

PREFACE

ON the auspicious occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of the Bangabasi College it is our privilege to offer our homage to its illustrious Founder who by his long and disinterested life, dedicated to the cause of scientific education, inaugurated a new chapter in the cultural life of Bengal. He was born, as we know, on the 29th October, 1853 five years before the foundation of our First University at Calcutta. Thirty years before that we find our great pioneer Rammohan Roy, in his memorable letter to Lord Amherst, demanding, in 1823 all facilities from the Government for an all-round scientific education, embracing Mathematics, Medicine, Chemistry etc. Rammohan died in 1833 but his friend Dwarka Nath Tagore lived to see the foundation, in 1835, of the Calcutta Medical College which trained the first batch of our own scientists working under European experts.

Some of the earliest essays and miscellaneous writings on scientific subjects were published in the *Tattva-Bodhini Patrika*, established in 1843 by Debendra Nath Tagore and edited by Aukshoy Kumar Dutta, whose '*Charu Path*' still remains a landmark in popularizing science through our vernacular Bengali. Scientific topics appeared also in the first Bengali Encyclopaedia, '*Vidya-Kalpadruma*' (1846-49) of Rev. K. M. Banerjee as well as in the '*Vividartha-Samgraha*' (1851) edited by Rajendra Lal Mitra. The files of these valuable journals should be systematically searched if we wish to get more precise data with regard to the educational atmosphere prevailing in Bengal during the infancy of Giris Chandra Bose.

From his native district of Burdwan Giris Chandra migrated to Hooghly and stayed there with his cousins—Umesh Chandra and Jogendra Chandra Bose, the latter famous throughout Bengal as the Founder of the memorable journal—'*Bangabasi*'. Giris Chandra, as we know, passed the Entrance Examination in 1870 and his B.A. in B. Course (Science) in 1876. The Great Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, the friend and well-wisher of the family blessed the early educational careers of Giris Chandra and his colleagues in those momentous days when Vidyasagar was developing, in 1856, an Association for the Encouragement of Learning, supported by Kali Prosanna Sinha; and in 1856 all the preliminaries were settled for the foundation of the University of Calcutta. Vidyasagar's junior colleague Bhudev Mukherji started his '*Shiksha-Darpan*' monthly in 1864 and 'The

Education Gazette' in 1868. The immortal Founder of the '*Banga-Darsan*' (1872) Bankim Chandra Chatterji was an ardent champion of teaching Science through our mother-tongue and that is how we got from the Father of Bengali novels also no less novel a Bengali book '*Bijnan Rahasya*'. Dr. Mahendra Lal Sarker, that indomitable fighter in the Cause of Scientific education, found his best supporters, while planning the foundation of the Indian Association for the cultivation of Science, in his friends Keshab Chandra Sen and Bankim Chandra Chatterji who published the first Appeal for that Association in his '*Banga-Darsan*'.

The very year in which Giris Chandra took his B. A. Degree, securing highest marks in Botany his special subject, in 1876 we saw the foundation of Dr. Mahendralal Sarker's Association. In 1876 Giris Chandra was selected to be the Lecturer in Science at the Ravenshaw College, Cuttack and in 1877 he was married to the daughter of Pyari Charan Mitra of Burdwan whose nephew Dr. Ganga Narayan Mitra was a great friend of Vidyasagar.

Destiny soon called Giris Chandra away from the comfortable job in a College to a big adventure in Scientific training and exploration; for Bhudev Mukherji induced his parents to send Giris Chandra abroad, on Government scholarship, for the study of Agriculture in England. On December 21, 1881, Giris Chandra sailed away to complete his education at the famous Cirencester College where he worked for three years with such exemplary devotion and talent that he passed the Diploma Examination of the Royal Agricultural Society of England, standing first with an award of £50 prize. He also passed the Fellowship Examination of the Highland Agricultural Society and in 1883 he was elected a Fellow of the Chemical Society of England. In 1884 he passed the Final Examination of the Cirencester College standing second in order of merit, earning a prize of £50 for proficiency in Veterinary Science. This was a remarkable record for a young man of 30 who was on his way back to his Motherland full of high hopes and noble dreams.

That was the year when the oldest Scientific Society of India the Asiatic Society of Bengal, under the Presidentship of Dr. Rajendra Lal Mitra was getting ready to celebrate its centenary; and in the Commemoration Volume published on that occasion we find a big chapter on the Survey of the Sciences by Pramatha Nath Bose who returned a little earlier from the University of London and joined the Geological Survey of India. Pramatha Nath, as we know, entertained very high opinion about Giris Chandra; and I beg to quote, in this connection, two extracts which speak for themselves. In 1894 Pramatha Nath published

his *History of Hindu Civilisation during the British Rule* and he wrote in the preface :—

“Of the friends to whom I am indebted for this attempt I desire in the first place to mention the name of Dr. R. C. Dutt, C.I.E., who has helped me very materially by his advice and suggestions. I have also to gratefully acknowledge my obligations to Mr. G. C. Bose, M.A., M.R.A.C. for the chapter on Agriculture”. Reviewing the volume, Mr. R. C. Dutt in the *Calcutta Review* (1895) draws our special attention to the fourth part “which contains interesting and valuable information about Agriculture and Industries. Mr. G. C. Bose, M.R.A.C., a specialist in Indian Agriculture, has contributed the chapter on Agriculture and it is in every way worthy of him”.

After his return from Europe Giris Chandra found that his fellow-students in the domain of Agricultural Science like Ambika Charan Sen, Bhupal Chandra Bose and others dropped their Scientific studies and joined Government service. In April 1885 Giris Chandra created history by founding the first Indian agricultural journal in two languages. *Krishi Gazette* in Bengali and *Agricultural Gazette* in English. A complete file of these Journals must be secured ; but from what the indefatigable researchers in the archives of the Bangabasi College have succeeded so far in discovering we could present to the public this admirable documentation of the Jubilee Volume. We are proud of the achievements of young Giris Chandra in the domain of popularizing the Food Sciences to the teeming millions of India when neither the Government nor the rich landed aristocracy cared to do anything along that line.

I feel strongly, therefore, that remembering his pioneering activities in this line as well as the fact that in 1886 he wanted not merely to establish a college of General Education but a model Agricultural College, the Governing Body of the Bangabasi College, with the co-operation of the staff and students and with the generous support of our Old Boys and sympathisers, should try to build up a first-rate Agricultural Institute in Bengal dedicated to the memory of our illustrious pioneer Giris Chandra Bose.

From the foundation of the Bangabasi School in May 1886 and of the College in 1887 to the very last day of his mundane existence, Acharya Giris Chandra devoted every ounce of his energy and his entire resources—mental as well as material—to the progressive development of the Bangabasi College of which we are all proud and to which we wish a glorious future. Only in our sincere efforts to make the College in every way worthy of the noble Founder we can express our gratitude to him for his inestimable services

to our Motherland. Precursor Giris Chandra paved the way for a veritable galaxy of Indian Scientists led by Dr. Jagadish Chandra Bose and Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy who in the last decade of the 19th century, opened, with their brilliant disciples, a new era in India's communion with Nature. With this humble tribute to Acharya Giris Chandra Bose, we venture to bring out this Souvenir hoping that it will be welcomed by our countrymen and by Acharya Bose's numerous students, colleagues and admirers. We could not do full justice to the theme owing to shortness of time and we humbly apologize in advance to all for our shortcomings.

KALIDAS NAG
on behalf of the Souvenir Committee