BUILDERS OF MODERN INDIA

ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE

SASADHAR SINHA

PUBLICATIONS DIVISION
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
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ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE

ABOUT THE SERIES

The object of the Series is the publication of biographies of those eminent sons and daughters of India who have been mainly instrumental in our national renaissance and the struggle for independence.

It is essential for the present and coming generations to know something about these great men and women. Except in a few cases, no authoritative biographies are available. The Series has been planned to remove this lacuna and comprises handy volumes containing simple and short biographies of our eminent leaders written by competent persons who know their subject well. The books in this Series are of 200 to 300 pages each and are not intended either to be comprehensive studies or to replace more elaborate biographies.

Though desirable, it may not be possible to publish the biographies in a chronological order. The work of writing these lives has to be entrusted to persons who are well equipped to do so and, therefore, for practical reasons, it is possible that there might be no historical sequence observed. It is hoped, however, that within a short period all eminent national personalities will figure in this Series.

Mr. R. R. Diwakar is the General Editor of the Series.

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SASADHAR SINHA

PUBLICATIONS DIVISION

PREFACE

WHEN the Publications Division wrote to me to enquire whether I would consider their proposal to write a biography of Asutosh Mookerjee in their 'Builders of Modern India' series, I readily fell in with their request, despite crippling illness. Firstly, because I have a natural attraction for anything to do with the emergence of modern India and secondly, which is more important, because I could hardly forgo the honour and pleasure of writing on the most dynamic figure in Indian education in the present century, a true builder to whom the country will always remain indebted.

The pattern of higher education in India, as it has come down to us, was his creation against insuperable odds that would have rebuffed a lesser man. But such were the range of his mind, his personality, courage, hard work and administrative ability that he went ahead almost single-handed to raise the edifice of higher or more specifically university education in this country. Moreover, everything that has been done since his passing, over four decades ago, is largely a variation of the same theme. The foundation was laid by him long ago.

Briefly, he wanted to do four things. His first idea was to throw the door of university education open to as wide a circle as possible, for, he felt that the leaven of higher education, however inadequate in practice, was the only means of lifting the country out of its narrowness and social stagnation. Secondly, he aimed at making university education, at its higher levels at any rate, comparable to any in Western countries. Thirdly, his ambition was to convert, and successfully in my opinion, the University of Calcutta, his Alma Mater, from an examining into a teaching and research university. Fourthly, and above all, his greatest and most formidable task was to render university education, both academically and administratively, free from and unfettered by official interference and control.

The enormity of the tasks that awaited him can only be imagined

when, from the state in which higher education found itself, he actively undertook to reorganize the University of Calcutta according to his conception of what university education should be in India.

It must be recalled that the British had introduced higher education in India as a means to a limited end, which was to train men to meet their administrative exigencies. What, in fact, they required was primarily 'qualified' candidates, as Tagore has derisively called them, to man their gigantic and expanding administrative structure as economically as possible—which, they had realized, was impracticable, were they to rely exclusively on British personnel. The white man's prestige could not bear the strain.

In this connection, it may be recalled that as university education began to take root in India, the British instinctively sensed the dangers inherent in the spread of such education. On the one hand, they tried, as best they could, to still their fears by saying to themselves that, since Indians were essentially imitative, they were perhaps not as dangerous as they might appear to be at first sight, but on the other, those in authority took a more realistic, if retrograde, view of the matter. Hence their insistence that education must always remain under their sole control, so that higher education, in particular, was in no way permitted to undermine the permanence of British rule in India.

Sir Charles Wood's Despatch of 1854 leaves little doubt on the matter. He was, in fact, of the opinion that higher education should be confined only to the aristocratic upper class, the natural ally of the British ruling class. He, therefore, resisted the idea that it should be thrown open to the middle classes who, he felt, would take advantage of it and thus might one day become "a discontented class". "I am against providing for our future detractors, opponents and grumblers", he said. But he was over-ruled by higher authorities, for the needs of administration proved decisive.

At the same time, it is perhaps arguable whether it was higher education alone which was responsible for the rise of nationalist sentiments among Indians as among other colonial subjects. Education, certainly, was a contributing factor, but it cannot be claimed that

education, as provided by the powers that be, was the cause of Indian discontent.

Indeed, by contrast, it is interesting to observe, the French in their administrative approach, for instance, followed a completely different line. On the whole, they relied on a predominantly French personnel for the administrative needs in their various territories, while colonial education in their case always remained minimal. But even then, the French Colonial Empire was eventually confronted with a similar discontent. In fact, as is well known, some of the outstanding leaders in the French Colonies were either self-taught or educated in Metropolitan France. Obviously, the problem was more basic.

"Suppose that some 100 years hence," Ram Mohun Roy had written in 1828 to an English friend, "the native character becomes elevated by constant intercourse with Europeans and the acquirements of general and political knowledge as well as of modern arts and sciences, is it possible that they (*i.e.*, Indians) will not have the spirit as well as the inclination to resist effectively any unjust and oppressive measures serving to degrade them in the scale of society."

Asutosh Mookerjee held similar views. He too believed in the liberating role of education, with one difference. His was an active creed, as evidenced by his life long endeavour to transform the University of Calcutta into a truly modern university and give it a popular base.

S. SINHA

Kalyani, West Bengal.
1969.

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With my present physical disability, I am obliged to depend for all sorts of help on others. My sincere thanks are, therefore, due first to Mr. C. R. Banerji, Deputy Librarian, National Library, Calcutta, for suggesting for purchase the title of an indispensable book—Dr. N. K. Sinha's *Asutosh Mookerjee—A Biographical Study*, and for the supply of other books and valuable information; to Professor Shymal Sengupta, of Maulana Azad College, Calcutta, for borrowing on my behalf two important publications bearing on my work, as well as to Professor Gour Mohan Bannerjee, of the B.T. College, Kalyani, for providing me with valuable background material; and secondly, as always, to my wife who has come to my rescue by going carefully through my manuscript, checking two or three chapters at a time, as and when they were ready, and having them typed, according to specifications, by Mrs. Jolly, who has typed my previous books. I am deeply indebted to them both.

S. S.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

ALTHOUGH the Sepoy Mutiny had its origin in Barrackpore, near Calcutta, the great 1857 uprising had left Bengal well-nigh unaffected. By and large, it was confined to Upper India where its fate was decided. Nonetheless, it is well to remember that 1857 had proved to be a turning point in the evolution of the province. Indeed, the Bengali renaissance, initiated earlier in the century by Ram Mohun Roy, had by that time reached a maturity which was to affect the life of the Bengali people profoundly. The previous nihilistic excesses were gone, while the appearance of a galaxy of outstanding men on the scene was evidence of a new seriousness in the air.)

(It is unnecessary to mention all of them, but it may not be inappropriate to name at least some of the universally familiar figures. Thus, for instance, Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Ramkrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda as well as Rabindranath Tagore, Dr. Rajendralal Mitra and Dr. Mahendralal Sarkar, on the one hand, while, among the politicians, W. C. Bonnerjee, Ananda Mohan Bose and Surendranath Bannerjea, on the other.)

(It is also probably true that henceforth the Bengali intelligentsia began to take a new look at their own problems and girded their loins up to face them. This new outlook undoubtedly accounted, to some extent at any rate, for the eminence that Bengal acquired almost in every field, but especially in politics, in this phase of modern India's growth. As Messrs. Thompson and Garratt have pointed out in *The Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India,* "most Indians accepted the British connection as a permanency; the more thoughtful began to consider how best they could influence the foreign government under which they and their children were fated to live. This attitude was most noticeable amongst the Bengalis. Their training and outlook,

their long experience of British rule, their propinquity to the seat of Government at Calcutta all helped to mark them out as political leaders."

But, on the side of our rulers, the growth of racialism was then the most pronounced feature, which, however unfortunate, was destined to affect deeply the life of the people. Henceforth, the British began to feel and behave like conquerors. Earlier, there was still room for British and Indians to meet on terms of friendship on the social plane—which was probably one of the causes why the renaissance in Bengal could take place at all. Thus, although the new movement came from the Indians themselves, the help that the British, officially and non-officially, rendered to forward it was invaluable.

The reason probably was the new class composition of the men in authority.

Formerly, the upper classes, it is interesting to note, were heavily represented in the official class which was still guided by the idea of *noblesse oblige*. They had a sense of social responsibility towards Indians; they were genuinely interested in knowledge about India's past. In fact, the number of great administrators and scholars produced in the earlier phase of Indo-British connection is in glaring contrast with that of the post-1857 period.

The 1857 upheaval changed the situation radically. Easy communication with England, rendered possible by the invention of railway, steamship and telegraph, connoted, for one thing, a steady deterioration in the standard of public life with all that it meant.

The climax in racialism was reached during the Ilbert Bill controversy (1883).

Thus, although Queen Victoria's Proclamation in 1858, on the assumption of direct rule by the Crown, emphasized racial equality for Indians in regard to power and preference, the propaganda let loose among the British by the above Bill was so intense that there was no mistaking the fact that henceforward racialism and its concomitant discrimination were to become the hall-mark of British rule in India.

For the first time, the British formed their own organization to safe-

guard their privileged position. This was how the so-called European Association was brought into being. It was, however, not an unmixed blessing for the British, as subsequent developments were to show. On their part, the Indian public too learnt the lesson of organization, resulting in the foundation of the Indian National Congress almost simultaneously in 1885.

Earlier (1876), the Indian Association had been formed. This was the prelude to the appearance of a new phenomenon which was completely unknown, indeed, could not have been known in India. But Surendranath Bannerjea, inspired by Mazzini's gospel of nationalism, had started propagating it in Calcutta and afterwards in the whole of India. His tearing campaign for the cause makes it a thrilling episode in the life of the great leader. But not content merely with the espousal of the national idea, the Indian National Conference was called in Calcutta to provide an all-India platform. Its second sitting in Calcutta took place at the same time as the first session of the Indian National Congress in January, 1885, in Bombay, presided over by W. C. Bonnerjee, a leading Calcutta barrister. Surendranath Bannerjea being preoccupied in Calcutta at the time, could not attend the Congress session, but subsequently the Indian Conference merged with the Indian National Congress, thus becoming the only organization of the Indian nationalists.

To the British as much as to Indians, the growing national consciousness of Indians came as a great surprise. Referring to Surendranath, Sir Henry Cotton in his book, *New India,* has written : ".....the idea of Bengali influence in the Punjab would have been incredible yet at the present moment the name of Surendranath Bannerjea excites as much excitement among the rising generation of Multan as in Dacca."

British officialdom sensed the impending storm and set to sharpening its weapons accordingly. When the Congress was first founded, British officials supported it in the hope of canalizing Indian political aspirations, but they must very soon have had second thoughts on the subject.

Hence the genesis of communalism in India. In 1888, three years

after the foundation of the Indian National Congress, Sir John Stratchey, the well-known British expert on Indian affairs, had written, "The truth plainly is that the existence side by side of these two hostile creeds is one of the strong points in our political position in India." But it was still early days and communalist ideas did not come to full fruition until the Partition of Bengal.

Lord Curzon, the new Viceroy and Governor-General, came out to India in 1899, and his sinister role began to unfold almost at once. The growth of national consciousness among Indians, particularly in Bengal, constituted, he thought, a threat to the stability of British rule in India. He, therefore, resolved to nip it in the bud and thus the Partition of Bengal, 'the settled fact', followed in 1905. This was octensibly done for administrative reasons, for Bengal was considered too large and unwieldy for effective administration. But the real ground was, of course, different. No knowledgeable person could be hoodwinked by this specious reasoning. It was, in fact, to break the back of Bengali nationalism, a bad example for everybody, by physical dismemberment of the province.

This cavalier action on the part of Curzon set the province on fire, so to speak, and heralded the birth of the great Swadeshi Movement. It was such a demonstration of popular opposition and unity that, despite repressive measures, its onward march could not be halted.

Mahatma Gandhi, commenting on the significance of the Partition of Bengal in *Hind Swaraj*, wrote, "Yet the real awakening took place after the Partition of Bengal. For this we have to be thankful to Lord Curzon." "At the same time", he added, "the people of Bengal reasoned with Lord Curzon, but in the pride of power he disregarded all their prayers. He took it for granted that Indians would only prattle, that they would never take any effective steps. He used insulting language, and in the teeth of opposition partitioned Bengal. That may be considered to be the day for the partition of the British Empire. The shock that the British power received through Partition has never been equalled by any other act."

The Swadeshi Movement was the first moral test for the Bengali

people and the national awakening that accompanied it sowed the seeds of later developments, some for the good of Bengal and others for the present eclipse of the province, leading to its second partition and, what is worse, the Partition of India.

In this phase, the first notable event was the undoing of Partition. This was a great positive achievement, but at the same time by transferring the capital of India from Calcutta to Delhi, a mortal blow was dealt at Bengal, under whose impact the province is still reeling.

Thus, although great permanent harm was done to the province in order to undermine its political influence, there is no doubt that in the wake of the Swadeshi Movement, there occurred several developments in various directions which demonstrated that Bengal still counted in the counsels of the Indian nation. In art and literature for one thing, Bengal still led, and the outstanding contributions to both cannot be gainsaid. The names of the artist brothers—Gaganendranath and Abanindranath— are important in this connection. The revival of Indian art was thus in full swing and the renown of the Calcutta School of Art became a household word in artistic circles throughout India, while a group of talented artists, headed by Nandalal Bose, gathered round the School. But in the field of literature outstanding progress was recorded, as shown by international recognition. The award of the Nobel Prize for Literature to Rabindranath Tagore took place in 1913. Concerning the growth and development of Bengali literature, Sri Aurobindo, himself a product of this existing period, writes in *The Ideal of Human Unity*. "It is significant that the subnation in India which from the first refused to undergo this yoke (that of the English language, that is), devoted itself to the development of its language, made that for long its principal preoccupation, gave to it its most original minds and the most living energies getting through everything else perfunctorily.... that is Bengal which gave it the first modern Indian poet of world-wide fame and achievements..."

Apart from the extraordinary efflorescence of literature, the second most notable development was in the field of science. P. C. Ray's name comes to mind first, because it was primarily through his devo-

tion to science and encouragement of scientific research that a brilliant band of scientists was attracted to chemical research and thus through his pioneering efforts a School of Chemistry was launched. The next equally important name that occurs is that of Jagadish Chandra Bose, who, since he came down from Cambridge, began his career as a Physicist, but the work that brought him fame and eventual membership of the Royal Society in London, is in a different but indirectly related sphere. His research on the living and non-living is not so well known to his countrymen, but the Bose Research Institute stands as a monument to his far-reaching work.

"In his investigations into the action of force upon matter" as Lord Ronaldshay (later Marquis of Zetland) writes in *The Heart of Aryavarta*, "he tells us that he (*i.e.* Bose) was amazed to find boundary lines vanishing and to discover points of contact emerging between the living and non-living. He can conceive of no greater contribution to knowledge in the realm of science than the establishment of a great generalisation 'not merely speculation, but based on actual demonstration of an underlying unity amid bewildering diversity'."

In any case, what is important is the fact that science for the first time had come into its own and scientific research spread throughout India.

In spite of the impetus given by the Swadeshi Movement, the progress made in the economic sphere was not as great as might have been expected. The principal reason for this lack of advance, as it appears to me, was because unbridled idealism was a poor basis for progress, nor could the lack of experience be minimized. It was therefore probably inevitable in the circumstances, but the lesson is being gradually but painfully learnt.

Asutosh Mookerjee also belonged to this period of *Sturm und Drang*. On the one hand he had come into the inheritance of the Bengali renaissance, its broad humanism and firm belief in education, humanistic and scientific. On the other he was also a product of the stirring events of the post-1857 period. It can therefore be reasonably surmised that the growth of racialism on the part of the British and

its attendant discriminatory practices entered deeply into his soul. Consequently, he felt, it was only through broad-based higher education among his countrymen that they could be cured of their sense of intellectual inferiority to the Westerners. Thus was formed his resolve to create a modern university out of his Alma Mater, the University of Calcutta.

By temperament and training, Asutosh Mookerjee had avoided politics, for he held the belief that when intellectual freedom had been won by his compatriots, the ultimate goal of their politics—political freedom of the country—would follow as night follows day. Was he far wrong ?

CHAPTER II

PARENTAGE AND EARLY DAYS

MANY an eminent Bengali in recent times—Ram Mohun Roy, foremost among them—was either born in or related in some way with Hooghly, adjacent to Calcutta. (The forebears of Asutosh Mookerjee, too, came from a village called Dikshul in the same district. But his grandfather—Viswanath—moved to another village, Jirat by name, from which, presumably, his father—Gangaprasad—came down to Calcutta for his studies.)

(Gangaprasad belonged to the early group of graduates of the Calcutta University, having passed the Entrance Examination in 1857.) He obtained his B.A. degree four years later (1861), which was to be followed in 1866 by the M.B. degree from the Calcutta Medical College. Being of modest means, his only source of dependable income seemed to have been the scholarships he won throughout his educational career. (Gangaprasad Mookerjee lived in Calcutta at 29 (formerly 10/1) Malanga Lane, Bowbazar, where Asutosh was born on June 29, 1864, two years before his father qualified as a medical practitioner.)

The story runs that Sir Charles, the Principal of the College, impressed by young Gangaprasad's ability and knowing his circumstances, was anxious to help him tide over his temporary embarrassment. He therefore suggested, at the conclusion of his medical course, that Gangaprasad should call on the Military Secretary of the Viceroy in order to fill a temporary vacancy. This he did. The Military Secretary seemed to have been satisfied with his credentials and offered him the post, dropping at the same time a hint that he should dress differently.

He was naturally attired in a perfectly clean *dhoti* and coat. Hence the suggestion that he should don a pair of trousers to qualify for the post decided the issue. He declined the offer made which he could ill-afford to do in his uncertain financial position.

When therefore Gangaprasad returned to the Medical College, in order to thank his Principal for his kindness, he told him of his decision, saying that what the Military Secretary wanted, apparently, was a pair of trousers and not a medical man.

(His father's sense of dignity, outspokenness and courage were the qualities Asutosh admired most, so that he proved himself to be a chip of the old block when, in his turn, he was faced with life's hazards and uncertainties.)

(Dr. Gangaprasad Mookerjee now set up in practice in Russa Road (now Asutosh Road), a growing suburb in South Calcutta, and bought a house there.)

His decision to decline Government employment proved, however, a blessing in disguise, for his practice prospered and he soon came to occupy a position of trust and consequence among his fellow-citizens for his medical skill, generosity and for his forthright, if somewhat irascible, character.

(As a boy, Asutosh was surrounded by the affections of his father and mother (Jagattarini Devi). In a busy, if a trifle 'subdued' household, he lived in a world of phantasy, absorbed in his books. This habit of reading his father encouraged, for his one overmastering ambition was to see his son well educated. And it is not improbable that in later life this was the foundation of his magnificent collection of books and journals in many languages and on all possible subjects—literature, history, law, philosophy, education, mathematics and science generally—which in March, 1949, his sons—Mr. Justice Ramaprasad Mookerjee, Dr. Shymaprasad Mookerjee, Mr. Umaprasad Mookerjee and Mr. Bamaprasad Mookerjee—donated to the National Library in Calcutta, to be kept in a separate bay for the use of scholars and research workers.) The late Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, then the Union Minister for Education, accepted this huge collection of books and journals—including some rare ones—of 72,000 items on behalf of the Government of India. "I would in conclusion," he wrote, "express appreciation of the Government of India and my personal satisfaction at the generous offer you and your brothers have made."

Young Asutosh went to the Sisu Vidyalaya (Infant School) at Chakraberia, Bhowanipur, shunning games and sports usual for boys of his own age, but the only physical relaxation he seemed to have had was going for long walks. Indeed, so it is reported, when the Sadler Commission Report was in process of preparation, he used to go to the Calcutta Maidan for a walk and Sir Michael would often join him to discuss intricate points of their report.

When still at the infant school, he did not seem to be keeping well and was sent to Mathura for a change of climate. As he was returning to Calcutta, he met, by chance, Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, the idol of the schoolboys of Bengal, at Mughalsarai Railway Junction. He was then ten years of age.

This meeting was perhaps symbolic of his future career, the foremost educationist of India of the present century coming face to face with one who was the leading figure in education in the previous one. Vidyasagar must have been struck by the keenness of the lad, so that when they met again in a Calcutta bookshop, Iswar Chandra presented him with a copy of Robinson Crusoe, a prized possession of young Asutosh.

In 1876, at the age of twelve, he left the elementary school to join the 4th. class at the South Suburban School. Thus began his secondary schooling under a famous Headmaster, Pandit Sivnath Sastri. Besides being famous as a social reformer, Sivnath Sastri was also the author of an indispensable book on the social history of 19th. century Bengal—*Ramtanu Lahiri o tat-Kalin Banga Samaj* (Ramtanu Lahiri and the Bangali Society of that time). Asutosh had, too, as private tutor, Madhusudan Das, the famous future leader of Orissa.

Of the early influences which shaped Asutosh's life, his parents naturally come first and foremost. He inherited his father's sense of dignity, courage and generosity, as well as his methodical life and capacity for hard work. As for his mother, she exercised a silent but equally potent influence on him and, in fact, in all the important personal decisions taken in the future, he always turned to her for guidance and approval, such being the strength of the filial tie.

Next, Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar's charismatic figure at once leaps to the eye. For he exercised a profound influence on a whole generation, but in the case of Asutosh Mookerjee, this influence was more specific, as testified by his later activities.

Finally, Sivnath Sastri's influence on him is less easy to define, except that the School over which he presided owed its whole ethos to him. As a growing boy, Asutosh must have benefited by this all-pervading influence. The same remark is equally applicable to Madhusudan Das, except for the fact that as late as 1924, he tried to persuade his famous pupil to enter active politics.

(In 1879, at the age of 15, Asutosh Mookerjee passed the Entrance Examination of the Calcutta University, winning the third place among the successful candidates. He received a first-grade scholarship for his success.)

CHAPTER III

ACADEMIC BRILLIANCE

NOT unlike Eton and Harrow, Presidency College at Calcutta, the premier college of the province, has been the nursery of the outstanding sons of Bengal. (Young Asutosh entered it in his own right in 1880, both as a promising student and as a scholarship boy, the hall-mark of academic distinction.)

The Presidency College, like its predecessor, The Hindu College, with which it is related by lineal descent, has always had a brilliant staff, besides attracting highly gifted students. (In the time of Asutosh Mookerjee, some of the teachers were Principal Tawney, father of the famous economic historian, the late Prof. Tawney of the London School of Economics; William Booth, the Mathematician, F. J. Rowe, W. H. McCann, W. T. Webb, Peary Charan Sarkar, Prasanna Kumar Sarbadhikary and H. M. Percival, an Indian Christian, famous as a Professor of English.) Percival made England his home on retirement, but the fact that Asutosh Mookerjee invited him to become the Head of English in his Post-graduate Department was indicative of the esteem in which he was held.

Nor was this all. Among his senior contemporaries at the Presidency College may be counted some of the famous Bengali names who either adorned the Bench or earned renown as lawyers, scientists, surgeons or professors. (For instance, Byomkesh Chakravarty; Asutosh Chaudhuri, an uncle of General J. N. Chaudhuri, now India's High Commissioner in Canada; Bhupendra Nath Bose, later Member of the India Council in London; Abdur Rahim, later the Chief Justice of Madras; Heremba Chandra Maitra, father-in-law of Prof. P. C. Mahalanobis F.R.S.; P. C. Ray, the famous Chemist; and Suresh Prasad Sarbadhikari, a leading surgeon in Calcutta)

But it will perhaps come as a surprise to many to know that Narendra Nath Datta, who later became universally known as Swami

Vivekananda, was for some time a fellow-student of Asutosh Mookerjee at Presidency College where he spent five years (1880-1885).

Asutosh Mookerjee passed his First Arts Examination in 1881 and, in spite of serious illness, secured the second place among the successful candidates. The B.A. and M.A. degrees followed in 1884 and 1885, respectively. His *forte* was Mathematics, and he secured a first class first in both B.A. and M.A. In 1886, he passed the M.A. in Physical Science, also.

In the same year, a significant personal event took place. Asutosh Mookerjee married Jogamaya Devi, daughter of Pandit Ramnarayan Bhattacharya of Krishnanagar, a historic town in Nadia not far from Calcutta. To the great delight of his father, he did not accept any dowry.

His mathematical genius and academic achievements drew appreciative references from one Vice-Chancellor after another, although the mathematical research that he had begun early in his career was never to come to full fruition, owing to life's vicissitudes.

Thus, for example, H. G. Reynolds (1883-86) in his Convocation Address in 1884 said : "The senior wrangler of the year, if I may borrow the phrase from Cambridge, is Asutosh Mookerjee of the Presidency College who stands first in the list of B.A. graduates and is in receipt of the Ishan and Vizianagaram scholarships and the Hurrish Chander Prize."

In 1886, he obtained the Premchand Roychand studentship, the highest honour that the University of Calcutta could offer him. But not being content with an M.A. degree in two subjects—Mathematics and Physics or Physical Science—he sought permission from the University of Calcutta to appear once more for the Premchand Roychand studentship examination in three arts subjects; this was refused by the Syndicate. He further acquired knowledge of French and German in order to read scientific works.

In the meantime, his fame as a mathematical prodigy had spread far and wide, so that the then Director of Public Instruction, Sir Alfred Croft, wanted to see him and being satisfied offered him an appoint-

ment at his own College, the Presidency College of Calcutta). But this offer came to nothing, because Asutosh Mookerjee wanted to dictate his own terms, so sure was he of his ability to hold his own with anybody. But what really clinched matters was his insistence on the *claim for equality of status and pay with the European members of the* Indian Education Service. This, of course, Sir Alfred could not promise—which meant that "he was not a candidate for appointment", as Dr. N. K. Sinha has put it in his biographical study of Asutosh Mookerjee.

This was surely a confirmation of what he had always suspected and tried to remedy through his devoted service to the cause of higher education—the vindication of racial equality.

(It is probable that his ambition to become a Research Professor in Mathematics at his Alma Mater failed, in spite of the valiant efforts of Sir Gurudas Bannerjee, during his tenure as Vice-Chancellor, owing to the opposition of Sir Alfred Croft.)

(In 1886, he was appointed an Examiner for the M.A. Examination in mathematics, but this was not all.)

(Dr. Mahendralal Sarkar, who had a genius for spotting real talent, discovered Asutosh Mookerjee, and invited him to deliver courses of lectures in higher mathematics at the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science. These, as he had said, "were listened to with profit by the M.A. students of the Calcutta colleges including the Presidency College." But, unfortunately, these valuable lectures (which he delivered between 1887-1892), had to be discontinued owing to his preoccupation elsewhere.

In his quest for financial independence, Asutosh Mookerjee had already started thinking of a future profession. This was the origin of his interest in law, which was not surprising nor unexpected, for mathematics and law are integrally connected, both requiring a keen, analytic mind.

(He took his B.L. Examination from City College, where one of his teachers was S. P. Sinha (later Lord Sinha, a future Under-Secretary of State in the Liberal Government in England)

He was awarded the Tagore Law Gold Medal for three successive years—1884, 1885 and 1886.

In addition to being the recipient of the Doctor of Law in 1894, he was appointed the Tagore Law Professor in 1897. His lectures as Tagore Law Professor were published in book form, entitled *The Law of Perpetuities in British India.*

CHAPTER IV

A MATHEMATICAL GENIUS WASTED

WRITING about Asutosh Mookerjee, Dr. R. P. Paranjpye, himself a Senior Wrangler, remarked, "if he had made up his mind to devote himself entirely to the study of mathematics he was sure to have secured a place in the front rank of world mathematicians." Other competent persons have paid similar tribute to his mathematical genius.

Taught by brilliant mathematics professors, Asutosh began to interest himself in mathematical research from his early college days and made some twenty-two original contributions to various scientific journals at home and abroad. "This", as Dr. R. N. Sen, a well-known professor of mathematics, has observed, "is an accomplishment which has few parallels in the history of the mathematical world."

As mentioned earlier, he contributed his first paper to *The Messenger of Mathematics,* a journal of Pure and Applied Mathematics in Cambridge, in which he gave "an elegant new proof of the 25th proposition of the first book of Euclid." Regarding his third paper, on elliptical functions, Prof. Caley wrote "that it was remarkable how a real result was obtained by consideration of an imaginary point. This paper has been referred to in Enneper's Elliptische Funktionen." Another paper which brought him international renown was called "On the differential equation of trajectory." It was written immediately after he had taken his M.A. degree. This related to the solution given on the subject by the Italian mathematician Mainhardi. "Asutosh Mookerjee showed by an ingenious process that Mainhardi's solution could be replaced by a pair of remarkably simple equations which admitted an interesting geometrical solution. These equations have been quoted by Prof. Forsyth in his book on Differential Equations in later editions." It is unnecessary to add anything more about the

mathematical genius of Asutosh Mookerjee, but the following remarks of a famous Indian mathematician may not come amiss. Thus wrote Prof. Ganesh Prasad : "Sir Asutosh's contributions to mathematical knowledge were due to his unaided efforts while he was only a college student. After Bhaskara, he was the first Indian to enter into the field of mathematical researches, as distinguished from astronomical researches, and did much which was truly original."

Asutosh Mookerjee wrote a textbook on Geometrical Conics for Beginners; it was published in 1893 by Macmillans, went into many editions, and was highly reviewed in *Nature* and other journals.

Besides being a member of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, of which he was also a President for a number of years, he was elected a Fellow of the Edinburgh Royal Society, of the Royal Astronomical Society, as well as a member of the Royal Irish Academy. In addition, he was made a member of the Mathematical Societies of London, Edinburgh, Paris, Palermo and New York.

Finally, he founded the Calcutta Mathematical Society in 1908 and continued to be its President from the beginning.

Chapter V

CHOOSING A PROFESSION

"NOTHING," Dr. Asutosh Mukerjee said in reminiscent mood in 1920, "is dearer to me, nothing has been dearer to me than my university. I began life as a research student in mathematics when research was practically unknown in this country and the ambition of my life was to be a research professor in my own university. Mr. Justice Gooroodas Bannerjee (his own spelling), who was then Vice-Chancellor of this university, made desperate attempts to create a chair for me, but such were the times that he failed to collect even a sum which would yield a modest sum of Rs. 4,000 a year which was all that he and I thought would be sufficient to maintain me as a research professor. The result was that I drifted into Law."

Having served his articles under the celebrated jurist, Sir Rashbehari Ghosh, he thus started practising in 1888 as a Vakil at the Calcutta High Court.

In 1889, he lost his father and his death made him more determined than ever to make good at the new profession.

Accordingly, he was well launched in his future career. Indeed, Sir Gurudas Bannerjee "had a considerable share in moulding my career," he himself said.

It is quite clear that he chose Law, *faute de mieux*. Had he had the opportunity, not unjustifid in normal circumstances, he would certainly have remained loyal to mathematics, his first love. Nevertheless, as I have already said, the two disciplines—mathematics and law—demand similar qualities, an acute and an analytic mind.

But, of course, his choice of law was finally determined by the ineluctable need for financial and, perhaps, also intellectual independence.

His mental capacity, wide scholarship, energy and courage were

bound to take him far along the path of success. And, in fact, he was doing exceedingly well at the Bar and found himself in congenial company.

In his time, the Calcutta High Court was an intensely exciting place and could boast of giants among its practitioners.

On the one hand, there were, among Indians, W. C. Bonnerjee, Taraknath Palit, Rashbehari Ghosh and Gurudas Bannerjee and among the English, Woodroffe, the Trantrik scholar and author of the famous book, *Is India Civilized?*, Jackson, Paul and Garth, on the other.

Asutosh Mookerjee was only forty and at the height of his powers. His elevation to Bench was therefore a loss on many counts, of which the financial was the most obvious. But, as has been well said, it "was a sacrifice to which he cheerfully submitted, mainly because of the position and prestige of High Court Judge was likely to give him an opportunity to serve his Alma Mater."

Nonetheless, it is not improbable that the Government too had an ulterior motive in choosing him as a judge. For, to my mind, it was not merely the recognition of his superb legal acumen—his ability to go at once to the heart of the case—and his recognized eminence of diverse kinds, but also of the indispensability of having a man of his calibre to head the University of Calcutta as future Vice-Chancellor. "Finally I may mention," as the Home Member, Mr. (later Sir) R. H. Risley had parenthetically said in an important letter, "it is an advantage for the Vice-Chancellor to be a judge of the High Court since the political faction in the Senate is composed mainly of pleaders and they are more amenable to a judge before whom they have to appear in Court than an executive official."

The official mind is a calculating mind and, perhaps, less innocent than appears at first sight. It was undeniably an important consideration that nobody else could fill as adequately as Asutosh Mookerjee the vacancy created by the retirement of Sir Alexander Pedler. In fact, the latter appeared to have anticipated the appointment.

CHAPTER VI

A HIGH COURT JUDGE

ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE became a Judge of the Calcutta High Court in 1904 and retired in 1923, officiating for a few months as Chief Justice of Bengal in 1920. He was also Knighted in 1911.

His judgments, which number more than two thousand, cover almost every aspect of law and his weighty pronouncements have been recognized everywhere, including the Privy Council. Referring to his judgments, Dawson Miller, Chief Justice of the Patna High Court, declared that "they had only to be quoted to command universal respect."

His profound knowledge of history and sociology lay at the root of his judgments. No wonder, therefore, that he has been called a "historical and sociological jurist." He looked upon law as constantly evolving and his pronouncements were accordingly tempered by this dynamic view of society. "Law is coeval with society. It has adapted itself, notwithstanding all the imperfections of its mode of development through the ages, to all the complications of modern life," he told the Banaras students in 1923.

Nor was this all. He also wanted legal studies, especially for Indian students, to be so broad-based as to embrace all branches of written law with a bearing on the Indian situation, including the American, because of the U.S.A.'s industrial and commercial importance. He made his views quite clear when he told the Banaras law students that an Indian pursuing legal studies must *ipso facto* be encyclopaedic in his outlook, so as to include not only a study of Hindu and Muhammedan law and "the legislative output of the Indian legislature", but also of the development of laws in England, particularly of the principles of English law and other laws which have affected our own legislative efforts.

To him, as he put it, "Law is essentially a science of principles." In so far as a lawyer can apply this precept in practice, in the light of man's social evolution, he is a good lawyer. It requires on his part "that highest kind of integrity—the integrity of scholarship." He had this quality in full measure. Hence his renown as the greatest of judges in modern India.

His view of law, furthermore, related to its effect on a country's growth. Quoting, in a justly famous speech in August 1923, he observed, "Edmund Burke traced the intractable spirit of the American colonists to the growth of their system of education which included an extensive study of law."

"The study of law makes man acute, inquisitive, dexterous, prompt in attack, ready in defence, full of resources," he had added. This remark is particularly apposite in our own case, for the part that lawyers have played and are still playing in India has been invaluable.

Finally, this section can be fittingly brought to an end by a quotation from Dr. N. K. Sinha. "Dr. Asutosh Mookerjee's judgments", he says, "were masterly expositions of law on every subject with which he dealt. His stand against executive high-handedness also deserves to be noticed, as also his insistence that there must be procedural justice, particularly in State prosecutions. He was in the fullest sense a learned judge and the atmosphere of the High Court in those days was conducive to judicial learning."

CHAPTER VII

THE CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY

THE retirement of Sir Alexander Pedler, Vice-Chancellor, was impending. The question of finding a successor to him at the Calcutta University was therefore a matter of some urgency. The fact that the Home Member of the Government of India, H. H. Risley, recommended the name of Asutosh Mookerjee to become the next incumbent for the post demonstrated, if nothing else, the standing that he enjoyed in official circles.

"Sir A. Pedler", Risley wrote in this connection, "will leave India about the end of March. It is necessary to consider the question of appointing his successor. I have no hesitation in saying that the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Mookerjee is marked out by his scientific attainments, his long connection with the University and the work he has done for it and by his official position as conspicuously qualified for the post of Vice-Chancellor. Dr. Mookerjee was appointed a Fellow of the University in January 1889 and has been a member of the Syndicate for more than 16 years. During that time he attended every meeting of the Syndicate, except one, and meetings of the Senate and the faculties of Arts and Law. For the last eleven years, he has been President of the Board of Studies in Mathematics and he conducted the highest examinations in mathematics and Law since 1887. He represented the University on the Bengal Council from 1889 to 1903 and was Additional Member of the Viceroy's Council as representing Bengal from 1903-1909. He has served on the Indian Universities Commission in 1902 as the local member for Bengal and when the University was reconstituted in 1909, he was appointed in the three faculties of Arts, Science and Law. During the last years, the Senate has been occupied with the important task of preparing regulations under Section 25 of the Act and for this purpose has been divided into

a number of committees on all of which, except one, Dr. Mookerjee is now serving. Owing to this and his remarkable knowledge of the enormous mass of minutes passed by the University since its establishment, he is better acquainted with the internal working of the University than anyone, not excepting the present Vice-Chancellor, who has been generally dependent on Dr. Mookerjee's advice in conducting discussions in the various committees. Dr. Mookerjee had a brilliant academic career, his chief distinctions being the Premchand Roychand studentship, the degree of Doctor of Law and the Tagore Law Professorship. In this special subject, Pure Mathematics, he has a European reputation and the results of his original researches have been embodied in his name in standard Cambridge text books.

"The appointment of a distinguished Indian as Vice-Chancellor would undoubtedly be popular and would tend in some degree to discourage the idea that the sole purpose of the Universities Act was to tighten official control over the universities. But apart from this it is essential while the complicated process of framing regulations is going forward that the Vice-Chancellor should be one who has a thorough knowledge of the past history of the University and of the intricate discussions which have taken place regarding the regulations during the last year. No one else possesses this knowledge and I can think of no one who is competent to carry out the difficult task of framing a compact and consistent body of university regulations. I believe that Dr. Mookerjee can be trusted to carry out the policy of Government in university affairs. In a confidential statement made by him before the Universities' Commission, he strongly condemned the systematic lowering of standards to which Sir Henry Cotton (not a University man himself) lent the support of his influence. And when I was on the Syndicate with Dr. Mookerjee ten years ago, he was always on the side of sound education. Finally, I may mention that it is an advantage for the Vice-Chancellor to be a judge of the High Court since the political faction of the Senate is composed mainly of pleaders and they are more amenable to a judge before whom they have to appear in Court than an executive official."

Two years after his appointment as a judge of the Calcutta High Court, that is in March 1906, Asutosh Mookerjee was appointed Vice-Chancellor of his Alma Mater, the fostering mother, thus fulfilling his ambition to serve it and the cause of higher education in Bengal. The supreme desire that he had always cherished and worked for was at last realized.

For eight years (1906-1914), he continued to hold the post of Vice-Chancellor. Thereafter, an interregnum followed, partly owing to constant friction with the authorities, and partly owing to his pre-occupations elsewhere.

In 1921, the University of Calcutta came under the jurisdiction of the Government of Bengal. The Governor of the province, Lord Ronaldshay (later Marquis of Zetland) thus became the first Chancellor of the University.

Like Lord Minto (a former Viceroy), Lord Ronaldshay entertained genuine admiration for Dr. Asutosh Mookerjee and he promptly reappointed him Vice-Chancellor. In announcing his appointment at the Convocation on March 29, 1921, he had said, "No one surely is better qualified so to mould the future of your university as to make it a national university in the best and truest sense of the word."

But the honeymoon did not long endure, for when Lord Lytton succeeded Ronaldshay, he offered to make Asutosh Mookerjee Vice-Chancellor once more but conditionally, and sent him an offensive letter. Dr. Mookerjee naturally spurned the offer with the contempt that it deserved.

But it must at the same time be said to the credit of Lord Lytton that he did make amends for his gratuitous insults to Dr. Mookerjee at the memorial meeting held at the Calcutta University over which, as Chancellor, he presided. "We have assembled under the shadow of a great disaster, we stand here in the presence of death, and with bowed heads and heavy hearts we come to mourn the loss of our University's greatest son... Sir Asutosh Mookerjee was the most striking and representative Bengali of his time ... The University of Calcutta, as it stands today, bears the indelible impress of 35 years of devoted labour.

What the University is today is the result of Sir Asutosh's work.... The Post-graduate Department of this university was the outstanding product of Sir Asutosh's great career.... For many years, Sir Asutosh was in fact the University and the University Sir Asutosh."

CHAPTER VIII

LEGISLATIVE AND MUNICIPAL WORK

ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE'S association with the University of Calcutta began early in life and he acquired detailed knowledge of University affairs.

No wonder, at the age of 25, he was nominated a Fellow of the University and in the same year was elected to the Senate and the Syndicate. He was indeed, so assiduous in his attendance of the Senate and Syndicate that it evoked the testimony of no less a person than the Home Member of the Government of India, (later Sir) H. H. Risley.

By sending him to the Bengal Legislative Council in 1899, the University of Calcutta was doing no more than honouring one of its most distinguished and loyal members. He was re-elected by the Calcutta University in 1901. In 1903, it sent him again to the Council, although this time he had to fight successfully in a triangular contest with Surendranath Bannerjea and the Maharaja of Darbhanga.

In 1894, he was nominated to the Calcutta Corporation, both for his legislative ability and, presumably, also to mollify him for his lack of success with the Municipal, or so-called Mackenzie Bill at the Bengal Legislative Council.

Asutosh Mookerjee was by no means an inactive member of the Bengal Council. Together with Surendranath Bannerjea, he opposed the Mackenzie Bill, clause by clause, for its undemocratic and inequitable character. The whole purpose of the municipal legislation, as was Lord Curzon's wont, was first to officialize the Calcutta Municipality as also to give European commercial interests predominance over it to the detriment of the Indian rate-payers who were after all the major element in the situation. In short, the new Bill was a complete negation of municipal self-government.

Thus, although the European commercial interests won for the time, Surendranath had at least the satisfaction of seeing the wrong undone when he became the Minister of Local Self-Government in the reformed Legislature.

Asutosh Mookerjee's other activity largely related to education with financial implications. He thus fought the cause of teachers over the differentiation in pay between the educational and judicial and executive services and sometimes even in the same service. "I trust that an endeavour will be made to raise the status of the officers of the education department, especially in the provincial and subordinate services," he had said.

He had also levelled his criticism at the distinction between Superior and Provincial services. Thus, for instance, an Indian educated in India may be as distinguished as an Indian educated in England, but when it came to payment, the latter was placed in the Superior and the former in the Provincial service. "You place them both perhaps in the same college". Dr. Mookerjee argued, "The work you set them to do is precisely of the same character; only when you come to the question of remuneration you pay one just twice as much as you pay the other. It is an anomaly which, I confess, I am not acute enough to justify." Finally, he vigorously protested against the Government policy of reducing the number and value of scholarships. "This declaration", he said, "is inconsistent with the avowed policy to encourage education, especially among the students of ability and distinction but of limited means."

In 1902, he was appointed a local member of the University Commission which made him anxious to go to the Imperial Council, for he foresaw that the Universities Act with a view to officializing them would soon be passed.

In fact, his active opposition to the Universities Act of 1904 was fully justified by his election to the Imperial Council in 1903 by the non-official members of the Bengal Council.

G. K. Gokhale bore with him the brunt of opposition to the Universities Act of 1904, leading to its subsequent transformation.

The importance of the part played in the Imperial Council by Asutosh Mookerjee is evident from the remarks of Lord Curzon, the Viceroy. "The honourable member", he declared, "was only the other day elected to the Council. No sooner did this news reach us there than we at once placed him upon the Select Committee of the bill though we knew it must add considerably to the length and contentiousness of the proceedings but so anxious were we to give full scope to reasonable and competent criticism that we at once took advantage of his services. We do not want time-servers and sycophants."

The transitory provisions inserted in Section 12 of the Act, it was said, were due "in the main to the ingenuity of a learned judge of the High Court of Calcutta, a member of this Council a year ago, a member of the Select Committee that was responsible for turning the Bill into its present shape and one of the most consistent allies of Mr. Gokhale."

The other important subject that occupied his mind in the Imperial Legislative Council was military expenditure. He vehemently opposed the policy of unfair apportioning of annual military charges between India and England. "The whole question was", he said, "whether the initial annual charge of £ 220,000 and the ultimate annual charge of £ 786,000 rendered necessary by the decision of His Majesty's Government to raise the pay of the British Army could be rightly charged to the revenues of India."

In the Municipality of Calcutta, he did not play the same part as in the Bengal Council, although while he was there he always tried to uphold the interests of the rate-payer. The long closing of roads, owing to repairs and drainage works, and the damage to buildings owing to sewer and other works in a metropolitan city might be cited as instances.

CHAPTER IX

HIS VISION OF AN INDIAN UNIVERSITY

THE transformation of the University of Calcutta into a modern university in the truest sense was Asutosh Mookerjee's unique contribution to the cause of higher education in this country. Accordingly, he set a pattern for all Indian universities, thus largely realizing his vision of an Indian university.

Teaching and research in double harness lay at the root of this vision. His life-long effort was to bring to a final end the static conception which had dominated university education up to the time he had actively undertaken the reorganization of the University of Calcutta.

He had been much impressed by the German system of university education which was based on the two-way traffic of "give and take", *i.e.,* on the conception that university education should advance learning which could be done best by harnessing teaching to research. Teaching, in other words, should not only impart pre-digested knowledge, but actively ensure its progress and advance by constant research. This is done in most Western universities, above all in Germany.

It is not fortuitous therefore that "the advancement of learning" has become the motto of the University of Calcutta.

The University was primarily "a great human factory", so had said Lord Lytton, the Chancellor of the Calcutta University, "and I am anxious to see that it supplies the commodity which is most required." This succinctly represented the official view and it is not difficult to fathom the reason for this assertion.

In glaring contrast to this narrow conception, Asutosh Mookerjee had explicitly outlined his vision of university education in his Convocation Address in March, 1922.* "To my mind", he had said, "the University is a great store-house of learning, a great bureau of standards,

*See Appendix A for Convocation Address of Asutosh Mookerjee delivered on March 18, 1922.

a great workshop of knowledge, a great laboratory for the training as well of men of thought as that of men of action. The University is thus the instrument of the State for the conservation of knowledge, for the discovery of knowledge, for the applications of knowledge, and above all, for the creation of knowledge-makers."

Apart from everything else, the real source of the static, if not sterile conception—implicit in Lord Lytton's definition of a university—was to be traced back to the model on which the University of Calcutta was founded. It was the University of London which supplied the prototype. It was an examining body, so was *ipso facto* Calcutta.

Hence no reform in India was possible until the London University itself had changed in order to come closer to the modern conception of university education elsewhere in Europe. Fortunately, London had already begun to think in modern terms and thus made teaching one of its more important functions.

Thanks to this background and Asutosh Mookerjee's presence in the Select Committee, the Universities Act of 1904 had become permissive in scope and thus heralded a change in India, too.

Gopal Krishna Gokhale had cast serious doubts on this new development and foresaw its failure for want of funds, but for Asutosh Mookerjee this was the thin end of the wedge, as subsequent developments showed.

"Our universities," he had said in 1913, "have done more teaching, even teaching of a high type but the teaching has not matured that particular precious fruit which university teaching in the West bears in such increasing abundance. The Indian universities have contributed exceedingly little towards the advance and increase of knowledge. They have acted as faithful guardians of the sacred flame but they have done nothing to make it burn brighter and higher."

Lord Curzon had thrown down a challenge and the gauntlet had been taken up by Indians, so that Asutosh Mookerjee was able to gather about 50 lakhs of rupees from the magnificent gifts made by his countrymen, above all Sir Tarak Nath Palit and Sir Rashbehari Ghosh, two distinguished lawyers of the Calcutta High Court.

Post-graduate teaching in Calcutta was under way earlier but it reached its culmination only in 1917.

Readerships had already been in existence before and many distinguished scholars from the West and the East had lectured in Calcutta. Now, the task was to institute permanent professorships in the various post-graduate departments, to be headed by distinguished Indians.

In 1909, the opening of the University Law College, with a magnificent library, marked an important stage in the expansion of teaching in the University.

Asutosh Mookerjee had said "that law was neither a trade nor a solemn jugglery but a living science in the proper sense of the word." This supplied the key to the principle underlying teaching and research at this College.

As an eminent lawyer himself, Asutosh Mookerjee had a soft corner for the Law College and had in mind the Harvard Law School as its model.

The College has already produced not only a galaxy of eminent lawyers, but can boast of renowned teachers who had attained countrywide fame later. For example, the first President of India, Rajendra Prasad, himself an alumnus of the Calcutta University, was a teacher here, while Bijan Kumar Mukherjee and Sudhi Ranjan Das had both taught here, each becoming the Chief Justice of India.

Asutosh Mookerjee took keen interest in its teaching, his participation in the moot courts being a feature of the students' training.

Thanks mainly to the munificence of Tarak Nath Palit and Rashbehari Ghosh, the University College of Science and Technology was opened in 1912. "I trust," Asutosh Mookerjee had said on the day of its inauguration, "I may be allowed to deal without impropriety on the gratifying circumstance that of the six Professors, fully one-half come from provinces other than Bengal. We are proud, indeed, to have on our teaching body those distinguished representatives of Madras, Bombay and the United Provinces. No greater testimony is needed to emphasise the cosmopolitan character of science, and I

fervently hope that although the College of Science is an integral component part of the University of Calcutta, it will be regarded not as a provincial but an all-India College of Science to which students will flock from every corner of the Indian empire, attracted by the excellence of the instruction imparted and the facilities provided for research."

This is how C. V. Raman, a comparatively unknown figure then, came from the Finance Department of the Government of India to become the Palit Professor of Physics at the University College of Science.

In this connection, what Raman, not yet a Professor, said at the Science Convention held in Calcutta in 1917 will be found interesting.

"The introduction of the new regulations," he said as President of Physics, Mathematical Section, "which came into force in Calcutta University in 1909, laid the foundations for much subsequent progress. These regulations generally strengthened mathematical teaching in the university and the study of physics was considerably stiffened by the greater insistence upon laboratory equipment and practical work.

"Readership lectures were delivered by Dr. A. Schuster and Dr. G. T. Walker. Opportunity was also given to local men to show their capacity. Lectures on optical theories delivered by Dr. D. N. Mullick, which have since been published in book form by the Cambridge University Press, have been formally reviewed by *Nature*."

"The successful fruition of the object of the donors," he added, "was, however, delayed and hampered by a combination of unfortunate circumstances. The most serious cause of the delay was the absence of that support from Government which alone could have made possible the steady construction and equipment of a first class physical laboratory for research. Such assistance could surely have been looked for. Further causes of delay were the lawsuit on the Palit estate which made permanency of the endowment a matter for the decision of the law courts and the attitude of the Member for Education (Sir Harcourt Butler) who declined to permit my joining the Palit chair until I resigned my permanent appointment in the face of this uncertainty. In

fact it was not possible for me formally to join my duties in the university until July 1917."

"..... An organisation for original research has been firmly established in Calcutta. In support of this statement I give a history of 25 papers showing the work done by the schools during the last three years."

Another climacteric event was the recognition given to the Indian languages, especially Bengali, as part of the graduate work, and their final inclusion in post-graduate studies.

At the Convocation held on December 26, 1913, on the occasion of the conferring of the degree of Doctor of Literature on Rabindranath Tagore in recognition of his services to Bengali literature and on his reception of the award of the Nobel Prize for literature conferred on him, Asutosh Mookerjee had the following to say. "Mr. Rabindranath Tagore is our national poet, who, in our pride and satisfaction, is at the present moment not only the most prominent figure in the field of Bengali literature, but also occupies a place in the foremost rank amongst the living poets of the world.... Apart however from the prominence of Mr. Rabindranath Tagore as a poet, we must not overlook the true significance of the world-wide recognition now accorded for the first time to the writings of an author who has embodied the best products of his genius in an Indian vernacular; this recognition, indeed, has been immediately preceded by a remarkable revolution .....in academic circles of the true position of the vernacular as a subject of study by the students of our University. It is now nearly twenty-three years ago that a young and inexperienced Member of the Senate earnestly pleaded that a competent knowledge of the vernaculars should be a pre-requisite for admission to a Degree in the Faculty of Arts in this University. The Senators complimented the novice on his eloquence and admired his boldness, but doubted his wisdom; and by an overwhelming majority rejected his proposal, on what now seems to be a truly astonishing ground that Indian vernaculars did not deserve a serious study by Indian students who had entered an Indian University. Fifteen years later, the young Senator, then

grown maturer, repeated his effort, with equally disastrous results. In the year following, he was however more fortunate and persuaded the government of Lord Minto that every student of this University should, while still an undergraduate, acquire a competent knowledge of his vernaculars and that his proficiency in this respect should be tested precisely in the same manner as in the case of any other branch of knowledge and should be treated as an essential factor of success in his academic career. After the struggle of a quarter of a century the elementary truth was thus recognised that if the Indian University are ever to be indissolubly assimilated with our national life, they must ungrudgingly accord due recognition to the irresistible claims of the Indian vernaculars. The far-reaching effect of the doctrine thus formulated and accepted began to manifest itself but time alone can prove conclusively the beneficial results of this vital and fundamental change. Meanwhile, the young Senator of twenty-three years ago has the privilege to ask your Excellency to confer the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Literature and thus to set, as it were, the seal of academic recognition upon the pre-eminently gifted son of Bengal ...."

In opening the Asutosh Institute of Languages in Calcutta in 1964, Dr. Radhakrishnan, himself a former Professor of Philosophy of the Calcutta University, paid a tribute to the vision of Asutosh Mookerjee for introducing an M.A. degree in all Indian languages and literature and also for insisting that an M.A. degree in Bengali would require an acquisition of proficiency of another modern Indian language and literature, such as Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, Tamil, Telugu, Oriya or Urdu. He was particularly struck by the significance of this innovation. "Genius anticipates experience," he said at the time.

In 1917, the Government of India had at last given the green signal and post-graduate teaching in Arts and Science was thus inaugurated. Asutosh Mookerjee himself became the President of both the Arts and Science Councils.

With special endownments, Government grants and University funds, permanent professorships in different subjects were founded. In this fashion came into being the post-graduate departments of the Calcutta

University; in partial fulfilment, at any rate, of the dream of Asutosh Mookerjee.

In 1906, when he first became its Vice-Chancellor, there was only one professorship in the University, but by 1924 the number had grown to twenty-five. Moreover, there were well-nigh hundred lectureships in different subjects of study in Arts and Science.

A fitting ending to the present chapter would be to quote in this connection, the Convocation Address of its Chancellor, Lord Ronaldshay in 1921. "Surely," he said, among other things, "you must be proud of the splendid attempt which is being made here to render to Indian civilization and culture the homage which is its due. Teaching of the highest order, along with research work by Indian scholars of repute, is being carried on in a number of branches in higher Sanskrit which in themselves cover a wide field of ancient Indian learning, in Pali, which embraces the far-reaching field of Buddhistic studies, in Islamic studies including Theology, Literature, Rhetoric, Poetics, Grammer and Philosophy, in science, in Indian vernaculars and in the elaborate course devoted to ancient Indian History and Culture. Surely the gratitude and support of every Indian, who truly loves his country, is due to the man who has done so much for Indian learning. The man is himself an Indian among Indians, Sir Asutosh Mookerjee."

CHAPTER X

AT ODDS WITH THE GOVERNMENT

THE difference of opinion between a superbly forceful personality and the Government of India took a long time to come to a climax. It was not so much the people at the top as with lesser individuals that Asutosh Mookerjee found himself at variance.

The man who took the lead was Henry Sharp who, at one time, was Director of Public Instruction in Eastern Bengal and Assam under the notorious Bamfylde Fuller, the Lieutenant-Governor of the newly created province. His supreme ambition seems to have been to over-rule the Calcutta leaders.

Henry Sharp was schooled by him and when he came to the Education Department in Delhi as Secretary, he began immediately to goad Asutosh Mookerjee, not realizing the stature of the man with whom he was dealing.

The trouble first started over the appointments of Mr. Rasul and Mr. Jayaswal, the distinguished Indologist, and others.

In Henry Sharp's note of 1915, the following words occur : "Can Rasul by any chance be our friend the Congresswala ? This for M.A. teaching is decidedly *Kutcha.* The Vice-Chancellor constantly speaks of things being settled before the Chancellor has approved. The way in which the European professors are thrown into the background is characteristic.

"Rasul, I learn, is the agitator, Abdul Rasul, who is used by Surendranath Bannerjea. Kashi Prasad Jayaswal appears to be a most objectionable person, who was connected with Bipin Chandra Pal and V. D. Savarkar in England and who has recently been in Egypt and hobnobbing with the nationalists there. One wonders what sort of history lectures these gentlemen will give."

Similar notes followed from others, but Sir Harcourt Butler, Member for Education, was more subtle and supported these *sub rosa.*

The appointments of Mr. Rasul, Dr. Suhrawardy and Mr. Jayaswal were vetoed by the Government of India.

In his letter to the Education Secretary, Asutosh Mookerjee wrote, "Mr. Rasul was the only available man for International Law. He had specialised in it for his B C.L. course in Oxford. Dr. Suhrawardy is highly competent to teach Arabic from the standpoint of the Western scholar. Mr. Jayaswal for Ancient Indian History, specially Buddhist India."

Henry Sharp's final move was to try and deprive the University of Calcutta of all financial assistance, while the Government of India continued to talk of "the wonderful ingratitude displayed by the Calcutta University" and "the arrogant and overbearing attitude taken up by Sir Asutosh Mookerjee."

A note written by Henry Sharp pleaded that the University should be deprived "of financial assistance till it has been brought to some measure of reform...."

This state of affairs continued until Sir Sankaran Nair became, towards the middle of 1915, the Member for Education in the Governor-General's Executive Council.

In 1921, the Calcutta University was transferred to the jurisdiction of the Government of Bengal and *ipso facto,* the Governor of the province, Lord Ronaldshay, became its Chancellor. His admiration for Asutosh Mookerjee was well known, but the scene changed when on the former's retirement Lord Lytton followed as Governor.

The notorious letter Lord Lytton wrote to Asutosh Mookerjee and the latter's reply to him deserves to be quoted in part, at any rate, in order to realize the great man's personality as well as to appreciate his firm adherence, irrespective of personal consequences, to the supreme need for freedom in university affairs which he had upheld throughout his career as an educationist.

On March 24, 1923, Lord Lytton wrote to Asutosh Mookerjee :

"The continuance of the course you have followed during the last few months would entirely preclude your re-appointment. Hitherto you have given me no help; you have on the contrary used every

expedient to oppose us. Your criticism has been destructive. You have misrepresented our objects and motives and instead of coming to me as your friend and Chancellor with helpful suggestions for the improvement of our Bill, you have inspired articles in the Press to discredit the Government. You have appealed to Sir Michael Sadler, to the Government of India, and to the Government of Assam to oppose the Bill. All this has been the action not of a fellow-worker anxious to improve the conditions of co-operation between the Government and the University, but of an opponent of the maintenance of any connection between the two. I should not complain of this if you declared yourself an open antagonist and said to me frankly : 'In the interest of the University I am obliged to oppose your policy and cannot co-operate with you.' But in that case, you cannot, you could not expect the Government to retain you as a colleague and ask you to continue as Vice-Chancellor.

"I invite you at this time when the Vice-Chancellor's office must be filled anew—a time which is also of momentous consequences to the University—to assure me that you will change an attitude of opposition to one of whole-hearted assistance, for in our co-operation lies the only chance of securing public funds for the University without impairing academic freedom. If you do this, you will work with us as a colleague and trust to your power of persuasion to have what you consider the defects of our Bill amended, if you can give an assurance that you will not work against the Government or will seek the aid of other agencies to defeat our Bill, then I am prepared to seek the concurrence of my Minister to your reappointment as Vice-Chancellor, and if you cannot conscientiously do this you must make yourself free to oppose me by ceasing to be Vice-Chancellor."

In reply, Asutosh Mookerjee wrote :

"You complain that I have hitherto given you no help. I maintain I have constantly offered you my help and advice which, for reasons best known to you alone, you have not accepted.

"Again you do not hesitate to assert that I have inspired articles in the Press to discredit your Government. This is a libel and I challenge you to produce evidence in support of your unfounded allegation.

"You complain that my criticisms have been destructive of the provisions of the Bills (*i.e.*, those dealing with the reform of the University and the creation of a Board of Secondary Education) which appeared to me and to my colleagues of the Senate, to be most objectionable, framed, as we did not hesitate to record, from a political and not an educational standpoint. You seem to regret that our criticisms have not been constructive but you have never cared to invite the University to frame a constructive scheme for the benefit of your Government. I have, on more than one occasion, as you will no doubt recollect, offered to draw up a Bill with the assistance of my colleagues in the Senate and representatives of your Government but I have received no response. I have written to you letter after letter—even in the midst of terrible sorrows—commenting in detail on the provisions of the Bills. You have never cared to reply to the criticisms thus expressed. On the other hand, although I find from your letter, dated 11th January, 1923, that you were convinced that the proposed amendments were, as predicted by me, impossible of accomplishment in your amending Bill, I discovered much to my surprise a few days later that you were determined to push on the amending Bill and send it up to the Government of India for sanction. Again, the Report of the Committee on the two Bills (which we took great pains to prepare) minutely criticised their clauses and challanged the ideal that lay beneath them. You have never recorded our opinion or our views. You have not even given me an opportunity to discuss the report with you....

"I notice that you charge me with having misrepresented your objects and motives. I must emphatically repudiate the charge..... If you have the courage to publish to the world all the documents on the subject and the entire correspondence which has passed between us, I shall cheerfully accept the judgment of an impartial public.

"I shall finally consider your offer to re-appoint me as Vice-Chancellor subject to a variety of conditions. There are expressions in your letter which imply that I am an applicant for the post and I am in expectation of re-appointment. Let me assure you that if you and

your Minister are under such an impression, you are entirely mistaken. You ask me to give you a pledge that I shall exchange an attitude of opposition for one of whole-hearted assistance. You are not apparently acquainted with the traditions of high office which I have held for ten years.... Let me assure you that this high tradition was not created by me. It was my privilege to work as a member of the Syndicate with eight successive Vice-Chancellors during a period of seventeen years before I was called upon to accept that post, and most, if not all of them, were eminent men imbued with the traditions of the office from the time of their predecessors. Many of them have been men who had taken oath to administer justice in the name of their sovereign. To them, it would have been a matter of astonishment to be told that as Vice-Chancellors they were expected to adapt themselves to the views of the Government simply because it was the Government which had the appointment in its gift. I have, I maintain, scrupulously adhered to the cherished traditions of my high office and it has never entered into my mind during the last two years that I was seriously expected to adapt myself to the wishes of your Government... I have not in the remotest degree tried to please you or your Minister. But I claim that I have acted throughout in the best interests of the University... and that I have uniformly tried to save your Government from the pursuit of a radically wrong course though my advice has not been heeded.... It may not be impossible for you to secure the services of a subservient Vice-Chancellor, prepared always to carry out the mandates of your Government and to act as a spy on the Senate. He may enjoy the confidence of your Government but he will not certainly enjoy the confidence of the Senate and the public of Bengal....

"I send you without hesitation the only answer which an honourable man can send—an answer which you and your advisers expect and desire. I decline the insulting offer you have made to me."

CHAPTER XI

THE SADLER COMMISSION

THE Calcutta University Commission was appointed by the Government of India in September 1917. Its President was Sir Michael Sadler, the distinguished educationist and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leeds. The other members were Dr. J. W. Gregory, Prof. Ramsay Muir, Mr. (later Sir) P. J. Hartog, Dr. (later Sir) Ziauddin Ahmed, the Hon'ble Mr. W. W. Hornell and the Hon'ble Sir Asutosh Mookerjee.

The most controversial member among these was undoubtedly Asutosh Mookerjee, for attempts were made by the members of the Education Department of the Government of India to the very last to keep him out of the Commission. Indeed, it was realized by all concerned that their real purposes would thus be foiled and that in view of his incomparable knowledge of University affairs, Asutosh Mookerjee would ultimately dominate the situation.

All the animosity of the Government of India towards the Calcutta University, in fact, was primarily political and not educational. The educational argument, in other words, was a mere facade, the real purpose being the denigration of Asutosh Mookerjee and secondarily the University over which he presided.

Sir Harcourt Butler, the Education Member of the Government of India, in a revealing note of October, 1915, wrote : "The question is as much political as educational. The Bengalis of Calcutta are simply itching for a peg to hang their agitation on. The Bengal Government can hardly be relied upon for constant support. Mr. Lyon and Mr. Hornell cannot agree. Sir A. Mookerjee is an angry man who still has great influence in the University and hates the Government of India very cordially. With Sir Asutosh Mookerjee all powerful, we could have no enquiry into the University which will come to anything.

The Bengal Government suggested that Sir Asutosh Mookerjee should be on the Committee. We have removed some of Sir Asutosh's men from the Senate. The policy is bearing fruit."

Sir Harcourt was obviously crowing too soon, for Sir Michael and Sir Asutosh were in perfect accord from the beginning and the work of the University Commission went forward as smoothly as could be expected. Indeed, it was able to issue the final Report in five volumes in 1919; it has been described "as a monument of academic wisdom."

Sir Michael was at one with Sir Asutosh on most points. In any case, the latter did not write a note of dissent, for he believed in his persuasive powers and in his conviction that the Report's defects—and they were many—could be removed by convincing arguments. What he wanted, above all, was to get things done and that too as quickly as possible. "He has aimed," Lord Carmichael had observed in 1914, "at getting something done and getting something done quickly. I have talked with Sir Asutosh about University development and he has told me more than once that if he could set up his ideal and work for it, it might be very different from the ideal which has been set up for him and for which he has had to work."

Early on, it was realized that the terms of reference for the Calcutta University Commission could not be confined to Calcutta alone, but they must embrace all Indian universities. Hence it soon became a Universities Commission, so that all Indian universities have benefited, more or less, by the Calcutta University Commission Report.

But the introduction of the communal principle was unquestionably its most serious defeat. The Dacca University, for instance, was founded in 1921 to give effect to this principle.

An alien Government has a long memory and the inauguration of the Dacca University was partly the fulfilment of the Government of India's long crusade against Sir Asutosh and the Calcutta University.

This was the origin of the notorious "flanking movement at Dacca and the realisation of the Dacca scheme must form part of the movement in Calcutta," as Sir Harcourt Butler had gleefully expressed himself in a note of October 4, 1915.

It is not the occasion to discuss the Report in detail, except to say, as the late A. N. Basu has pointed out, that the Sadler Commission Report was broadly patterned on the Haldane Committee Report on the University of London, covering secondary, collegiate and university education.

It was recognized from the outset that no worthwhile university education was possible until secondary education had been radically reformed, for it really made or marred collegiate and university education, not excluding post-graduate teaching, on whose necessity both Sir Michael and Sir Asutosh were in complete sympathy, indeed, agreement.

Sir Asutosh was thus vindicated in his main ideas, such as the reform of secondary education, the proper staffing and inspection of colleges, the academic and administrative freedom of the University, and, last but not least, the need for expanding post-graduate teaching.

CHAPTER XII

BOYCOTT OF EDUCATION

AS the word "boycott" indicates, the movement is of Irish inspiration, to be precise, based on the Sinn Fein model.

After the partition of Bengal in 1905, the movement for self-reliance in education swept the whole province and as a result national schools were started to replace the Government ones, although they soon petered out for want of funds as well as for their intrinsic qualitative deficiency. The only national institution, the Jadavpur Engineering College, survived and has now become a full-fledged university.

Rabindranath Tagore, who took an active part in the new educational movement, had pleaded that it should be a real educational movement and not an ill-disguised camouflage for politics which neither made the people adequately self-reliant nor served any real educational purpose. Indeed, as I wrote in 1962 in my book, *Social Thinking of Rabindranath Tagore,* "The fact that the Jadavpur Engineering College (now a fully-constituted university) is the only institution which has survived from the 'partition' days is an illustration of the soundness of the poet's contention that in the struggle for existence only those educational institutions, which were of some service to the people, could stand the test. This does not mean that Tagore took a merely utilitarian view of education. On the contrary, that the main purpose of education should be the development of personality, but education, which neither developed personality nor made the individual adequately self-reliant, was bound to give way to one which did. The national school movement in the early years of the century thus failed, because its primary motivation was political and not educational. It arose chiefly as a protest against the existing system of government in the country and only remotely against the inadequacies of the education in vogue. The poet, of course, raised his voice of warning at the

time against this misdirection of energy, against the confusion of aims, but it was, not unexpectedly, drowned in the noisy demonstration of patriotic fervour." He, in the words of Sir Michael Sadler, "feared and hated anarchy," but that was only a part of the story. There was first the question of fifty thousand boys coming out of schools, while that of many thousands of others interrupting their career in mid-stream in the colleges was no less serious. This proved fatal to the boys who had deserted their "books for the loudspeaker".

Asutosh Mookerjee could not but look upon this wastage of energy with unmitigated concern, indeed "horror".

But the problem, which affected him directly, was the future of the post-graduate department, on the successful planning and completion of which he had devoted so much of his time and energy. As the University was so ineluctably dependent on fees of different kinds, he was hard put to it to face the financial insolvency of the University with equanimity.

For Asutosh Mookerjee, the problem of university education was not theoretical but very real—all his life's hopes and ambitions were slipping through his fingers.

In this connection, I can do no better than to quote a famous speech at the climax of the non-co-operation movement, that he made from the steps of the Senate House of the Calcutta University.

"You want a Swadeshi (national) university. Is not Calcutta University your national university? The Senate and the Syndicate are in the hands of the Bengalis. It is fostered by the donations of the sons of Bengal. Everyone is in national dress. There is no foreign influence here. Should you insult this noble patriotism, this generous sacrifice?"

CHAPTER XIII

EXTRACTS FROM SOME NOTABLE SPEECHES

BY virtue of his educational pre-eminence, Asutosh Mookerjee was in constant demand all over the country. Apart from the Universities, where his counsel was eagerly sought, cultural and scientific conferences of all sorts drew upon his vast knowledge and wisdom.

The Western model was what he advocated for learning and research in this country. In these matters he was completely above the parochial approach and ever ready to accept all that was valuable in the West.

In the first Convocation address at the University of Mysore in October, 1918, for instance, he had said : "We cannot sit on the lovely snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas in contemplation of our glorious past.... we cannot waste our precious time and strength in defence of theories and systems which, however valuable in their own days, have been swept away by the irresistible avalanche of world-wide changes .... we can live neither in nor by our defeated past and if we would live in the conquering future, we must dedicate our whole strength to shape its course.... Let us raise an emphatic protest against all suicidal policy of isolation and stagnation."

In 1919, speaking at the Science Convention*, held in Calcutta, over which he presided, what he had said went to the heart of the matter. His speech was in conformity with his life-long conviction that freedom was the soul of both academic excellence and fruitful scientific research. ".... what our workers needed," he had observed then, "was sympathy of the right kind which was helpful and did not tend to degenerate into a patronising attitude on the one hand or to meddlesome interference on the other."

"The root of the matter," he had said in January 1924, in his

*See Appendix B for Address delivered by Asutosh Mookerjee on the occasion of the First Science Congress on January 15, 1914.

address at the Convocation at Lucknow, "that though things which have universal human value are the things of most importance to education, the universal can be fully apprehended where it lives in concrete embodiments. Consequently, while we recognise and appropriate all that is wholesome in the West, we are equally concerned with the conservation and development of the organs of our own national culture and civilisation." This needed saying in order to understand the true position of Asutosh Mookerjee in cultural matters. He believed in the acceptance of Western cultural values, but not at the cost of his own where they were truly significant and complementary. His Mysore address might otherwise be mis-conceived.

The wide sweep of mind and range of interest of Asutosh Mookerjee should be better known in the country. He was equally at home in many fields and spoke on diverse topics with the authority of a master.

His address on historical research in March 1924 at Government House, Patna, under the presidency of Sir Henry Wheeler, Governor of Bihar and Orissa, at the Annual Meeting of the Bihar and Orissa Historical Society, although quoted fragmentarily, might come as a surprise to many, but there was no mistaking the authentic touch. He had said :

"I notice further that you have published a portion of the invaluable journals of Francis Buchanan from the precious originals in the India Office Library, and I trust, I may be permitted to throw out a suggestion for another undertaking on a similar line. It would be in the fitness of things if your Society could publish a complete edition of all the contributions of that modest scholar, Principal John Watson McCrindle, who devoted his life in this very place to the study of action and reaction of Greece and India, the two nations of antiquity which attained the pinnacle of greatness in the domain of intellect. His works, carefully edited and brought up-to-date in the light of modern research, would be welcomed by scholars, and their publication would not, I feel convinced, be financially impossible.

"I cannot conclude my observations without some reference to the discovery of Sanskrit manuscripts by Mr. Jayaswal, who, for once, here united the functions of an antiquarian and a jurist.

"The discovery of the manuscripts reminded me of the rich treasures that lie hidden in your province, a veritable treasure house of literary relics of the past. In the Puri District alone, at least two hundred thousand palm-leaf manuscripts are reported to exist, while Tirhoot abounds in large collection of manuscripts as well in libraries of the great nobles as in the humble abodes of Pandits. A systematic survey should be organised and a thorough search for these manuscripts carried out before priceless treasures are destroyed by the ravages of time.

"We rejoice to think, however, that in the domain of Moslem learning, at any rate, the task of preservation has already been taken well in hand by the far-sighted wisdom and munificent liberality of a private citizen, my revered friend, the late Mr. Khuda Buksh, whose life-long passion was to acquire and store varieties of manuscripts with tact and vigilance, regardless of considerations of health and money. I can still recall the thrill of pleasure I felt on the occasion of my first visit, years ago, to the Khuda Buksh Library, where you find a unique and invaluable collection of materials sufficient to occupy many generations of workers..... What a splendid catalogue, each a scholar's joy, a collector's pride.... In Law, too, the Library can win an easy first. It is the proud possessor of Abu Hazin's work in jurisprudence—a work of which no other copy exists elsewhere.

"Equally conspicuous is the collection in science. Nor is the collection of medical works less distinguished. Zahravis' work on surgery, if published, would doubtless rob Europe of many a boasted invention of surgical instruments....

"Nor shall I omit one subject which has always attracted me—the history of Muslim politics and administration. Flügel first dealt with the subject, but so far as I am aware, since then it has been neglected. Only recently Prof. Metz has thrown a flood of light on it, but neither Flügel nor Metz is accessible to those who know no German. Disciples of Plato and Aristotle, the Muslim thinkers were the forerunners of Hobbes and Locke and other European publicists of later times.

"I trust you will not misunderstand my insistence on your

co-operation to promote Islamic learning by all means legitimate in your power. Consider for a moment the magnificent achievement of the British and Continental universities in this direction.

"Moslems at one time held aloft the torch of learning. Did they not collect, translate, study and elucidate the works of Greeks, Persians and Hindus? Does not their historian, Masudi, speak with exulting pride of their passion for studies and their devotion to letters? They need surely no other example but their own to urge them on to their sacred but, alas, forsaken duty."

CHAPTER XIV

POLITICS PLAYS A MINOR ROLE

ALTHOUGH Asutosh Mookerjee was eminently suited by his intellectual stature, courage and restless energy to take up politics, as was the wont in his time, he gave wide berth to it, much to the surprise of many. The reason for this avoidance was, perhaps, not so strange as it might appear. It was probably simply a matter of temperament. For he believed in building up the country step by step, so that the intermediate steps were just as important as the ultimate ones to him, devoted to education as he was.

"So long as we are under foreign rule our avowal of the ultimate object is suicidal," he said. "What the country wanted was practical problems to work at, demanding immediate application. This was the only cure for an imagination fired by wild projects," he had added in his letter to Sir Michael Sadler.

I have already said that his distaste for politics was probably a function of his mental make-up. This is quite evident from his attitude to education. It is all of a piece. With Gopal Krishna Gokhale, he was convinced that Western education, often qualitatively deficient, was to be preferred to indefinitely waiting for the *summum bonnum*.

"I think," Gokhale had once said, "and this is a matter of the deepest conviction with me that in the present circumstances of India all Western education is valuable and useful. Even if it is not the highest it is on that account not be neglected.... Western education in the present day is not so much the encouragement of learning as the liberation of the Indian mind from the thraldom of old world ideas and assimilation of what is best in the life and thought and character of the West. For this purpose, not only the highest but all Western education is useful."

Asutosh Mookerjee himself was deeply immersed in Western knowledge and culture. He, therefore, held similar views as Gokhale, and

was fully conscious of the seminal contribution of the West to Indian education. And his policy of the widest possible dissemination of Western, *i.e.*, English, education among the people was determined accordingly.

That he was eminently successful in this effort has been endorsed by no less a body than the Sadler Commission. "In recent years recruits have begun to come," it noted, "to the University in increasing numbers even from the cultivating classes.... through the normal routine of high school and colleges leading to the degree. This is the recognised pathway to government employment or to success in the legal profession. It is the one chance of escape from the social barriers imposed by the system of caste. The adoption of academic ambitions by even a small portion of the cultivating classes is an event of great moment in the social history of Bengal. It may be the herald of a social revolution."

It is clear from the above, why Asutosh avoided politics. Indeed, the one solitary instance of his involvement in politics—if it can be called politics—was the leading part he took in a protest march against the incarceration of Surendranath Bannerjea in the celebrated 'Contempt' case.

Consequently, it can be surmised that if Asutosh Mookerjee ever took an active part in politics, it could only have been liberal politics in which reason played a dominant role. By education, training and experience, he would have been a misfit in any other. Hence his closeness to G. K. Gokhale. It may well be added, however, that in a likely contingency, his political role would also have been a constructive one which his massive intelligence and superb administrative ability fully warranted. It is, therefore, not for nothing that Sir Michael Sadler had said after his passing that the world had lost in him "one of its commanding personalities who could have ruled an empire." He could indeed!

CHAPTER XV

SPECULATION ON FUTURE POLITICAL ACTIVITY

WHEN, thanks to Lord Lytton's ineptitude, Asutosh Mookerjee's career as Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University came to a sudden end, he must have thought seriously of assuming a political role. His mounting disillusionment with the powers that be had, indeed, been driving him to the inescapable conclusion that without political power at his command, all his work for university education was destined to come to nought. For, in the last resort, it was the power of the purse that was the determining factor—which meant a decisive voice at the seat of political power.

The dilemma for many had been resolved by their frank choice of politics. The overwhelming importance that it enjoyed in our social life was, therefore, comprehensible. The avoidance of politics might have been justified on temperamental or educational grounds, but not on the ground of necessity.

But with Asutosh Mookerjee, this conviction came only towards the end of his career. In a free country, his educational mission and endeavour would probably have found unfettered scope and he could have achieved everything that he had set his heart upon. But in a country under alien domination and with an unsympathetic bureaucracy, all his efforts could end only in ashes.

At the same time, it should be added that the boycott of or non-co-operation in the educational field was no substitute for politics. It was, in fact, a policy of cutting one's nose to spite one's face. In a dependent country, what was required, above all, was more not less education.

The fact remains, however, that out of frustration, Asutosh Mookerjee became finally persuaded to change his tactics. Madhusudan Das, the great Orissa leader and his former private tutor, was the first to

press him to exchange the rough and tumble of politics for the peaceful seclusion of education. Many others had tried to do the same for their own different reasons. Sir Michael Sadler, for instance, had written to him to ask for his political leadership and guidance.

Thus although it was generally recognized that his entry into politics was the supreme need of the hour in the national interest, what brought the matter to a head was the tactless letter of Lord Lytton to which reference has already been made. A joint concerted effort on the part of C. R. Das and Asutosh Mookerjee thus suddenly came with the range of possibility.

In this connection, the biographer of C. R. Das, P. C. Ray, in his *Life and Times of C. R. Das* has written, "This time Sir Asutosh Mookerjee and Chitta Ranjan Das were concerting a joint measure to paralyse all sinister attempts to rob the University of Calcutta of its academic freedom.

"Strengthened by the moral support of Sir Asutosh and by his undertaking that on retirement from the Bench he would come and work for the Swarajya Party," the prospects of C. R. Das, the leader of the new party, brightened considerably. The promise was definite enough, but the more important thing was the potentiality of the formidable combination that it implied.

For one thing, the political picture of India would unquestionably have undergone a qualitative change, nor is it difficult to surmise that the second partition of Bengal or the partition of India for that matter could have been avoided. As I stated in my *Indian Independence in Perspective,* the great blunder committed at that time was to seek the solution of communalism on an all-India basis instead of seeking a local remedy. Indeed, C. R. Das had always advocated the latter course. And Asutosh Mookerjee, because of his legal training and high standing among Hindus and Muslims in Bengal in particular, would undoubtedly have seen eye to eye with C. R. Das.

On his retirement from the Bench on December 31, 1923, Asutosh Mookerjee had gone to Patna in connection with the Dumrao Raj case, but had died suddenly on May 25, 1924. Within a year, on

June 16, 1925, C. R. Das too succumbed in Darjeeling. These two deaths, coming so close together, were an unparalleled disaster for the future of India, their joint political action thus remaining an unfulfilled dream—a tragic might-have-been of history.

CHAPTER XVI

SUMMING-UP

IT was, I believe, Chapman, of the Imperial Library of Calcutta, who thought that representative Bengalis belonged to the stocky as opposed to the reedy type, the implication being that such men required stout bodies to support their massive minds. Clearly, he had Asutosh Mookerjee in mind when he wrote the Cambridge essay and his description certainly fitted him, but whether it was generally applicable or not was another matter.

Asutosh Mookerjee was profoundly proud of his Brahmanical ancestry and had received the full inheritance of India's culture and civilization. Like a Brahman of old, he was simple in his habits, rose early, preferred a hard to a soft bed, was not ashamed to reveal his bare body or his sacred thread, and outside office hours was always inclined to slip back into a *dhoti* and a short coat in which he felt more comfortable.

He was a wonderful epitome of the combination of Indian and European cultures. In this matter, he was in line with the outstanding Bengalis produced by the Bengal Renaissance of the 19th century. They were equally at home with their own culture and all the best that the West could offer. To the great tragedy of India, he was probably one of the last few of that surviving line.

Asutosh Mookerjee was undoubtedly built on a heroic mould. He was completely fearless and his courage gave him the confidence to march straight to his goal, unharried by doubts. Hence his success in whatever he undertook to do. He had, of course, his detractors who found fault with his inordinate self-confidence and blamed him for his alleged dictatorial turn of mind and conduct. But, it seems to me in retrospect, that these defects, if they can be called such, were in fact virtues in him, but for which he would scarcely have been expected to accomplish so much in his own lifetime.

Incidentally, it is important to remember that he was deeply attached to his mother and never did anything without her consent and approval. The story goes that when Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India, asked him to represent Calcutta, then the capital of the Indian empire, at the Coronation of Edward VII, undoubtedly a great personal honour to him, he pleaded his inability to go on account of his mother's objections to his crossing "the black waters". "Please go and tell your mother that the Viceroy and Governor-General of India commands you to go", said Lord Curzon. "Then I must tell the Viceroy of India on her behalf that the mother of Asutosh Mookerjee refuses to let her son be commanded by anybody but herself", came the prompt reply from Sir Asutosh. The answer was characteristic and could be expected of that wonderful old lady who certainly had a mind of her own.

Nevertheless, Asutosh Mookerjee was not socially retrogressive in the usual sense of the word. An admirer of Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, he kept an open mind on many an iniquitous social practice. Thus, with his mother's approval and braving social opposition and obloquy, he decided in 1908 to give in re-marriage his beloved daughter, Kamala, a child widow, who tragically enough also lost her second husband. The father was heart-broken, but in the circumstances, the only thing that he could do was to endow lectureships—the Kamala Lectures—to enshrine her dear memory.

His daughter pre-deceased him in 1923 and he himself died in 1924. Neither of them was therefore present at the first Kamala Lectures delivered in 1925 at the Calcutta University by the late Mrs. Annie Besant.

Asutosh Mookerjee's interest in promising intellectual workers was unbounded and his sympathy and advice were always at their disposal. In this regard, he made no distinction between an Indian and a foreigner. ".... every earnest intellectual worker," wrote Prof. Cullis in *Nature*, "however humble and however eminent would find him a wise and understanding friend and could talk to him as to a co-worker and an equal. Specialists in most diverse literary and scientific subjects

could find him familiar with the latest literature. To every band of men engaged in the quest after truth and light his help and encouragement were greatly and unselfishly given, and in the learned societies and gatherings he was a dominating figure, giving appreciation where it was due and advice where it was needed."

Anteus, of Greek mythology, it has been said, was vulnerable only when he became separated from Mother Earth. This is a symbolism of universal significance, as exemplified at present by youthful unrest all over the world. Restless and without stable values, the young today take refuge in cheap cynicism and revenge themselves in blind fury against society.

Asutosh Mookerjee was always close to the young and understood their problems. As if anticipating the coming storm, what he said nearly fifty years ago has, therefore, a contemporary ring and the essence of the message he gave to his youthful interlocuters has, perhaps, not lost its value for today. "Disregard not," he said, "all that is most sublime in Indian thought and all that is best in Indian manners and customs. Neglet not in the glare of Western light, the priceless treasures which are your inheritance. In your just admiration for all that is best in the culture of the West, do not under any circumstances, denationalize yourselves. Do not hesitate to own at all times that you are genuine Indians, and do not fail to raise above the petty vanities of dress and taste. Above all, sedulously cultivate your vernaculars, for it is through the medium of your vernaculars alone, that you can hope to reach the masses of your countrymen and communicate to them the treasures you gather from the field of Western learning."

Admittedly, this was a long-term remedy of restiveness among the young, but none that I can see that will do in the short-run. It is, in fact, a long-term problem which can be solved only with patience and foresight.

It is clear that the ultimate salvation lies in becoming 'genuine' Indians, as Asutosh Mookerjee claimed, and not in cheap imitations of the so-called modern. Imitation cannot prevail against reality.

Asutosh Mookerjee was a patriot in the highest sense of the word and he had only re-defined patriotism in his message to the young.

APPENDIX A

CONVOCATION ADDRESS DELIVERED ON MARCH 18, 1922, AT THE CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY

My first words on the present occasion must be expressive of my deep gratitude to Your Excellency for the appreciative terms in which you have referred to my association with my Alma Mater—an association which has already covered a long eventful period of more than a third of a century. But what is uppermost in my mind, at the present moment, as it is, I believe, in the mind of every member of this distinguished assembly, is our keen regret that we shall no longer enjoy the advantage of the wise and far-sighted guidance of so accomplished a scholar and an administrator as Your Excellency in the performance of our difficult task of reconstruction. At the same time, we respectfully venture to express the hope that, however exalted the sphere of your future activities, you may continue to watch with unabated sympathy and interest the evolution of this University.

It has been customary for the Vice-Chancellor, at our annual Convocation for conferment of Degrees, to avail himself of the opportunity to review the academic work of the University during the preceding session. I trust, I may claim your indulgent consideration if I depart, in some measure, from this time-honoured practice and take a wider survey of the educational problems which now arrest our attention.

It has always appeared to me to be a singular circumstance that the origin and the development of this University in successive stages should have taken place during periods of grave political excitement. We were called into existence in the year of the great Mutiny when the flames of rebellion were still unquenched, and the times might have been deemed scarcely suited to educational advancement, except by administrators remarkable for their persistent energy and generous

impulses. We were, however, created as a merely examining corporation, with the inevitable consequence that not many years had elapsed before an enthusiastic, though unsuccessful, movement was set up under the wise leadership of one of our most brilliant graduates, the late Mr. Anandamohan Bose, to approach the Government with a request that the organisation might be transformed into a Teaching University. But as has happened not infrequently in the history of institutions, what was then summarily rejected as a paradox, later became an axiomatic truth, and in 1904 when the Indian Universities Act came to be passed, it was ordained that all the Indian Universities should be deemed to have been established for the promotion of study and research, with authority to appoint Professors and Lecturers for the instruction of students and to erect, equip and maintain University libraries, laboratories and museums. This was, in any event, one redeeming feature of the constructive attempt made by our distinguished Chancellor, Lord Curzon, to effectuate the reform of the Indian Universities.

I recall with pleasure the day ever memorable to me when, now sixteen years ago, I was invited by Lord Minto to undertake what has proved to be the gigantic task of reconstruction of the University. I recall also the magnitude and intensity of the political excitement which had, at that period, penetrated into the remotest corners of the land, and added considerably to the intrinsic difficulties of educational reform under the most embarrassing circumstances. The momentum of progress was, however, irresistible, and by the time that I relinquished office after an unprecedentedly long term of eight years, foundation had been laid on a generous scale for the ultimate establishment of a great Teaching and Research University in what was once the capital of the British Empire in India. Little did I dream at the time that I might be summoned again to undertake the increasingly difficult task of reshaping my University, and this must have been the opinion of so far-sighted and sympathetic a statesman as Lord Hardinge himself, when he sent his message of regret at his absence from that academic function where he thought it would be my duty for the last time to address the Convocation as Vice-Chancellor. But man proposes and God disposes.

One of the greatest surprises of my life happened on the day when a year ago I was summoned by Your Excellency and was informed with the utmost cordiality and graciousness that both Lord Chelmsford, who was then our Chancellor, and Your Excellency yourself as our Rector, desired that I should again undertake the responsibilities of office. Refusal was impossible, yet it is needless to emphasise that I did not expect to be installed in a throne of diamonds. No one was more conscious than myself of the perils of the situation, visible and invisible, and I keenly realised that we might have to live through stormy times, specially as changes of a fundamental character had been accomplished in the field of our educational activities in the interval of seven years.

Let me remind you that in 1916, Lord Chelmsford appointed a representative committee to advise the Government of India on the best method of early consolidation of Post-Graduate studies. The Committee, over whose deliberations I was called upon to preside, included scholars and administrators of distinction, such as Professor Praphullachandra Roy, Professor Brajendranath Seal, Professor Hamilton, Principal Howells, Dr. Henry Haydon, Mr. Hornell, Mr. Anderson and Mr. Wordsworth. They unanimously presented an elaborate scheme of reconstruction. The Government of India, which then included Sir Sankaran Nair, that sturdy champion of freedom and equality in the sphere of high education, expressed their approval of the report. Lord Carmichael, then Rector of the University, added the weighty authority of his judgment and experience in favour of the recommendations. After a protracted debate, the Senate not only adopted the principle formulated in the report, but also framed Regulations with a view to carry it into immediate execution. Here it is my pleasant duty to acknowledge that Your Excellency, on assumption of the office of Rector approached the problem with an open mind, and after independent examination, arrived at the conclusion that the new system proposed to be inaugurated by the Senate was sound in principle and merited support. The result was that on the 26th June, 1917, the Government of India accorded their sanction to the Regulations for Post-Graduate Teaching in various branches of Arts and Science.

This marks a new stage, a new epoch, in the history of the foundation and development of a great Teaching and Research University in Calcutta. It is needless for me, indeed, it would be unwise for me, to recall here the bitter controversies which we had to face in the course of our strenuous struggle in taking this new step forward on the way to our coveted goal. But I desire it to be remembered that this fresh advancement was a most deliberate act on the part of the Senate of this University, undertaken after prolonged discussion, approved by two successive Rectors, and finally confirmed by the Supreme Government in the land after the most careful and searching enquiry. It would, I further venture to think, be far from right to overlook or ignore the undeniable fact that the principle of co-operation between the Colleges and the University, for the development of the highest instruction of the best intellects amongst the youth of Bengal, has received recognition from the University Commission as the true basis of a fruitful synthesis between a great Teaching and Research University and the Colleges included withits sphere of influence.

Untoward Fate, which had caused the deepest embarrassment to us when the first attempts were made to create a Teaching and Research University, however, followed us with unfaltering step and reappeared on the scene precisely at this juncture. Disasters in connection with examinations, and the creation of new Universities and other educational organisations within our jurisdiction, which restricted the territorial sphere of our activities and tended to cripple our financial resources, followed in quick succession, just when our new responsibilities, which could not be declined, were steadily on the increase. At the same time, while the greatest of wars in modern history, though happily concluded, overturned the finances of the most firmly established Governments throughout the civilised world, the introduction of new reforms in our administrative system unsettled, in this presidency at least, the calculations of the wisest of financiers. To crown all, political excitement of a formidable character saturated youthful minds at the most impressionable period of their lives, seriously affected their discipline, shook to the foundations their faith in established law and order, and like a

whirlwind swept them away from the peaceful avocations of the scholar. To shoulder the responsibility of management, at so critical a period in the life of a great University, steadily developing and expanding, was a manifestly hazardous adventure, which possibly illustrates the hypothesis that the greater the peril of the task, the more attractive the performance of the duty. But we feel encouraged by the assurance of the philosphic historian that we are about to turn, if we have not already turned, a new page in the history of civilisation. We see on all sides unmistakable signs of the pulsation of new life, of new hopes, of new aspirations, in all spheres of human activity. In this struggle for the progress of the race, India will take an honourable position, and her destiny will be brightened, only if we are able to provide in abundance education of the highest type for the children of this generation and of generations yet unborn. In the accomplishment of this noble task, the University of Calcutta, still the foremost amongst the Universities of the Indian Continent, may rightly be expected to be the leader and the path-finder. I cordially invite all citizens of this enlightened province to study with anxious care the history of the foundation of a Teaching and Research University in Calcutta, to acquaint themselves in detail with its present condition, and to form a sound and an impartial judgment as to the strength and value of its equipments as instruments of our national progress. Meanwhile, let me ask you to bear with me patiently for an instant while I refer to some of these equipments in the briefest outline and tell you what measure of success has attended our humble efforts to lay the foundations of a Teaching and Research University which may yet be the pride not only of Bengal, but of all India.

In fulfilment of the obligation imposed by the new Regulations on the University authorities to provide for Post-Graduate study and research in the Faculties of Arts and Science, they had to arrange for work in twenty distinct departments of knowledge, namely, in English, Sanskrit, Pali, Arabic, Persian, Indian Vernaculars, Comparative Philology, Mental and Moral Philosophy, History, Political Economy and Political Philosophy, Commerce, Pure Mathematics, Applied Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Physiology, Botany, Geology, Zoology,

Experimental Psychology and Anthropology. The bare enumeration of the titles of so many branches of knowledge may, perhaps, alarm even those that profess to appreciate the vital need for broad-based education amongst a people advancing with rapid strides; on the other hand, the scope of the activities of our University has appeared unduly restricted in the eyes of those who have intelligently studied the conditions prevailing in the great centres of high education in Western countries, and more particularly the astonishing developments which have there taken place in recent years. I need not dwell at length on the importance of adequate provision for instruction in each of these topics in a University designed to satisfy the needs of a progressive community. It is sufficient to say that all of them have attracted students of the best type. Criticism, however, has been directed against departments where the students are necessarily limited in number, and it has been urged almost in a spirit of complaint that it is colossal folly to provide for instruction in subjects of this character. Let me illustrate the point by reference to one branch which, I doubt not, will enlist the sympathetic support of every true Indian, I mean, the subject of Sanskrit studies. I cannot help quoting a remarkable passage from the impressive address delivered by Your Excellency at the last Annual Convocation. "Surely you must be proud of the splendid attempt which is being made here to render to Indian civilization and culture the homage which is its due. Teaching of the highest order along with research work by Indian scholars of repute is being carried on in a number of branches of higher Sanskrit, which in themselves cover a wide field of Ancient Indian Learning." This appreciation presents a strange contrast to the remarkable ignorance of the importance as also the extent and variety of Sanskrit learning which pervades, I regret to think, the minds of a certain section of Indians, who, blinded by the dazzling glamour of the West, have forgotton the noble traditions of the East. A reference to the University Regulations will satisfy the most superficial observer that in the Department of Sanskrit, provision has had to be made in as many as nine groups of subjects, namely, Literature, Vedas, Law and Science of Interpretation, Vedanta, Sankhya and Yoga, Nyaya and Vaishesik,

General Philosophy, Prakrit and Epigraphy. The truth is, as I had once occasion to remark, that the term Sanskrit, though composed only of eight letters, connotes in the domain of knowledge an empire by itself. A similar observation applies, though to a limited extent, in the department of Pali studies, which, as Your Excellency rightly observed, embrace "the far-reaching field of Buddhistic studies". Here, again, provision has had to be made for at least four groups, Literary, Philosophical, Epigraphic and Mahajanic. Nor have we ignored the claims of Islamic studies including Theology, Philosophy, Literature, Rhetoric, Poetic, Grammar and Science.

I cannot pass over in silence the arrangements made by the University for the encouragement of Tibetan studies. No other University in India affords regular facility for the study of Tibetan, although it is of the greatest importance for the reconstruction of the history of Indian civilisation during the first thousand years of the Christian era. As has been repeatedly pointed out by eminent scholars, during that period of Indian History—one of the darkest in her annals—thousands of Sanskrit books were carried away into the fastness of the Tibetan mountains by Indian Pandits and were translated into Tibetan by learned Lamas. These are still preserved in Tibet as the memorials of Indian civilisation, although the originals have completely disappeared from the country of their birth. Amongst our scholars, there have been only two, who penetrated into this region of work—the late Saratchandra Das and the late Satishchandra Vidyabhusan. It was with considerable difficulty that the University could make even an humble beginning in this sphere of study. Major Campbell, the Political Officer at Sikkim, himself a Tibetan scholar of repute, was induced to interest himself in this matter, and through his intervention, the Dalai Lama was prevailed upon to send out to our University one of the profoundest scholars of Tibet—Geshe Lobzang Targe. But after the lamentable death of Satishchandra Vidyabhusan, the Geshe returned to the land of his birth, as he could not find scholars here with whom he could carry on discussion on equal terms. We have, however, secured the services of two other Lamas of considerable attainments for the benefit of our advanced students.

Our rich collection of Tibetan block-prints and manuscripts, which includes the remnant of the valuable library of the late Saratchandra Das received as a gift from his son, has also been recently replenished by the addition of more than one hundred volumes which cover forty thousand pages and include treatises on History, Logic, Philosophy, Grammer, Medicine, Astrology, Dogma and various other branches of learning. This unique collection has secured for us by the well-known Tibetan scholar, Mr. John Van Mannen, and will make accessible for the first time many a valuable work, never before placed within the reach of modern scholars resident beyond the limits of Tibet. Closely connected with our activities in this field is the study of Chinese and Japanese, which has been placed in charge of two distinguished scholars from Japan.

Let me next pass on to the department of History. The very mention of this subject recalls to my mind the severe loss we have sustained by reason of the tragic death of Professor Jogendra Nath Dasgupta, far from his native land on foreign soil, where he had been sent as one of a distinguished band of University teachers to represent us in the Congress of the Universities of the Empire. He was intimately associated with the work of the University in various spheres of useful activity for more than thirty years, and his services will long be held in affectionate rememberance. Our department of History has to be considered in its two great sub-divisions, namely, the department of General History and the department of Ancient Indian History and Culture. In the General Department, provision has been made for intensive study, with reference to original sources, of such fascinating subjects as the History of England during the region of Queen Victoria, the History of India from the birth of the Buddha to the advent of Mohamedan invaders, the History of the Ancient East, the Constitutional History of England, the History and Principles of International Law, the History of Islam and Islamic Civilisation, the History of Bengal, political administrative, social and economic from the Battle of Plassey to the Parmanent Settlement, the History of the Rajputs from

the advent of the Mohamedans to the Treaty with the British Government, the History of the Mahrattas, the History of the Sikhs, the Economic History of England and India, the Principles of Comparative Politics, the History of the French Revolution, the principles of Indian Ethnography and Ethnology, the Modern History of China and Japan, and the Constitutional History of British India and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas. Magnificent opportunities of this description, calculated to awaken the intelligence of the present generation of students in Bengal were not within the reach of those who received their education quarter of a century ago. Well may the question be asked whether it is not desirable that the students of the present day should possess an accurate knowledge of the conditions which led to the rise, growth and decay of different sections of the Indian nation, such as the Rajputs, the Mahrattas and the Sikhs. Well may the question be put further, whether it is not desirable that students should have an intelligent appreciation of the conditions which rendered it possible for the patriotic statesmen of China and Japan to vitalise, to modernise and to reconstruct their ancient civilisations. Well may the question be put, again, whether students should not have an opportunity to study subjects like Indian Ethnology and the French Revolution, when race problems and revolutionary ideals face us in every direction.

Let me now turn for a moment to that division of History which is concerned with Ancient Indian History and Culture. It is the unique triumph of this University that it was the first, here or elsewhere, to establish a Chair devoted exclusively for the promotion of study and research in Ancient Indian History and Culture; and it was also the first seat of learning where the highest degree in the Faculty of Arts could be earned as the result of competent knowledge of the subject, which must be captivating to all truly patriotic Indians. In this department, every student is required to receive instruction in the general history of Vedic and Epic India, the political history of the Post-Epic period and the historical geography of Ancient India. In addition to these obligatory topics, every student is required to make a choice out of five divisions, which may be described as Archaeology, Social and

Constitutional History, Religious History, Mathematics and Astronomy, and Racial and Ethnographic History. Enormous are the difficulties of students and lecturers, particularly because there are so few text books on these branches; indeed, they have never received the compliment of recognition as regular subjects of study in any seat of learning. The materials in use have been collected from a variety of sources, many of them neither easily accessible, nor even systematically explored. It is my pleasant duty to mention here that through the liberality of Kumar Sarat Kumar Roy, supplemented by a generous grant from Sir John Marshall, Professor Bhandarkar and his assistants will shortly be in a position to undertake excavation work in classic Varendra land. Thus, for the first time in the history of high education in British India, has the attempt been made by our University to impart instruction to students in Indian Epigraphy, Indian Fine Arts, Indian Iconography, Indian Coinage, Indian Palaeography, Indian Architecture, Indian Economic life, Indian Social life, Indian Administration, Indian Religions, Indian Astronomy, Indian Mathematics, and Indian Race Origin. If a simllar attempt had been made in any other civilised country in regard to its ancient institutions, I doubt not the endeavour would have received not merely sympathetic consideration, but also active support and generous help from all quarters. Here, on the other hand, recognition is slow to come. But, nevertheless, we feel encouraged from time to time when eminent critics, so sagacious and impartial, as Professor Foucher, Dr. Thomas and last but not the least, Professor Sylvain Levi generously come forward publicity to recognise our efforts to wake up an interest in these neglected fields and to carry the horizon of India beyond present India, though we have not yet succeeded to bring these newly recovered domains in real contact with our traditional and classical teaching.

It is distinctly unfortunate that we should be blamed for the arrangements we have made for these very subjects which are indispensable for study and research in a truly national University. Let me turn for a moment to that great department of Indian Vernaculars which is a special feature of our University and which should constitute its

chief glory in the eyes of all patriotic and public-spirited citizens. In 1919, the University, with the sanction of the Government of India, opened its department of Indian Vernaculars. For the first time in the history of Indian Universities, it thus became possible for a person to take the highest University degree on the basis of his knowledge of his mother tongue. The fundamental principle, which lies at the root of the new Regulations, is that a student should possess a knowledge of two Vernaculars, namely a thorough knowledge of his mother tongue and a less comprehensive knowledge of a second Vernacular. The student is also required to obtain a working acquaintance with two of the languages which have formed the foundation of the Indian Vernaculars, such as Pali, Prakrit, and Persian. The languages which have already been recognised as principal languages, are Bengali, Hindi Guzrati and Oriya. The languages which have been recognised as subsidiary languages are Bengali, Assamese, Oriya, Hindi, Urdu, Maithili, Guzrati, Mahratti, Telugu, Tamil, Canarese, Malayalam, and Sinhalese. The basic languages include Pali, Prakrit and Persian. Besides these, the student has to acquire a comparative knowledge of the Philology of his Vernacular. There is no other University in India where facilities are provided for the cultivation of the Indian Vernaculars on so extensive a scale. But let me ask whether this would have been possible, unless the University had a department of Pali which included learned Sinhalese monks, a department of Sanskrit which included a Prakritist professing the Jain religion, a department of Islamic studies which included Persian scholars, a department of Comparative Philology which included a Guzrati scholar, a department of History which included a Mahratta scholar, a department of Economics which included a Telugu scholar, and a department of Anthropology which included a Tamil and Malayalam scholar. It is because the University now comprises men of high intellectual attainments in so many branches of human knowledge, it is because the University has broken through the barriers of narrow provincialism, it is because of this combination of talents recruited from all parts of India that it has become possible to open the new department of Indian Vernaculars.

The University has further organised a scheme for the preparation and publication of volumes of typical *selection in all the Indian* Vernaculars from the earliest stages of their development to modern times. About a dozen years ago, we invited Rai Bahadur Dr. Dineschandra Sen to prepare typical selctions in Bengali. Two splendid volumes were published by the University eight years ago, giving specimens of Bengali from the earliest old manuscripts as also from printed works down to the middle of the 19th century. The preparation of selections in other vernaculars, similar in scope, has been undertaken by the University, and scholars from different parts of India have gladly accepted our invitation to collaborate in the accomplishment of this great national task. The first volume of the typical selection in Oriya as also that of the selections in Hindi have been printed and published, while considerable prograss has been made in the cases of other languages. It is extremely gratifying that several men of culture have come forward to the assistance of the University. The Maharaja of Sonepur, one of the Feudatory Chiefs of Orissa, has generously contributed to the cost of publication of the Oriya selections. The Holker of Indore has expressed his readiness to associate himself with the publication of the Maharatti selections. Mr. R. D. Mehta, a distinguished citizen of Calcutta, has contributed a substantial amount towards the cost of publication of the selections from the Zendavesta, Mr. Bholanath Barooah, one of the most enlightened sons of Assam, has offered a handsome donation of Rs. 10,000 to meet the cost of publication of the Assamese selections. It also redounds to the credit of cultured men beyond the limits of Calcutta that some, at any rate, amongst them have recognised the value of the work undertaken by the University. Mr. Sanatkumar Mookerjee has presented to us a large and valuable collection of Bengali manuscripts which will furnish an extensive field for research in the domain of Indian Vernaculars. Mr. Tankanath Chaudhuri of Dinajpur is maintaining a lectureship in Maithili, while Raja Kirtyanand Singh and his co-sharers are maintaining the Baneli-Srinagar lectureship for research work in Maithili; Mr. Gopaldas Chaudhuri of

Mymensingh is maintaining a lectureship in Bengali; and the Maharaja of Sonepur has provided funds for the maintenance of a lectureship in Oriya.

But surely, the University does require liberal assistance on a far more extensive scale for these and similar activities. Do not our people appreciate the full significance of this great movement? Do they not realise what part the Indian Vernaculars must play if India is again to take her part among the great nations of the world? Are they not aware that in many departments of human thought, where India had in the past occupied a distinguished position, a determined effort has been made by narrow-minded and unsympathetic scholars to dethrone her from the position of honour? Are they not aware, for instance, that for many years past, a steady movement has been in progress to establish that Indians had no originality in the departments of Science, Mathematics and Astronomy and that the University has not only entrusted its lecturers with the task of exploration of these subjects, but had even sent out one of them at its own expense to collect manuscripts and other materials from the remotest corners of the country? Are not our people aware, again, that a desperate effort has been made to establish that Indian Art owes its origin to the Grecks and that University maintains lecturers to examine the foundations of this extraordinary hypothesis? Are they not aware that even so cautious a scholar as the late Professor Vincent Smith boldly enunciated the theory that India was not fit for self-government, because representative institutions had no existence in ancient India, and that this theory, astonishing as it was in its departure from truth, was demolished by scholars amongst others like Devadatta Bhandarkar, Kashiprasad Jayaswal, Radhakumud Mookerjee, Rameshchandra Majumdar and Narendranath Law, who have had opportunities or encouragement afforded to them by his University to carry on original research in the domain of Indian History. Blame us not if we deem it inconsistent with true national consciousness that the first and last words, the final and definitive judgments on Indian Civilisation should be pronounced in intellectual centres far beyond the limits of our motherland. Be it remembered in this connection that the attempts to modernise the

East by the importation of Western culture in our midst, to the complete supersession of our native ideals, has proved a failure. The Indian Universities have not yet been able to take root in the life of the nation, because they have been exotics. India was and is civilised. Western civilisation, however, valuable as a factor in the progress of mankind, should not supersede, much less be permitted to destroy the vital elements of our civilisation. I claim that in no other University in India has this view been realised and carried into effect as has been done in Calcutta.

It is impracticable for me within the limits of the time at my disposal to convey to you even an inadequate impression of the activities of the University in other important subjects in the Department of Letters, such as English, Philosophy, Economic and Commerce, which have roused the intellectual curiosity of many an enthusiastic student. We have utilised our splendid staff in the Department of English to deal with the subject in a comprehensive manner as well from the literary as from the linguistic standpoint. But what is of more vital importance, we have recognised the value of English as a world language, as a powerful medium for the comparative study of the most remarkable exponents of diverse types of civilisation. We have employed our brilliant staff in the Department of Philosophy to expound adequately the doctrines of the chief schools of philosophical thought, ancient, mediaeval and modern, in all their diverse phases; but what is of greater moment, we have been able, for the first time in the history of this University, to arrange for a comprehensive programme of instruction in every branch of Indian Philosophy with reference to original sources. It is undeniable that no Indian University can fully justify its existence as a true seat of national culture, unless it brings home to its students the solid contributions which were made in bygone days by Indian scholars to the solution of the eternal problems of mind and matter, of God and Man, and which, notwithstanding later developments in philosophic thought, still continue to evoke feelings of respect and admiration in every civilised centre of learning and culture. We have employed a distinguished band of teachers in the Department of

Political Economy and Political Philosophy to cover a considerable tract of the territory comprised within the ever-widening domain of economic and commercial studies. We have arranged for special courses of lectures on topics of engrossing interest to the Indian citizen and publicist, such as Famines, Co-operation, Railways, Industrial Organisation, Currency Problems, Land Systems, Village Communities, Labour Questions, Statistical Methods and Forms of Government. To these we have added during the current session courses of lectures on commercial subjects, such as Accounting, Banking and Commercial Law. Well may we ask, how many of our educated countrymen have taken the trouble to acquaint themselves with the nature and scope of what has already been accomplished by the University in the way of Economic and Commercial studies, which are of such vital importance to the progress of the nation in this transitional age, when a new earth has to be shaped anew to the needs of men. This, at any rate, is patent that not one single individual, official or non-official, has yet volunteered to promote the work of the University even in these departments of study.

Before I pass on to the domain of what are usually regarded as scientific subjects, let me invite your attention to the activities of the University in two branches which are supposed to lie on the border-land of Letters and Science. I mean, Experimental Psychology and Anthropology. It is needless to emphasise the inestimable value from a sociological standpoint, of the practical results likely to follow from the correlated study of these rapidly progressing, though apparently recondite, branches of knowledge, which have been investigated on an adequate scale only in the most advanced Universities of France, Germany, Italy and the United States. But I must press upon your attention the unquestionable importance of the work already undertaken and in part accomplished by members of these two departments. With the praiseworthy and unselfish co-operation of members of the medical profession, they are engaged in a systematic physical examination of our college students; three thousand have already been examined and the work is steadily in progress. The facts thus discovered as to the

health of the students are of the most alarming character, as will be apparent from even a superficial study of the Report already published by our Students' Welfare Committee. It may be confidently maintained that in any other country of the civilised world, work of this description, carried out by a University, would have forthwith arrested public attention and readily secured for that institution liberal assistance as well from the keepers of the public funds as from private benefactors.

Let me next describe to you in as intelligible a form as practicable the activities of the University in the direction of the organisation of scientific instruction and scientific research. We have steadily maintained two great departments of mathematical study and research, the one for Pure Mathematics, the other for Applied Mathematics, under the supervision of the respective Council of Post-Graduate Teaching. Adequate provision has been made, which has no parallel in an Indian University, for unfolding to our advanced students the mysteries of the most recondite developments in the region of higher mathematics, which are often intimately connected with the progress of the physical, chemical and biological sciences. The University College of Science and Technology thus comprehends within its scope all the exact sciences in their theoretical as well as practical aspects. But, let me frankly confess to you that the ideal which enraptured me in my student days, that my Alma Mater should afford ample opportunities of scientific study and research, is yet far removed from what may fairly be regarded as full and complete realisation. As an humble student of Science, I had not failed to realise that the chief debt of civilisation to science was not merely material comfort, but also intellectual freedom and enlightenment, for while she plants her feet on the solid ground of Nature, her head moves amongst the stars. I had not been slow to appreciate the cardinal truth that the aim of Science is to know and control Nature, not merely that man may obtain the golden touch and that all things may be made to minister to his ease, but also that he may know the Truth and that the Truth may set him free from the bondage of superstition and a slavish regard for authority. It was in the belief that Science had proclaimed intellectual emancipation and enormously enlarged the

entire field of human thought, that Dr. Mahendralal Sircar, one of the truest sons of this University, devoted the best energies of his life to the foundation of an Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science. It was in my deepest conviction that Science had unfettered the mind, enthroned reason, taught the duty and responsibility of independent thought, and brought to mankind the message of intellectual enlightenment and liberty, that I planned the foundation of a University College of Science and Technology, and approached, for fulfilment of my cherished ambition two of the noblest sons of India, Sir Taraknath Palit and Sir Rashbehari Ghosh. With a generosity which has had no parallel in the history of education in British India, they gave away their wealth, not their inherited patrimony, not money amassed by the fortunes of speculation, but the savings of life-long toil as members of the legal profession. The magnificent endowments created by them have enabled us to maintain as many as eight University Professorships—Palit Chair of Chemistry, Palit Chair of Physics, Ghosh Chair of Applied Mathematics, Ghosh Chair of Botany, Ghosh Chair of Applied Physics and Ghosh Chair of Applied Chemistry—with research students attached to each Professor. Later on, it was my good fortune to approach, on behalf of my Alma Mater, Kumar Guruprasad Singh of Khaira who placed in my hands the generous contribution of five and a half lacs of rupees for the promotion of higher studies in Letters as well as in Science. This has enabled us to maintain a Chair of Chemistry, a Chair of Physics, a Chair of Agriculture, besides a Chair of Indian Fine Arts and a Chair of Indian Linguistics and Phonetics. To these must now be added the Travelling Fellowships founded by Sir Rashbehari Ghosh for the investigation of educational methods abroad and the promotion of research in special branches of learning. We also maintain, out of our current income, a Chair in Botany and a Chair in Zoology. The University, with a restricted source of revenue and limited funds at its disposal, has nevertheless found it possible to contribute more than ten lacs of rupees out of the capital and recurring expenditure of sixteen lacs hitherto incurred in connection with the establishment and maintenance of the University College of Science and Technology. Well

may one here stop and enquire, what about the guardians of the public treasury ? We are grateful to them for permission to divert to the use of the College of Science a sum of one thousand rupees a month, which had been originally intended by them to be spent for other purposes. Beyond this, the custodians of the public funds, though repeatedly approached, have met the legitimate demands of the University with steady and persistent refusal. To me it is an unfathomable mystery that administrators in responsible positions should fail to be inspired to a sense of their paramount duty as servants of the people, even by the magnificent spectacle of self-sacrifice presented by the noble examples of Sir Taraknath Palit and Sir Rashbehari Ghosh. And yet let it not be forgotten that in the Department of Science, perhaps even more than in the Department of Letters, University teachers and students have systematically carried out original investigations of acknowledged value. We have, indeed, made the University College of Science a nursery of young men of exceptional ability—mathematicians, physicists, chemists, botanists, zoologists—whose researches have been eagerly accepted for publication by scientific societies and in scientific periodicals in the foremost seats of learning in Europe, America and Japan.

But let me emphasise that though much has already been achieved, more still remains to be accomplished, specially in the direction of expansion of what may be called industrial studies. The opportunities of modern Universities are, indeed, much more comprehensive in this respect than they have ever been before in the civilised world. Industry and education will march forward, more and more, hand in hand, for this is pre-eminently a time to awaken industry and education alike. Industry in its many-sided interests will look to education for enlightenment and support, and out of the laboratories of the University will emanate in an ever-increasing measure the influences that make for economic and industrial improvement and contribute to the betterment of human living and to the good of mankind. I have in my mind particularly the development of technological studies in the broadest sense of that expression, not merely in the University, but also in hundreds of schools in the province where the students and teachers

alike legitimately display a hopeful yearning for vocational training, unhappily not yet satisfied. One of the fundamental essentials for the success of a comprehensive scheme of this description is the abundant supply of able and willing teachers. Let me add at once that such a development of the requisite type, which the University is willing to undertake, implies immediate financial assistance on a liberal scale for laboratories, museums, workshops, their equipment and maintenance. There are ample indications that the sources of private liberality have not yet been exhausted, for only recently a generous benefactor, Mr. Prankrishna Chatterjee, offered to make over to the University valuable property near Raneegunj as a nucleus for the establishment of a University School of Mines. The expansion, if not the initiation, of a great undertaking of this nature must, however, in a large measure be dependent upon adequate grants from the public funds, and precisely the same observation applies to the technological and agricultural studies which the University is anxious to promote.

Let me assure you with all the emphasis and earnestness I can command that plans for University development, whether judged by work already accomplished or activities yet to be undertaken, have been neither casual nor accidental. They have their solid basis on the rock of a definite conception of the true function of this University in the life of the Nation. It is the duty of the University to gather from the persistent past, where there are no dead, and to embody within its walls the learning of the world in living exponents of scholarship, who shall maintain in Letters, Science and Art the standards of truth and beauty and the canons of criticism and taste. It is equally incumbent upon the University, for the living present and its persistence in the future, to enlarge the boundaries of human learning and to give powerful aid to the advancement of knowledge by the development of creative capacity in those disciplines through which men seek for truth and strive after duty. It is further incumbent on the University to convey to the community in popular, quite as much as in permanent form, the products of the highest thought on current problems of science and society, of government and public order, of knowledge and conduct.

The University can achieve this object and contribute to the welfare of the people in freedom, health and wealth, if it sends forth streams of liberally educated men and women to be leaders of public opinion and to be practitioners in all the brain-working profession of our time, from law, medicine, engineering, teaching and commerce, to architecture, agriculture, banking, journalism and public administration. A University so designed for the service of the Nation in all possible phases of its development, cannot be restricted to a narrow or chosen teaching, much less starved altogether in its activities. It cannot be treated either as a great scholastic sanctuary or as a glorified technical institute. In such a University, we cannot for instance, discard the claims of History and its interpretation as a laboratory to test all plans for political and social reforms. We cannot ignore Philosophy as a clearing house for all theories and methods of knowledge. We cannot ignore Letters as the record, in thoughts that breathe and words that burn, of all human striving after sweetness and light. We cannot ignore Art which is the flowering product of the creative imagination, ennobling and enriching the content of life. We cannot ignore Applied Science whose chief business is the development of the material resources of the world. We cannot ignore Economics whose cardinal problem is that of distribution of the wealth thus produced. Finally, we cannot ignore the Science Education in whose philosophical, psychological and physiological foundations we now seek the surest means of training the intellect and stimulating the imagination of men.

To my mind the University is a great store-house of learning, a great bureau of standards, a great workshop of knowledge, a great laboratory for the training as well of men of thought as of men of action. The University is thus the instrument of the State for the conservation of knowledge, for the discovery of knowledge, for the distribution of knowledge, for the application of knowledge, and above all, for the creation of knowledge-makers.

People of Bengal, you have at your doors, the foundations already laid of a great University, a University devoted to the advancement of Literature, Science and Art, to the promotion of Letters as the record

of the achievements of the human spirit, to the promotion of Science as the revealer of the laws and the conqueror of the forces of Nature, to the promotion of Art as the sunshine and gilding of life, but more than all this, to the investigation of the glorious past of India and the fundamental unity, amidst apparent diversity, of the varied aspects of Indian civilisation which is so deeply calculated to rouse and purify true national instinct and national pride. You have at your doors a society of scholars in whose company your children, your children's children and their children may spend formative years of their aspiring youth under the captivating influences of humane Letters and Pure and Applied Science, pursuing culture with forward-looking minds and far-seeing spirit. It is for you, People of Bengal, to determine whether you will make this University a national asset. We invite every citizen, conscious of his duty and responsiblity, unmoved by ignorant and prejudiced criticism, to come forward to be united with us in feeling, in purpose, for the realisation of our vision of duty and of service. It has ever been our ambition to bring the University in intimate touch with the Nation, because of the supreme part that it must play in the national consciousness, pointing out by its attitude towards the things of life, through the whole wide range of human intelligence, the true direction of national safety and national progress. The University should thus be alive and progressive, not a passive and inactive force in the life of the community of which it is not only a part but a participant. The University would be dead to the Nation, if it were made to stand on a height of its own, isolated from the community. On the other hand, if the activities of the University were more and more assimilated with the life of the Nation, it might then be even more determinate as a teacher, and more dominant as a leader than it has even been before.

While I emphasise this aspect of the mission of a University to new and better service of the community, let me assure you that I do not overlook a potent factor—the advent of democracy. A profound student of the history and philosophy of political institutions has observed that the weaknesses of a democracy are the opportunities of

education. I venture to think that there is food for thought in this enigmatical statement, because a democracy has its weakness as well as its strength. A great weakness in a democracy, uninformed and unenlightened, is the indifference that largely prevails to the paramount need for the broadest education of all grades amongst the people. And it is the business of the educator to recognise this weakness, to come down from his heights into the valleys, and to work in the light that has been given him for the extension of educational opportunities amongst the new democracy. That will make in the end for the salvation of his country. If we do not thus bring ourselves into intimate touch with the progress of national life, we shall have a Government of the many by the few instead of a Government by all, as is inherent in the very life of a democracy. Let us then adjust our activities so as to increase our influence as a potent instrument for fostering amongst the citizens of this land that passion for the discovery and dissemination of Truth which is the condition of all sincerity of conduct and of all advancement of knowledge. If we succeed in this our mission, the New Democracy, proud and humble, patiently pressing forward, praising her heroes of old, training her future leaders, seeking her crown in a nobler race of men and women, will proclaim her confession of faith in the beautiful words of the poet :

"Faith in the worth of the smallest fact and
the laws that govern the star-beams,
Faith in the beauty of truth and the truth of
perfect beauty,
Faith in the God, who creates the souls of men,
by knowledge and love and worship."

Tell me not that the task of such regeneration of our people through the path of education is supremely difficult of achievement, for unalterable is my faith in the lesson taught by my preceptors in the stirring words of the poet :

"If thou canst plan a noble deed,
And never flag till it succeed,

Though in the strife thy heart must bleed;
Whatever obstacles control,
Thine hour will come. Go on, true soul,
Thou'lt win the prize, thou'lt reach the goal."

I call upon you to take this as your motto, and to join with me in a fervent prayer for the well-being of our motherland in the words of the message of our great national poet, Rabindranath Tagore :

"Where the mind is without fear and the head is
held high;
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken up into
fragments by narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms
towards perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way
into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward by Thee into
ever-widening thought and action—
Into that heaven of freedom, My Father, let
my country awake !"

APPENDIX B

ADDRESS TO THE FIRST INDIAN SCIENCE CONGRESS

ON JANUARY 15, 1914

I do not use the language of mere conventional courtesy when I say that although I am deeply grateful to you for your invitation to take the Chair at this, the inaugural meeting of the Indian Science Congress, I cannot but feel that on this occasion the Chair might have been more fittingly occupied by one of the many distinguished investigators who are present in this assembly and who have devoted the best of their lives exclusively to the advancement of science. Let me assure you, however, that although I am deficient in many respects, I yield to none in an anxious desire to promote those objects for the attainment of which this Congress has been convened.

We meet in this historic building on the anniversary of a date ever memorable in the annals of research, scientific and philological, in the British Empire in the East, for it was just one hundred and thirty years ago, on the 15th of January, 1784, that the Asiatic Society was founded by Sir William Jones, one of the most gifted of the many noble sons of Britain who have devoted their lives to the cause of the advancement of knowledge amongst the people of this land. The Asiatic Society thus founded has been throughout its long career the principal source of inspiration in the organisation and advancement of scientific research of every description in the country, and it is eminently befitting that the first meeting of the Indian Science Congress should be held in the rooms of the Society and directly under its auspices. It is further fortunate that we should be able to hold the Congress simultaneously with the celebration of the centenary of the foundation of the Indian Museum, which had its origin in the activities of the members of the Asiatic Society, and which, by the invaluable work of its scientific officers in

various departments, has justly attained world-wide reputation. The times are manifestly favourable to the establishment of an Indian Science Congress, and I trust I may rely upon your indulgence, while I briefly narrate how the idea to hold such a Congress originated, took shape and was developed.

It is now more than two years ago that Professor MacMahon of the Canning College at Lucknow, and Professor Simonson of the Presidency College at Madras, brought forward a proposal for the foundation of an Indian Association for the Advancement of Science. The object and scope of the proposed Institution were stated to be similar to those of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, namely, to give a stronger impulse and a more systematic direction to scientific enquiry, to promote the intercourse of Societies and individuals interested in Science in different parts of the country, to obtain a more general attention to the objects of Pure and Applied Science and the removal of any disadvantages of a public kind which may impede its progress. This proposal was widely circulated amongst persons of culture interested in the spread and development of Science in this country and the fundamental idea, as might easily have been anticipated, met with favourable reception. The scholars approached were not slow to recognise the desirability of co-ordination of scientific work and co-operation amongst scientific workers. It is not necessary on the present occasion to attempt an exhaustive enumeration of the different branches of scientific activity in which teachers and investigators are engaged throughout this great continent. To enable us to appreciate the vast extent and varied nature of the scientific work to which they are devoted, one need recall to mind only the numerous colleges affiliated to the various Indian Universities, where the study of Mathematics, Pure and Applied, Astronomy, Physics, Chemistry and Biology is enthusiastically pursued; the excellent Institutions where branches of professional knowledge like Medicine and Engineering, whose foundations lie on a deep-rooted scientific basis, are studied; the Institutes which are maintained in a high state of efficiency by private munificence or by State grants, solely for the cultivation and advancement of Pure and Applied Science; the

Observatories where Astronomical and Meteorological investigations are regularly carried on; the various departments of the State entrusted with the special care of important branches of knowledge like Geology, Botany, Agriculture, Forestry, Sanitation, Bacteriology, Trigonometrical Survey, Marine Survey, and Archaeology; finally, our splendid Museums which have been in the past the chief centres of Zoological and Anthropological study and research. In a domain so vast in extent and diverse in character, it is obviously essential, if the fullest measure of efficiency and success is to be achieved, that the men of Science, engaged in study and instruction, whether individually or in small groups, should be brought into close association with each other; they really constitute an army of workers whose services to the State are materially impaired in strength if they are allowed always to remain scattered and isolated. The advantages of personal intercourse between scientific workers, engaged in the same field of activity or in the pursuit of allied lines of research, are too obvious to require much elaboration. The most beneficent results may be achieved by an instructive interchange of ideas between scientific men; they may, however, not only mutually communicate their ideas, they may also state the advance made in their own respective spheres of action, and indicate to each other the special departments which may be most profitably cultivated or the outstanding problems which may be attacked with the greatest utility. But personal association amongst scientific men may be pregnant with important consequences, not merely by a fruitful exchange of ideas; cultivators of Science, by periodical meetings and discussions, may bring their aims and views prominently into public notice, and may also, whenever necessary, press them upon the attention of the Government—a contingency by no means remote, for, as experience has shown, even the most enlightened Governments occasionally require to be reminded of the full extent of the paramount claims of Science upon the Public Funds. The votaries of Science may, in this manner, give to their researches a profitable direction, enable teachers and investigators to obtain an intimate acquaintance with the practical needs of the country, foster a growth of active co-operation between Europeans and Indians

in the spread of scientific education, and, what is of the greatest importance in our present condition, on the one hand, bring home to the commercial community the inestimable value of Science as an essential factor of industrial regeneration, and, on the other hand, make the landed aristocracy realise that Science enables us to solve difficult agricultural problems and thereby to revolutionise agricultural methods. In view of the various standpoints I have just briefly indicated, it was only natural that the idea, which lay at the basis of the proposal to establish an Indian Association for the Advancement of Science, should meet with ready recognition. But it was felt by many men of experience that the pressure of heavy official duties under which many investigators here carry on their scientific work, the climatic conditions which prevail in this country, and the long distances which have to be traversed, constitute practical difficulties of no mean order in the way of the immediate formation of a peripatetic association, designed to meet periodically in turn in all the different centres of scientific activity. As the result of full discussion of the situation, the view ultimately prevailed that the desired object could be attained if a Science Congress was held in the first instance in Calcutta, under the leadership of the Asiatic Society, and simultaneously with the Indian Museum Centenary Celebrations, which, under the special facilities generously afforded by the Government of India to scientific officers, was likely to be attended by a large number of distinguished scientific men. It is, I think, distinctly fortunate for the success of the movement that we have been able to secure as our Patron, His Excellency Lord Carmichael, whose devotion to the cause of scientific research is equalled only by his fame as a just and sympathetic statesman. I trust it may fairly be maintained that we have started our work under as favourable an auspices as the promoters and supporters of the movement could reasonably expect under the present conditions. Their call to scientific workers has met with generous response, as is amply indicated by the presence here of many notable investigators from all parts of the Indian Empire. We have also been favoured with a number of important papers on Chemistry, Physics, Zoology, Geology, Botany, and last but not least, the fascinating subject

of Ethnography which is too often regarded, very erroneously, as a popular and non-scientific branch of study. I now beg to accord a most cordial welcome to each and every one of our members and guests and declare this Congress open.

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