

THE INDIAN EDUCATOR

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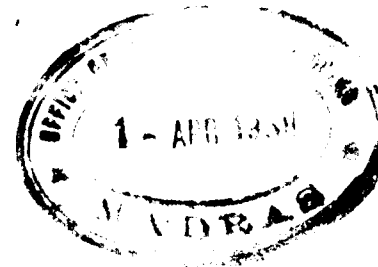
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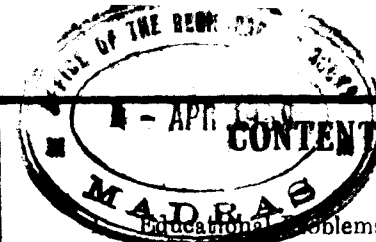
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THE INDIAN EDUCATOR

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

Vol. XV.

MADURA: MARCH, 1939.

No. 3.

Educational Problems

By the Hon'ble SHRI SAMPURNANAND, B. Sc., L. T., M. L. A.,
Minister for Education, U. P.

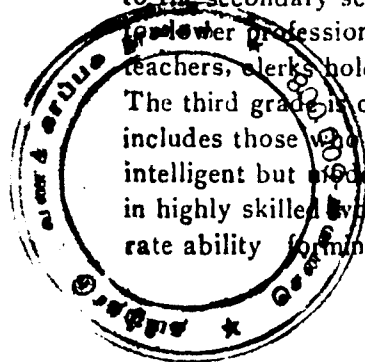
To-day, I wish to speak to you about some of the problems which face us, you and me, who take an interest in the education of our people. Every one who has given a thought to the question has felt that a change has long been overdue. I wish the members of the teaching profession on whom lies the heavy responsibility of carrying out educational policies and who are in the best position to watch the effect of their teaching on those entrusted to their care, had been more insistent on raising their voice in protest. It is no use—at any rate in this place and at this time—to try to apportion blame or to impute motives, but we, teachers, have permitted ourselves to be used as the willing tools for carrying out an educational policy which has had disastrous results on the nation. Imparted through the medium of a foreign language, the intellect of the average school boy and school girl is dwarfed and forced to perform intellectual gymnastics which do not produce commensurate results. There is no attempt at giving to every child that basic education which should be the surest foundation of all further study. Much of what is learnt at school has no relation with the child's life and environment and is confined to books, many of which derive their inspiration from sources which are not congenial to the spirit of our nation and are not broad-based on its cultural heritage. And there is another danger, a more serious one. All education is of one type and tries to mould the minds of all children who enter school into one cast. It takes no note of the different capacities of different individuals and forgets that every one who passes out of the school will not be called upon to perform the same function in society. The Intermediate College was designed to cater secondary school teaching and

make the latter an independent thing, complete in itself and a fitting preparation for life. But it has failed in this object and secondary education to-day is dominated by the needs of the university to which it acts as the feeder. But it cannot satisfy even these needs adequately because of the heterogeneity of the material it handles. Teaching in the secondary school has to be brought down to the level of the weakest intellect with the result that the university has to admit students, who are not fit to profit by Higher Education, and to lower its standards. Some of you have probably read that interesting little book "Procrustes" or "The Future of English Education" by M. Alderton Pink in the "To-day and To-morrow" series. I wish to read out to you a passage which, while it has been written about England, is equally true of India:

"They (*viz.* teachers) realise that there are other sorts of capacity besides those which enable pupils to pass the usual examinations. They constantly see in their pupils special interests and aptitudes which find little or no outlet in the ordinary academic routine. They so often have to shake hands with old boys or old girls who were duffers at ordinary school subjects, but who have since achieved success in business or industry that it has become a commonplace with them that failure at school does not necessarily mean failure in life. But this commonplace surely implies the tragic fact that school has not discovered what the 'duffer' can do, but has consistently tried to make him do things for which he has no aptitude."

In this connexion I would draw your attention to another paragraph in the same book.

"Dr. Cyril Burt has carried out a survey of London school children, by means of intelligence-tests, to provide evidence for use in vocational guidance. He finds that the few children of the type who win scholarships to secondary schools and thence to the universities, and who are fitted to seek higher professional Civil Service posts form about one per thousand of the child population. About two per cent. come into the second grade, which includes those who win scholarships to the secondary school but not to the university, and who are suitable for lower professional posts; they may become, for instance, elementary teachers, clerks holding responsible posts, or successful trades people. The third grade is composed of about ten per cent. of the children, and includes those who are suited to become, say, clerks doing work of an intelligent but moderately routine character, or manual workers engaged in highly skilled work. Below this comes a body of children of moderate ability forming about four-fifths of the whole. These may enter



many of the ordinary commercial posts,—they may become small trades people, or shop-assistants; skilled manual workers also belong to this group. The remaining children have an intelligence which fits them only for unskilled work. The classification is, admittedly, only tentative; but if it has any validity, it is clear that the percentage of children really fitted for professional work is relatively very low, and account must be taken of this fact in framing secondary courses."

This may sound like a justification of the caste system. Possibly it is, but it points to facts of which we teachers have to take cognizance.

All this directly indicates the necessity of having more than one type of secondary school, after giving to every child a basic education which shall be literary, scientific, cultural and centred round a handicraft which has a basic intrinsic connexion with the child's life and environment. As for the secondary schools, they have to be of various types because they have to provide for the individual whose natural bent is towards commerce and industries, for the young man or woman whose interests lie along practical lines, in the domain of applied science, and for the pupil of an academic bent of mind who, economic conditions permitting, will work his or her way up to the university.

You will have noticed that the trend of discussions in our Education Reorganization Committee has been more or less on these lines. This is but natural. The pity is that we did not begin to think and act like this earlier. But I want your help and advice in this as in other matters. You would be unfair to yourselves, if you allowed yourselves to be carried away by catchwords, "Vocational Training" or the fashionable cry of, "Basic Education" or "the Wardha Scheme." But you have to go down deeper. You have to make an intensive study of human psychology and try to save your pupil from being sacrificed at the altar of a soulless machine which does not recognize human personality. Talking of psychology, I have to refer to the great need there is for studying and developing methods of judging a child's inclinations and capacities, so that we may be able to tender suitable advice to parents and guardians and those who have to provide the necessary funds.

I shall not discuss at any length—in fact, I shall not discuss at all—the details of your work in the class-room. Pedagogics is a Science and an art and it would be criminal negligence on the part of a teacher not to equip himself with the latest advancement in the technique of his profession. But there are one or two questions about which I wish to speak to you. At the present time, a knowledge of the psychology of

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sex is not supposed to be within the teacher's regular beat. It was not so always or the Rishi, Vatsyayana, would not have cared to show his knowledge of the subject by writing the *Kama Sutra*. I want you, particularly those of you who are head-masters and teachers of the higher classes which contain adolescent pupils, to consider if it is not advisable to impart a knowledge of sex-physiology and sex-hygiene to your students. You cannot deny that they manage to acquire such knowledge in spite of the conspiracy of silence maintained at home and in school, but the knowledge, thus acquired, is often imperfect or wrong and, in many cases, bought at the expense of much future physical pain and mental anguish. We cannot forget that we have to deal with individuals who possess the sex-instinct. It is our business to guide this instinct along proper channels just as we guide the other instincts. The time has come when you must seriously begin to think how to impart healthy knowledge about the phenomena of sex and procreation. As a teacher, I have tried the experiment. Even if the Education Department does not officially take up this question for the present, there is nothing to prevent some of you from taking the initiative. May I quote to you a paragraph from a note prepared some time back by Mr. Meliscent Shephard, Central Organizer and Secretary to the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene in India :—

"The gift of the creative instinct is part of the Divine purpose for all living creatures. For the purpose of continuation of the species the energy connected with this instinct is powerful. But the essential difference between the human and the animal world lies in the fact that man can choose, and has the capability of communion with the creative spirit of life. Any help which, therefore, teachers can give towards developing and training that human power of choice, will also help their students to build characters of survival value, to create a world in which it is safe for little children to be born, in other words, will bring one step nearer that world of men and women who shall together come to a wiser and holier understanding of those twin mysteries we call Love and Life."

"Brahmacharya" is an old-fashioned term, but the idea behind it, is as sound to-day as it was centuries ago. We want men and women with clean bodies and clean minds but this is possible only if they are warned early by you about the dangers in their path, dangers which, because of the pleasant titillation which they produce, lull their victims to a sleep from which they awake too late to be able to help themselves.

May I draw your attention for a moment to the teaching of history? Text-books may come and go but the spirit behind the teaching is important. I do not for a moment ask you to falsify facts or to engender notions of national variety or exclusiveness in your pupils, but I do want you to remember, when giving lessons in History, that you are Indians dealing with Indian children. If we want the product of our schools to be social assets, and not social liabilities, we must make them self-reliant, we must implant in them faith in themselves and in their nation's destiny. We must teach the Hindu and Muslim, the Christian and the Sikh that there are great names on our rolls of honour of whom, whatever their religious beliefs, they may all well be proud. We have to teach our pupils that it is a proud privilege to be an Indian. The teacher, who implants this in the minds of his pupils, will have, even though he is not an active politician, done yeoman's service in stamping out communalism from our midst and helping to build up the free India which we have all to live for and to die for.

There is yet another question of vital importance to which I should like to refer, the question of the maintenance of discipline in school. Not a day passes, but we hear of a strike in one school or another. To some extent this is understandable. There is unrest in the air, social, political and economic. Men's nerves are unstrung and any activity, the wilder it is the better, affords temporary relief, as it distracts attention. Again, the old barriers have broken down, old values have lost their potency, old sanctions their meaning. God and Scripture, social taboo and the criminal law fail to frighten people into acquiescence. The customs of the caste and the family, the institutions of marriage, the restrictions upon choice of vocation, the status enjoyed by inherited wealth, all these and many other problems are stirring the minds not only of serious scholars but of immature young men and women and the result is unrest and consequent clashes. They need your sympathy. Do not permit your minds to ossify. Keep up their buoyancy and try to enter into your pupils' thoughts and feelings, their hopes and aspirations, their fears and disappointments. Do not judge them from a high pedestal. Your personal character is your highest pedestal. If your pupil feels that he can trust you, you will have solved the problems of school discipline to a large extent. But you have to be on your guard. In the course of my work as a Minister, I have come across cases where teachers out of petty jealousy or communal prejudice have themselves fanned the fire of indiscipline. This cannot be tolerated and will have to be put down with a strong

relentless hand. We are not going to allow our schools to degenerate into centres of rowdyism.

I have not said anything so far about your salaries or conditions of service. These are important matters. They are engaging the attention of Government. We are alive to some of the serious disabilities from which teachers in private institutions have to suffer. In many cases, their tenure of service is most insecure and instances are not wanting in which they are looked upon almost as the private servants of influential members of the management. This is disgraceful. We hope it will become a thing of the past. We are intending to take early steps to have this and allied questions investigated. If society wants its children to be properly educated, it must revise its attitude towards the teacher. It is unfortunate that the members of this noble profession—the Brahmins of the time—have been relegated to an inferior position as compared to those in the executive services and the business magnates. There can be no lasting peace, prosperity or spiritual uplift for a society in which the Teacher has to yield precedence to the slaughterer and the exploiter of men.

But great as your disabilities are, they cannot justify any relaxation of your efforts. You will be false to yourselves, if you decide to cheat society because society illtreats you. You have a noble mission. The traditions of your profession are great and you have to try to live up to them. You have the opportunity to make or mar a nation, to make or mar a world. It is not a world towards which you can afford to be indifferent; it is your world and the world of your children and children's children. You have to help to create a world in which work shall be joy and there shall be no exploitation of man by man.

(From the Inaugural Address at the Benares Conference of the U.P.S.E.A.)

The Process of Learning.

BY SRI J. A. VAKIL, M. Ed.

It is not necessary to be a psychologist nor a research worker to realise that unless the practice of the teacher's profession is brought into line with the scientifically ascertained facts about it, the status and prestige of that profession will not be much enhanced in public estimation. But I also realise that the historical process of raising the rule-of-the-thumb pedagogy to the practice of an educational science is a particularly slow one, depending as it does on the political evolution of Society towards truer forms of democracy having for their basis the factual and not the specious values of the Individual. In a poor country like ours, where we teachers have to hurry and get qualified or trained to raise as quickly as possible the standards of mass literacy, we cannot afford 'to stand and stare' or 'pause to reflect on the experimental evidence for the advanced views about the various aspects of the individual's mental and physical growth with which we are the most concerned. Still, stand and stare we must, if only occasionally and fruitlessly. I believe no teacher to be so uninquisitive as not to be struck at least once in his long career, by the uniqueness of the fact of learning either in himself or in his pupils. Perhaps it is the most distinguishing characteristic of the man that he can learn or acquire more habits than other species and pass on a few for the use of future generations. Carlyle who sneered at him as a featherless bi-ped distinguished by the extraneous circumstance of his clothes-wearing, forgot that cloth-making and clothes-wearing were two of the innumerable habits that man can and does, as we say, "pick up". Undoubtedly it is this ability to learn coupled with the fact of transmission that has played the dominant role through geological ages in the modification and differentiation of the homo sapiens. If not as teachers at least as humans, it is of supreme interest to us to study this fundamental act of learning.

Consider what happens in learning. A boy does not know how to read, write or talk English (or for the matter of that any other language), how to work out sums, or type, or ride, or sing, or play cricket. He applies himself to these problems and as a result of his reactions to them or shortly, his practice, is soon behaving differently. He can now read, write or talk English or type with ease and fluency and whenever called upon to do so. It is this change in behaviour brought about by his reactions to these activities which stimulated him

to respond that we call learning. Now you will notice that the term refers both to this process of gradual changing and the final accomplishment or integration of that process into what we know as the habit. As teachers we are too engrossed with the final accomplishments to worry much about the process determining them but a correct view of these accomplishments is to see them in their proper perspective, namely, as the end-products of a gradually integrating change in behaviour. In this lecture we shall discuss the laws governing this change and the rules making for more efficient or economical learning. Throughout we shall try to understand this change in terms of stimulus-response integration; the stimulus in terms of our sense organs or receptors excited; the response in terms of the muscular movements of our organs of response or the effectors. Thus when an infant learns to pronounce a name we want to know what this learning means in terms of his hearing and how does the response come to be effected by the muscular contractions of his lips.

Now you must not imagine that it is only in the class-room where the boy applies himself consciously to the mastery of various problems that learning takes place. We can define learning in the most general terms as reactions to stimuli and a moment's reflection will tell you that everything in this material world—light, rocks, water, electricity, dynamite, mice and men—in short everything material reacts and changes and new adjustments are continually taking place in response to the action of innumerable stimuli. When you see any particular act of learning in this light namely as a series of continuous adjustments made in response to repeated stimuli, the uniqueness of learning which we noted before disappears. We shall then see the organism making these responses which effect new and necessary adjustments to its ever-changing environment with a view to conserve itself. There are some responses which are so important for our preservation that the race acquired them long ago and so thoroughly incorporated them in our system that we are born with them and don't have to learn them. These are called unlearned or unconditioned responses. No one for example has to learn that when he is hungry, he should search out food and on finding it, eat it. Such are the responses which are called "instinctual" such as defence, fear, sex, etc. and they represent a line of development which has long been "closed" or completed. Next come the adjustments where we learn to conserve our energy by diminishing the response to a particular stimulus to the zero point and thus cease to be troubled by it. The monotonous droll of a teacher ceases to hold the attention of the child who may consequently go to sleep.

Citizens get used to the din and bustle of the traffic, people living near the railway stations cease to be disturbed by the rattle of the trains, and those living near about the Niagara Falls seem to show no sign of hearing their deafening roar. A number of such negative adaptations are implied when we talk of getting acclimatised to a foreign climate and our social and moral codes which tell us "Don't do this or that" also require the same sort of negative adaptation. It is however the third type of response which seems to be created out of an old response that is deemed popularly to merit the name of learning. Thus when a rat trying to respond to the food stimulus, incidentally 'picks up' the habit of running correctly through a maze at the end of which food is placed, learning seems to have occurred by the association of a new response (maze-habit) to the old one (feeding). This association with its mechanism is the central problem in learning.

Now let us talk in our more precise terms and see what happens in negative adaptation and associative learning. In the former, a stimulus such as the ticking of a clock is repeated with a certain intensity and at certain temporal intervals. It affects one receptor field, namely the ear and calls forth the "attention response", which however diminishes gradually till it is finally extinguished and we come to ignore the ticking of the clock in the room. If after this extinction, the intensity of the stimulus is raised, that is, the ticking of the clock is made louder, we begin to respond with "attention" till with a sufficient number of repetitions of the new stimulus, the response is again extinguished. This proved two things, namely, (i) extinction is not due to fatigue and (ii) repetition of response does not by itself make for its retention. This is a sharp modification of the popular adage that 'practice makes a man perfect'. Practice in the sense of mere repetition of an activity does not make for perfection and this is well known to those who do not believe in the "dry drudgery of the desk's dead wood" or "the intolerable boredom of endless class room repetition."

This does not mean that repetition is unnecessary in learning; but for repetition to be effective it must be motivated. In the many examples of negative adaptation that we have seen, the response can be retained instead of being extinguished, if a motive is introduced. Thus if for some reason you must find fault with the room, then the ticking of the clock will be a source of perpetual disturbance to the peace of your mind. It is alarming to reflect how that harmless and rhythmic sound can "get on some people's nerves" and "drive them mad". If a nagging mother-in-law is introduced into the house adjoining the railway station then the rattling of the trains to which you can

otherwise get thoroughly used, becomes a source of continual complaint. The rat who is in no mood to impress you with his ability to learn the maze, takes seriously to it because of the food motive. It has been noticed that he does not acquire the maze habit if there is no food at the end, and for want of it begins to even unlearn the habit. The young animal who comes to your class-room is not particularly interested in the "stuff" you want him to learn and is sometimes dishearteningly contemptuous towards it. You have to make it interesting for him, that is, use a number of motives which would make the learning of the stuff worthwhile.

Now there are two ways of looking at this type of what I have rather vaguely called "associated learning" typified by the maze learning. One is to regard the 20 odd repeated trials or responses made during practice as a total Response made to the complex Maze-and-Food-Situation. The other is to regard this unified response as being made up of tiny independent units acquired or added to one after the other in the manner of links in a long chain. The first may be called the "whole" view and the second the "atomic" view of the behaviourists. The unit in the "atomic" view is considered to be the Conditioned Reflex based on its proto-type the Reflex Arc which determines an unlearned response. You can study the simplest type of association in a dog who will begin to respond with salivation on *hearing* a bell instead of *seeing* food which normally calls forth this response. All you have to do is to ring the bell simultaneously with, or immediately after, presenting the food to the hungry dog and repeat this procedure till the dog begins to respond to the bell alone. The association between the new stimulus (the ringing of the bell) and the salivation response is thus seen to be conditioned by food and the maze-learning where the food and the maze come to be associated is regarded to be of this type, only it being infinitely more complex, is supposed to be made up of a number of such conditioned Reflexes acquired one after the other. According to this view, human beings starting with a number of primary or unlearned responses, get conditioned by association to a number of stimuli, that is, acquire a number of secondary responses and these "conditionings" or "conditioned reflexes" combine individually to produce the pattern of behaviour called the habit.

Now all this sounds very scientific but it does not fit in with facts. Our habitual actions are not performed as rigidly and stereotypedly as this theory would make out. A bird may fly to, or walk up to or partly fly and walk up to an object after it had been trained to

reach the object in one way only. That is, it may use altogether different effectors. All evidence goes to show that the maze-habit develops as a unity. True, the animal in its progress towards food is guided by its previous steps and learns to associate one part of the maze with the following part. But when you study its errors and see how they are eliminated first in the portion of the maze near the food and thence in the backward order, you will naturally conclude that the effect of repeated trials is in the direction of an integrated whole and not in the mere summation of the parts of the maze. Practice effects interact on and modify one another and the economic "whole", that is the unified habit, evolves. The Gestalt school believes that the organism working towards a goal configures this unity in the stimulus situation. With the attainment of the goal, the response is integrally related to the stimulus in a "whole", a sort of completed or "closed" circle. Now doubtless you can recall some occasions where you saw the solution to a problem that baffled you "all in a flash". It was then that you completed or closed the configuration or as you say, "saw the whole". When the 'flashy' American in the detective picture says "I see it all", you can take it that he has completed the "unclosed" situation or solved the murder mystery by connecting certain "links" into a "whole". But what is it that would cap the whole or close the situation in any learning? The Gestalt school has not been able to point to any criterion of 'closure' and the 'whole' is rather a vague substitute for the unitary act of learning.

Still the 'whole' method has in practice been demonstrated (though not always) to be superior to the part method in effectiveness. Much of the faulty class-room teaching is directly the result of this want of appreciation of the organism's drive towards larger 'wholes'. Instead of helping the pupils to develop first the general idea of say a piece of prose set for study and then elaborating it, many teachers start with the details first and as we say 'lose the wood for the trees'. The cry for greater co-ordination of the different school subjects is psychologically sound and insistent. A truly educated or cultured man is one whose universe is continually expanding and he is himself achieving greater synthesis of all knowledge. Secondly, the attainment of the goal which motivates this drive in learning should never be lost sight of. Fresh motivation always raises falling scores in practice. A new motive, e.g. increase in salary, can raise a typist's speed to higher levels. In class-room teaching, the purpose of the study must arise from the experience of the pupil, that is, he must feel that the study will answer one or the other need of his being. When the study

material has thus been presented, the pupil should be made to respond to it by his own activity and he should repeat that activity often enough to ensure a little overlearning. Most of the class-room responses are acquired with just the sufficient number of repetitions that ensure one correct reinstatement with the result that they are forgotten sooner than those responses which have been slightly overlearnt. Overlearning need not mean concentration of effort which gives poorer results as compared with well-distributed effort. Instead of trying to learn a long poem all in one hour, it is better to distribute effort in 6 ten-minute periods over 6 consecutive days. Therefore the four rules of economical learning are:—

1. Learn by the whole method.
2. Reinforce your practice with fresh motivation.
3. Overlearn to ensure better retention.
4. Distribute your effort judiciously by spacing out your repetitions.

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By SRI H. P. CHATTERJI, B. T., Dip. Sp. Eng.

The theory that criminals are usually feeble-minded and the feeble-minded always turn criminals has been exploded. Persons of a very high I.Q., whose ingenuity often outwits the keenest of detectives are usually found among criminals *de luxe*. Jailbirds are rarely dull or idiotic.

The popular belief that feeble-mindedness is hereditary is equally unsound. Davenport's biological experiment proves this unsoundness. When two definitely feeble-minded persons mated, the proportion of defective offspring was not 100 per cent as expected, but 77.3 per cent. The percentage of defectives would surely have been less if they had been bred in a more salubrious environment. Similar results from subsequent investigations have led to the conclusion that feeble-mindedness is no elementary trait, but it is "alogical or sociological rather than a biological term."

So by punishing the mentally defective, we cannot stop crimes, but we can train him to lead a moral life, just as a dog whose intelligence may well be within the idiot range, can be taught to perform useful tricks. Hence the modern problem is now to adjust the feeble-minded to the social order, a problem whose solution lies in education.

Those students and pseudo-students of genetics who still advocate the sterilizing of defectives can be gagged very easily. Sterilisation of morons and idiots will not lead to the emancipation of society or the world. No real harm is done or can be done by these lowly creatures of the dark; far worse offences are committed by flamboyant personalities towering high above them. It would be more expedient to begin by sterilizing, or better by electrolocuting the great politicians, the powerful vandals, the 'Artful Dodgers', who are diligently cudgelling their brains to drag this planet to headlong catastrophe. The consensus of opinion among modern scientists is that Science will certainly need centuries of further research before it can hope to know as much about human heredity as it knows about that of 'sweet peas and fruit flies'.

The task of educating the feeble-minded will utterly fail if the pupil is given the impression that he belongs to an inferior stratum of society. The policy of superiority complex on the part of those who

live with or near him, tends to add fuel to the slumbering flame. Like brutes, sub-normal persons are gullible and malleable. In a good, sympathetic environment their presence is hardly felt as a troublesome burden; in a bad environment they are made to retaliate. A psychologist aptly remarks that in this sense the feeble-minded are "an index of social conditions". If the community finds itself pestered by the so-called menace of the feeble-minded, it should ask of itself: "What kind of community have we here, what homes, what neighbourhood, what recreations?" The trouble might be traced to others and not to the feeble-minded. They may be perpetrators, but rarely instigators.

The feeble-minded person is doubly handicapped. For him learning in the first instance, and unlearning what he has already acquired, are equally difficult. That is why defective children should be placed in the right kind of institution as early as possible. The earlier this is done, the more favourable are the chances of weeding out undesirable habits and planting sociable habits instead. Since a large part of the training of the subnormal child consists in fitting him to the social order, this means that he must acquire the control of impulses which make him a menace.

The Bodhana-Niketan was started at Jhargram in the district of Midnapore (Bengal), early in the year 1932. It was subsequently moved nearer to Calcutta and is now situated in Ballygange in a very modest building. The outcome of private initiative, it is a unique institution in India. Although it enjoys a small grant from the Government of Bengal and is affiliated to the Society for the Protection of Children in India, it is mainly run on philanthropic lines.

When a visitor steps into the Bodhana dormitory and sees a helpless urchin lying on his cot, apparently sans eyes, sans mind, sans wit, sans everything, gazing with wide unseeing eyes at a bunch of paper flowers hung above his head (exactly the kind of thing we buy for our babies in cradles), or being made to smell powders held under his nose—the visitor will perhaps wonder why such, to him, childish, methods are pursued.

But there is nothing to marvel at. For, as with Pavlov's dog, children should be "conditioned" as early as possible. Response to a stimulus, or rather the manner in which an individual responds, is a reliable trait which distinguishes the dull from the brilliant, the educated from the mis-educated, the human from the sub-human. The conditioning process results in the formation of certain habits, habitudes, and finally character which is the essence of good life. With subnormal

and abnormal individuals this conditioning process should always be applied cautiously and never hastily. Education is given to them through the media of elemental things which fill the child's everyday environment. For example, training of the auditory sense takes place through the child's reactions to the different colours of the rainbow symbolized in the commonly found flowers of the field, to the diversities of the physical phenomena; training of the olfactory sense through reaction to different odours; development of the gustatory sense by making the child react to different tastes, and so on. Knowledge finally emerges from successes and failures, from correlating causes with effects, and the concrete with the abstract.

What strikes me as the most hopeful sign in the work of the Bodhana institution is that the staff, over and above their task of supervision and training, constantly rub shoulders with their charges, as if they are all pals, members of a team in which the jolly, unbullying big brothers just help the young novices in the art of playing the game. This warm personal contact between teacher and taught; the teacher's avoidance of all pedagogical airs; the beam of his kindly eyes; his genuine interest in the well-being of his disciple; the one-ness, so to say, of *guru* and *sisya*, is a powerful magnetic force in the process of education, which alone can make education effective. Boys and girls in the crowded modern institutions live a herd life. They are not members of a body, but each is an atom in a crowd. This want of personal equation in the process of education has lately been bewailed, among others, by Rev. C. F. Andrews in a Convocation Address; and educationists here and elsewhere are all painfully aware of this "modern" defect. Only a few institutions in our country have been able, in their own ways, to mock this curse of modernity: the Santiniketan in Bolpur; the Deaf and Dumb School in Calcutta; the Blind Boys' School in Behala (a suburb of Calcutta); the Bodhana-Niketan with its present premises in Ballygunge; and — alas! where is the fifth?*

Education fails of its purpose if it is not permeated with a feeling of love and friendship between teacher and taught, and such failure is precipitate and terrible when the problem concerns the schooling of mentally defectives. The feeble-minded need more care and personal attention than normal children. Otherwise they turn awry and perverted. In the family the idiot son gets the lion's share of his mother's

**[Only quite recently institutions modelled after the Wardha Scheme are slowly evolving under the auspices of Mahatma Gandhiji. But time alone will justify their merit.]

affection. In the school which should by all means be a replica of the family (if it maintains to be a seat of education and not a mere bureau of information), the same law ought to prevail, with the slight momentous difference that unlike the doting mother, the teacher so directs his love and sympathy that his object may be attained in the best way.

The Bodhana Niketan has begun its momentous task. Thanks to the generosity of a few bountiful souls, it has just completed the sixth year of its existence. But it is struggling to keep abreast of the times. Whatever crudities the institution may seem to have in the eyes of the critical observer, they are bound to dissolve with the strengthening of its financial position. Its present enrolment is about twenty. The pupils get an outpouring of heart's love and motherly care, treatment of diseases if any, education in language, arithmetic, drawing, tailoring, modelling, carpentry, basketry, farming, music, and domestic duties. The first aim of the Samiti is to provide a haven of rest to the down-trodden waifs and strays, the pariah sons and daughters of unfortunate parents, and help them to live a clean life. "But sometimes we get much better results than that", says its founder, "we get what seems a miracle; when we find that a mind which looked dead and was really only stupefied with starvation and ill-treatment; that it has awakened, and we have a small human being instead of the unlovely mis-fitting young mammal which was brought to us, or which we found."

If society cannot gain any visible material benefit by spending on defectives, it should nevertheless cling to charity. For these Cinderellas of society, these dregs of the world sty., need care and protection if only for their own poor selves. "Have we not manacled them and sent them to jail? Do we not pay for the upkeep of worthless bedlamites?" — These are hollow answers to the question: "What have you done, O Society, for these down and out intellectual paupers?" When Cain was questioned about his brother his reply was in a similar vein: "Am I my brother's keeper? Did I not pay my brother his wages?" — Society's task is something more than paying the labourer his wages, or the offender, his stripes.

One thing is needful to maintain philanthropic institutions of which Bodhana is a type, and that is adequate financial support. We talk glibly of "mass poverty" in India. But there are dozens of scathing examples which point to the contrary. Let a demagogue clap his hands to-day in a public park and a fortune will roll into his lap in less time than it takes to count. India is not so poor in coins as she is in the wisdom of spending them.

However, the Bodhana mission is an innovation in India; and like all innovations it will, we hope, slowly but surely gain public recognition and assistance. Loving-kindness is manifest everywhere in this institution. With pathetically little to give of things material they are prodigals of the heart, which prodigality is perhaps life's final wisdom. With infinite patience, unselfishness and affection, they nurse the mentally sick, they try to breathe life into the mentally inert, they cheer the disconsolate, and help to recall the straying. I do not think that the religion of the Mighty Teacher of Galilee conjures human beings to do more than that.

The work which the school has set itself to do calls for tact, unwearied vigilance, a large expenditure of time and energy and the unrelenting zeal of a dervish of the desert. But it would be difficult to mention a nobler investment of human resources and energy.

That Sense of Weakness.

By PROF. ANJILVEL V. MATTHEW, B.A., B.T.

Life is a complex affair; and it is much more so in these days of detailed organisation and of frequent interactions between individuals and social units occupying different parts of the world than it used to be under less developed conditions of travel and communications. Science has developed enormously; and, as a consequence, not only the confines of knowledge but even of ignorance have been extended, and we feel that we are inadequate to meet the manifold life situations single-handed. Wherever we turn we feel that we are inevitably dependent on the good sense and efficiency of numbers of people whose conduct we can but slightly influence. The result is that very often we feel bewildered and baffled. We feel a sense of inadequacy. If we are honest with ourselves we admit our insufficiency. There are many, however, who dare not and will not admit their limitations to even themselves, and life to such is always an unsolved conflict, conflict with external circumstances personal and material, and conflict with their own selves.

It is not hard for experienced observers to detect the symptoms of the helpless conflict that a man wages with himself. He is often unhappy, but instead of finding the root cause of his unhappiness within himself he finds it immensely easier and more comforting to

project his misfortunes on others, whose stupidity and want of consideration and sympathy are held accountable for his own failures. Such people are hard to deal with, as they are often fault-finding to a degree in their relations with others. If they are surgeons they make a fuss in the surgical hall, and shout at their assistants. If they are teachers they dictate to their students and leave them little scope to develop according to their individual interests and aptitudes. If they are business men they find it easier by their rough and discourteous manners to lose customers than to win them. If they are placed in responsible administrative positions they make subordinates miserable; why more, they spread the poison of unhappiness not only in their own offices, but transmit it to a number of smaller offices and even to places not directly concerned with them, for surliness is as contagious as cheerfulness. One infected with it makes many others morose and sullen, and these latter in their turn pass their sulkiness and gloom on to a number of unsuspecting circle of neighbours and acquaintances, and they in their turn take it to their several homes.

No social institution is so much affected by the cheerlessness of an adult individual as the home. Often wife and children are obliged to suffer hardships caused by the inadequate financial means of the bread-winner of the home; more often still they are made to bear part of the strain of the psychic tension of the man who works hard to maintain the comforts of his family but who somehow finds all his efforts inadequate to meet the situation. If to this is added the sense of inadequacy which results from an unsympathetic and nervous superior, the lot of the man and his family is hard indeed. He is miserable, and they too who have to live in intimate touch with him find life difficult, disconcerting and highly fatiguing. On little children especially, the mental strain of the unbalanced life of the grown-ups in the home, and of possible bickerings between them, is liable to have longstanding effect.

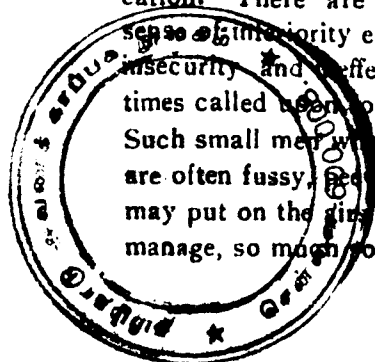
Infantile emotional strain is one of the predisposing causes that make the grown-up person unhappy and nervous at the slightest provocation. There are circumstances however which tend to give one a sense of inferiority even if he had not been subject to such a sense of insecurity and ineffectiveness in his childhood. Some persons are at times called upon to occupy places that are really too big for them. Such small men who by a chance find themselves placed in big jobs are often fussy, peevish and not rarely even bullying. Such a bully may put on the airs of a past master of the business he is supposed to manage, so much so that others may think less of his inferiority which

has really occasioned the objectionable attitude than of his pride and haughtiness which are but the offspring of his sense of inferiority — conscious or unconscious. Such a man who has at times to deal with more experienced and in some respects better qualified subordinates think it impolitic that any decision of his be questioned and insists on the implicit obedience of all his orders irrespective of whether they refer to vital or trifling affairs.

There are some really intelligent folk who are not blessed with a striking exterior, and not rarely the sense of their physical handicap weighs heavily on them. They usually become irritable and at times make caustic remarks on situations which more favoured persons would have been inclined to pass over with a hearty laugh. A number of relevant instances from practical life may be cited by the reader himself in this connection. Persons who are afraid that others think they are deformed, men and women who believe themselves to be ugly, those with a peculiar or unwelcome complexion — all these have a burden to carry in their mind which makes it hard for them to mingle with others with light-hearted glee or unselfconscious freedom.

Some efficient people may at times occupy humble places. For some time this does not seem to adversely affect them. If however they are obliged to spend a long period of time in such a small position, they gradually begin to worry whether others consider them unfit for a better place; and as a consequence are disgruntled and tempted to cavil at those in authority and to backbite them. This is particularly the case when they do not have the courage to openly revolt or to quit the place, not knowing whether the next place they may chance upon may even be less sufferable than the present one.

Again there are men and women who feel unhappy within themselves on account of their difficulty to master their own natural impulses which may not be wrong in themselves but which cannot be indulged in on account of insurmountable difficulties. Any instinctive urge, if balked, may prove costly in moral poise and internal harmony; nevertheless natural indulgence may be impossible to be allowed to take place for practical or moral reasons. Sex urge is one of the hardest to deal with in this matter. The maternal instinct is another which if unexercised leaves the subject uneasy and dissatisfied. It is true that all instincts including the sex instinct can to a certain extent be sublimated by diverting the natural energy involved into other healthy and socially acceptable channels, but an attempt at mere suppression of the instinctive energy often results in much internal conflict and consequent loss



of personal integration and happiness. The consequence is a sense of frustration and futility, a sense of inadequacy and dissatisfaction that pervades through all one's life activity. In passing it may be observed that for this reason, however convenient it may be to engage old bachelors and spinsters in educational or religious work, such persons have to work under a handicap which married men and women do not have, and that there is a possibility of the outlook of some of them at any rate being embittered by an unrecognised sense of frustration and ineffectiveness.

Any of these causes we have mentioned may do much harm to the sense of personal efficiency of an individual, and it not rarely happens that a number of these reasons function together in the same individual at once. No wonder that persons are often at war with themselves and at times make others also miserable.

How can one get over his sense of inferiority? First of all the individual must diagnose his malady. If he cannot do it himself he must get the advice of some one skilled to deal with mental unrest and unhappiness. Even the reading of some good books on the unconscious motives of human beings will not be without its use. He should find out where his special weakness lies — one need not be a thorough student of formal psychology to do it. But it is most necessary that he should be honest with himself, and if he can confide his troubles to a sympathetic and tactful friend, so much the better. Confession is the starting point of mental health, whether that confession is entirely personal or auricular.

No one however can lead an efficient personal life on mere confession. It is important that he should recognise not only his weaknesses but also his strong points; and this recognition must be followed by a conscious emphasis on what can be achieved by virtues of his positive personal traits. The credit side of one's life should certainly loom larger than the debit side. There is some underlying truth in Vivekananda's reluctance to call man a sinner. Sinner he undoubtedly is, but virtue grows and personal efficiency is enhanced only in so far as he recognises that though much is lost much still remains.

When once a man recognizes that there are still resources of good in him, he should begin to make active use of them. He that has, and makes use of what he has, is given more; while from him who fails to make use of his talents is taken away even what he has. Just as there is a law of use and exercise, there is a law of disuse which says that acquired gains tend to disappear if they are not practised. Let

the weak man glory in his strength, what little strength he has, and he will have more of it. The way to efficiency is the way of the active exercise of one's strong points, and they that make use of existing advantages find more of them. They can thus get rid of their unhealthy and therefore deceitful sense of weakness and with the confidence and sense of competence thus obtained can go further ahead in the toils and ventures of service.

This last expression puts emphasis on another aspect of success. Many persons are unhappy, discontented, and oppressed with a sense of weakness in themselves as they are ego-centred in their outlook. They think in terms of what they can get out of life rather than in terms of what they can put into it. Religion teaches the beauty of service; but psychology, which many people think has nothing to do with religion, also stresses the importance of thinking less of one-self and making others the centre of one's thought. Narcissism in any form is fraught with evil. One of the means employed to reclaim people from mental maladies is to make them actively interested in something outside of themselves. The self-centred man loses his life and its opportunities, while he that enters into the adventure of service finds life. He still has a certain sense of weakness—it gives him the necessary spiritual background of humility, but it no more oppresses him.

Invocation

By SRI R. RAMAKRISHNAN, M. A., L. T.

We have divorced God from our schools. We do not attempt any kind of religious instruction to our pupils. All that we attempt is mere secular instruction.

But even the most prosaic among us will not deny that education is a spiritual affair, and that schools are temples where pupils and teachers worship at the altar of learning. It is therefore necessary that a devout, prayerful attitude is cultivated by both teachers and taught.

Our ancients consciously strove to create an atmosphere of sacredness round the abode of education. Before the day's lessons began, the master and disciples chanted in inspiring tones a couplet or two. This invocation served to elevate them to a chaste and intensive mood. The pupils became attentive, and their capacity for reception was set in active motion. The teacher's inner springs were also touched, and he became fit to communicate knowledge.

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Whenever we think of the conditions of ancient India, there arises a feeling in us which says that there was something rich, golden, complete, pure, in that age, which we of today sadly miss. It is therefore good that we often transport ourselves to the regions in which our forefathers lived, and emerge out of them inspired, elevated, rejuvenated.

Let us read through a few of the invocations that delighted our ancestors, and bestow some thought on them.

(1) Here is an invocation. The original is transliterated below, because no translation can ever reproduce its music and its richness of sound.

*Om Bhadram Karnebhih Srinuyama Devah
Bhadram Pasyemakshabhihryajatrah
Sthirai rangaisthushtuvagmsasthanubhih
Vyasema Devahitham Yadayuh.*

Om! With our ears what is auspicious may we hear, O Gods! With our eyes may we see what is auspicious, O ye worshipful ones! May we who sing praises to ye enjoy the life allotted to us by the gods with strong limbs and body!

(2) Here is another:

*Swasti na Indro Vridhasravah
Swasti nah Pusha Viswadevah
Swasti nastharkshyo Arishtanemih
Swasti no Brihaspatir dadhatu.*

May the far-famed Indra grant us welfare! May the great sustainers, the Viswadevas, grant us welfare! May the sun of the chariot of unchecked wheels grant us welfare! May the lord of speech grant us welfare!

(3) Here is a third:

*Sahanavavatu Saha nau bhunaktu
Saha viryam Karavavahai, Tejasvina
vadhita mastu ma vidvishavahai*

May Brahman protect us both together! May he nourish us both together! May we both work together with great energy! May our study be vigorous and effective! May we not hate each other!

(4) The translation alone of another invocation is given below:—

May my limbs, speech, energy, eyes, ear and vitality as well as all the other senses become more vigorous.....May I never deny Brahman, nor may Brahman deny me!

(5) May Mitra, Varuna, Aryaman, Brihaspati, Indra and Vishnu be propitious to us!

These gods are the presiding deities of several factors like the vital energy, day, night, sun, eyes, strength, hands, speech, intellect, legs etc.

(6) The right will I speak, and I will speak the truth. May Brahman protect me! May That protect the teacher!

(7) And all the invocations end with *Om Santi Santi Santi* — Om, Peace! Peace! Peace!

Let us now see what lessons we can learn from the above invocations.

(1) Contrary to the belief wrongly held by superficial observers of India and contrary to the conclusion maliciously arrived at by interested traducers of Indian culture, our ancients were not merely not other-worldly but they were vitally interested in living a full, rich, physical life on earth. They knew the importance of a strong and virile body, and they realised the wisdom of having muscles of iron and nerves of steel? Their distinction lay in the fact that they did not stop with praying for a healthy body. They understood that the body was only an, albeit an indispensable, instrument, and they knew that man's interests lay deeper than the body. They loved to see and enjoy external grandeur, but also probed into the soul's inner depths and drank deep of celestial bliss.

(2) Our ancients realised that the bond between teacher and pupil was a sacred one, that they both belonged to the same unit, and that their united endeavours alone could lead to enlightenment. Prayers therefore went forth for the welfare of teacher and pupil. 'May we not hate each other', said they. How necessary is this prayer at the present day when there is a wrong feeling in the air in some misguided quarters that teacher and pupil belong to two opposing groups, that the interests of the pupil can be furthered by collective bargaining and other trade union methods.

(3) To the young pupil knowledge comes through every touch; every move of his brings him more illumination. All the limbs of his body go out as it were in search of knowledge. Walking, eating, speaking, touching — every process is to him a part of learning. It is only as we grow old that we walk mechanically and speak mechanically; the things of the world have no message for us; we see no poetry in them. Our present system of education stands self-condemned, because it miserably fails to afford scope for the exercise of all the

elements that make up the human personality. Go into a class-room and watch for an hour the work that goes on there. You will find the teacher doing most of the talking; the pupils sit passive, only bestirring themselves occasionally to copy down a word or a sentence that the teacher writes on the board. It is no wonder therefore that the young ones regard the school as a prison where they have to sit glued to benches for three hours at a stretch, their tedium only relieved by the change of teachers after every stroke of the bell. It is not surprising that the little ones play truant as often as possible. A child's limbs itch to be active; all the child's senses want to be simultaneously employed. Do our schools provide opportunities for the full utilisation of the child's faculties? It was different in the old days. Pupils had no need to dread school life then. They could roam about in the wood-lands with the calf and the deer, gather grass and twigs, and watch nature's gentle moods as well as her terrific aspects. They were enabled to educate themselves by living, not by hearing alone. Their life was at one with the cosmic life. So they prayed for the conferment of vigour on all their senses.

(4) Education signified the building up of a character in the old days. A well informed, clever, intellectually alert man was not necessarily an educated man. Truth and righteousness were the hall-marks of true education.

(5) Our ancients realised the supreme need of peace, and they always ended their prayers with an invocation for peace. The world to-day is unhappy because of the absence of peace. We want peace in the individual, peace in society, peace in the world. But if peace should be ensured, the citizens of the future must be prepared for it. In other words, education for peace, for all-round peace, should be the aim of schools. Progress is possible only when peace reigns — on earth and in man's soul. And the greatest of divine blessings is the blessing of peace.

College Life in Germany undergoes Transformation.

(By A Correspondent.)

In former years, college life in Germany was invariably associated in the minds of foreigners especially, with bright-coloured students' caps and scarfs, with innumerable societies, the clash of duelling swords, and in short with a life of careless gaiety hard to reconcile with any of the more serious problems of everyday life and work. It was known, of course, that behind this external appearance of pleasure-seeking, a great deal of earnest and valuable scientific and intellectual work was being accomplished by these same apparently frivolous student bodies. The high estimation in which the German colleges and institutions of advanced learning are held abroad is sufficient proof of this. Yet this same atmosphere of gaiety and frivolity was always considered by foreigners to be the outstanding characteristic of the German college and university, the forms and traditions of which dated back to the Middle Ages. Few people realized that much of the mediaeval tradition was disturbed when the necessities arising out of the war and post-war periods gave birth to a new development within the student body, which showed itself in the desire for a reformation, and that many fundamental changes began to be made under the cover of the old traditional forms, the most vital of which being the zealous struggles on the part of the students of Germany to bring about a political re-birth within the nation.

When National Socialism seized the reins of government, after having won over to its principles the soul of the nation, it found in the high schools and colleges an extraordinary amount of dissension, but the attack on liberalism being made from above, as it were, the administrative and facultative departments of most of the colleges were soon successfully re-organized. The faculties of the several colleges, for example, had come to be made up largely of Jewish professors and teachers, although even from the start, much opposition to this process had been evidenced from the student bodies. This was because the national socialist idea had already taken root and was beginning to gain ground among the student of nearly all of the German colleges. But the student body, as such, was cut up into factions and in no sense united. Within its ranks, there arose a bitter struggle as to the principles on which a general reform should be based. It was the task of National Socialism, therefore, to restore a spirit of unity in the colleges, on which it would be possible to build up a new academic

structure, in which both the college and the individual student were automatically incorporated as integral elements in the life of the nation.

This problem has been solved by National Socialist leadership in the control and administration of the colleges and high-schools. A new idea of college life, both intellectual and social, has been put into practice through the untiring efforts of those delegated to this task. Without disregarding the best traditions of former German academic life and custom, the student of to-day is brought under the influence of training in the principles of National Socialism, as a preparation for the duty he will have placed upon him as an active member of the National Socialist State.

Reich Student Leader Dr. Scheel, who took over the superintendence of the student organizations some two years ago, has successfully re-organized the entire student body of Germany. At the same time, Dr. Scheel is the chairman of the German Student Organization, whose membership includes all those who have matriculated at a university, a college, a high-school, or a school of technology. Dr. Scheel is also head of the National Socialist Students' League, whose members in the various colleges, etc. form the nucleus for National Socialist troops among the students. This League works in constant co-operation with all the Reich organizations having to do with educational matters, and their branches in the several administrative districts throughout the country.

The system of National Socialist "Self-Education" among German students has brought about the formation of two distinct student organizations, i.e., the Social Groups of the National Socialist Students' League ("Kameradschaft"), and the Technical Groups, the members of which are students following a particular course of study. The "Kameradschaft", in the first place, is to take the place of the student societies, clubs, and fraternities with which German colleges and universities teemed in former times. It will, however, continue to foster all of the best traditions of German student life in the past, and especially the spirit of patriotism which has always pervaded organizations of German students. This spirit is to be re-awakened in a national socialist conception of State and Nation. The members of these "Kameradschafts" will be the standard-bearers of the new German attitude toward world politics and they will influence the character and perspective of the young students who according to a decree issued by Reich Minister of Education Rust, must attend for at least two academic terms the high-school or college which they left in order to

perform their tour of duty in the Reich Labour Front Organization. In future, the student will still have free choice as to the students' society or "Kameradschaft" which he joins. There are several such fraternities in every college, the total number in Germany being about 900. During the time of his course of study, he is released from duty in the other N. S. Party organizations, such as the S. A. and S. S. The activities of the several "Kameradschafts", which next to their political work, are to be largely devoted to sport and physical training, are to be under the control of a responsible leader, whose task it will be to guide "self-education" groups into proper channels. Many of the members of these new student groups still live in the old fraternity houses which belonged to the former student societies, and which have now been placed at the disposal of the new groups, and between the "old Grads" organizations and the modern National Socialist Students' League a perfect spirit of harmony exists, although the new "kameradschaft" will not in any sense be a continuation of the old German college society or fraternity. These organizations are no longer to bear the name of some traditional "national" students league of mediaeval times, but will be named for great men in Germany's history, particularly those who lost their lives for the National Socialist fight for Germany's freedom. In order that students shall not lose touch with their fellow-citizens in other walks of life, or forget that they are a part of the "folk" community, all members of the "kameradschaft" societies will be required to help gather in the harvest during their vacation periods, and also to do extra work in the factories in their district between college terms. In this way, all young students will become familiar with the manual labour and the various handicrafts in which their fellow-citizens are engaged, and their courses of study will not be confined to theory, but must be practically applied. Last summer over two thousand students took part in bringing in the harvest in East Prussia alone.

After three academic terms in one of the "kameradschaft" groups, to which each student is thereafter permanently connected, he is transferred into one of the technical or occupational groups under one of the several Faculties of the college or university. Here the instruction is more intensive and is directed along scientific lines with the direct purpose of developing an academic consciousness based on National Socialist principles. The so-called "technical" or occupational groups form the foundation of the competitive occupational contests, now a part of the German higher educational system, in which more and more students are participating each year. The practical value of

this Reich Competitive Occupational System for high-school and college students is shown by the single fact that more than 50% of the students' theses and essays on scientific and intellectual subjects have been found of actual use in various departments of the National Socialist Party and of the Government.

The winners of the occupational competitive contests are given special preference as they continue their studies. The student body in Germany, taken as a whole, has entered upon a new course during the last few years. In particular, the preliminary education of talented young men of high character, who are not in a position to take of a college course owing to their limited financial means, are so assisted that they are enabled to take their entrance examinations and go to college, where they can enjoy university training without cost. Much value and importance is attached to the system of exchange students with the colleges and universities of other countries. This system is under the management of a regularly organized "Academic Exchange Service". During the current college term, there are 167 exchange students at the various German universities, not counting those foreign students who have matriculated at some German college or university independent of the exchange service. Among the former are 15 Italian students, including those holding the so-called "Mussolini scholarships". All of these foreign students are given the opportunity of becoming familiar with German student life in all its aspects and to make close friendships with their German comrades, friendships which promote sympathetic understanding and appreciation of the foreign country, and at the same time strengthening one's love for his own country.

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Gleanings.

Visual Instruction for Adults.

BY N. S. ULLAL, B. A., S. T. C. D.

(A paper read at the All-India Educational Conference, Bombay, 1938.)

The problem of the education of the vast illiterate adult population of India is a difficult and intricate one. The need of the adults for acquiring a sufficient knowledge of the 3 R's so as to be able to manage their own correspondence and accounts is, of course, great. The imparting of adequate literacy to the millions of our brethren is by itself a herculean task. Looking to the cost and trouble involved in this task and the appalling poverty of the country, the end in view appears well nigh impossible, unless a large number of individuals come forward in every village and town and work towards it day and night, and unless Government, Local Bodies and the public generously contribute towards the formation of adult education classes, free libraries and reading rooms to enable those who have acquired some literacy to retain it.

Moreover in the present international situation, the trade, industry and agriculture of our country cannot but feel the reaction and competition from foreign countries, and our traders, industrial workers and agriculturists need much more than mere literacy. Unless they are acquainted with and practise the most up-to-date methods adopted in foreign countries, they can never hope to cover the wide gap between the industrial and agricultural progress of India and other nations of the world. Similarly, the masses must be educated in the principles of responsible Government and be taught how to exercise their right to vote in an election. They should also know the history of their country as well as of England, so that they may have correct appreciation of their political position. Thus history, geography and science have to be taught to our adult brethren and this has to be done as quickly and as efficiently as possible.

Now the adults whose education we have in view are mostly engaged in some walk of life. They have to be called at a time when they are free and that time is night. But, they come home tired in the evening and are more in need of rest and recreation than the knowledge of history or geography. We can combine entertainment with instruction in visual instruction. Facts of history, geography or science, if shown and explained through the magic lantern slide or the cinema film, attain concreteness and intelligibility which instructs as well as recreates. Since the last war, every nation has been striving to develop its natural resources to the fullest extent, so as to become economically self-sufficient and in the feverish race for advancement, has been in search of the quickest and most efficient means of educating its pupils in schools, farmers in fields and workmen in factories. Visual instruction has undoubtedly proved to be that means.

In the United States of America, the Departments of Mining and Agriculture have produced hundreds of films, in addition to slides, posters and exhibits, covering all phases of the mineral and agricultural industries. These visual aids are available for use anywhere in the United States on payment of the cost of transportation.

The big industrial firms of America use motion pictures, slides, film-slides, charts and exhibits, both for advertising and for instructing workers. These visual aids illustrate manufacturing processes, as well as the history and development of an industry. Only a few workers at a time can be taken to the different sections of a factory and shown the working of the machines. Even there the workers cannot have an idea of the working of the parts of the machines which are not visible. But with the cinema a large gathering of workers can be taught the working of every part, as well as of the whole machine. The picture can be projected on a screen and the lecturer can speak through a loud speaker to hundreds of workers at one and the same time.

Russia, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, has used all types of visual aids, excursions, museums, posters, maps, stereographs, slides, plays, pageants, motion pictures, to combat the appalling illiteracy among its people. The progress made is reported to be phenomenal and in the last twenty years mass illiteracy is said to have been wiped out. The leading newspapers *Pravda* (Truth) and the *Peasants' Magazine*, in Leningrad, have got 26 and 30 lakhs of readers respectively. In Moscow, a school for visual instructors runs a course of four years, giving training in the construction and use of visual aids of all types.

Signor Mussolini has introduced the poster, the motion picture, the slide and other forms of illustrative material in the education of school pupils and adults in Italy.

The Canadian Government Motion Picture Bureau produces educational, industrial, and scenic pictures in slide and film form for distribution throughout the Dominion.

In England the British Museum offers facilities of visual education to all schools, while the Empire Film Library lends films free of charge.

In Germany excellent collections of paintings, photographs, slides and motion pictures are extensively used at Berlin, Leipzig, Munich and other cities, among schools of all types.

France has converted one of its military barracks into a studio for the preparation of suitable educational films.

In China, wireless sets are being harnessed with cinema machines as effective means of instruction in schools.

Japan has introduced education through the cinema in most of its schools.

A library of 16 mm. educational films has been maintained by the Union Government in South Africa, while a circulating film library for schools is maintained by the Educational Department of South Australia.

The experience of all these countries has been that education with visual aids is both quicker and better than without them and it is especially so in mass education. Careful experiments have proved that education with visual aids is 40 per cent more efficient than without them. Mere verbal description does not appeal to them so strongly or so quickly.

Child Welfare.

In view of the anxiety felt in all countries about overwork at school and of the interest taken everywhere in campaigns for the health of the school-child, it will be useful to give publicity to the recommendations adopted in February 1938 by the child specialists of Geneva (Switzerland) and presented by them to the Swiss Department of Public Instruction. The recommendations are as follows:

"The child-specialists in the medical profession at Geneva are particularly concerned with the effects of school life upon the health of the child whose most formative years are spent in studying at school.

"The child needs an average of 9 to 10 hours of sleep, and the 14 hours of his day should not comprise more than 7 hours of work, including homework, the remaining 7 hours being left free for meals, dressing, play, home-life, moral or religious educational exercises, hygiene, etc.

"The school week should not have more than 35 hours, including home-work.

"The senior classes of secondary schools might make an exception and establish an eight hours day on the model of the working day of adults.

"On the basis of these conditions of life which they consider to be normal for children, the pediatricists in the medical profession at Geneva hope that the Department of Public Instruction will receive favourably the following proposals concerning school work.

- (1) Saturday afternoons to be free as well as Thursday*
- (2) No sort of achievement test to be held on Mondays and no home-work to be set that involves working on Sundays.
- (3) As far as possible, the class-teacher to be alone responsible for the teaching in the lower sections of secondary schools.

* In the Canton of Geneva, as in France, Thursday is the weekly whole holiday.

(4) Taking into account the strain inherent to growth, puberty and the illnesses common to childhood, no disgrace to be attached henceforth to repeating a class, that contingency being counterbalanced by granting the pupil all kinds of facilities, such as missing a school year, or passing into a higher class without taking all the subjects generally required.

(5) The medical men wish it to be understood that they do not consider the decrease of school hours they ask for as justifying a lowering of the salaries of teachers. The hours set free might be usefully employed in preparing the lessons to be taught.

In expressing these desires, which they hope will be shared by their colleagues in the other Cantons, the pediatricists of Geneva believe that they are working for the good of their country and acting in conformity with the modern demands of hygiene and medicine."

(Information Service of the International Bureau of Education.)

The Woman Ideal in Nazi Germany.

Professor Clifford Kirkpatrick, of Minnesota University, (U.S.A.), after a year's stay in Germany on a special mission to study the Women's movement under the Nazi regime, sums up his conclusions thus :

"Women should be guardians of the germplasm, cherish the German tradition, be comrades rather than competitors, bear healthy children, unite the family with the folk, create a pleasant home atmosphere, handle men tactfully, guard morality, practise domestic economy, educate the younger generation, nurse the weak and the helpless, carry on an artistic tradition, be the guardians of the life-process, be the custodians of spiritual values, strengthen themselves by exercise for motherhood, nourish patriotism and be thoroughly womanly women.

The Indian Thinker.

Handwriting—A Declining Art.

Is it a Blessing in Disguise ?

The handwriting competition organised by a contemporary journal devoted to children is a scheme to be commended. It is a paradox that, despite the spread of education, handwriting is not what it was, and according to all accounts it is getting progressively worse. Yet this may be because of, rather than in spite of, the growth of education, for there is a wide-spread belief that the brain-power of famous men is in inverse proportion to their handwriting, and this belief seems to be borne out upon investigation.

The usual signature of Tennyson, for instance, might represent anything but his name, and Kingsley began his signature with a perfectly plain "R" instead of a "K" the rest being scratches in which a "g" and "l" are legible, but is otherwise mere guesswork in reading. Anthony Trollope's Christian name looked as if it might be Arthur, whilst the signature of Offenbach, the composer, is a wild helterskelter of scratches, in which no one letter of his name can be traced. And, strangely enough, Lord Nelson's earlier efforts in writing with his left hand, if shakier, are certainly clearer than his natural hand.

The handwriting of numerous lawyers, doctors and other professional men lends weight to the theory that the more educated the pupil the more careless his penmanship. Handwriting is, in fact, less a subject in itself than a means to acquiring skill in other and more important subjects. It has gone down in the scale of scholastic values, and the more it is used the worse it becomes. It is, moreover, a sign of the modern craze for speed; when Australia is less than three days away it is futile to hope for the painstaking labour expended on handwriting by the mediaeval monks. Nor has the typewriter helped to preserve the beautiful flourishes of the handwriting of more leisurely days. Teachers who regret the passing of ornate calligraphy can only hope that what is being lost on the roundabouts is more than being made up for on the swings.

— The Schoolmaster and Woman Teachers' Chronicle, London.

Notes.

The Indian Universities Conference.

By Prof. C. A. KRISHNAMURTI RAU, M.A., F.R.E.S.,
ASSOCIATE EDITOR.

The Fourth Quinquennial Conference of the Indian Universities was held in Bombay on the 1st of March this year, the opening of the same being done by H. E. the Governor of Bombay. Dewan Bahadur S. E. Runganatham, Vice-Chancellor of the Madras University, presided. As many as 18 Universities of India were represented at the Conference and Mr. John Sargent, Educational Commissioner with the Government of India, represented the Central Government.

In opening the Conference H. E. Sir Roger Lumley, the Governor of Bombay, said that there was need today more than at any time in the past for clear thinking and calm courage in the direction of university policy if the present and the future were to realise their best aspirations.

The Universities, he said, should be seats of learning and culture co-ordinating knowledge and the results of learning in its broadest sense. The Universities, particularly in these days of speed and bustle, should be "refugees of broad and independent thought". He warned them all against the dangers of parochialism which would interfere with the more generous ideal of the cultural importance of scholarship and learning. While pointing out to the rapid progress in the education of the masses, he prophesied a demand for cheapening University education and pleaded for closer association of the Universities with the commercial and industrial worlds. He insisted on the maintenance of a high standard and the contributions to be made to scientific research and discovery.

In his presidential address, Mr. Runganatham referred to Provincial Autonomy as a notable event though this did not shut out the wholesome influence which the Central Government was still exercising. In his opinion, the Central Advisory Board of Education and the Abbot-Wood Report would enable them to carry out the re-organisation of Secondary Education with a number of Technical schools and colleges at suitable centres after a regional survey of industrial conditions. He stressed the need for a careful and coherent scheme of technical education alongside Secondary and University education. He dwelt on two conditions essential for the success of the scheme. The first was finance and the second was the public attitude towards technical education, which, Mr. Runganatham deplored, was unfavourable to it owing to a partiality for University education. We should, however, point out that such a reference would have been appropriate to things as they existed some years ago. No parent today is against technical education unless he is sure that his boy's bent is predominantly literary. The real obstacle to progress is the absence of finance which during the past two years has shown a decidedly down-ward tendency. So the anxious parent may be spared the odium of being stiff-necked in the matter of technical education.

Mr. Runganatham's demand for a sound national policy of industrial expansion will be acclaimed by every true Indian. His appreciation of the value of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction in educational institutions will meet with general approval. His discussion of the place of English in our curriculum today was fair and stimulated thought in the direction of the need for making the Indian languages adequate vehicles of modern thought.

A number of resolutions were passed at the Conference, of which the most important were those relating to making the mother tongue the medium of instruction up to and including the Degree Course, advisory committees for women for each University, the parity of Examinations of the different Universities, and the need for the Universities establishing close contact with commercial and industrial organisations in the country.

We have to wait and see how far these resolutions are going to be carried out or influence the working of the Universities.

Reviews.

Books by Macmillan & Co., Ltd.

1. **First English Course** : By a Menezes, M. A., and V. D. Salgaonkar, M. A., LL. B. Pages xii+417. Price: Re. 1-8-0.

This is a book providing both Grammar and Composition in one volume for the earlier standards. Pains have been taken to make the treatment of the subject devoid of boredom so as to infuse interest and help in the mastery of its contents with minimum effort. The theory and applied grammar have been intelligently blended, with explanatory notes on the correct significance of terminologies. Copious exercises follow each chapter, which would be helpful for recapitulation.

The Composition part begins appropriately with models and exercises in oral practice. Story writing of different types is then attempted, one special feature of it being the inclusion of picture composition. The paragraph, the essay, letter-writing, dialogue, and paraphrase have next received attention, models and outlines being given. The chapter on 'Appreciation of Poetry' would be of value to teachers and pupils.

Lower Forms of Secondary Schools will find the book highly useful.

2. Achievement : By J. H. Mair, M. A. Price: Re. 1. Pp. 148.

As the title signifies, the contents treat of remarkable achievements in the various realms—of History, Literature, Politics, Science, Technology etc. Readers are herein introduced to world-famous heroes and heroines who have made lasting contributions in all spheres of life. They get glimpses of inspiring personalities like Socrates, Abraham Lincoln, Mustafa Kemal and others farther home, and of towering personages like Asoka, Mahatma Gandhi, Sarojini, Ashutosh Mukerji etc., nearer home. The sketches breathe a catholic outlook throughout, and make refreshing and elevating reading. Giving a wide berth to monotony and written in a charming, fluent style, the book would be found a pleasurable companion for a light hour of mental recreation. High School students would be profited by studying this in their leisure.

3. New Model Selections of Prose and Poetry : For Form V. Price: Re. 1—2—0. Pp. 223.

This is a text-book of English designed to meet the needs of Madras Schools. The selections have been judiciously chosen, mostly with an Indian setting, and serving to introduce readers to 'straight-forward contemporary English prose'. For securing variety, some extracts from older writers and poems of different periods and styles have been incorporated. One special feature of the book lies in its emphasis on the study of language forms and grammatical principles through the subject matter. For this purpose, a systematic course of notes and exercises has been planned to follow each lesson. The reader is first introduced to a sketch of the author and his subject, followed by helpful notes and exercises in grammar, usage and composition. Poetical selections have, in addition, a short critical comment which would afford training in literary appreciation. Aptly illustrated and neatly got up, the volume would admirably serve the purpose for which it has been compiled.

4. Food Facts and Diet Planning (For Students and House-wife). By Grace MacDonald, B. Sc. (Hons.), F. R. I. P. H. H. Pages 168 Price: Sh. 3.

This is a book useful to students of Domestic Science and those interested in problems of Nutrition and Diet Planning. The contents abound in valuable information supported by statistics and diagrams, and apt quotations. The classification of food substances and their relative values, followed by Vitamins and their bearing on health, form interesting subject matter to begin with. The reader is then taken through clear accounts relating to composition of common articles of

food, correct methods of cooking and preserving food, and correct planning of diet according to age, climate, occupation, etc., which make refreshing reading. A knowledge of Digestion and Absorption and the action of Microbes being essential in this connection, necessary matter has also been included. The concluding chapter on gardening and its contribution to a healthy diet will be appreciated.

The book would prove a valuable guide in dietetics and as such deserves to be in every library.

5. ஸ்கூல் கௌஸ் பௌதிசாஸ்திரம் Book I. By T. S. Krishnaswami Aiyer, M.A. L.T., Translated by K. R. Krishnamurthi Aiyer, B.A., L.T. Published by Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd., Madras. Price: Re. 1—4—0.

This is a Tamil rendering of the original 'School Course in Physics' in English so popular among High Schools. Following the original plan of treatment, the translating author has rendered the subject in lucid and simple Tamil. Most of the scientific terms used have been culled from the list of Equivalents published by the Education Department. Where the latter have not been apt or sufficiently intelligible, transliteration of terms or the use of other familiar and easily recognisable expressions has been attempted. English terms have been given side by side with Tamil equivalents. Care has been taken to clothe laws and definitions in terse, clear and accurate expression. The contents throughout, technical as they are, have been made quite readable and capable of being easily mastered by pupils. The volume treats only of the portions needed for Form V. Heat and Light having been reserved for the next part. Pupils specialising in Physics will find it a useful text-book.

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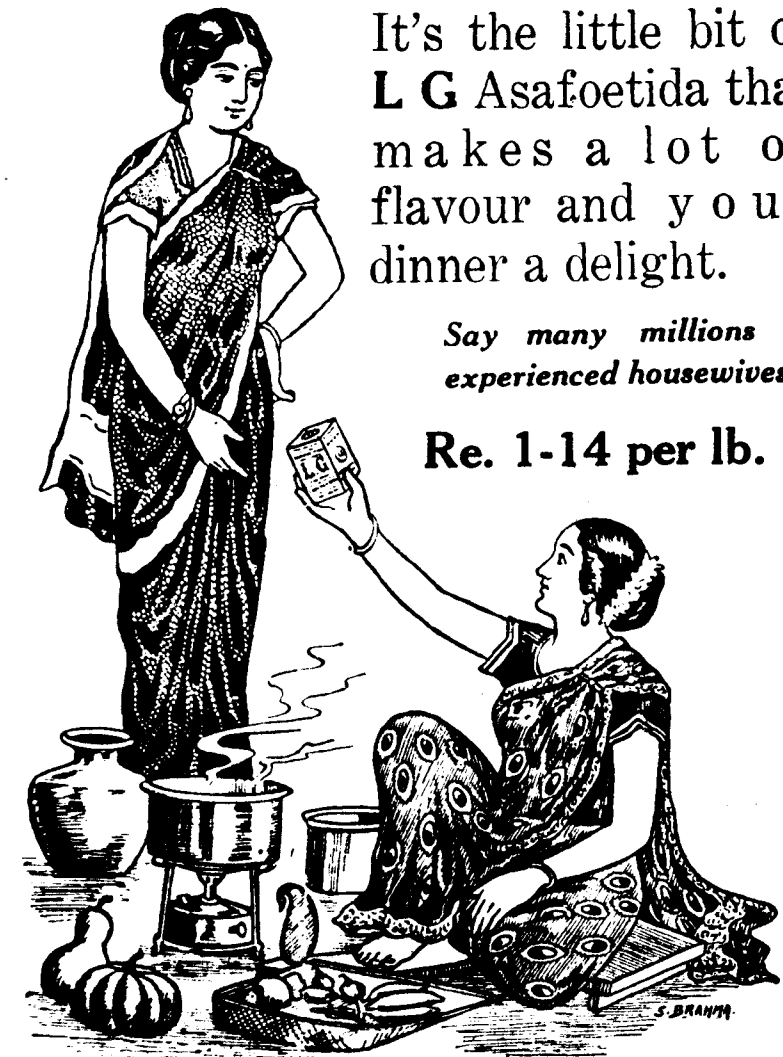
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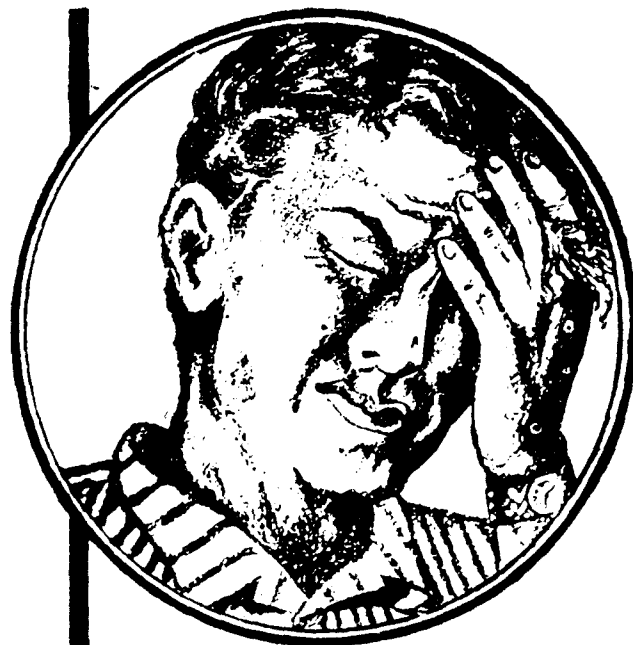
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