

LATIN.

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PHYSICS.

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GEOLOGY.

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PHYSIOLOGY.

Captain D. Mc Cay I. M. S.

BOTANY.

J. H. Burkill, M.A.

ZOOLOGY.

Dr. N. Anandale D. Sc.

ORIGINAL COMPOSITION

IN BENGALI

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CLASSICS AT THE UNIVERSITY.

No provision need be made for the Indian Vernaculars at any University Examination, as ample provision has been made for them both at the Primary and Secondary stages of Education. According to the Resolution of the Government of India dated the 11th March 1904, the vernaculars are to be the medium of instruction up to the minimum age of 13, and it has been further recommended that 'the study of vernaculars should be kept up until the end of the school course' by which, no doubt, the Government of India mean the School Final Examination.

The Universities Commission recommend in para 171 of their Report "that the only subjects in which a student should be examined are English, a classical language, Mathematics, and History and Geography" at the Matriculation Examination. They further include a classical language as a compulsory subject in the Intermediate Course and in the B. A. Course (para

117 of their Report.) The following words contained in para 89 are well worth quoting:—

“One of the most important questions in connection with the second language is whether, as between a classical language and its allied vernaculars, the classical language alone should be recognised in the courses at the Universities, or any of those vernaculars may also be recognised... Whilst we are strongly impressed with the need for the more careful study of vernacular languages, we do not think, for several reasons, that to allow a student to study a vernacular in substitution for a classical language will secure that object or be advisable from the point of view of general education. In the first place, if the alternative of a vernacular language is permitted, many students will lose the benefits to be derived from a knowledge of a classical language containing a rich literature and embodying the record of the thought and action of one or other of the great races of mankind. There is no Indian Vernacular, according to the strongest advocate of the alternative study of vernacular languages, that is as rich in literature as Sanskrit. In the second place, the amount of mental training which the study of a classical language ensures is much greater than that required for the study of a vernacular language. Thirdly, the study of classical languages is of the utmost importance for the improvement of their allied vernaculars. That the vernacular languages and literature have advanced more rapidly in Bengal and Bombay than in Madras* appears to us to afford a striking illustration of this principle.”

Under the existing Regulations, a candidate is permitted to take up an Indian Vernacular in place of a Classical Language at the Entrance Examination. But as no such provision exists at the F. A. Examination, the arrangement practically neces-

* In Madras option is allowed even in higher examinations between a vernacular and a classical language.

sitates that such Entrance candidates as have the F. A. Examination in prospect begin their classical studies at the Entrance stage; and a very small proportion of candidates only—namely those who do not go in for higher University education, take up the Indian vernaculars. The Draft Regulations, whilst retaining the same arrangement at the Matriculation, have provided for a bifurcation of studies after the Matriculation (and not as heretofore after the F.A.), and have eliminated second language entirely from the Intermediate Examination in Science. Candidates for Matriculation, whose aptitudes lie on the Science side will not therefore think it worth their while to learn a classical language when such a study will not be necessary for them in their future academical career. The inevitable result of such a Regulation will be the ignorance of classics on the part of a very large number of college students, a state of things highly detrimental to the best interests of the country and its people. One cannot therefore too strongly deprecate this provision of the Draft Regulations, which leaves it entirely to the choice of those who seek admission to the University, whether or not they should study classics. A workable knowledge of one or other of the classical languages on the part of all candidates for matriculation should be compulsorily provided for, leaving it to those who pass the Matriculation to decide whether they care to have a fuller knowledge of the subject at the higher stages.

The strongest advocate of the study of vernacular languages may go so far as to ask for a simultaneous study of a classical language and an Indian Vernacular. But considering that the English Language is bound to be a compulsory subject of study at all University Examinations, this will be laying an undue stress upon linguistic studies to the prejudice of the claims of other branches of study. Nor is the compromise effected by the Calcutta University at its Entrance Examination by inclu-

ding under the subject of oriental classics a paper in Translation from English into a Vernacular and Composition in a Vernacular, to be approved of by any sound educationist, as the tendency of such an arrangement is to give a candidate a cheap pass in oriental classics by enabling him to get through the examination with a very superficial or no knowledge of the classical language at all.

It will not be out of place to point out in this connection that India is the home of many races speaking many tongues and if the university chooses to recognise every language spoken by some section, large or small, of the people, as it has too often done in the past, a veritable confusion of tongues creating endless complications in the work of examination is unavoidable. Besides, it is highly undesirable to recognise languages (like Khasi, Parbatia, etc) that can hardly boast of any literature. Exception has been taken in some quarters to the compelling of Khasi and Parbatia-speaking students (who have no ancient classics of their own) to waste their time in acquiring the rudiments of Latin; it however is certainly not the duty of the university to lower its standards to suit the conveniences of all comers, but on the other hand it should insist that these high standards should be conformed to by those who value the privilege of University education. The inclusion of a select few of the Indian Vernaculars (e. g. those rich in literature) is also invidious, entailing as it does a hardship on certain sections of the community whilst others enjoy an immunity from it. The best solution of the second-language difficulty, therefore lies in the recognition of the classical languages alone to the exclusion of the vernaculars, thus enabling the various peoples with which this University is concerned to study their ancient classics (viz, Sanskrit for Hindus, Arabic or Persian for Mussulmans, Pali for Buddhists, Classical Armenian or Hebrew for Jews, Latin or Greek for Europeans and Eurasians.)

Besides the usual claims of classical studies, as affording a very high order of mental culture and intellectual discipline, the study of Sanskrit, Arabic or Persian has special claims upon the two great communities of which Indian Society is mainly made up—the Hindus and the Musalmans. It is admitted on all hands that in this country high education on an English basis is indispensably necessary and highly beneficial. But it can hardly impart that complete culture which is the object of all liberal education, if the classics of India form no integral part of it. A knowledge of the classical languages of India, does not only enable the student (in his future life) to draw upon the rich treasures of poetry and philosophy of his race and to gain an insight into the true spirit of his ancestral religion and social system, but also gives him the necessary equipment for enriching the vernacular. This will serve to carry out the principle affirmed in the Education Despatch of 1854 and endorsed by the Resolution of the Government of India dated the 11th March 1904, that European knowledge should gradually be brought by means of the Indian vernaculars within the reach of all classes of people.

Further it is only reasonable to expect the Indian student to devote himself to questions of Indian philology and original research in connection with the literature and philosophy of his race, instead of leaving such tasks to foreigners. It is impossible for the Indian student to be thoroughly equipped for this purpose unless and until he obtains a thorough grounding in the classics. Again the young *alumni* of science, if they have assimilated Western knowledge in the true sense of the term, cannot enrich their national literature by writing scientific treatises for the people without a knowledge of the classical languages of India, to which they must necessarily resort for framing or adopting a scientific terminology.

Linguistically, the relation of a large number of Indian ver-