

MY REMINISCENCES

Today at the fag-end of my life my reminiscences of my old College days are not of much general interest. Many of my contemporaries have been gathered to their fathers and many, if they are still on this earth, have forgotten one another. Those were olden days when we were in the Bangabasi College. The years were of course A. D., the period being between the years 1904 and 1908. In our First Arts course we had to read, then, Heat, Light, Electricity, Magnetism in Ganot's Physics. Our text was Jago's Inorganic Chemistry, besides English, Sanskrit Mathematics and Deductive Logic. None of the text books on those subjects were published by the University. I am not ashamed to say that our science laboratories as of other private colleges, were not so well-equipped as those of the St. Xavier's and Presidency Colleges. Explaining in class by chalk representation on the black board of many an apparatus could not be ridiculed then. Government had a step-motherly treatment against the spread of education. Never could adequate funds for these colleges be found. Consequently the private colleges did what best they could in the circumstances.

Prof. K. D. Mullick was in charge of the science department in the College. Botany was taken by Principal Girish Chandra Bose. Unlike specialised education of modern days our Alma Mater then prescribed for us a curriculum which gave us a tolerable acquaintance helping us in our life by posting us with some general knowledge in the onward march of human progress in Science, Art, Philosophy and Literature.

In our B. A. classes the course was divided as 'A' and 'B' courses, the former being for Arts and the latter for Science. I belonged to the 'A' course. We were then noisy naughty students with the mounting political pulsation of the Partition of Bengal throbbing within our young hearts. Our college was then situated in premises No. 191 Bowbazar Street. In this building when the English classes were held in the first floor by Mr. E. M. Wheeler the students in these classes were so large in number that they used to overflow from the lecture hall and extend beyond the ken of the Professor to the landing of the staircase nearby. In this respect matters much improved when we came to the buildings in Scott Lane. Mr. Wheeler had then left for the Berhampore

College. We had then Sri Pannalal Bose as our Professor who afterwards took to Judicial service and achieved a supreme distinction in trying that case known as the Bhowal Sanyasi case. His epic judgment could not be assailed by the learned Judges of the Calcutta High Court or those of the Privy Council. I am proud to associate his name here. He taught us Psychology and Ethics. His quiet genial manners infused interest amongst us. Then we must recollect Prof. Lalit Kumar Bannerjee who was a Gold Medallist both in English and Sanskrit. He managed his classes well. In the course of his lectures he would quote copious parallel passages from Sanskrit and even Bengali—although the latter subject had then no room in our curriculum. He used to give us the meaning, the construction if difficult, the amplification, the defects and purple patches in rhetoric during his lectures on Shakespeare, Burke, Macaulay, Tennyson and other authors. The subjects of History, Indian, English and Saracenic, were taken by Prof. A. K. Ghosh, Barrister. He was a young man, a part time Professor, devoting some of his time for building up a practice in the High Court. He was full of tales of merry England. I must say that although he did not neglect his subjects yet the students enjoyed his gossip. We helped ourselves with our Political Economy which was then included in the subject of History. We however respected all our professors. About this time our College magazine was started in which I contributed an article under the caption "Was the Mahomedan Rule in India National?". This is the scrappy picture of a forgotten era.

Now I cannot close my reminiscence without recollecting with sincere regard our Principal of the College, late Giris Chandra Bose whom I can still picture with a head of seemingly stiff combed and slightly-parted hair but apparently never bestowing much care on it. He was clean shaven with medium moustache, having a face with a gravity not repelling but not attractive unless invited to approach. Clothed in *than* and *dhooty*, then "Ralli's 49"—swadeshi had then no clothing—with band collard shirt and wearing mostly loin-cloth *chaddar* over it in summer and *alwan* in winter, he used to come regularly to the College. He had been to England but never changed his national costume. He was regarded in high esteem by the most wicked amongst us. There were poor Eurasians—Curzon's term of Anglo-Indian was not then applied to that class—around our College buildings. As they were, in terms of college cant of the times, "born on

,cement, *bilati matti*' they posed themselves superior to us and would gratuitously abuse and insult us. But we could never tolerate this and would hit them back, throw brick-bats, break their scanty crockeries in their dirty habitations and knuckle them on their swelled heads and flatten their nose; but no sooner had we heard that Giris Babu was coming we would melt away. This was not for any fear of injury the Principal might inflict on us but out of respectful sentiment that he should not have been disturbed. If our excesses brought in the Police the Principal was always careful to take the culprits under his sheltering wings. He would rebuke them aside, frightening them that the Police were on their track. But that track always appeared to have been lost, and the Police failed to turn up again. It will not be out of place to say that we respected discipline which was to us an intelligent co-operation of mind and action for the benefit of such acquirements as were obtainable in the course of our education in our colleges. Of course later, repeated political repression and national struggle for independence changed this outlook amongst the students of the day, and they may opine we had no or less problems of education and conduct to tackle than they have. Whatever it is we had love and affection between the teachers and the taught—a necessary condition obtaining in all civilised countries, and I wish it should again prevail as in our days in the Bangabasi College. *Bande Mataram.*

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We were favoured with many more reminiscences from our former teachers and students, but we are extremely sorry we could not incorporate them in this souvenir due to hurry and shortage of time. We intend to incorporate all of them in the JUBILEE MAGAZINE of the College which will be brought out after the celebrations are over—Ed,