of English in this Province to discuss the various problems arising from English being the chief language in the Secondary School Curriculum and the methods of teaching it; and a sub-committee was formed for the purpose. A questionnaire dealing with the different aspects of the study of English was sent round to all the schools and colleges in South India. In all, 533 boys' schools and 73 girls' secondary schools, 61 colleges, and 26 District Educational Officers, besides Headmasters of Training Schools and Principals of Government Training Colleges were addressed.

Considering the very large number of institutions and individuals addressed, the response should certainly be considered disappointing. For, only about 30 individual teachers and 15 Teachers' Associations have sent replies. On further enquiry, I understand that the 15 Associations, among whom are some District Guild Special Committees constituted for this purpose, represent the considered views of over 400 teachers actually engaged in the teaching of English. Considering the trouble and expense involved in work of this kind and also realising the importance of a study of the problems, the prevailing indifference is to be deplored. In this as in many other activities of a similar character, there is evidence too often of a feeling, that the whole business is the work of a few individuals, and that the rest have amply discharged their duty by observing wise silence. Of the 26 District Educational Officers who were requested to give us the benefit of their expert advice and experience, only one has thought fit to answer. This is to be specially regretted. For if there is any one class of educationists from whom we teachers expect an intelligent and comprehensive survey of the problems, it is the District Educational Officers. It is to be hoped that in future at least the departmental men charged with the work of guiding and supervising education would welcome all opportunities of co-operation with non-official bodies engaged in the study of educational problems.

One Principal of a Government Training College, one Headmaster of a Government Training School, two lecturers of colleges, four Headmistresses of Girls' High Schools, ten Headmasters of Boys' High Schools, one Principal of an Arts College, and five school assistants are among those who have responded to the questionnaire. It must be

admitted that the terms of the questionnaire were rather wide and covered a fairly large ground, but as this was the first attempt at organising educational opinion on a question of this kind, it was well-nigh inevitable.

The replies were, in the opinion of the sub-committee, of a high quality and decidedly helpful. They were not lacking in outspokenness, or in strength of conviction, and in one or two cases, they were certainly lively. There was almost complete unanimity with regard to the subject raised in question 5 of the questionnaire. It was as follows:

"Do you believe that the compulsory use of the mother-tongue in all the schools of the Presidency for teaching knowledge subjects would yield both extra time and energy for a better and more intensive study of the foreign language? If you can kindly give specific instances where it has been found to be so, in actual school work, the Committee will be obliged."

I say "almost complete unanimity" because there was only one Lecturer in English who wrote to say that:—

"It is futile to expect any time to be gained by teaching the knowledge subjects in the vernacular. If the work is to be done well, practically the same amount of time will be taken up now as in the past when the teaching of such subjects was being done in English."

It is evident that he is so out of touch with the actual classroom difficulties, that he is not able to realise the immense relief that the adaptation of the mother-tongue would bring to the pupil in his acquisition of knowledge.

Except this lecturer, all are agreed that the universal adoption of the vernacular is absolutely essential for any effective acquisition of knowledge. Except two, all are agreed that there has been a marked deterioration in the quality of English composition work of the average school-boy or undergraduate to-day. The remarks of many on this head provide very profitable and interesting reading. Emphasis is laid on the following by many contributors as being responsible for deterioration in English work:—Indiscriminate admission of pupils; laxity of promotions; a deliberate lowering of the standard due to dilution and manipulation of results; the pressure of extra educational influences; heavy and ambitious syllabuses; neglect of English in the lower classes; faulty methods of language teaching; want of individual attention; difficulty of eradicating wrong forms once they are established; the incubus of a foreign language medium in picking up knowledge; neglect of the mother-tongue; general aversion to all intellectual labour; want of a lead from the training colleges and the departments; and even an anti-English spirit, this last point, however, being mentioned by only one teacher.

The draft resolutions which have already been placed in your hands and which are to be the basis of our discussions, were framed by the sub-committee after full consideration of the answers to the questionnaire.

Let me now conclude with a few remarks of a general nature. The part that language training plays in mental development is a commonplace of modern educational theory. Nowhere has this been stated with such force and precision as in the celebrated passage of the Newbolt Committee's Report (1921) on the teaching of English in England: "What a man cannot clearly state he does not perfectly know, and, conversely, the inability to put his thought into words sets a boundary to his thought. Impressions may anticipate words, but unless expression seizes and re-creates them, they soon fade away, or remain but vague and indefinite in the mind which received them and incommunicable to others."

The implications of this passage should be fully realised by all of us who follow the day-to-day struggle of the average boy in our classrooms to form mental images, out of our spoken word and out of the written words put in his hand. I may claim to have studied some of the stages of this struggle for the past fifteen years, and it seems to me, that a haziness of intellectual vision is the worst malady affecting an overwhelmingly large number of our boys. This malady which begins in the earliest stages of the boy's education unfortunately continues to grow to an alarming extent. And it is no untruth to say that after a course in our colleges, if we were to analyse the mental content of the graduates, we should probably find nothing more than what Chesterton has somewhere called "a mere splashing about in a vocabulary." And what a vocabulary!

To find suitable, if not graceful, words for our impressions not only renders them clear to ourselves and to others but leads us to deeper insight and fresh discoveries. This is in itself an educative process. For it not only explains clearly what was previously not clear but helps to extend our own sphere of knowledge. How can this be achieved in our classroom to-day where there is no desire on the part of the boy for first-hand information and investigation and where there is no awakening of any interest, but where, on the other hand, the energy of the whole school is organised and harnessed to "coach" him for an external examination? I do not decry examinations. They have a well-recognised value, but to put that before us, as the "be-all" and "end-all" of all educative endeavour is the very negation of sound teaching.

What is the place of English in our Secondary School curriculum now and what should be its place in future? What should be the aim of an English course in the Secondary School? In answering these questions I cannot do better than quote in full the remarks of a distinguished member of the I. E. S., himself an English professor, who holds a very responsible position in the educational life of our Province." Says he with regard to the place of English:—

> "English used to be, still in too many cases is, the Sun of the Secondary School system. It should be only a planet. The whole system is, and will remain out of relation to reality, as long as this Ptolemic error continues. The true centre of the system is the mother-tongue. The substitution of the mother-tongue for English as the centre of the Secondary School curriculum is the Copernican revolution of South Indian education."

His apprehension that the entire Secondary School system is bound to break down if this truth is not immediately recognised is unmistakable: "It is not altogether an idle fear," he continues, "that the progressive weakening of the force which originated and still actuates Secondary Education may ultimately destroy the motive power of the system—that 1935 may undo the work of 1835. The danger can only be averted by giving the mother-tongue exactly the same prominence and attention that English gets in England and *using English as a source of knowledge and power for the modernisation and invigoration of the mother-tongue.*"

It follows from this that the teacher of a foreign language, however painstaking and well-equipped, can do nothing profitable or fruitful if the boy has not been enabled to acquire a thorough mastery of the mother-tongue as a vehicle of modern thought and experience. This can be done only if there is a complete revolution in the spirit and method of teaching the mother-tongue. The traditional method, whatever

its name, must be wholly scrapped and the spirit of the Newbolt Committee referred to above, should be incorporated in the reorganised aims and methods of South Indian language studies. I venture to suggest that the Department of Education in our Province should forthwith establish and organise such a "Section of Studies" in the Training Colleges and put before the teachers this idea that the main aim of an English course should be to just supply those defects of our vernaculars which arise from their not being at present instruments of precision for the expression of modern thought and experience. Once this is done, the imparting of the power to a High School student to assimilate not only the *matter* but the *form* of modern English prose is comparatively easy.

On the general principles to be borne in mind in constructing the method of teaching English, I would particularly lay stress on three features: (1) Comprehensiveness; (2) Soundness; and (3) Elasticity. By the first I mean that we should take cognisance of all desired branches of English that may be taught. By soundness is meant a basis of accepted principles of psychology and by elasticity, the ability to adapt our principles to the varying conditions in which they have to be applied.

We have had in the past, and continue to have in the present, much avoidable confusion in the objects of an English course. Many students have been and are taught literary English when their only aim has always been to secure English for business or professional purposes. A careful approach to this question should begin with answers to the following: Is English desired for its business value; or for public service; or as a means of communication; or for familiarity with occidental studies and knowledge; or, again, as preparation for a higher education; or simply as a means of general education and culture; or, finally, as a course in mental training and discipline?

For any or all of these subjects reading English is important; for most of them the writing of English is useful; and a speaking knowledge is essential for business, communication, public service and higher education.

Over and above all this, to my mind, the supreme value of English lies in our ability to use it as a leaven in the making of vigorous and new thoughts in our vernaculars and turn them into instruments of precision for the expression of new experiences.

> "The relation between the teachers of the mother-tongue and of English must be peculiarly intimate. It is no exaggeration to say that half the work that is now imposed on and often left undone by the English teacher should be done in the vernacular class. Good education, ready speech, accurate and fitting expression, both oral and written, the ability to derive from books a full measure of what they have to give of information and enjoyment, and, above all, clear thinking—all this is the business of the teacher of the mother-tongue more than anyone else. All the fundamental distinctions of grammar and rhetoric required for the purpose of reading and composition by the teacher of English should reach the pupil by a path paved by the teacher of the mother-tongue. The failure of the teaching of mother-tongue in the past is the measure of the failure in the teaching of English. Correlation is the key to success in future."

On all other matters arising out of the recent circular of the S. S. L. C. Board, Ladies and Gentlemen, the draft resolutions will, I hope, provide a suitable basis for all your discussions.

Once again I welcome you all to what I trust would prove a most profitable session.

A SUGGESTED REFORM IN THE EDUCATION OF GIRLS *

BY

MISS E. MCDOUGALL, M.A., D.LITT.

I speak about women's education only, because I have no personal practical experience of the education of boys, but of course there is much in common between them, and as far as general principles go, there is little difference.

I shall be touching at some unfavourable aspects of our educational system, so I wish to say at the outset that there is much in it that is very good, and that whenever you have a really good and inspired teacher, the system does not entirely spoil her work. Nothing can render the work of such a teacher wholly ineffective. The teacher is by very far the most important element in education.

Till now it has been necessary that the education of boys and girls should be alike, so that the capacity of girls to receive school education should be proved. This is a necessary stage in the development of the education of girls in every country. It is everywhere assumed at first that boys should be educated rather than girls, though as a matter of fact, the education of the mother is more important to the progress of the race than the education of the father. It has naturally been assumed that the boy, as the future wage-earner, needs a definite preparation for that task, while the girl can learn all that is necessary to wife-hood and motherhood from the elder women of her family. The training of her mind has been considered as of secondary importance, and also it has been doubted whether girls are capable of the mental development and training of which boys are capable. It was absolutely necessary to disprove this mistaken opinion, and in most countries this has been done. It is now abundantly proved that though women seldom rise so high as the very most gifted men, yet they seldom sink so low as the worst, and that their average of achievement is considerably higher than that of men; not, I think, because they are better endowed by Nature, but because so far they have been more wisely educated.

There are two outstanding errors which have done much to spoil the education of children and young people both in this and other lands—the size of the classes and the abuse of the system of examinations.

I need not dwell on the first of these. Everyone sees now that a large class is wasteful and ineffective, and the more so, the younger the pupils concerned. There is something to be said (though not much, I think) for the mass lecture as part of College education; there is nothing at all to be said for the large class at school, and in the Kindergarten it is impossible. Of course, the one advantage is cheapness, but India, like all other countries, must be prepared to spend more on education if it is to be good. But this error does not affect the education of girls as much as it has in-

* Paper read at the Provincial Educational Conference, Trichy, on the 18th May 1933.

jured the education of boys, because the pupils have not been so numerous. But we can see it beginning, and when education becomes compulsory, the same problem will arise.

The other evil influence is the system of marks, and the abuse of examinations. Here the education of girls is on the way to be almost as sadly affected as the education of boys, and it is here that I wish to suggest a reform. While the numbers are still small and while the system is still plastic and the method has not yet hardened into a rigid tradition, the experiment can be made, and if, as I believe, it proves successful and the girl enjoys and profits by her education more than the boy, the reformed method can be transferred to their schools also. In any case the improvement of the education of girls is more important than a reform in the education of boys.

The examination system has conferred a great and lasting benefit by setting up an impartial tribunal, a court of judgment where pleas based on wealth, rank, caste, family prestige and personal affection are of no avail. But it has over-emphasised the commercial aspect of education, it has eclipsed its nobler aspects, it goes directly against the traditions of detachment from worldly gain and of disinterested effort which are the glory of early Indian thought. I need not dwell in this assembly on the blighting and paralysing influence which it spreads like an insidious disease through our schools and colleges. But if we look at it closely we may see a way by which, without abolishing the system, which we must not do till we have something better to put in its place, we may do much to render it less harmful. This is what I have to suggest with regard to the education of girls.

The greatest crime, I think, which has been committed in Indian education is the publication of the Pass Mark. Why this disastrous step was taken I cannot imagine. In public examinations the pupil must of course be informed whether she has passed or not, i.e., whether she is fit to go on to higher studies, and whether, in case she has passed, she has deserved distinction. That is all she needs to know. In the very few cases where it is really important to know which student has done best, for the award of prizes and scholarships, the examiners could with little trouble select the papers which impressed them as most satisfactory and compare these.

But to announce that a definite number of marks necessary and a number so low as 35%, or even so ignominious a number as 25% as acceptable in certain subjects, is nothing less than criminal. It debases the whole idea of examination. If 35% is a satisfactory achievement, either the examiners have set their papers at too high a level for the syllabus, or they are content with far too low a performance. Is it not absurd that to do a third of your duty should bring success in any sphere? Papers should be set on the syllabus, the syllabus should represent what an average student who is well taught should be able to master in a given time, and if she shows that she has mastered only a third of what is required, she should be sent back to do her work more thoroughly. It is a serious wrong to boys and girls to teach them to regard so low an achievement as anything but ignominious. The 35% attitude of mind is the curse of the country. "Why", said a very gifted young man to me, "why should I do better than I need?"

The effect on the mind of the pupil is twofold. With most it means an easy acquiescence in a low level of work and achievement. "Why should I do better than I need?" I know little about the education of boys, but my students speak to me sometimes about their brothers, and I gather

that the main reason why women as a rule have so much higher an average of success in University examinations is that under the influence of their teachers they study in a more scholarly and less commercial way. A woman student works steadily throughout the academic year, reading and understanding as she goes on from month to month; a man student attends lectures in order to get an attendance certificate, takes notes which he does not revise, and when the time of examination approaches, spends excessively long hours in endeavouring to learn, from notes which no longer are intelligible to him, or from cram-books which are frankly commercial, the least amount that will secure a pass, spending in vain endeavours to find out "probable questions" or in devising possible or impossible ways of getting favourable circumstances or lucky auspices, ingenuity and zeal which, if applied to disinterested study, would probably have raised him to a satisfactory level of knowledge. It is sad if he fails, and it goes to my heart sometimes to think of the acute suffering which young people risk when they press into the University, but it is far sadder if he succeeds and leaves his college to face life with that most disastrous attitude of mind—perhaps the most disastrous which any human being can adopt —"Why should I do better than I need?"

While the education of girls is still capable of rescue, let us try a remedy. Let promotion from class to class depend chiefly on the recorded work of the whole year, and let that record be entirely without numerical valuation. Each piece of work done throughout the year should be criticised, and should meet either praise or rebuke, but the rebuke should always be based on the ground: "You have not done as well as you could," and the praise: "This is right in the main, and if you go on trying, you will do still better." There may or may not be a promotion examination—that does not matter very much—but if there is, no pass mark should be announced, and it should be made clear that the examination is not the chief determining factor.

When the School Final Examination comes, the girl must face the same papers as boys brought up in the system of marks, but she will be quite able to face them. I speak from my own experience. My sisters and I never heard of marks or prizes and hardly of examinations till we were far on in our studies. At the age of fifteen I entered Manchester High School in the Vth Form, after several years at a private school, and two in a boarding school in Germany. There in M. H. S., I found the mark system in full swing, and was much irritated and vexed by it, so that I enjoyed that year of my education less than any other. However at the end of the year I won in open competition the Vth Form Scholarship over all my class-mates who had been brought up on marks. When I moved up next year into the VIth Form where, as is usual in England, marks are abolished, I felt that I had come back to freer and happier ways of working. Since then I was never subjected again to the tyranny of marks, and never knew what a pass-mark was, yet I did a good deal of hard work and passed each University examination within the normal time.

Of course, this system of working without marks demands far more care and attention from the teacher than the mechanical method. It is much easier to mark an exercise with a number than to write a discriminating comment to each pupil. And no doubt a mechanically minded teacher will reduce such comments also to a mechanical series sinking almost to a numerical valuation. But such people should not be teachers at all. The average woman teacher will find this method, though laborious, far more interesting than the other, and will be rewarded by a far more intimate

knowledge of each child and a much happier relation with her. It is a challenge, but one which the average woman teacher, who as a rule is conscientious and devoted, will gladly and efficiently meet. The children will work with greater pleasure and zeal; they will not dread the examination so much, and they are more likely to acquire the inestimable habit of doing everything as well as they can, than if they are reared in the deplorable system of satisfaction with a very low standard.

One detail I might add. Examinations would be robbed of much of their discomfort if there were no time-limit. The necessity of finishing at a certain moment is always distracting, and as children differ widely in their mental speed, it is often unjust. Speed is not a very valuable mental quality, and does not deserve the extremely high reward which examinations assign to it. The papers should be set at a length suited to the average student and the pupil should leave the room when she has finished it, whether before or after the average time.

The other, much smaller, class of girls who is adversely affected by the system of marks, consists of those who are anxious to obtain higher marks than anyone else, and with them too the publication of marks is unfortunate. It may be allowed in University classes by way of discipline, but should be wholly absent from schools. Competition and emulation are perhaps inevitable in later life, but they should be avoided as long as possible, and youth should be spared this injury. The great cry of our age, in this country, as in all the world, is for co-operation, not competition. Many of our most baffling problems at this critical time arise from the passion for pre-eminence—community over community, race over race, country over country, just when we might be saved by co-operation and by a united desire for each other's prosperity and progress. The spirit that resents the better fortune of some one else, the spirit that loves a unique advantage and hates to have it shared, such a spirit has produced so much disaster in our own times that it seems most foolish to foster and even inculcate it in our schools. Hence I welcome the Girl Guide Movement which fosters and teaches co-operation rather than competition, and I trust it may never descend to countenancing rivalry and the longing for pre-eminence.

There is of course a place in education for competition, as for many other human impulses of doubtful operation, and that is the playground. In games we can find an outlet for human passions which we strive to banish from serious life. That is one of the main uses of games. Snatching, circumventing, outdoing the adversary, outstripping the fellow-competitor and many other such things, so deplorable in actual life, have their place in games which are definitely meant to be only play and not serious. In play such impulses are disciplined and controlled; we learn to play for our side, to play for the sake of the game, to play fair and obey the rules, to prefer a well-matched contest to an easy victory, and so on. Thus play proves to be what the Greeks called a *katharsis,* a purification by which the baser impulses are given scope, but relegated to unreality, to pretence, to a game and play-acting, and removed from actual responsible life. So let girls compete with each other and outdo each other in the playground, but not in the class-room.

Such a method of carrying on the education of girls will, I think, be welcome to most women teachers, however much it may add to their toil, and no doubt the children will enjoy it, but the great adversary will be the parent. I have not time to dwell on this. But in time, I hope, the co-operation of the parent will be won. When

the father finds his daughter eager and happy at school, and her teachers full of interest and hope about her, he will come to prefer this to knowing how many marks she has gained, and comparing her with the daughters of others, and he will cease to insist that she should enter a class above her age and capacity and attainment in the hope that the deplorably low pass-mark may give her a chance of succeeding in next year's examination. We should avoid all conflict with the parents and hope in time to win their acquiescence and even approval. And when our own pupils become the mothers of the new generation they will all be for this more humane and more loving method of education.

Let us hope that the education of girls may be reformed in these directions. But even if there is no general reform, each woman teacher can act in the spirit of them and do much to counteract the present injurious system and to give her pupils an ideal of disinterested work and mutual goodwill. It is a stimulating thought but also it carries with it a great responsibility that when all is said and done, and whatever the system, everything depends on the spirit and idealism of the individual teacher.

RURAL UPLIFT AND THE TEACHERS' ROLE THEREIN

BY

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RURAL UPLIFT IS NATIONAL UPLIFT

The uplift and advancement of our country is largely a problem of rural uplift, or uplift of villages, for the important reason that, out of the 353 millions of Indian population according to the census of 1931, only 33 millions or 10% are town dwellers and the rest viz., 323 millions or 90% are residents of villages. Further, the fact, that the proportion of population classed as rural is tending to increase relatively to that classed as urban, is significant, though contrary to ordinary expectations. The typical self-contained village community still exists throughout the greater part of the country and therefore reinforces our case for a scheme of organised effort for rural uplift.

FEATURES OF RURAL DECADENCE

The term "Rural uplift" indicates that the village is in, or has fallen into, a state of decadence and therefore requires resuscitation or reconstruction. The causes of such decadence are many and various and are both historical and otherwise. But they need not engage us here. Suffice it to know that the chief features of that decadence are, briefly put,

I. *Ignorance,* II. *Poverty* and III. *Disease.*

I. *Ignorance.* As ignorance is the root of all ills and evils of national life, it is important that that should come in for our prime and paramount consideration at the outset.

Literacy as an ordinary index of absence of ignorance is appallingly low in our country. Whereas in England it is 99·66% and in Japan 99·12%, in India literacy is only 7·5%, and of this low percentage, male literates constitute 5·2% and female literates 1·5% of the literate population. If we convert the literacy figures into illiteracy figures, about 92·5% are illiterates. The progress of literacy in our country in the four decades 1881 to 1921 has been 3·5% to 7·3 (or 7·5%) and the rate of progress is one per cent. in one decade. Therefore at the rate at which we have been progressing, it will take us another 927 years or about 10 centuries to come up, say, to the standard of Japan.

Assuming that at least 12% of the population should be in Elementary Schools, British India has only 3·48% of the total population in schools compared with 22·7% in the U. S. A., 16·5% in Great Britain and 14·3% in Japan. Of the 3·48%, 9/10 of the children are in rural areas and of these only 5% attend schools.

From the above it will be clearly seen that our country has to make up a good deal of leeway in literacy and therefore in progress, assuming that literacy, though not tantamount to progress, is an essential tool for its attainment.

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*A lecture delivered in connection with the Refresher Course for Elementary School teachers held under the auspices of the Provincial Educational Conference in May 1933.

Rural uplift, in point of eradication of ignorance is essentially a problem involving the removal of illiteracy. Since illiteracy is all pervasive and is inclusive of not merely the children of school going age but also of adults of both sexes, any scheme of educational uplift of villages should tackle not merely the problem of Elementary Education of both boys and girls but also of the education of adults, both men and women.

While the need for the education of our children through Elementary Schools has been in recent years recognised in a larger measure and greater provision made for it, the importance of the education of adults and particularly of women, who form about half the total population of the country and who are in charge of our children at their most impressionable period of life and are the ultimate moulders of the destiny of our future citizens, has not been adequately realized by us.

A. *Elementary Education,* as a part of rural uplift on the educational side, merits our consideration first. We have, in that regard, to consider firstly the present state of Elementary Education, and secondly, the part that our Elementary School teachers can play therein.

The defects of our Elementary Schools are essentially five-fold and they are:

(1) *The defects of the Teacher* due to (*a*) inefficiency on account of meagre attainments, and lack of professional knowledge or training and (*b*) to inability to manage plural classes in a country where out of 184,156 Primary Schools 114,293 are single-teacher schools.

(2) *The defects of the Pupil* due to (*a*) irregular and unpunctual attendance and (*b*) admission at any odd time of the year in school.

(3) *The defects of the parent* due to (*a*) apathy towards education on account of lack of appreciation of the value of education on the one hand and on account of distrust of the utility of the education as given in an ordinary Elementary School with an urban bias in curriculum and organisation and teaching methods; (*b*) employment of the children on field labour at an early age due to impecuneousness.

(4) *The defects of the curriculum,* with a lack of rural bias and absence of correlation with the needs and conditions of real life. Rural subjects such as cattle breeding, poultry keeping, gardening, agriculture, etc., are not now part of the school curriculum. Reading, writing and arithmetic are not now correlated with what is needed by actual village life. Text-books written from the pupils' point of view are few. Native and indigenous games are not much in evidence. Thus, the curriculum requires to be given a new orientation.

(5) *The defects of the management* due to lack of allotment of adequate funds and of legislative compulsion.

The remedies to the above that lie within the reach of an ordinary Elementary Schoolmaster are as follows:—

(1) In the first place, he has to equip himself before he thinks of equipping his pupils and try to be as up to date as he can in his knowledge both professional and general. For this the highest desideratum is a desire and a thirst for knowledge co-existing with a real enthusiasm for his work. It is therefore important for the teacher to recognise and realise that it is not the change of curriculum or better building, equipment or organisation that is so much needed as a real and sincere sense of duty to do the work of instruction honestly and thoroughly.

(2) The defects of the pupils consisting in irregular and unpunctual attendance can be removed by the teacher persuading the management to provide for the working of the school in seasons and at hours convenient to the children of the villagers who are more or less agriculturists. Admission at any odd time of the year in school may also be avoided.

(3) If the above defects of the pupil are due to the parents' apathy, contact must be established between the parents and the school and the former persuaded and educated to send their children to school regularly and punctually. The parents moreover require to be educated incessantly about the value of education as a means of achieving greater productivity or earning capacity and consequently of wealth. It is the teachers' incessant propaganda alone in that behalf which will go a great way towards removing prejudices innate in the ordinary villager parent.

(4) Better organised school curriculum with a rural and prevocational bias and better teaching methods suited to the realities of the villagers' life-needs and conditions will also help to redeem Elementary Education from its present devitalised state.

The remedies suggested above will help to remove much of the wastage in Elementary Education which is in evidence at the present day.

(5) As regards legislative compulsion, it is a matter for the legislators to look to. Teachers' Associations organised on a proper basis, can function effectively in educating the legislators about the need for the introduction of free and compulsory education in our country. The example of the National Union of Teachers in the United Kingdom may very well be imitated by our Elementary school masters here. Teachers may also by their personal influence stimulate private philanthrophy to function generously in the cause of the expansion of Elementary Education as in England, where the History of Elementary Education discloses the interesting fact of the expansion of Elementary Education, particularly in the early stages, through private initiative and philanthrophy. Plutocratic shyness should be dispelled and its resources enlisted through propaganda for the cause of educational advancement.

B. The next problem in connection with the educational side of rural uplift is one related to *the education of the adults of* both sexes.

The problem of rural adult education has got two aspects (1) The literacy aspect and (2) the general culture aspect.

(1) *The literacy aspect.*

The first aspect, in its turn has got two important phases viz. (i) content or subject matter of the course to be followed and (ii) methods to be adopted.

(i) In the first place, we require to possess a clear conception of what an average village adult requires in the shape of education. In the opinion of men in the know of things and competent to judge, an ordinary villager should be able to read a book or leaflet (written in a simple language) or a vernacular daily newspaper or periodical, as well as to read and write an ordinary letter. He should have adequate grasp of simple local arithmetic so as to be able to work out, more or less mentally, simple sums relating to rural bazaar and other transactions. His faculties of observation, reasoning and thinking should be developed in general in reference to village needs and conditions. The village school master needs therefore to possess a correct perspective view of the requirements of an ordinary and average villager.

(ii) To achieve standards, suitable methods of instruction need to be adopted

by him. Reading and writing should be more effectively and quickly taught on the lines laid down by Mr. S. G. Daniel in his 'Method of teaching Tamil reading to Beginners' and by following his method of visual instruction through the aid of lantern slides. The Daniel method has got not only the advantage of expeditiousness of instruction in that an average adult is taught to read and write within a short time, say 6 weeks, but also the benefit of imparting side by side valuable general knowledge with a bearing upon rural life and needs. Methods other than the above calculated to bring about the same result may also be followed.

Schools conducted in the off season, Night schools and continuation classes are the means best suited to impart instruction to adults and the village teacher should endeavour to organise them.

As regards school terms, schools in the off season may conveniently begin to work after the harvest and finish a course within the succeeding four months before the outburst of the monsoon. After this, those who are willing and able to spare some time every day may be allowed to continue their studies and improve their knowledge. For others, a time and hour convenient to them may be fixed according to local circumstances and instruction imparted so as to keep them from relapsing.

While generally night schools are most suitable for men, afternoon classes are the best suited for women.

The question of continuation classes or courses brings into relief an issue which is very important from the point of view of preventing a relapse into illiteracy and is besides intimately connected with the general culture aspect of adult education which therefore deserves to be considered presently.

(2) *The general Culture aspect of adult education.*

(1) *The village library service* is a very useful means of keeping up literacy in adults. The village library should consist of simple, easy and cheap vernacular literature and booklets relating to subjects of general knowledge. The library may most conveniently be located in the village school. It may be both a centre at which villagers assemble and read, or hear the village teacher read, books and newspapers, and be a lending concern, circulating books. The library, if well organised, may also be on wheels and in locomotion from place to place issuing and receiving books and functioning otherwise as a moving centre of light and learning as in Baroda and Mysore. The village school-master should be the human centre of the village library service.

The general knowledge of the villagers may be improved as well as their literacy maintained by a variety of other means which we consider below:—

(2) Foremost in importance comes the *screen.* The screen is the cheapest and the most effective method of educating the people without their waiting for literacy. Subjects like health and hygiene, co-operation and thrift, patriotism and citizenship, religion and social reform, rural economics and scientific methods may all be effectively and easily taught through the screen. Slides now in the possession of the Education, Health and other Departments may be taken out on loan and made good use of in villages by teachers by rotation. The description of each picture or slide should be in the vernacular so as to enable the people to read the same. The village teacher should explain the subject matter of the slide and follow it up by distributing small and simple leaflets or pamphlets on the subject concerned which he should get

printed through the aid of local fund or philanthrophy.

(3) Allied to the screen in usefulness and importance is the *stage*. The village school may be the venue of the stage. The village teachers and boys may put on boards plays and playlets connected with health, co-operation, religion, patriotism, etc., so as to inculcate in the minds of the villagers principles of good citizenship, ethics, religion, health and hygiene and so on.

(4) The organisation of weekly Bhajana parties, Kathas and Kalakshepams by the village teacher will also be a useful means of promoting general culture.

(5) Besides, valuable talks may either be given by the village teacher, or got to be given by men competent, on such subjects as on the evils of drink, litigation and untouchability, the benefits of co-operation and thrift, the value of unity in a village etc. He may acquaint the people, through daily or weekly talks with the most stirring events of the day and the news of the happenings in the several countries of the world.

(6) He may institute or organise the study of the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Bhagavatha, Bhaktavijayam, Thiruvachakam, Thevaram, etc., in the village.

(7) The village teacher may take advantage of the local village festivals and the weekly markets or shandies and organise lantern lectures, cinema shows, musical entertainments, dramatic performances, exhibitions of an agricultural or industrial character, so as to stimulate the interest of the villagers in subjects calculated to promote general knowledge.

(8) He may organise the village boys as scouts and get them to do valuable public service during festivals as well as on ordinary occasions.

(9) The village teacher may take a leading part in organising co-operative societies of various kinds such as for credit, production and distribution, marketing etc.

We have so far considered how ignorance is the chief feature of village life and how the village teacher can do his bit to dispel ignorance both in the case of children and of adults.

II. It now behoves us to consider the second great factor leading to the decadence of village life namely *poverty* and how far the teacher can help to minimise it.

The villagers are in a state of abject poverty. A few figures from the India year Book for 1931 may be useful and interesting. The average income of an Indian towards the close of the last century was about Rs. 30 per annum. But, in the decade 1919-1929, there was a marked increase in it generally and greater in the case of the urban areas than in the case of the rural areas. The average income of a town dweller was Rs. 100 per annum while that of a villager was Rs. 85. Be that as it may, the average income of an Indian is pitifully lower than that of a citizen of countries like England and the United States of America.

The causes of Indian poverty are rooted in the mind and character as well as the traditions of the Indian masses, which in turn are conditioned largely by their ignorance.

Their prosperity is detrimentally affected by a number and variety of factors:—

The psychology of the Indian masses is characterized by an uneconomic bias. The sense of indignity in manual labour, the joint family system which destroys individual initiative and penalises the industrious, the socio-religious obligations of the Indian in connection with marriages, funerals and festivals, the religious prejudice against the use of animal manures such as

bonemeal, the practice of burning cow dung as household fuel instead of turning it to better use as manure, religious handicaps in protecting crops against monkeys, foxes, squirrels and birds, the widespread prejudice against the employment of female labour, the absence of subsidiary occupations and cottage industries to increase the villagers' slender resources, the absence of a hygienic conscience and the prevalence of epidemics and the consequent emasculation and enfeeblement of men and women and consequent diminution of productivity or material efficiency, the custom of early marriages with the evils of early and premature motherhood and infantile mortality, the conservatism of the average ryot and his indifference and failure to exploit the methods of modern invention in agriculture, are among the many reasons that are responsible for his appalling poverty.

While it is recognised that the state can do much in the direction of ameliorating the economic condition of the ryot, the village school-master can also, in his own humble way, do much to eradicate prejudice and to inculcate the proper attitude and temper of mind towards social and religious questions which bar the ryot's material progress. The village teacher, through making the village school the centre of village community life, and through education and propaganda achieve results in a measure far beyond ordinary expectations.

III. The third feature of the decadence of village life is *disease.*

Death apart from natural causes is due to diseases preventible and otherwise and disease is due to both ignorance and poverty the factors already examined. In India, the average number of deaths every year from preventible diseases is about 5 to 6 millions. The average number of days lost to labour by each person is not less than a fortnight to three weeks in each year. The loss of efficiency of an average person in India is not less than 20 per cent and the wastage of life and efficiency resulting from preventible diseases costs several hundreds of crores of Rupees each year.

The incidence of diseases and loss of manpower in India are mainly due to (1) ignorance of hygienic principles and laws and the unhygienic habits of the people, resulting in a large reducible incidence of diseases like cholera, plague, small pox, dysentery, typhoid, etc., (2) apathy due to a spirit of fatalism (3) social customs and manners of which child marriage, the purdah system, the use of opium, belief in traditional methods of midwifery, etc., are the chief ones.

The part that a village teacher can usefully play in preventing diseases and promoting health is as follows:—

(1) The teacher can through weekly talks, magic lantern lectures, health plays, organisation of village clean-up weeks as in America, health week celebrations, etc., help to create a hygienic conscience in the village folk.

(2) The teacher can acquire training in first aid and in the use of ordinary and patent medicines such as boric powder, tincture of iodine, zambuk, chlorodyne, etc., and make use of the school premises as a centre for such first aid and ordinary medical treatment as are indispensable before a doctor can be called in and is ready to treat.

(3) He can organise the boy scouts to undertake the cleaning of streets and cheries, the patrolling of village tanks and wells so as to protect them from contamination by persons suffering from communicable diseases, and otherwise educate the people of the village in the value of cleanliness and purity of air, food and water.

(4) He can organise health pageants as in China and represent through them the history of diseases and the means of effectively

curing them e.g. Malaria, its causes, symptoms, prevention and cure can be illustrated through several pageants which may be taken in procession in due order so that the people may have an ocular or visual education of the havoc of diseases.

To carry out the above objects and to do rural uplift work of the kind described, what is needed is the right type of village teacher. The present set of teachers may be given a course of training in rural uplift work during the summer vacation or other recesses on the lines worked out by the Chingleput District Board and Tanjore Taluk Board in the Madras Presidency and in other Rural Reconstruction centres like Moga in the Punjab and Bolpur in Bengal and due allowances or additions to pay paid to them for the extra community service rendered till such time as when the teachers themselves fired with a sense of patriotism and community service take to such work spontaneously. Pupil teachers undergoing a course of training in Training institutions may have rural uplift classes held for them and certificates awarded to them. Further, local bodies and the Government should tackle the problem of rural uplift in a more intimate manner and measure and give due fillip and support to such efforts made by private initiative and enterprise. Educational policy of the Government should receive a new rural orientation and bias and curricula in schools should be suitably modified to subserve the ends of rural advancement.

The salvation of India, in fine, lies in the salvation of the villages that make it up and for the salvation of the villages, no better or more useful means or instrument can be imagined than the village teacher of the right type possessed of proper equipment and, still more than that, possessed of a missionary zeal and spirit of selflessness and service for the uplift and advancement of rural India which is real India.

THE TEACHERS' BOOKSHELF

Cambridge School Histories. Book III. Britain in Modern Times. By Margaret M. Elliot, B.A. (Cambridge University Press).

This is the third book of the series 'Cambridge School Histories' which can well be used by the students in senior classes in our Secondary Schools. Pupils using the books of this series for the study of English History under 'A' Group of the present S. S. L. C. course are sure to gain a good general knowledge of British History inasmuch as the books aim at presenting social and economic sides along with the political and several chapters are allotted to the contemporary history of other countries in order to give the necessary background. The book under review contains many illustrations most of which have been chosen from contemporary sources so as to preserve the spirit of the period as far as possible. Questions and exercises which are found at the end of the book are carefully chosen and will be found very useful for guiding the pupils in their study and testing their knowledge of History.

Easy Lessons in Economics. By E. E. Houseley, B.A., B.Sc., Econ., (Cambridge University Press).

This is an excellent introductory book on Economics in essentially non-technical language for the common reader. The book contains a number of simple lessons on such topics as Big business; Shops, Trades and Occupations; Goods, Work, Skill and Progress; Money; Markets; Banks, Incomes, Taxation and Wise spending, etc. All these lessons, the author says, are based on a successful course given to pupils of ordinary ability and the general reader is sure to find the book interesting and instructive.

A New Series of Applied Grammar and Composition Books with Pictures. By M. G. Singh, M.A. and K. S. Maulvi Muhammad Din, B.A. Publishers: Uttarchand Kapur & Sons, Lahore.

Book I deals with elements of grammar. Books II and III deal with details of grammar. The plan of the series is to enlarge the child's experience to call upon it to write, to read and to think more; all by easy stages. Each book consists of 4 parts. Part I generally deals with the rules of grammar. Part II gives exercises on application of grammar leading to composition in Part III. Part IV in each book consists of pictures intended for oral and picture composition. The books have been carefully revised in the second edition. One can well see that the authors have brought to bear the rich experience of the classroom and have treated throughout grammar not as a general study but as an aid to composition.

New Method Readers. Ivanhoe simplified by Michael West, M.A., D.Phil. I.E.S. Illustrated by Basil Moseley. Publishers: Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd. Price As. 11.

We commend this book to the notice of English teachers as a suitable supplementary reader to be placed in the hands of pupils in High Schools. The questions given at the end of the book will serve to direct the reading of the pupils.

Matriculation English Grammar. By L. Tipping. Price Rs. 4. Publishers: Messrs. MacMillan & Co.

In the preface to this book the author says that a living language like a living tree is always growing and always changing and that grammar must keep step with the language if it is not to get out of date. For grammar is a statement and codification of rules drawn up from the observation of the language used in speech and writing by educated persons. Bearing this in mind the book is planned to be a grammar of Modern English Usage. It contains a large number of exercises attached to each chapter and these exercises are so framed as to give training in composition. We have pleasure in recommending this book.

Gautama Buddha. By Mr. N. K. Venkateswaran, B.A., L.T., Trivandrum. Published by the Educational Publishing Co., Second Line Beach, Madras. Price 8 annas. pp. 74.

The life of Gautama Buddha is one of those topics on which any number of books could be written without tiring the reading public. There are so many phases in the life of this great teacher that it is impossible for any single human being to try to portray in words all of them. Mr. N. K. Venkateswaran is an original thinker and a philosopher. His rendering of this life of Gautama has it it a freshness and a vigour which would make it a valuable introduction to the greater works. It is written for the ordinary reader but we would recommend its study by

the pupils of the highest class in our High Schools. It would ennoble their thoughts and it would inspire right ideals in them.

Junior Progressive Course in English. Arranged and annotated by Mr. S. K. Devasikhamani, B.A., L.T., Headmaster, B. H. C. High School, Trichinopoly. Published by the Modern Publishing House, Triplicane, Madras. Price Annas 14.

Mr. S. K. Devasikhamani deserves to be warmly congratulated for this compilation intended for the III and IV forms of our High Schools. The Junior Progressive Course is a self-contained reader. It offers material for an intensive study of language, for enlargement of one's vocabulary, for the study of grammar and for acquiring skill in composition. It appears as if Mr. S. K. Devasikhamani had in mind a teacher of English of average ability to teach the foreign language. At the end of each selection, which, it must be said, are varied, short and interesting, he has given materials for oral work leading to written composition, grammar being introduced, not in a formal way but as an aid to correct writing. He has brought to bear in this considerable experience.

The publishers and the printers have done their best in giving it an attractive get up.

Tales from Sanskrit Lore. By Mr. Y. Viswanathan, M.A., L.T. Published by Messrs. Macmillan & Co., Ltd., Madras. Price As. 3. pp. 41.

A supplementary reader suitable for forms III and IV. Interesting folk tales from Sanskrit are written in simple English. Students reading in the junior forms of our High Schools will find these tales interesting reading.

Thoughts from Rabindranath Tagore. Messrs. Macmillan & Co., Ltd. Price Re. 1.

This is a very useful publication. Dr. Tagore's sayings have been collected, arranged and put in one volume. It is a treasury of noble thoughts and ideals.

THE S. I. T. U. PROTECTION FUND

NOTICE.

The attention of applicants who have not yet completely paid the amount due at the time of admission to the Fund, is brought to the following bye-law now in force.

"Applicants for admission into the Fund be allowed to pay the sum referred to in Rule 6 under *Admission*, in instalments of not less than rupee one a month, *provided* the last rupee is paid within *six calendar months* of the 1st payment, or with the Calendar year whichever is earlier; otherwise the amounts paid shall be forfeited. But the applicants will be entitled to the benefit of the Fund from the date of completely paying up the sum referred to in Rule 6."

12-7-33.

R. RAMAKRISHNAN,
Hon. Secretary.

LIST OF NAMES OF MEMBERS ADMITTED ACCORDING TO THE REVISED RULES.

1078 Mr. T. James Sellathurai, Head Clerk, Pasumalai Training School, Pasumalai.
1079 „ P. Nadamuni, Weaving Instructor. Board High School, Kandukur
1080 „ D. Ebenezer, Assistant, Pasumalai Model School, Pasumalai.
1081 „ T. James Sugunadoss, Assistant, Pasumalai Model School, Pasumalai.
1082 „ V. Packianathan, Assistant, Pasumalai Training School, Pasumalai.
1083 „ V. Sivaraman, Headmaster, Bd. Ele. School, Kilur (Madura Dt.).
1084 „ R. Thangavelu Naicker, Drawing and Drill-mater, Muncipal High School Villupuram.
1085 „ P. Amirthanayagam, writer, Pasumalai High School, Pasumalai.
1086 „ R. Govinda Naig, Headmaster, Bd. Boys School, Tiruvadamani (Ramnad Dt.).
1087 „ C. V. John, Drawingmaster, Pasumalai Training School Pasumalai.
1088 „ K. V. Subramanya Sastry, Asst. Government Secondary and Training School for Women, Rajahmundry.
1089 „ S. Subrania Somayaji, Commercial Instructor, Coronation High School, Srivaikuntam.

Triplicane,
12—7—'33.

R. RAMAKRISHNAN,
Hon. Secretary.

OBITUARY

The undersigned regrets to inform the members of the S. I. T. U. Protection Fund, of the death of Mr. R. Venkatachariar (Reg. No. 897) Assistant Master, National High School, Negapatam, on 12-7-1933 at the early age of 36.

According to the new scheme now in force, the member was registered as a contributor for *two units*. Till now he has paid the Fund only a sum of Rs. 14, (Rupees fourteen) as call money. His widow who is his nominee will be paid a Benefit Amount of Rs. 510 *Rupees five hundred and ten* less any amount due to the Fund, soon after the necessary claim papers.

Triplicane,
12—7—'33.

R. RAMAKRISHNAN,
Hon. Secretary.

EDITORIAL

FORMAL GRAMMAR

Now that the Director of Public Instruction has issued a circular on the teaching of English, it would seem that there will be a reversion to the old order of things, the state of things that existed in the old Matriculation days. In fact there is a misapprehension that the old days of formal Grammar will return and questions requiring the other genders of and the other numbers of nouns and on the conjugation of verbs will take the lead among the questions in the S. S. L. C. paper. It is justifiable, too, in view of the fact that the examiners, whether Headmasters or others are mostly out of live touch with classroom methods or with modern methods of teaching English Grammar will set papers not altogether different from the papers of their good old days. In the words of Lord Rosebury, the examiners too require to be trained for their jobs. It has to be noted that a new orientation has to be imparted on Grammar and the teaching methods have to change. English is unlike Latin and Sanskrit, a living language. The practice of great writers and usages in Modern English provide the basis for Grammatical rules. They cannot be dictatorial in character. There is no greater authority than Otto Jesperson and he is no dogmatist. To find out the actual usage in the construction of relative clauses he picks out 100 clauses in each work of certain well-known writers and generalises a principle. But he does not ask us to follow it blindly. Indeed, as Mr. Macnee would have it, if the great writers by common consent use a singular nominative and a plural verb or vice versa, that becomes the established practice and therefore the rule. It is evident therefore that it cannot endure for all time nor can it partake of the laws of Medes and Persians. It is as well for us to note that the emphasis has shifted from Form to Function, in English Grammar. English being slightly inflected language, the function of inflections is discharged by either the prepositions and the prepositional phrases which have supplanted the case-terminations, or the auxiliaries which help in the formation of tenses and moods. It is therefore important that Indian pupils being accustomed to the highly inflected vernaculars should pay particular attention to prepositions, phrases or idioms, as auxiliaries or modalities as they are styled by modern grammarians. No syllabus on modern Grammar can be complete which ignores these two aspects, for it is they that lend richness and colour to the language.

We give only a few examples of the peculiarity of the idioms and the difficulty which a foreign student experiences in mastering them. He finds that he can 'pick a quarrel', but not a fight; that a mob of excited men may 'run riot', but not gallop; why, he asks, do the firemen 'play on the flames' when all the time they are working hardest or why should one in rushing out of the house fall 'head over heels' and not 'heels over head'? Why does a man 'catch fever' when he strives his utmost to avoid it? It is all bewildering.

The word-order is another determinant factor in the function of a word in a sentence. You change the order of words and the function varies, the form remaining the same. In short, as Mr. Foot remarked, "No one who does not know a language can understand the grammar of it." If it is so, the rules must follow, never precede the language and it ought to be possible for each pupil to frame for himself or confirm by his

own experience and observations the sanctioned and therefore the correct rules. It is hoped that the syllabus framers, examiners, Headmasters and the teachers in general will bear these in mind when they deal with modern English Grammar in relation to the needs of our pupils. In the words of Mr. J. H. Jagger, "English Grammar is the description of the structure of English as from examination we find that it is, not as —from the knowledge of the past—we know that it was, nor as because of preconceived notions from the study of extraneous subjects—we believe it ought to be."

S. S. L. C. EXAMINATION, 1934

We learn that the Commissioner for Government Examinations has sent to heads of schools model question papers in the different subjects of 'A' and 'C' groups of the S. S. L. C. examination and that for the examination of 1934, the papers will be on the models now sent. We do not have before us all the model papers. We hope to review these model papers in a future issue and trust that in the meanwhile teachers in Secondary Schools will study these question papers carefully and give publicity to their views as to how far these questions will test the efficiency of pupils.

We are told that these model papers were set in pursuance of a decision of the S. S. L. C. Board that questions should not be of the essay type but should be direct and so unambiguous as to admit of only one answer and that in a few sentences, the underlying idea being simple questions and strict marking. The principle behind the decision of the Board is very sound and it is sure to reduce the variations between the markings of different examiners. It is also calculated to reduce that tendency of examiners to judge every answer as a piece of literary composition. It is hoped that the new type question paper will therefore be a blessing. There is, however, a strong feeling that publication of model papers will lead to coaching. We hope the Guilds will soon find an opportunity to express their considered opinion on this subject.

We have not studied the model papers yet. We have before us the papers in Elementary Science, 'C' Physics and Chemistry, supplied to us through the courtesy of a friend. Even on a most superficial examination we find that the papers were set rather hastily. The foot note on page 42 of the Department Publication 'Secondary School Leaving Certificates' reads thus. *"The Treatment should be popular no quantitative relations are implied in the syllabus."* Yet the first two questions in the model question paper in Elementary Science require a knowledge of quantitative relation. It may be argued the questions are easy. But 'easy' and 'difficult' are relative terms and we are sorry that the framers of the model paper overlooked the note in the syllabus. We trust that the S. S. L. C. Board will give proper instructions to the examiners and see that the papers do not go beyond the scope of the syllabus.

We are again surprised that even the model paper does not adhere to the limits set by it. The note at the beginning of the paper says, 'Since there is no choice, no good purpose is served by reading through the whole paper before commencing to answer.' But in part B., the boys are asked to choose three questions from out of a total of four questions. We are unable to understand how a pupil can choose if he is not to read the whole paper.

Copies of these model papers are being sent to schools. But the Department must be aware that nearly 5 or 6 thousand private pupils appear for the examination. It is the duty of the Department to appraise these pupils also of the proposed change in the type of examinations and we hope they will find some means to do so.

S. S. L. C. SUPPLEMENTARY COURSE

It is strange that the Department of Education should have passed a rule restricting the number of times a pupil may appear for the S. S. L. C. examination. In these days when the possession of a good S. S. L. C. is the first requisite for everything viz., employment in Government offices, admission to training schools, technical schools and employment in commercial firms, it is a great hardship to have such a restriction imposed on a pupil sincerely desirous of improving his certificate. We can very well understand a University saying that if a pupil failed to secure the required minimum after two supplementary courses, he would not be fit for University studies. It is a gross injustice to take away from pupils the opportunity not only to improve their certificates but to seek means to better equip themselves.

One effect of this short-sighted and unwise policy of the Department is to increase the number of applicants for the foreign examinations viz., the Cambridge and the Oxford certificate examinations. If the examination is becoming difficult to conduct in view of the rapidly increasing number of the examinees, the Department should study the problem and devise other proper measures.

LIBRARIES IN CANADA

A study of the Library situation in Canada was conducted by a commission of Enquiry consisting of John Riddington, (Chairman) Librarian, University of British Columbia, Vancouver B. C., Miss Mary J. L. Black, Librarian, Public Library, Fort William, Ontario and Dr. George H. Locke, Chief Librarian, Public Library, Toronto, Ontario. This enquiry was conducted on funds supplied by the Carnegie Corporation. The objects of the commission were to ascertain present library conditions in the various parts of Canada, and to obtain the opinions of interested and competent people as to what might be done for their improvement. With these objects the commission visited every province in Canada and interviewed and discussed the Library situation with public men. The survey deals first with library situation in each of the five divisions of Canada and makes recommendations suited to the needs of each province. Two chapters deal with the University and Federal Libraries respectively and the concluding chapter makes recommendation for the Dominion as a whole. Canada is reputed to be a country where the library movement is said to be very strong, and this survey makes it clear that in all the important provinces, there is a library act governing the conduct of libraries. In some provinces especially Ontario and British Columbia, libraries form an integral part of their activities. Almost every Canadian Municipality possesses a well equipped library functioning fairly well. But Canada's problem is in her villages. "Nearly 80% of the people of Canada have nothing that could by any stretch of imagination be called library service of any kind. The surveyors hope that as a result of their report, there may arise in Canada, equal opportunities for all, an equal chance for a person to make the most and best of himself—if he wants to—for freer access to perhaps his greatest help —books—the most widely used tools of every educated man, the recorded experience of those who have gone before, have blazed the ways, tried out the paths and cast up the highways."

As a result of their visits and discussions, they have made the following recommendations:—1. The creation of larger administrative library units, based on the county or a co-operative combination of urban and rural municipalities into a Regional Library District. 2. Extension of a library service by branch libraries, library trucks, etc., un-

til it is nearly as universal as the postal system. 3. Competent professional supervision of library activities as a direct responsibility of provincial Governments. Though libraries are essentially the concern of provincial governments the survey points out how with the honourable exception of Ontario, Public Libraries have been abandoned by the government to the Municipalities, and how very often it is the cinderella of the municipal family. To remedy these conditions, the surveyors recommend revision of the existing library laws and mention the following features of a sound and workable library law.

1. A provincial book service policy so formulated as to meet the needs of all types of provinces, and citizens whether living in city or town, hamlet or farm, or beyond the borderlands of organised municipal government.

2. Recognition of the public library on a basis or parity with the public school.

3. Official responsibility for the encouragement and the supervision of all public libraries, officially vested in the provincial Ministers of Education, acting through a professionally trained librarian.

4. A representation, influential and interested commission, to co-operate with the Department of Education in all matters that affect public library welfare and progress.

5. Standards of library service in cities, towns and rural districts should be set forth and minimum professional standards prescribed for libraries doing specified types of work.

6. Provision for a library income commensurate to the services required.

7. Combination or creation of library units into country or regional libraries.

8. The development of provincial (or central) libraries to include a representative open shelf collection to serve as a reservoir, or reserve to supplement and reinforce limited local book collections and at all times, active encouragement, co-operation and supervision.

The surveyors are alive that all these cannot be immediately secured but are of opinion that powers to do any and all of them should be and could be taken. For as interest increases, public opinion warrants, opportunity arise and revenues permit more and more of the library activity specified in the act should be put into operation.

We quote these features of a sound library law so that our legislators will bear them in mind when they take up the question of the Madras Library Act which we trust will shortly be introduced. Madras, being essentially rural, has to devise some form of library service to reach the rural people and help to educate them to be responsible citizens of the province.