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JANUARY, 1938.



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THE INDIAN EDUCATOR

MR. V. ARAVAMUDA IYENGAR, B.A., L.T.—*Managing Editor.*

Vol. XIV.

MADURA: JANUARY, 1938.

No. 1.

Education as Social Efficiency

The Socialising Influence of Schools

By PROF. M. S. SRINIVASA SARMA, M.A.

THE BUSINESS OF LIFE.

The exceedingly unhappy condition of modern India on account of religious dissensions and communal tensions calls for an urgent and thorough re-orientation in the educational policy and programme. That the function of education is the preparation for life is recognised by all; and this idea is as old as Plato. Only, the implications of this principle have not been clearly understood and properly emphasised. This aim of education is not likely to be fulfilled unless we have precise and definite ideas about what "life" is. An investigation into the meaning of life is essential to demonstrate not only the vital and intimate connection between the school and its social environment, but also the fundamental relation between a man's philosophy of life and his views on education.

Hegel looks upon morality as the end and aim of all school education; and Dewey emphasises "the necessity of discussing the entire structure and the specific workings of the school system from the standpoint of its moral position and its moral function in society". It is conceded by all that the highest ideals of life and duty should be instilled in the minds of young children during the period of their school life. In as much as the function of the school is taken to be the formation of character, it is rightly considered to be a great moral institution; and it should justify its existence by turning out pupils efficient in every sense of the term—physically, morally, and intellectually; and above all it must prepare and make efficient its pupils to take their legitimate place in the social world; for, this is exactly the "business of life". Plato never for a moment forgot the social function of education. His "Republic" is permeated by the idea that education is essentially preparation for citizenship. Thus the new movement that education should aim not so much at

individual as at social efficiency is only a new emphasis on an old idea which originated with Plato. It is being increasingly felt that education is a most important form of social activity, and that its ideal is social progress and social efficiency rather than personal success and individual development.

MAN ESSENTIALLY SOCIAL.

This is in the fitness of things; for, man is essentially a social animal. The gregarious instinct is perhaps the most deeprooted instinct in man. Every individual belongs to a social system. An isolated individual is even inconceivable. Personal life and social life are so inextricably interwoven that the self is comprehensible only as a member of society. Man is what he is because of and in virtue of the community. It is his social significance that makes life valuable to him; and it is the emptiness of social content that makes life worthless and drives him to suicide. The child inherits everything valuable from the race before it comes into the world; and its long period of infancy consisting of about twenty years is spent in assimilating from society the system of knowledge, the code of morals, and the form of religion which are indispensable to its development into a full-blown personality. There is, strictly speaking, no such thing as a "self-made man". No man can make himself. What he does in fact is simply to use the opportunities that the society offers him. It is the society that liberates and directs the energies of the individual. Our world of action is one in which the individual is one limit and society the another; and between them lie all sorts of minor associative arrangements like family, school, club, friendship, etc. To be sure, the individual can never even "know himself" apart from society. It is the membership of a wide and rich society that evokes the powers of the individual, and helps him to realise his possibilities. Not only his latent powers aroused by society, but particular tendencies of the individual are selected and encouraged and confirmed by it; and thus he is trained in reflective judgment and personal valuation by the necessities of social existence. Man acquires these rights and powers by education. Knowledge and strength of will—the twin aim of education—give him power, personality, and privileges.

CHARACTER—THE POWER OF SOCIAL AGENCY.

It was perhaps the consideration of this correlation between the individual and the society that actuated Herbart to emphasise that *all* real education is *moral* education. He says categorically that "the one and the whole work of education may be summed up in the concept—Morality". Now, what is morality? It is the set of principles according

to which right habits are acquired, and correct form of character is formed. Character in its inmost essence means the power of social agency, the organised capacity for efficient social functioning. It means social insight and social executive power. Morality thus is our social attitude towards the human environment, and culminates in the formation of a desirable form of character congenial to the individual and of service to the community. The highest aim of morality is to bring into existence the best-ordered community which gives the greatest scope to its component members to make the best of themselves; and the "best" in human nature is that which contributes to the harmony and the onward movement of society. The inter-personal relation, whether it is communal or national, is always essentially a moral relation; and the consciousness of the rights and duties that are indispensable for the harmoniously creative social life is ultimately based upon the consciousness of moral obligation; and this supreme sense of duty, though personal, is socially initiated.

Now as the community is essential for the perfecting of the individual, so is personal morality a means and a necessary condition of social reconstruction. A life can be great and full only through a wide social grasp. Morality is the principle of cohesion in society; and in so far as any society is coherent and integrated it is moral. Only in so far as man identifies himself with others and seeks a common good, can there be association. There is thus a most necessary and intimate connection between public socialisation and private moralisation. The verdict of history is that the races and the individuals with the more advanced moral standards survive while those of lower perish. Nature has socialised man by a repeated application of the method of "United we stand, divided we fall". Morality is not merely an organising but a corrective force. It is like a gardener tenderly nurturing some flowers and ruthlessly pruning or weeding out others so that the garden may be the most beautiful place.

SOCIALISATION—THE AIM EDUCATION.

Thus it is clear that there could be no real conflict between the ideal of Ethics and the aim of Education. Therefore the education that discovers and trains the distinctive powers of the individual is at the same time rendering the best service to the whole community. The membership we enjoy in the social order involves rights granted to us and rights which we should grant. Each man is a recipient of goods through membership in the moral solidarity of the community; and the realisation that one receives benefits leads to the realisation that one should give one's share. The powers of the individual must be trained in such

a way that he may become an active and efficient member of society. The task of harmonising the individual's aim with those of the society is no easy affair; but the realisation of it is at once the pressing problem and the main purpose of education. Time was when the schools confined themselves exclusively to the intellectual culture of the pupils; but today owing to advanced civilisation and specialised life the demands of society on the individual have become extremely complex. And the school which does not do something towards fitting the young to meet the new social needs is not fulfilling its appointed task; and the education that does not cultivate equality of treatment, community of interests, and impartiality of regard in its pupils stands self-condemned. The pupils should be made to feel that the test of any right action is its social value. The Kantian ideal should be the inspirer of their everyday behaviour; "So act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in that of another always as an end, never as a means".

There are countless ways and numberless opportunities which could be wisely utilised to inculcate ideas of organised co-operation and sound social spirit in the young students. It should never be forgotten that education is a community life and the schools a community living a life, and not a mere instrument of instruction. Sometimes even people engaged in the educational line speak glibly of religious instruction, moral training and social service as "extra-curricular activities", which betrays a most lamentable lack of insight into the value and function of education. It is the primary duty of a well-planned educational scheme to give a concrete shape to all social values, and train the growing young children to become living embodiments of those values. The beauty of self-sacrifice and the glory of self-surrender are inspired and maintained by religion. Religion, if anything, is the unifying principle in social life. It is a social necessity, it is the cohesive force that integrates the varying and divergent individuals into an organic unity. It is indeed a mockery to say that religion would be disruptive, and therefore should be driven out lock, stock and barrel from our schools. A little dispassionate inquiry will convince us that it is not religion that breeds fanaticism and intolerance, but superstition, ignorance and bigotry that masquerade as religion which are responsible for these undesirable traits in human beings; and the way to eradicate these obnoxious features is certainly not by keeping the study of religion out of the healthy and formative atmosphere of the gates of learning, but by submitting it to open and honest discussion, free and fearless criticism, and independent and creative thinking; and in order to carry out this purpose no better place could be found than our educational institutions where truth is sought

to be gained for its own sake, where no standard other than reason is accepted, and where a perfectly free atmosphere prevails.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION INDISPENSABLE.

Therefore a school or college which does not provide for systematic instruction and training in religion and morality—the two of the most powerful social agencies for unifying and integrating the diversified and differently constituted human beings—is a mere machine like a Printing Press producing stereotyped lifeless graduates and passed men after a standard pattern. It would be profitable and really instructive to remember in this connection the shrewd observation of a Japanese visitor to America to the effect that "The Universities here are athletic associations in which certain opportunities for study are provided for the feeble-minded". This refreshing and thoroughly radical attitude to education is most urgently needed to correct and vivify our country which is most ingloriously following the old soul-killing policy of ordering the schools to produce 35 % men who have become adepts in the ignoble art of "mugging up" the dictated notes and vomiting them out at the deadening examinations. It is no good blaming the schools for this sorry state of affairs. Let it be noted that no educational institution can do exactly what it considers best and wisest, as its very existence depends on public favour and public support. What is therefore urgently needed is a transvaluation of values on the part of the parents and the leaders. In the meantime every school may within the restricted and limited scope of its freedom foster corporate life among its members, and instil sociability, catholicity, tolerance, and "give and take" attitude in them, and train them in social efficiency by the help of its regular studies and varied methods.

THE SOCIAL VALUE OF PLAY.

Literary Societies, Boy Scout Associations, Dramatic Unions, Social Service Leagues and Athletic Clubs afford excellent opportunities to the pupils to learn not only how to think but also how to live. These vital limbs of a "live" school should function efficiently if the education that is imparted in it should fulfil its avowed object. These activities nurture such qualities as loyalty, truthfulness, justice, perseverance, self-control and tolerance—which are the foundations of character.

To take one example by way of illustration: Play is the most valuable means to moral culture and social discipline. It is the nursery of virtues. Plato tells us that "the soul of a child should be guided through his play towards the pursuit of excellence in ways that he will

need when he is grown up". Muscles are in a peculiar sense the instruments of the will, and vehicles of habituation and character. Play is the school of morality. It gives not only strength but courage and confidence, and contributes energy, decision and promptness to the will. If the essence of social life consists in being good and doing good, then play is the most powerful incentive to it. It is the making of the social man, and generates a friendly intercourse on a footing of perfect equality, promotes healthy rivalry with a view to draw out the best which each individual is capable of, and tends to the increase of mutual understanding and sympathy. The high social value of games should therefore be unstintingly and generously fostered and encouraged as they are mainly instrumental in training the students in the fine art of self-education, leadership and social administration. The students who participate day after day in the life and activities of the Debating Societies, Sporting and Excursion Clubs, Musical and Dramatic Associations of the school will not fail to imbibe a genuine social interest and social spirit. Playing together, working together, living together and studying together will certainly quicken in them a high and abiding social sense, train them in adaptive plasticity and sympathetic tolerance, and teach them the much needed lesson of mutual dependence and social solidarity.

THE ALCHEMY OF THE TEACHER'S PERSONALITY.

The responsibility of the teachers in this supreme function of education is tremendous. Apart from their personal lives which should exemplify to the pupils the high ideals of life, the teachers should strive to present the subjects they teach in their true relation to the actual realities of life. They must try to make instruction less bookish and more concrete. This will facilitate the socialising process. Class lessons should aim not only at cultivating and enriching the mind and ennobling life, but should tend to elevate human labour and endow with dignity all forms of useful occupations. Group activities should be encouraged as they give an insight into human institutions and train the pupils in institutional life. They also reveal to the teachers the basic inclinations and special aptitudes of pupils, and thus give useful guidance in the choice of their lifework.

In the last resort the most essential condition for the realisation of the social ideals of education is to be found in the teachers themselves. They are directly responsible for integrating education with the life of the nation or community as a whole. They are the most numerous and the most influential body of social servants. The engineering of human nature lies in their hands; and since the foundations of correct thinking,

associated life and mental balance are to be laid in childhood and youth, they have the best chance of achieving the rich and fruitful integration of society. The whole life of the community flows through the schools; and the teachers there are not only trainers of children but veritable makers of society. The right training of the social instincts is beyond any doubt one of the most important means of securing happiness to the individual and orderly progress to the society. A man cannot be said to be healthy mentally whose social instincts are poor or perverted. When a man is becoming disordered in mind, commonly one of the very first symptoms is the diminution of his social interests. The insane people are notoriously, if not positively, anti-social.

Again, good manners always imply altruism and consideration for the feelings of others. Children learn by what they see, not by what they are told. Good manners can be taught only by patient and persistent example. Through the contagion of personal example, man's influence has infinite possibilities. Thus the task of the teacher is most difficult and onerous; and he must rise to the full consciousness of his duty and dignity, and endeavour to discharge his obligations in a religious and missionary spirit, devoid of self-interest and with profound spiritual insight. Truly does George Bernard Shaw proclaim: "This is the true joy of life, the being used for a purpose recognised by yourself as a mighty one; the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap-heap; the being a Force of Nature, instead of a feverish little selfish clod of ailments and grievances, complaining that the world will not devote itself to make you happy".

Causes for the Deterioration in High School Education.

BY MR. S. SANTANAM, M. A., L. T.

The students coming out of High Schools with certificates of eligibility for entrance to university studies and government services have been found to be deteriorating in their standards of knowledge or at least acclaimed to be so by university lecturers and professors who have to deal with these High School products for further studies and also by the Public Service Commissioners who publish now and then a list of howlers in proof of the abysmal ignorance of the prospective government employees. The author of this article is prepared to accept their verdict in the case of a vast majority of successful students and thinks that there are some good reasons for such a deterioration.

The most important of the reasons for it is the invasion of our High Schools by a vast number of pupils for the mere spoils of victory in public examinations. Our High School education was once a fairly paying affair, and there was something almost like a guarantee that a Matriculate will be able to eke out a livelihood, decent and honourable, in government or similarly secure services. This was responsible for bringing into the High Schools all classes of pupils in the hope of somehow successfully completing the course for enjoying the fruits thereof. In our country the literary education imparted by our High Schools was and is a hard nut to crack by the scions of communities other than those which have been brought up in an atmosphere of literary culture. For a long time after the introduction of this English High School education, only those communities and among them only such persons as showed a capacity and calibre for such education went in for it and others stood aloof. The result was that the material and stuff that were handled by the teachers in the previous generations were of a high order and excellent results were obtained. The examinations were also stiffer and perhaps also freer from many corrupt and unwholesome methods which have now come in to vitiate the quality of the certificates issued by the test of public examinations. No wonder then that with better pupils and tests High Schools were able to produce fitter pupils for the Universities and more capable men for government services and others requiring a good standard of literary training.

Now the days are changed. All and sundry come into the High Schools and it is our policy to bring them all. Even the depressed

classes who have been from time immemorial deprived of all chances of such an education are encouraged to come in by freeships, free supply of books and clothes, and free meals or scholarships, which may be more than enough for all these. There is now hardly a community, however backward it may be, which does not think of sending its youth to schools to try their luck for the plums of respectable and paying services under the government. Schools have multiplied and their further multiplication is desired and even necessary not only for the spread of education but also for the solution of the problem of the unemployment question as regards the educated. Normally every school has also been growing in its strength and has been trying to retain it even in depressing conditions, if not to augment to it. Naturally the teachers and the authorities of all schools have tried not only to attract pupils but also to retain them by lenient promotions; strictness in promotions may mean, and in the experience of the author has meant, the closing down of some sections in the school, which in its turn, cannot but mean sending away some of the teachers, even the permanent ones. No wonder, then, the teachers who have to decide the class promotions have to decide them in a way not prejudicial to their interests and those of their fellow employees.

This loose filtration by promotion has also been largely responsible for the deterioration of education. This has gone on for a great number of years and perhaps has to go on also for various reasons other than those based on the interests of teachers themselves. The hands of a strict headmaster and his staff are very often forced to be lenient in promotions by influential people in the neighbourhood, aye, by those very people in the management who are ready to condemn the teachers for bad results in the public examinations. Parents who usually do not care to know anything of the progress of their sons during the year flock to the school to get promotion for them, however poor may be their marks in the different subjects. All excuses are brought in by them; heart-rending appeals are made; special coaching to make up the lack of knowledge in any subjects is profusely promised; in the last resort even intimidation is tried to make the headmaster yield. In this way, the not-over-strict headmaster's promotions are made looser still. Every pupil and his father want promotion at the end of the year; the idea that he should deserve it does not at all bother him and his parents. The poor teacher and the headmaster have therefore to put up with classes where in more than 50% of the pupils are not fit for the standard. Is it any wonder then, that the standards are becoming lower and lower year after year?

A third powerful factor which contributes to the deterioration is the anxiety of the teachers themselves for the production of showy results. The greater the percentage of passes, the greater is the credit of the teachers and their schools. The management is pleased, the pupils are pleased and the parents are pleased while the public also honours such schools. The successes may not be deserved and the successful pupils tested by intelligence tests and original powers of composition and capacity to answer questions of a variety different from what they have been coached for in various subjects may be woefully below the standard and perhaps thoroughly unsatisfactory and yet the school with a good percentage of passes escapes censure. What does it care if it can only dress up shallow students as possessing the substance of education as attested by the certificates of eligibility won for them in public examinations? In fact these certificates are very much like those of doctors vouching for the illness of employees when they go on medical leave; the only difference is that the doctors who issue the certificates know the truth though they may certify otherwise but the S. S. L. C. Board do not know the truth when they issue the certificates. Teachers now-a-days do not care to educate their pupils and teach them the subjects of the curriculum with a view to impart a good knowledge in them, but simply coach their pupils for examinations for supplying them with ready-made answers for probable questions. The greater the luck and the power of the teacher to foresee the questions, the better will the results be. It seems to be a waste of time for him and his pupils to be mastering the whole subject when by a thorough drilling in answering the few questions that appear in the examination paper, far better results can be obtained than through the morally right, tediously longer, more arduous and less advantageous method of the thorough mastery of the entire subject according to the syllabus. Some teachers have developed an uncanny power of foreseeing the questions and have earned a good name as efficient teachers, thanks to their shrewdness and readiness to follow this paying method of coaching. When this power is not possessed, the teachers piteously hunt for guidance elsewhere. Even the pupils are encouraged to obtain a list of such questions through secret correspondence with their friends or relatives in other schools likely to have a knowledge of the questions to appear either through the powers of their sure-hitting teachers or of others who may have a scent of them in some clandestine manner. That some schools also practised or may practise dishonest ways of knowing these questions can be well understood from the distrust of the Government to place the question papers in the custody of the headmasters even a week before the examinations. The leakage of question papers is perhaps a normal

annual affair, though only in a few years it becomes too much to be brushed aside without an inquiry. Though in the long run honesty is the best policy, there can be no questioning of the fact that dishonesty if indulged in cleverly and without the possibility of detection is immediately the most beneficial policy for the good name of the school and the teachers.

How far the system of public examinations instituted to issue certificates for higher studies or services can vitiate real education is easily understood by an experience of common examinations instituted in the schools under some District Boards. If, say for 10 High Schools, there is to be a system of common examinations from the I or II form upwards, the teachers who are employed in such schools at once feel that the results of such an examination will be used to judge their merit and so they take to coaching, hunting for questions, helping their own pupils if they are themselves examiners, and even stooping to hinting the answers in the examination hall. Good results seem easier of production through such methods than through honest and laborious methods of teaching. In the experience of the author, common examinations in the lower forms have been playing havoc on the quality of our High School education. Such a system is perhaps not maintained for healthy reasons but for unwholesome causes which it may not be prudent to discuss here more especially as it is not very germane to the point at issue. It is enough to point out how it leads to deterioration of education in the lower forms in the same way as the public examinations have been doing in a larger measure and sphere in our province. Thus even from the lowest classes many schools have to replace good methods of teaching by paying methods of coaching. The result is that the deterioration sets in at the very foundation. Examinations dominate the whole High school education and instead of being mere tests of knowledge have been elevated to be the ends and achievements of education.

Another pitiable cause is to be found in the principles deciding the issue of the eligible lists. The S. S. L. C. Board very often exercises the right of moderating the results and wants to avoid the onslaught of the public cry of the slaughter of the innocents by resolving to include a decent percentage of pupils who have appeared in their list. In fact the S. S. L. C. system itself was brought into existence to avoid such a slaughter through university examinations. It has been a policy of the Board, it may be guessed, to give eligibility at least to 35%. If passes go below the level, then artificial manipulation of the marks brings into the list many who do not deserve to be there by the marks at first obtained by them. It is no wonder that High Schools

follow the same liberal principles to a greater extent and feel it unjust to detain more than 35% of the pupils of a class under any circumstances. Usually not more than 10% are detained.

A fifth reason lies in the absence of an efficient set of headmasters to run the High Schools properly. Without meaning any offence to the existing headmasters, I wish to say that many among them have secured their appointments for no extraordinary merit or marked superiority when compared with the L. T.'s serving under them or serving elsewhere as assistants. It is true they are also L. T.'s and possess the necessary qualifications for the post. Mere qualifications, however, are not enough for that post of honour and command in the High Schools. Experience, character, enthusiasm for ideals, real superiority in knowledge and the art of teaching, personality, devotion to duty, sympathetic understanding of the defects of the assistants and tact to correct them and make them co-operate with him in making the school efficient without any desire to lord it over them by his authority and to use his powers for selfish purposes are necessary for the headmastership, and many a headmaster at the present day may be quite inferior in these to many who happen to be only assistants. Communal considerations, nepotism, local politics, recommendations and relationships of influential persons have secured them their appointments. Without understanding that, and trying their level best to deserve their place, many of them play the petty gods in their narrow sphere of authority, maltreat their assistants though more experienced and capable, and cause their time and energies to be lost in pin-pricks, plots and counterplots. The peons, school property and even funds are misused and temporarily misappropriated, and the assistants who are courageous enough to resent, oppose and expose them are victimised through their influence with the authorities. Unless and until the headmasters are pure and enthusiastically devoted to the cause of education, there cannot but be deterioration. A good commander makes a good army and similarly a good headmaster makes a good school. Almost everything depends on the headmaster and the whole tone and efficiency of the school can be improved by a good and marred by an inefficient or bad headmaster. In the matter of having made many of their appointments, local boards have played a prominent part with results which have not been satisfactory, and thus have brought in deterioration. What is worse, they have thrown cold water on the enthusiasm of capable assistants and made them discontented and careless about efficiency because it is not properly rewarded.

Another powerful reason for the deterioration is found in the attitude of our pupils. They do not have any enthusiasm for an education which has no attraction for them in itself or by its utility for the securing of jobs in the event of their getting through the course with credit. No boy has a taste for all the subjects of the course and some have no taste for any of them. The pupils are there for securing only the passports for jobs—jobs which are becoming more and more difficult to obtain! Then why work hard and rack one's brains over these subjects? It is enough to get the barest minimum of marks for passing—that is their motto. They only want marks to pass but not the knowledge of the subjects taught. How is it possible to arrest the deterioration in education with pupils of such a mental make-up?

One more reason can be added and that is the over-crowded curricula of studies and the over-loaded syllabuses. The primary classes and the lower secondary classes are now taught too many subjects and are worried with too much of information in each subject. Even in the High School classes, one or two subjects can be dropped, such as the C group subjects of the present system and others simplified. In attempting too much, the system has produced a nausea for education in the minds of the pupils and thus has led to deterioration.

Many other causes can be given by others, as good as and better than those given above, but it cannot be denied, it is hoped, that the seven causes mentioned are among the most powerful factors accounting for the deterioration. To sum up, they are as follows:—

1. The rush of all communities, backward and the depressed also, and of the incompetent among the forward communities for High School education with a view to securing jobs under government.
2. Lenient promotions.
3. Recourse to coaching and malpractices in preference to teaching by teachers forced to be anxious for results and the evils of coaching spread down to the lower classes through a system of common examinations.
4. The absence of capable headmasters.
5. The mentality of the modern students.
6. The over-crowding of the subjects and the overloading of the syllabuses in them.

The author, however, wishes to sound a note of warning against the view that all the products of modern High School education are inferior to all the products of such an education a generation or so ago. The average product may be inferior, but in absolute numbers and quality of scholarship as judged by the best specimens of modern times in comparison with those of the previous generation, the author thinks that we have made a remarkable advance of which we may be legitimately proud. Only the enormous numbers of the inferior specimens and the small proportion that the good specimens form in the total number make people ready to raise the cry that EDUCATION HAS DETERIORATED AND IS DETERIORATING.

Geography*

BY PRINCIPAL K. S. VANIL, M.Ed., M.R.S.T., F.R.G.S., I.E.S. (Retd.)

The Madras Geographical Association is the only Geographical Association in India that has steadily worked on since its start and done solid work in the field of Geography. Your Journal, your annual conferences, your summer schools, your regional surveys, your excursions to places of interest in the country, your refresher courses for teachers, and several other allied activities bear ample testimony to your many-sided interests, and the institution of a Diploma and a Degree in Geography by the University of Madras marks the high degree of success you have achieved in the field. Recognition of Geography as a Degree subject by your University serves as an example to other universities in the country and will, it may be expected, gradually lead to its general recognition as a subject of University grade by other Universities. Without such recognition, one cannot expect the subject to be treated with respect or its study to be pursued by students and teachers much beyond the school stage. In the absence of such recognition, teachers entering training colleges are apt to look upon it as a subject which they can take as their special method subject even though they do not possess the necessary background of knowledge of it. They take English, Sanskrit, History, Mathematics, or Science, only if they have studied it previously as an optional subject for the B. A. or B. Sc. Examination, but they take Geography and attempt to study methods of teaching it although they never before studied it except during their school course. Such teachers on their return to schools as teachers of Geography proceed to teach the subject as if they knew it well enough and often make

* Address to the Seventh Madras Geographical Conference.

a complete mess of it. There is no doubt that Geography suffers on account of its late recognition as a subject of cultural value. Advanced countries have, however, made up for its neglect in the past and given Geography the place that is due to it in their schemes of education. Ours is, so far as I know, the only country which claims to be advanced but which still does not give Geography its rightful place in its schemes of school and university education. It is, therefore, our duty as teachers to press its claims to equality of treatment with other subjects on the attention of the school and university authorities.

No subject of school or college study is so highly interesting and useful as Geography. Geography touches our life at every point. Our homes and habitations, our foods and drinks, our roads and railways, our commerce, and industry, all depend on our Geography—our natural environment. What we are today socially, industrially, and even politically we owe to our Geography. Geography explains how gaps in the natural defences of our frontiers led to repeated foreign invasions of this country in the past, what caused the failure of the people of the plains of India to withstand these invasions, what made Panipat the historic battlefield of North India, what makes Peshawar a military outpost of the utmost value, what makes Delhi the natural capital of India, and what has caused foreign domination of India and what has made it come to stay. A wild man in the jungle can live his life without any knowledge whatsoever of reading, writing, and ciphering. He can get on without the least knowledge of literature, history, mathematics, science and all the other subjects included in our school and college courses. But he cannot get on without a knowledge of Geography. He must know the Geography of the locality in which he lives so as to be able to carry on his business of life without inconvenience or hardship. He must know the local soil, the local climatic and seasonal conditions, the local products and means of transport, etc., so that he may be able to live usefully and efficiently. As soon as a baby begins to turn its eyes to the various things it sees lying around in the house and explore its environment, it begins, no matter how unconsciously, to study geography.

Dr. Cousins who presided at your Fifth Conference put in a suggestion for Geographicing all education. I endorse his suggestion and strongly recommend you to strive to make geography the central subject of study in elementary schools and correlate all other studies to it. In these times, when everyone is calling for reconstruction of education on practical lines, it should not be difficult to frame a school curriculum on the basis of geography—on the physical environment of the child—on local hills and valleys, heights and depressions, rivers and rivulets, plants

and animals, products and industries, people and their occupations, manners, customs and modes of life, means of locomotion, etc. The earliest school activities may be given the form of nature stories, nature rambles, nature drawings, and modelling in sand and clay of local land forms. Language lessons may be based on stories of excursions to places of interest in the locality; arithmetic lessons may be based on measurements of distances between the school and children's homes, the school and the temple, the school and the railway station, the police station, or the Revenue Office; on calculations of prices of articles of daily uses; etc. Tales of travel, exploration, and adventure, descriptions of journeys, voyages, and flights, by land, sea, and air may be provided for study with a view to firing the imagination of the rising generation at school and college.

In the teaching of Geography, I believe that it is extremely desirable to emphasise the value of Home Geography. The teaching of the subject may, with advantage, begin with the home or the locality in which the pupils live and proceed stage by stage on concentric lines from the town or village to the tehsil or taluka, from the taluka to the zilla, from the zilla or district to the province, from the province to the country, from the country, to the continent, and from the continent to the wide world. Unless the teaching starts from what is known and within the purview of the pupils, it is likely to fail to evoke their real interest in it. I would relate all geographical teaching to what is likely to be within their knowledge and experience. I would not conduct it on formal textbook lines. If there is any subject in the school curriculum which can be taught altogether without a text book, it is geography. What we need to teach it satisfactorily are visual aids—maps, charts, pictures, models, etc. If we use them freely and liberally and visualise our teaching, it cannot fail to fulfil its purpose.

Explanation of origins of place names occurring in the course of geography-teaching would, I believe, help considerably in making it interesting. For instance, explanation of the origins of such names as Madras, Pondicherry, Calcutta, Bombay, Allahabad, Ahmedabad, Daulatabad, Bengal, Kathiawar, Bihar, Bijapur, Vijayanagar and Vascoda Gama, would throw a flood of light on their past history and enable the teacher to correlate his geography-teaching to history-teaching.

In the teaching of Geography, nothing is, to my mind, so important as weekly talks to pupils on current events. Nothing broadens their general mental outlook and liberalises their social interests and sympathies so much as weekly surveys of world events. Nothing is more helpful to the teacher in achieving the highest purpose of geogra-

phy-teaching so much as these. A clear understanding of the events occurring in the world from day to day is highly educative in value. It enables the rising generation to encompass in their view all the peoples of the world, understand the relationships which bind them and the differences which divide them, and study the forces which have been steadily working to narrow down their differences and bring them closer together. It engenders in them a spirit of world citizenship—a spirit which it is so necessary for educators to encourage in the cause of general happiness of mankind.

It would not, I believe, be out of place, in a conference of geography-teachers such as this, if I mentioned some common errors in geography-teaching. There is a tendency among teachers, as most of you may have noticed, to confuse *north* with *up* and *south* with *down*, *country* with *continent*, *state* with *country*, *mouths* of rivers with their *sources*, *climate* with *temperature*, *products* with *industries* or *occupations*. There is a tendency to use the term "*mountains*" to signify sometimes "*mountain peaks*" and sometimes "*mountain ranges*"; to consider *plains* to be as flat as floors and *plateaus* to be as level as table tops; to regard tributaries of rivers as their branches flowing away from the main streams; to treat glaciers, avalanches, and icebergs as if they were all the same or nearly so; to forget, while speaking of the slanting rays of the sun, that the sun's rays are all parallel to one another and that the slant of the so-called slanting rays is due to the slant or curvature of the earth's surface; to believe that the sun is overhead every noon at the equator; that the hot weather is caused by nearness of the sun to the earth; that the torrid zone includes all the hottest regions and the frigid zones all the coldest; that the frigid zones have snow everywhere all the year round and that the torrid zone has no snow anywhere at all; that the temperate zones are never so hot as the torrid zone and never so cold as the frigid; that it never rains in deserts; that there cannot be any plant-life in deserts; that there is no rain in deserts because they are deserts; etc. Such errors convey wrong notions to young learners and make impressions on their minds which it is difficult for them in after-life to get rid of. If, when they grow up, they chance to become teachers, they naturally tend to pass on their erroneous notions to their pupils and thus unconsciously perpetuate them. It is up to us teachers to make careful lists of such mistakes and supply them to the Association so as to enable it to prepare from the lists received a fairly comprehensive catalogue of common mistakes in geography-teaching and bring them to the notice of all geography teachers not only in this Presidency but in the whole country. The service thus rendered will, I feel sure, be very much appreciated by all concerned in correct teaching.

Three Days in a German Women's Labour Camp.

BY JOY WRIGHT.

I have just spent some days in a German Women's Labour Camp.

By October 1, 1937, there were 545 of these camps for women in Germany. The 10,000 young women now in the Labour Service are being joined by another, 10,000.

I felt that I would like to know something about this movement in which 20,000 young women between the ages of 18 and 25 from all classes of society voluntarily live for six months with the utmost frugality under strict discipline, and work six hours a day digging potatoes, tending cattle, cooking or scrubbing in some peasant cottage.

Some good friends of mine in Berlin arranged the visit for me through the authorities. I had to supply them with a synopsis of my life and two photographs of myself; a quite natural precaution to take before allowing a foreigner to stay as a guest in a Government institution. Quite shortly came back the permission. They chose one of the camps in the East of Germany near Schweibus. As I left Berlin behind me on that Friday morning I felt a certain amount of trepidation. I had heard many tales of the severity of life in these Labour Camps, and I am not much given to hard living myself. At the little wayside station I was met by a rather stern looking young woman in the khaki uniform of the Women's Labour Service. (I discovered later that she wasn't as stern as she looked). She greeted me, told me to wait a moment, and disappeared, returning in two minutes with a bicycle in each hand. My heart sank. It is twenty years since I rode a bicycle. But I knew that I was already considerably privileged in being allowed to visit the Labour Camp at all, so to cavil at the means of locomotion provided by my hostess would have been churlish. After several attempts I succeeded in mounting the bicycle; my companion had gallantly strapped my luggage on to the back of her machine, and off we went. I decided cycling must be like swimming, once you learn it you never forget. Nevertheless I could have wished that the five miles to the camp had been shorter by half. Getting off the wretched machine was another story. Luckily I found a convenient doorway and propped the bicycle against it while I clambered off.

THREE DAYS IN A GERMAN WOMEN'S LABOUR CAMP 19

Down the path to meet me came the Leader of the Camp, Fraulein Kottmaier. I felt rather like a new girl at school. In those seconds while I walked towards her there flashed through my mind 'Heavens above, I've got lipstick on'. I tried to remember how much lipstick I had put on that morning, and whether I had remembered to powder over it so that it didn't look too glaring. I gave as well a hasty thought to my finger nails and thanked my lucky stars that I have never seen a disciple of the blood-red school. I hoped my "light-rust" might pass un-noticed. Whether it did or not, I never found out; but by the warmth of the welcome I was given from both the Camp Leader and later from the girls themselves, I conclude that if they did notice these things they absolved me on the grounds that I was English, not German.

It was by this time about one o'clock and the girls of the camp were still at their work in the neighbouring village and settlement. While we waited for them to come back, the leader showed me around the camp. It is established in what was the Dower House of a Castle, and stands just inside the Castle Gates. On the ground floor was the camp Common Room, a big dining room with four long tables of wood, scrubbed to a dazzling whiteness, walls distempered in sunshine yellow and in the centre of one long wall what they called their "flower window", a wide-window sill banked with growing flowers. On the tables also were bowls of flowers.

Beyond the dining room were model kitchens and laundry rooms.

On the first floor the bedrooms were arranged. Ten or twelve girls slept in each room in double decker bunk-like beds. The bedding consisted of a straw mattress, no pillow, and a blanket folded and covered by a cover of blue and white check linen. (I slept on a straw mattress myself and found it quite comfortable). On this floor also was the washroom where each girl had her own bowl and small bench.

The floor above was occupied with locker rooms for clothes and shoes. Each girl had a locker with a key in which she kept her clothes and personal possessions.

There were 38 women in this particular camp, including the leader and two assistant leaders. Their ages varied from 18 to 25 years, and I was somewhat surprised to find that the average age seemed to be about 21 years. I had expected the majority of the girls to be nearer 18 years old.

As we finished our tour of the house the girls began to return from their work, some on foot and some cycling. They were wearing their working uniform, a butcher blue drill dress, with short sleeves and peter pan collar, a pinafore of navy blue spotted in white, and a red kerchief on their heads. A very neat and practical uniform it looked. They seemed cheerful and happy coming up the road in twos and threes chatting and laughing. When they saw us they gave a friendly "Hail Hitler". There was nothing military about their greeting. The days when one used to have the feeling that the German's greeting of "Hail Hitler" held something of defiance in it have gone, it has become almost as benign a salutation as the Bavarian's "Gruss Gott".

On their return to the camp the girls changed for their leisure hours into their own private clothes and we all gathered in the big dining room for dinner. It was a very good dinner too of a simple kind. Rissoles we should call them, the Germans call the Hamburger steaks, and boiled potatoes. Two of the girls are detailed each week for kitchen service and they prepare the meals, another two are on table service, which consists of laying the table, clearing away and washing up.

After dinner everyone went to bed for an hour and a half. There was no compulsion to sleep, they could read or sew if they wished, but most of them after six and a half hours work in field or cottage were only too glad to sleep for this time. At 4.30 they assembled again in the dining room for a short period of instruction by the camp leader. On this particular afternoon she was talking about the position of the farmer and peasant in the life of the nation, glorifying country life and the people who work on the land. Three times a week this period of the day is occupied by lectures, and on the other two afternoons by folk dancing and handwork. Saturdays and Sundays are recreation days.

At 6.30 came supper; cocoa made with milk, rounds of rye bread spread with gherkins or sausage meat, and a delicious salad. The salad was so good that I asked how it was made and was told that it consisted of white cabbage finely shredded, chopped apples and gherkins with an oil and vinegar dressing.

Supper is usually followed by one of the girls reading aloud a newspaper, but just as we were starting with this a knock at the door hailed with wild enthusiasm by the assembly announced the arrival of the two assistant leaders of the camp, returned from the Reich Party Days in Nuremberg, which they had attended as delegates from their camp.

For the next hour they entertained us with a graphic description of their experience, tumbling over one another in their eagerness to tell us all about it. In the middle of all the description of camps and uniforms the young voices dropped to an awed whisper "And ... then ... came ... the ... Leader....."

Certainly Hitler has the whole hearted adoration of the young people of Germany.

At 8.25 we all trooped out into the garden and assembled around the flag staff with arms raised at the Hitler salute while the flag was lowered. The Women's Labour Service has its own flag, a swastika flanked by ripe ears of wheat. And so to bed!

At 5 o'clock next morning I was awakened by the sound of scurrying feet and rolled out of bed just in time to see my comrades in their neat shorts and vests set off for a sharp ten minutes of physical jerks in the open air.

The next half hour was devoted to washing, dressing, making beds and putting rooms in order. Five minutes before six o'clock we assembled again while the flag was hoisted. 6 o'clock was breakfast time. Breakfast consisted of milk soup and rye biscuits. Milk soup is a kind of gruel made with milk, thicker than English gruel but rather thinner than our porridge. A second breakfast arrived at 9 o'clock for those who were working in the camp. The peasants for whom they work usually provide the girls with an equivalent meal.

At 7 o'clock the "arbeitsmaiden" set out for their work in the neighbouring fields and cottages. Later in the morning I went round to see them at it. In the first house the "arbeitsmaid" was busy making cake for the family tea, the other side of the road another was up on top of a threshing machine lending a hand. Just along the way we looked in through a kitchen door and found the arbeitsmaid mopping up the floor. Another visit discovered one of them in the cowshed milking the cows.

I asked one of the peasant women how she liked having a strange young woman sent to help her. She told me that at first, she and her neighbours were a bit doubtful about the idea, but once the awkwardness of the first few days had worn off they all found the extra pair of hands a great help. She said "We have come to a very happy understanding with our work girls". But it was not necessary to tell me this. I could see for myself that these young girls were tremendously popular in the village. They work for six weeks in the same place and

then change around to give them each a diversity of experience. The young woman who was showing me around took me to the cottage where she had worked for the first six weeks, and which she had left a fortnight before. The joyous greeting she received from the whole family spoke well for the success of the Labour Camp idea.

Saturday afternoon was a holiday. One of the girls was celebrating her birthday and had invited twelve of her special friends in the camp to a birthday tea. With typical German kindness she asked me to join them. During the next two hours while we sat around a table bearing 22 candles, laden with flowers, cakes and fruit, I thought many times with smiles of the tales of military discipline which I had heard existed in these camps. Discipline, of course, does exist, but the position between the Camp Leader and the girls seemed to me to be very similar to that between a prefect in an English boarding school and the girls of her form or house. The atmosphere was one rather of co-operation than of command and obedience.

The next day, Sunday, was visiting day at the camp, the day when parents and friends may come to see the girls, or take them out for the day. Those who had no visitors went off for walks or cycle rides, and several of them set out to visit their "settlers". After working in the kitchen all the week they go to tea on Sundays and are entertained as guests of honour in the parlour. In many cases they were going back to see the people they had worked for during their first six weeks.

I spent most of the Sunday talking to one or other or groups of the girls. It was interesting to hear about their different circumstances. They came from all districts of Germany and from every social circle. For the most part they were undertaking the service voluntarily. The only instance when the six months Labour Service is compulsory for women is in cases where girls wish to enter universities, then they must first do the six months labour service.

I was quite sorry when Sunday evening came and I had to leave. They all came out to see me off and thrust into my hands and pockets half a dozen odd shaped parcels. When I had time to inspect them I found written on the outside of each "Guten Appetit", and inside was enough food to last me two days, cake, biscuits, and sandwiches of their delicious rye bread and sausage meat. "To eat in the train" they said, but I would have needed to take the Trans Siberian route to eat my way through so much food in any train. (I. R. I. B.)

The Teaching of English.

BY PROF. A. RAMA IYER, M. A.

[Prof. A. Rama Iyer, M.A., of the National College, Trichinopoly, gave, in April 1937, a course of six lectures on the Teaching of English, with special reference to Dr. Michael West's method of teaching it. The course, arranged under the auspices of the Trichinopoly District Teachers' Guild and inaugurated by Mr. V. R. Ranganathan, the then District Educational Officer of Trichinopoly, was attended by a good number of teachers deputed by several schools. The first four lectures were devoted to a discussion of general principles, and the last two to a study of Dr. West's New Method Series of Readers, published by Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd. The first four lectures appeared in an uncorrected form, full of errors, in the September number of *The South Indian Teacher*. We understand that the report of the lectures did not have the benefit of Mr. Rama Iyer's revision. The whole matter has since been revised by him, without any change in the informal style of the lectures as delivered, and we have great pleasure in publishing it in *The Indian Educator* for the benefit of teachers.]

I. PRINCIPLES OF LANGUAGE-STUDY.

Friends,—I am thankful for the opportunity that has been given me of giving you this course of lectures. But whether you will feel thankful for it remains to be seen: you will have to decide it for yourselves at the end of the course. As a matter of fact, I am keenly conscious of my own limitations. I am not a trained teacher myself: I have not passed through the mill of a training college. In the opinion of some people, that may be a disqualification. I have never taught in the primary classes, and that is a real disqualification. But I undertook this task because I found no one else coming forward to do it. So, please do not regard me as anything like an authority on the subject. My conclusions are all tentative; I just place them before you for your consideration.

But I am quite sure that the present haphazard methods in the choice of text-books and the haphazard methods of teaching must go at any cost. Any change, I am convinced, would be a change for the better, because things cannot easily be worse than they are.

I propose to follow very closely the printed synopsis that has been put into your hands. I think that would be better for you as

well as for myself. We shall be able to do the maximum of work within the time at our disposal by adopting that course.

The topic of the first lecture is: "Principles of Language-study". We must have a clear idea of what it is that we have to do in teaching a language,—particularly, in teaching English. And so I thought a whole lecture must be devoted to the principles of language-study. More and more I have found it utterly impossible to deal with college students because they have not had a good grounding. They have learnt everything the wrong way. They have acquired wrong habits of speech and writing. And language-study is a habit-forming and a habit-adapting process. Correct habits have to be formed from the very beginning. If we form a bad speech-habit, that bad habit is very difficult to get rid of at a later stage. I have found that the two years of the Intermediate course are not enough for our pupils to unlearn what they have mislearnt or learnt in the wrong way. The more I think about it, the more I am convinced of the supreme importance of the elementary stage. "If we take care of the elementary stage, the advanced stage will take care of itself." That means, we want the best teachers for the elementary stage. It does not really matter if we have comparatively incompetent teachers to deal with the later stages. But our methods are all topsy-turvy. We believe that *anyone* is competent to teach children; we seek the best teachers for the higher classes. This is all wrong; but we cannot change this method at present. What we have got to do is to improve the equipment of the elementary teachers that we have today. It is the duty of each elementary teacher to improve his own equipment: he must make himself as good a teacher of English as he could possibly be under the circumstances.

The next point is about the place of English in India. There again, our system is all wrong. No argument is required to convince any rational man that nothing can be more absurd than to have a foreign language as the medium of instruction. Even in the University stage, if we could arrange it, the mother-tongue should be the medium of instruction. All of us, however, must admit that English is necessary for us. Even under a Swaraj Government, I believe, English will continue to be indispensable. But we begin to teach English at present too early. If I were an educational dictator, I would forbid the teaching of English till a good grounding has been given in the mother-tongue. The mother-tongue should first be taught on modern lines as a modern language, on the principles on which all modern languages are taught. There are very many works on the teaching

of English as the mother-tongue, intended for English teachers and English children. Have we a single book about the teaching of Tamil as the mother-tongue? We think there is no need for any books, because Tamil is our mother-tongue, and we think our children can learn Tamil without any effort and that any Tamilian can teach Tamil. This is quite wrong. We must see to it that, for the first five years at least, Tamil is taught intensively, so that our children may be able to have a mastery of Tamil, so that they may be able to gather all the information that they want from Tamil books. There are not enough Tamil books at present giving modern knowledge; that is a want which will have to be remedied. But, when there is a demand for Tamil books, they will come. At present there are few Tamil books, because there is so little demand for Tamil books. The teaching of English, then, is to begin after a good grounding has been given in the mother-tongue. Then you will find that English can be taught and learnt much more easily than at present.

In many schools, English is begun in the III Class; in some schools, in the IV Class. Nothing can be more wasteful. It means that so much time which should be devoted to the mother-tongue is taken away from the mother-tongue and given to English. What is the result? Neither language is properly learnt or taught. If only the time that is devoted to English at present in these lower classes could all be devoted to Tamil, don't you realise how infinitely better our children would be equipped in their Tamil? At present they do not get a mastery of their Tamil, and by the very nature of the case they cannot get a mastery of English either. And when you have not found an efficient medium of expression, you cannot have real education.

West, in his book called *Language in Education*, has an opening chapter on "Aphasia in Education" in which he points out that one has no brain-power when one has no power of expression in a language. That is what is happening to us; even those of us who pride themselves on their education and culture are really suffering from this handicap. They cannot think out an original thought. They cannot think originally in English because their mastery of English is not enough; and they cannot think or express themselves in their mother-tongue. For all these reasons, I think it is absolutely necessary that we should concentrate on Tamil in the lower classes. If I had a free hand, I would not introduce English earlier than the II Form. I am quite convinced that nothing would be lost by it and everything would be gained.

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The need for perfect co-ordination between the teaching of the mother-tongue and the teaching of English is another very important thing. When English begins to be taught, it must be taught by really competent teachers. That goes without saying. And the teacher of Tamil and the teacher of English, if they are different, must work in perfect co-operation with each other, because the fundamental principles of language-study are the same for all languages, though the methods will have to be changed for English because English is being learnt as a foreign language.

English is to be taught merely as language, not as literature, in the early stages. We think now that the best means of teaching English is to prescribe good passages of literature; but it does not work. How many of our students at present, nay, how many of our graduates, are really lovers of literature? Not even one per cent of them, so far as I can see. Why is it? Because they have not got a mastery of language. They do not learn to like the literature, because they have not learnt the language. They have not learnt the language, because the language has not been taught as language, that is, as a medium of expression.

In the earlier stages, I think it is very important that the ideas that are presented to the pupils should be familiar ideas. Of course, it is not always possible; if you want to deal with English life, you cannot have familiar ideas. But, in the early stages, there should be no unfamiliar ideas introduced.

Now let us consider the different kinds of skill or ability which have to be taught. There is, first, the ability to understand written matter, to read and understand books. Secondly, the ability to understand speech. I am not always able to follow an Englishman's speech. When I go to an English talkie, I find, I am not able to follow a good deal of the conversation. Why is it? Because the English that I have listened to all my life is English as spoken by our own people, not by Englishmen. Ability to understand speech, therefore, is different from ability to understand written matter. Thirdly, the ability to speak. That is a different kind of ability—the ability to use English as speech. And, fourthly, the ability to write. One kind of ability does not necessarily give another kind of ability. I shall give an example from my own experience; you will excuse me if I give some personal illustrations. I know a bit of Bengalee. I can read Rabindranath Tagore's books in the original Bengalee and understand them fairly well. But I cannot pronounce Bengalee correctly; I cannot greet a Bengali in his own language; I cannot put two words together in Bengalee. Nor can I write

Bengalee; I cannot form even a single letter. So I have only the first kind of skill—the ability to read Bengalee; and I have got that in a fairly high degree, though I have not got the other kinds of skill at all. I know also some Hindi. I have the reading ability in a high degree. I have also the ability to understand speech, though not in the same degree because, when a man whose mother-tongue is Hindi begins to speak very fluently in his language, it is only with an effort that I can understand him. I have also got the ability to speak to some extent, though my Hindi speech is necessarily different from the speech of one whose mother-tongue is Hindi. I have also got the ability to write to some extent. But here again, I have got in a much larger measure the ability to understand written matter than the other kinds of ability. As a matter of fact, the ability to understand written matter, as Dr. Michael West contends, is the easiest to acquire. His contention is that, so far as the average Indian child is concerned, it is quite enough for him to be able to read English books and understand them, because there would be very few occasions on which he has to speak in English, and fewer on which he may have to write in English.

I have already referred to the importance of forming correct speech-habits at the earliest stage. Language-study is a habit-forming process, so, if we form correct habits to begin with, the rest is plain sailing. It is by means of drill-work that correct habits are formed. We must learn to use the language in different situations over and over again. Drill-work does not necessarily mean learning by rote, or dull, monotonous repetition. We must learn to use the language automatically. When we have to refer to a particular object, we should not first think of the Tamil name for it and then think of the English word. When we have an idea, that idea must come to us forthwith in its English form. Even if our knowledge of English is elementary, it must be automatic. Elementary knowledge does not mean superficial knowledge or slipshod knowledge. Even elementary knowledge must be thorough. Thoroughness is a very important principle. When we cannot use a language automatically, we have not learnt that language; to that extent, we have not learnt it. Those of us who have not learnt any English are able to express their thoughts in their mother-tongue automatically. We cannot do it, because we have certain ideas which we have not learnt to express in our mother-tongue. We have not mastered our mother-tongue enough to be able to express all our ideas. Our use of Tamil is not automatic. Our use of English is not automatic either. You can see it is only with an effort that I am able to express myself

now, because I am now trying to express my thoughts in the simplest language that I know. It is not automatic; that means, to that extent I have not mastered English. "The fusing of linguistic symbols to the things symbolized",—that is the definition given by Palmer of the learning of a language. The word and the idea cannot be separated from one another.

I have already referred to the need for accuracy and thoroughness. No slipshodness should be tolerated; and no wrong forms should be heard by the pupils. That is a very important practical point to remember. That means, no opportunity should be given to the pupils to hear an incorrect form in the early stages. Since the pupils have not yet mastered their language, they cannot distinguish between what is correct and what is not correct. When a pupil says, "I *is* coming", you should not ask him to exercise his own ingenuity to correct it. You should not ask his neighbour either. He may then say, "I *are* coming". Two incorrect forms would then be there, and all the pupils would hear those two incorrect forms, making it double labour for you to correct the error. If a pupil says "I *is* coming", you should at once correct him, saying "I *am* coming". *I am coming* must be taught as a whole. We have to teach complete word-groups, if not sentences. It is only names of objects and actions that can be taught as single words.

The next principle is the principle of interest. Drill-work need not be uninteresting. When I learnt Sanskrit, I learnt it by means of drill, but it was very dull and monotonous drill, because I was never able to understand then why I was being exercised in those forms. I simply submitted to the dictation of my elders and went on repeating those forms. That is not enough; the pupils must know what they are about. They must know the meaning of the expressions that they are drilled in. Variety can also be introduced. It is the teacher's job to see to it that the drillwork is not made dull or uninteresting.

Now let us consider some chief factors of interest. First, there is the elimination of bewilderment. You should not try your ingenuity on an innocent pupil whose knowledge of the language is very meagre. Then, a sense of progress is achieved. The child should be able to feel at the end of every lesson that something new has been learnt during the lesson. In the *New Method Readers* the pupil is told how many words he knows at the end of every lesson as well as at the beginning of it.

Then, there is the spirit of competition or emulation. Game-like exercises are the best for this purpose. Variety is another important factor of interest. Concreteness also plays a very important part. In the

earlier stages, no abstract ideas should be introduced at all. Do not bother about the moral of a lesson, which is something essentially abstract. It is psychologically wrong to introduce abstract ideas at too early a stage, especially in the teaching of English. Everything should be concrete; that is to say, the words that are taught should be the names of familiar objects and actions. They should be able to see before their eyes the very objects, or images or pictures of those objects. If you are teaching an action, teach it concretely. Take, for instance, "Go to the door". The teacher should himself go to the door, and the pupil should say "I go to the door", suiting the action to the words. This method of action is much simpler and much more interesting than translating the expression into Tamil. If you translate everything into Tamil, half the time is taken away by Tamil, and the pupil gets very little practice in English.

I turn now to proper gradation. The training of the ear should precede the training of the eye; reading should not be taught before the sounds. The pupils should be made familiar with all the speech-sounds of English, and they should have learnt a few words before they proceed to read a book. When they find that what they read is what they have already learnt orally, you can imagine the interest that they will take in reading. The ears have to be trained for another reason. Correct pronunciation can be taught only through the ear. So, ear-training comes first, voice-training next, and then reading. The pupils should be taught to pronounce the sounds of the words correctly before they are taught to read. I have found from my experience that reading is much easier than writing. It is only after a few lessons have been learnt that writing should begin. Our Tamil Readers which are supposed to be written on modern lines are all written on wrong lines from this point of view, because the words or the letters that are introduced are arranged from the point of view of writing. I think this is quite wrong. When writing begins, you can easily arrange the letters in the order of difficulty.

Then comes 'immediate memory before prolonged memory'. In the early stages, you should put questions only on what you have just taught, not on lessons taught in the previous classes. That is immediate memory. Prolonged memory cannot be expected of beginners. The stage at which you can proceed from immediate memory to prolonged memory will depend upon the capacity of the pupils and the kind of matter which you are teaching. "Chorus work before individual work" is another important principle. English is an entirely foreign language, and

its sounds are quite new to our children; so, if you tell a child to reproduce a sound or a word, he may be too nervous to do it. So, to begin with, all the children should be made to reproduce the sounds together, so that they may get over that nervousness. After some training in chorus work, they can proceed to individual work, with very good results. Even the shyest and the most timid child gets over his timidity under chorus work. Next, "sentence before word", since the sentence is the unit of language. It is an important principle that we must proceed from the complex to the simple, from the whole to the part. You should not start with single words, and then teach the child to put them together in sentences. Ideas can be expressed only in sentences, though often a phrase or a word-group can be taught. Single words can also be taught when they are merely names of concrete objects; but there is no point in teaching them by rote unless you introduce them in sentences. So, your aim should be to introduce sentences from the very beginning, as far as possible. In West's books, you have sentences coming in the very first lesson. "I sit.", "It is."—these two sentences are introduced when only three letters of the alphabet have been taught.

Then there is the principle of "correct usage before grammar". I shall deal with this in detail with the teaching of grammar. But let me tell you categorically now that I do not believe in the teaching of grammar in the earlier stages. If I were an educational dictator, I would forbid the formal teaching of English grammar before the IV Form. The only English I myself learnt in the early stages was from Nesfield's Grammar. I admit I have profited by it, but I have never acquired fluency because I was never drilled in the use of English, either in speech or in writing. Even now I have to be so halting in speaking English, because of lack of adequate training at that stage. Therefore, what is required is drill in the correct forms, without any rules or definitions. The time devoted to the formal teaching of grammar rules and definitions is so much time taken away from the legitimate work of the English teacher.

I want now to say something about the Translation Method *versus* the Direct Method. There is a lot of controversy about the Direct Method at present. The Direct Method has come to be discredited in India. But I contend that what was being tried as the Direct Method in our schools was not the Direct Method; it was a travesty of it. I learnt my English by the Translation Method. Every sentence that I read had to be translated into the mother-tongue. What a laborious

and wasteful process it is! It is not only wasteful, but it is wrong, because it never leads to automatism. You will never learn to use the language automatically, if you simply learn to translate the English into Tamil. Of course you get to know the correct meanings; Tamil translation is very good for that purpose. But, for the beginner it is utterly difficult; translation is not an easy thing, and word-for-word translation from English into Tamil is the most absurd thing that you can imagine. Take a simple illustration—"I am a man." Translated into Tamil, it means: நான் மனிதன். In translating it, you have to drop two words altogether. How can you teach a child these subtleties? How can you explain that 'am' and 'a' have to be dropped in the translation? The translation method never leads to fusion or automatism, though I am free to admit that translation is a very useful exercise at a later stage. When the foundations have been well and truly laid, you can proceed to translation. Then there must be translation and retranslation: translation of an English passage into idiomatic Tamil—the translation should read as if it were an original passage, and then retranslation of the Tamil passage into English, trying to get at the original as far as possible. It is a very good exercise, but not in the earlier stages. The Translation Method of teaching English is all wrong for this reason: *it never leads to fusion or automatism.*

And why is the Direct Method discredited in our country? First there is the teacher's poor equipment. How many of our elementary teachers have mastered English speech? The aim of the Direct Method was to make the pupil speak English just as an Englishman would speak it. Think of the absurdity of an Indian elementary teacher starting with such an aim! The teacher's equipment—even the *best* teacher's is necessarily too meagre for that purpose. Secondly, there was no proper environment for making the pupils speak in English all the time. Thirdly, there was no selected or controlled vocabulary and no graded scheme of lessons. Even in the Direct Method, you must have a definite scheme before you. The aim seems to have been to try to talk about anything at random in English. You cannot talk about anything at random in English, a foreign language which you have not mastered yourself. The words which you have to introduce must be very carefully chosen and controlled. Dr. Michael West has prepared a New Method Conversation Course. It is a two years' course. He says it is to be tried only after four years of reading practice. He has, after a series of experiments, chosen a limited vocabulary of one thousand words with the maximum expressive power. His contention is that all common ideas can be expressed with the help of these

one thousand words. He has made experiments through years to arrive at this select vocabulary. He has very carefully devised the order in which the words are introduced in the course. There were no such materials in the hands of the Direct Method teacher in our country. Fourthly, there was no real speaking practice for the pupils. Think of a class of 40 pupils and a period of 45 minutes. Suppose the effective time to be 40 minutes, to be devoted to 40 pupils. The teacher had to put a question to each pupil and elicit his answer. Let us imagine that absolutely no time was wasted, that no pupil devoted any time to the thinking out of an answer, that he had his answer at his fingers' ends. Even so, half the time was taken up by the teacher, and the person that got speaking practice was the teacher, not the pupil. Each pupil had half a minute at the most, and for the rest of the time he had only listening practice. I have heard some of our best teachers say: let the pupils listen to good English. They have been listening to fairly good English all their lives, without being any the better for it. The reason is this: *you learn to speak only by speaking, as you learn to read only by reading, and learn to write only by writing.* These things sound too elementary to be emphasised, but they have not been understood by us as yet. There are many people amongst us who have learnt some Hindi. They are not able to speak Hindi, because they never got any speaking practice. Fifthly, there was the refusal to use the mother-tongue under any circumstances. It was regarded as a divine injunction that the mother-tongue should never be used. If a pupil forgot the name for a particular object, the utmost that could be done by the Direct Method teacher was to point to it. The teacher can save a lot of time and energy by using the mother-tongue; even under the Direct Method, the use of the mother-tongue is not entirely forbidden. When you find that a pupil has forgotten the meaning of a word, then you must explain it to him in the mother-tongue; that is the simplest way of doing it.

I believe in the principle of the Direct Method. It must be tempered with translation; but the principle is fundamentally sound. In all our teaching of a foreign language, the direct principle should be used as far as possible, both in speech and in writing. The mother-tongue should be used as little as possible. The direct principle is the principle of fusion or automatism; if we use the mother-tongue at every stage, it becomes the very negation of this principle.

Mr. Champion has used very harsh language about Michael West, simply because West has the temerity to assert that, for the average Indian pupil, reading is more necessary than the other kinds of

ability. West, however, is perfectly right. He himself has devised many kinds of exercises for speaking practice as well as for writing practice. And latterly, as I told you, he has published his New Method Conversation Course. So West is not against our teaching speech or writing. But he is quite right when he says that, for the average Indian pupil, reading is more necessary than the other kinds of ability. So we start with good reading matter; we must come to reading as early as possible. The text-book is the basis of our teaching. But oral and written work must also come in. Mere reading will not do, as mastery of the language must be of a good all-round sort. So there must be plenty of oral work and written work, based on carefully prepared reading matter. And that is just what Michael West has provided in his books. Even Dr. Ballard, whose composition books called *Fundamental English* are intended for England, has given a Teacher's Book for each Pupil's Book. And in these Teacher's Books, he has given the answers to the questions, because he knows that no risk can be taken in such a matter, as the average teacher has no time to think out the answers to the questions. And his books were written for English teachers. What then about the Indian teachers? Our teachers' equipment is much less adequate than that of English teachers, and they are more hard worked than English teachers. They cannot be depended upon to devise their own composition material. And that is why all the material has been placed in the hands of the teacher. The New Method course is what I might call a fool-proof system. The teacher has only to study the principles of the course and follow the detailed directions given by West. Of course, West does not claim that there should be absolutely no deviation of any kind from this procedure, but he gives the warning that as far as possible the procedure which he has outlined should be strictly followed, because his procedure is one which has been arrived at after a series of experiments over several years.

International Conference on Education

INSPECTION OF SCHOOLS

The Conference holding the view (a) that it is of great importance that discoveries resulting from a mere exact knowledge of child psychology should be translated into action as rapidly and as completely as possible by the adoption of more and more active, intuitive and concrete methods, (b) that for this purpose it does not suffice to rely upon the improvement in the methods by which future teachers are trained in Institutes of Education, Training Colleges, etc., (c) that teachers in service also require support, encouragement and guidance, (d) that this duty is essentially one which should be carried out by inspectors of all grades; and considering also that neither authority imposed from without nor routine methods make education really effective, but only the zeal of teachers in their vocation, that in all grades teachers should have great liberty in their choice of methods and their application as they also have the right to expect that their intellectual liberty shall be preserved, that whenever the authority of the inspector is called into action, it should be exercised, assuring to the teachers the necessary guarantees against arbitrary action and injustice, that in order to be fit for their work inspectors have need not only of sound knowledge of psychology and education, but also of moral and intellectual qualities, enabling them to guide with sympathy and understanding the teachers under their charge, that inspection is in the majority of countries, thought to be necessary for elementary, secondary and vocational education, but generally speaking it is not considered appropriate to the highest forms of education;

Recommends to the Ministries of Public Instruction in the various countries:

(i) that the choice of inspectors of all grades should only be made after a very searching investigation into the moral qualities and intellectual attainments needed for this most delicate function;

(ii) that none should be appointed to the inspectorate, who has not previously shown an interest and an understanding of general educational problems, either in a period of probation or by following a special course organised by a postgraduate institution. In this training there should be a place for the study of comparative education and the study of the system of school organisation in other countries;

(iii) that the examination to discover fitness for the inspectorate, where such exists, should deal not only with knowledge properly speaking but also (by the introduction of concrete examples of the problems which an inspector may meet) with capacity to administer with intelligence, tact and justice;

(iv) that the point of fundamental importance in the life of an inspector is that he shall understand the teachers in his charge and be able to advise them, bearing in mind that he must at all times respect their intellectual freedom and encourage the spirit of initiative in educational matters;

(v) that in order to be able to carry out their duty properly, and to keep pace with the educational progress, inspectors should not be in charge of too large districts nor with duties which are unduly complex,—that in secondary education particularly, administrative control should be in the hands of other officials, and that direction in purely educational matters should constitute the proper mission of the inspectors;

(vi) that by means of visits abroad by probationary periods and by special courses of work and by collaboration with eminent leaders of thought in Institutes of Education, Training Colleges, (or Normal Schools) in various educational researches and enquiries, they should keep abreast with modern educational thought;

(vii) that they should establish amongst themselves such general agreement on broad issues as is compatible with the preservation of freedom of action to the individual;

(viii) that in the interests of the children and of the private schools themselves these latter should be subjected to inspection as are the public schools;

(ix) that even if the specialisation of inspectors may be in practice difficult, as for instance, in elementary rural schools, specialisation should be established wherever possible;

(x) that for example the teaching in infant schools, in short courses, in schools for the blind and deaf-mute, should have the benefit of the guidance and advice of specialist inspectors;

(xi) that for elementary schools, at any rate in large towns, there should be special inspectors in charge of art education, physical education, manual work and domestic science;

(xii) that these inspectors should be entrusted with the duty of guiding, as far as their subject is concerned, the inspectors in charge of elementary education in the small towns and in rural schools;

(xiii) that these specialists should pay regular joint visits to their schools with the district inspector in order to assist and advise him;

(xiv) that with regard to secondary education and vocational education, where the conditions are most favourable, specialisation of inspectors should be considered the normal thing.

TEACHING OF PSYCHOLOGY.

The Conference, holding the view (a) that all education and all educational technique for the various grades of teaching, should be adapted to the

mentality of the child or the adolescent, (b) that the psychological sciences have, during the past years, made remarkable progress knowledge of which will be of great importance to teachers, even in cases where no immediate and direct application may be expected, (c) that, nevertheless, it is less important to give future teachers this special psychological training than to develop in them a taste for observation, as well as an attitude of caution and respect towards the child and of obedience to the laws governing his psychological development.

Recommends to the Ministries of Education in the various countries :

(i) that future teachers should acquire a sound psychological training integrated with their general educational preparation and particularly with their teaching practice ;

(ii) that this training should include not only general psychology, but also, and more particularly, psychology of the child and the adolescent ;

(iii) that it should not merely seek to initiate future teachers into the use of various tests and methods of measurement, which pre-suppose a well developed critical mind and a certain scientific maturity, but comprise a qualitative study of mental development and of the structure of the child's mind, from the intellectual and affective, individual and social aspects ;

(iv) that in addition to the study of the normal child and normal adolescent, provision should be made for the study of problem or abnormal children (in co-operation with school clinics), of individual aptitudes and characteristics (in co-operation with school and vocational guidance services), and of the various environments in which the children are reared, home, school, etc ;

(v) that in each of those fields, the psychological training should consist essentially in case-studies, personal observations and research on the intellectual, moral and social development of varied types of children; that these case studies should precede and accompany *ex cathedra* courses, which would otherwise tend on the one hand to be misunderstood by pupils not having learned by direct experience to grasp the sense of the psychological problems and theories, and on the other to give them an exaggerated respect for formulas instead of a knowledge of the importance of studying facts ;

(vi) that this psychological training should not be given to future teachers until they are old enough and sufficiently mature and have enough culture and biological training to enable them to understand the significance of the experiments in which they are called upon to collaborate ;

(vii) that this training should be given by professors who are themselves sufficiently prepared, not only by reason of their philosophical culture, but more particularly by their practical experience in scientific experiments and in the technique of psychology.

Notes.

The Educational Outlook in India.

By. Prof. C. A. KRISHNAMURTHI RAO. M.A., F.R. ECON S.,
ASSOCIATE EDITOR.

The year that has just closed has been eventful and even a unique one from the point of view of educational advancement. True, a proper or accurate assessment of its intensity or depth would be hard to get at. But the impression is there and is not illusory that our educational outlook has been considerably affected and we have covered much new ground since the last year began.

Education is largely influenced by the political outlook of a country especially from national and, perhaps to a less extent, from international politics. The two are inseparable. Education is a preparation for life and life which is continually changing should expect education to follow in her footsteps and adjust itself accordingly. There have been tremendous action and reaction as between life and education in our land during the year just past. The most striking indication of this change has been the introduction of Provincial Autonomy which brought in its train the Congress ministries which have with characteristic energy addressed themselves to the task of solving the thorny problem of education among other questions demanding immediate attention.

Not the least important of the events of last year has been the holding of the Indian Science Congress at Calcutta when India was honoured with the visits of some of the most eminent British experts in the various branches of scientific knowledge. It was a rare experience for us and should be a source of great inspiration which would bear rich fruit in the future. Dr. Saha and Sir V. N. Brahmachari standing by the side of Sir James Jeans form a brilliant company of which any Indian may be proud. One should certainly miss the striking personality of Sir C. V. Raman in such a galaxy of eminent scientists, whatever might have been the reasons for his keeping in the back-ground.

The All-India Educational Conference was held in the fourth week of December last in Calcutta and important pronouncements were made and resolutions passed. The Madras Provincial Educational Conference was held in May last in Tanjore and the next meeting is to be at Mangalore in May next. But what has created quite a stir in the educational world throughout the land is what is known as the Wardha Scheme whose most prominent feature is the central idea of a craft in which every pupil should have a course of training. The scheme is the outcome of the brains of such eminent persons as Gandhiji, Jawaharlal Nehru and Prof. K. T. Shah, the well-known economist of Bombay. Probably on account of pressure of other work at the present stage of political evolution of the country their heads and minds are too full to allow them to work out the scheme in detail. Hence the extensive and varied criticisms from various quarters which would be modified when the question is viewed in detail and in proper perspective. The International Fellowship of Education paid us a visit and in the course of its itinerary saw our educational system at work in the various provinces. One of them speaking about the Wardha Scheme is said to have remarked that it permitted the economic aspect of education to dominate the cultural. Proposals for the reorganisation of Secondary Education had been before the public some time before the talk about the Wardha Scheme. But the present state of affairs in the world of education in our province seems to be one of suspended animation because of the multiplicity of counsels and the inability on the part of leaders and the Government to give a definite lead to the next forward stage of progress. Of course the old system with all its features good and bad is functioning but even its activity has been paralysed to some extent in the present condition where many of the ideas are still nebulous but still claim attention.

The Head Masters' Conference met in Madras in December last to consider the situation particularly in the light of the Wardha Scheme. The Minister for Education and his Parliamentary Secretary were both present. The features that came in most for criticism were the period of years covered by

the Scheme, the neglect of the cultural side and the self-supporting nature of the scheme which made the pupils pay for the teachers. The present circumstances seem to demand a clearing of doubts by the promoters of the Scheme and a clear-cut considered programme to be placed before the public only after deep and mature consideration. Otherwise there is much waste of public time and energy often to no purpose.

It is equally important that anything new that is going to be introduced should be in such form that there is the least jolting. It should automatically fit in without the slightest disturbance to the progress now being made. New things to be successful must fit with the old and carry the whole machinery more smoothly and efficiently to the next stage of progress. Neither pressure of other work nor a desire to get big things done quickly should force the pace. The lack of finance in the face of ambitious programmes is another feature that might militate against an early realisation of our goal. But we must grant that the evils of our educational system against which agitation had been long and loud have the needed corrective only in the fundamentals of the Wardha Scheme which only require to be given proper shape and form. It is not mere craft. Our art and culture grew around our crafts. Our very domestic utensils—those which held the field before the advent of the cheap stuff that has now flooded the market—are evidences of this. Self-supporting education in the hands of the resourceful teacher does not mean the dependence of the teacher on the pupils' effort. It is a co-operative endeavour where the teacher is not inactive. Self-supporting would also mean the redemption of the teacher from the slavish dependence on managements many of whom are uneducational in outlook. The best thing seems to be to single out problems and get them solved by concentrated attention in which the actual worker, the teacher, should be permitted to have a larger share than he seems to be having now.

Reviews.

1. Longmans' School Arithmetic (in English): By S. Krishnaswami, M.A., L.T. Published by Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd., Madras. Price: Rs. 2/- (1936).

This is an up-to-date text-book of Elementary Mathematics designed to suit the needs of Secondary Schools. The topics of the syllabus have received clear and exhaustive treatment. Fundamental mathematical concepts have been stressed, and pains have been taken to give pupils lucid and accurate notions of terms and processes. The treatment is within the easy comprehension of pupils of ordinary ability and also gives scope for advanced students to acquire necessary foundation for specialised courses in the subject.

The contents start with a *resume* of the fundamental principles and processes applied in the book, and after dealing with compound quantities and properties of numbers, emphasise on contracted methods. The chapters on Square Roots, Percentages and Ratio and Proportion etc. that follow, have been carefully prepared with attention to applications in daily life and graphical illustrations. Mensuration of simple figures and solids receive clear treatment, accompanied by easy experiments where mathematical proofs are not possible. Examples are copious, varied and bearing on daily life, with model solutions to explain the principles. S. S. L. C. Examination papers have been added at the end. The book has been neatly got up.

2. A Simplified School Chemistry: By S. Jagannathan, B.A., L.T., Science Assistant, Municipal High School, Villupuram. (1937).

This is a school course in Chemistry designed to meet the requirements of S. S. L. C. pupils bringing up the subject under C. Group. Written by an experienced teacher, the book reveals a clear and intelligent grasp of the scope of the departmental syllabus and the needs and standard of the pupils for whom it has been intended. The author has made a judicious combination of the theoretical and practical aspects of Chemistry. Experimental details are sufficiently lucid and exhaustive and the fundamental manipulations have been carefully and clearly illustrated to be helpful to students who desire to have a decent grounding in the subject. Diagrams have been neatly done and are suggestive. Qualitative analysis of salts has received a fairly elaborate treatment at the end. The appendix, and the questions added at the end of each chapter form useful features of the book. Neatly printed and got-up, the handy volume will be a valuable guide and companion to pupils specialising in Chemistry.

3. Story Poems: By K. Srinivasa Kini, B.A., L.T. Published by the Teachers' Publishing House, Madras. Price: As. 12. (1937)

This is a collection of story poems judiciously chosen and carefully graded for composition work. Each poem has a short introduction in the beginning, and a set of questions at the foot, followed by brief explanatory notes where necessary. Helpful suggestions for the reproduction of a poem have been given, with some models following them. Some of the poems are copyright. Another special feature is the appendices on vocabulary work occupying about 30 pages, which should prove highly useful to pupils. The publication would be found valuable for the High School classes. The get-up and print leave nothing to be desired.

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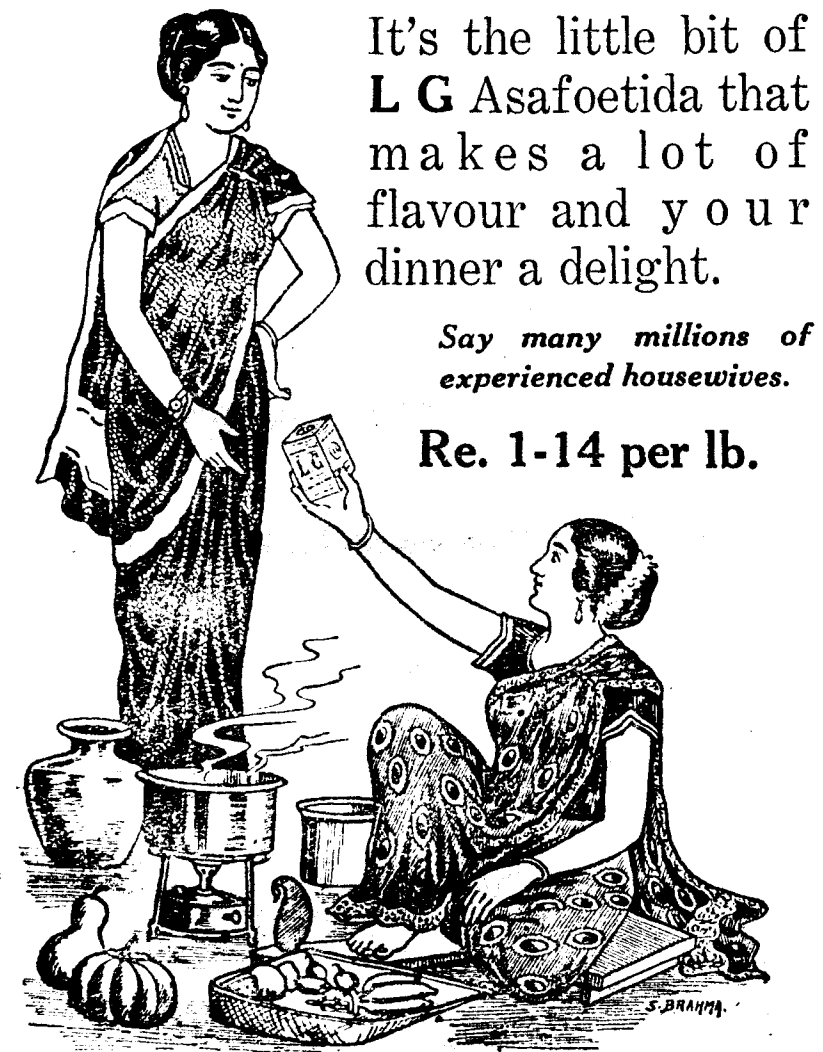
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