

who have had the arrangement of the methods by which the system of competitive examinations is carried out have succeeded very well in retaining all the well-paid posts for the young men who belong to the higher social class, and who have the hall-mark of superior breeding which is associated with an education at a public school and at one of the older universities.

The public service generally is divided into two classes, the higher division and the second division. The bulk of the men in the government offices belong to one or other of these grades. There are exceptions, which in the aggregate make a large class, such as the various grades of the post office and the revenue departments. Many departments have still retained a considerable amount of patronage, and many posts in the public service are still filled by nomination, that is by the political or permanent head of the department. We shall have more to say of this later, but for the moment we will deal with the main division of the Civil Service into a higher and a lower grade, each filled by open competitive examination.

The reason given for this division is that the work of the government offices can be conveniently divided into two grades, the first grade being administrative work dealing with matters of public policy, and the second grade being merely routine and ordinary clerical work. Though there may be some reason in fact for such a distinction, it is nevertheless true that this division in actual practice operates to set up an almost impassable barrier between the university men and those who enter by the second division examination.

Snug Berths for the Well-to-do.

The higher division clerks enter by the class I open examination, which is so framed that only men who have passed through a public

school and have then proceeded to Oxford or Cambridge can hope to be successful. The very few exceptions to that statement prove its truth. Between 1906 and 1910 there were 473 candidates successful in the Class I examination, and of these 247 had come from Oxford and 142 from Cambridge. The scheme of examination for the Class I has been deliberately framed so as to give an advantage to the candidate from Oxford or Cambridge. This system is openly defended on the ground that for the higher posts in the Civil Services it is necessary that men should feel that confidence and self-assurance which come from the knowledge that one belongs to a superior caste and has had an education which marks one off as select.

Though the higher posts in the Civil Service are nominally filled by open competition, the real fact is that the system by which they are filled makes these appointments the monopoly of the well-to-do classes almost as exclusively as if they were pure patronage appointments.

Experience takes a Back Seat.

The young man from the university who succeeds in passing the class I examination enters a government office with the assurance that, no matter what his ability for administration may be, he is from the first to be placed in authority over men of experience and long service who happened to enter by a lower examination. The possession of an academic education is accepted as being the supreme qualification for administrative work. Though the young class I man has never had a day's experience of business before entering the government office, he is from the first day put to do work which can only efficiently be done by men who have had long experience of the work of the department. The fact is that this young university man is taught his duties by the despised second division man, who