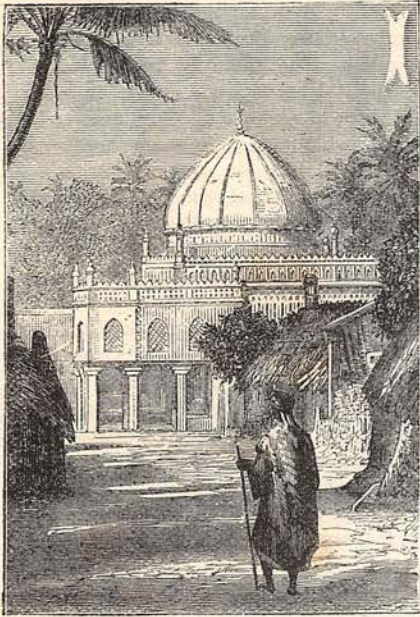


## HOW TO ENTER THE INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE.



It is now nearly a quarter of a century ago that the English Parliament determined to throw open to all comers, proving themselves competent, the avenue to the most lucrative service under the British Crown. By the India Act of 1853, it was pro-

vided that "the powers, rights, or privileges" of the Court of Directors of the East India Company "to nominate or appoint" persons to the Indian Civil Service should cease; and that, subject to certain regulations to be subsequently framed, any person—being a natural-born subject of the Queen—desirous of presenting himself for an appointment in that service, should be admitted as a candidate for examination. In the following year—November, 1854—a committee of five persons, eminently well qualified for the task, was appointed to frame the necessary regulations. This committee consisted of the great historian, Mr. (afterwards Lord) Macaulay; Lord Ashburton; Mr. (now Sir) John George Shaw-Lefevre, who until the year 1872 was a Civil Service Commissioner; the Rev. B. Jowett, the present Master of Balliol College; and Dr. Melvill, the Principal of the now abolished Haileybury College. In 1855, the regulations drawn up by this committee were put into force; the first "open competition" for the Indian Civil Service was held, and the first selections under the new system were made from the candidates who then presented themselves.

Since that time the Civil Service Commissioners have periodically held open examinations of candidates for Civil employment in the Indian Service, and young men of the highest ability have been draughted from this country, after passing through the necessary ordeal, and then launched upon an Indian career. The open competitive system has, in fact, proved to be an undoubted and splendid success. Yet, strangely enough, notwithstanding the advantageous career thus opened and offered—absolutely unlogged by any conditions of "birth" or "connections"—to the fittest,

there yet remains amongst large classes in this country, well calculated to furnish a contingent of eligible candidates for this fine service, a singular amount of ignorance concerning the whole subject. This ignorance it is the especial object of the present paper to remove; and it will be a source of considerable satisfaction to the writer if he can succeed in creating a new and increased interest in a subject of so much importance, both to the service of the Crown and to those individual Englishmen who may desire to seek distinction in one of the most honourable of all professions.

Increased attention to this subject at the present time is all the more necessary and opportune, because of the circumstance that proposed changes in the regulations affecting admission to the Indian Civil Service have been recently sanctioned by the Secretary of State for India. These changes have not yet been made, because from their nature it was necessary that full notice of them should be given to intending candidates for the service. But the fiat has gone forth for their adoption; and it will be interesting to notice and, so far as space will permit, to discuss the principle upon which the proposals for change have been based.

Another and a stronger reason for endeavouring to popularise a knowledge of the conditions of entrance to, and of the prospects of advancement offered by, the Indian Civil Service, will be presently explained. Notwithstanding that a Civil career in India under the competitive system has been an open one, the greater number of those hitherto appointed under that system have been drawn from the aristocracy and from the upper classes generally. In the fourteen years, for instance, between 1860 and 1874, during which as many as 668 Civilians were sent from this country to India, seventy-eight per cent. of the number were drawn from those classes, their parents belonging either to the aristocracy, the army, the navy, the Home, Indian, or Colonial Civil Services, or to one or other of the learned professions. As many as 184 of the 668 appointments were obtained by the sons of ministers of religion. The parents of 145 of the 184 were clergymen of the Church of England and Ireland. The parents of the other thirty-nine were ministers of various denominations, and missionaries. Of the remaining appointments, sixty-seven were filled by the sons of the aristocracy, sixty-five by the sons of officers of the army, navy, and Civil Service, fifty-four by the sons of Indian and Colonial Civil servants, forty-nine and sixty-five by the sons of practitioners of the law and of medicine respectively, forty-eight by the sons of merchants, &c., and eleven by the sons of architects or engineers; whilst the remaining ninety-eight were filled by the sons of men of various callings, amongst the number being "professors," schoolmasters, farmers, &c.

The high educational qualifications required of can-

didates for the Indian Civil Service have, of course, naturally served to give the best chances of appointment to those young men whose parents have been able to afford them the greatest educational advantages. Of the forty candidates, for instance, who, in the competition of 1874, stood highest on the list, as many as thirty had been educated at public schools. This proportion may indeed be accepted as a pretty fair average. Still, as the service for which these candidates are selected is one requiring the highest abilities, the national interests demand that the standard of qualification should suffer no reduction. It has, nevertheless, been seen that the sons of men in a humble position in life have been able to secure appointments, and education at a public school or university need not by any means be looked upon as an indispensable condition of success. The intention of the Legislature in throwing open the Indian Civil Service was to remove the barrier which the "patronage" system had set against the meritorious, and to offer "a fair field and no favour" to all classes of Her Majesty's subjects who could comply with certain essential requirements. Six years ago, the institution of School Boards placed the means of a fair education within the reach of the poorest in the land, and there is now, therefore, no reason why appointments in the Indian service should not be filled to a larger extent than has hitherto been the case by young men in a humble walk of life.

It would, however, be unwise to conceal the fact that success in the competition for appointments in the Indian Civil Service can only be obtained as the result of very hard study; and the examination, so far as the list of "subjects" is concerned, is admirably calculated to afford the best means of testing the capabilities of the competitors. The committee already referred to, who in 1854 framed the regulations for the admission of candidates, laid it down that the subjects of examination—the first examination—should be "confined to those branches of knowledge to which it is desirable that English gentlemen, who mean to remain at home, should pay some attention." That is to say, that no subject should be introduced into the examination which could not be regarded as a necessary part of an ordinary liberal education. And the examination was so fixed for the thoughtful reason that "no candidate who might fail should, to whatever calling he might betake himself, have any reason to regret the time and labour which he had spent in preparing himself to be examined." At the same time, the interests of the service were not, of course, lost sight of; and in those interests it was considered desirable that "an excellent general education" should be required on the part of the candidate—such an education, in fact, as might "enlarge and strengthen his understanding," and thus fittingly precede the special education which must prepare him for the duties he would be called upon to perform in India.

The committee of 1854 gave expression, in fixing the list of qualifications for the first examination, to "an anxious desire to deal fairly by all parts of the United

Kingdom, and by all places of liberal education;" and these suggestions have been pretty literally adopted by the Civil Service Commissioners in the list now in force. As the degrees of proficiency of the candidates are shown by "marks," it may be well to indicate the subjects, for convenience sake, in the natural order assigned to them by the maxima of marks. First of all we have, then, the language, literature, and history of France, of Germany, and of Italy, for each of which the maximum number of marks is 375. Then follow six subjects, for each of which a maximum number of 500 marks is fixed. They are—English composition; history of England, including that of the laws and constitution; English language and literature; moral sciences—that is to say, logic, mental and moral philosophy; Sanscrit language and literature; and Arabic language and literature. To the language, literature, and history of Greece and of Rome respectively, 750 marks are assigned. Against natural science—that is to say, (1) chemistry, including heat; (2) electricity and magnetism; (3) geology and mineralogy; (4) zoology; and (5) botany—1,000 marks are set, and may be secured by adequate proficiency in any two or more of the five branches of the subject named. For mathematics, pure and mixed, 1,250 marks are assigned.

It is important to bear in mind that none of these subjects are obligatory upon candidates, but those who possess a competent knowledge of the greatest number of them will take the highest places in the competition. No marks at all, however, will be given for any subject in respect of which a candidate does not show what, in the discretion of the examiners appointed by the Civil Service Commissioners, is deemed to be a "competent" knowledge. This is a rule which is intended to discourage the acquirement of a mere "smattering" of any subject, and it well accomplishes its object. As another means of discouraging "smattering," the commissioners adopt the plan of deducting from the marks given under each subject to the candidates, the entire number of marks which correspond to what the examiners consider a competent knowledge of the subject. A simple illustration will exhibit the fairness of this plan. If 100 marks gained for a subject—for which the maximum, as representing what, for the sake of argument, may be called perfection, is fixed at 375 marks—be deemed to correspond to the examiners' estimate of a "competent" knowledge, the man who merely gained ninety-nine marks for that subject would score nothing; for these marks, falling short of the minimum limit, would not be allowed to count. If, however, 101 marks were gained, only one would count; and this would be fair, because then the difference between the man who—gaining ninety-nine marks—counted nothing, and the man who gained 101 marks would be properly represented, not by 101, but by two marks. In the same way, under the operation of this system of deducting marks, the relative knowledge of the competitors is fairly ascertained in respect of all the subjects in the list. On the understanding, therefore, that no candidate gets any credit for any subject in which he cannot obtain at least one mark over the

minimum number, it is fair to give extra credit for extra proficiency; so that a candidate who may in one or two subjects be just over the minimum limit, may score so well in other subjects as to secure a place in the competition; for the marks under each subject are added together, and the highest totals give the prizes.

It will, however, be understood that before a candidate can compete at all he must give to the Civil Service Commissioners satisfactory proofs of his eligibility in respect of certain essential conditions, which are—that he is a natural-born subject of the Queen; that his age is not less than seventeen, or more than twenty-one; that he has “no disease, constitutional affection, or bodily infirmity unfitting him, or likely to unfit him, for the Civil Service of India;” and lastly, that he is of good moral character. These conditions fulfilled, and a place secured in the competition, a period of probation extending over two years ensues, during which the candidates are examined periodically in further subjects, their progress in which is indicated by marks given by the examiners. The subjects of this, the “final examination,” are four—namely, (1) Oriental languages—*i.e.*, Sanscrit and the vernacular languages of India; (2) the history and geography of India; (3) law; (4) political economy. For Nos. 2 and 4, 350 marks each are assigned; for No. 1, the marks assigned are—for the vernacular languages of India, each 400 marks, and for Sanscrit 500 marks; whilst for No. 3, 1,250 marks are assigned. The languages besides Sanscrit, to which a candidate gives his first and best attention, are of course those which may be required for the Presidency to which he is to be appointed; and the choice of a Presidency is made in the order of merit immediately after the result of the open competition is announced. A sum of £300 is allowed by the Government, to each candidate who passes the final examinations, towards the expenses of the probationary period—£50 after each of the first three half-yearly examinations satisfactorily gone through, and £150 after the final examination at the end of the last half-year of the period.

It will be desirable to notice in this place the changes which the Government have determined to make in the regulations for the admission of candidates to the Civil Service of India. At present, the age for admission to the competition must be between seventeen and twenty-one years. The Government propose to reduce the maximum limit from twenty-one to nineteen. Lord Salisbury is of opinion that under the existing system a candidate is almost precluded from receiving a university education, the age at which he must compete being so fixed that he cannot, according to ordinary arrangements, receive such an education either before or after the competition. As a result of the present system, young men, after they have passed their competitive examination, ordinarily spend their two years of preparation for the final examination studying by themselves in London lodgings. The opinions for and against maintaining the present limits of age, of those most competent to judge, appear pretty equally balanced. The Civil Service

Commissioners are in favour of maintaining them; Lord Salisbury and the Government are on the other side. The Civil Service Commissioners quote, with approbation, the opinion of Professor Jowett, that it is much more difficult to form an estimate of the real capacity of candidates at seventeen or eighteen, than at nineteen or twenty. That, of course, may be held to be merely a matter of opinion; and very much, it will be obvious, must depend upon the individual capacity of candidates. Some will necessarily be earlier, and others later, in giving the indications upon which an estimate of their capacity may be formed. Lord Salisbury, however, adduces what it must be admitted is a very important consideration, in favour of his view that the earlier maximum age for candidates is preferable to that fixed under the present regulations. His lordship remarks, in a despatch on this subject addressed to the Governor-General of India, that out of the number who present themselves for competition for the Indian Civil Service, it is certain that four-fifths must fail, because the candidates are usually more than five times as many as the vacancies. He adds, “No prudent parent, in selecting a profession for his son, will leave this uncertainty out of consideration. Some professions are absolutely closed, others are almost impossible, to a man who thinks for the first time of entering them at the age of twenty-two. A man, therefore, who competes for the Indian Civil Service at that age, undoubtedly strives for a valuable prize, but does it at a formidable risk. He stakes, in a measure, his chance of self-support upon the result of a competition in which it is certain that four-fifths must fail. It is more than probable that such a risk must weigh strongly with parents, and diminish the field of competition—especially among the professional class; but no such apprehension will be possible if the limit of age is fixed at nineteen.” Lord Salisbury appears to have overlooked the consideration that candidates may compete two, three, and occasionally four times; thus reducing the risks of failure which his lordship thinks will be “certain” to affect four-fifths of the total number of candidates. It must, however, be conceded that, even after making the deductions which have been suggested, the burden of the argument is in favour of Lord Salisbury’s view—that the lower is preferable to the higher maximum limit of age.

There is one other important point connected with the change of system which has been determined on that deserves notice. There are no doubt strong reasons in favour of giving to the successful competitors the advantages of university training during their two years’ probation, which has to be undergone before they proceed to India to enter upon their duties. The Indian Civilian’s career is to a large extent, during its earlier years, one of peculiar isolation in many instances. Should he be appointed to an up-country station, he will probably be thrown very little into the society of Europeans. It is therefore undesirable, for obvious reasons, that a young man who has been taken from school to compete for the Indian Service, and who spends the interval, as he

usually does under the present arrangements, in studious isolation, should be sent at once after his final examination to a remote Indian station, without having had the opportunity of obtaining the advantages conferred by University life—advantages which include what Lord Salisbury very properly describes as “the invaluable training which consists in the knowledge of the thoughts and characters of other men.”

The opinion of experts is strongly in favour of Lord Salisbury's views on this point, and it must be confessed that there is much to be said in favour of these views. To enforce as far as possible its adoption, the Government have determined to make the allowance of £150 a year, during the two years of the probationer's term, dependent upon his having passed the probation at some University, to be approved by the Secretary of State, at which “moral responsibility for the conduct of the students is undertaken, and rules of discipline are enforced.” This will still not absolutely preclude candidates from pursuing their probationary studies where they please; but it will undoubtedly largely tend to influence their decision. The new arrangements, however, will not come into operation until July, 1878, and meanwhile there will be held—next March, and in the early part of 1878—two examinations under the existing arrangements. Those who desire to compete in the examination to be held next March, must produce to the Civil Service Commissioners the usual evidence as to age, health, and character, &c., before the 1st of February.

It now remains to notice the subjects of pay, “furlough,” and pension in connection with the Civil Service of India; and this must be done briefly. The pay ranges from about £480 a year at commencement;\* rising to about £3,000 or £4,000. Above this are numerous prizes ranging up to much higher amounts. The salary of the Governor-General is £25,000 per annum; of the Lieutenant-Governors of the Provinces, £10,000; and it may be mentioned as an encouragement to candidates for this splendid service, that Lord Lawrence entered as a junior Civilian, and won his way to the top. It is, of course, obvious that every Civilian cannot be Governor-General; but there are many splendid

prizes in the service, which need not be despised because they happen to fall short of the princely stipend of the Governor-General.

Some years ago the Civil Service Commissioners published information respecting the positions, in the period 1859—62, of the first batch of Civilians sent out to India from the first open competition, held in 1855; and one or two facts culled from this source will be interesting as indicating the then rate of progress of the Indian Civil servant. One of the 1855 candidates was, in 1861, Officiating Deputy Commissioner at Pertaubghur, in the Bengal Presidency, at a salary of £1,135. Another was Officiating Judge at Lahore, at a salary of £1,200. Another was Superintendent of Surveys at Dacca, and in June, 1860, his salary was £1,200. Another was, in June, 1871, Joint Magistrate and Deputy Collector at Midnapore, at a salary of £1,489. A fifth was, in December, 1859, Under-Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, and his salary was £1,500 per annum. It will be naturally inferred from these figures that promotion must be regulated partly by merit and partly by seniority.

Both the Civil Leave and the Civil Pension Codes for the Indian Civil Service are most elaborate and complicated documents. But for the purpose of the present paper it will be sufficient to indicate broadly the chief points of interest in these codes. In the matter of pension, Section 4 of the Code provides that “an officer who has been twenty-five years in the service, counting from the date of his covenant, or from the date of the despatch of the Secretary of State announcing his appointment (whichever may have been earlier), and who has rendered twenty-one years' active service, is entitled, on his resignation of the service being accepted, to an annuity of £1,000.” This, it will not be disputed, is a liberal allowance. Equally liberal, the intending candidate will probably admit, is the allowance of “furlough.” Section 8 of the Civil Leave Code says: “The amount of furlough, and of special leave, with allowances, is limited to six years.” Section 9 says: “The amount of furlough ‘earned’ by an officer is one-fourth of his active service.”

It cannot, indeed, be denied that, on the whole, the career opened up before the Indian Civilian is a brilliant one, and it may well tempt the ambition of the youth of this country—offering as it does the prospect of honourable distinction. F. G. H.

\* According to the Civil Lists received at the India Office from India, it appears that the Civilians last appointed are drawing 400 rupees per mensem, or just £480 per annum.

