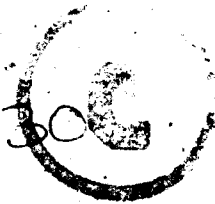


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THE  
EDUCATIONAL REVIEW

VOL-XXXVI NO. 3

MAR-1930



GD. NO. M. 272.

2- APR 1930

MADRAS

# THE EDUCATIONAL REVIEW

A Monthly Record for India.

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Vol. XXXVI.]

MARCH 1930.

[No. 3.

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## The Educational Review

With these examples from history of what educationists from Bihar accomplished by their connection with the Punjab, one associated with Bihar's latest University may be excused for a certain amount of nervousness to face and address an audience consisting of the leaders of thought and learning in the Punjab. I come here to-day, not with the equipment of Jivaka, but in the spirit which animated him, to learn and not to impress, to receive more than to give.

Not only has your past a unique record, but in recent years too, in educational as well as in other nation-building activities, you have gone far ahead of other provinces and you may well be proud of these achievements. You have been real pioneers of the Co-operative Movement and the marvellous improvement in Agriculture and the economic prosperity of your province are the direct results of co-operative effort. The rich canal colonies of the Punjab are the envy of the whole of India, and one is amazed to find what miracles scientific agriculture and big irrigation schemes can accomplish in improving the lot of the cultivators—the back-bone of Indian society—and bringing about economic peace and contentment. Nature has gifted you with a bracing climate and stalwart physique and has thereby fitted you most eminently to supply the requirements of the army service and material for national defence in the changed conditions when India is aspiring to attain a better political status in the British Commonwealth.

If, therefore, in asking me to come and speak to you, you expected me to break new ground in the field of educational methods and ideals, you must prepare yourselves for a disappointment. If I say anything, it shall be

of the doubts and difficulties I have felt during my connection with University education, in the hope that you may solve them for me and others like me so that in the years to come, my own province and perhaps the whole of India may benefit by your example as much as the ancient University of Nalanda did by the example of the still more ancient University of Taxila.

In all human effort, it is certainly a useful thing to have a clear-cut idea of the goal sought to be reached. I can also understand the desirability of pitching ideals on as lofty a plane as possible on the principle that he who would shoot high must aim at the sky. So far as the education is concerned, its proper ideals have been formulated by a host of thinkers ever since people began to think, and anybody in search of educational ideals may have as many as he wants if he only takes the trouble to look up what has been said on the subject by eminent men of all ages. If you want to supplement the accumulated store of human wisdom by what practical men in touch with current Indian problems have to add, I think you may for a choice take up any of the two recent pronouncements on the subject—one by His Excellency the Viceroy in his Address to the Universities' Conference held at Delhi in October last and the other by the Auxiliary Committee of the Indian Statutory Commission.

Speaking of the essential functions of a University, His Excellency said that if he had to answer in a sentence the question "What do we really expect from and what is essentially the function of a University?" he should say that the function of a University was to create and maintain standards by which he meant principally three things—first, the standard of

learning and research, second, the standard of judgment, and third, the standard of conduct.

The Auxiliary Committee was primarily concerned with a review of education and its organisation in British

which Aladin's lamp and the discovery of an open sesame to the cave of treasure have for men in all parts of the world, proceeds from this deep-rooted craving. It was this craving which led to the quest of the philosopher's stone for the discovery of which many learned men in the Middle Ages consecrated their lives. That quest is not dead and can never die. Education is the twentieth century philosopher's stone and everywhere we see evidence of a research magnificent for a system of education that will transform mankind or large portions of it from what they are into what we desire them to be. The fact that the result of the systems and ideals so far worked out in practice in our academies are fundamentally humdrum and their practical utility limited does not deter us. Even at this day, when alchemy is a thing of the past, who that has benefited by the practical discoveries of its votaries in Chemistry and Physical Science will say that their experiments were useless? It may be that it is with Nature as with the farmer in Aesop's fables in that she sends her children digging her fields for treasure which cannot be found so that they may get for their pains the bumper crop which would have been impossible without the digging.

But the crop, valuable as it is, is not what we seek. We want the treasure. Why does it elude us? Is it that it does not exist or is it that we are like the mad man in Tagore's beautiful poem who went out in search of the philosopher's stone and who from a long habit of throwing away the countless stones that he picked up and found to be wrong ones actually cast away the right one when it came.

Without the least pretence to find out and place before you any clear-cut formula which

will solve our difficulties, I venture to make a few observations based on my experience of and close association with educational problems and University education in my own province. The great problem that must engage our attention at present is that of preventing overcrowding of our Universities with men who are not profiting either intellectually or materially by their University training, though the number of students at the Universities is yet much too low compared with the population of India. We have always before us the sorry spectacle of the Indian graduate thrown adrift into the world slenderly-equipped for the battle of life and thus contributing to the waste of human power that is telling terribly on ideals—individual as well as social. The main reasons of this tragedy are (1) the total absence of any definite aim of students receiving education at the Universities, and (2) the woeful one-sidedness of our University education.

There can be no doubt that at present we are entrusting youth with rich assets which it does not know how to utilise either in its own behalf or on behalf of the society. In order to avoid this tragedy of misdirected educational effort, it is highly essential that our teachers should study the needs of the student and his propensities and find out the work for which he is best suited and in which he is likely to prove more successful. In short our young men should start with a definite aim before them. The Roman philosopher, Emperor Marcus Aurelius, had a favourite saying: "Always keep some definite aim before you. An aim in life is the only fortune worth the finding." "Wobblers, purposeless people get nowhere. The man who has a goal has at least one thing to strive at and work for. More, he can subject every movement and

decision to one primary purpose. Direction is as necessary to a worker as to a rifle-man. Fixity of purpose is of paramount importance to human beings as it is to

with plenty of cheap labour untrained and unskilled, with small holdings in lands, or with small individual capital—all pointing to economic co-operation as the sovereign solvent of a difficult situation. Here then is the opportunity for our landed and financial magnates to come forward and dole out something of their huge capital which is lying idle, for the growth and development of industries and agriculture of the country and thereby widen the avenues of employment and service for our young men. They must supply the necessary funds for industrial and commercial enterprises and thereby offer opportunities to our young men to develop India's agriculture and India's industry. The country can never attain that high standard of economic prosperity and contentment unless her youths are equipped with the necessary knowledge and training to work for economic and industrial improvement and thus contribute to the wealth of the country. Thus our goal should be the University which mobilises all resources, moral as well as material, for organised national service and which throws open all doors to our young men through which knowledge can advance and beyond which lie a thousand opportunities of usefulness for what Bacon called "the relief of man's estate."

There is perhaps still one other direction in which the one-sidedness of our University education can be reduced. Lord Beaconsfield once said that it is a holy thing to see a nation saved by its youth. I think the time has come in the life of this country when her young sons can have greater opportunities to serve her in the larger interests of the whole community. In this connection a question arises as to how far our system of education should concern itself in equipping the young

with those branches of human knowledge which are most definitely connected with social problems? In a broader sense, the purpose of all education is to prepare the individual for citizenship and to inculcate in him a sense of duty to others. Leaving alone the controversial questions and the loading of a young brain with a number of unexamined or wholly obsolete shibboleths which are definitely injurious and must be condemned, his education must equip him with qualities which necessarily imply a social reference. He cannot have a detached outlook and his poise of mind and character must find an outlet in the service of his own fellow mankind. His education must teach him to rise above petty sectarian and communal jealousies. 'To love the good and hate the evil, to admire the beautiful and dislike the ugly' must be the essential qualities of a citizen's education. If our youths whole-heartedly threw themselves into a movement which would aim at effecting such social reforms as are the crying need of the day—and they are sufficient to keep them busy for a long time to come—they would earn the everlasting gratitude of their elders. Political advancement will be on a surer and firmer foundation if there are corresponding social reforms effected. Indian youth has to adopt this attitude of mind in the task of building the Indian nation and gaining through his efforts the most cherished ideal of attaining for his country a proper place in the British Commonwealth. The energy of our youth and his equipment in the varied branches of learning should be utilised for constructive purposes which may be productive of real good to the country.

Young graduates of the Punjab University, before I conclude my address, let me offer you my sincerest and heartiest congratula-

tions on your success. You will now leave the learned precincts and enter upon actual business of life. You will have in the course of your lives to serve your country in some way or other. India's political future with all its implications of civil and military obligations depends upon you and others like you, and there has never

new systems of thought had come into existence.

After centuries of slumber, Indian art also showed signs of new life. Thanks to the efforts of sympathetic foreign critics, Bengal had developed a new school which tried to catch some of the best traditions of Indian art, though it unfortunately seemed sometimes to pride itself on its violation of anatomical truth. Bombay had done well too, though it could not shake off its fascination for Western models and there was a promising school coming into prominence among the Andhras. The future historian of India will find a successor of the Moghul and Rajput periods of painting only during this renaissance.

The influence on social conditions was not less marked. There was a desire to reform society and social injustices were being felt keenly as the result of contact with the more spacious life of the West. While the work of social reform was not complete, it could be said without any exaggeration, that there was a changed outlook in social matters and a beginning had been made in social reconstruction.

The influence was most marked in political matters. New conceptions of democracy had dawned upon the people and the political ideal was no longer that of a benevolent despotism as in ancient times. An attempt had been made to show that political institutions of a democratic type had existed in ancient India, but it may be acknowledged with truth that the appreciation of democratic forms of government in India was largely the gift of the West. Greece and Rome had traditions of freedom the like of which were nowhere to be found in Oriental History.

England and America represented a history of struggle in the cause of freedom which has had great effect on the Indian mind.

It would not be wrong to say that the Renaissance had also expressed itself in Religion. There was a commendable attempt to revive religious life and thought and to purify Hinduism from the superstitions it had gathered round itself during centuries of backwardness. The Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Theosophical Society and the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Mission had all played a part in this religious revival. Principal Seshadri concluded with the remark that to the future historian of India, this would be a period full of interest marking a new direction in many departments of national activity.

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the spread of her culture and civilisation that it lives through ages. The great nations of the past when they rose to their greatness owed much to the 'Muses,' to the artists, sculptors and musicians and poets, who made artistic permanences of which political success was only a transient symbol. The Greeks are said "to have made a point of teaching music (and other arts also) because they believed that it made them more unselfish and helped them to see better the beauty of order and the usefulness of rule."

The aim of true education, then, is to keep alive the spark of national pride and self-respect in the midst of conflicting circumstances that tend to undermine them. It must be one of life-building, man-making and character-making. To fulfil this supreme aim of education, the fine arts should find a place in the educational system.

Somehow, Poetry alone of all her sister muses has found a favourable place in education, and very recently music has been recognised as a subject that can be included amongst the arts of study. In ancient India, music formed the very foundation of civic virtue and, at present, it needs to be fully and properly introduced in our schools and colleges and also to take the place of a more elevating influence than it has.

It is not really to be wondered at, that the other arts, dancing, painting and sculpture, have not entered our Universities as yet. The ancient divine art of dance has lost the significance, social position and intellectual status it once possessed. In olden times, we hear of kings as experts in this beautiful art. Do not we know of Arjuna's teaching "Bharata Natya" to Uttara? One of the Western Chalukya kings, Someswara, a pupil

of Bilhana, "even condescended to come down from his throne to teach a certain grace in posture in a dance called "Kundali" to a Mahratta dancer. Kalidasa also laid stress in his plays on "Nata," the rhythmic music, because "Gita, Vadya and Abinava" go hand in hand, but now it is sad to note that it has completely lost its old educational value. As for painting and sculpture, barely twenty years have passed since the revival of Indian art that has slept without patronage after the Mughal period, and only in the modern revival we have come to know of our art treasures in the Ajanta, Bagh, Ellora and other cave temples. These wonderful artistic permanences in stone and colour show how this innate desire for self-expression in man manifested itself by the force of the great love for beauty and the desire to symbolise eternal Beauty and Truth through art.

Besides the national value, Indian art has an ideal quite different from the Western, in that it can express eternal Truth, and it is not limited to the expression of mere form and appearance. Behind a few figures, a few lines, the supreme intelligence lurks and the artist seeks this great mysterious life and suggests it in all its manifestations. Hence art is something vital that touches the life of man, it is the life-force that throbs and fills man's life. When an artist is busy with the brush or the chisel, the outside world is forgotten and the whole soul remains detached all the while from worldly sorrow or pleasure. He or she is immersed in the joy, in the rhythmic dance of creation. This rhythm to an artist is a truth which is very difficult to express in any language. Ananda fills the soul and it is this Ananda that is expressed in the various forms of art, through song, dance, picture and sculpture. One of our seers says, "From joy



"naturalise and nationalise education" and again Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi urges that "no education can be complete if it is dissociated from the daily life of the people, and if it takes the pupil away from the cherished thoughts and ideals of his or her ancestors and no education can fulfil its chief purpose, if it is not going to train patriotic, useful and selfless citizens to serve humanity." Indeed, our education will be "naturalised

and nationalised," and our pupils will grow to be "patriotic, useful and selfless citizens" if all our Universities instead of keeping artistic training apart as a special privilege of a few specialists, recognise its importance as a great educative power for national advancement like Visvabharati, as a part of culture no less necessary than science or literature.

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