

# BANGABASI COLLEGE MAGAZINE.

प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया

By Reverence : By Questioning : By Service.

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## THE MONTH.

Our readers are no doubt aware that at the instance of Mr. G. C. Bose, the Senate appointed a Committee for enquiring into the causes of the phenomenally bad results of the last Entrance Examination. The Committee consisted of five members including the Vice-Chancellor, the Registrar, Sir Gooroodas Banerjee, the Hon'ble Bhupendra Nath Bose and Father Lafont. The Report now before the public is in every way worthy of the eminent men who have penned it. We take the liberty of quoting two paragraphs which form the very cream of the Report.

“ The method of marking in subjects in which there are Head Examiners appears to us to be open to grave objection. Answers are not judged as a whole. The marks allotted to an answer are subdivided into parts, and are distributed according to what are styled points, which often overlap. Deductions are directed to be made according to a scale arbitrarily fixed, for faults in the answers

50/238

which in some instances are either no faults at all or are quite excusable. For example, marks are deducted for want of strict adherence to the text-book, in matters of minor punctuation. The result is that the number of deductions so made may exhaust the full number of marks allotted to the answer, although after making due deduction for faults there remains a residuum of good work in the answer which ought to be entitled to credit. In particular in regard to translations and pieces of original composition, judging from the marks awarded and taking into consideration the rules adopted as to the award and deduction of marks, we feel bound to say that the method is unjust and unsatisfactory. The system of examination by Head Examiners was introduced with the object of securing uniformity of standard. We regret to find that it has gradually developed into a method of examination which is wholly mechanical by reason of an unduly strict and unattainable standard of uniformity being kept in view, and free exercise of judgment by Examiners being controlled by minute and rigid rules. We should add in defence of our Examiners in recent years that these rules are of long standing; and they have been made, at least as often on the suggestion of the Examiners, to prevent subsequent interference in their work by Head Examiners, as by the Head Examiners to secure uniformity in the work of the Examiners under them. In spite of this artificial system, uniformity has not however been attained; and in some instances credit has not been given for answers which even under the rules framed are entitled to credit."

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"We find that in some cases the instructions given by the Head Examiner were not communicated to the Registrar as required by the rules; and in most cases the copy of the instructions sent to the Registrar did not contain all the instructions that had been given. We also find that in one instance there was no second meeting of Examiners as required by the rules for the final determination of the standard."

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These paragraphs leave no doubt on any unbiassed mind that the system of appointing an 'overlord' over the examiners

has proved an absolute failure, since the object for which it was introduced has been completely defeated ; besides it has given rise to evils of serious import. It is not a little surprising, therefore, to put it very mildly, that the Committee have not in spite of all this seen their way to recommending an abolition of this vicious system, a system of which we have loudly complained more than once in these pages. The Committee are content with proposing certain safe-guards which we doubt not will be more honoured in the breach than in the observance as similar safe-guards have been in the past. It is a pity that although the Committee have gone to the very root of the question, they have shut their eyes to the unavoidable logical conclusion of their own premisses and desisted from recommending a drastic remedy for a grave failure of justice.

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A Note of Dissent from the Committee's Report has been put forward by the Hon'ble Bhupendra Nath Bose. Not content with the vague generalities indulged in by his colleagues, the Hon'ble member has been at the pains to reveal facts and figures that materially help people having no access to the records in understanding the gravity of the irregularities committed by the examiners in certain subjects. However much we may regret from an academical point of view that the Hon'ble member should think it fit to wash the august University's dirty linen in public, we are compelled to admit that he has made out his case that a grave miscarriage of justice has taken place and that it is not too late to make an honest attempt at rectifying it by ordering a fresh examination of the answer papers. This extreme view, however, is not endorsed in the majority Report which simply concerns itself with devising means for preventing such irregularities in future. In a country where there is no active public opinion on educational questions it is not likely that such revelations

and such recommendations will cause any stir in the public mind. Our only reliance therefore is on the good sense of the Senate. The Senate, we understand, held a special meeting for the purpose of discussing the Report along with the Note of Dissent. Several Notes based on the Report were also circulated among the members of Senate. The Senate did not see their way to adopt the suggestions embodied in the Note of Dissent and threw them out by a large majority. The Syndicate have been asked by the Senate to draw up new Rules for Examinations by the light of the revelations and recommendations made in the Report, the Note of Dissent and the several Notes based on them.

Besides the Vice-Chancellor and the Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, who, under the new Regulations are *ex officio* members of the Syndicate, the following fifteen gentlemen have been duly elected :—

1. Dr. P. K. Ray	}	Elected by the Faculty of Arts.
2. N. N. Ghosh, Esq.		
3. C. Little, Esq.		
4. Rev. A. B. Wann.		
5. S. C. Mahalanabis Esq.	}	Elected by the Faculty of Science.
6. C. W. Peake Esq.		
7. Babu Devaprasad "Sarvadhikari,	}	Elected by the Faculty of Law.
8. S. P. Sinha, Esq.		
9. Rai Debendra Nath Ray Bahadur.	}	Elected by the Faculty of Medicine.
10. Lt. Col. C. P. Lukis.		
11. B. Heaton Esq.	}	Elected by the Faculty of Engineering
12. Col. Harris	}	Elected by the Senate.
13. Babu Kāli Charan Banerjee		
14. Hon'ble Bhupendra Nath Bose.		
15. Mr. Hari Nath De.		

We had occasion to express our satisfaction in the previous issue that not a single non-teacher was returned by the Faculties of Art and Science. We are glad to be able to say that the Senate elections have been equally satisfactory, as the only non-teacher returned by the Senate is the Hon'ble Bhupendra Nath Bose,\* who, as the representative of the University on the Bengal Legislative Council, eminently deserves a place on the Syndicate. Nay, it should have been provided for in the Act that the holder of this exalted position should be an *ex-officio* member of the Syndicate like the Director of Public Instruction, Bengal and the Vice-Chancellor. We understand that the new Syndicate have taken over charge from the Provisional Syndicate and have arranged to meet twice a month from now.

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The Annual Report of the Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, has been published in a recent issue of the Calcutta Gazette. It is an interesting document, eminently readable and bears on every page ample evidence of the activities that characterise the working of the Department ever since the promulgation of Lord Curzon's education Resolution. We are glad to notice that the spirit of reform is abroad and that the present Director has taken steps to awaken Government to a full sense of their responsibilities in this matter. One great step towards reform lies in the increase of the controlling and the teaching staff as well as in the improvement of the prospects of the various Services. It is satisfactory to learn that the latter end has been to a certain extent secured by the scheme sanctioned by the Secretary of State, reference to which has been made in a subsequent paragraph and the former object the Director has full in view. Nothing is more needful for sound education than the efficiency of teachers in the lower classes and unless and until this is secured, Universities Acts and Regulations and Resolutions for University reform

will be of no avail. We are doubtful of the utility of increasing the directing and the inspecting staff so long as the teaching staff in the lower classes remains at it is. The creation of a graded system of lower Subordinate service is a distinct move in the right direction although it is to be feared that the pay and prospects provided for is not likely to attract really capable men to the service. But a recent letter of the Government of India on the improvement of secondary or school education holds out a definite hope that the lower Subordinate service will ere long be treated in a more liberal manner. We are fully in sympathy with the views entertained by the Director on most questions of educational importance but we must beg leave to differ from him on the question of the Science Readers introduced by Sir Alexander Pedler. We are free to admit that the experiment has not proved eminently successful but this has been the case not owing to any inherent fault in the books or in the system but to the paucity of competent teachers, in as much as the system was introduced before teachers had been trained for the work. It was an attempt to make bricks without straw.

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We were led to expect that the University under the present regime will no longer rest content with its old function of merely conferring degrees after examination and we are gratified to find that our expectations have been more than fulfilled, for among names of persons recommended for Examinerships we come across those of several gentlemen who have been dubbed M. A.'s although they underwent no examination specially devised for the purpose, so far as we are aware. Let us congratulate our lucky friends as well as the University on this occasion, presumably the earliest in the history of the University, of receiving and conferring the honorary degree of Master of Arts. If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

In another respect the new University has transcended the old. The old University laid down the principle that teachers should not set papers on the subject they taught, evidently with a view to brush off all pedantry and too much technique. It appears that the members of the new Senate have acted upon the equally healthy principle that teachers should examine in subjects with which they are least conversant. The examination will thus be conducted on a sound common-sense basis and all suspicions of pedantic hair-splitting will be laid at rest for ever. With this laudable object in view, the members of the Senate have recommended an eminent botanist for an examinership in Classics at the Degree examination, and a veteran scientist and a young medico for examinerships in Philosophy at the Degree examination. It now remains to be seen how the Syndicate consisting almost exclusively of Teachers will see their way to rise above their class-prejudices in dealing with these eminently judicious recommendations of the members of the Senate.

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Two successive issues of the Calcutta Gazette in the course of the month contained two announcements affording great cause for jubilation to the educated community of the Province. One published a fairly long list of names of young men who have been appointed Deputy Magistrates or Sub-Deputies. Almost everyone of these—and the exceptions are no doubt special cases—is a graduate and a few are distinguished graduates who were nominated by the local University. The abolition of the competitive test led many people to apprehend that this will pave the way towards the perpetration of grave jobberies in the form of nepotism and favouritism and that a fair opening for the legitimate aspirations of our graduates will be barred out. We did not share the apprehension at the time and we are glad to find now that there is

good ground for the hopeful view we took of the question at the time.

The other announcement we refer to is the nominal roll of educational officers of the Province both in the Provincial Service and the Subordinate Service. There has been improvement of status all round under the new scheme and the majority of the officers have obtained a lift. Whilst congratulating the recipients on this recognition of their claims and rejoicing in behalf of future candidates for admission into the Provincial Service on the raising of the minimum or initial pay from Rs. 150 to Rs. 200 as sanctioned under the new scheme, we cannot say that those who distinguish themselves in the Oriental Languages have obtained or are likely to obtain that equitable consideration which they so eminently deserve and the absence of which was strongly deprecated by the Universities Commission. Let us cite a few instances which carry their own lesson with them. The Principal of the Sanskrit College who is the senior man in his subject and one of the finest scholars among us must rest content with Rs. 600 when he is within a year or so of his retirement. And even this is considered by many as a singular case of good fortune as things go in this department of learning. Another distinguished Sanskritist, a first class M. A. and a Premchand Roychand Scholar and one of the best products of the Sanskrit College, has just obtained Rs. 300 while two other Premchand Roychand Scholars who took up other subjects than Sanskrit have obtained Rs. 500, although they are very much junior in service to the eminent Sanskritist we have been referring to. Yet another First Class Sanskritist who has been in service for above ten years still gets Rs. 200 and has not been promoted to the Provincial Service, although he has been working as a senior Professor in First Grade Colleges ever since his appointment. When such prospects and such emoluments

are held out to the finest products of the University, it may be very well guessed how our indigenous scholars fare in the Service. And after all this, Government talks of the decadence of Sanskrit learning after Western methods in our Province and threatens us with the importation of a Western Scholar for the improvement of the tone of Sanskrit teaching in our Colleges. However, we must be thankful for the small mercies that have been meted out to a deserving body of men who have been long treated with injustice. It is a hopeful sign that Government is gradually awakening to a sense of the importance of the fact that the Teachers form a powerful lever wherewith to work out the intellectual elevation of the country.

The Collège and School closed from the 22nd December to the 2nd January, both days inclusive, on account of Christmas and New Year's Day holidays. The intervention of the holidays which we could not resist the temptation of enjoying to the fullest has occasioned a slight delay in bringing out the Magazine.

Periodicals received since our last acknowledgement :— Macmillan's Magazine, Indian Education, the Educational Review, Central Hindu College Magazine, and the D. A. V. College Union Magazine for December, The Student's Own Magazine for November and December, the Indian Student and the Student's Magazine for October, the Dawn and Dawn Society's Magazine (which has been again converted into a monthly) for November and December. Besides the *Sanjibani* and the *Utbohdana* we have received another vernacular paper (a monthly) called *Kajerloke* (the Business Man) of which the first two issues—for *Ashwin* and *Kartik*—have reached us. It is a new venture on a new plan, devoted to practical questions of the economic

development of the country. We wish our contemporary success in this novel sphere of activity.

We are glad to receive the first quarterly issue (for December 1906 and January-February 1907) of another College Magazine, the organ of ~~Doveton~~ ~~College~~. Though inferior in get-up and variety of its contents to the **Xaverian** which we had occasion to review sometime ago, the ~~Doveton~~ College Magazine deserves every encouragement as a new development of the activities of one of the oldest Colleges in Calcutta. As we have always entertained the view that every College should have its literary organ, we are unfeignedly glad at the advent of our young contemporary and look forward to the day when the zeal of its conductors and contributors will convert it into a monthly.

As we go to press, we learn that on the results of the Premchand Roychand Studentship Examination held in November last, the Studentship and the Mouat Medal have been awarded to Babu Panchanan Niyogi, M. A., of Presidency College. We also learn that the results of the M. A. Examination have been recently published. It is satisfactory to notice that *four* students have obtained a First Class in English, *one* in Philosophy, *two* in Mathematics and *two* in Physics. We may remark in passing that the student who heads the list in Botany got his training from this College but as he was in the M. A. Class only for six months, he had to appear under the Rules of the University not as a student of the college but as a Private Student. Presidency College occupies the foremost places in every subject and the majority of places as well. This is as it should be. But it is rather curious that with a single exception, students from the unaided Colleges of Calcutta are conspicuous by their absence from the list.

The Syndicate have, we understand, requested Babu Nrisingha Chandra Mukerjee, Rai Rajendra Chandra Shastri Bahadur

and Pandit Bahuballabh Sastri to prepare a Sanskrit Grammar for the Intermediate and B. A. Examinations under the supervision of the Vice-Chancellor, for which Rs. 1000 will be paid to each of them. For an Arabic Grammar to be similarly prepared, Maulvie Azoo will obtain Rs. 2000 and Mr. Harinath De Rs. 1000. Mr. N. N. Ghosh has been requested to prepare a book dealing with 'Progress of India under British Rule and the Present Administration of India' for which he will obtain Rs. 2000. It should be borne in mind that the books thus prepared are to be the property of the University. As we have expressed our views on the policy of the University regarding this question in a previous issue, we need not further dilate on the recent decision of the Syndicate.

### FAILURES AT THE ENTRANCE EXAMINATION.

1. The Committee of enquiry report that the system of Examination by Head Examiners "has developed into a method of Examination which is wholly mechanical" and the object with which it was introduced (namely, that of "securing uniformity of standard") "has not been attained, in spite of this artificial system;" nor in their opinion is "any absolute and ideal standard of uniformity" desirable.

2. After referring to the defects of the system of Examination by Head Examiners in paragraph 8 of their Report, the Committee recommend five limitations on the functions of Head Examiners with a view no doubt to remedy these defects. Four of these limitations, namely the first, the second, the third and the fifth are virtually such as already exist in the Rules for Examinations and a mere repetition of them is not likely to add to their force in future. As regards the fourth limitation which is new it will be practically unworkable, because it will involve at least two Examinations by the Sub-Examiners and two Examinations by the Head Examiner of, say, a hundred papers before arriving at a conclusion about the leniency or strictness of Examiners. On the other hand, if the tendency of individual Examiners one way or the other be known to the Syndicate as incurable from before, the best solution would be to eliminate them at the time of appointment.