

## EDITORIAL NOTE

"It is not growing like a tree  
In bulk, doth make Men better be ;  
Or standing like an oak, three hundred year,  
To fall a log at last, dry, bald and sere"

This is an unforgettable utterance of the poet who sums up in these lines a significant and thought-provoking truth about life—it is neither the bulk nor the span of life that actually makes human existence a meaningful reality. A human being is crowned with glory by his quality of character and worth of achievement. And what is true of life is substantially true of an Institution. It is indeed a proud privilege to witness and observe the centenary of a seat of learning and cast a nostalgic look at a great event which assumes a special significance, if one intensely feels by a long and loving association to be part and parcel of its fruitful existence. But the mere fact of its rolling on for a long stretch of a hundred years is not the whole of the story. The meaningful career and the glorious success of an Institution in its undaunted march, valiantly thwarting innumerable obstacles that impeded its progress lie in its dominant capacity to bring up and instil in the minds of generations of young learners a sense of intrepidity and inspiration which alone may impart to them a dignified status.

The celebration of the centenary of Bangabasi College

is unquestionably the occasion of pride and joy for all of us not simply for the fact that it has marked the completion of the hundredth year of its glorious existence but especially for the fact that this august seat of learning has, to an exemplary extent, justified its noble purpose by manifesting in manifold ways its innate vitality and immense potentiality. It is indeed no mean proof of its potentiality that the Institution which began its humble journey in 1887 with just six pupils on its rolls had made some original strides in its marathon march to progress and achievement that has given it impetus to cross the threshold of the century, holding out promises for the Institution to begin anew afresh lease of vibrant life and opening out bright prospects of future excellence teeming with greater possibilities.

We recall, on this great occasion, with a sense of pride and pleasure, that for the illustrious founder of Bangabasi College, Acharya Giris Chandra Bose, it was not just an ordinary journey that started in 1887, but a propitious pilgrimage to which he was encouraged both by his prophetic vision and a spirit of dedication. It was the vision of what Vivekananda calls 'man-making education' that acted as his true inspiration and sparked off his missionary zeal to enlighten his countrymen, the majority of whom were unfortunately denied the benefits of higher education. In a spirit of dedication he assiduously pursued this noble mission in order to bring the blessings of higher education within the reach of the poor and the luckless.

Urged by a zeal for this noble venture at a time when Acharya Bose was surrounded by various impediments that threatened to thwart his life's mission, he founded this

Institution which aimed at imparting education that would make for the development of man and the society, and awaken a feeling of patriotism in the minds of students. True to his mission, he was determined to build the Institution, to quote his own words, "as the nerve-centre of our social polity from whence will come forth a valiant band of workers, practical idealists, sufferers who will sweep and scour, polish and brighten, wash and clean till Bengal shines like a plate of burnished gold." He believed like Vivekananda, of whom he was a staunch follower and admirer, "I hold everyman a traitor who having been educated at their expenses pays not the least heed to them." He, therefore, sought to inspire his pupils with an ideal of education that would make them fully conscious of their responsibility not only to themselves but also to those that were constrained to live in hunger and ignorance. Founded as an Institution which aimed at achieving character-building and fostering the spirit of nationalism, Bangabasi College has greatly fulfilled its objectives by imparting liberal humanism and scientific knowledge which fertilised the field of Bengal Renaissance.

As keen spectators of time spanning the larger part of a stormy century, we have had the unique privilege of watching with wondrous admiration the growth and development of the Renaissance of Bengal. We now remember Radhakrishnan who rightly pointed out that at this stage the people of Bengal had been distinguished by their intellectual vigour, emotional intensity and sacrificial devotion to a noble cause. What a matter of pride and thrill it is for us to lovingly muse on the fact at this auspicious moment, that Bangabasi College, in consonance with the reawakening of the

emotional and intellectual mind of Bengal, had been a happy and fortunate product of intellectual vivacity, emotional exuberance and sacrificial dedication to a noble cause ! We feel exceedingly delighted to recall that this seat of higher learning and rich heritage has been built steadily by the concentrated aspirations and concerted endeavours of its dedicated staff and students who formed a nucleus round its great founder. An Institution, it is evident, is known neither by magnificent and imposing buildings, nor by its distinguished teaching staff, but principally by the integrity, quality and character of its students. From the continued and steady advance the Institution has made in the academic as well as in other spheres of cultural and socio-political activities in its long and fruitful career of a hundred years, we sincerely believe that the quality and character that have been built up by the Institution setting up a tradition of excellence have been diffused through the hearts of generations of students, and the spirit of the Institution has instilled into their minds a high sense of dignity as human beings, a belief in the value of intellectual powers with which they are equipped and confidence in the power of knowledge which is to be acquired in a spirit of reverence and humility. In short, at this auspicious moment of the completion of the centenary of our beloved Institution we visualise the living soul of this great seat of learning sending out a clarion call as it were, to the generations of the seekers of knowledge :

Youth should be awed, religiously possessed  
With a conviction of the power that waits  
On knowledge when sincerely sought and prized.

Such must be the character and quality of the students that the Institution had been nurturing in the bosom of their Alma Mater for these long years, and it is a matter of profound joy and elation that legion is the number of such students who have won laurels of victory in various spheres of national life. And yet it is not by numbers alone, but by the quality and character of its students that the college has carved out a place in the cultural history of the country.

As we stand at this momentous period of the history of the College in a rather reminiscent mood, and 'look before and after', glancing at the past with a sense of melancholy regret for the bright days that have faded away and gazing forward to the future with an eager yearning for more glowing dreams to cherish, we feel on the one hand submerged by a deluge of memories that roll on in waves of emotion in our subconscious minds, and on the other hand surcharged with the promise and hopefulness of a radiant future that spark off a thrilling shiver through our veins. We, who have had the mixed experience of watching closely the joys and sorrows, the ups and downs, of which the college life had been woven, and of inevitably having our share in these alternating changes of weal and woe, are overwhelmed by the contrary emotions that surge in our minds arising out of such fond remembrances of the days that have receded, or the scintillating promises of the future that flow glittering in front of us. These memories flash upon our inward eyes which, as the poet puts, are "the bliss of solitude" in our pensive moments - memories "recollected in tranquillity." These are the sweet remembrances which bring the "light of other days around" us, and we emotionally feel with the poet : "Sorrow's crown

of sorrow is remembering happier things. And echoing the sentiments of the poet Wordsworth we feel inclined to say as well :

To us the sweetest mem'ries that flow, arouse  
Thoughts that do often lie to deep for tears.

Awakening ourselves, however, from the reminiscent reverie of the nostalgic past which seems to have merged our souls into the very life of the Institution, when we concentrate on the present, we note with deep satisfaction that inspired by the hearty co-operation of all concerned we have been able to observe the centenary of this Institution of hallowed memories in a befitting manner with conspicuous success by holding programmes throughout the year which highlighted the achievements of this great Institution in different fields of academic, social, cultural and political activities. The successful completion of the centenary itself bears glowing testimony to its admirable potentiality to overcome the hours of trials and tribulations that often threatened to retard the smooth passage in its onward march and its tremendous urge and resourcefulness to live on in resplendent glory.

In order to make the centenary an occasion of abiding memory we have ventured to bring out a Commemoration Volume which will include, among other things, its chequered history which, in the words of Chakravarty Rajagopalachari, "is an adventure and a story-book by itself." This volume is brought out in the hope that the history of such an Institution will be of immense interest not only to the future generations of students and staff of the college, but even to the posterity who



may be curious to contemplate the cultural history of Bengal. We have, therefore, taken care to preserve for future generations at least a few pages of this "story-book" from the ravages of time for the knowledge and guidance of those that will come after us so that the "story-book" might serve as a beacon-light to them for their future journey in search for knowledge. The volume should have been published immediately after the completion of the centenary celebrations. But for reasons beyond our control we could not bring it out earlier. Though late, this commemoration volume, we believe, will serve the purpose for which such publications are meant. To make this endeavour a success the members of the Editorial Board and the staff of the college have lent their unstinted help and co-operation. In this context we sincerely thank all of them.

The Institution has just completed its hundred years of existence and begun its new phase of life. It is the end of the old that heralds the dawn of the new. And now is the occasion for us all to look back and take stock of what the Institution has achieved so far in furtherance of its dedicated mission and what is yet to be achieved. And this rethinking inevitably reminds us of Browning's famous lines—

"Look at the end of work, contrast  
The petty done, the undone vast."

This contrast necessarily awakens our consciousness to the fact that in this effort too "the petty done" stands conspicuous by the side of "the undone vast" which is left for our posterity to accomplish. It is true that during this long stretch of years many of the aims and objectives

of the Institution have come to fruition, but it is also true that there is still much to be done. The College may, however, hope to attain further fruitful longevity by means of the realisation of the vision that has not yet been translated into a reality. And that cherished vision may be greatly fulfilled if only all of us who are intimately associated with the Bangabasi family based on a tradition of family fraternity, cherishing a sentimental longing in the core of our hearts, concertedly rise to the occasion and initiate a dynamic move to reach the goal that lies ahead. For us it is the sacred duty to to keep the torch lit a hundred years ago burning and blazing in full splendour and hand it over to the next generation who will be our team-mates in the eternal relay race of more and more achievements and progress.

Let us, therefore, wish our dear Alma Mater a future, better and brighter than her past—a future that depends for its fulfilment on the intellectual, moral and spiritual achievements of those who are acting on the theatre of the present. And in fine, realizing the fact that “Man has forever” to look forward to and that “he is eternal”, let us, in tune with the tenor of the poet, conclude with a heart-felt wish that this, our most beloved Institution, crowned with a garland of glory, shall be riding on its chariot of progress and prosperity “with life forever old, yet new”.

**Prasanta Kumar Bose**  
**on behalf of the Editorial Board**