

## A CENTURY OF ENGLISH EDUCATION IN TRAVANCORE 1817-1917

ENGLISH Education in Travancore has been the fruit of the munificence and culture of the successive sovereigns of the State from Her Highness Rani Gouri Parwathy Bhye, who ascended the musnad in 1815, to His Gracious Highness the present Maharajah. But for the valuable help rendered by the former sovereign, under the advice of Colonel Munro, the British Resident, the introduction of Western education would certainly have been indefinitely delayed. It is a striking fact that State aid was given for the founding of an English school about half a century before a similar step was taken in connection with a vernacular school. It may also be said that the desire to improve vernacular education and to elevate the vernacular school from the antiquated type was itself a direct result of the gradual spread of modern and enlightened ideas through English education.

### Syrian Seminary.

The earliest school in this State where English was regularly taught was that started in the Syrian College or Seminary at Kottayam, which was built in 1814 for the education of the Syrians. English education was begun in the College in 1817 by the Rev. Benjamin Bailey, whom the Church Missionary Society had sent at the instance of Colonel Munro. The next year he was succeeded by the Rev. Joseph Fenn as Principal. Fenn had among his assistants John Roberts, who was destined to play an important part in the early history of English education in the State. About the same time, H. H. the Rani endowed the College with a sum of over twenty thousand Rupees and a tract of land now known as Munro Island. In connection with this record of Her Highness' liberality, it should be stated that the College at Kottayam was regarded by her Government as an institution for general education from which any demands of the State for officers to fill the various Departments of its public service were to be met. Till 1827 this work was carried on under the conjoint management of the Syrian Metropolitan and the missionaries of the

C. M. S., the course of studies comprising besides English, Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Syriac, Sanskrit, Higher Mathematics and Natural Philosophy.

The following extracts from the 'Reminiscences' of Colonel Welsh who visited Kottayam in 1824 will give some idea of the high standard of education given in the Seminary in those early days:—

"On the second story of the Seminary is a library, containing 2,250 elegantly bound volumes, on Theology, Astrology, Mathematics, History and, in short, every other science in the English, French, Latin, Greek, Syriac, Hebrew, Malayalam, Persian, Arabic and German languages; as well as a repertory of scientific instruments, containing globes, orreries, telescopes, an electrifying machine, air pump, magic lantern, microscopes etc., all of which are of the best quality."

"We next ascended to Mr. Fenn's room, where we heard the examination of seven native scholars, apparently between the ages of 14 and 18. The first book was Virgil which they were then learning, and with which they were quite *au fait*; a passage in Caesar's commentaries, which they had never read before, was then given to them, which they immediately rendered into good English; and in short evinced a surprising proficiency in the grammars of both languages, equally foreign to them."

### C. M. S. College.

In 1837 the above school was transferred to another building and came to be known as the C. M. S. College. About 1845 during the Principalship of Rev. J. Chapman, Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, a beautiful chapel was added to the College buildings. The first batch of candidates for the Matriculation was sent in 1862 by the Rev. Richard Collins M. A. It was the Rev. J. H. Bishop B. A. who thoroughly reorganised the College and brought it to a very high level of efficiency. In 1892 during the time of the Rev. A. J. F. Adams M. A., of Balliol College, Oxford, the institution was affiliated to the Madras University as a Second Grade College.

### Scott Christian College.

The next school in the State where English education was given was the Nagercoil Seminary started by the Rev. Charles Mead of the London Missionary Society in the year 1819. This was at first intended for training men for service in the Mission. Mr. John Roberts was for some years the headmaster of this institution. Under the able management of Mr. Mead and his successors the Nagercoil Seminary developed gradually. The arrival of Rev. O. Whitehouse in 1842 began a new period in the history of the Seminary. He possessed great abilities both as a teacher and organiser, and his work firmly established the institution. He was followed by Dr. Duthie during whose long

period of service the Seminary developed into a High School and later into a Second Grade College. It was affiliated to the Madras University in 1893. It is a noteworthy fact that two of the Dewans of Travancore received their early training in that Seminary.

### Maharajah's College.

The year 1831 forms the next landmark in the history of English education in this State. It was in that year that an English school was started in Trivandrum. The circumstances that led to this result are interesting. In Dec. 1831, H. H. the Rajah visited the southern parts of Travancore. "His Highness" visit to the Nagercoil English Seminary and the Mission Press produced important results to the State, for he was so much delighted with the working of these useful institutions, and so much impressed of their importance as civilising agents, that he very much regretted that his own capital could not boast of such establishments. When, therefore, His Highness requested the missionaries to help him to establish similar institutions in Trivandrum, they heartily agreed. In consequence of this Mr. Roberts the headmaster was induced to go and start an English School at Trivandrum." Originally it was a private school, but in 1836 it was taken over by the Sirkar and came to be known as the Rajah's Free School. No fees were levied and the strength was limited to 100. It is this school, begun in such a modest manner, that has developed into the present Maharajah's College at Trivandrum. Under Mr. Roberts, who was a man of great ability, force of character, and piety, the Free School made good progress. The course of studies included Logic, Mental Philosophy, Natural Philosophy and Higher Mathematics. It is interesting to remember that Mr. John Roberts was connected with the three earliest English Schools in the State.

In 1864 the strength of the School had risen to 500. In that year the first batch of candidates appeared for the Matriculation Examination of the Madras University. The same year the old system of free education was stopped and fees began to be levied. In 1865, Mr. John Ross, M. A., fittingly described by the late Maharajah as the 'Master-tiller of the intellectual soil of Travancore' arrived and took charge of the School. Soon afterwards a senior department was formed consisting of a class of ten matriculated students and another of about twenty youths preparing for the Matriculation Examination. The junior department had a strength of 550 boys under the charge of Mr. J. Bensely, who was the headmaster. It is interesting to note

that in the year 1041 M. E. (1865-66) seven lectures on useful and instructive subjects were delivered in the school for the benefit of the boys as well as of the public. One of these was by the Dewan, Sir T. Madava Row K. C. S. I. on the Electric Telegraph.

Two years later, Mr. Robert Harvey M. A. arrived and commenced work as assistant to Mr. Ross. The energetic manner in which these gentlemen threw themselves into the work, the success which attended their labours, and the sincere interest which they evinced in the welfare of the students won for them a name which will long be remembered in the history of English education in this State. In the year 1043, a preparatory school was organized and the strength of the three departments was as follows:—

Senior department	96
Junior "	158
Preparatory School	230
Total	<u>784</u>

On the 30th Sept. 1869, His Highness the Maharajah (Ayiliam Thirunal) laid the foundation-stone of a new College building. The next year, Mr. V. Nagam Aiya passed the B. A. Examination from the College—the earliest graduate from that institution. "It cannot but be felt" wrote Sir T. Madava Row in that year, "that under Mr. Ross and his zealous assistants, the central school is becoming a powerful engine of good in the country." It will be remembered that it was in the year 1045 that the University course was extended from three to four years.

Since then various additions and improvements have been made to the buildings and to the courses of study. Courses in English, Sanskrit and Dravidian Languages, Philosophy, Mathematics and Physics have been successively introduced. In 1914 Honours Courses in English and History and Economics were opened. There is a strong staff of Professors, Assistant Professors, Lecturers and Tutors. In point of buildings, equipment and general efficiency, this College holds a prominent place among the best Colleges of South India.

### District Schools.

In addition to the above schools, which, as already seen, developed later into Colleges, there were a number of smaller schools throughout the State, from very early days. First in order must be mentioned the Sirkar District English Schools. Not long after

the founding of the Free School at Trivandrum, a few District English Schools were opened in important stations. These schools were at first placed under the supervision of Mr. J. Roberts. Mr. Mead, who became the Superintendent of Education in 1855, planted some more schools. Under Mr. J. E. Lafrenais, who rendered valuable service as Superintendent of District Schools for twelve years, there were further additions and improvements. Thus, while in 1042 there were eleven English schools, in 1062 the number had grown to twenty-two. Mr. O. H. Bensley succeeded Mr. Lafrenais in 1050. In 1053 Mr. J. Ross M. A., Principal of the College and High School at Trivandrum, became Superintendent with an Inspector under him. In 1062 Mr. J. A. Duthie was appointed Superintendent, while the Principal of the College retained a general control as 'Director of English Education.' These schools, planted in different important stations, and efficiently managed by a succession of earnest and competent Superintendents and Directors, became valuable centres of work. In the early days of their history, they had to meet with a good deal of indifference and prejudice. The monthly fee in all classes was four chuckrams per head. In many cases, the teachers had to advance the sum and afterwards realise it, often in kind. Truancy was very common and the teachers had occasionally to go out truant-hunting.

The District Schools were feeders to the central school at Trivandrum. For many years, some half a dozen scholarships were available at the latter institution for the benefit of the boys who went there from the District Schools. There was also an arrangement for some years whereby the more advanced pupils in the District Schools were given the privilege of visiting Trivandrum at the expense of the State—the *Grand Tour* on a small scale.

In 1057 a system of Comparative Examinations was introduced for the three highest classes of all the Sirkar schools, on the results of which the annual promotions were based. The arrangements for these examinations were in the hands of the Principal of the Maharajah's College. This system seems to have continued till 1071.

### Grant-in-aid System.

From the year 1063 the Sirkar, instead of increasing the number of District Schools, adopted the policy of aiding private English Schools as they had been doing in the case of Vernacular Schools. In 1065 there were only five English schools receiving

grant, though the number rose steadily from year to year, till in 1069 it was twenty-two.

The Church Missionary Society and the London Missionary Society had a few feeder schools at some of their important stations for the central institutions at Kottayam and Nagercoil respectively. The Roman Catholic Church, the Syrian Church, some of the Hindu Organizations, as well as private individuals opened schools at various times and places to afford greater facilities for English education.

The following figures show the stage of progress reached in 1069, just before the Educational Rules and Grant-in-aid Notification of 1070 came into operation:—

1069

Grade of Institution	Kind	No. of Institution	No. of Pupils
Arts Colleges	Government	1	248
	Private, Unaided	2	
High School	Government	5	4,049
	Private, Aided	5	
	" Unaided	4	
Middle School	Government	17	2,719
	Private, Aided	9	
	" Unaided	4	
Primary	Government	2	1,066
	Private, Aided	8	
	" Unaided	11	
Total		68	8,082

### Code of 1070. (1894.)

The first step taken by the Government, to organize the educational activities of the State as a whole, by co-ordinating and controlling the various agencies and branches of the work, was by means of the 'Travancore Educational Rules' and the 'Grant-in-aid Code of 1070'. This was the work of the capable educationist, Dr. A. Creighton Mitchell, then Principal of the Maharajah's College, and later, also Secretary to Government Educational Department.

The State was divided into three Ranges with a Range Inspector over each. These Ranges were subdivided into four Districts, each under an Assistant Inspector. All the schools, both Vernacular and English, were placed under the Inspectors of schools, except certain Government institutions at the capital which continued to be directly responsible to Government. An improved curriculum for both English and Vernacular schools was prescribed. Before the Code came into operation, there was no uniform course of study for the English Schools of the State, except that the highest class prepared candidates for the Matriculation Examination. Moreover, the Vernacular schools were brought into line with the English schools. Thus the spirit and method of English education considerably affected the system of Vernacular education. Another feature of the Code was the rating of grants according to the salaries of teachers. Grants were also given for general maintenance, the provision of furniture and appliances, the erection and extension of school buildings, and public libraries.

In 1891 a reform in organization was effected by an addition to the number of classes below the Matriculation. After the preparatory stage, which consisted of three classes, the Matriculation Class was previously reached in three years through the Lower Fourth, Upper Fourth, and Fifth Classes. According to the new system; after the preparatory course, there were five Forms before the pupil could get into the Matriculation Class, the Vth Form. Improved curricula of studies were brought into force for Forms IV to VI.

In 1902 revised curricula of studies were introduced, with a new classification of schools. The distinguishing features of the scheme were the bifurcation of schools into English and Vernacular after the fourth-year course in the Primary schools, and the prescribing of English as an optional subject in all classes of the Vernacular schools, from Class III up to Class VIII. The idea was that all pupils who passed through even the Vernacular schools should have a working knowledge of English, as it would be of very great practical use to them in the conditions of modern life in India. Though the idea was a commendable one, the system has been discredited, not, however, on account of any inherent defect in it, but because it has been found impracticable to supply all the Vernacular schools with qualified teachers of English. While the knowledge of English at the command of most of the English High School pupils is considered poor, it is no wonder that the knowledge of English obtained in the Vernacular schools was found to be miserable.

Another landmark in the history of English education in the State is the appointment of an Education Committee in 1908 under the presidency of Mr. L. C. Hodgson M. A., the present Director of Public Instruction, consisting of official and non-official educationists in the State. This Committee submitted a comprehensive report on the condition of education in the State and made recommendations for necessary reforms both in the English and the Vernacular departments. This report paved the way and supplied the materials for many of the changes that were introduced in the organization and working of English schools in the State by the Education Code of 1910.

The following figures for 1084, just before the introduction of the Code of 1910, will show the progress made since the Code of 1070 came into operation:—

1084

Grade of Institution	Kind of Institution	No.	No. of Pupils
Arts Colleges	Government	2	276
	Private, Unaided	2	130
H. G. S. Schools	Government	7	3,014
	Private, Aided	18	6,811
" Unaided	Government	3	1,100
	Private, Aided	18	2,440
L. G. S. Schools	Government	21	2,647
	Private, Unaided	24	1,852
Total		95	18,270

N.B.— In the above statement, the old class of Primary Schools, of which there were twenty-one in 1069, has been merged in the L. G. S. Schools.

### Code of 1085. (1910.)

The system of having three Range Inspectors, each working on his own lines, with the very general control and direction that was possible from the Huzur Secretariat, was found unsatisfactory. To remedy this evil Dr. A. C. Mitchell was in 1909 appointed the first Director of Public Instruction, with control over all educational institutions, Collegiate, Secondary, Industrial, and

Professional. The Law College alone was left out. Under him the Education Code of 1910 which wrought great changes in the course of studies, organization, and control of education in the State was passed.

One important change in control was that the Range Inspectors were given jurisdiction only over the Vernacular schools, now known as Elementary schools, while a European Inspector of Secondary schools was appointed for English schools, Mr. J. Pryde M. A., B. Sc., the present holder of the office, being the first. The vast increase in the number of Elementary schools and the considerable increase in that of Secondary schools has shown the wisdom of this bifurcation of the Inspecting Staff.

The considerable enhancement of school fees, the reduction of the rates of general maintenance grants, the raising of the salaries of teachers of Secondary schools under Government management, and the greater rigour in the demands concerning the qualification of teachers, form some of the other features of the new system.

With regard to school work the system of recording and appreciating the progress of a pupil's work during the whole course, instead of determining it by the result of a single examination at the end of the course, was an important change introduced by the new system. The re-introduction of text-books for the English examination of the Matriculation standard is also worthy of note. The plan of making pupils specialize during the High School course was another important feature. In view of the fears to the contrary entertained owing to the raising of fees, and the rigour of the conditions of recognition in the new Code, the increase shown below in the number of scholars, though not of schools, since the introduction of the Code seven years ago, will be interesting.

1092

Grade of Institution	Kind of Institution	No.	No. of Pupils
Arts College	Government	2	514
	Private, Aided	1	193
	Private, Unaided	1	194
H. G. S. School	Government	10	6,818
	Private, Aided	17	6,457
	Private, Unaided	5	2,600
L. G. S. School	Government	26	3,906
	Private, Aided	13	1,317
	Private, Unaided	0	1,609
Total		63	23,608

At the time of the introduction of the Code of 1910 it was thought that the policy of Government was to discourage private schools and increase the number of Government schools. But the awakening of the people to the advantages of education, and the consequent rush of boys and girls seeking education, soon made it clear that Government, by themselves, could not meet the increasing demand for schools. Various actions of Government have now made it clear that it is their deliberate policy to give full scope for the increase and development of private schools instead of multiplying Government schools. An examination of the number of departmental and private schools with the number of pupils in each class of schools and the cost to Government per pupil in each, will reveal the wisdom of the above policy.

The increase of school fees in the L. G. S. classes has enabled private managers to maintain such schools without much cost to themselves, provided they can secure a site and building and the equipment necessary at the beginning. This has given rise to a movement, now felt in many parts, for the opening of L. G. S. schools. Under the guidance and control of the Education Department, for which there is adequate organization and *personnel* now, this will lead to a large increase in the number of boys who would get the benefit of English education up to a certain stage, and who, if they are found fit for further studies, could manage to go up to the H. G. S. schools.

### Scholarships.

For many years about half a dozen scholarships were available at the central institution for the benefit of the boys who went there from the District Schools. By the Code of 1910 all free scholarships were abolished. In 1913-14 a new scheme was introduced under the name of H. H. the Maharajah's scholarships. It was a very comprehensive scheme, its scope extending from the IVth Form up to the B. A. Degree Examination. These scholarships are of the value of Rs. 5, Rs. 10, and Rs. 15 in the three grades of the course and are intended only for the subjects of H. H. the Maharajah. The total sum set apart for these scholarships was Rs. 17,000.

### Provident Fund.

A Provident Fund scheme has been recently inaugurated by Government to benefit Secondary School teachers in Private Recognised Schools. Under it, each teacher who wishes to take advantage of the Fund is to contribute every month a sum proportionate to his salary and an equal amount is contributed

both by the Manager and the Government. The teacher, on retirement, or his heirs, if he dies before retirement, becomes entitled to the accumulated amount with compound interest calculated half-yearly. It is left to the option of the Manager as well as the teacher to take advantage of the scheme.

### Text Book Committee.

In order to maintain as far as possible a uniform standard in reading-books, and to help school authorities in general in the selection of proper text books in all subjects, a Text Book Committee was appointed by Government in 1900, consisting of official and non-official members. In 1917 two separate Committees were formed, one for English Secondary Schools, the other for Elementary or Vernacular Schools. Instead of, as before, recommending, year after year, the books to be prescribed as text-books, the Committee is now required only to give a list of books for the various subjects taught in the different classes, the authorities of the schools being left free to make their own selection from the list of approved books.

### Hostels.

The first schools in Travancore to start Boarding Establishments attached to their schools were the Syrian Seminary at Kottayam and the Nagercoil Seminary. This example was not followed by other schools for a very long time. In recent years, however, the importance of opening proper hostels for the accommodation of students seems to have dawned upon managers of schools. Within the last quarter of a century several hostels have sprung up in various centres in the State. At present there are six hostels partly or entirely serving the needs of College students and eighteen for the use of Secondary School pupils, of which, four are girls' hostels. In these twenty-four hostels there are about 1471 inmates. These are by no means sufficient for the needs of the students and pupils who are at present living away from home control.

### Female Education.

The beginnings of Female Education in English must also be traced to the labours of the missionaries. The Boarding School for Girls organized by Mrs. Mead at Nagercoil in 1819, the Girls' School at Alleppey started in 1820 by Mrs. Norton, and that in Kottayam started in 1822 by Mrs. Bailey were the pioneer institutions. Though primarily intended for giving vernacular education, English was also taught in the highest classes. These

Mission schools were useful in gradually subduing the prejudice against female education in the country.

The first substantial effort made by the Sirkar in this direction was in 1864, when they took under their management a Girls' School for Christians in the Cantonment in Trivandrum. Some years later, it was thrown open to all classes of pupils. In 1867 an English school-mistress was appointed and the school was placed on an efficient footing. In 1890 this school was recognized as a High School by the University, and in 1897, under Miss S. B. Williams M. A., it was raised to the standard of a Second Grade College under the name of H. H. the Maharajah's College for Girls, and was affiliated to the University. In that same year all fees were abolished.

Another Girls' School in Trivandrum that deserves special mention because it has been doing useful work for half a century is the school started in the Fort in 1867 for the education of caste girls by Miss A. M. Blandford of the Zenana Mission. This school has all along received the care and patronage of our Royal Family. Miss Blandford could count among her pupils some of the members of the highest families in Trivandrum, including even Ranees and Royal consorts. About 1845 Mrs. Henry Baker started a school at Kottaraw, which has developed into the Baker Memorial Higher Grade Secondary School. The Convent of the Holy Angels' H. G. S. School, Trivandrum, the Nagercoil H. G. S. School for Girls, and the Nicholson Syrian Girls' School at Tiruwella are the other three Higher Grade Schools in the State. These Institutions have also Boarding Homes attached to them, the last being purely a Residential School.

The following statements for 1070, 1084, and 1092 show the pace of the progress of English education among females in the State.

	1070		1084		1092	
	Institutions	Scholars	Institutions	Scholars	Institutions	Scholars
Government	-	"	1	7	1	48
College of Arts	"	"	1	468	1	577
High Schools	1	151	"	"	*3	368
Middle "	"	"	"	"	"	"
Primary "	"	"	"	"	"	"
Private, Aided						
High Schools	1	314	2	396	5	968
Middle "	6	540	*7	1069	*4	450
Primary "	1	19	"	"	"	"
Priv., Unaided						
High Schools	"	"	"	"	"	"
Middle "	1	34	"	"	*1	49
Primary "	1	37	"	"	"	"
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1095</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1940</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2460</b>

\*Lower Grade Secondary Schools.

### Teachers' Training Institutions.

No history of English education in Travancore can be complete without a brief reference to the provision made for training teachers. At first there were no facilities for training in the State. The students were sent to the training institutions of British India. In 1894 a Normal School was established at Trivandrum for the training of teachers who were undergraduates and Middle School or Lower Secondary men. Since 1904 there has been a Training Department attached to the Maharajah's College for Girls at Trivandrum. From 1896 a batch of four teachers from Government schools was annually sent with scholarships to the Teachers' College at Saidapet to prepare for the L. T. Degree Examination. In 1911 Government opened a well-equipped and efficiently-staffed Training College at Trivandrum affiliated to the Madras University, at which teachers from Cochin are also received on the recommendation of the Cochin Durbar.

## Literacy.

Judging from the figures given in the last two Census Reports we see that the progress of literacy in English has been more than three times as great as that of Malayalam.

	1901	1911	Increase per cent
Malayalam	3,64,810	4,53,119	24
English	14,869	26,250	76

## Conclusion.

By a happy coincidence the Shastiabdapoorthi of H. H. the Maharajah and the Centenary of English Education have fallen in the same year. Of the hundred years now under review, nearly one-third has been covered by the reign of His Gracious Highness our present Maharajah.

The previous pages will show that by far the greatest stride in the progress of English education achieved in the century has been made during the three decades of His Highness' most beneficent reign. As has been mentioned above, the influence of the spread of English education has considerably improved the spirit and methods of vernacular education as well, and given a great impetus to the spread of the same. The same influence has also permeated every department of public and private life in the State. The plant of Western culture introduced into this land through the noble efforts of Colonel Munro, the British Resident, in co-operation with the early European Missionaries and the Syrian Metropolitan, and most generously fostered and cherished by the successive sovereigns of the State, has now grown into a vast tree with roots deep struck in the land, branches spreading far and wide, and wholesome fruits in abundance. Long may this mighty tree continue in its beneficent growth, and long may our gracious sovereign reign showering all the blessings of progress and prosperity upon this land.