

# PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

## **Introduction.**

To-day it is our happy privilege to welcome for the first time into our midst Sri Bishnuram Medhi, our distinguished Governor, as president of our College Day Celebrations. To Srimathi Medhi also we are most grateful for having so graciously accepted our invitation to distribute the prizes ; whilst the presence of His Excellency Bishop Carvalho always brings us added joy assuring us as it does of his paternal blessing on the College. To one and all, Reverend clergy, parents of our students and devoted friends of the College we extend a most cordial welcome, and trust that they will enjoy this evening's function.

## **New Buildings.**

In these days of space-exploration, with rockets soaring off to the other side of the moon, Stella Maris is solving her own space problem in the modern way - by launching out from her old orbit in Mylapore, to the new skies of "The Cloisters." The venture, like any flight into space, is a daring one, but with the help of God to Whom all things are possible, we trust that the College with all its equipment and over 800 students aboard, will make a happy landing at Cathedral Road for its re-opening in June. †

To turn back the pages of this last year, the foundation stone of the new College Building was laid on the 5th of June by our esteemed Vice-Chancellor. Since that date, despite the slender resources and the very heavy cost involved, due to the untiring zeal and unbounded confidence in Divine Providence on the part of Rev. Mother Superior, the buildings have been springing up at a rapid pace and will, we trust, be ready for occupation at the beginning of the next academic year. In this connection we are most grateful to all the kind and large-hearted benefactors who have so generously helped us throughout the year, and in particular to Dr. and Mrs. Tara Cheriaan and all the members of our Building Fund Committee who worked so tirelessly and unselfishly to organize the Three Day Benefit Entertainment in August, which you, Sir, very graciously inaugurated at the Annamalai Manram. Nor must we omit the part played by the staff and students in contributing to the success of the undertaking. Classes enthusiastically vied with each other in selling tickets, collecting advertisements for the Souvenir, leaving no stone unturned in their efforts to help their dear College. We are grateful also to the University Grants Commission for the grant of one lakh we received towards the construction of the Hostel. Much is still required to pay off the debt incurred, but we go forward knowing that God, Who is ever with us, will help us in the future as in the past.

## **Hostel.**

In speaking of "Hostel" it becomes necessary to use the word in the plural this year, as our well-established Hostel here at Mylapore has now a young and vigorous rival - the new College Hostel at "The Cloisters", kindly opened by the Vice-Chancellor on the same day the foundation stone of the New College Buildings was laid. A number of students have been occupying it since then, proudly preparing the way for their elder sisters to join them for the next academic year. Hostel Day in October brought with it the happy re-union, without rivalry, of the two Hostels when both co-operated wholeheartedly to make the day's programme pleasant and enjoyable for all. The Hostel seems to be vying with the College for pride of place in the new campus - for whilst Hostel No. 1 was the first of the new buildings to be erected, Hostel No. 2, long past the foundation stage, is now rising to complete the ensemble.

## **Examinations.**

We started work this academic year, encouraged and enlivened by the unprecedented success secured by the students in the University Examinations. Percentages as such are just cold numbers, but what enthusiasm and joy do they not arouse in the hearts of the students and staff alike, for they are in reality more than mere uninteresting figures, being an index of the happy co-operation and conscientious work of both. It is with a keen realization of the debt of humble gratitude we owe to God that we record the results which in no branch fell below 83%.

In the B.A. (old regulations) for Parts I, II, and III respectively, the percentage of passes were 98, 100 and 97 whilst the B. Sc. secured 96 and B. Music 100. The Pre-University students determined not be left behind, raised their percentage to 83. In the first examination of the New Three Year Degree Course the students established a very encouraging precedent of 100% in English, 96% for Language, Ancillary B.A. 100% and B. Sc. 90, Minors 88 for B.A. and 98 for B. Sc. The Social Service Diploma students stolidly maintained their usual 100%.

Our warmest congratulations to our 3 prize winners: S.N. Hemalatha who was awarded the Professor R. Gopala Ayyar prize on securing first rank in the University in Zoology. The G. A. Natesan Prize and the Rama Panicker Medal for Indian Music were won by K. Janaki whilst S. A. Alamelu received the R. Akkamma Gari Medal for her proficiency in English.

## **Sports.**

Sports and games, collegiate and inter-collegiate, have always occupied an important place in the life and interests of students at Stella Maris - warmly encouraged by the college authorities as an essential part of any true education. This year has seen no diminution of interest and enthusiasm. Although the results may have been less spectacular, the more important fruits of initiative, team-spirit, fair play, courage and discipline have certainly been reaped.

## **Associations.**

A year of fruitful achievement in the various associations has been the result of the persevering and self-sacrificing efforts of our College Union President and Vice-President, Mahema Michael and Audrey Pinto and their assistant office-bearers. Mr. Best of the British Council kindly inaugurated the meetings in July with his challenging topic "Why poetry?" which stimulated much thought and discussion, since then a non-stop series of discussions, symposia and lectures on a variety of topics have succeeded each other until Mr. Tribe, also of the British Council, terminated the cycle by his very instructive Valedictory address on "University life in England today."

Debates have proved very popular this year, especially the collegiate inter-class debates in which the Pre-University students, or to be more precise Pre-University Group V, deserve our heartiest congratulations for managing to defeat their seniors and unexpectedly carrying off the shield. A notable feature of inter-collegiate Debates was that the College was represented not so much by the same individual student or team, but by a number of different teams drawn from the various classes - frequently including the P. U. Very often they returned victorious - sometimes bringing with them, not one but several cups and shields, doubly happy at the success of their combined efforts.

## **Social Service.**

In order to understand something of the varied activities of the Social Service League there is no easier and more effective means than to read through the daily diary maintained by the Leaguers in which the various counsellors of the Medical, Recreational, Educational and Needlework committees relate their many encounters with the people of the four cheris they visit daily.

One tells of the baby covered with sores who was bathed and treated with the appropriate medicine, as the amazed mother looked on and learned; on the next page there is a cry of pity and distress in the account of the three little girls who were so hungry that they could not play Rounders, that was until the Leaguers had bought food to revive their energy. Again we read of the children in Nochikuppam who can never come to join in the games organized by the Leaguers - not even for half an hour - for they are obliged to help their mothers with household work and with looking after their younger sisters and brothers. But of course a Leaguer is always there to relieve them from duty for at least some time. Apart from this usual routine work the League was also responsible this year for having several poor people treated free of charge by a doctor and admitted into hospital.

The League held its annual Christmas Tree on the 21st of Dec. in the College compound. On this occasion 295 poor people were provided with clothing, toys, school equipment and sweets. As a preparation for this, a house to house campaign was conducted by the League - when two members made a point of visiting the College students in their own homes in order to collect any old clothes, toys etc. that might have been overlooked.

Perhaps the students do not achieve extraordinary results in their Social Service Work. Yet, apart from whatever real help they are able to give to the poor people, the Leaguers themselves profit greatly in the way of character formation. They develop a sense of responsibility and a new interest in others, especially in those less fortunate than themselves. This we hope will stand them in good stead later when they have time and opportunities for achieving more tangible results in their service of others.

#### **A. I. C. U. F.**

The Catholic Students' Union began its activities with a Social at which the new members became acquainted with their fellow members in an atmosphere of gaiety and fun. Then without further delay serious work began at the weekly meetings, the Enquiry Method being employed in order to see, judge and then act with regard to such practical subjects as Reading, Films, Newcomers in College, Women's place in Society etc. But perhaps the most notable event in the C. S. U. during 1959-1960 was the fact that apart from the Annual Retreat of three days during the middle term we also managed to hold a Day of Recollection in both the first and third terms. The C. S. U. has also aimed at making the students themselves more responsible for the running of the Union, and certainly the qualities of leadership exhibited by several of the students have been very encouraging. The Union's activities elicit latent talents of leadership, organization and influence for good. But above all it trains the students to face the problems of modern life as rational beings conscious of their personal responsibility, thus preparing them to become morally useful citizens of India.

#### **New Courses.**

The most outstanding of this year's academic innovations was the opening of the Post-Graduate courses in Economics and English, whilst the M. A. in Indian Music proudly entered its second year. Departmental Libraries were prepared in accordance with the University Regulations and by July all was in readiness to welcome the first group of pioneers, happy to have the double honour of being the first batch of Stella Marians in the first Women's College to follow the Post-Graduate Courses in English and Economics. Twice weekly they visit other colleges to attend profitable inter-collegiate lectures.

A second year will be added to the present one-year Post-Graduate Diploma Course in Social Service from the next academic year. Successful students will receive the University Diploma at the end of the first year and a Diploma issued by the College at the end of the second year. Our object and sincere hope is that this additional year of specialisation in some particular social field will prove beneficial to the students by deepening their knowledge and practical ability, thus rendering them more useful to modern India where social workers are today in such urgent demand.

#### **Staff.**

The foregoing record of our academic and extra-curricular achievements would have been impossible without the whole-hearted co-operation of our loyal and devoted staff who have proved, as always, indefatigable in the discharge of their various duties. In the English Department where the classes are of necessity always large, an

attempt has been made to secure greater personal contact between lecturers and students by assigning, as far as possible, all branches of English to one particular staff member : the result has proved happy and satisfactory for staff and students alike.

**Conclusion.**

“Real beauty is the beauty of the soul” as Gandhiji truly said, and such is the ideal which the Management, Staff and Students of Stella Maris ever strive to keep before their eyes as they advance daily together.

“To fresh woods and pastures new” will be the keynote of the coming year. Relying upon God’s unfaltering assistance we confidently trust that with additional accommodation and more spacious grounds, the future being always deeply rooted in the past, Stella Maris may in her new surroundings look forward to a history as luminous as that with which she has been blessed during her thirteen years at Mylapore. May she ever grow from strength to strength is our prayer, thus redounding to the greater glory of God, and to the moral, social and intellectual welfare of the daughters of Mother India.