

TEACHING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

The first Matriculation Examination under the new regulations will be held in 1910. This requires that in all secondary schools from the last class to the third, the system of teaching and the curriculum of studies will be radically changed from the beginning of the next session. Greater attention will have to be paid to *translation* and *composition* both in English and in the vernaculars; *wider reading* will have to be encouraged in languages; in Sanskrit and other classical languages the teaching will have to follow the *natural method* of reading lessons first and grammar next or along with reading lessons, and not the *unnatural* method of grammar first and reading lessons next, which was hitherto in vogue. In Geometry *practical exercises* should precede lessons on theorems, in other words, the pupils should learn first for instance practically with a pair of compasses and a ruler to bisect a given straight line before they learn the theory of it; in Geography they should first learn the natural divisions and configurations of a country; how these divisions and configurations determine the distribution of rainfall and other climatic conditions, the courses of rivers, the distribution of animals and vegetables, the area and growth of food and industrial crops, the density of population, growth of towns and cities, trade routes, exports and imports, while political geography or geography as moulded by man should be relegated to a subsidiary position; in short the pupils will have to learn subject matters and not text-books, to acquire a knowledge of things and not how that knowledge is communicated.

Teachers shall have in fact to hold before their pupils a new ideal,—the ideal of learning things and not merely passing examinations. This is a plain truth but it has to be dinned into the ears of both teachers and their pupils, since truth is often stranger than fiction. The teacher shall have to keep in view one essential principle of teaching: he should teach

first the broad principles of a subject and leave the details to be learnt when necessary after the broad principles have been mastered. For instance in Sanskrit, the pupil should be taught to read, write and understand simple plain easy passages without his energies being frittered away and time wasted in attempting the impossible at this stage, namely learning the peculiarities and details of declensions, conjugations, transformations *et hoc genus omne*; in English, he should be taught how to write and speak plain easy everyday English, correct spelling and some sort of punctuation without any attempt at fine and idiomatic writing; he should be kept as far apart as possible from archaic words and forms of expression which if once learnt will be extremely difficult for him to unlearn afterwards. In Geography maps and atlases should be his companions and books should be left undisturbed on the upper shelves of the book-case beyond his reach and to be consulted only occasionally by way of reference; history should be taught as the description of a community and not a mere catalogue of kings, battles and dates, as the evolution of a society and not mere revolutions of kings, inductively from the known to the unknown and not deductively from the unknown to the known; mathematics as an intellectual exercise and not a mere mechanical solution of possible and impossible problems.

We do not want our boys to grow into mental acrobats or intellectual monstrosities fit for exhibition but thinking practical men fit to be useful members of society. The new regulations aim at these wholesome changes in the method of teaching and the sooner the teacher grasps this new model and mends his manners accordingly the better it will be for the education of our boys.

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