INDIAN ACADEMY

FORESIGHT ! that is the apt word ; it could sum up the ushering in of the Indian Academy in 1928.

The Academy's history has been for the most part a vigorous effort to eavesdrop at the affairs of India, Burma and Ceylon, past and present. The philosophical and religious background, the missiological and sociological needs of these countries have been the main topics of investigation and discussion. Literature, history and politics have not been entirely by-passed. Essays on these subjects have thrown sidelights on every aspect of Indian life and culture.

If one would delve into the past proceedings of the Academy, found in the accumulations of secretarial pen-pushing, one would find over a hundred subject-headings on Hindu philosophy or literature alone. India's art and culture, her historical and sociological outlines cover the subject-matter of nearly fifty essays or discussions. We have done full justice to the minorities : Mohammed and Buddha, Jainism, Sikhism and Zoroastrianism have had their say in our midst. Through all these labyrinthine ways the Catholic outlook and influence on India and her millions have been closely scrutinized and commented upon.

While the main aim of the Academy has remained stable and constant, the means adopted have gone through a complicated process of metamorphosis. The Academy started on the philosophers' side. In the second year of its existence, its doors were thrown open to the theologians. The meetings were primarily holiday meetings, their number varying from five to ten a year. At this stage attendance was free but praiseworthy.

In 1936 the Academy suffered a bifurcation. The theologians and philosophers conducted their meetings separately. This new phase resulted in more meetings and a better handling of subjects. The number of meetings rose up to twenty in the philosophers' section for 1939 and seventeen in the theologians' section for 1941. As long as this bifurcation remained, the direction of the Academy was entrusted to two directors : Rev. Fr. C. Lambot, S.J., being the director of the philosophers' section ; and Rev. Fr. P. Rayanna, S.J., directed the destinies of the theologians' section, except in the year 1938 when Rev. Fr. R. Criem, S.J., was in charge.

Fr. Lambot and Br. K. J. Antony set the ball rolling nearly twenty years ago. The

latter gave us of his best as president for five years. Till now he is up and doing in the Archdiocese of Trivandrum. While our guide, counsellor, friend and director Rev. Fr. Lambot, S.J., has been the Academy's mainstay throughout its existence. This veritable " firebrand " has not only warmed up our hearts and minds with the gentle flame of his hilarity but set aflame our entire halls of learning with the torch of his bold and vigorous enthusiasm. Amidst the flux and fluid and the vagaries of our existence and work, he remained constant and stable to the end.

Once again the two branches were amalgamated into one in 1943, when the Academy eked out its existence for a year and went a-hibernating in 1944. Its winter was unduly prolonged. For a couple of months its voice was relegated to the limbo of forgotten things, only to be resurrected in glory in 1945. It was awakened by the magic touch of the C.B.C.I.

Now it is a live-thing, in its heyday ; Rev. Fr. Rector is present at most of its meetings. The enthusiasm of many professors and students is directed towards its progress. Since it has not too many laurels to rest upon, its future is rosy.

During its course the Academy has provided books pertaining to Indian questions and collected a few illustrative and historical tit-bits that are housed in its museum.

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ST. MARY'S ENGLISH ACADEMY

On the 19th September, 1896, in the very beginning of the Seminary's existence, this Academy was formed under the initiative of the Rector, Rev. Fr. S. Grosjean, S.J., to enable Kandyans to make themselves able writers and eloquent speakers. And now, as we look back on our past endeavours and gaze even as far back as the eighteen-nineties, we see that the Academy has verily been the novitiate of Kandyan eloquence. The literary drill gone through in the Academy has shown its worth in the mission-fields.

During the last half century, the Academy has had fifteen directors. Of presidents it has had fifty-two, three of whom have felt the weight of a mitre and a diocese on their heads. We have, however, had but one Patroness, Our Blessed Mother. She saw the birth of the Academy, and she is with us yet, the one unchanging reality amidst all the bustle and change that has marked the Academy's life.

This Academy was formed, as our first president said in his inaugural address, to make us " able writers and eloquent speakers ". Various exercises have helped us to achieve this end. The items which characterized the meetings of the Academy in its earlier years were sermons, compositions, essays of a descriptive or imaginative nature, declamations, short communications and readings of extracts both poetry and prose. Literary studies of classical authors took the chief place in the Academy's programmes only a couple of years later. In 1902 the Academy staged its first play — a part of Sheridan's *The Critic*. Debates were introduced shortly afterwards, and a few years later, lectures and extempore speeches. Even from the beginning the best of the Academy's essays and addresses have been preserved in the ' Golden Book '. Throughout the years, the Academic Library has helped the members to acquire both a good style and much useful knowledge, besides that habit of sound reading, which will stand a priest in good stead always and everywhere.

As the years went by, the sermons, short communications and readings ceased to be. The declamations were continued, strengthened by an occasional dialogue, and the essays took a decidedly literary turn. The good

custom of honouring our Blessed Mother with a solemn meeting in May was introduced, and with the years this came to be considered one of the main features of the year. On 11th October 1921, the Academy celebrated its Silver Jubilee with a High Mass and *Te Deum*, followed by a dramatic entertainment. By the 1920's the essays and declamations interspersed with debates, lectures, extempore speeches, and a drama at the end of the year had come to stay as items on the agenda and have continued to be, till today; and the cometary appearance of a mock trial has always been very welcome.

At present the Academy is alive and kicking, indefatigably carrying on the task of making Kandyans literary men.*

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* *St. Joseph's Theologians' Academy*, which has existed for nearly twenty years — no official records of its origin can be traced — was suppressed in 1936. It had rendered yeoman service under the directorship of Fathers Gryffroy and Roelandts. When the programme of studies was definitely carried out according to the Apostolic Constitution *Deus scientiarum*, the Academy ceased its activities, the aim of which partly coincided with the purpose of the *Exercitationes* of the Theological Faculty.

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ST. MARY'S LATIN ACADEMY

IT WAS IN THE YEAR 1900 that this Academy came into existence during the rectorship of Very Rev. Fr. T. Adessi, S.J. In founding this Academy Fr. Adessi's ardent desire was that it should serve as an efficient means for the seminarists to acquire both an easy understanding of the Latin authors and a great facility in the art of writing. We may say that he specially intended it to be the school where the students would drill themselves in the art of speaking Latin, an art difficult, yet necessary, requiring constant and continuous practice.

About the year 1906 the Academy fell into a sort of slumber, but this was not to last long. Soon, in 1909, under the leadership of Rev. Fr. F. X. L'Hoir, S.J., then a scholastic, it rose up with renewed vigour and energy which has been keeping the Academy even to our present days alive, strong and robust; a fact, to be admired indeed, since Latin is a dead language and not a very palatable one to all.

From the start, essays were being written on the classical works of great authors like Cicero, Horatius and Virgil; the intellectual giants of the Catholic Church like the Magnus Pater Augustinus, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome have time and again afforded ample matter for essays. It is to be remarked that Our Lady has occupied a pre-eminent part in the activities of the Academy. As of old, declamation retains its place in the agenda. Debates and extempore speeches too were introduced from the year 1934. The Golden Book which was proposed, but rejected in 1928, gained entrance into the Academy in 1945. Besides a few short scenes, it is interesting to note that three dramas in Latin have been staged. The first *Joseph* was performed on the grand occasion of the Silver Jubilee of the Academy; the second *Stephani Martyrium* in 1931. The third *Flavianus*, which was presented in 1944, deserves a special mention. It was appreciated to the full both for its beautiful plot and for the superb performance. Quite fittingly every year two extraordinary meetings are held: one in honour of Our Lady on the 8th September, the other on the 13th August in honour of St. John Berchmans, both of whom are the Patrons of the Academy. May they help the Academy to realize more and more its grand ideal.

MAR THOMA MALAYALA SAMAJAM

THE AIM of the Academy is, as its constitution says, " to help the priestly formation of the members, making of them efficient priests fit for their work in Malabar, by fostering union among the members, respect of the mother country and improvement in the knowledge of the mother tongue, in a word, the development of the Kerala Culture ". Consequently its scope is wide : " all subjects that pertain to the language, religion, culture, history, society and any others that will be useful for priests in their ministry " are treated in the Academy.

For the origin of the Academy we have to go back to the dim past of the very birth of our Seminary itself. It was a very happy idea that in 1893, the eight Malayalee students here started a club for the sake of talking in their mother tongue. Being only a club for the members to meet together and talk in their mother tongue, it had no academy activities.

That is why, we find no written record of the Academy till 1903, when the club took the form of an academy with an elected bureau. It had vigorous and varied activities till 1906 when it fell into a state of ' inertia ' and even a proposal to suppress the Academy was introduced which, of course, was thrown out.

Gradually the number of the members increased ; dynamic and enthusiastic elements came in ; the Academy got fresh vigour and for the sake of more efficient working, it was divided into two sections in 1912 : one for the philosophers and the other for the theologians. In 1913 the Academy celebrated its 20th anniversary and the report was printed and published.

The separate meetings, for the want of members, had to be amalgamated into one main association in 1917, and the Academy celebrated its Silver Jubilee in 1918.

The separate meetings revived in 1919, and continued to work till the end of 1925. From 1926 till this day, the Academy had been working on the unitary line. In 1934 the 40th anniversary was celebrated on a grand scale.

A committee was appointed in 1938 to revise and codify the constitution of the Academy. This revised constitution is in force now.

Though the Academy completed fifty years of its existence in the year 1943, Golden Jubilee Celebrations had to be postponed due to the adverse circumstances consequent on the last war.

In 1945, however, a library extension fund was raised as a jubilee memorial and owing to the generous contributions from the old members over Rs. 400 were collected. The money was used to buy the best of Malayalam books available at present.

This year we are intending to have the formal Jubilee Celebration and the opening of the library extension as the jubilee memorial.

This, in short, is the history of the Malayalam Academy. May the blessings of its Patron, St. Thomas, be on its members, past and present.

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ST. MARY'S TAMIL ACADEMY

WITHIN FIVE YEARS FROM NOW, the Tamil Academy will be celebrating its Golden Jubilee. For the illustrious date of its birth is 3rd September 1901. The names connected with the events are those of Bro. Swaminather and Bro. Adaikalam. St. Francis Xavier was chosen as Patron. But alas, he was made the Patron of a still-born babe ! For full eight years it did not breathe.

Reborn in May 1909, the Academy was placed under the patronage of Our Lady. (Our sympathies to St. Francis Xavier.) A Tamil drama was acted for the first time in 1910. The Golden Book was introduced in

1911. Special interest in *Kathaprasangam* was a feature of this period.

Every great institution has its own dark days. Whether or not the Tamil Academy actually fell on evil days between the years 1913 and 1917 is not known. But nothing is recorded of the activities for that period.

The meetings became more frequent. Their number increases every year. 1926 records a total of 32. The present generation is likely to be scandalized at this number. There are a good many discussions round the Golden Book causing much heat. And the Golden Book gets adorned every year with new acquisitions. Certain years record the visits, addresses of extraordinary men to the Academy. Thus in 1926, Rev. Fr. Bury, S.J., gave a talk on Tamil literature. Dr. Roche, Bishop of Tuticorin, addressed a meeting held in his honour on the 17th July 1924. In 1926 the Academy met in true Kandyan spirit, with those of its ex-members who had come in connection with the blessing of the new chapel. Rev. Fr. Swaminather spoke of his good old days in the Seminary. On 3rd September 1926, the Tamil Academy was twenty-five years old. The Jubilee Celebrations were not very modest. The occasion was crowned with the staging of a drama entitled *Manoranchithan*.

The number of meetings increases. They reach the astounding total of 38 in 1929. 1931 records a meeting presided over by one Rev. Fr. Dupont, S.J. In March 1932 the Tamil Academy had the honour of greeting its most illustrious son, Rt. Rev. Peter Francis, Bishop of Kumbakonam, who had visited the Seminary. Staging a Tamil drama every alternate year has now become a regular custom. These later years have also seen a revival of *Kathaprasangam*. From 1935 a meeting, presided over by Rev. Fr. Rayanna, becomes an indispensable item.

That is a sketchy outline of the vast and multifarious activities of the St. Mary's Tamil Academy in its long career of forty-five years. Following on the illustrious tradition of its past, the Tamil Academy is advancing with increased vigour under the gracious protection of its Patroness ever young and never old.

It is proper that this report should end with an expression of our gratitude to our benefactors. We cordially thank His Lordship the Rt. Rev. Peter Francis, Bishop of Kumbakonam and His Lordship the Rt. Rev. F. T. Roche, S.J., Bishop of Tuticorin, and all those who have contributed their share to the welfare of our Tamil Academy.

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THE SACRED HEART CONCANIM ACADEMY

IN THE YEAR 1912 the idea dawned on Rev. Fr. Cyprian Lambot, S.J., to have in the Seminary another vernacular Academy for the Concanim-speaking Brothers. This wish he expressed in person to Bro. Thomas Almeida and the idea was discussed in council by all the Goan Brothers on the 16th of February. Four days later, on the 20th, our Sacred Heart Concanim Academy came into being with Rev. Fr. Lambot as its Director and Bro. Raymond Cordeiro as its first President.

At first it was possible to hold weekly meetings, but a few years later, the number of members dwindling to a meagre four or five, they became fortnightly. Because of obstacles, the formal meetings had to be dropped from 1919 on; nevertheless, the members continued to meet every Sunday afternoon for some reading and conversation in Concanim. At the biginning of 1930 membership had risen to ten. It was now proper to revive the Academy and make it glow with renewed fervour. The 24th of

May of the same year saw the rules of the Academy revised and sanctioned by Very Rev. Fr. F. X. L'Hoir, S.J. (then Rector). From now onwards the meetings were to be held regularly every month. Today we can count no less than thirty members on our rolls.

Our best talents in speech and music were displayed at the very solemn meeting held in June in honour of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The secondary Patrons being Our Lady Queen of the Apostles, St. Francis Xavier and Venerable Fr. Joseph Vaz, solemn meetings were instituted in their honour. The monthly meetings were mostly devotional in character, comprising declamations and sermons, preceded by and ending with appropriate hymns. Later on, for a variety, debates, symposiums, dialogues, discussions and catechism classes were held.

Our library, which began with the Academy, consists mainly of books, religious pamphlets and magazines presented by the editors themselves or subscribed to by the members. Of the former, we are greatly indebted to Fathers Vincent Lobo and Ludovic Pereira, of happy memory, for their generous donations of dictionaries, devotional and prayer books. In no small measure are our thanks due also to the editors of the *Dor Mhuiniachi Rotti* and *Udentechem Neketr* who not only bring us in touch with a high standard of Concanim literature but also keep us well informed of current events through their magazines.

Meanwhile, the histrionic and musical talents of our members were not neglected. They were given full scope to in various plays, all written and enacted by the members themselves. Two outstanding and memorable ones were staged in 1937 and 1945, the former: *Silver thou didst take away but Golde didst thou give us*: on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of the Academy, and thy latter: *Forgive thy enemies*, on the dae of the Final Vows of Rev. Fr. Lawrence Fernandes, S.J., our professor of dogma.

At the close of every year, a final séance was held in honour of our outgoing *Neo-Sacerdotes*. The report of the year was read out by the president, after which a variety entertainment or a play was staged. The meetings ended with parting addresses and the blessing from the new priests.

This, in short, is a retrospective glance at our Academy's activities down the arches of the years, and as we kneel today thanking the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus for all His benefits to us in the past, we pray that He may shower on us and upon all the future members of our Academy His bountiful blessings. *Crescat et floreat!*

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ST. JOSEPH'S SINGHALESE ACADEMY

IT IS REGRETTED that the documents available in the archives of the Academy do not give any information about its life and work before the year 1924. Thus the names of the members, who were founders of the Academy, and the identity of its pioneer workers cannot be traced with precision and exactitude. Nevertheless, it is known from reliable and authoritative circles that the Singhalese Brothers in the Seminary used to conduct meetings for the study of their mother tongue before 1924.

The records at our disposal point to sure and steady progress as may be seen from a review of the Academy's main annual activities recorded by its secretariate. On the average, meetings have been held once a month at which essays, lectures declamations, dialogues, catechism classes and sermons have been the main features. The

conspicuous absence of spectacular performances like dramas, etc., proper to a vernacular Academy, and its consequent cloistered life, may to a great extent be attributed to its paucity of numbers. In spite of this great drawback and handicap, the Academy has been fortunate to have a library which caters to a great extent for the needs of the members. In this connection, to name all our benefactors is impossible owing to the limits of space. However, special mention must be made of their Lordships the present Bishops of Galle, Kandy and Chilaw. To these and to all the other Rev. Fathers, who have given us help both in kind and cash for the library, hereby we tender our most sincere thanks.

The Academy is also much beholden and thankful to the Rectors of the Seminary, but for whose encouragement and guiding influence it would have ceased to exist long ago.

It is hoped that with the Academy's growing numerical strength, it may "set out prosperously and reign", thus enabling Lanka-Matha to give ear to Christ's message brought to her by her sons: "*Audi, filia, et vide et inclina aurem tuam, quia concupivit Rex speciem tuam.*"

