REVIVAL OF CLASSICAL LEARNING UNDER PATRONAGE OF EAST INDIA COMPANY

1. Warren Hastings' Policy of Orientalism

The discovery of the philosophical, literary and cultural treasures of India stimulated in the western scholars a great admiration for them. Goethe's rapturous appreciation of the aesthetic and philosophical beauty of Kalidas' 'Sakuntala' represents modern Europe's tribute to the ancient literature of India. This must have influenced the Government of the East India Company to encourage the revival of the classical learning of India as its educational policy.

They were urged also by political considerations to seek the active support of the people in consolidating British rule in India. The new rulers were, after all, foreigners having an alien culture far remote from that of Asian

1. "Sakuntala was translated into German by Forester in 1791, and was welcomed by Goethe with the same enthusiasm that Schopenhauer had shown for the 'Upanishads'. His epigram on the drama is well-known:—

Wouldst thou the young year's blossoms and the fruits of its decline,
And all by which the soul is charmed,
enraptured, feasted, fed,

Wouldst thou the earth and Heaven itself
in one sole name combine?

I name thee, O Sakontala! and all at once is said". Garral, G.T. (ed), "The Legacy of India", pp.32-33.
peoples. They could not hope to rule a foreign land without at least the seeming co-operation of the upper classes of society. Again, a class of judicial officers was needed for the administration of the territories which came under the Company's rule. Prompted by the immediate needs of administration of a country languishing in a state of anarchy and disintegration, Warren Hastings as the first governor-general of Bengal (1773-85), adopted measures to organise a new system of government based upon "two cardinal principles - the revival and readjustment of native institutions where possible and the welfare of the peasantry on whose industry, in the ultimate resort, the prosperity of the provinces depended".¹

As he wanted to establish the authority of the British Government on the ancient laws of the land, he needed the services of Indian scholars, both Hindu and Muslim, who could interpret their laws, customs and traditions for the benefit of administration and being urged by an influential body of eminent Muslims of Calcutta Hastings established the Calcutta Madrasa or Muhamedan College in 1781, at his own expense "to qualify the sons of Mohammedan gentlemen for responsible and lucrative offices of the State".² When the Madrasa was brought by the Government under its direct control after two

years of its foundation, Hastings was paid back the whole amount of money he had spent on the institution from his private account.¹ Lord Cornwallis (1786-93), Hastings' successor, authorised Jonathan Duncan, the British Resident at Benares, to establish in the holy city, a Sanskrit College for the Hindus in 1792, "for the preservation and cultivation of the Laws, Literature and Religion of that nation, at this centre of their faith, and the common resort of all their tribes".² Duncan pointed out the difficulty of collecting complete treatises on Hindu religion, art, laws and sciences, and he hoped that the institution "by preserving and disseminating a knowledge of the Hindoo Law and proving a nursery of future doctors and expounders thereof" would "assist the European judges in the due, regular and uniform administration of its genuine letter and spirit to the body of the people".³ The British Resident had a two-fold end in view, firstly, to preserve and to disseminate the knowledge of Hindu classical learning, and secondly, to train a body of legal experts to help the British judges in the correct interpretation of Hindu laws and customs for the administration of justice. The Court of

³ Ibid., p.10.
Directors supported the oriental policy of Warren Hastings who observed in 1792 that "the Hindus had as good a system of faith and morals as most people and that it would be madness to attempt their conversion or to give them any more learning or any other description of learning than that which they already possessed".¹

The courses of instruction in the Calcutta Madrasa and the Benares Sanskrit College were the classical studies of the Muslims and Hindus respectively and following the Indian tradition education was given free in the centres of oriental learning under the patronage of the State, and the students who mostly came from the upper classes, used to get stipends from the Government. These two institutions served as the model of other oriental colleges which were established subsequently by the British Government for the cultivation of the classical learning of the Hindus and the Muslims through the medium of Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian respectively. The policy of orientalism was pursued with greater ardour by the successors of Hastings and Cornwallis. Lord Minto noted that science and literature were in a progressive state of decay among the Indian people and said that "the number of the learned is not only diminished, but the circle of learning, even among those who still devote themselves to it, appears to be considerably contracted".

and "the absence of educational opportunities led to utter moral degradation and the prevalence of the crimes of perjury and forgery, so frequently noticed in the official reports, in a great measure ascribable, both in the Mahomedans and Hindoos, to the want of due instruction in the moral and religious tenets of their respective faiths".¹

Therefore Lord Minto proposed to establish two new Sanskrit Colleges in two seats of ancient Hindu learning, namely, Nuddea and Tirhoot, and also to bring about improvement in the affairs of the Benares Sanskrit College. He felt that the promotion of the classical learning of India would be the most powerful means of moral and social improvement of her people.

The Charter Act of 1813 enacted by the British Government, which gave the first parliamentary grant of one lakh of rupees to be spent annually by the East India Company out of a surplus of revenue "for the revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India, and for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India", ² set out the educational policy of the Government, which was to encourage and improve literature and to promote the cultivation of sciences among the

1. Minto's Minute of 6th March, 1811.
2. 53 Geo. 3 Cap. 55, Sec. 43.
people of this country. Although this educational clause of the Act did not clearly state what would be the content of knowledge to be imparted under this policy, the letter of instruction sent by the court of Directors, 3rd June, 1814, clearly stated that the cultivation of oriental learning was to become the keystone of the official programme. Explaining the implications of the educational clause of the Charter Act, the Court of Directors pointed out that it presents two distinct propositions for consideration first, the encouragement of the natives of India, and the revival and improvement of literature; secondly, the promotion of a knowledge of the sciences amongst the inhabitants of that country.\(^1\) In the opinion of the Directors neither of these aims could be realised by public colleges established on the model of European, "natives of caste and reputation" would readily accept "the subordination and discipline of a college", and the Court suggested that native scholars should be left free to pursue their own methods under their traditional system of education. "We are inclined", they observed, "to think that the mode by which the learned Hindus might be disposed to concur with us in prosecuting those objects would be by leaving them to the practice of an usage, long established amongst them, of giving instruction at their own houses, and by our encouraging them in the exercise and cultivation of their talents, by the

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1. Letter of 3rd June, 1814.
stimulus of honorary marks of distinction, and in some instances by grants of pecuniary assistance.1

Indeed, the opinion of the Court of Directors was influenced by political considerations, since they had become the new rulers of the country they felt they should recognise and respect the cultural traditions of the people in order to cultivate cordial relations with them. "In the consideration of it", they remarked, "we have kept in view the peculiar circumstances of our political relation with India which, having necessarily transferred all power and pre-eminence from native to European agency, have rendered it incumbent upon us, from motives of policy, as well as from a principle of justice, to consult the feelings, and even to yield to the prejudices, of the natives, whenever it can be done with safety to our dominions".2 The Directors called upon the Government of India to devote special attention to the holy city of Benares, the great seat of ancient Hindu learning, held in veneration, and to make a thorough survey to ascertain "what ancient establishments are still existing for the diffusion of knowledge in that city; what branches of science and literature are taught there; by what means

1. Letter of 3rd June, 1814.
2. Ibid.
the professors and teachers are supported; and in what way their present establishments might be improved to most advantage". 1 The officers of the Company were asked to cultivate oriental learning and to establish links of communication between the rulers and the people and the Court of Directors recommended "that due encouragement should be given to such of our servants in any of those departments as may be disposed to apply themselves to the study of the Sanskrit language". 2 Following this instruction some officials of the East India Company set themselves seriously to the scientific study of the classical languages and encouraged the revival of their study. 3

J.J. Harington, a member of the General Committee of Public Instruction set up in 1823, to be in charge of educational administration, put the oriental policy of the Government in a clear and bold perspective according to which both classical learning and European knowledge were to be imparted simultaneously under a common and combined

1. Letter of 3rd June, 1814.
2. Ibid.
3. The revival of the scientific study of Sanskrit is due to three British Officials: Sir Charles Wilkins (1749? - 1836), who in 1778, established a printing press for oriental languages and translated perhaps the greatest of Sanskrit religious poems, the 'Bhagavat Gita' into English; Sir William Jones (1746-94), who made translations from Arabic and Persian, as well as Sanskrit; and H.T. Colabroke (1765-1837). "Education in India", Hartog, P., The Year Book of Education 1932, p. 686.
programme. "To allure the learned natives of India to the study of European science and literature, "he observed, "we must, I think, engraft this study upon their own established methods of scientific and literary instruction; and particularly in all the public colleges or schools maintained or encouraged by Government, good translations of the most useful European compositions on the subjects taught in them, may, I conceive, be introduced with the greatest advantage." This idea of "engrafting" western knowledge on that of India became the keynote of the oriental policy of education pursued by the Government. The General Committee declared that, though the emphasis of the oriental programme would be on the cultivation of oriental learning through the medium of classical languages, it was to be combined with western knowledge to be imparted by translation of English works into Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian, as well as the cultivation of western knowledge through the medium of English wherever such a demand existed. Of course much of oriental learning was useless for practical purposes and contrary to the accepted moral and scientific ideas of the West. The Orientalists wanted to retain and confirm and communicate what was correct and valuable in classical learning as the basis on which to raise a superstructure of European knowledge, as the guiding principle of their educational programme. Indian scholars educated in both eastern and western learning could give a new and powerful impetus to

1. Quoted in "Adam's Reports on Vernacular Education in Bengal and Bihar", (1868), p. 310.
moral and intellectual improvement of their country. A judicious combination of both could best serve the cause of enlightenment of the people according to the Orientalists. A fusion of what was of permanent value in oriental culture with the modern scientific knowledge of Europe was held to be the main objective of the oriental programme. The learned classes of India used to their age-old traditional ways were averse to new ideas of foreign sources being imposed on them. To make western knowledge acceptable to them the Orientalists presented it in works of translation into classical languages, which contained those portions of ancient learning which had a scientific value in the development of oriental studies. The revival of classical literature was more a means than an end of introducing into India the knowledge of western arts and sciences. The orientalist aim was to create a new literature in India the form and style of which were to be oriental and classical, but the content largely modern and European. "If the people are to have a literature", wrote H.H. Wilson, "it must be their own. The staff may be in a great degree European, but it must be freely interwoven with home-spun materials, and the fashion must be Asiatic".¹

Since a moral and intellectual renaissance could be accomplished only by a combination of eastern and western

learning Orientalists refused to make English the exclusive medium for communication of European knowledge, or to make the diffusion of the knowledge of English a primary object of their educational programme. Indeed, even a little and superficial knowledge of English was a ready source of employment in both public and private service, but it could not bring about the desired improvement in the life of the people. A wide dissemination of a limited and superficial knowledge of English, however materially useful, could be "quite compatible with gross ignorance and inveterate superstition",¹ and could hardly bring about a salutary change in the moral and intellectual outlook of the Indian people. The knowledge of only a language could not produce the cherished effect, deep and thorough assimilation of ideas conveyed through literature was essential for the purpose. "To produce any improvement in the notions and feelings of the natives", wrote Wilson, "their education must extend to things as well as to words; they must be taught knowledge, not speech. They have already the means of communicating ideas, what they want is an additional and better stock of ideas".² Indeed, English literature could convey to them the rich treasure of varied ideas of modern

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² Ibid. p.12.
Europe through the medium of English language. But to acquire a thorough and effective knowledge of English language and literature in order to render it a constant source of moral and intellectual improvement, one had to make long and strenuous efforts, "to follow that protracted and persevering career", which most of the Indian students were reluctant to undertake.¹

Owing to paucity of funds since it was not possible to educate the masses of the people Government decided to devote their limited resources to the education of the upper classes who had been the traditional leaders of society. It was a strong conviction with the Orientalists that propagation of European knowledge would be most effective and even extensive, through the agency of the learned classes of the upper stratum of society, because of the great influence they exercised over their fellow countrymen. "As long as the learned classes of India", wrote Wilson, "are not enlisted in the cause of diffusing sound knowledge, little real progress will be made. In the history of all philosophical and religious reformation, it will be found that the most effective agents have been those who had been educated in the errors they reformed; such men alone can come fully armed into the contest, as are masters not only of their own weapons,

but of those wielded by their adversaries. The leading principle of the oriental policy was to give a little thorough and condensed knowledge of classical learning combined with western knowledge not to a large number of pupils; but to a small number of students of the upper classes, who in turn would educate the masses through their own mother-tongues and enrich the indigenous literature first, by translation and then by original work.

The broad outlines of the policy of oriental education consistent with the relevant provisions of the Charter Act of 1813, and their interpretation as embodied in the letter of 3rd June, 1814, were stated by Holt Mackenzie, Secretary of the Territorial Department, in his Note of 17th July, 1823, where he observed "that Government should apply itself chiefly to the instruction of those who will themselves be teachers and to the translation, compilation and publication of useful works. These objects being provided for, the support and establishment of colleges for the instruction of what may be called the educated and influential classes seem to me to be the more immediate objects of the care of Government than the support and establishment of elementary schools; though these in particular places may claim attention."

2. Ibid., p.13.
3. It was the first Education Despatch ever sent by the Court of Directors to India.
Once the upper classes received education, it was expected, they would in their turn educate the masses through their own vernacular languages, and the learning and culture of the higher classes would seek a downward course from the upper to the lower level, for "the natural course of things in all countries seems to be that knowledge introduced from abroad should descend from the higher or educated classes and gradually spread through their examples".¹ So it was "the limited classes who are now instructed in the learning of the country, should be the first object of attention. This, of course, implies the association of oriental learning with European science, and the gradual introduction of the latter, without any attempt arbitrarily to supersede the former. It implies too the support and patronage of existing institutions, so far at least as the furnishing them with Masters and supplying them with translations. And further, if our means suffice, it implies a more positive encouragement to learned Natives, and consists well with the resolution of establish new institutions for the instruction of Natives in the learning of the East, and of the West together".² As for the study of English Mackenzie hoped that Government would hold out some encouragement

1. Note of Hold Mackenzie, 17th July, 1823.
2. Ibid.
"to induce natives to acquire the English language so as to qualify themselves to become translators and teachers", and pointed out that Persian was after all a foreign language as much as English and it might be questioned "whether what is recorded in that tongue is much better understood by the generality of parties interested, than it would be if recorded in English".\(^1\) In his Note Mackenzie emphasized the need of using education as a source of supplying not only teachers and translators, but also educated personnel to the different branches of administration so that "the constitution of public offices and distribution of employments can be made the means of exerting to study and rewarding merit".\(^2\) The aim of education was, on the one hand, to bring about moral and intellectual improvement of the people, and, on the other, to provide employment to talented persons in public service. This twofold objective would make the oriental policy useful and popular by the dissemination of both eastern and western knowledge among the people.

The General Committee of Public Instruction scrupulously carried out the oriental programme and established new institutions and introduced reforms in the old institutions under their control and supervision. They printed

\(^1\) Note of Holt Mackenzie, 17th July, 1823.
\(^2\) Ibid.
a number of oriental as well as scientific works translated from English into classical languages. They introduced in the Oriental Colleges a course of European learning and knowledge of English language. Though the general pattern of the curriculum was the same Oriental Colleges followed different courses of study. Thus, in the Calcutta Madrasa, Euclid and European Anatomy were taught along with the oriental systems of these branches of learning, in the Calcutta Sanskrit College European Anatomy and Medicine had nearly supplanted the native systems. Agra and Delhi Colleges taught, besides Anatomy and Mathematics, Elements of Geography, While the Calcutta Madrasa and the Sanskrit College as well as the Agra College had English classes attached to them, Delhi and Benares Colleges had separate schools for the teaching of English. "Without offering therefore any violence to native prejudices, and whilst giving liberal encouragement to purely native education", the General Committee observed, "the principle of connecting it with the introduction of real knowledge has never been lost sight of, and the foundation has been laid of great and beneficial change in the minds of those who, by their character and profession direct and influence the intellect of Hindustan".¹

2. Problems of Organisation and Administration of Oriental Learning

Since the Calcutta Madrasa was brought under the direct control of the Government in 1783, the work of educational administration was entrusted to one or the other departments such as the Political or Judicial Department till a separate organisation called the General Committee of Public Instruction was set up by the Government in 1823 with its head-quarters at Calcutta.\(^1\) The annual grant of one lakh of rupees sanctioned by the Charter Act of 1813, and to take effect from 1821-22, was credited to the Education Fund of the Committee, to be devoted to the implementation of the education policy announced by the Charter Act.\(^2\) The General Committee which consisted originally of only European officials but later took members, both official and non-official, European and Indian as well, devoted themselves to their duty of supervision with great earnestness and ability.\(^3\) None of the members of the Committee, except the secretary, were paid for the assistance they rendered to the work of educational organisation and administration, and almost all of them had a strong oriental bias.

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3. The Despatch of 1854.
The General Committee had a few sub-committees in charge of finance, and the selection of text books, and exercised administrative and financial control over education through the local committees which were directly responsible for the management of local institutions. Local Committees carried out the orders of the General Committee, supervised and inspected the institutions under them, and raised subscriptions and donations as well as exercising general powers of control and administration as prescribed by the General Committee.

To organise efficiently the scheme of oriental education which combined elements of both eastern and western knowledge to be communicated through the classical languages of India, was fraught with serious difficulties. Before long it was realised that the knowledge of modern sciences could not be adequately and effectively imparted by means of the classical languages and the necessity of using English as a medium of instruction for scientific knowledge was urgently felt. Though the interest shown by the pupils in the study of mathematics and sciences was quite remarkable, the knowledge of these subjects communicated to them through translation of English works into classical languages was limited and no demonstration of lessons was provided by means of scientific apparatus.
In a letter to Dr. Lumsden, secretary of the Calcutta Madrasa, Rev. Mr. Thomason who had examined students of this College in mathematics and sciences, after having analysed the deficiencies of the oriental system which originated from teaching sciences by means of classical languages, suggested, "A great point therefore would be gained if instead of translating books into the eastern languages, scientifical instruction were conveyed in English".¹ The same problem of defective teaching of sciences was faced by the Benares Sanskrit College and Captain C. Thoresby, secretary of the College Committee, suggested that western knowledge to be effective, should be imparted directly through the medium of English and for this purpose a department should be opened in the College for the study of western knowledge through English.²

Delhi College founded in 1825, for the cultivation of oriental learning had an English class attached to it. But the College Committee was not satisfied with the academic programme which combined branches of eastern and western knowledge none of which could be cultivated thoroughly. The College Committee observed that in an oriental institution meant for cultivation of classical knowledge, the scope of

learning English was necessarily limited, but a wider diffusion of the knowledge of English was necessary for the acquisition of western learning. They also suggested that English should be used as the language of public affairs, and supported the official announcement that preference in the appointment of lawyers would be given to those candidates of the oriental colleges, who, in addition to their legal qualification possessed knowledge of English.

Though "The plan of study adopted in the colleges is in general an improvement upon the native mode, and is intended to convey a well founded knowledge of the languages studied, with a wider range of acquirement than is common, and to effect this in the least possible time",¹ it became evident that the traditional method of classical education could not be altered and the quality of instruction improved and it could not serve the needs of the changing times. Lord Moira (1813-23), who had visited the Benares Sanskrit College found that the students of the College learned by rote only, without much understanding the texts and the standard of instruction was poor and the Governor-General observed in a Minute of 1815, that the whole scheme of teaching sciences in the Oriental Colleges

was "a project altogether delusive",¹ and even the oriental scholars themselves admitted "that Hindoo and Mahomedan learning does not in any subject, go beyond the point arrived at in Europe before the invention of Printing".² The value of classical learning had much declined in public estimation and the Benares Sanskrit College, for instance, instead of being an assemblage of learned Hindus resembled a band of retired people wholly dependent upon "the charity of Government",³ and students of the oriental institutions received little social recognition and they frequently appealed to the authorities for financial assistance as they complained that they had "but little prospect of bettering our condition without the kind assistance of your Honourable Committee, the indifference with which we are generally looked upon by our countrymen, leaving no hope of encouragement and assistance from them".⁴ Though the study of Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian was still pursued as an ancient tradition and people had still some conventional veneration for classical learning, it became obvious to the oriental scholars themselves that classical education would have some limited academic value, but hardly any.

3. Minute of F. Brooke, 7th January, 1804, Acting President of the Benares Sanskrit College.
practical usefulness, in modern times. "Learned Pundits and Orthodox Maulvis", reported the Local Committee of the Delhi College and Institution, "think it no longer heresy to reject as barren and unprofitable the antiquated lore of their ancestors, and enter their sons in English schools".¹

Classical education became a costly public undertaking as the bulk of the students had to be given stipends on a generous scale, and instruction was made free in oriental institutions following the ancient tradition, and vast sums had to be spent on the preparation, printing and publication of oriental works out of the limited resources of the Government, and yet, inspite of this heavy expenditure, while there was an increasing demand for English books providing western knowledge, there was almost none for the classical works, so that the whole project of translation and publication of oriental literature turned out to be a fruitless investment of public funds. The Calcutta School Book Society established in 1817, to supply cheap and suitable text-books both in English and Indian languages giving secular knowledge, for instance, sold more than thirty thousand English books in two years, whereas the General Committee could not dispose of enough Sanskrit and Arabic works in three years to meet

¹. "Report of the Local Committee of the Delhi College and Institution, 15th January, 1834."
the charge for keeping them for only two months in the hired Book Depository, to say nothing about paying the cost of printing.\(^1\)

There were other factors which contributed to the difficulties of organising effectively the scheme of oriental education. To the younger generation of British Officials and Indian reformers the social evils such as female infanticide, child marriage and untouchability, widely prevalent in the country and the unconvincing arguments against the abolition of 'suttee', which were used by H.H.Wilson, leader of the Orientalists, to support the cause of classical learning, "did much to ruin their cause".\(^2\) There had been for a long time past a general decadence of India civilisation and much of its cultural tradition was steeped in superstitions and had become obscurantist and ritualistic, and the officials firmly believed that they were dealing with a 'decomposed society', hopelessly corrupt, and to give it a new life and vigour a more useful and dynamic system of education than mere orientalism, had to be devised. Even the Court of Directors once ardent champions of classical education had to admit as early as 1824, that their policy of Orientalism "was originally and fundamentally erroneous", and observed

that their aim "should not have been to teach Hindoo learning but useful learning", and much of the classical education being obsolete had become useless.¹ This official view of disapproval brought out the glaring deficiencies of the scheme of oriental learning and gave the oriental policy a rude shock.

The problems of administration of the oriental colleges were no less serious than those of implementing the whole plan of classical studies. From the beginning the management of the Calcutta Madrasa, for instance, suffered from serious deficiencies, such as inefficiency, neglect of studies and indiscipline among students. Now and again Government introduced measures of reform, for example, in 1791, they set up a Committee of Superintendence consisting of European officials, and a European secretary was appointed in 1818, which, however, were vehemently opposed by Indian vested interests. In October, 1820, when the Governor-General in Council sanctioned the rules recommended by the Committee for the administration of the Madrasa, a system of examination was for the first time introduced. Both students and teachers were opposed to the scheme of examination which did not exist under ancient Hindu or Muslim system of traditional classical learning. The

¹ Despatch of 18th February, 1824.
effect of an examination held in the Madrasa on 15th August, 1821, however, mollified the general attitude of hostility against this innovation and improved the standard of discipline, as the Committee reported that it resulted "in dissipating the ancient prejudices against examinations, and, together with those prejudices, much of the lethargy and indolence, which had so long tended to depress it and to degrade its character".¹

The Benares Sanskrit College too suffered from the evils of maladministration. A College Committee was set up in 1798, with F. Brooke, the second Judge of Benares, as secretary, who wrote: "The College instead of being looked up to by the natives with respect and veneration, is an object of their ridicule; instead of an assemblage of learned Hindus, it resembles a band of pensioners supported by the charity of Government".²

An enquiry into the affairs of the Benares Sanskrit College conducted in 1820, revealed defects both in the academic work which was poor as well as in administration, and the committee of enquiry observed "that the College has done little more than contribute to the maintenance of a certain number of pundits and pupils, amongst whom litera-

². Minute of 7th January, 1804.
ture and study have merely served as pleas for securing a maintenance", and held the failure of the academic programme due to "the want of effective control, the absence of which has led to a total deficiency of arrangement in the order of study and utter want of diligence and zeal in its prosecution".¹

Even a private institution like the Hindu Vidyalaya or the Anglo-Indian College established in Calcutta in 1816, by a body of philanthropic Europeans and Hindus, for the cultivation of western knowledge and English, faced serious problems of administration and financial strain, and to tide over the difficulties it had to submit to the administrative authority of the General Committee which were to exercise "a regular inspection and supervising control as visitors of the Anglo-Indian College through the medium of such of their members as they might from time to time appoint".²

The several measures of reform introduced in the oriental colleges, such as the replacement of Indian superintendence by European supervision of these institutions brought about some improvement in the quality of administration and of discipline, and the General Committee

². Despatch of Governor-General in Council to Court of Directors, 27th January, 1826.
observed that "the consequences are a systematic course of study, diligent and regular habits, and an impartial appreciation of merits, which no institution left to native superintendence alone, has ever been known to maintain."¹ But the apparent improvement was short-lived and could not sustain itself for long and the institutions relapsed into a state of morbid decline.

The situation was made worse by the controversy that broke out on the question of the educational policy which divided the members of the General Committee into two opposing groups, one in favour of continuation of the existing oriental programme and the other demanding immediate substitution of classical learning by English education. When Charles Trevelyan, J.R. Colwin and Wilborforce Bird, became members of the General Committee in 1834, it became equally divided between advocates of orientalism and English education, five in favour and five against the policy of classical learning. Owing to the division of the Committee in equal force of Orientalists and Anglicists, there was complete deadlock in its work. It could not take a firm decision on fundamental questions of educational policy and could not even carry out effectively the routine programme, and progress was checked by the conflicting views of the two factions. The frequent dispute and dis-

agreement obstructed the business of the Committee at every turn. "Almost everything which came before them", wrote Trevelyan, "was more or less involved in it. The two parties were so equally balanced as to be unable to make a forward movement in any direction. A particular point might occasionally be decided by an accidental majority of one or two, but as the decision was likely to be reversed the next time the subject came under consideration, this only added inconsistency to inefficiency. This state of things lasted for about three years, until both parties became convinced that the usefulness and respectability of their body would be utterly compromised by its longer continuance. The Committee had come to a dead stop, and the Government alone could set it in motion again, by giving a preponderance to one or the other of the two opposite sections".¹

¹. Trevelyan, C.E., "On the Education of the People of India", pp. 11-12.