



ভাই বঙ্গবাসী! সকলে মিলিয়া একবার তারস্থরে উচ্চকণ্ঠে উচ্চারণ কর—“শিক্ষা এবং জ্ঞানই সকল পরাক্রমের মূল”। ভারতবাসী! একবার দ্বেষ পরহিংসা তুলিয়া, পূর্বব গৌরব স্মরণ করিয়া, জগৎকে দেখাও, যে ভারতই এক সময় জগতের নেতা ছিল, ভারতেরই আলোকে জগৎ আলোকিত হয়েছিল।

—গিরিশ চন্দ্র বসু

OUR FOUNDER

The Educationist in Making

ACHARYA GIRIS CHANDRA BOSE was born on the 4th of Kartick, 1260, B.S., corresponding to the 29th of October, 1853, at the tiny village of Berugram in the district of Burdwan. Berugram was a small village but it contained ancient families of high social status. It was in one such family that Giris Chandra was born. His father was Janaki Prasad Bose, a man of wide outlook, a large heart and a liberal mind. These traits of character meant a lot in those days of stern conservatism when modern liberalism had just begun to dawn upon Bengal and met with stout opposition from the Conservatives. He knew English.

Giris Chandra had his first lessons in the three R's in the village primary school. His father taught him English. From early boyhood, he showed a remarkable keenness and desire for knowledge which was greatly encouraged by his father. When his primary school course was complete, he was sent to Hooghly for further study. His uncle, father's elder brother, Rajballav Bose was a *peshkar* in the Hooghly civil court. Two of his cousins Umesh Chandra Bose and Jogendra Chandra Bose, accompanied him to Hooghly and Umesh Chandra and Giris Chandra joined the Hooghly branch Collegiate School and took admission in the last class but one. Jogendra Chandra who was younger than Giris Chandra by two years, was admitted into a Private Primary School. In later years, he rose to be a journalist of immortal fame as the founder of the weekly 'Bangabasi'.

Giris Chandra's aunt at Hooghly looked after the needs and comforts of all the three boys with the affection of a mother. The boys were not only cousins but great friends. They continued their studies in the high school uninterrupted till the second class of the School when Umesh died after a sudden illness. This was his first bereavement, the first shock, and he was left alone in the school to complete his studies there. He bore this bereavement with great fortitude and continued to pay the same attention to his studies. He passed his Entrance Examination from that school in 1870.

He continued his studies at Hooghly and took admission in the Hooghly College. From there, he passed both the First

Arts and the Bachelor of Arts Examinations. He took his B.A. degree in B course in 1876. In F.A., he stood high in order of merit and in the B.A., he obtained high marks in all the subjects. In Botany, which was to become his most favourite subject in later years, he secured the highest marks.

Giris Chandra's aunt exercised a great influence over him during his impressionable early days at Hooghly. Born of a liberal father and mother, he was detached from their daily company at the tender age of ten, but his aunt, through her daily association, planted deep the seeds of kindness, affection, courage and character in his heart of hearts which imperceptibly helped him to attain a great moral stature which knew no compromise with anything that was evil and at the same time to attain a mind full of the milk of human kindness.

At Cuttack

Mr. Woodrow, Director of Public Instruction, Bengal was attracted by the Examination results of Giris Chandra. Only a few candidates had come out successfully that year, his position in order of merit having been very high. Mr. Woodrow selected him as a Lecturer in Science at the Ravenshaw College, Cuttack. He joined the post on February 8, 1876.

In 1877, he was married to Nirad Mohini, the youngest daughter of the late Peary Charan Mitra of Burdwan. The marriage took place at Burdwan at the residence of his brother-in-law, Dr. Ganganarayan Mitra. Dr. Mitra was a great friend of Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, who, whenever he visited Burdwan, used to put up with him. Like Vidyasagar, Dr. Mitra was a great liberal and philanthropist, and wielded considerable influence in and around Burdwan. He had completed the L.M.S. course at the Calcutta Medical College but the degree was not awarded to him because he was lame. The practice of the time was not to admit persons with physical deformity into medical degrees. This difficulty however, did not deter him from adopting and pursuing a noble profession which, in those days, conferred the maximum of benefit on the people. In the dry season when Cholera raged throughout the country-side taking a heavy toll of human lives Dr. Mitra was seen wading through the impassable roads of the villages with his medical-box carried by a servant behind him. Very often Vidyasagar accompanied him in his lonely fight against one of the most fearful diseases of Asia.

Dr. Mitra had no fees fixed ; it was adjusted according to his patient's capacity to pay and the amount was decided by the voluntary wishes of the beneficiary.

The marriage brought Giris Chandra into contact with two of the greatest liberals of the nineteenth century Bengal, one a social and educational reformer with a great and wide fame, the other a selfless and silent worker devoted to the service of suffering humanity. Vidyasagar played a very prominent role at the marriage which united two liberal families and minds with great potentialities for the future. Giris Chandra was then only a youth of 24.

After marriage Giris Chandra went back to Cuttack and his father accompanied him. One day, Bhudev Mukherjee, the immortal litterateur of Bengal, the then Inspector of Schools, Burdwan Division, called on his father. The Bengal Government were then selecting suitable candidates for sending them to London for higher studies in Agriculture. Bhudev Mukherjee sought permission of the father of Giris Chandra for proposing his son's name for inclusion in the list of scholarships that were being awarded for the study of agriculture in England. The father was naturally hesitant in agreeing to send his boy to such a distant country. But the Inspector of Schools was keen upon sending him to England because he knew that it would open up a great future for him. He had, in the meantime, secured the consent of Giris Chandra in this proposal, and he was keen upon awaiting this opportunity for higher study. His mission was finally successful ; the father's consent was secured when he was told that the son himself and the Government were eager to see the year's best boy of the Burdwan division thrive in life.

In those days of conservatism, specially during the period of reaction against the nineteenth century renaissance in Bengal, the crossing of the sea was tantamount to a sin. Anybody that ventured to do so was boycotted by the society and made an outcast. The Renaissance was however, fast pulling down this barrier, and persons returning from England began to find powerful social support on their side against the boycott moves. When Giris Chandra's decision to sail for England was made public, his relations offered stout opposition to this proposal which was considered sinful. With his father's blessings and brother-in-law's (Ganganarayan Mitra) moral support behind him, Giris Chandra remained unwavering in his determination. He accepted the scholarships and booked his passage for England.

The service at the Ravenshaw College consequently came to an end in December 1881.

In England

Giris Chandra left for England on Wednesday, December 21, 1881, on board S. S. Moira. The ship weighed anchor at Koilaghat early that morning and reached Colombo on the sixth day of her voyage. The ship entered Red Sea on January 5, and reached Suez on the ninth. After leaving Port Said, on the 14th, a heavy storm raged which continued in full fury for over 36 hours. The ship was damaged at some places but it continued its journey. On the 17th, Malta was left behind. Next morning the northern coast of Africa was fully visible. The ship passed Tunis, Algeria and other coastal cities and towns of Africa. These historic places reminded him of the glory that was Carthage; in a letter he writes that in his mind's eye he saw Hannibal standing on the coast, old and feeble, leaning on a heavy stick—blind in one eye and tears trickling down from the other. On the 20th, the African coast went out of sight. Next afternoon, the ship passed Gibraltar and came out of the Mediterranean. On the 24th, the ship entered the Bay of Biscay which he described as a ship-devouring Demon. Fortunately for the passengers on board the Moira, Biscay remained calm till the ship left the Bay and entered the English Channel on the 25th. At 8 o'clock in the evening of the 26th of January the ship reached the mouth of the Thames and anchored there. Next morning the ship entered the Thames but as it was ebb-tide, anchored at Gravesend 16 miles from London. With other passengers, Giris Chandra again set foot on the hard soil after a continuous floating journey for 37 days. He reached Charingcross at four in the afternoon the same day, and by five he was with his friend with whom he had arranged to put up. After thirty seven days, he spoke Bengali and he makes a particular mention of this fact in his letter dated February 22, 1882.

The series of letters that Giris Chandra wrote from England and Europe, had been published in Calcutta. All the letters were written in chaste and elegant Bengali and give us some idea of the keen spirit of nationalism that was in him. Shortly after he had reached London, he wrote about the dress of Indians in England. He said that Indian boys made the first mistake by abandoning the then Indian Court dress of *Choga* and *Chapkan*

and then did the greater mistake of adopting the English dress. For a new comer in England, the donning of English dress was bound to be defective in some place or other. "The collar may not suit," he said, "the tie knot may not be good, the shirt sleeves may not be properly demonstrated". His keenly observing mind had noticed that the slightest defect in dress attracts attention and the wearer becomes an object of ridicule. Giris Chandra again says in his letters, "It might be bad for the Britons to do so, but why do we invite it by dressing like a clown. Instead, if you avoid their dress and stick to your own *Choga* and *Chapkan* there will be none to discover defects and pass uncharitable remarks just within your hearing. The Indian student who desired to live in Society must be properly dressed." So Giris Chandra continued that it was a great mistake on his part to come to England in English dress because, in the first place, it made him a laughing stock among Englishmen; secondly, it was very costly and thirdly, it destroyed our spirit of nationalism. It was his firm belief that Indians in England using their own dress did not come down in status or esteem.

He gave an account of the expenses that an Indian student had to incur in those days. Two properly furnished rooms could be had in London for Rs. 9 or 10 per week. The expenses were almost the same in Oxford, Cambridge or Cirencester. Generally the drawing room was furnished with a dining table, one or two writing tables, one almirah, 4 or 5 cushioned chairs, one or two easy chairs, one sofa, a few pictures and arrangement for heating. The retiring room was furnished with a bedstead complete with bedding, one or two chairs, one dressing table, a wash basin and a drawer for the safekeeping of clothings. Rs. 6/- per week was sufficient for food. Thus a decent board fully suitable for an Indian student cost only about Rs. 800/- a year. Rs. 200/- per year should be added to it for dress, books and sundry expenses. College fees apart, an Indian student could comfortably maintain himself in England for Rs. 1000/- a year.

In his letter dated April 6, 1882 he wrote that every year two candidates were being sent to Cirencester from Bengal for Agricultural education. He had noticed that almost all of the candidates were ignorant of the courses of study in that college and expenses that were required there. Consequently they had to undergo much unnecessary hardship. In this letter, therefore, Giris Chandra gave an elaborate account of the complete syllabus as follows :—

(1) Theoretical and practical agriculture, (2) Inorganic, Organic, qualitative and quantitative chemical analysis and Agricultural Chemistry ; Practical training in Chemical and soil analysis, (3) Botany, (4) Geology, (5) Zoology, (6) Physiology and medical treatment of horses, cows and sheep, (7) Physics, (8) Surveying and Levelling, (9) Land management, (10) Agricultural Laws, (11) Building construction and analysis of the strength of building materials and (12) Book-keeping in English style. The subject of agriculture included not only production of crops but also rearing of horses, sheep, pigs etc. and dairy farming. There were a little over a hundred students in the College. Overall expenses for each student who resided in the College Hostel amounted to Rs. 2,322 or Rs. 1,926 according to the comforts that he desired. Rs. 1,602 was sufficient for a student who stayed out of the College premises and boarded in the city. It was advantageous however to stay in the College because the student could then follow all the agricultural operations in the attached land ; this advantage was greatly lost to those who stayed out. The College was one and a half miles away from the city.

The college year was divided into three terms of four months each. In every term, classes were held for 11 or 12 weeks, the rest was leisure. There were four classes, the fourth class consisted of only one section. One term was required to finish the course of study for each section, and two terms were required to complete a class. Thus the entire course was one of two years and four months. An examination was held at the end of each term. Unsuccessful candidates could appear at the next examination after four months, instead of waiting for a whole year as is the case in our country. Giris Chandra had noticed the benefit of this system of examination and made the following comment in his letter, dated April 21 :

"In the London University as well, examinations are held twice a year. The authorities of our education department have been educated here ; this system of examination is not unknown to them. I fail to understand why they have not yet introduced it in our University. It may be agreed that in our country the number of students for each institution is large, but is there no way out? "

It was only after his death that this wrong has been partially set right through the introduction of supplementary examinations.

On April 27, the marriage of Prince Leopold, youngest son

of Queen Victoria, was solemnized with Princess Helen. Giris Chandra was sorry that he was unable to witness the ceremony. Admit cards had been issued to foreigners and Indians were classed amongst them. As he did not try in time to get an admit card, he had to content himself by attending the railway station when the guests returned from the Royal wedding ceremony. There was a banquet at the Windsor Palace on this occasion and in the news that was published, mention was made of the use of the costly dining plates seized at the palace of Tipu Sultan. The patriotic mind of the young Indian student was touched at this display of Imperial power and he wrote, "You can understand what was the state of my mind when I saw all these things."

After his arrival in England and soon after he was able to settle down, Giris Chandra wanted to visit important personages and places in that country and observe their social, educational and economic life. Charles Darwin was alive when he reached England at the end of January. Next month, he wrote to Darwin seeking an interview with him. In reply that great savant wrote that he would be glad to meet him. But providence decreed otherwise. Darwin died on April 19 before Giris Chandra could make it convenient to see him. He visited the graveyard of the Westminster Abbey the day after Darwin had been laid to rest there. The floral wreaths placed on the tomb were still all there. He carefully read the labels attached to them. One of them had been sent by Queen Victoria herself. He was overwhelmed at the honour the great savant had received from all quarters.

In that graveyard he visited other tombs as well. He made special mention of the tombs of Shakespeare, Southey, Dryden, Grote, Newton, Hirschel, Lyall, Henry VII, Edward I, Queen Elizabeth, Queen Mary and Dean Stanley. Next he visited the Abbey where the coronation throne of the Kings and Queens of England lie preserved. He described this ancient and historic throne of England as a "motheaten, broken, disproportionate, big and very old chair from which most of the paint has disappeared.

(একখানি পোকা খেঁকো, ভাঙ্গা, রঙ ওঠা বেচপ্-বহ পুরাতন বড় চৌকি)।

Since his arrival in England, he had been eager to visit the Parliament which decided the fate of India. A recommendation from a Member of the Parliament was required before an admit card could be issued to a visitor. At that time the murder of Lord Cavendish and Burke and the resignation of Forster had brought about much sensation among the members of the Parliament

and attendance at the House of Commons was very large. There was no room for visitors. Giris Chandra was therefore able to secure an admit card only for the House of Lords. At 4 o'clock in the afternoon, the gate of the Visitors' Gallery was opened and he was permitted to take his seat there. He stayed on for the day's session. He writes, "From boyhood we have read that the Lord Chancellor takes his seat on the Woolsac. Today I have seen the Woolsac" He heard Lord Salisbury speaking but was hardly able to follow him because of the noise around. He was disgusted to find people laughing, talking and moving as if in a market place when the Parliament session had been going on. Before the session started, he had utilized the time by seeing the interior of the House of Commons and other parts of the Parliament building.

The Royal Agricultural Society of England organizes an Agricultural Exhibition every year. In 1882 it was held at Reading and Giris Chandra availed himself of the opportunity of visiting this great exhibition. It was open to the public for six days and the tickets were priced at Rs. 1/8/- for the first day, Rs. 4/8/- for the second day, Rs. 1/8/- for the third and fourth days each and As. /8/- for the last two days. There was a heavy rush of visitors. Everything connected with agriculture was exhibited. These details have been given in his letters which show the keen power of observation of a young Indian student who scrutinized everything of importance that came across his way in England, specially one that had a bearing on affairs in his Motherland.

Giris Chandra took great care in seeing things there in great detail. In the first section, there were agricultural implements of all descriptions. In the second were exhibited live-stocks required for agricultural operations and also for the supply of meat, like cows, horses, sheep and pigs. In the third section there were several varieties of manure, seeds and fruits, and in the fourth, butter and cheese. In the fifth, processes for the manufacture of butter were demonstrated. The sixth and the last section contained demonstrations for the cultivations of honey and wax.

In the agricultural implements section, he examined the ploughs exhibited there and noticed that they were too heavy for use in India, were costly, the price being Rs. 30 or Rs. 40 each and could not be drawn by any animal other than a horse. Some manufacturers had exhibited lighter and cheaper ploughs

suitable for India and their representatives carefully explained their usefulness to the Indian visitors. Two Parsi visitors from Bombay had placed orders for two or three such ploughs. One kind of plough, manufactured by the same firm, attracted his attention and he considered them suitable for our country specially in the cultivation of potatoes. He himself had brought a plough from England when he came back. This plough was exhibited in front of the Bangabasi School and for a long time it lay in that place. He was extremely careful in observing every implement in minute detail exhibited in the machinery section and the live-stock section, which included animals exhibited by the personal farm of the Prince of Wales. Giris Chandra was present when the Prince of Wales himself visited the Exhibition on its opening day and spent three or four hours there.

The Kew Garden is England's biggest Botanical garden. It is situated on the Thames 20 miles away from London. Giris Chandra spent a few days there and examined it thoroughly. Plants from India, Africa, New Zealand, America and many other countries had been taken there and reared in glass houses under conditions of temperature suitable for the plants. The plants were thus kept exactly in the same condition in which they grew in their respective countries. The tallest glass house was one which contained the Palmyra, Date and Coconut trees whose growths were as they should be in their native places. Giris Chandra was very much delighted to find a plantain tree with a bunch of plantains including the *Mocha* by the side of a tank inside the garden. He writes, "Is it not natural that I should be delighted to see a thing of my own country in a land where the men, animals and plants are all foreign to us and nothing of ours can be seen?" He was much impressed to find that even women in England possessed an amount of knowledge in botany not found amongst advanced students of his country. He was surprised to overhear an old lady telling her lady companion, "Do you know what is this plant? This is Clematis, natural order Ranunculacæ"

Giris Chandra had grown tired of the monotony of English food and was longing for Indian dishes. On one Sunday, he, along with two of his friends, decided to cook some Indian delicacies. The landlady was entrusted with the marketing which was completed by Saturday evening. *Mug Dal* could not be had, therefore, *Masur Dal* took its place. *Atap* rice, potato, onion, curry-powder, green chillies, olive oil in place of mustard oil which also could not be procured and cod fish were ready. No *ghee* was

available ; the cooking of *Masur Dal* had therefore, to be completed with butter. The cooking of fish became a great problem. The slices of fish could not be kept in tact ; they broke into pieces. The landlady cooked rice. After a long time the dinner was greatly relished by all the three students from India. The landlady had observed the process of cooking and since then, at intervals, she prepared rice and fish broth for her Indian student-guests. In his letters he did not conceal his disgust at English dishes. He wrote, "English nation, the leader of modern civilization, has not advanced much from its ancestor, the original Briton in England, in the matter of cooking. So far as I can find either they do not realize the defects in their food preparation or they cannot relish well-cooked and delicious dishes" He had noticed that all the big hotels there had French cooks who did the cooking in full French style. He gave a nice story of a storm over a single *Brinjal*. One day, a brinjal, displayed in a glass case of a shop, attracted his attention. This favourite article of food enamoured him ; he stepped into the shop and enquired about the price. The shopkeeper demanded one shilling i.e., about ten annas. He was very much depressed at such an exorbitant demand and walked out. Every day, when he passed by that shop he cast a longing lingering look at the commodity which he was unable to have himself. One day, the glass case was empty ; he again stepped into the shop and asked what had happened to it. The shop-keeper said, "A lady had purchased it yesterday but she came back to-day and called me a cheat because she found no taste in it" Giris Chandra laughed and said, "*Brinjal* is not eaten raw ; potato, brinjal and fish are cooked together as a broth. That is why the lady did not find any taste" The shop-keeper only looked at Giris Chandra with silent surprise.

Giris Chandra has given us a vivid picture of the educational conditions in England during his time. When he had left India, there were talks of setting up an Education Commission for suggesting changes in the primary education system. While in England, he had been following the activities of the Commission, which had come into existence, through newspaper reports and compared the Indian conditions of education with those obtaining in England. He was very much surprised at the spread of education in that country. In one of his letters he writes that this astonishing advance in education had taken place only during two decades although England had long been a free country and she was the last state in Europe to pay attention to popular education.

Germany was the first to realize the importance of education in the national life of a country ; France and Switzerland followed. England, writes Giris Chandra, had just awakened from her slumber and had begun to understand that real strength of a country lay not in its military might but in popular education. Even advance in commerce depended on spread of popular education. The English Education Act of 1870 was the product of a long and intense agitation. He gave the following figures which explain the great advance that had been made in the sphere of primary education. The figures were for England and Wales which had a total population of only 25 millions.

(1) Number of students reading in primary schools :

1870	18,78,000
1882 ..	45,38,000
Increase in 12 years..	26,60,000

(2) Number of students on the attendance rolls

1870	16,03,000
1882 ..	41,00,000
Increase in 12 years..	24,97,000

(3) Average number present

1870	11,52,000
1882 ..	30,15,000
Increase in 12 years..	18,63,000

In 1881, the total number of English boys and girls between 2 and 15 years of age was 8 millions of whom 4 millions went to school. Total number of children between 5 and 13 was 4·7 millions of whom 3 millions attended school.

Certified teachers also increased in proportion with the pupils. Their number rose from 12,467 in 1870 to 33,562 in 1882. For illustration, he cites the case of Worcester. In that town, in 1873, an education census revealed that of its 30,000 inhabitants 4,418 children were of school going age, of whom 1,000 did not attend any school. In the education census of 1882 it was found that only 43 children of that town did not go to school.

Giris Chandra had shown his eagerness for studying the primary education system not only in England, but in the other western countries as well. He heard G. W. Hastings, M. P. in a meeting of the Social Science Association, who said, "Ten

years ago, I visited Boston in the U. S. A. ; I asked the Secretary of the Education Office to tell me the number of pupils absent in the schools of Boston that day" The Secretary replied, "I cannot give you the figure for to-day because they have not yet reached me, but I can tell you the number of absentees for yesterday" He just turned the pages of his register and said, "For causes other than sickness or urgent business, only two were absent" Commenting on this speech Giris Chandra wrote to his friends here, "Just realize the advance of education in a city like Boston; only two pupils were absent"

In that letter he expressed great concern whether the people of Bengal would care to follow these developments in England in the sphere of education and take lessons from them. He gave an account of the expenditure incurred by the British Government for the advancement of primary education. In 1870 the British Government spent Rs. 1,28,64,000 which was raised in 1882 to Rs. 4,31,88,000. But even then, England was far behind other countries of Europe. In 1882, French expenditure for the education of children in Paris was Rs. 7-3-3 per head per annum, while Britain spent for Birmingham Schools Rs. 1-1-6 only. At this time, the Bengal Government spent only Rs. 4,87,000. Commenting on this he says, "It is really lamentable that the Government which spends five crores on education in its own country does not spend five lakhs in the country it has conquered. The root of all national advancement lies in popular education; there is no hope for us till there is a spread of popular education in our country."

He made a thorough study of the educational system of England and followed the same development in other countries of Europe through speeches and newspaper reports there. He gives the following account of the school at Lucerne in Switzerland: "The population of Lucerne is 20,000 and the inhabitants are poor. But they have built a palatial school building there at a cost of three lakhs of rupees. They had discovered astonishing methods for imparting object lessons and possessed a well-equipped laboratory. Just imagine that all these are for one school only which may admit 800 pupils at the most... Oh, my countrymen in Bengal, let us shout together at the top of our voice—'From education and knowledge springs all power' Let us forget our mutual jealousies, remember our ancestral glory and show to the world that although India is in a different position to-day, she can draw inspiration from the western countries and educate herself.

If you want to be victorious in the struggle of life, if you want to be counted as a nation in the world, then light the torch of education in your country. Don't waste your time by putting on hat and coat, smoking cigar and riding on Tandem with your wife by your side dressed in an English gown. Time for action has arrived; turn your attention away from British habits of luxury and look at the root of their success. You will find that their national pride owes everything to education."

Giris Chandra was then a youth of barely thirty. He had fully grasped the true cause of the rise of a nation. Western educational advancement had deeply influenced him and left a lasting impression upon his character which ultimately took shape in his great creation, the Bangabasi College.

He attended the London Fish Exhibition held on May 12, 1883. Queen Victoria was to have opened it but for some unavoidable reasons it was not possible for her to do so; so the Prince of Wales performed the opening ceremony. All the other members of the Royal family attended the function. On the opening day which was a Saturday only the invited guests and rich men attended because the price of the ticket was fixed at two guineas. On Sunday, the Exhibition was closed. For the next two days it was open to the public, the admission fee being only eight annas. On Monday, there were 60,000 visitors and the gate collections and advertisement bills brought in a revenue of Rs. 4 lakhs. On Tuesday, the number of visitors were 29,436. On Wednesday, the last day, admission fee was raised to Rs. 1-8-0. Almost all the countries of the world, including New South Wales, Chile, India, China, Holland, Belgium, Norway, Sweden, U.S.A., Newfoundland, Denmark, Spain, Canada, Russia, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Jamaica, Austria, Germany, Japan, Straits Settlements, Bahama Islands etc., joined this International Fish Exhibition and made it a complete success. For some days before and after the Exhibition, great enthusiasm prevailed in London. Several illustrated books and pamphlets were published and the newspapers filled their columns with long articles written specially for the occasion. Queen Victoria, the Prince of Wales and the Lord Mayor of London were at home to the fishermen and fisherwomen who had come to London for the exhibition. While describing the exhibition, he comments, "It is difficult to express in a letter the eagerness of Englishmen for the improvement of fish. We, Indians, are great adepts in the

destruction of the fish and never think of improving their taste or increasing their number”

Giris Chandra visited Scotland in the summer of 1883. He left for Edinburgh on March 21. Reaching Waverley, his literary mind was delighted to recall the glory of Sir Walter Scott and his Waverley Novels, when thousands of eager readers queued up in front of the Ballantyne's to have a copy of the anonymous writer's Waverley Novels. From Waverley, he proceeded to the city of Edinburgh in the company of one of his Scotch friends. In silent reverence he passed by the Scott Memorial in the midst of the city. There he visited the Palace of Mary Queen of Scots, and the Burns Memorial. In Edinburgh, he made many friends and talked with them about Scott and Burns, two of the greatest sons of Scotland. The Scotch nation was enamoured of the two names but Giris Chandra's deep insight had discovered a difference in the Scotch people's approach to them. He wrote in his letters, “Scott was their preceptor, Burns was looked upon as a member of the family. Without Burns the home had no charm ; Scott was its ornament. Burns was national life, Scott national pride.”

He visited the Edinburgh University before he left Scotland. He knew one of the Bengali students there, and made acquaintances with another. In the University, he was attracted by the Chemical Laboratory, the Chemical Lecture theatre and the Physical Laboratory. He attended the lecture of Prof. Tait, one of the greatest professors of the time. He had noticed an improvement in filtration introduced in the Chemical Laboratory of the Edinburgh University. He continues, “In the London Laboratories, the process of filtration in Chemical analysis unnecessarily took up much time ; here a new device had been introduced which reduced the filtering time from half an hour to ten minutes. Teaching of Chemistry, Physics and Biology was not confined to the attending of lectures and observing of class demonstrations by the Professor. Practical classes were compulsory and laboratory note books had to be submitted at the time of examination” Again in his letter on June 30, 1883, Giris Chandra comments, “In our country, these subjects have recently been included in our University syllabus ; let us hope that this system of practical training and practical examination will be introduced soon” But it took the University a long time to do so.

Giris Chandra had a good company in England. He had

three of his most intimate friends in London, Bhupal Chandra Bose, Byomkesh Chakravarty and A. K. Roy, who had gone there for agricultural education. Subsequently, N. G. Mukherjee, D. L. Roy, and Jagadish Chandra Bose went there and joined him. He became intimate with S. P. Sinha, later Lord Sinha, who had preceded him to London and studied Law. His friendship with all of them was enduring and he received immense help specially from three of them, namely, Bhupal Bose, Byomkesh Chakravarty and S. P. Sinha, when he devoted himself to the great and onerous task of building up an educational institution in his own country.

In 1882, while at Cirencester, he passed the Diploma examination of the Royal Agricultural Society of England and was made a life member of the Society. He stood first in this examination and was awarded a prize of £50 by that Society. In the same year he passed the Fellowship Examination of the Highland Agricultural Society and was made a life member of that Society as well. In 1883, he was elected a fellow of the Chemical Society of England on the recommendation of Dr. Kinch, F. C. S., Professor of Chemistry in the Agricultural College. He passed the final examination of the Cirencester College in the first term of 1884 standing first in order of merit. In England, he was known as a brilliant scholar and annexed several prizes. He also earned the Lt.-Governor's Prize of £50 for proficiency in Veterinary Science.

On the Continent

Giris Chandra left London on June 4, 1884 and set foot at Dieppe, on the French soil early next morning. He spent a couple of days at Rouen and visited the Joan of Arc Monument and the Notre Dame. He was delighted to be present at the Notre Dame at Prayer time. On June 6, he left Rouen and reached Paris. Here he had noticed a great difference between the attitude of the French and English people towards foreigners. In England crowds jeered at foreigners on the streets specially when they happened to be coloured people. In Paris nobody took any notice of the foreigners moving about and were equally polite to them. Commenting on this Giris Chandra wrote, "This fact alone proves the admirable superiority of the French culture". He visited every important place in Paris and made a short trip to Versailles. He left Paris on June 11 for Geneva. From there he paid a short visit to Turin in Italy and went back to his hotel

at Geneva. On the 17th, he left for Marseilles and spent a couple of days there. On June 20, at noon, he embarked on his home-bound return journey.

Back Home

The news of Giris Chandra's home coming had set the village society of Berugram, his native village, in ferment. He had lost his father while in England and there was none to give him protection from social ostracism in that village. Dr. Ganganarayan Mitra had realized the difficulty of the position and asked for advice from his first cousin Khetra Mohan Mitra, a Munsiff serving the Government in an out-of-the-way place. Khetra Mohan wrote back saying that Giris Chandra must be received at their Burdwan residence even if the people of the town tried to boycott them socially. Dr. Mitra naturally anticipated this reply and decided to bring him to Burdwan straightaway. Jogendra Chandra Bose proceeded to Bombay to receive his friend and cousin.

Like Dr. Ganganarayan, his first cousin Khetra Mohan was also straight forward and liberal. His son Jamini Mohan Mitra rose to be the Registrar of the Co-operative Societies, Bengal and he was the first person who had struck at the root of British vested interests in India by organizing Co-operative Jute Sale Societies. This move for saving the Bengali jute cultivators from the clutches of British merchants and mill owners was frustrated with the help of the then alien Government.

On reaching home, Giris Chandra took up residence at Burdwan. Reactionaries were at work here as well. Three of the leading members amongst them,—an educationist, a medical practitioner and a pleader—started a campaign for a social boycott of Dr. Mitra's family. Sashibhusan Bose was then the leader of the Burdwan bar. He had come under the influence of the Brahmo Samaj and was liberal. Dr. Mitra approached him and told him about the conspiracy which was being hatched in secret. Sashibhusan was at first not inclined to pay much heed to the report but when Dr. Mitra named an eminent Brahmo citizen of Burdwan as his source of information, he believed it and was furious. He decided to nip the conspiracy in the bud by arranging a social dinner at his home in which Giris Chandra must participate. The dinner was held on the Sunday following. All the leading men of Burdwan including the three prime movers of the boycott

were invited and they too, participated in the feast in which Giris Chandra was specially invited. This bold action on the part of Sashibhusan Bose completely frustrated the boycott move at Burdwan and Giris Chandra was hailed with a warm welcome in his native district and was looked upon as an object of glory for the whole of the Burdwan Division.

The Dilemma

Giris Chandra was now faced with a great dilemma. His inner self desired him to dedicate his life to the cause of education. His foreign education had opened his eyes. He had realized in his heart of hearts that national might and national pride lay in a truly national education. The patriot in him pined for following the ideal while temptations came from many directions with promises of power, prestige and material wealth.

Offer of a lucrative job came from Hyderabad, the Nizam's Dominion. He had almost decided to accept it and packed his diplomas and other credentials for despatch there for facilitating the final approval of the proposed appointment. But at the last moment, the patriot in him revolted, he unpacked the parcel and instead of a letter of acceptance a letter of regret was despatched. Most of his friends who had taken their agricultural diplomas at Cirencester, accepted appointments in the cadre of Deputy Magistrates shortly after their arrival in India and their agricultural education went in vain.

Giris Chandra had finally decided to dedicate his life for the advancement of national education.

On to Ideal

Giris Chandra was the third Indian scholar to visit Cirencester. Ambika Charan Sen and Maulavi Sakhwat Hossain had got the Cirencester diploma before him but on their return to India both of them had accepted Deputy Magistrateships, the former having been placed in the executive and the latter in the judicial branch of the service. As usual, Giris Chandra had also been offered such a post, but he declined. It was no easy thing to resist the temptation of a Deputy Magistrateship in those days, and almost all the Cirencester scholars had succumbed to it. Giris Chandra had made up his mind. He resolved to devote himself to the service of his Motherland and to work in

the field of education and agricultural advancement. He was among the first Indian stalwarts who had realized that the prosperity of our Motherland lay in the banishment of illiteracy and poverty. As a student in England, he had studied in the minutest detail, as we have shown before, the American, British and Continental advancements in the twin domains of education and agriculture. He had gone to Cirencester not for securing a degree that would serve as a passport for a lucrative job for his personal gain. He had gone there to gather first hand knowledge of how a modern agricultural college worked for the benefit of the dumb millions, the poor and neglected sons of the soil. He had in his heart of hearts the keen desire to learn the technique of improving the economic condition of eighty per cent of our population who depended on agriculture. He had realized that in education constituted the strength of a nation. He went to England a Bengali, remained a Bengali there and came back a hundred per cent Bengali with the flame of patriotism burning in his bosom. His Cirencester education made this fire still more glowing in which offers for high positions from the Government of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and the Nizam's Dominion were burnt down.

Within a year of his arrival in India from England, Giris Chandra started in April 1885 the first Indian Agricultural Journal which brought agricultural knowledge to the door of the masses. The Journal was published in two languages, *Krishi Gazette* in Bengali and *Agricultural Gazette* in English. The first two issues contained three articles from the pen of Giris Chandra entitled "The future dependence of Britain on Indian wheat"; the second on cattle mortality in India and the third on the Cultivation of Fish—all three subjects which are still worrying the Government of India. Giris Chandra was among the first few distinguished sons of Mother India who had foreseen that India must attain self-sufficiency in food but he went a few steps ahead in thinking that Britain cannot be self-sufficient in respect of food; she must depend on others for it, so India should take up the position of supplying Britain with her most vital need. He wanted to stir up India to take up this position of vantage which has now been taken away by the United States of America. The food, cattle mortality and the fish problems have just received the attention from the Government which he sought for them more than sixty years ago.

After a prolonged agitation the Agricultural Department was

established in Bengal in 1885 not as a fully autonomous section but as an adjunct of the Executive. Three of the Cirencester scholars, namely Ambika Charan Sen, Sakhwat Hossain and Giris Chandra Bose were then available. Atul Krishna Roy, Byomkesh Chakravarty, Bhupal Chandra Bose and Pestonji Rustomji Mehta of Bombay passed out of Cirencester after Giris Chandra. The Government of Bengal selected the first two—Sen and Hossain—for inclusion as officers in the newly created Agricultural department and excluded Giris Chandra. *The Dainik*, a Bengali daily of Calcutta, protested vigorously against this exclusion of the most brilliant of the three scholars. But the man over whom the storm raged, himself remained unruffled and continued to prepare the ground for the fulfilment of the mission.

The *Krishi Gazette* soon became a powerful organ. Giris Chandra gathered round a galaxy of contributors among whom were Atul Krishna Roy; Bipradas Pal Chowdhury, Zemindar; Sris Chandra Dutt, Assistant Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Commerce, Government of Kashmir; Trailokyanath Mukherjee of the Agricultural Department of the Government of India; Ambika Charan Sen; Maulvi Sakhwat Hossain; Bhupal Chandra Bose; Mr. Ozanne, C.S., Director of Agriculture, Bombay; Mr. Allen, C.S., of the Agricultural Department, Patna Division; Mr. Doyle and Mr. Price. The subjects for the articles included agriculture, fishery, live-stock and cottage industries like manufacture of paper and sugar. A special feature of the journal was comparative studies of all our problems with those of the most advanced countries of the world.

Giris Chandra had felt that an Agricultural journal can touch only a fringe of our greatest national problems; what was really needed was an institution on the model of Cirencester. He was denied the financial support that was needed for the foundation of such a big institution. The people were apathetic and the Government was hostile. The task was too big for an individual enterprise. But Giris Chandra was undaunted. He was determined to make a beginning. In April 1886, he declared in the editorial note of the *Krishi Gazette* that a new school, named Bangabasi School, was going to be established at 116, Bowbazar Street from the first day of May next with the twin object of imparting general and agricultural education. He declared that one of the main objects of adding an Agricultural Section to the Bangabasi School was to afford facilities for agricultural education here so that Indian students would not have

to incur a large expenditure by going over to Cirencester for the purpose. The following was the syllabus of study in the Agricultural section of the school which had on its instructive staff picked scholars from Cirencester. (i) Agriculture, (ii) Agricultural Chemistry, (iii) Rural conditions, (iv) Botany, (v) Geology, (vi) Survey and Drawing, (vii) Book Keeping, (viii) Rural health and (ix) Veterinary Science.

This was the first non-official and independent venture to establish an agricultural institution without any sort of Government aid or support. The advertisement appearing in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* dated May 13, 1886, gives a complete scheme of the school. It embodies most of the suggestions Giris Chandra had made in his letters from abroad for the improvement in our educational system. He divided the year into two half-yearly terms and used Bengali words, *Basanti* term and *Dusserah* term for them. The following is the full text of the advertisement :—

AMRITA BAZAR PATRIKA, MAY 13, 1886.

The Bangabasi School, 116, Bowbazar Street, Calcutta.

The Bangabasi School will consist of two distinct branches viz., (i) the general branch which will teach, to begin with, upto the Entrance standard, and (ii) the Agricultural branch, which is intended to supply the want of Agricultural Education in India. The Managing Board of the school has thought it expedient to substitute a 7 years' course of study for the 9 years' course usual in most schools in Bengal, for in their opinion, much of the valuable time of students is wasted for want of due occupation.

There will be two terms each year, (i) the Dusserah Term (June to November) and (ii) the Basanti Term (December to May). After examination at the end of each term, liberal scholarships and prizes as well as free studentships will be awarded to deserving students in each class. The scholarships will be, one of Rs. 6/- each and the free studentships and prizes, also one each for each class. At the end of the year, a grand special prize of Rs. 50/- will be awarded to the most successful student of the school. Besides, four Matriculation prizes of

Rs. 100/-, Rs. 50/-, Rs. 30/- and Rs. 20/- respectively will be awarded to first four passed students of the Bangabasi School at the Entrance Examination each provided they pass it in the First Division.

As the teaching of English is usually very defective in most schools of Bengal, the Managing Board of the Bangabasi School is very happy to have secured the services of several gentlemen who, besides being distinguished graduates of the Calcutta University, have also had the advantage of education in England. Among these are Babus Giris Chandra Bose, M.A., M.R.A.C., F.C.S, etc., late Professor of the Cuttuck College, Bhupal Chandra Bose, B.A., M.R.A.C. etc., Byomkesh Chakravarty, M.A., M.R.A.C., late Professor of the Sheebpur Engineering College, A. K. Roy, M.R.A.C. etc. and Aghore Nath Chatterjee, M.R.C.P. etc. The schooling fees will be Rs. 4/- per mensem for the upper three classes and Rs. 2/- for the lower three but in special cases they may be reduced to one half ; admission fees the same as monthly fees. The schooling fee for the agricultural classes is Rs. 5/-.

25 students will receive free studentships in the Entrance Class provided they prove to the satisfaction of the Secretary that they deserve them and take their admission before the 1st of June.

Special note :— The Bangabasi School is now open for admission but classes will begin from the 1st of June. For further particulars see prospectus or apply at the Bangabasi Office, 34-1, Kalutola Street, Calcutta.

The patriot in Giris Chandra had taken upon himself a burden that was too heavy for the shoulders of an individual. With a hostile State and an apathetic population such a big venture had little chance of success. The financial strain proved too heavy for him. The Agricultural Section of the Bangabasi School died out but its General Section was a success. It soon grew into a first grade College. Giris Chandra was compelled under the circumstances to sacrifice the agricultural section, but in the general section he introduced the basic sciences of Botany and Chemistry that constituted the foundation of agricultural studies. In this attempt again, a new obstacle appeared ; the Calcutta University took up a step-motherly attitude towards his zeal for the

introduction of scientific education in India. But Giris Chandra was not only a patriot and a friend of the poor, he was a fighter as well. He fought the University with the valour of a Field Marshal and won from its unwilling hands the right to impart education in the basic sciences. The story of the fulfilment of his mission in the building up of the institution according to the ideals he had been cherishing in his mind all through reads like a romance and will be told in the next section.

" WORK IS WORSHIP "

Giris Chandra Bose