

Vishvanath S. Abhyankar, ex '26, of Bombay, India, has spent the past twelve years in America at various universities. After work in the universities of Illinois, Kansas and California, he came to the University of Oklahoma and completed his undergraduate and master's work at Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical college. Mr Abhyankar is now enroute to India, via Japan, to look after business interests. He plans to work on his doctorate at the university. In the following article he describes his own native university, which among a group of notable alumni produced Mahatma Gandhi. The photograph below shows the University of Bombay library

University of Bombay

BY VISHVANATH S. ABHYANKAR, '26



AN American friend recently asked me if there were any educational opportunities in India, what was their nature, and if courses in magic and fortune telling, leading to an academic degree, are offered. I was struck dumb. My surprise at the last question may only be imagined. However, I felt compelled to state that these last two pseudo-sciences, supposedly representative of India, were held in absolute disrepute, if not contempt, by all serious-minded scholars and students in India and only the occult crazy, superstitious public looked upon them with a sense of respect.

The source of the erroneous impression of Indian education in the above mentioned matter is two-fold. Misinformed, bigoted, hasty and highly prejudiced tour-

ists traveling India by means of a book and often under the direction of a ninth rate guide, looking only for the unusual and bizarre. Katherine Mayo and her colleagues, the Christian missionaries, who, in order to promote their respective interests at home, retail all sorts of strange weird tales about the type and manner of Indian mentality.

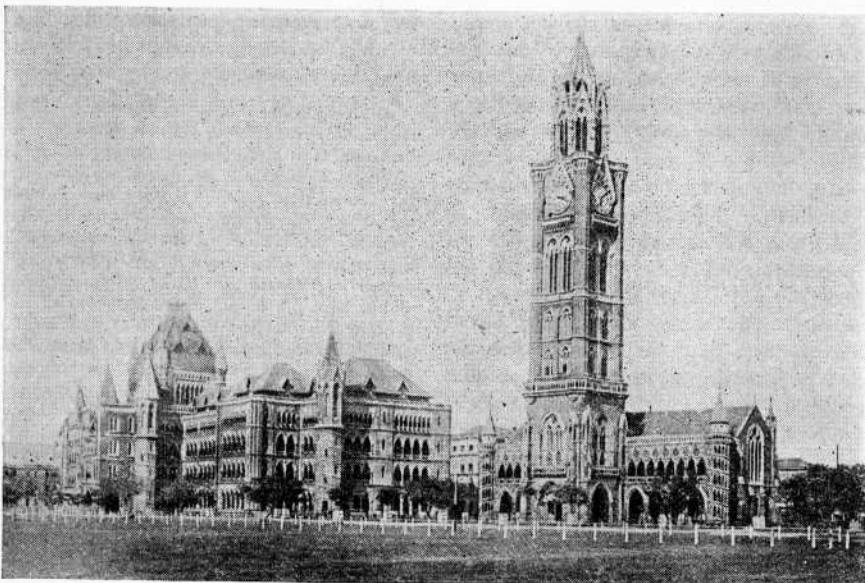
The Indian educational system not only excludes such courses as the above as ludicrous and utterly imbecilic, but emphasizes in addition, the most rigid of curricular and scholastic requirements in its students as well as a universally high level of scholarship in its professors.

The University of Bombay, which may be non-existent as far as the majority of American students are concerned, is ac-

tually a thriving educational institution, engaged in the colossal task of converting our plebian raw material into the finished product of college graduates. Literally, thousands of them may be seen every year, donning the cap and gown, ready to enter upon life's career. The University of Bombay differs fundamentally from the standard American college or university, in that it possesses no football team with its multitudinous paraphernalia.

Indian colleges certainly are not without a sense of humor and a social life of their own. They possess some degree of colloquialism and slang which gives them a touch of distinctiveness. Moreover, they serve as a melting pot in a land where caste and creed have always militated against social understanding. A decade or two ago, communal consciousness even among college students was invincibly strong, but the rising tide of nationalism pushed this narrowmindedness into the background. One of the most sacred of daily performances to an upper caste Hindu is his *meals*. A few years ago inter-dining would have been sacrilegious to them, but today it is a matter of common occurrence. Castes and creeds have generally been ruled out, if not completely annihilated, in Indian colleges. This is particularly true of secular and governmental institutions. On the other hand, privately endowed sectarian colleges have always been the cause of communal friction and a great deal of animosity. However, their popularity is rapidly waning.

There is, however, an ever-widening gulf that separates the professional oligarchy from the general student body in Indian colleges. A teacher in India is always looked upon with reverence. Undue familiarity with him, according to Indian code of ethics, may breed disrespect, if



not contempt, on the part of the students. Quite reverse is the case in America, where professors are referred to, with such epithets as *prexy* or *prof.* Jestings and *smart Alec* arguments with professors are a rare phenomenon. Professorial dignity is very carefully guarded and preserved in Indian colleges. Indian professors consider it essential in their teaching profession. Once a well known and a very reserved professor, in one of the arts colleges of the University, could not meet his classes at a scheduled hour, so he placed a notice on a class room black board—, *Prof. B— will not take his classes at 4 P. M. today.*—A witty student erased the “c” out of the word *classes* and added *where?* On his return the professor, without uttering a word, deliberately erased “I” to the annoyance of the joker. This shows the subtle sense of humor exercised by our scholars.

It is a well known fact that Indian students exercise powerful political influence in modern India. Against them and their national aspirations, the British machine works in vain. They may be mauled by police, intimidated by college authorities, imprisoned repeatedly and shut out of classes: still they go on.

Indian students are interested in vital matters of today—national or international, even if they do not have the opportunity or the background of the students in America. Thus, the University of Bombay probably appears to the average American students as quite a drab and uninteresting institution, lacking in social grace and other activities which so truly characterize the collegiate centers in America. Stadium drives, student senate dances, inter-scholastic games, periodic football convulsions, *rah-rah-rah* spirit (the only three R's in our modern education) and various “inter-sororo-fraternal” contacts of the American collegiate social world are unknown to the serious Indian scholars. To them, Greek lettered organizations such as Lambda Chi Alpha, Phi Kappa Sigma or their feminine co-efficients, Kappa Kappa Gamma or Kappa Alpha Theta, are an inscrutable mystery.

University of Bombay was established in 1857 along with two other pioneering institutions; namely, the Universities of Calcutta and Madras. The establishment of these scholastic centers in India was the direct outcome of the parliamentary inquiry which preceded the confirmation of the old East India company's charter by the British parliament in the year of 1853. The University of London as a singular administrative and examining university, was taken as a pattern, rather than Oxford or Cambridge. The framers of the original policy of higher education in India, did not intend the university should have no teaching functions, but the peculiar situation at the time of its formation, made the university of Bombay a non-teaching university. It now possesses some thirty full-fledged colleges of arts

and sciences, scattered all over the province of Bombay, with an engineering and an agricultural college situated in Poona and schools of law and medicine established in the city of Bombay where legal and clinical facilities are most numerous. Unlike the universities and colleges in America, the University of Bombay exercises a more powerful control over the collegiate student body. Every college, private or governmental, must receive recognition from the university, if it is to function educationally. It must also submit itself to numerous curricular and administrative requirements prescribed by the university. In curricula, much that is offered is rigidly outlined by the university and very little scope is given the students for elective subjects. For instance, every freshman upon entering one of the arts colleges of the university must take all the subjects prescribed for the first year's course and he is not promoted to the sophomore year, or what is generally known in India as “intermediate year,” until he has passed all the subjects simultaneously. To expound it in terms of American system, it would not be possible for a freshman to flunk in one subject—say for instance in mathematics and yet be permitted to take sophomore year's work in other subjects, which he may have completed successfully. He must wait for another year before he is given an opportunity to make good in all the subjects including those that he may have passed with honors. In other words, subjects in Bombay university are not sliced and cut into so many quantitative entities such as three hours a week of class attendance as equivalent to three credits and so on.

In an American college it is necessary for a freshman to be advised and guided by a professor in charge, due to the fact that there is a total absence of rigid curricular requirements in America. Too often, moreover, the pre-college preparation of some of the rural or country high schools, is not quite up to par with urban high schools. This frequently tends to cause much confusion and a great deal of personal adjustments when a freshman enters college. I recall a case of a freshman student who, during an interview with a college dean, was advised to look over the catalogue to see what school and courses he wished to pursue, which he did faithfully and on his second interview with the dean, he expressed himself as having decided to enter the graduate school. The humor of it is too self-evident to be stressed here. Reasons offered were first, that a graduate school required only one year; second, master's degree sounded somewhat better than a bachelor's; and third, there were neither physical education nor R. O. T. C. requirements.

The course of the development of Indian university life is quite interesting historically. The affiliating type of university became early the pivotal point of the Indian educational system. It has undoubt-

edly been of some value in many ways. It enabled the government to select recruits for its service on an impartial basis; it did much through the instrumentality of its colleges to improve and develop backward places. It speeded up the westernization of India—especially in the realm of education; and the whole scheme was regarded as economical—at a time when money was prime consideration. On the other hand, new universities were not “corporations of scholars” but “corporations of administration.” They dealt only indirectly with the training of students, but their main purpose was the examination of candidates. “They were not concerned with learning, except in so far as learning could be tested by examination.” In fact, the colleges were fettered by numerous examination requirements and by uniform courses, and students were encouraged to value training, not for its own sake, but as a means of securing marketable qualifications.

The constitution of the University of Bombay has recently undergone considerable change in view of the new enactment known as the Bombay university act of 1928. According to Vice-chancellor Mirza Ali Akbar Khan, this act changed the whole significance of the constitution. The aim was to bring the university, as a body, in closer touch with the individual, the community and the civic life of the Indian people, and to render them finer and better opportunities for culture and education, and on a larger scale than before. Post-graduate courses and an extensive research were now to be introduced, and emphasized.

The authorities of the University of Bombay are made up of chancellor; vice-chancellor, syndicate, the academic council and the senate. The last one is made up of the university fellows and is the most important body of the university. Its members numbered 144, of whom forty are nominated by the chancellor and eleven are ex-officio. The academic council is a unit, made up of experienced and recognized educators, which deals with all disciplinary and scholastic matters, in conjunction with the university executives.

The University of Bombay is thus, a very solid, active and vivacious collegiate body and the students, who are trained under its direction and guidance, go out fully prepared to render service to the world. It serves as a great force for cementing intellectual relationship between the various communities and parts of our nation. Students flock to its doors from all over India. It keeps up the reputation of Indian scholars over the whole world. Its research departments, particularly in the fields of archeology, classical literature, and modern sciences, is well known internationally.

The average American student probably does not realize the splendid benefits India has derived from the University of

(TURN TO PAGE 323, PLEASE)



Billy Morgan, is most interested at present in puppies, pop corn, and play but his future loyalty has been pledged to Soonerdom by his parents, Laura Focht Morgan, '25 arts-sc., and Walter H. Morgan, ex '25. Billy is four years old and lives at 1216 West 38th Street in Oklahoma City

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lation manager and later advertising manager of the *Oklahoma Daily*, and business manager of the 1927 Sooner.

1930

Dr R. O. Meents, who received his Ph. D. degree in August, 1930, has been employed as instructor in geography at East Central State Teachers college, the appointment to become effective May 24. He taught last year at Southern Methodist university, Dallas.

Clay Kerr, ex '30, who has done extension work at the university is popularly known among educators as the "man who handles the week school funds." He is the president of the Oklahoma Education association. As assistant state superintendent of instruction, Kerr administers the weak school distribution.

Paul Kennedy, '30 jour., who is continuity writer for WKY, Oklahoma City broadcasting station, receives an honorable mention in the "Don't Worry" column written by Walt W. Mills of the *Oklahoma City Times*. "It should please the D. A. R. to know that Paul Kennedy thinks America has the best government. Save for the political orators, Paul probably is the only one outside the D. A. R. who feels that way about this land of the free rural delivery and home of the Boston Brave or Braves. At any rate, there is a growing contempt for a government that is notoriously inefficient, cowardly and corrupt in spots."

1931

Ben Huey, '31 law, has opened law offices at 211½ East Main street, Norman. He was formerly connected with the state banking department and was special attorney in liquidation of failed state banks. Mr Huey is a member of the Phi Delta Phi honorary legal fraternity and Acacia social fraternity.

1932

Olin Rulon, Gallatin, Missouri, graduate assistant in the zoology department has won a fellowship at the University of Chicago where next year he will conduct research on methods by which cell division and growth can be stimulated.

Babette Schumacher, '32 grad., Mariana, Arkansas, has received a fellowship at Bryn Mawr college. She will study the rate of cell division in the eggs of certain fishes.

UNIVERSITY OF BOMBAY

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Bombay, in its usefulness as an educational medium. It has given India some of her most notable leaders, social reformers, educators, statesmen and economists. I cannot resist the temptation of mentioning a few names of former students who have glorified their Alma Mater—the University of Bombay. Late Messers. G. K. Gokhale, the educator and social reformer; Dr R. G. Bhandarkar, orientalist and scholar; M. G. Ranade, outstanding justice of the supreme court of Bombay; Sir Pheroze Shah Mehta, Indian statesman; B. G. Tilak, popular political leader and author; Dr Dada Bhai Naoroji, politician and ex-member of the British Parliament and last but not least, Mahatma Gandhi, barrister and most widely known Indian leader and Prof. D. K. Karve, champion of Indian women's education, are only a few of the vast number comprising the alumni of the university.

Names of these notables are a conclusive proof of the well deserved reputation enjoyed by the University of Bombay. May it be said to the credit of the University of Bombay, that her rôle in the sphere of higher education in India, has truly been most commendable and praiseworthy.

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Mortar board officers

Virginia Lester, Oklahoma City, is the new president of Mortar Board, senior women's honorary society. Elizabeth Morley, Oklahoma City, is vice-president; Thelma Bradford, Norman, secretary; Betty Evans, Ardmore, treasurer; Nan Estelle Hunter, Oklahoma City, historian; and Evelyn Anderson, Norman, quarterly editor.

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