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SIR GOOROODASS BANERJEE

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SIR GOOROODASS BANERJEE Kt., M.A., D.L., PH.D.



**FOR CONSULTATION ONLY**  
**SIR GOOROODASS BANERJEE**

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BY

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TO THE HONOURABLE  
**Sir Lancelot Sanderson Kt., KC., M.A., LL.B.**  
CHIEF JUSTICE OF BENGAL,  
EX-VICE CHANCELLOR, CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY,  
THIS VOLUME IS  
WITH HIS KIND PERMISSION  
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED  
BY THE AUTHOR



## PREFACE.

Shortly after the death of Sir Gooroodass Banerjee, I received the following note from Prof. Allan Cameron, Joint Editor of the Scottish Churches College Magazine :—

“ I should be grateful if you could contribute to the next issue of our College Magazine a short sketch of the career of the late Sir Gooroodass Banerjee. I am sure it would be greatly appreciated by students and staff alike.”

I readily agreed and a portion of this life appeared in the Scottish Churches College Magazine in 1919 and 1920, but I could not complete it for the journal.

I am glad I have been able to finish my work at last. It gives me great pleasure to present to the public a brief sketch of the life and work of Sir Gooroodass Banerjee whom I loved, admired, respected and honoured as my GURU.

My object in writing this sketch is to place before my countrymen (particularly the student community of Bengal whose devoted friend Sir Gooroodass was) the example of a great man who succeeded in assimilating what was best in the cultures of the East and the West, who was ever inspired by pure and noble thoughts, whose motto of life was *Karma* (work) for the sake of *Karma* only and who cheerfully devoted his whole life to the service of his King, his Country and Humanity, He preached as he practised “*plain living*” and his life was a continuous record of “*high thinking*.” Sir Gooroodass’s example will ever shine as a beacon light to guide his countrymen to paths of right thoughts and right action. If the perusal of this book proves



helpful to the attainment of this object, the author will consider his labours amply recompensed.

My grateful thanks are due to Mr. Haran Chandra Banerjee, M.A., B.L., eldest son of the late Sir Gooroodass Banerjee, for supplying me with some valuable materials for this book and to my son, Mr. A. P. Basu, M.A., Advocate, High Court, Calcutta, for able assistnace in the preparation of this volume.

CALCUTTA,  
*15<sup>th</sup> September, 1921.*

C. L. BOSE



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# SIR GOOROODASS BANERJEE

## CHAPTER I

### FAMILY AND EARLY LIFE

A prince among men has passed away—a prince not caring for the material things of life but proud in the possession of the priceless treasures of wisdom and knowledge, both intellectual and spiritual.

Sir Gooroodass Banerjee was such a familiar figure here, there and everywhere in this city that it is hard to believe that he has left us for good. The air of this city is still heavy with the perfume of his sweet and saintly presence and we seem still to hear the music of his deep, clear and earnest voice.

In physique, Sir Gooroodass was short, thin and light from his birth, and what used to strike a person, specially a medical man, was the large size of his head as compared with his body. His high forehead and the marked frontal eminences unmistakably pointed to the highly developed character of that portion of the brain to which phrenologists ascribe the seat of intellect and ethical faculties.

In that large head of his were a pair of eyes noted for their brilliancy and keenness. The writer had occasion to deliver a lecture on "Eye"



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at a meeting of a literary society in Calcutta and with the help of lantern slides, he tried to show the characteristics of the man as depicted in his eyes. He put on the screen slides containing portraits of some notable Indians including Sir Gooroodass. In describing his eyes, the writer happened to observe that one could expect even-handed justice from a man possessed of those eyes, and justice that is tempered with mercy. Those eyes beamed with wisdom and intelligence, sympathy and kindness, self-control and determination, patience and perseverance. Revenge or any of the baser passions of life could not be present in the man who happened to be possessed of such eyes. They showed a well-balanced combination of wisdom and love of action. The opinion of the meeting certainly was that the writer was not wrong in his estimate.

Sir Gooroodass's physical frame, though thin, seemed to possess an extraordinary vitality and an uncommon stock of sound health. He seldom suffered from any serious illness in his long life except the last which carried him off. During his fifteen years' service as a Judge of the High Court, the writer is credibly informed that he was absent for a short period only on account of illness. To some people, however, his slight physical make did not appear to be consistent with the dignity of his high office as a Judge. An amusing incident has been related to the writer by an Indian Professor of the Presidency College from personal knowledge. His father was a pleader of Dinajpur and came down to Calcutta with an appeal case which was to be



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heard by Sir Gooroodass Banerjee and a junior European Judge. The late Mr. Sarada Charan Mitter was engaged as a Vakil to argue the case but the case was lost. The next day, his client who was a crude mufussil man came to the mess where the pleader was temporarily residing with his son, and observed with a wry face that the Judge was indeed a good fellow but it was the *Peshkar* (clerk of the Court) who misled the Judge and spoiled the case. When asked as to who he meant by the *Peshkar*, he exclaimed—"Why, Sir, that thin poorly-looking man who was whispering so often to the ears of the Saheb." When told that the gentleman in question was Sir Gooroodass Banerjee, the Senior Judge in the case, it took him long to believe the pleader, for the simple reason that his idea of a high personage occupying the office of the Judge of the Calcutta High Court was that he should be a fat, rounded and corpulent man and not a thin and wiry-looking person like Sir Gooroodass who, in his opinion, could not be anything better than a poor clerk.

Sir Gooroodass's activities were so many and of such varied character and the field of his labours was so extensive, that it would be impossible to mention even the many good deeds done by him in any one department within the short space at our disposal. I shall, therefore, try to confine myself chiefly to a few reminiscences and anecdotes of his life (some of them being personal communications and others obtained from reliable sources) which throw light on his character and on the rich



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qualities of his head and heart. There is much in them to inspire us with a genuine desire to make our lives sublime, and thus the rich legacy that he has left behind of a life well-spent, is a constant beacon-light to his countrymen to follow in his foot-steps.

Like many of the world's great and self-made men, Sir Gooroodass Banerjee was not born with a silver spoon in his mouth. He came from a Brahmin family, highly respectable and cultured, but of limited means. His ancestral home was in a village called Bora in the Diamond Harbour Sub-division. His grandfather, Babu Manick Chandra Banerjee, was the first of the family to come to Calcutta in search of service. Here he acquired a working knowledge in English and secured an appointment in a merchant's office. He built a simple dwelling house for the family at Narikeldanga which was afterwards enlarged and embellished by Sir Gooroodass Banerjee. Sir Gooroodass's father, Babu Ram Chandra Banerjee, was a clerk in the office of Carr, Tagore and Co., of this city but his career was cut short by early death. Born on the 26th of January 1844, the death of his father in the year 1847 not only deprived him of paternal care in the formative period of life but further embarrassed the financial position of the family and thus in early life. Sir Gooroodass had to face great difficulties in the successful prosecution of his studies.

Fortunately for himself and us, his mother was an ideal Hindu woman of the old school, simple,



SIR GOOROODASS'S MOTHER.



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austere, unostentatious, not caring for the comforts or the good things of life but content with plain living and resigned to the will of God, and possessing such strength of character and determination as not to give way to the severe calamity that befell her. She resolved to face it and get the better of it. She determined to give her son an English education on sound lines, and at the same time, to bring him up in the strictly orthodox traditions of the family. For this, she had to fight hard against adverse circumstances and had to suffer many privations. Future events have shown how correctly she had read the signs of the times and judged of the potential greatness of her son, and her wise decision and watchful care bore fruits for which her countrymen will ever remain grateful to her.

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## CHAPTER II

### SCHOOL DAYS

It is quite in the fitness of things that the first public meeting held to do honour to the memory of the deceased should have taken place in the hall of the Scottish Churches College where Sir Gooroodass Banerjee received his first school-education in the early fifties and where he afterwards worked as a teacher.

This College now regularly observes the Annual Re-union of the old and new boys in the month of February. At one of the Re-unions held just before his death, Sir Gooroodass was present and he told us of his student-days in the institution and of his brief connection with it as a lecturer in Mathematics. He addressed us standing on the very spot in the central hall where he used to sit as a student in his class and was good enough to recite a piece of English poetry—the good old story of the Spider and the Fly—which he read while he was in this school.

He did not continue long in the General Assembly's Institution. His maternal uncle, who was a man of position and means, got him admitted into the Oriental Seminary, then known as Gour Mohan Auddy's School, and this was at that time considered to be the best school in the northern part of the town. There he saw the celebrated Captain D. L. Richardson, who used to exercise



BABU PEARY CHARAN SIRCAR.



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so much influence on the minds of the "Young Bengal" of that time. His uncle wanted to keep the boy under his care, but here Sir Gooroodass's mother intervened. She did not wish that the personal influence of the mother on her son should be allowed to diminish even by temporary absence, and accordingly, Sir Gooroodass left the Oriental Seminary which was far too distant from his Narikel-danga house and entered the Hare School, then known as the Collootola Branch School, located in an old building at the north-east corner of the present Presidency College grounds. Here he read for five years, covering eight classes in that time by double and triple promotions and passing the University Entrance Examination in 1859, standing first from his school in that examination. While in the Hare School, he was the best boy of his class and invariably occupied the first position in the successive annual examinations of the school. Here he came into contact with one of the greatest teachers that Bengal has produced, the late Babu Peary Charan Sircar. The elevating and ennobling example of that great man was not lost upon young Gooroodass Banerjee. In noticing Sir Gooroodass's death, the "Englishman" in its issue of the 4th December 1918, was pleased to remark that "his life was unique and demonstrated, above everything else, that it is possible to combine plain living with high thinking and that no Indian need imbibe western manners and customs at the sacrifice of his own, even when sitting on the High Court Bench." The seeds



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of “plain living and high thinking” were first sown by his mother in the young and impressionable mind of Gooroodass Banerjee ; they were stimulated to vigorous growth by the example of the austere simple and highly intellectual life of Peary Charan Sircar. The other day, on the occasion of the unveiling of the portrait of the late Babu Peary Charan Sircar at the Hare School, Sir Gooroodass, in an eloquent tribute of affection and respect to the memory of his great teacher, feelingly referred to what he owed to him for his success in life, and to the end of his days, he religiously kept to the ideal and tried to mould his life and habits as he had seen them in his mother and his revered preceptor.

Babu Peary Charan Sircar had great faith in class exercises in every branch of study, and he insisted upon boys being given regular tasks both in the class and at home. These papers were carefully examined and the mistakes explained before the whole class, so that a boy not only knew what mistakes he had made but he also profited by the mistakes of others. This system, Sir Gooroodass told us, was also continued in the Presidency College in his day and it proved to be of great help to boys in making up their deficiency in subjects in which they were weak. The practice no doubt still obtains in some schools at the present day, but owing to the size of the classes, the good effect of the system is not fully attained. In the colleges, tutorial classes are still held, but in many of them, the students do not receive much benefit



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from them for the same reason. In the case of his sons and grandsons, Sir Gooroodass took care to see that they obtained the full benefit of the system, and amidst his multifarious calls of duty, he regularly devoted some time every day looking after the education of the children of his house as well as of his neighbours, and exercises formed a very conspicuous part of his home tuition. He often used to say that he began life as a teacher and any opportunity to follow that vocation was most agreeable and pleasing to him. Parents and guardians would do well to take note of this.

The late Babu Peary Charan Sircar was the pioneer of the Temperance movement in Bengal. He organised a Band of Hope of young men who pledged themselves to abstain from smoking and drinking. The special significance of the movement lay in the fact that drinking was then considered by young Bengal to be a proof of enlightenment, culture and moral courage, and Peary Charan Sircar tried his best and to a large extent succeeded in checking the tide of drinking in Bengali Society. The other great man who worked in the same line afterwards was the late Keshab Chandra Sen.

It may not be out of place to mention here that the boys of Bengal make their first acquaintance with the English language by reading Peary Charan Sircar's "First Book of Reading" as they do, in the case of Bengali, with the venerable Vidyasagar's Bengali primers.

Sir Gooroodass fell ill just before the Entrance Examination, and it made his teacher, Peary Charan



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Sircar, very uneasy and anxious. All his hopes in respect of the success of his school were centred in him. He visited the boy Gooroodass in his house and made all arrangements to take him to the Examination hall in a palanquin, and when the examination was over, he drew a sigh of relief and indeed he was so full of hope that he exclaimed—“How much do I owe to you, my boy!” Sir Gooroodass occupied the first place in the school in that examination.

Although a brilliant mathematician in his later student-days and the author of some well-known text-books on the subject, Sir Gooroodass Banerjee had at first some difficulty in grasping the fundamental ideas of Geometry and the Arabic or common system of Notation. How this difficulty of early years was overcome by his perseverance and industry, is well-known to all.

His handwriting, if not beautiful, was well-set, bold and clear and he generally wrote without having to make many corrections afterwards. His father's handwriting was exceptionally good but Sir Gooroodass had no chance of imitating it. He could draw very neat and correct maps; one of his school-day productions is still to be seen in his house.

Sir Gooroodass Banerjee began to learn Sanskrit at a very early age under the tuition of a learned Pundit who for some time lived in his house. While yet a boy, he made such good use of his wonderful memory that he committed to heart the celebrated Sanskrit dictionary known as the



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*Amarakosha*. This was of great help to him in acquiring a deep knowledge of Sanskrit in later life and enabled him to have such a mastery of Hindu Law. He subsequently studied Sanskrit at Berhampore under the tuition of the distinguished Bengali author, Pundit Ramgati Nyayaratna.

He retained his wonderful memory up to the last day of his life. In his case, the poet's prophecy was falsified. Pope, in his "Essay on Criticism," says,

"Where memory prevails,

The solid power of understanding fails."

But in Sir Gooroodass, we had a rare combination of memory and intelligence, and it is difficult to say which of these faculties was the most developed in him. He could cite offhand and faultlessly English, Bengali and Sanskrit passages, prose and poetry, from books which he had read in his school and college days. He was a strong advocate of the cultivation of memory, but he condemned cramming. He used to take a keen interest in the inter-collegiate recitations annually arranged by the Calcutta University Institute, in which he often acted both as selector and judge. He always advised students to practise the faculty of memory which, he said, would help them to become good writers and speakers.

In Sir Gooroodass's time, students had not to read many books, but only a limited number of the best type in each subject and these very thoroughly. He had all along been in favour of pres-



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cribing text-books for the University examinations. His idea was to place in the hands of the students in the earlier part of their University course a limited number of really good books on which they could concentrate their whole attention which otherwise is liable to be scattered, thus avoiding sacrifice of depth to superficiality. Whenever such questions came up for discussion at the meetings of the Boards of Study, the Faculties or the Senate of the Calcutta University, he expressed sympathy with proposals for the introduction of the former system of education, by prescribing text-books for the Matriculation, Intermediate and B. A. examinations.

Sir Gooroodass felt rather disappointed in the industry and application of the present generation of students. He often used to say that the students in his days never depended on cram-books or notes but they prepared their lessons without the help of these and of private tutors as well. The real pleasure of study which lies in having to find for themselves the way out of the difficulties is, he said, lost to the boys of the present day, and they fail to improve by the exercise of self-help.

From his early years, he was an ardent and devoted student of the Geeta. It is related how he was unconsciously initiated into the study of the Geeta, when he was under three years of age, by hearing his father repeat the stanzas every evening with baby Gooroodass on his lap. What



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The Bible is to the Christians, the Geeta is to the Hindus. No wonder, therefore, that Sir Gooroodass had the greatest reverence for this Hindu Scripture and he would not allow any day of his life to pass without reading some passages from it. There were few public speeches made by him in which he did not cite one or more *slokas* from the Geeta to illustrate certain points made by him, and we are told that when the last breath of life was slowly passing away, he was deeply absorbed in listening to the Geeta read to him at his asking by one of his sons. He often regretted the loss of the copy of Geeta which belonged to his father and bore his initials.

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## CHAPTER III

### SIR GOOROODASS AT COLLEGE

Many of the incidents narrated in this chapter as well as a few others to find place in my next have been taken from the short but authentic Bengali memoir published by Mr. Gourhari Sen in the *Manashi*. Not a few of these came to my knowledge direct from Sir Gooroodass himself, and Mr. Sen's notes have been of great help to me in faithfully reproducing the impressions from my memory.

Sir Gooroodass joined the first year class of the Presidency College, then located in the present Hindu School and Sanskrit College buildings, in 1860. The foundation-stone of this college at its present site was laid by Sir George Campbell, the then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, in 1872.

As in the school, so in the College, Sir Gooroodass was a very industrious, hardworking and diligent student. These qualities, combined with his superior intelligence, quick perception and an honest and intense desire to improve, secured for him the first place not only in his class but also in all the University examinations. The Calcutta University has seldom produced a more brilliant graduate or a greater man, taking all things into consideration, than Sir Gooroodass Banerjee.

Some of the distinguished men of Bengal were



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BABU NILANBAR MOOKERJEE C.I.E., M.A., B.L.



his class-fellows in the Presidency College, among whom may be mentioned Babu Nilambar Mookerjee, C.I.E., who afterwards became the Prime Minister of H. H. the Maharaja of Kashmir, Babu Kalinath Mitter, C.I.E., who is now the oldest solicitor of the Calcutta High Court and the late Mr. O. C. Mullick, the distinguished advocate and father of our respected townsmen, the Hon'ble Mr. Justice B. K. Mullick of the Patna High Court and Dr. S. K. Mullick, M.D., C.B.E.

Babu Nilambar Mookerjee was a formidable competitor of Sir Gooroodass in all the University examinations. There was always a hard race run between them, but Sir Gooroodass invariably won it, Babu Nilambar coming next.

I have already spoken of Sir Gooroodass's mother as a pious Hindu lady of the old school, unselfish, charitably disposed and impartial to a fault even in matters which vitally affected the best interests of her son. A little incident which occurred when Sir Gooroodass was preparing for the B. L. Examination illustrates this side of the character which Sir Gooroodass acquired from his mother as a precious heritage. Both he and Babu Nilambar were reading for the B. L. Examination. On the advice of some friends, Gooroodass Banerjee was keeping late hours at night in order to be able to retain his usual position in the Law Examination and to keep Nilambar from overtopping him and carrying away the gold medal. His mother having come to know of it at once remonstrated with



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him, telling him that it was not right on his part to make such tremendous efforts for the examination with the avowed object of discomfiting a fellow-student, that it was a sinful ambition, and that it was also bad for his health. She further observed that he had already won the first place in all the previous examinations and that he should not be so selfish as to think of monopolising the good things of the world for himself or to grudge Nilambar a chance to win the gold medal in that examination, and said that she would be very glad to see Nilambar coming out first and carrying off the prize. She did not stop there but actually reduced the allowance of oil for his reading lamp at night which, however, was hardly necessary for her to do in order to enforce her advice given to so dutiful a son as Gooroodass Banerjee. Gooroodass accordingly had to curtail greatly his hours of study at night before the examination, but as luck would have it, he retained his first place in the examination and obtained the gold medal, Babu Nilambar coming next to him in order of merit. Such an attitude on the part of a mother directed against what would ordinarily be thought to be the best interests of the son, for the sake of a principle, *viz., that jealousy even in study ought to be discouraged*, points forcibly to an acutely developed moral sense in the mother which it was the privilege of Sir Gooroodass to inherit and which so largely influenced all his dealings in both private and public life. To the average man, such conduct would have appeared to be not only justifiable but even



commendable, being an instance of what is known as "healthy rivalry" in student life, calling for encouragement instead of discouragement; but Sir Gooroodass's mother thought of it in a different light and it must be admitted that she judged from a higher moral stand-point.

Before Sir Gooroodass's time, there was no F. A. examination, but in its place, a Senior Scholarship examination used to be held. Some of the most distinguished educationists and public men of that time passed that examination and were called Senior Scholars. The F. A. examination was first introduced in Sir Gooroodass's time and he took advantage of it.

It might interest the University students of the present day to know the subjects and the books that used to be read in or about the time when Sir Gooroodass was a college student. In the F. A. class, selections from Addison's "Spectator," Milton's "Paradise Lost," Pope's "Essay on Criticism" and a few other books of a similar nature and standard formed the text-books in the English language and literature, while in mathematics were prescribed Todhunter's Algebra and Trigonometry, Pott's Euclid and Potter's Statics. Keightley's "History of England" was the text-book in History, and in Philosophy they had Abercrombie's "Mental and Moral Science." Part of Bacon's "Advancement of Learning" was also read, and, as regards the Bengali language and literature, selections from the Mahabharata by



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Rasiram Das were prescribed. Sanskrit was not included in the curriculum of study either for the F. A. or the B. A. course, and Science was not taught in the F. A. class in Sir Gooroodass's time.

For the B. A. course, they had English, Bengali, History, Philosophy, Mathematics and Science. But even the Presidency College in those days had no arrangement for teaching Science, and the Science-students had to go to the Medical College to read such subjects as Chemistry, Physiology etc. Sir Gooroodass was one of those who used to attend the Medical College to learn Chemistry and Physiology. He had thus an opportunity of seeing dissected human bodies and of knowing the position and appearance of the various internal organs. He was very eloquent in his praise of Dr. Macnamara's lectures in Chemistry, which, he said, were most lucid and interesting. There was an unfortunate hand-to-hand fight between the military pupils of the Medical College and the students of the Presidency College in which the late Sir Tarak Nath Palit and Mr. Satyendra Nath Tagore took part on the side of the Presidency College. The fight ended in the total discomfiture of the Presidency College boys, and, for a time, their admission into the Science classes of the Medical College was stopped. The matter was set right in Sir Gooroodass's time and the privilege was renewed.

While in the Presidency College, Sir Gooroodass came into contact with some of the distinguished teachers of the day, among whom were Professors



Howell, Sutcliffe, Saunders, Lobb, Jones, Stephenson, Rees, Hand, Peary Charan Sircar and Krishna Kamal Bhattacharjee. Lobb, Hand and Sircar used to teach English. Babu Peary Charan Sircar joined the Presidency College when Sir Gooroodass was in the second-year class and he used to look over the students' exercises in English. Sir Gooroodass had the reputation of being a good essay-writer and once he happened to write an essay on a piece of bad paper. Sir Gooroodass told us that at the time of returning the paper after examination, Babu Peary Charan observed—"The essay is good but the paper is indifferent."

Professors Rees, Stephenson and Sutcliffe used to teach Mathematics. Mr. Sutcliffe's name is well known to the old graduates of the University. He was the Principal of the College for many years and also acted as the Registrar of the Calcutta University, which two offices remained combined for a long time to come.

I have already referred to the importance attached to class-exercises in Sir Gooroodass's time. Mr. Sutcliffe used to go round the class during the exercise-hours, and, standing behind each student, note how he was progressing. He would not allow any student to sit idle in the class during the exercise-hours. If the boy could not work out the exercises for himself, Mr. Sutcliffe would ask him to copy the answers from the text-books, thus making all students employ their time usefully. This reminds me of the method employed by my



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revered teacher of Mathematics in the General Assembly's College, the late Professor Gouri Sankar De, who would make the idle and backward boys copy, in the exercise-hours, book-propositions from Euclid, which practice was of great help to them at the time of examination, as book propositions formed nearly 50 per cent. of the questions set in the University examinations in those days. Mr. Sutcliffe was very particular about the handwriting of his boys and often used to say—"A neat hand wins half the battle."

Mr. Saunders had a novel way of correcting exercises in History. He used to call half a dozen boys at a time to help him in the work. He called these boys "inspectors" and they were selected by him in turn, so that each boy had an opportunity to get the honoured position. The exercise-papers were examined by him in association with the "inspectors," so that each boy had an opportunity to go through a number of answer-papers and thus become greatly benefited by the arrangement.

Mr. Rees, Professor of Mathematics, knew his Geometry very well and used to take pride in the fact that he possessed seventeen different editions of Euclid. Most of the students had one edition only, but Sir Gooroodass was the happy possessor of seven different editions, and this shows what keen interest he took in the study of Mathematics. The Professor used sometimes to pause in the middle of his lectures on Mathematics and aroused much merriment and revived the attention of his students



## AT COLLEGE

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by quoting off-hand witty passages in English and Latin or by playing at conundrums with his boys. Sir Gooroodass has presented us with two such quotations which are self-explanatory and one of these carries with it a moral lesson :—

“ *Live, vile and evil* have the selfsame letters,  
They *live* but *vile* whom *evil* holds in fetters.”

The other was a Latin phrase which would read the same whether begun from left to right or from right to left :—

“*Otto tenet mappam madidam mappam tenet Otto,*”

Professor Cowell, a great Sanskrit scholar in his time who afterwards so worthily filled the chair of the Principal of the Sanskrit College, used to teach History in the B. A. classes. Sir Gooroodass used to speak of him with the utmost reverence and affection. He was a great scholar, a perfect gentleman and loved India and the people well. While teaching his subject, he became so deeply absorbed in it and could create such an abiding interest in it among his pupils that when his class happened to meet during the last working hour, *viz.*, 3-4 P.M., he often continued for two hours at a stretch without his pupils showing either fatigue or restlessness (a compliment which would be eagerly sought for by not a few professors of the present day). On many an occasion, Mrs. Cowell, who used to come in a gharry to take her husband away, had to wait till after 5 P.M., when the Professor could with difficulty be induced to dissolve his class. His notes and commentaries on Elphinstone's History



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of India which was then the text-book for the B. A. examination, are considered very valuable, and Sir Gooroodass was among the first batch of students who had the privilege of taking them down. Sir Gooroodass well remembered Professor Cowell's idea of good government which would not find favour with the politicians of the present day, even of the *moderate* school. In speaking about the merits of different forms of government, Professor Cowell used to say,—“The best form of government is Despotism with Akbar as your despot, but the danger is that there is Aurangzeb following.”

Sir Gooroodass was most impressed by Prof. Cowell's method of teaching Shakespeare. He had the good fortune to study “Macbeth” under the distinguished Professor. In his study, habits and sentiments, Prof. Cowell was much like a Pundit of the old school and he entertained great respect for Brahmins. The late Mahamahopadhyaya Pundit Mahesh Chandra Nyayaratna, C.I.E., was Prof. Cowell's teacher in Hindu Philosophy. At one time, Cowell was anxious that Gooroodass should go to England to finish his education. Gooroodass pointed out the many difficulties which stood in his way and suggested that his class-mate, Mr. O. C. Mullick, might go. Prof. Cowell was heard to observe—“We wish that a Brahmin should go.”

Babu Rangalal Banerjee, the first Bengali Swadeshi poet, who afterwards became a distinguished member of the Provincial Executive Service, was for a short time Sir Gooroodass's Professor in



Bengali in the Presidency College. Sir Gooroodass freely acknowledged his debt to this Professor for valuable hints which he got from him in the matter of translation from Bengali to English.

Gooroodass Banerjee passed the F.A. Examination in 1862, standing first in order of merit, Babu Nilambar occupying the second place of honour from the Sanskrit College.

Babu Krishna Kamal Bhattacharyya, the distinguished Sanskrit scholar and philosopher, used to teach Bengali in the B. A. classes. Michael Madhu Sudan Dutt's celebrated epic poem, the "Meghnadbadha" was published in the early sixties but it met with scant welcome at the hands of the reading Bengali public of the day, specially the Pundit class. The book was written in blank verse and was the first of its kind to be so written. Like all great innovations, it became at once a target for hostile criticism; and the Pundits condemned it in no measured terms and considered the departure from the time-honoured practice as an unpardonable offence on the part of the author. Such was the reception accorded, at its first appearance, to the book which was destined to occupy the first place in Bengali poetic literature and to make the name of the author immortal. But Gooroodass Banerjee was quick to appreciate the merits of the book even when he was an undergraduate, and he wrote anonymously to Dr. Duff, who was then a very influential member of the Syndicate of the Calcutta University about the great



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merits of the book, suggesting that it should be made a text-book in Bengali. Dr. Duff was so well pleased with the account of the book in the anonymous communication that he had no hesitation in proposing it to be a text-book in Bengali for the B. A. course and had his recommendation accepted by the University. Babu Krishna Kamal himself entertained a high opinion of the book and he taught it in the class with unbounded enthusiasm and great display of scholarship. He used to cite parallel passages from the works of great English and Sanskrit poets which made his exposition very interesting and attractive. Sir Gooroodass used to say that he owed his knowledge of grammar to the lucid teaching of the Bengali literature by Babu Krishna Kamal Bhattacharyya.

Sir Gooroodass passed the B. A. examination in 1864, occupying the first place of honour among the successful candidates. He stood first in Mathematics, Philosophy and Bengali, his rival Babu Nilambar securing the highest number of marks in English and History. It was always a wonder to Sir Gooroodass that he should have obtained higher marks in Bengali than Babu Nilambar whose reputation as a Sanskrit scholar was higher, and he used to say that Mr. Wenger, who was the Examiner in Bengali in his year, made an impossible thing possible.

Sir Gooroodass's knowledge of Logic was of a high order. Prof. Saunders was the teacher of the subject in the Presidency College, and Whateley's



Logic was the text-book in his time. Saunders would not leave out unread even such things as the title-page of the book and the dedication, if any, and would make every student in the class commit to memory the classifications of syllogism at one sitting. Sir Gooroodass made the best use of his knowledge of Logic in all his writings and in all debates in which he took part in after life.

Principal Ogilvie of the General Assembly's Institution was the B. A. Examiner in Philosophy in Sir Gooroodass's year, and he, with a few other examinees, went to the examiner to know the result of the examination. Dr. Ogilvie told him that he had done very well in his subject. One of the examinees who was a tall fellow, standing behind Dr. Ogilvie, made a sly attempt to find out his marks from the roll which the Professor had spread out before him. In this he was detected and the Doctor was greatly annoyed at his conduct, and Sir Gooroodass well remembered Dr. Ogilvie's remarks that he did not expect to see such childish curiosity displayed by young men who were shortly going to be the graduates of the University.

There was a curious and oppressive regulation of the University in force before Sir Gooroodass's time, *viz.*, that if a student should pass the M. A. examination just one month after passing the B. A., he would be entitled to receive, if otherwise fit, the medals and scholarships reserved for that examination, but that he could not receive any of the prizes if he passed it at the expiration of a year. Sir



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Gooroodass of course wanted to get the full benefit of the existing rule and he communicated his desire to Mr. Sutcliffe when he was in the third year class. Mr. Sutcliffe tried his best to dissuade him from attempting so difficult a task, observing, "Mind you, in attempting to grasp the shadow, you may lose the substance." It is, however, satisfactory to note that, before long, the University authorities saw the unreasonableness of the rule and the hardship entailed by it, and abolished it in the very year when Sir Gooroodass obtained his B. A. degree. He, therefore, appeared in the M. A. examination just one year after his graduation and secured the first place in Mathematics, Babu Nilambar occupying the first place in Sanskrit, both getting gold medals in their respective subjects. In that year, Raja Peary Mohan Mookerjee, C.S.I., Mr. O. C. Mullick and Mr. Blockmann (who was afterwards the Principal of the Madrasa College) obtained their M. A. degrees, Raja Peary Mohan being the first Bengali to receive the M.A. degree in Physical science.

In those days, the Entrance Examination used to be held in the Town Hall, but the Degree Examinations which claimed only a limited number of candidates were conducted in the Hindu school buildings and in the Albert College. When sitting for the M. A. Examination, Sir Gooroodass wanted to go out of the hall for a few minutes and he asked the permission of Professor Saunders who was acting as guard. Mr. Saunders observed that it



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was against the rule, but Sir Gooroodass was not to be put off so easily. He told us that he met the refusal of the Professor by quoting the following passage from Pope—

“ If, where the rules not far enough extend,  
(Since rules were made but to promote their end)  
Some lucky license answer to the full  
The intent proposed that license is a rule.”

Mr. Saunders was so pleased with the ready, reasonable and witty retort that the permission asked for was at once granted.

He obtained his M. A. degree in 1865 and passed the B. L. examination in 1866 standing first in order of merit and winning the gold medal. Some of the learned lawyers of the day were his teachers in law. In his time, a student was required to attend the first and second years' course of lectures for the B. L. examination while reading for the Degree of M. A. and Sir Gooroodass followed this course. Among his law teachers may be mentioned the names of Montriou (a man very learned in English Law), Goodeve (who was for some time the Master in Equity in the Supreme Court) and Boulnois who was a Judge in the Court of Small Causes in Calcutta and who afterwards became one of the Judges of the Chief Court, Punjab. Montriou took as his assistant the great linguist and the distinguished author of the “Vyavastha Darpan,” Babu Shyama Charan Sircar, and he was entrusted with the duty of teaching Hindu and Mahomedan Law in which Mr. Montriou had not himself special-



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ized. Babu Shyama Charan afterwards became a Law Lecturer in the Presidency College and was also appointed as Interpreter in the Calcutta High Court. Sir Chandra Madhab Ghosh was also a lecturer in Law in Sir Gooroodass's time.

Thus in 1866, one who was afterwards to become a great Judge, a great lawyer, a great educationist and above all, a great man, finished his career as a student of the Calcutta University.

In 1868, Sir Gooroodass sat for the Prem Chand Roy Chand Scholarship which was the highest honour at the disposal of the Calcutta University for award to her alumni. The late Babus Kali Charan Banerjee and Asutosh Mookerjee were the other competitors for the scholarship in that year, and Babu Asutosh Mookerjee was the fortunate and the first winner of this coveted prize. This was the first failure of Sir Gooroodass in securing the first position in an examination of the Calcutta University. No doubt he keenly felt the disappointment but he bore it with his usual patience and resignation.

An incident which occurred in 1916 and which was related by Sir Gooroodass himself to the writer showed that his failure at the Prem Chand Roy Chand examination made a deep impression on his mind. There were four candidates for the Fellowship of the Calcutta University to be returned by registered graduates in 1916 of whom two were brilliant graduates of the Calcutta University having occupied the top positions in the exami-



nations of their years. Sir Gooroodass said it was very difficult for him to choose between these two, as he had to select one only among them, his other vote he intended to give to an old able Fellow who stood for re-election. Sir Gooroodass at last decided in favour of the candidate who was a Prem Chand Roy Chand Scholar on the ground that if he would not vote for him, it might be construed that he himself having failed in that examination, he bore a grudge against a successful candidate. He passed the Honours in Law Examination in 1876 and obtained his Doctorate in Law in 1877 while practising as a Vakil of the High Court. The honorary Degree of Doctor of Philosophy was conferred on him by the Calcutta University in 1908.

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## CHAPTER IV

## SIR GOOROODASS AS A TEACHER

It is perhaps not known to many that Sir Gooroodass, while still a student preparing for the M. A. examination, acted as a Junior Professor of Mathematics in the Presidency College for a short time. He had to teach Mathematics for two hours daily and his pay was Rs. 150. The celebrated poet Nabin Chandra Sen was one of his pupils in the first year class. He used also to be a teacher of English in addition to Mathematics, and the book he read with his students was Byron's "Prisoner of Chillon."

After passing the M. A. examination in 1865, he was appointed for a short time as a Professor of Mathematics in the Presidency College. An amusing incident is associated with his appointment, which may be related here. He was advised by the Principal of the Presidency College to see the then Director of Public Instruction about this temporary vacancy. His habits had always been simple, and he used to come to the college dressed in a *dhoti* and a piece of red broad-cloth (*lal banat*), which was the usual dress of respectable Hindu Brahmins of that age in the cold weather. When he saw the Director, that gentleman from his dress took him to be a *Tol Pundit*, and in order to get rid of him at once, told him that there was



vacancy for the post of a pundit under him. When Sir Gooroodass explained to him that he was not an applicant for a Punditship, but for the vacant Professorship of Mathematics in the Presidency College, the Director felt greatly surprised and enquired what his qualifications were. After five minutes' conversation with Sir Gooroodass, the stiff and cold attitude of the Director was changed. He gave a very kind and cordial welcome to his young visitor and Sir Gooroodass got the appointment then and there.

Sir Gooroodass taught Mathematics in the First Year Class and he always expressed satisfaction in having had the privilege of counting among his pupils some of the distinguished scholars and public men of the past generation. Among these may be mentioned the names of Ramesh Chandra Dutt, Bihari Lal Gupta and Ananda Chandra Barooah, who were the flowers of the Indian Civil Service in their time and who have left behind them indelible impressions on the judicial and executive administration of the country.

As was natural with him, he used to take great interest in his subject and also in his pupils and gave them home exercises in Mathematics which he examined with great care and corrected in the presence of the class. He allowed no neglect of the task. Mr. Ramesh Chandra Dutt was a very keen student of literature and history, but showed little inclination for mathematical work. When questioned one day by Sir Gooroodass, Ramesh

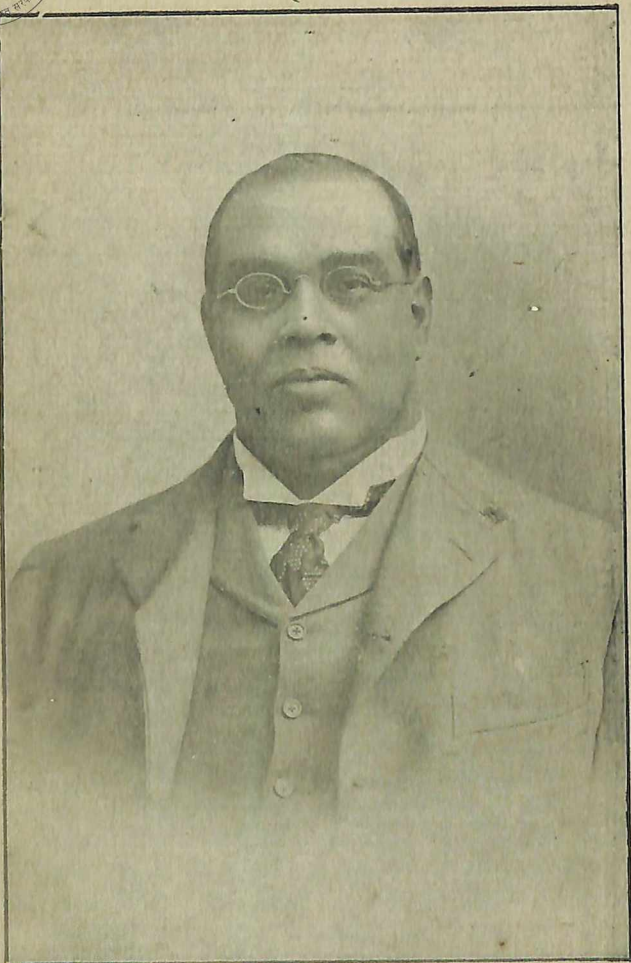


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Chandra replied that he had no special aptitude for mathematics and, therefore, the subject did not interest him. Sir Gooroodass mildly remonstrated with him, saying that for the study of the mathematics of the F. A. class, the genius of a Newton or a Laplace was not required, but a little application was all that was necessary for successfully working out the exercises. Ramesh Chandra bowed low, accepted the advice of his teacher and began to work at the neglected subject in right earnest. It is a noteworthy fact that Mr. Dutt secured the highest number of marks in Mathematics at the Indian Civil Service Examination and his examiner was the celebrated Mr. Todhunter. Sir Gooroodass used to enliven his dry subject and create an interest in it among his pupils by trying to render the truths of Geometry into English verses and citing phenomena of common knowledge in Natural History by way of illustration.

He paid great attention to *discipline* in all its various aspects. Throughout his long life, he was himself a strict observer of discipline in his thoughts, action and habits, and he was naturally most anxious to see all his pupils come under its healthy influence. When he was a Professor in the Presidency College, some of the students once left the class without his permission. He did not take any severe measure nor did he use any harsh words, but simply called the culprits before him and told them that they could have got the leave from him for the asking, and so they had



MR. RAMESH CHANDRA DUTT C.I.E., I.C.S.



no need of taking the trouble to scale the wall when the gate remained open. This simple remark had its effect.

I had the honour of being associated with him in the work of several institutions in this city which are concerned with the promotion of the best interests of the student community. While allowing young men liberty of thought and action within legitimate bounds, he set his face severely against breaches of discipline of any kind and would not rest content until matters had been put right in such a way as to make the repetition of the offence impossible. His ideal was the *brahmacharyya* as practised by the students of ancient India in their preceptors' house, about which he often used to speak in glowing terms. He held that, though the institution could not now be revived in its original form, the personal example, care and earnestness on the part of the guardians at home and teachers at school would go a great way to make its spirit permeate and work in the life of the student-community of the present day. Superfluity in dress, over-scrupulous attention to the person, indiscriminate selection of food and taking it at all hours of the day, costly and idle games which would not give much physical benefit, too much indulgence in light literature—all these he looked upon as grave breaches of discipline in student-life which, by engendering ideas of ease and selfishness, helped to impair its simplicity and purity. He never hesitated to speak out his mind in such matters and the example of his simple and disciplined life



stood him in good stead in inducing others to accept his ideal of discipline.

In 1866, he was appointed a Professor of Mathematics in the General Assembly's Institution (now the Scottish Churches College) and worked there for five months. Here he had the late Sir Pratul Chandra Chatterjee (who afterwards became a Judge of the Punjab Chief Court) as one of his pupils. His friend, class-mate and rival, Babu Nilambar Mookerjee, occupied the Chair of Philosophy in the same College at the same time.

After passing the B. L. examination in 1866, he gave up teaching work in the Scottish Churches College. He had, however, such a regard and liking for the vocation of the teacher that when a vacancy had occurred in the Patna College, and afterwards when the post of the Head Master of the Gauhati High School fell vacant (the latter post carrying a salary of Rs. 300 per month), he wanted to apply for both of them, but his mother was not agreeable to the proposal. She told him that his earnings were not then insufficient to meet the requirements of the family and he ought to remain contented with that for the time being. In those days, communication with the mufussil was not so easy as now, and it was not convenient always to take one's family to one's place of business. The Hindu mother did not wish that her only son should live so far away, deprived of the care, comforts and companionship of home. When, however, a vacancy occurred in the Berhampur College, Sir Gooroodass Banerjee approached his uncle and begged him to



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speak to his mother on his behalf and obtain her permission to his accepting the post which carried with it a salary of Rs. 300 per month with the privilege of practising in the Law courts. Ultimately the mother yielded to the importunities of her brother and her son, and gave permission to Sir Gooroodass to accept the post on condition that he would give up his appointment and come back to Calcutta as soon as he had made enough savings yielding an income of Rs. 100 per month, which she thought was quite sufficient to meet all the requirements of the family.

This was a great turning point in the life of Sir Gooroodass Banerjee. It was an auspicious moment when he accepted this appointment as it afforded him splendid opportunities to acquire that deep knowledge and wide experience in the theory and practice of Law which afterwards stood him in good stead as an eminent lawyer and as a distinguished Judge of the Calcutta High Court.

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## CHAPTER V

## SIR GOOROODASS AT BERHAMPORE

Raja Prasanna Narain Deb of Sovabazar was then the Dewan of the Nawab Nazim of Murshidabad. The salary attached to that post was Rs. 2,500 per month and, next to the Nawab, he was the most influential man in the estate. He was a friend of Sir Gooroodass's uncle and gave a very kind welcome to young Gooroodass on his arrival at Berhampur, where he remained as the guest of the Raja for some time. Sir Gooroodass was good enough to relate to us some of the interesting reminiscences of his acquaintance with the Nawab Nazim of Murshidabad and his affairs, which may not prove uninteresting to my readers.

In those days, there was a Political Agent attached to the Murshidabad Court and Mr. W. B. Buckle (a brother of the celebrated historian) held that high office at the time of Sir Gooroodass's first visit to Berhampore. One of Sir Gooroodass's distant relations, Babu Prem Chandra Mookerjee, was a clerk in the office of the Political Agent. He was a man of truth and independent character and he never failed to speak out his mind to his master whenever occasion required. Sir Gooroodass told us that once upon a time, Mr. Buckle in conversation with his clerk, expressed the opinion that the Bengalis were not a truthful people and concluded



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with the remark—"We never speak an untruth." Prem Chandra was equal to the occasion and respectfully retorted—"I doubt, Sir, whether you are speaking the truth this time." The master was much amused and pleased with the outspokenness of the man and the boldness of the remark. We have heard from Sir Gooroodass that long before Rai Sarat Chandra Das Bahadur visited Tibet, Prem Chandra had the courage and pluck to go to that almost inaccessible and practically unknown country of the great Lamas. This reflects no little credit on the adventurous spirit of this Bengali Brahmin. Prem Chandra was of great help to Sir Gooroodass in his early career at Berhampore.

Sir Gooroodass had to teach Law in the Berhampur College daily for one hour, and also Mathematics in the Fourth Year Class for the same period during three days in the week. He took great pains to make a synopsis of Stephen's Commentaries on the Laws of England for the benefit of poor students who could not afford to buy the book on account of its high price. Mr. C. H. Campbell (a brother of a former Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal) was then the Commissioner of the Division, and he and the Rev. Mr. Long, the celebrated translator of the "*Neel Darpan*," were his great friends at Berhampore and sometimes used to come to his class and listen to his lectures on the Penal Code. Mr. Campbell mentioned in very appreciative terms Sir Gooroodass's work in the College in the Annual Administration Report of the district.



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His predecessor in office, Babu Ramanath Nandi, in addition to his appointment as a Professor in the college, was the retained Legal Adviser of the Nawab Nazim of Murshidabad. Sir Gooroodass's uncle approached his friend, the Dewan, with a request to appoint his nephew to the vacant post. Raja Prasanna Narain Deb at first put it off on the ground that his nephew was too young to be able to do all that was required for the successful management of a law suit. Sir Gooroodass took the refusal in good spirit saying that no one could add to or take away a pice from what his destiny had reserved for him as his due from the Nawab's treasury. It was not long, however, before fortune smiled on him and he succeeded in securing this appointment.

The first fee that Sir Gooroodass received as a lawyer was through the patronage of his friend, Babu Matilal Banerjee, who was the first man in his profession in Berhampore when Sir Gooroodass went there. This as well as his first earnings as a Professor in the Presidency College were applied by his mother in the construction of a silver seat for the family god. Babu Matilal was of great help to Sir Gooroodass in his start in life as a lawyer, and Sir Gooroodass ever afterwards freely acknowledged his indebtedness to this gentleman for his success in life. Matilal Babu was not only a sound lawyer, but he was a man of generous instincts, strictly honest in his professional dealings and most considerate and helpful to his juniors. Sir Gooroodass told us that in a case occurring in a Mahomedan



family in respect of the right of succession, Babu Matilal was the senior pleader engaged by one of the parties and Sir Gooroodass was his junior. Sir Gooroodass, while reading his brief, brought out a point of law which had a most important bearing on the issue in the case. Babu Matilal was so much struck with the value of the discovery that he at once gave up his right as the senior man and allowed Sir Gooroodass, with the permission of the Court, to argue the case on the ground that the point was his discovery and the senior man ought not to take the credit for it. Very few senior men would act so generously as Matilal Babu did in this case.

Babu Matilal was a man of great independence of character and very keen to maintain the dignity of the Bar. Sir Gooroodass told us of an incident that took place in the Court of Mr. Grant (the son of a former Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal), who was the then Magistrate of Berhampore. Mr. Grant disallowed a question put to a witness by Babu Matilal in the course of cross-examination. Babu Matilal protested against the action of the Court which very much annoyed the Magistrate who made the following remark—"That sort of protest against the action of the Court may well become the English bar, who are educated gentlemen and who know their business, but it does not become any member of the Mufussil bar, where we have only a half-educated bar—" Before the Magistrate had finished the sentence, Babu Matilal filled it up by adding—"and a quarter-educated Bench." The whole court was taken aback by the boldness of the



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retort. The Magistrate made no further observation, but allowed Babu Matilal to go on with the case.

From the very beginning of his career as a lawyer, Sir Gooroodass was most punctilious in observing the etiquettes and rules of conduct of the profession. The acceptance of a brief in a regular suit from a party by a lawyer who had acted as the legal adviser of the opposite party in the preliminary stages of the proceedings was not generally considered to be an objectionable practice, but Sir Gooroodass thought otherwise and could not be induced to accept briefs in such cases. He was once offered a very high fee in such a case at Berhampore in the beginning of his career, but he declined to accept the brief. He was requested by the party to consult Babu Matilal Banerjee on the propriety of the practice and act according to his advice. He consulted Babu Matilal who told him that he was the best judge whether to accept the brief or not. He observed that his young friend should put the two sides of the case in the balance, *viz.*, the fat fee and its attendant conveniences on one side, and the pangs of self-reproach caused by the sacrifice of conscience at the altar of Mammon on the other side, and find out for himself which side weighed with him and act accordingly. The hint confirmed Sir Gooroodass's decision which he had long ago arrived at and he accordingly declined the tempting offer. This happened in the beginning of his career as a pleader and it is well known to all how strenuously he



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maintained this high principle ever afterwards in the practice of his profession.

I quote another incident mentioned in his admirable lecture on the "Moral Aspects of the Legal Profession," to which I shall have occasion to refer more fully later on. This shows how he discouraged those vexatious cases which the rich and the powerful often bring to harass the poor and the weak, as well as other cases which, taken by themselves, are not bad in law or on the facts, but which in their consequences are evidently fraught with mischief. Sir Gooroodass did not disclose the identity of the chief actor in the incident, but we know it was Sir Gooroodass himself.

"A practitioner in a District Court was requested by a Zamindar who understood a little of law to draw up a plaint in a suit for recovery of a large tract of alluvial land formed on the site of an estate after-diluvion and in close contact with the estate of the intending plaintiff. The Privy Council decision in the case *Lopez v. Mudan M. Thakur* had not then been passed, and according to the rulings of the High Court as they then stood, the right to alluvial land by accretion was held to prevail over the right to reformation on old site. The Zamindar was anxious to bring his suit, but the young practitioner's conscience was shocked at the idea that what was clearly formed upon the site of one man's estate should become the property of another. He could not persuade himself that the law was meant to sanction such capricious transfer of property,



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and so he advised his client to wait until the period of limitation which was about to expire, and then think over the matter again, if in the mean time the law was not interpreted differently. A short time after this, the decision in the Lopez case was out, and the client was extremely thankful to his legal adviser for having saved him the trouble, expense and disappointment of a heavy but fruitless litigation. The young lawyer may have lost a handsome fee for not advising the institution of the suit, but he was, I think, compensated, if not by having gained to some extent the confidence of his client, certainly by the inward satisfaction which he must have felt."

Sir Gooroodass had firm faith in the ultimate triumph of truth and righteousness in the affairs of human life and he believed that men following the right course do not suffer in the long run even from a worldly point of view, but receive their due reward at the hands of an ever-watchful, just and kind Providence in due time. The following incident which took place when he was a Vakil of the High Court was narrated by Sir Gooroodass himself in illustration of his deep conviction that God helps those who do their duty. He had accepted the brief in a certain case and the fee was marked Rs. 50. On the day immediately preceding that fixed for the hearing of the case, he was offered a fee of Rs. 1,500 for going to Berhampore on the next day to conduct a case there. It was after 4 P.M. when the offer came and he asked his former client if he would allow him to make arrangement for his



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case (which was a non-contentious matter) with some other brother practitioner so as to enable him to accept the brief in the Berhampore case and proceed to Berhampore on that night. The man was inexorable and would on no account agree to any such arrangement. It was too late to apply for the postponement of the case as the Judges had left the court and Sir Gooroodass told the Berhampore party that, under the circumstances, he was unable to accept their offer. The Berhampore men went away disappointed. The next morning when Sir Gooroodass came to court, the Berhampore party saw him with a telegram in which the Calcutta agent was asked to engage Sir Gooroodass on some other day, as the Judge at Berhampore had agreed to postpone the case to suit Sir Gooroodass's convenience. Sir Gooroodass had now no hesitation to accept the brief and he told the writer with great earnestness that because he stuck to the right course, he not only got the fee in the Calcutta case, but did not lose Rs. 1,500 from Berhampore, and he smilingly added that over and above these, he made a clear profit of Rs. 500 in another way out of a transaction of purchase of a plot of land at Narikeldanga. It happened in this way. The broker who was negotiating for the sale of the land, was present when Sir Gooroodass gave up the Berhampore case. As Sir Gooroodass was keen about the purchase of the land which was adjacent to his house, the broker, who was a poor man, intended to take advantage of Sir Gooroodass's goodness and had



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made a private settlement with the seller by asking him to ostensibly fix the price at Rs. 3,000, out of which the broker would get a profit of Rs. 500 without Sir Gooroodass's knowledge. But when he saw on that day that Sir Gooroodass could easily give up Rs. 1,500 offered by the Berhampore people for the sake of a principle, he felt greatly distressed at his own conduct. He made a clean breast of the whole affair to Sir Gooroodass, expressed regret at his attempt to cheat such a saintly man and completed the sale of the land at the actual price demanded by the seller, *viz.* Rs. 2,500 only. This incident made a great impression on Sir Gooroodass's mind of the advantage of always following the right course without looking forward to results of action, the latter being left to the care of a just and kind Providence.

Sir Gooroodass had set in earnest to learn Urdu before he started practice as a lawyer. This was a great help to him in reading and understanding for himself documents and papers in original coming from his Mahomedan clients.

In the early part of his practice at Berhampore, Sir Gooroodass was more in demand on the criminal than on the civil side of the court, and an incident happened which greatly helped to establish his reputation as a criminal lawyer. There was a rich Zamindar in Murshidabad, who died leaving a widow, a son and a daughter. Before death, he had made a *benami* transfer of the whole of his property to his wife. The daughter was subsequently married to a poor man who came to live in the



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house of the mother-in-law as one of her dependants. The mother-in-law died. Some friends of the son-in-law then advised him that as the whole of the property stood in the name of his mother-in-law, his wife, according to the Hindu Law of succession, was the rightful heir and he should fight it out in the court of law against his brother-in-law who was then in possession of the property after his mother's death. It was, however, not convenient and proper to institute a law-suit against his brother-in-law while his wife was living under his roof and protection. He, therefore, wanted to remove her under the advice of his friends from her brother's house, when the latter objected. There was a riot in which the police who were helping the son-in-law got the worse at the hands of the young Zamindar's retainers. The Government took up the matter, prosecuted the Zamindar and engaged Sir Gooroodass as the pleader for prosecution at a fee of Rs. 50 per day. It seemed as if the whole of the Berhampore Bar, except Sir Gooroodass, was engaged by the Zamindar who took up the plea that he was quite justified in opposing the police on the ground of self-defence. Sir Gooroodass insisted upon the right of the husband to take his wife under his own protection to which none could object, and he told us that he cited a Sanskrit passage from *Sakuntala* dwelling on the undesirability of a married daughter permanently residing in her father's house and the social stigma attached to such conduct. The passage is quoted here :—



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“सतौमपि ज्ञातिकुलेकसंशया

जनोऽन्यथा भर्तृमतीं विशङ्कते ।

अतः समीपे परित्येत्तुरिष्यते

प्रियाऽप्रिया वा प्रमदा स्वन्मुभिः ॥

“ Even if a woman is virtuous, the mere fact of her residing continuously in her father's house, leads people to suspect her character. Therefore it is very desirable that she should go and live with her husband in his own house.”

Sir Gooroodass informed us that the impropriety indicated in the classical passage had a great effect on the Magistrate's mind and he convicted the Zamindar and sentenced him to 3 days' simple imprisonment.

This case produced a great sensation at Berhampore and the fact that Sir Gooroodass, in spite of the opposition of the whole Bar, won the case, secured for him a very wide reputation as a criminal lawyer. But Sir Gooroodass himself never claimed any personal credit for the success in the case, but attributed it, as he used to do in all affairs of life, to a combination of favourable circumstances which man, insignificant as he is, has little power to change.

During his residence at Berhampore, the Nawab Nazim wanted his legal advice in a very important case, which Sir Gooroodass gave after a careful examination of all the documents and papers. The distinguished advocate of the High Court, Mr. R. V. Doyne, was also consulted in the matter



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and Sir Gooroodass's opinion was forwarded to him. He fully agreed with the view taken by Sir Gooroodass and the Nawab, acting on the advice, was spared the loss of no less than Rs. 20,000. The Nawab Nazim was so pleased with the result that he made Sir Gooroodass a present of a costly watch and chain which have been preserved in the family as a valuable memento, coming as they did from a great historical house which once ruled the destinies of Bengal.

Sir Gooroodass told us that the Nawab Nazim of Murshidabad was a very social man, pleasant in conversation, extremely courteous and with a good command over the English language. He was a good rider too and could remain on horseback for six or seven hours without feeling tired. He used to address Sir Gooroodass as "Gooroodass Saheb." The Nawab Nazim was styled by his officers and his people as "Pur Noor" meaning "Full Moon." Sir Gooroodass took a gold mohur with him as nazar on his first visit to the Nawab. It was the custom with the Nawab to accept the nazar from one whose acquaintance he wished to cultivate; otherwise, the gold mohur was only touched by him and returned. It so happened that the "Full Moon" was not visible at the first visit and Sir Gooroodass had to remain content with an interview with his eldest and second sons. He was, however, more fortunate on his second visit and the Nawab Nazim graciously accepted the nazar. Sir Gooroodass informed us that during his first visit, he saw a gentleman sitting with the



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sons of the Nawab dressed in Mahomedan court-dress, who spoke in Urdu so fluently that he took him to be a Mahomedan. He afterwards learnt to his surprise that this gentleman was no other than the late Babu Sambhu Chandra Mookerjee, the celebrated editor of the "Reis and Raiyat." He was for the time being the Private Secretary to the Nawab Nazim, and he afterwards held the high office of the Prime Minister to the Maharaja of Tippera.

At the main gate of the palace of the Nawab Nazim, a band of musicians used to sit all day and give out sweet melodies (nahabat) at stated intervals of the day, reminding the Nawab of the time for the performance of his various daily duties. The Nawab was a great observer of the dignity of his high position. Even when he was accessible only to the members of his household, a servant used to hold a golden umbrella over his head. There was always a gold betel-case lying beside him containing prepared betels and lime (which used to be made by burning real pearls). The Nawab was very fond of betels and he was never tired of chewing them in his waking hours. Once Mr. Prinsep, who afterwards became a Judge of the High Court, came to the palace to take the Nawab's evidence on commission. The Nawab could not do without betels for a moment and he felt a little uneasy in Mr. Prinsep's presence, as he knew that Europeans did not like the habit of betel-chewing. He asked Mr. Prinsep if he had any objection to his taking betels to which Mr. Prinsep replied with a smile,



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"this is not my Court, but this is your Highness's palace."

Sir Gooroodass remembered that during his first interview with the Nawab, the latter was curious to know how it was that the price of land all over the country was increasing, while the value of the Rupee was depreciating. Sir Gooroodass's reply was a discourse in Political Economy on the law of supply and demand and other cognate matters.

Sir Gooroodass informed us that the Nawab Nazim of Murshidabad used to receive an annual pension of Rs. 1600000 from the British Government and the way in which the account was adjusted in the Nawab's Treasury was suggestive of no little vanity on the part of the illustrious pensioner. Under the Nawab's orders, the whole of the revenues of the provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, which was actually realized by the British Government in those days, used to be entered on the credit side of his account, as if it legitimately belonged to him, and the whole amount except the 16 lacs which was his pension was shown on the debit side as *Darmaha* or salary paid to the British Government for the services rendered to the Nawab. The balance of 16 lacs which was his pension used to be shown as his net income from his whole kingdom.

The Nawab Nazim could on occasions be generous to the extreme, and we have from Sir Gooroodass an instance of his generosity which may be related here. He had a paid jeweller who arranged his jewellery in such a pretty way one day that the



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Nawab was greatly struck and pleased with it and immediately ordered a reward of Rs. 500 to the man. The Dewan did not like this piece of extravagance and ventured to observe that as the jeweller was a paid servant, it was hardly necessary to give the man such a handsome reward. The Nawab retorted that there must be some difference in the way of making his own pleasure known from that of other people. When one set of his favourites happened to charge the other party with dishonesty or corruption, the Nawab seriously observed that in this world, most people are thieves and the things they enjoy are stolen property, not even excepting the royal seat which it was his privilege to occupy.

Sir Gooroodass made many friends at Berhampore and among these may be mentioned the names of Baikuntha Nath Sen, Ganga Charan Sircar (Judicial officer) and his son Akshoy Chandra Sircar (afterwards Editor of the "Sadharani"), Ramdas Sen (the great antiquarian), Asutosh Chatterjee and Dinanath Ganguli (pleaders), men who in that age and afterwards were distinguished for their activities in different spheres of life.

Babu Asutosh Chatterjee was a distinguished Vakil of the High Court who subsequently joined the Berhampore Bar. He was a man of very generous and grateful temperament. He was a near relation of the late Babu Nagendranath Tagore, a brother of Maharshi Devendranath Tagore and was much helped by him in his early career. When Nagendranath was involved in heavy debts and his creditors



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issued a distress warrant against him, Babu Asutosh stood security for him and saved him from the humiliation of incarceration. He too, however, could not meet the dues in time and had to leave Calcutta to save himself from the worry of the creditors on account of his self-imposed liabilities. As a lawyer, he had brilliant attainments and at one time was marked out for a Judgeship of the Calcutta High Court, which, however, was given to Babu Anukul Chandra Mookerjee and not to him on account of his bad debts. When one of his friends at Berhampore observed that it was indiscreet on his part to be voluntarily saddled with this indebtedness which marred all his future prospects, he promptly replied that he only did his duty in the matter, sparing his benefactor the indignity of imprisonment, and this his conscience valued more than a judgeship of the Calcutta High Court.

The pleaders at Berhampore did not enjoy the luxury of a Bar Library in Sir Gooroodass's time and they used to squat on a piece of mat spread on the veranda of the court-room. This assembly was humorously called the "Navaratna Sabha" (the Assembly of Nine Jewels) named after the historic institution of King Vikramaditya, and the honoured position of "Kalidasa" was assigned to Rai Bahadur Ganga Charan Sircar and that of "Bararuchi" to Sir Gooroodass. Rai Bahadur Ganga Charan became a judicial officer of great ability and independence and he was full of pleasant humour in which he often indulged to the great amusement of the assembly. The assembly some-



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times used to meet in the house of the late Babu Baikuntha Nath Nag of Berhampore, who was honoured with the title of "Vikramaditya," and Sir Gooroodass, who had the aptitude to write verses both in Bengali and English from his early life wrote a few appreciative lines in honour of the President.

The Sabha took great interest and pleasure in the solution of riddles in both Bengali and English. Sir Gooroodass once asked the members the following question,—“What is that thing whose presence is desirable and its absence regrettable, the appearance of which is unwelcome and its non-appearance much wished for.”

Babu Ganga Charan Sircar gave the correct answer on the second chance in the following four lines in verse :—

“হেঁয়ালির অর্থ তব শুনহে রসিক,  
নর হতে নারী তাহা ধরয়ে অধিক।  
অধিক কি কব আর বুঝে দেখ ভাই,  
কল্য না বলিতে পেরে পাইয়াছি ভাই।”

The answer is well-expressed in the Bengali word “*lajja*” for which there is no single equivalent term in English. It may mean, according to circumstances, the modesty of a woman, but under different conditions, it stands for sense of shame.

The question put on another occasion was—“A lady in white; the longer she stands, the shorter she grows.” The prompt answer given by one of the members was “a burning white candle.”



The distinguished antiquarian, Babu Ramdas Sen, wrote a short poem on the great poet of Bengal, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, which Sir Gooroodass translated into English. Perhaps this was his first attempt to write verses in English. I have already informed my readers that Sir Gooroodass was a great admirer of Michael's writings. He was, however, not slow to point out where the great poet fell short of reaching that height of imagination and high standard of poetry which have made the author of "Sakuntala" and "Kumara Sambhaba" immortal for ever. He was also a great admirer of Dr. Rabindranath Tagore's writings, but his admiration was not always unqualified. The writer on many occasions happened to discuss the subject with him and Sir Gooroodass's complaint against Rabindranath was that many passages in the early writings of the great poet were hazy and failed to give a distinct and clear impression of the author's ideas. The grave charge that he used to make against Rabindranath was that some of his works, particularly some of the novels and lyric poems, contained hidden in them a vein of sensuousness and displayed unwarranted contempt of the old traditions and customs of the Hindu society and a damaging estimate of some of the Pauranic characters which the Hindu community in all ages have worshipped as ideal characters and which have so greatly helped to build up the national life. He used to observe that the eyes of the people have been dazzled by the glare of Rabindranath's genius, but it would not do to say that because the full

moon is so beautiful and grand, she has not her dark spots (*kalanka*).

He spent much time at Berhampore in improving his knowledge of the Sanskrit language and he studied the Sanskrit grammar and literature (works of Kalidasa) under the able guidance of the late Pandit Ramgati Nyayaratna, who was then residing at Berhampore. The Pandit made a present to Sir Gooroodass of his own copy of *Uttaracharita* observing that Sir Gooroodass would get many a Sanskrit teacher like him, but the Pandit would hardly expect to get a pupil of his brilliance and attainments.

Sir Gooroodass was a Judge of the High Court when his old Sanskrit teacher, Pandit Ramgati, wrote to him asking him if he would see Sir Alfred Croft, the then Director of Public Instruction, on the matter of his pension, which for certain misunderstanding on the part of the authorities, made him a loser of Rs. 30 per month. It was a strict principle with Sir Gooroodass not to ask a favour from any person for any body (not excepting his own children) and he was thus placed in a delicate position by his revered teacher. What he did was worthy of his noble nature and high character. He sent Rs. 30 to the Pandit and promised him a regular remittance of the same amount every month during the tenure of his service in the High Court as an humble attempt on his part to discharge the deep debt of gratitude he owed to his teacher. The Pandit did not refuse the first instalment for fear of wounding Sir Gooroodass's feelings and wrote



to him an appreciative letter commending his regard for his teacher, but refused to accept any further instalment.

Sir Rash Behari Ghosh was for sometime a Professor of English in the Berhampore College when Sir Gooroodass was there. Subsequently he left Berhampore for Calcutta to join the High Court. He insisted on Sir Gooroodass taking the same step, observing that people who aspire to rise high in the profession should not stagnate in a Mufussil town but should go to the High Court. Subsequent events showed that Sir Rash Behari was fully justified in making this high estimate of his own worth and that of his colleague, Sir Gooroodass. The great Judge, Dwarkanath Mitter, had, we are told, a similar abounding confidence in his own capabilities. We are told that in his time, Mr. Allan was a very able member of the Bar and he and Mr. Mitter were engaged as senior and junior pleaders respectively in a case. Dwarkanath saw that Mr. Allan was arguing a point in a wrong way when he quietly warned him about his mistake. This greatly annoyed the senior man who roughly observed,—“I don’t think I should like to be associated with you in a case, after this,” to which Mr. Mitter promptly retorted,—“I don’t know who would be the greater loser thereby.”

We have heard Sir Gooroodass to say that Sir Barnes Peacock, a former Chief Justice of Bengal, once extolled Dr. Rash Behari Ghosh as a *modest* man. His many friends chaffed Dr. Ghosh saying that they should like to know when he became



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deserving of that compliment, to which Dr. Ghosh pleasantly replied that the Chief Justice was quite right in his observation, inasmuch as in the presence of such a great man and impartial Judge as Sir B. Peacock, the modesty of a man comes out naturally and without effort, but the case becomes different when one has to deal with self-conceited and stupid members of the Bench.

Sir Gooroodass was very shy of wounding any body's feelings unnecessarily, and if by any chance he had done so, he would not rest content until he had explained his conduct in sweet and soothing words. It appears that he had a Hindu Zamindar client in Berhampore who was tried by a Civilian Judge and Jury on a serious criminal charge. The opposite party consisted of certain Mahommedans with whom the Sheristadar of the Court was on friendly terms. This Sheristadar by his discourteous treatment of the members of the Bar was most unpopular with them. When the Judge was addressing the Jury, the Sheristadar was seen to be looking at the Jury and nodding his head approvingly to any remarks that fell from the Judge against Sir Gooroodass's client, but he remained stolid and silent when any facts in favour of the defence were brought out by the Judge. Sir Gooroodass thought such conduct on the part of the Sheristadar of the Court to be wrong and highly prejudicial to the interests of his client and he drew the attention of the Court to this matter. The Judge thereupon strongly reprimanded the Sheristadar in open Court for his improper conduct towards the Jury.



It so happened that Sir Gooroodass won the case, but he felt sore about the discomfiture of the Sheristadar which, however, was much enjoyed by the other members of the Bar, and they would not allow Sir Gooroodass to humour the man. The long Puja vacation came shortly after this incident and Sir Gooroodass told his friends that he would not be able to enjoy the holidays at home until he had spoken some kind words to the Sheristadar, and he did this and felt relieved. This was a predominant feature in Sir Gooroodass's character but it did not find favour with some of his intimate and devoted friends. They looked upon it as a weak spot in his character and often quoted the English proverb—"A painter who tried to please every body, pleased no body,"—in support of their opinion. The critics, however, were not right in their estimate of this side of Sir Gooroodass's character. In trying to be sweet and pleasant, Sir Gooroodass never failed to show his strong disapproval of the *impropriety of an act*, but he did not like to be severe on the *actor* if he could do without it, because he was pre-eminently an advocate of the art of gentle persuasion. He would much rather use sweet and gentle words in order to convince the man of his error than create in him a feeling of resentment and rebellion by the use of harsh and unsympathetic language and manners. This line of conduct, although not approved of by some people, succeeded eminently well with Sir Gooroodass, and the writer knows many instances where his gentle and sweet remonstrances



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brought in the desired reform most quietly and effectively.

The year 1870 was a notable year in the history of the Bengali literature, for it was in that year that the celebrated Bengali monthly, the "*Bangadarsan*," first saw the light of day under the distinguished editorship of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. Bankim Chandra came to Berhampore as a Deputy Magistrate in 1870, and the first issue of the "*Bangadarsan*" was published from that town. No other journal had ever exercised so great an influence on the mind of the educated community of Bengal as this paper did. It served as the gateway for the admission of the light of western thoughts and western ideas among a very large section of the Bengali-reading public with whom the barrier of language had hitherto proved too great. It helped to create new ideas and stimulate the thoughts of an awakening and receptive community and simultaneously made a vast impression on its intellectual and social life. The thoughts and preachings of Emerson and Carlyle, Spencer and Darwin, Huxley and Tyndal, Mill and Burke were first presented by this journal to the rising generation of Bengal, clothed in their own vernacular and in a form most attractive and easily to be assimilated. In fact, the journal produced a revolution in the national life of the people of Bengal and to it in a great measure must be given the credit for the growth of the spirit of nationalism in Bengal. The celebrated novels of Bankim Chandra were published piecemeal in the "*Banga*."



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*darsan* " which did not satisfy its readers, who used to wait in breathless expectation for the next issue of the journal. The best intellects of Bengal of that age were the contributors to the paper, among whom may be mentioned Hem Chandra Banerjee, Akshay Chandra Sircar, Ramdas Sen, Jogendranath Vidyabhushan, Dwijendra Nath Tagore, Nabin Chandra Sen, Chandra Nath Bose, Dinabandhu Mitra and a host of others whose labours in the field of Bengali literature are too well-known to need mention here. There have been well-conducted and highly intellectual and popular Bengali monthlies after the publication of the "*Bangadarsan*," but none has ever been able to attain to the position of the "*Bangadarsan*" in respect of popularity, usefulness, dignity and power.

In the first issue of the "*Bangadarsan*," Babu Akshay Chandra Sircar contributed two articles, one on "*Grabu*" (a game of cards) and the other entitled "*Uddipana*" (inspiration) which attracted much public attention at that time and which, even to this day, are read with interest, profit and amusement. They were probably the maiden writings of the celebrated editor of the "*Sadharani*," (a weekly newspaper) which used to be published from Chinsurah in his later days and which proved to be a powerful exponent of public opinion in matters educational, social and political.

The celebrated author of "*Govinda Samanta*," Rev. Lal Behari Dey, was one of the Professors of English in the Berhampore College during Sir



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Gooroodass's time and was the Secretary of a local club, called the "Grand Hall Club" of which Babu Digambar Biswas, the Subordinate Judge, was the President and Bankim Chandra its Assistant Secretary. Papers used to be read at the meetings of the Club by the members and Sir Gooroodass was the author of a paper on "Abused India Vindicated" in which he made some humorous, though pertinent observations on the inordinate love for dress and show among the rising generation of his countrymen, from which we quote the following :—

"If the tailor be the high priest of the regenerative ceremony of India, far be such regeneration from me and my countrymen."

Fifty years have since passed but Sir Gooroodass's remark has lost neither its originality nor its practical application. Perhaps it has a more extended application now, as it might include in its scope a certain section of the community whose demand for fashionable dress was unknown when Sir Gooroodass practised as a pleader in Berhampore.

Dinabandhu Mitra, the Moliere of Bengal, was a superintendent of the Post Offices in the early seventies, and he and Bankim Chandra were great friends. He used to come to Berhampore often on official duty when Bankim Chandra was there. Sir Gooroodass could remember no pleasanter evenings he passed at Berhampore than those when Dinabandhu was with them. The whole town enjoyed Dinabandhu's visits, and the air resounded with laughter and merriment at Dina-



*Devendra Prasad Saxena*



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bandhu's sallies of wit and humour, of which it seemed he had an inexhaustible fund.

Fortune favoured Sir Gooroodass in every way when he was at Berhampore, but he had to suffer a family bereavement by the death of his eldest child, a daughter aged  $1\frac{1}{2}$  years, who was taken to Berhampore with her mother some time after his first arrival and who died there of cholera. The girl was so beautiful that she was named Mohini (the Enchantress). It was a great shock to the parents and Sir Gooroodass was deeply affected. His great friend, Babu Shama Charan Bhattacharjee, used to come to the house often, and by way of consolation, used to relate to him the sorrows and troubles of his own life, compared to which Sir Gooroodass's misfortune was insignificant, often observing that Sir Gooroodass should not break down at the first blow, because life was full of such blows.

Sir Gooroodass's mother now became more and more insistent in her wish that he should come back to Calcutta. She could no longer endure his separation and could not be with the son at his place of business which would interfere with the daily performance of her duties to the family god. She began to remind him of his promise to leave Berhampore and come back to Calcutta as soon as he could command a small but fixed monthly income for the support of the family. Sir Gooroodass consulted his friend and benefactor, Babu Matilal Banerjee, in the matter. Mati Babu's advice was that if he wanted to catch small fry



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at every bait, he had better stick to Berhampore; but if he joined the High Court, "although he would have to wait for a while, he was sure to catch big fish in the end.

Sir Gooroodass could not long put off his mother's call, bade farewell to Berhampore with regret and joined the Calcutta High Court in 1872. Thus the wishes of his great friend, Sir Rash Behari Ghosh, were at last fulfilled.

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## CHAPTER VI

## ON THE PROFESSION OF LAW

At a special meeting organized to celebrate the inauguration of the Calcutta University Institute, Sir Gooroodass delivered an admirable address on the "Moral Aspects of the Legal Profession," which will always be read with interest and profit, not only by the senior and junior members of the profession, but also by students of law. While dealing with the duties of the profession from the moral and, therefore, the higher standpoint, he has not left out of consideration the difficulties that lie in the way of law-students and legal practitioners at the beginning of their career and the address is replete with practical suggestions how best to get over the difficulties without bartering one's conscience. At the outset, Sir Gooroodass does not fail to notice that a large number of his educated countrymen betake themselves to the legal profession and that, even in his time, the way was crowded and the paths of struggling juniors were not strewn with flowers. Sir Gooroodass's warning that success in the legal profession is by no means so easily attainable as the sanguineness of youth would wish, is as true now as it was in his time and young aspirants to fame would do well to lay to heart his safe and sound advice that thorough and severe training and untiring patience are necessary for that success.



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The profession of law, viewed from the proper standpoint, is a truly noble profession worthy of the aspirations of the most elevated intellect and moral nature and capable of giving rich rewards to all the deserving, however numerous they may be.

Sir Gooroodass discusses the subject under three heads, viz., (1) of the lawyer in relation to his study ; (2) of the lawyer in relation to his client, and (3) of the lawyer in relation to the Bench and to the public.

(1) *Of the lawyer in relation to his study.*—" If you want to do your duty as a lawyer well and properly," says Sir Gooroodass, "you must begin by doing your duty as a student well and thoroughly." The lawyer's business is certainly not to quibble about words or " to lengthen simple justice into trade," as some ill-informed persons are wont to say. The student would do well to remember that it is a science demanding serious study and is not a mere money-making art which there would be time enough to study carefully when one commences practising it. Like other sciences, it is based upon a few fundamental principles, and these in their applications lead to such complex propositions that they can be dealt with only by careful study. Do not, therefore, neglect your study while you are a student of law or you will never otherwise be able to make up for lost time. Such study should not only be continuous but also systematic, for the business of the lawyer embraces the whole range of human affairs in their endless variety and manifold complications. Begin, therefore, early



to economise time by doing everything in its proper time and putting off nothing for the future. The student should always remember that law is the ultimate arbiter of all contests between man and man in civilized society and the position of a practising lawyer, therefore, is one of grave trust and responsibility, for his business places him in charge of the life, property and reputation of his clients, and it is, therefore, the paramount duty of every student of law to see that he does everything to qualify himself for such a position. Sir Gooroodass's advice in this connection to the student is that he should not only study law but should also carefully study the lives of those great lawyers who have shed lustre on their profession, *e.g.*, Campbell's *Lives of the Lord Chancellors* and his *Lives of the Chief Justices of England*. Again, the student should study law not from a narrow technical point of view but in a broad liberal spirit and should always try to bring it into harmony with, and make it subservient to, the ends of justice.

(2) *Of the lawyer in relation to his client.*—On the second head, Sir Gooroodass discusses the question how the young lawyer is to get into practice without compromising himself in any way, having regard to the traditions of the profession. The first and foremost of the rules of the profession is that you shall not seek for business in any way, not even by lowering your fees, but to wait till business seeks you out. But having regard to the present state of things when the profession is so largely overcrowded, honest and legitimate



modes in which a young practitioner may seek business must be allowed and one of the least objectionable of such modes is to seek it at the hands of distinguished leaders of the profession. Another mode would be to write useful law books and edit important Acts with well-arranged notes. Still another would be the defence of undefended prisoners, though in this case the young lawyer must know the serious responsibility of his position and must be extremely careful to prepare himself well, so that his client may not be worse off with his help than he would have been without it.

Incidentally, Sir Gooroodass discusses some questions which are of perennial interest to the members of the legal profession, viz.,—

- (a) Whether the lowering of fees is allowable.
- (b) Whether the rule which prohibits the taking of instructions except through certain classes of persons is founded on reason or is purely conventional and embarrassing.
- (c) Whether it is necessary to impose arbitrary restrictions upon admission to the profession.
- (d) Whether there is anything wrong in the legal practitioner making the best arrangement for his fees with his clients, in other words, whether it is wrong to make money-making one of the objects of the legal profession.
- (e) Whether a lawyer is not bound, if his client insists upon it, to take up his case even though it may not, in his own judgment, be a righteous one.
- (f) What is the lawyer to do in a case which, having been taken up under the belief that it is just, is found afterwards, from the confession of the client,



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to be the reverse? (g) Whether a pleader or a counsel can change sides in the course of a case or of a connected litigation.

Sir Gooroodass's observations on these questions are marked by that sobriety of judgment, that scrupulous regard for the morality and propriety of the action as distinguished from a mere technical rule of conduct and that overwhelming desire to do justice to the client and to place his interest in the forefront of all others, which made him afterwards the great Judge that he was, and his observations must be read *in extenso* by the reader who would like to get an acquaintance with the working of the mind of the great man.

(3) *Of the lawyer in relation to the Bench and to the public*:—On the third head, viz., the moral aspects of the relation between the Bench and the Bar, Sir Gooroodass discusses the oft misunderstood question, viz., what are the legitimate limits of advocacy? Is an advocate justified in advancing arguments which he knows to be fallacious or in insisting upon the truthfulness of evidence which he knows or believes to be false? Or is his function merely to rely on argument and evidence believed to be sound and true? In the latter case, it would appear the advocate would be encroaching upon the province of the Judge and compel the client against his will to accept his judgment when he wants that of the constituted court; while in the former case, the advocate is not justified in urging his own belief in the justice of his client's cause, simply because he is an advocate and not a witness or

Judge in the cause. Perhaps, the true view of the matter is that taken by Johnson who says,—  
“A lawyer is to do for his client all that his client might fairly do for himself if he could.” An advocate should never distort facts or advance arguments known to be fallacious in the hope that such misrepresentation or fallacy may in the hurry of the moment or through the ignorance of the adversary or the incompetency of the Judge, pass undetected. In the conduct of a case, he should be above such indirect motives as those of pleasing a friend or offending an enemy or of playing to the gallery. The liberty of speech that is allowed to an advocate is a sacred privilege which must never be abused.

The behaviour of the Bench and the Bar towards each other is not without its moral aspect. While the severity and sometimes the superciliousness and arrogance of the Judge to the young lawyer struggling into practice is a thing to be condemned, yet from the nature of things, it is sometimes unavoidable and the young lawyer would do well to submit to it, though not from a sense of fear or sneaking subservience, but from a sense of duty, viz., that the dignity of the court must be maintained. While, therefore, respect is due to the Bench from the Bar, kindness and courtesy are due to the Bar from the Bench, especially to the junior members who are at a disadvantage and who require to be encouraged more than others.

In concluding, Sir Gooroodass says—“We can never expect to be able completely to calm the troubled sea of human affairs. The vain bickerings



and contentions of men will never cease and there will always remain enough work for the legal profession." But, however near or distant the millenium may be, he advises his young friends to be "above the reach of temptation, to equip themselves by severe training and constant care for the due discharge of their professional duties, and above all, to be self-sacrificing in their efforts to do good to the society."

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## CHAPTER VII

## SIR GOOROODASS AS A JUDGE

Sir Gooroodass joined the Calcutta High Court in the latter part of 1872. His reputation as a sound, conscientious and able lawyer had long preceded him and thus, with the experience he acquired, while at Berhampore, in the various departments of his profession, his early struggle was made so much easier and it was not long before he had secured for himself a place in the front rank of the High Court Bar.

As a lawyer, he was held in great respect both by the Bar and the Bench, and his opinions carried great weight not only for their soundness but also for the deep regard for truth and for the breadth of view which always characterised them. No doubt, he was most anxious to safeguard the interests of his client, but he never subordinated his conscience to considerations of professional gain or fame and he was ever anxious to uphold the cause of truth and justice. The secret of his success in winning the confidence and respect of the Bench, the Bar and the public in the practice of his profession as well as in the administration of justice in the highest tribunal of the land is thus explained.

On the retirement of Mr. Justice Cunningham in 1888, Sir Gooroodass's name was sent up to the Government of India by Sir Comer Petheram, the



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then Chief Justice of Bengal, as the most suitable person to fill the vacancy. The Government accepted the recommendation and after six months' temporary service, Sir Gooroodass was made a permanent Judge of the Calcutta High Court—an appointment which gave universal satisfaction. He filled this high office with credit and distinction up till 31st January, 1904, when on the completion of his 60th year, he retired on pension. Although the sixty years' retirement rule did not apply in his case and he could have continued in his post as long as he wished, higher considerations of duty induced him to decide on the course he adopted. He did not wish to stand in the way of deserving junior members of the profession who were looking forward to be elevated to the Bench, and he also felt that age was just beginning to affect his good temper which he considered to be an indispensable qualification for a Judge.

Sir Francis Maclean, a former Chief Justice of Bengal, had such a high opinion of the value of his services that he never sat, if he could, without Sir Gooroodass during the whole period of his service in the High Court. As a Judge, Sir Gooroodass upheld the great traditions of the High Court in a most worthy manner and this was freely acknowledged both by the Bench and the Bar at the time of his retirement. Babu Ram Charan Mitter, C.I.E., the Senior Government Pleader, when presenting him with an address at the time of his retirement, referred to his career as a Judge in the following appreciative terms:—



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“Your career as a Judge has been characterized throughout by profound learning, great ability, thorough conscientiousness, marked independence, untiring patience and uniform courtesy—qualities by which you have always inspired confidence in the public mind and commanded the respect and admiration of all branches of the profession. Your successful and brilliant career as a Judge is a source of pride to the members of the profession to which you belonged and will always be an illustrious example to that body.”

That able and distinguished Advocate-General of the day, Mr. J. T. Woodroffe, on behalf of the English Bar paid a tribute of praise to the retiring Judge in the following eloquent terms:—

“Upon the tomb of one of the noblest of her sons whom England has given to India is to be found inscribed the epitaph—‘He tried to do his duty.’ No man can have a higher aim and no man can honestly say more of himself than that. Happy, indeed, is he if he is able to say it, for when the time of reckoning comes, we are all conscious how utterly we have failed to discharge the duties imposed upon us. But you, my Lord, have tried, and nobly tried, and, so far as the Bar can see, have succeeded in discharging the duties which you took upon you. The address which has been read to us describes in no exaggerated language your character and your ability as a Judge. I will only say so far as my experience goes, which extends over the whole time of your Lordship’s career as a Judge, *never have I heard a single suitor complain that full justice*



*had not been done to him by Mr. Justice Gooroodass Banerjee, that his case had not been listened to with attention, all the arguments weighed and every effort made to understand what it was, and he felt that if the case was decided against him, it was rightly decided. You have also shown a character of independence. You have spoken when silence might have pointed out the line of least resistance. You have been throughout your career as a pleader and a judge, if I may be permitted to say so, most eminently straightforward, honest and conscientious."*

I quote below from the "Calcutta Weekly Notes" of 1st February, 1904, an extract from the editorial comments on his career as a judge of the High Court and on his valuable contributions to the interpretation of Law in the form of decisions of cases disposed of by him :—

"During his sixteen years' work on the Bench, he endeared himself to everybody by his unvarying kindness, consideration and unfailing courtesy and was held by all in high regard as a Judge owing to his strong sense of justice, his great learning and the conscientious discharge of his duties. He has also during this period contributed considerably to the interpretation of law. His judgments are always very thorough and learned, and though in some instances, the conscientious labour and study that he devoted to them tended to make them a little too technical, yet their value as contributions to the legal literature is well-recognised."

"Among the many reported decisions associated with his name, we may note :—



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(1) *Kamini v. Chandra* (I. L. R. 17 Cal. 373) which softened the rigour of the law as laid down by the old Full Bench case of *Kashinath v. Kshetramani* (9 W. R. 413) by recognising the rule that a moral obligation of an ancestor would, on a descent, ripen into a legal obligation affecting the estate in the hands of the heir.

(2) *Mandakini v. Adinath* (I. L. R. 18 Cal. 69) which lays down an important rule relating to the law as to the divesting of estates on adoption.

(3) *Gur Baksh v. Jowahir* (I. L. R. 20 Cal. 599) which is perhaps the first case after *Mahabir v. Macnaghten* (I. L. R. 9 Cal. 656) to lay down that the relationship of cause and effect between a proved irregularity and a proved material injury, in a case under Sec. 311 of the Code of Civil Procedure, may be established in any manner recognized by the Evidence Act.

(4) *Mahesh v. Sarada* (I. L. R. 21 Cal. 433) which recognised the transferability of portions of *Mokurari* holding.

(5) *Abdul Mazumdar v. Mahomed Gazi* (I. L. R. 21 Cal. 605) which recognised the maintainability of a suit to set aside a sale in execution of a decree on the ground of fraud in the decree.

(6) *Jogodanand v. Amrita* (I. L. R. 22 Cal. 767) in which he delivered the judgment of the Full Court laying down the true principle relating to the retrospective operation of Statutes.

(7) *Queen Empress v. Kader* (I. L. R. 23 Cal. 604) which contains an important pronouncement



on the law relating to insanity as affecting criminal responsibility.

(8) *Ishan v. Beni* (I. L. R. 24 Cal. 62) which may be taken to have settled the meaning of the term "representative" in sec. 244 of the Code of Civil Procedure.

(9) *Bhiram Ali v. Gopi* (I C. W. N. 396 ; s. c. I. L. R. 24 Cal. 355) which has an important bearing on the law relating to the saleability in execution of occupancy holdings.

(10) *Hemadri v. Ramoni* (I. L. R. 24 Cal. 575) which recognised the right of a *putnidar* to have a partition as against his zamindar.

(11) *Jagannath v. Ranjit* (I. L. R. 25 Cal. 354) which places on record the view of the Calcutta High Court regarding the application of arts. 118 and 119 of the Indian Limitation Act.

(12) *Rai Charan v. Kumud* (3 C. W. N. 409 : s. c. I. L. R. 25 Cal. 571) which has an important bearing on the doctrine relating to the concurrence of jurisdiction in connection with the law of *res judicata*.

(13) *Kadambini v. Kali* (2 C. W. N. 687 : s. c. I. L. R. 26 Cal. 516) recognising easements arising on a severance of tenements by partition.

(14) *Nisa Chand v. Kanchiram* (3 C. W. N. 568 : s. c. I. L. R. 26 Cal. 579) which express the view adopted by the Calcutta High Court on the much debated question as to whether mere previous possession for a period less than the statutory period of 12 years is a sufficient basis for a suit in ejectment."



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It is in the nature of some people to find fault with others not excluding the best and the most respected of men. We quote from the *Panchatantra* the following lines which well illustrate this phase of human character :—

“अपराधो न सेस्योति नैतद्विश्वासकारणम् ।

विद्यते हि नृश्रेष्ठो भयं गुणवतामपि ॥”

“ The belief in one's innocence is no security against harm. Even the best of men fall victims to malice.”

Sir Gooroodass was not altogether immune against the onslaughts of such people, although their number was very limited. While there was no doubt that he commanded the universal confidence and respect of the litigant public in the administration of civil and criminal justice, there were not wanting some people who used sneeringly to refer to him as the “Concurring Gooroodass,” meaning thereby that he always agreed with and had not the courage to differ from his colleague on the Bench. The charge was as baseless as it was ungenerous and this could be proved by citing many cases in which Sir Gooroodass differed from his colleagues and wrote separate judgments. One of these cases is still fresh in my mind ; it caused a good deal of sensation at the time. It was a case of criminal assault on a Hindu girl at the Asansol railway station by a railway officer. Sir Gooroodass's colleague on the Bench did not believe in the evidence of the witnesses for the prosecution and thought it was a trumped-up case and accordingly



acquitted the accused. Sir Gooroodass did not agree with his European colleague. In his opinion, the evidence against the accused was very strong and he had no doubt in his mind that it was a true case. He wrote a separate judgment convicting the accused. The case was accordingly referred to a bench of three judges presided over by the Chief Justice. The accused was ultimately convicted and Sir Gooroodass's judgment upheld.

Sir Gooroodass was permeated by a high sense of duty which showed itself in all the great and small affairs of his life. It came out most conspicuously in his work as a Judge. He was hardly, if ever, absent from the Court during his sixteen years' work on the Bench, except perhaps when illness kept him in bed, and these occasions were few and far between. His idea was that his absence, even for a day, would cause much inconvenience to the parties and their pleaders, would entail a loss to Government to the extent of two Judges' salary each day, and he avoided it to the best of his ability. I can cite one authentic incident to illustrate this side of his character. While he was a Judge, he had the misfortune to lose a son, Jatindra Chandra, aged about 15 years, a brilliant student of the Hare School, who died of cholera. The boy was in a precarious condition in the morning, but still Sir Gooroodass attended the High Court at the usual hour, sat on the Bench and went on with his work with no outward show of anxiety or disturbance. Later in the day, the Chief Justice came to know of the serious illness of his son.



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He interviewed Sir Gooroodass, made him dismiss his court and sent him home to be present with the dying boy who expired a few minutes after the arrival of the father. Sir Gooroodass was very fond of his son. He created a medal and a prize in the Calcutta University in 1892 called the "Jatindra Chandra Medal and Prize" in loving memory of his departed son. The medal is annually awarded to the student who occupies the first place in the Matriculation Examination, and the Prize consisting of useful books is awarded to the best student of the Hare School in the same examination. He also endowed an annual gold medal in memory of his deceased son at the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science.

He suffered another severe bereavement by the death of his dear old mother in 1889 and he founded a Prize in her name, called the "Sonamoni Prize," in the Calcutta University which is annually awarded at the Convocation to the student who stands first in the list of successful candidates for the M. A. Examination in Sanskrit, the prize consisting of books relating to the Sanskrit language and literature.

Sir Gooroodass would not allow an opportunity to slip by to become acquainted at first hand with details of any work entrusted to his hands. The writer well remembers an incident which occurred during Sir Gooroodass's visit to the Calcutta Medical College, along with the other members of the University Commission in 1904. The writer was then the Additional Chemical Examiner in charge



of the Medico-legal Section. After the inspection of the College was over, Sir Gooroodass expressed a wish to see the arrangements in the Medico-legal department for the conduct of analysis and disposal of cases referred to it by the Criminal Courts of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Of course, this did not fall within the purview of the University Commission. The writer showed Sir Gooroodass every thing in detail, beginning from the receipt and registration of exhibits, their storage in iron-barred locked rooms until disposal, the conduct of their analysis personally by the Chemical Examiner in cup-boards (one for each case) under lock and key, and the keeping of the keys in his charge during the non-working hours. Sir Gooroodass expressed great satisfaction at the arrangements and explained that the reason for his making this enquiry was that, as a Judge, he had often to deal with the Chemical Examiner's reports in murder, poisoning and rape cases, and although he had never any cause to doubt the accuracy of the reports, he always thought he would take the first opportunity to see for himself what care was taken by the Chemical Examiner in the disposal of cases involving questions of life and death.

On the 31st January 1904, came to a close the career of this distinguished Indian Judge who, from an humble position in life, rose to the highest office under Government which an Indian could then aspire to and who discharged the duties of the high office with credit to himself and to the honour and glory of his country. The members of the Bar mustered



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strong in the room of the Chief Justice on the 29th January, 1904, to present an address to Sir Gooroodass on the eve of his retirement from the Bench. We have already made reference to the speeches made on the occasion by the leaders of both the English and the Indian Bar which show what a high place the retiring Judge held in the regard, esteem and affection of the members of the Bar.

Sir Gooroodass's reply to the address was characterized by that modesty and magnanimity which were the two great traits of his character and by that absence of self-assertion which, as a true and devoted student of the *Geeta*, guided all his actions in life. He disclaimed any personal credit for any success that had attended his work as a Judge. I quote the following lines from his speech which well illustrate this side of his character. He said : " You have been pleased to say many good and kind words concerning me with much warmth of feeling, and I trust, you will excuse me if, imbibing the warmth of feeling about me, I say anything which cool reason may not strictly approve. We merit praise the most when we want it the least, and we are utterly undeserving of it if we actually seek for it. Now, whilst there are many who may not stoop so low as to seek for praise as an incentive for doing their duty, it is only a few who can aspire so high as to be able honestly to say that the inward satisfaction of having done their duty perfectly well places them above all praise. And to the former, therefore, good words coming from those whose opinions they value, after their work is done, always give gratifi-



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cation. Much as I have striven, much as I may wish to be one of the fortunate few, I feel that I am only one of the ordinary many with the common imperfections and infirmities of man, and I must, therefore, gratefully acknowledge that the very kind words which you have been pleased to say about me at a time when my work in this Court is over, must be a source of great satisfaction to me. But I should ill deserve your kindness if I were to appropriate to myself the many good things you have said as being wholly my due. I am fully sensible of the fact that a good portion of it is attributable to that indulgence with which generous minds view the merits and demerits of others at parting moments. I must also freely own that what may apparently stand to my credit for any good work done, a very large share belongs to you for the help you have always rendered me in doing that work. I must not here forget what the *Geeta* in a somewhat different connection reminds us of, when it says,—“Deluded by self-conceit, we often consider ourselves the authors of work which is really done by the agencies of Nature.” I say this, not from any affectation of humility, but from a conviction of its truth, for though intolerance of inopportune contradiction or impatience of unnecessary delay may sometimes make us look with disfavour upon forensic arguments, it is beyond question that the help which the Bar renders to the Bench is simply invaluable.”

His concluding words breathe a noble sentiment and a sacred injunction uttered in the best interests of the profession to which at one time he had the



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honour to belong, and with these words, I conclude this great chapter of Sir Gooroodass's life :—

“ Working harmoniously together, following your best traditions in the past, and keeping pace with the progress of time in the future, may you all go on helping the efficient administration of justice which is one of the highest blessings that the country can enjoy under British rule.”

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## CHAPTER VIII

### SIR GOOROODASS AS AN EDUCATIONIST

Sir Gooroodass was a man of versatile genius and his activities were many-sided. He had a striking personality and he shone brightly in all the departments of life in which it pleased Providence to place him. But nowhere did he shine with greater splendour or with a fuller display of his rich natural gifts than in the domain of Education. For nearly forty years, he exercised considerable influence on the character, system and policy of the education as imparted to his countrymen through the agency of the Calcutta University and other official and non-official educational organisations of the Province.

We have seen that Sir Gooroodass began his life as a teacher. He entertained a profound respect for the profession of teaching, and in his long connection with the Calcutta University and other educational institutions in this city, he seldom allowed an opportunity to slip where he could be of help to improve the position and prospects of teachers. His ideal of a teacher was the Guru of ancient India who, in his own person, combined the functions of the preceptor, the father and guardian of his pupil during the latter's stay in his house for study. He knew that all those conditions were not attainable in the circumstances of the present age,



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But he thought that the high standard maintained by a teacher of ancient India as exemplified by the purity of his character, his simple habits, the absence of all thought of money-making, his self-sacrifice and his whole-hearted devotion to study and teaching might with great advantage be imitated by the present generation of teachers.

Although he did not continue long as a teacher by profession, he maintained a keen interest in this line of work to the last day of his life. We have seen how, amidst multifarious and pressing calls of duty, he could find time to help the boys of his own family and those of some of his neighbours in their study by regularly setting and correcting home-exercises for them and removing their difficulties in many other ways. He, however, never posed as a teacher in any matter in which his advice or help was sought. He used to consider and conduct himself as an humble student all his life. He was a deep and critical scholar in English, Bengali and Sanskrit literature, in Mathematics, in Indian and Western Philosophy, in Law and in the lore of his own religion, and in him, we saw the fulfilment of the Sanskrit adage that humility is the hand-maid of scholarship.

True education, in the opinion of Sir Gooroodass Banerjee, consists in the harmonious and effective development of all the faculties of the pupil, physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual. It should make him strong in body, sound in mind, great in intellect and rich in spirituality. In order to attain this ideal, certain fundamental principles require



careful consideration, and he invites special attention to the following points which, according to him, form the foundation of all sound education. I shall give expression to his views on these points as I could gather them from his conversation, his speeches and his writings on the subject. We shall begin from the very beginning, viz., child education, and shall gradually develop the subject as we proceed. And finally, we shall record his views on certain special educational problems, such as the residential system, education of women, physical education, technical education, national education, etc.

The points for consideration are :—

- I. *The aim and object of Education.*
- II. *Capacity and natural aptitude of a pupil.*
- III. *Qualifications of a teacher.*
- IV. *Subjects of Education.*
- V. *Instruments of Education.*
- VI. *Methods of teaching.*

I. The aim and object of Education have already been briefly referred to. Although theoretically it may be considered desirable that a man should acquire knowledge in all its departments without which his education can not be said to be complete, yet it is not possible for him to obtain this happy result, simply because our life is short and our power of understanding and resourcefulness limited. A man should, therefore, strive to acquire such knowledge as would make him useful within the sphere of his life's work; at the same time, he must attain a fairly high standard of physical,



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mental and moral development. This development must be harmonious. As too much of physical training might starve the intellect, so too much of mental and spiritual culture to the neglect of the body might lead to physical deterioration and suffering. The training of the various faculties should, therefore, be co-ordinated. Physically weak people should give greater attention to their body than to mental culture. In the early period of life, when the culture of the mind is less easily attainable than that of the body, the latter should receive greater attention. It should always be borne in mind that a healthy body reacts for good on the mind and *vice versa*.

Further, education should not be sterile and unproductive ; it should, as far as possible, fit in with the conditions and requirements of the country and the particular community to which the pupil belongs.

II. Although success in teaching depends upon the mental calibre and receptive power of the pupil as well as on the ability and resourcefulness of the teacher, it is admitted by all that the former is the most important factor for consideration in the matter. As men differ widely in their physical appearance, so do they differ in their powers of understanding, in their likings and dislikings of subjects of study, in their application and in their retentive power. In view of these natural differences in the mental constitution of man, one type of education and one routine method of teaching cannot suit all people. The character of education



and the method of teaching should, therefore, necessarily vary and must be adapted to the special physical and mental conditions of the pupil. For example, the method adopted to teach a boy of quick understanding and good retentive power should be different from that followed in the case of a boy of weak intellect and memory. Then again, one may show great aptitude in learning a special subject such as Mathematics, Science, or Classics, while there are others who not only do not love these subjects but positively dislike them. The selection of subjects must, therefore, vary with the natural aptitudes of the pupil.

But in spite of these differences, Sir Gooroodass was strongly of opinion that up to a certain age, no freedom should be allowed in the choice of subjects, but that a uniform standard should be fixed for all students. This he considered to be the *irreducible minimum* of general education which should form the ground-work for all students, whatever their natural aptitude may be, and this he believed to be quite capable of attainment in the case of all, if only proper methods of teaching are adopted. This ground-work should include lessons in Literature (English, Vernacular and Classical), Mathematics, History, Geography and elementary Natural Science. As far as I could judge from his conversation, he would confine this uniform standard to the Matriculation stage of the Calcutta University with certain important modifications in its curriculum. On the completion of this stage, he would favour choice of subjects and also specialisation in



the subject or subjects in which the student shows a special natural inclination.

III. As regards the qualifications of a good teacher, he must, in the opinion of Sir Gooroodass, possess good health, his voice must be loud and distinct and his senses of sight and hearing must be acute and trained. Without these, it would be difficult for him to manage a large class.

The teacher should be of a cheerful disposition and calm temper. He will have to deal with boys of different temperaments and mental capacities, and unless he keeps his temper even and unruffled, his success as a good teacher will suffer. He must not fret and worry over the mental and moral short-comings of his pupils, but should try to improve them by kindness, patience and perseverance. A certain amount of reserve is no doubt needed in a teacher to check the frivolous propensities of the boys, but too much rigidity and aloofness are fatal to the creation of that sympathy and attachment between the teacher and the taught which is so essential in the interest of sound education.

A good teacher should possess a general knowledge of all important subjects and a special knowledge in the subject which he teaches. The former qualification is necessary, as all subjects of study are more or less inter-related. He should have a good knowledge of the methods of teaching, and for this, he should undergo a special training and be conversant with distinguished authors on the subject. His character should be high so as to



draw the respect and admiration of his pupils. He should not be a mere machine for teaching but a living personality inspiring not only interest but zeal and enthusiasm among his pupils in their work. His treatment of his pupils should be kind and sympathetic so as to engender love and confidence instead of fear in their young minds, and this is more helpful in the maintenance of order and discipline in the class than unkind words and corporal punishment. By his personal example, he must teach punctuality, cleanly habits, application, good use of time, method in work, and pleasant but chaste conversation. Of all periods of life, it is in childhood that the faculty of imitation is most predominant, and it is incumbent on the teacher to present to his pupils such good traits of conduct and character in his own person as they could imitate to their lasting benefit.

IV. The whole universe, observes Sir Gooroodass, is the subject of human study.

But, first of all, one must begin with the training of one's body. To keep our body in a fit condition, we require food and clothes, but these must be looked upon as necessities of life and should not be turned into instruments for luxury.

A certain amount of exercise is needed for good health. Our hands, our eyes and our ears should receive attention as part of our physical training. Without trained hands, trained eyes and trained ears, it is impossible to make any satisfactory progress in the study of the Arts and Science.

Language and Literature, Mathematics and Science form the principal subjects of study for men-



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tal culture. Without some knowledge of Mathematics and Science, one is at a great disadvantage even in the ordinary affairs of life, and the study of literature opens the mind and contributes to its peace and happiness amidst the troubles and turmoils of life.

A little knowledge of technology and commerce would greatly facilitate and improve the conditions of life.

To those who believe in the existence of the soul, its culture forms the prime duty of life. As exercise is necessary for the healthy development of the physical body, so the practice of *brahmacharyya* (*Service to God*) and self-control are required for the evolution of the soul. We are always pleased to look at a person in the possession of a well-proportioned and vigorous physical body. We should be more pleased to see a man endowed with a pure and manly character. Moral and religious education should go hand in hand with physical and intellectual training. In the midst of multiplicity of creeds, the belief in God and in the *after-life* forms the common ground on which all religions meet and, in Sir Gooroodass's opinion, it is not at all difficult to impart religious education in non-sectarian schools on these broad lines.

V. As regards the instruments for sound education, the teaching should be as much objective and as little subjective as possible. When an object becomes the subject of study, it should always, if possible, be presented in its original form to the pupil to help him in its study. When this is im-



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possible (as it is in a good many cases), a substitute should be provided for. A book is such a substitute. It presents the object of study clad in words. Pictures, maps, models, drawings and diagrams are also good substitutes and should always be made available where necessary.

In order to prevent waste of time and energy on the part of the pupil, all books for beginners should be written in simple, pleasant and correct language and the description of any subject should be clear but concise. To make study easy and pleasant, books should be neatly printed and in large type and the subject matter illustrated as much as possible with explanatory pictures and diagrams.

As regards primers for beginners, difficult words should be avoided and new words and new subjects should be gradually introduced. The primers on Grammar, Geography, History and Natural Science should treat of the general principles only and avoid details. The books on Mathematics for beginners should not contain difficult questions or examples.

As students advance in their study, a library would be needed for them. A good library containing the works of standard authors in different subjects and important reference-books should be attached to every school for the benefit of the teachers and students alike.

Instruments and appliances form indispensable accessories to study in certain subjects. For the study of Science, laboratories and museums are indispensable. These are no doubt expensive



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equipments, but with the help of intelligent teachers, a good deal of expenditure on this head may be saved by improvising apparatus out of simple materials at hand and encouraging local manufactures as much as possible.

There are both advantages and disadvantages attending education in schools and colleges. There is economy of both time and energy in training a number of boys together but the number under the charge of a single teacher should not exceed 30 in the interests of efficient teaching. There is economy in respect of expenditure also on school education. The disadvantage lies in the fact that all boys are not of the same temper, habits and mental capacity. The slow and backward students require greater attention from the teacher than bright boys and an altogether different mode of teaching, and the association of the two together in a class is often detrimental to the best interests of both. Then, again, the confinement of a number of boys in the close and unhealthy atmosphere of the class room for hours together is not an ideal state of things either for the body or for the mind. In order to prevent as much as possible the mischief done in this way, the school rooms should be spacious, well-lighted and well-ventilated, the boy should be allowed to play and remain in the open air for a reasonable period of time during the school hours, their daily lessons should be of such proportions as to allow them sufficient time for healthy recreation at home, a liberal routine for the whole school should be settled and strictly adhered to,



a periodical supervision of the work done in the school and periodical examinations to test the progress made by the boys should be held and the results of such examinations together with a statement of the conduct and character of each boy should be regularly reported to his guardian. The examinations should not be too technical or too frequent. The questions should be distributed over the whole subject of study and be general in their character. It must always be remembered that the object of such examinations is to test the real merits of the boys and the progress made by them in their study. Any examination held with the object of puzzling the boys or exhibiting the pedantry of the examiner is much to be condemned.

Sir Gooroodass Banerjee was never enthusiastic over the present-day residential system of education, but he had great respect and admiration for the residential system as it prevailed in ancient India. He thought that the idea of paternal love and filial affection on the part of the teacher and the pupil respectively lay at the root of the old system, but that the modern system was too mercenary to stand comparison with or act as a substitute for the former. But as the restitution of the old system is not possible under the present conditions, Sir Gooroodass would much rather see boys live with their parents and natural guardians where possible than huddled together in messes and hostels, under the nominal supervision and guardianship of superintendents who may not



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be teachers at all, and amid uncongenial and doubtful moral surroundings. In the case of students living far away from their parents or guardians, he thought that it was to their advantage to live in well-managed and properly supervised hostels, but in the case of all other students, he was strongly in favour of their living with their parents or natural guardians in the interest of their temporal, moral and spiritual welfare.

He strongly advocated the formation of teachers' councils in schools and colleges for the benefit of the teachers themselves and in the interest of efficient teaching. He was also in favour of students combining into societies for self-improvement and training for public life, but he would place such societies under the guidance of teachers.

VI. The method of teaching as defined by Sir Gooroodass Banerjee, consists of rules formulated by long experience, some of which are general and, therefore, applicable to all cases, while others are special and adapted to particular cases, according to time, place and circumstances. But even the general rules must not be too hard and fast. The teacher should have the liberty to modify them in the light of his experience and in accordance with the special needs of the case. In considering this matter, it is not possible, within the limit of time and space at our disposal, to enter into details. We shall therefore confine ourselves to the consideration of the broad outlines of the general and special rules of teaching as defined by Sir Gooroodass.

For the method of teaching to be successful in



the case of beginners, it should be as much pleasant, attractive and easy as possible. The *Kindergarten* system may be cited as an example as how to make instructions attractive, pleasant and easy for beginners and any attempt to fetter it by a multiplicity of rules should be discountenanced, for then its main object will be lost sight of. There are certain primers in English from which children can learn the language "without tears." Books like these are best suited for beginners. The lessons prescribed both in quality and in quantity, should be commensurate with the capacity of the pupil. His young and budding brain must not be overtaxed and the dose should be such as he can easily assimilate

The teaching should be directed not only towards acquisition of knowledge but should also help towards the opening of the mind and intelligence. Knowledge is not of much use to a stupid man, he can not utilise it in time of need. The cultivation of memory, though useful, must not be effected at the expense of the power of understanding.

There should be thoroughness in teaching, so as to leave a permanent impression on the mind of the pupil.

The pupil should be taught method in every thing. This means that he should do every thing at the proper time and in the proper manner and this will grow into a habit with him. A habit, good or bad, is second nature. Therefore, good habits in everything, *viz.*, study, conduct, manners,



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conversation and in respect of physical wants, shall be helped to develop in the pupil from a very early age.

Mistakes should never be allowed to grow but should be nipped in the bud. Otherwise, a mistake will grow into a bad habit which is so difficult to get rid of.

In teaching, such terms should be used as would at once convey the clear meaning of the subject of study. Flowery but meaningless words, however agreeable their effects might be on the ear, should be avoided in the interest of good teaching.

In the case of a beginner, it goes without saying that the medium of instruction should be his own vernacular and that instruction should be oral for some time. Oral teaching is best assimilated by memory and it is a well-known fact that this faculty shows great potency in childhood. The young pupil should first be well grounded in his own vernacular both in reading and in writing, and one's own vernacular forms the best medium of instruction in every country of the world. In India, however, a good knowledge of English is absolutely necessary for certain classes of people in order to enable them to become useful citizens of the Empire and to earn their daily living, as also for the sake of acquisition of knowledge, but it is a mistake to make an Indian boy learn English at a very early age. English language is a foreign and difficult language, and much time is wasted and the brain of the child is too much taxed if he is made to learn it early in life. One could learn all useful things in his own verna-



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cular in much less time than in English because he has not to surmount the language difficulty. He could very profitably devote the time and energy saved in this way to the study of English language and literature when he advances a little in years. Sir Gooroodass strongly advocated the introduction of the vernacular as the medium of instruction in schools and colleges in many of the higher branches of study.

Sir Gooroodass held that the place of grammar in the study of languages is not the same in all languages. In the study of the Bengali or English language, a beginner need not be hampered with the regular study of grammar, but the case is quite different with Sanskrit. Here a knowledge of grammar must precede the study of the language. Sanskrit is written in Bengali character in Bengal but in Devanagari in all other provinces of India. He was in favour of following the all-India method in his own province, both in the use of characters and in the matter of the pronunciation of certain letters of the Sanskrit alphabet.

The student should be well-versed in his national literature and acquire facility in essay-writing. He should then carefully study the literature of other nations and assimilate all that is best in them. He must, however, studiously avoid all objectionable and immoral literature, either national or foreign.

Sir Gooroodass used to lay great stress on the study of Geography. He held that the student should first acquire an accurate knowledge of the geography of his own country and then a general



knowledge of the geography of the world. Geography should always be studied with the help of maps, globes and models. He assigned to it a very important place in the curriculum of school education and he always regretted the insignificant position attached to geography in the Calcutta University course under the new Regulations. Modern geography is a very comprehensive subject. Besides general and physical geography, it includes political geography, arts, industries, agriculture, climatology, the fauna and flora of the world and their distribution, economics &c, and it, therefore, constitutes a most important branch of study.

The study of history and biography is as interesting as it is useful. It helps the building up of a nation and the character of the people. The student should first thoroughly study the history of his own country and the lives of the noble and the great among his countrymen. This would inspire him with feelings of patriotism and reverence for his own country and countrymen. He should then take up the study of the history of other countries and biographies of other men who have contributed so largely to the intellectual, material and moral progress of the world. An education which fails to foster a spirit of nationality and love for one's mother country is not worth the name, but this feeling must be looked upon as a holy sentiment and must not be associated with dislike or hatred for other people and other countries.

Mathematics, including Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry and Mensuration should be made a sub-



ject of compulsory study up to a certain stage, and all students should be well-grounded in the rules and fundamental principles. They should be given choice in the advanced stages of their study whether to continue the subject or to give it up.

Elementary Science, in the opinion of Sir Gooroodass, should form a subject of study from early years. It increases the power of observation and improves the faculty of reasoning. It is also very helpful in the training of the senses. Science teaching should always be illustrated by experiments and appliances.

As students advance in their study, lessons in Agriculture, Commerce and Technology should be gradually introduced, and laboratories, museums, model farms, workshops etc. should be provided for practical teaching in these subjects. In Technology, those branches should first be taught which help the production of articles in common and daily use in the country. A knowledge of political economy is necessary to understand the principles which underlie international commerce. It should form a special branch of study.

As physical science helps us to learn about things of the outer world, so philosophy gives us an insight into the working of the inner world of mind. The study of the mind is helped by the observation of the results of our actions and by the practice of introspection and self-examination. The ultimate effect of such study is the knowledge of Self and the acquisition of "Self-control" on which the real happiness of a man depends. Physical science, no



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doubt, gives us a mastery of the material world, but what avails this power so long as we remain slaves to our passions and lower instincts? In self-culture and self-control, therefore, lies hidden the key of the gate of true happiness of mankind, and all education should be directed to the attainment of this. It is not true that the practice of these virtues leads to effeminacy and inefficiency as is asserted by some people. Self-control increases, instead of weakening, the working capacity of man. It only weakens and checks his capacity for doing evil.

Fame and honour act as incentives to good deeds. They should, therefore, not be decried so long as the higher incentive, viz., the sense of duty and doing work for the sake of work only, is not awakened in the mind of the pupil. Rewards and punishments are necessary in the early stages of education. The pupil should, however, be made to understand that the satisfaction obtained by doing good work is the best reward of such work and not any material substitute in the form of medals and prizes. Punishments, when unavoidable, should always be tempered with mercy, and the delinquent should understand that the punishment does not proceed from anger or revenge on the part of the teacher.

Morality and religion govern man's actions in relation to his fellow-beings and help to keep order in society. They help to improve the character and nature of man. Morality may be taught by the enunciation of the fundamental moral laws and



by efforts to make the pupil practise them in his own life. The first is easy of performance. There is hardly any difference of opinion among the civilised races in respect of the fundamental laws of morality. The second part is more difficult of accomplishment as it inculcates the actual practice of the moral laws in the life of the pupil. To illustrate the difficult nature of the work, Sir Gooroodass cites the well-known passage of the *Mahabharata* in which Arjoona freely acknowledges this weakness in his character to Sree Krishna :—

“जानामि धर्मं न च मे प्रवृत्तिः ।

जानाम्यधर्मं न च मे निवृत्तिः ॥”

When translated, it means—“ I know what is right but I cannot practise it. I know what is wrong but I can not desist from it.” The teacher, by his character, conduct and conversation, should always stand as an object-lesson to his pupils of the moral principles which he preaches in the class and see that whatever the students do in the class, in the hostels, or on the play-ground, conforms to the lessons which they receive.

Religion forms the basis of morality and true education should never be divested of religious teaching. In the peculiar circumstances of India, sectarian religion can not be taught in schools or colleges belonging to Government or receiving State aid, but there ought to be no difficulty in preaching sectarian religions in private institutions under Christian, Hindu or Mahommedan management and such teaching is desirable. In non-sec-



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tarian schools and colleges, religious teaching may be imparted on certain broad lines on which all creeds agree. Lessons about an All-just God and His goodness as manifested in His creation and His love and kindness for all creatures may, without any objection, be taught to all students irrespective of their creed, caste and nationality. The ultimate goal of life must always be kept in view. This is *salvation* for those who believe in God and in an after-life. This need not distract one's attention from the things of this life and from its present duties.

It should be solemnly impressed upon the mind of the pupil that duties well-performed in this life prepare us to enjoy the blessings of the after-life. This was the view taken by our illustrious ancestors, the old Rishis of India, who divided life into so many stages simply to facilitate the performance of the graduated duties of each stage with efficiency, and thus fit us by process of evolution to attain the ultimate goal of life, viz., salvation.

The sum and substance of Sir Gooroodass's advice in this matter is that any one set of faculties must not be cultivated to the neglect or exclusion of others, that it should be the aim and object of true education to allow legitimate latitude for expansion and development to each and every faculty in accordance with its importance in the economy of life. In one word, true education should create a well-balanced condition of the body, the mind and the spirit.

Like the industrious bee, Sir Gooroodass used



to gather honey from many a flower in the wide fields of knowledge. He was the author of a number of valuable books on law, education, mathematics and culture. His book on the "Hindu Law of Marriage and Stridhan" is the best and the most authoritative treatise on the subject and is widely read by both students and legal practitioners. In his works on "A few thoughts on Education" and the "Education Problem in India," he has tried to solve some of the difficult problems of Indian education. They contain the fruits of his wide experience and life-long labour in the field of education and are full of detailed and practical hints on the methods of study and teaching to suit pupils of various grades of intelligence and capability. The books bespeak of his profound scholarship in matters educational, both oriental and occidental.

His "Jnan O Karma" (Knowledge and Work) in Bengali is greatly appreciated by the reading public. It enunciates some of the noble principles laid down in the Bhagabad Geeta in relation to their practical application to affairs of everyday life. It lays down rules for the conduct of life which he himself followed and which he believed would help to minimise the sufferings and disappointments inseparable from our life on this earth and would secure for every man a fair amount of peace and happiness in the midst of his uncongenial surroundings.

Mathematics was the most favourite subject of Sir Gooroodass and he really enjoyed its study.



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His books on Arithmetic, Algebra and Geometry, both in English and in Bengali, are standard textbooks on the subject and have seen many editions. Their value is recognised by teachers for the simple and practical arrangement of the subject-matter and its scientific treatment.

It is not generally known perhaps that Sir Gooroodass was a ready composer of short poems both in Bengali and in English. He was very particular in observing the rules of grammar and rhetoric in all such compositions ; at the same time, he could make such a happy selection of words as to render them sweet to the ear and to keep the sense free from obscurity. A few Bengali poems composed by him are placed in appendix 3.

His many theses, lectures and discourses which have been published from time to time should be collected and brought out in a book form.

The Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science was founded by Dr Mahendra Lal Sircar, C. I. E., M. D., in 1876, the object of which was to invite, encourage and enable natives of India to cultivate science in all its departments with a view to its advancement by original research and to its varied application to the arts and comforts of life. Sir Gooroodass joined the Association as a member from its very foundation and afterwards became one of its Vice-presidents. He took a deep interest in the institution and his genial and inspiring presence was hardly missed from any of its meetings. The writer had the honour to associate himself with Sir Gooroodass Banerjee



DR. MAHENDRA LAL SIRCAR C.I.E., M.D.



in the work of this Association for twenty years.

The writer worked as Secretary to the Visiting Committees of the Hindu and Hare schools for more than nine years and Sir Gooroodass Banerjee was a member of both the Committees. One of the duties of a member was to periodically inspect the schools and submit reports, which were considered by the Committee and afterwards forwarded to the Principal of the Presidency College for information and action. Many important reforms in both the schools in respect of teaching, discipline and sanitary matters were introduced on the recommendation embodied in Sir Gooroodass's reports.

The work of Sir Gooroodass in the Calcutta University Institute is too well known to require detailed mention here. He was one of the founders of the Institution and continued to take an active interest in its affairs until the day of his death. He was for many years one of its sectional presidents and there was scarcely a meeting or function of the Institute which was not graced by Sir Gooroodass's presence. The writer had the honour to work with him on the Committee of the Institute for many years. Sir Gooroodass used to take a paternal interest in the junior members and did his best to advance their physical, moral and intellectual welfare. He took great interest in the recitations and dramatic performances organised by the Institute. The duty of selecting pieces for recitation in certain subjects and of acting as a



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judge was generally entrusted to him and it was his duty also to select books for representation on the stage, and his encouraging presence was hardly missed at the performances. To his interest and efforts to a large extent, and also to those of the late Professor Benoyendra Nath Sen M.A., the Institute owes its present magnificent habitation.

The writer had also the honour to associate with Sir Gooroodass in the work of the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad and the Sahitya Sabha, the two leading literary associations in this city concerned with the advancement of the Bengali literature.

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HIS EXCELLENCY LORD RONALDSHAY, G.C.I.E.  
 CHANCELLOR, CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY.

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## CHAPTER IX

SIR GOOROODASS AND THE CALCUTTA  
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Sir Gooroodass was a brilliant *alumnus* of the Calcutta University. We have already noted that he occupied the first place in order of merit in most of the examinations up to the M. A. in which he obtained the gold medal for the year in Mathematics which was his subject and which he continued to cultivate as a student up to the last day of his life.

He never appeared to be weary of appearing at University examinations. While practising in the High Court, he passed the Honours Examination in Law in 1876 and was admitted to the Doctorate in the following year. His *theses* for the Degree of the Doctor of Law were on the "Necessity of Religious Ceremonies in Adoption" and on the "Hindu Law of Endowments" and these were considered to be of very high merit by the examiners.

He was appointed Tagore Law Lecturer in 1878 and delivered a course of lectures on the "Hindu Law of Marriage and Stridhan" which stands to this day the most learned and authoritative treatise on the subject.

In 1879, he was first appointed an Examiner in the B.L. Examination of the Calcutta University



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and he continued to do this duty occasionally in the Arts as well as in the Law Departments of the University up to the last year of his life.

Sir Gooroodass was indebted for his high academic distinctions to the Calcutta University alone, and no one was more loyal and devoted to the service of his *alma mater* than Sir Gooroodass Banerjee. He was appointed a Fellow in 1879 and served on the Senate and in the Faculties of Arts and Law without break for forty long years of his life. He also served on the Syndicate off and on for many years. He held the office of the Dean of the Faculty of Law in 1912.

He was the first Indian Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University (and as a matter of fact of any Indian University) and held the high office for three years from 1890 to 1892. Referring to this appointment in his Convocation speech, Lord Lansdowne, the then Chancellor of the University, was pleased to observe :—

“ There was, however, a special reason for which I was particularly anxious to attend this Convocation : I desired to offer my congratulations to the newly appointed Vice-Chancellor of the University on his accession to the honourable office. He enters upon it with the good will of his fellow-citizens, of the University and of the Government of India. I do not believe that any more suitable selection could have been made. As a member of the University conspicuous among his contemporaries during his career as a student, as a man of cultivated tastes and scholarly attainments, as a



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distinguished ornament of the Judicial Bench, and as a gentleman occupying an honourable position in the community which is most largely represented among the members of the Calcutta University, he is admirably qualified to take a leading part in its affairs. It has been very gratifying to me, as indeed it must have been to him, to observe the manner in which his appointment has been received. I have been long enough in this country to become aware that in such cases, it is not always easy to please every one: but, as far as I have been able to discover, no discordant note has marred the general expression of approval with which Mr. Justice Banerjee's nomination to the Vice-Chancellorship has been hailed. I desire, therefore, in the name of the University, of the Government of India—and I believe I may, in this case, claim to be the exponent of public opinion at large—to congratulate the Vice-Chancellor and to wish him a very successful tenure of office."

Sir Gooroodass's Vice-Chancellorship was marked by a momentous change in the constitution of the Calcutta University. It was during this time that the election system was first introduced in the appointment of Fellows of the Calcutta University. In 1890, the Government of India for the first time conferred upon the graduates of the Calcutta University residing in Calcutta and holding the highest academical distinctions, the privilege of choosing two among themselves to represent them on the Senate of the Calcutta University and submit the names to the Chancellor for approval. The first



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two Fellows elected by the Calcutta graduates in 1891 were Mr. Mohendra Nath Ray, C.I.E., M.A., B.L. and Rai Jogendra Chandra Ghosh Bahadur, M.A., B.L. In referring to these appointments, Lord Lansdowne in his Convocation address gave a hint that it might be possible to devise some means of extending this privilege of election to those M.A.'s. also who were residents in the Mufussil. The election system has since been largely expanded and improved. Sir Gooroodass Banerjee in thanking the Chancellor for this estimable privilege, said :—

“ The 1st of January, 1891, will be a memorable day in the history of the University, and we hope that the principle of representation will be recognised in its constitution as fully and definitely as sound policy and right reason will allow ”.

The Calcutta University until recently was mainly an examining body. The practice of selecting paper-setters in its different examinations from among men who were concerned in teaching the subjects, was open to grave objections and led to abuse. It was during the Vice-Chancellorship of Sir Gooroodass Banerjee that the Syndicate formally adopted the rule that no one should be appointed to set questions in any subject of which he taught the whole or a part and this salutary rule has ever since been in practice in the Calcutta University.

He was appointed a member of the Indian Universities Commission in 1902. In fulfilment of his duty as a member of the Commission, he visited the different University centres in India and had



the opportunity of personally investigating the conditions of secondary and higher education obtaining in different parts of India. The valuable report submitted by the Commission formed the basis of the Indian Universities Act of 1904. Sir Gooroodass was unable to agree with his colleagues on some of the points dealt with in the Report touching the questions of—

- I. Constitution of the Senate and the Syndicate.
- II. Disaffiliation of colleges by the Syndicate.
- III. Fees in Arts colleges.
- IV. Transfer of students.
- V. Improvement of colleges.
- VI. Recognition of private schools.
- VII. Abolition of text-books in English for the Entrance Examination.
- VIII. Centralization of Law teaching.
- IX. Matriculation and the School Final Examination.
- X. Appointment of teachers to set question-papers.
- XI. Improvement of school education.

We do not wish to enter into details regarding his views in matters which engaged great public attention at or about the time. The reader will find a reference to his views on some of these points in this book in their proper places. For a fuller information, the reader is referred to his note of dissent.

Sir Gooroodass was never so happy as when addressing an audience of students. His annual



addresses to the students as Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University were conceived in a spirit of love and deep solicitude for their welfare and were full of counsels of practical wisdom as to how best to prepare themselves for the struggle in after-life. We would quote for the information of the reader a few passages from his last Convocation address delivered in January, 1892.

“Many of you, my young friends, may be thinking now that you have passed through the first stage of life, the stage of preparation, and are about to enter the second, the stage of action. The first stage with its incessant toil and rigid discipline may have seemed to you a disagreeable one, while youthful fancy may be painting the second in glowing colours as the stage of unrestrained activity and unimpeded fruition. I should have been most unwilling to dispel this pleasing illusion, had I not been firmly convinced that it is the source of little joy and much sorrow. The illusion must soon disappear and leave painful disappointment behind. Better far that we should at once know the realities of our situation, be they agreeable or disagreeable, to be prepared beforehand to meet what awaits us.

“Now, one of the most distressing realities of the world you are going to enter, is the immense disproportion between the many that toil and the few that succeed. If at any of the examinations held in this hall there is heavy failure, the result attracts public attention and evokes criticism, and steps are taken to prevent its



recurrence in future. But who can criticise to any purpose the conduct of the world's examinations? We must take the world as it is. But if you cannot make the world conform to your views, you must not, on the other hand, servilely suit yourselves to the world to achieve success. Depend upon it that there is often more honour in deserving success than in attaining it. Have firm faith in the consoling truth that in the inscrutable dispensations of Providence, out of evil cometh good, and that adversity is not an unmixed evil. I do not ask you to imitate the example of the pious lady in the Puranas who preferred adversity to prosperity because it enabled her better to remember her Maker, for prosperity is not necessarily an evil, and should therefore be greeted when she comes. But I do ask you to submit, if it ever be your lot to do so, to adversity's stern and chastening rule with calmness and fortitude. If she bears a frowning look, remember that

“Scared at her frown terrific fly  
Self-pleasing folly's idle brood,  
Wild laughter, noise and thoughtless joy,  
And leave us leisure to be good.”

“Another perplexing reality of our situation is the strange inconsistency between profession and practice. Very few men outwardly profess any principle of doubtful propriety, but fewer still perhaps are they who can inwardly say unto themselves they have never swerved from their professed principles. As students, you have spent



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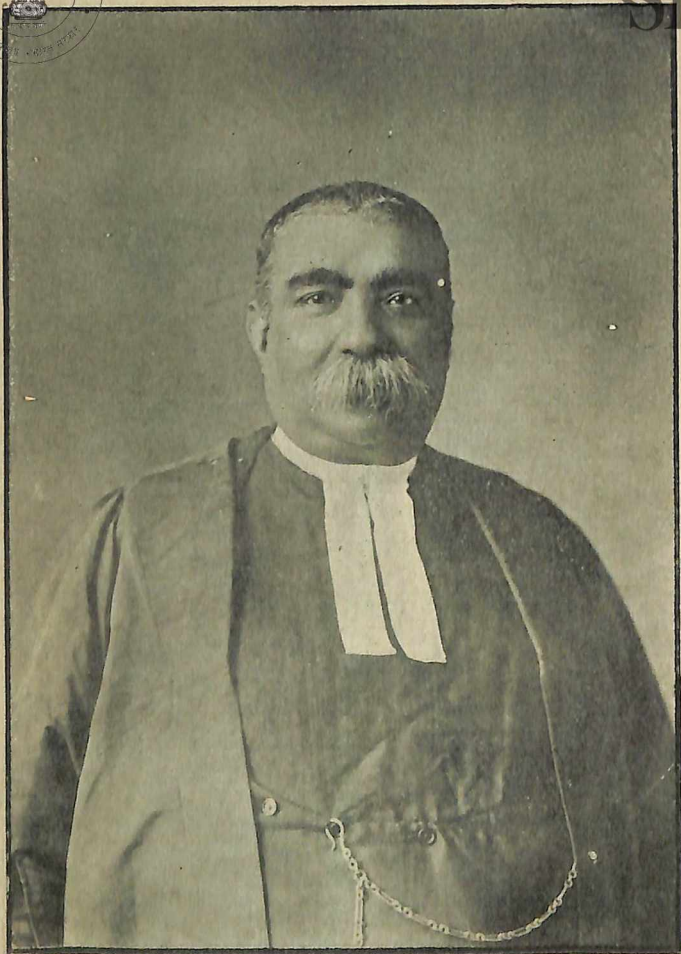
much time in learning principles ; be it then your first aim upon entering life rigidly to adhere to those principles in spite of the contaminating influence of example. If you wish to succeed in life, that is, if you wish to control the material forces of Nature, and the still more subtle forces that move society, so as to make them subserve your purpose, you must possess a powerful and a resolute will,—a will at least as powerful and resolute as can enable you to bring your own action into conformity with the principles you profess.

“If you are able to surmount these difficulties, if you can reconcile your practice with your principles, and if furthermore, you can reconcile yourself with your lot, you shall have earned that peace within, that true source of happiness, which even the most successful men often fail to attain. And your success, though measured by the amount of work done it may not be great, will surely not be small if measured by the moral strength acquired, strength which will not only sustain you in the race of life, but will stand you in good stead even in that awful stage of it that leads to eternity.”

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THE HON. SIR ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE Kt., C.S.I., M.A., D.L., D.SC., PH.D.  
VICE-CHANCELLOR, CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY.



## CHAPTER X

SIR GOOROODASS ON SOME PROBLEMS  
OF EDUCATION

Sir Gooroodass, although a lawyer and afterwards a Judge of the High Court, was pre-eminently an educationist above all other things. The only other person whose name naturally occurs to us in this connection is Sir Asutosh Mukerjee. Both these gentlemen have exercised for more than thirty years, a profound influence in shaping the policy and character of University education in India, particularly that imparted by the Calcutta University. I, therefore, offer no apology for briefly recording here the views of Sir Gooroodass Banerjee on some of the important problems of education.

**Education of Women.**—A man of Sir Gooroodass's breadth of views, profound scholarship and fine culture could not have failed to see the urgent necessity for the spread of liberal education among Indian women. But as his conception of womanhood and of the part she has to play in an Indian home was based on the ideal pictured in the Vedas and in the great Epics of India, he would put certain limitations to the scope and character of the education of Indian women. It must not,



however, be supposed that he was against our girls receiving higher education as imparted by the Universities, but, so far as I knew of his views in the matter, he would not make it a general rule, but only an exception in the present condition of the Hindu society. He wanted to see Hindu girls receive such education as to enable them to completely adapt themselves to the peculiar conditions and environments of a Hindu home and make them most useful there in the discharge of their many-sided domestic duties. He fully recognised the important part played by the Calcutta University in the matter of female education and he made this clear in his second Convocation speech delivered in 1891 when congratulating the lady-graduates who received Degrees at his hands in that year. He said :—"The encouragement of female education by its Degrees and other marks of distinction must rank as one of the highest useful functions of this University. No community can be said to be an educated community unless its female members are educated, that is, not simply taught to read and write, *but educated in the true and full sense of the word.* For, however proud man may boast of his intellectual superiority over the gentler sex, the simple truth must be admitted that woman is the primary educator of humanity. \* \* \* \* Our Eastern mind, notwithstanding its supposed antipathy towards the fair sex, conceived the genius of learning to be a female divinity, and it is therefore that our sage law-giver Manu, notwithstanding the harshness



to females which characterises archaic codes, has inculcated that memorable precept—

यव नार्यन्तु पूज्यन्ते रमन्ते तव देवताः ।

यवैतास्तु न पूज्यन्ते सर्व्वास्तवाफलाः क्रियाः ॥

“Where women are honoured, there the gods rejoice; where they are not honoured, there all rites are fruitless.”

Being a rigid Hindu, it was only to be expected that he would strongly advocate the zenana system and early marriage. But with all that, he did not fail to see the difficulties that the system created in the advancement of female education in this country and in his reply to the Calcutta University Commission's question, he admitted that the zenana system and early marriage were institutions which created difficulties in the way of higher education (as ordinarily understood) among women.

He was generally in favour of organising a separate system of education for Indian girls with different courses and periods of study and he was against making them feel the great burden of examinations.

He strongly supported the recommendations of the Dacca University for establishing a Women's College which he thought would supply a real want and would materially help the cause of female education.

**Residential University.**—The Calcutta University Commission Report records that “Sir Gooroodass Banerjee while admitting that a



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residential University has advantages and accepting the views that it should be tried in Dacca, overrates its drawbacks."

As the majority of Indian educationists strongly support the system of residential University and as this question is of momentous importance in respect of all Indian Universities, we would quote Sir Gooroodass's opinion in full in order that he may not be misunderstood. In his note on the Dacca University Committee's Report, Sir Gooroodass wrote as follows:—

"With all respect for the prevailing opinion on the subject, I am unable to accept the view that the best ideal of a University is one of the residential type. In saying this, I do not mean to suggest that the Dacca University should be of the non-residential type. I know that there is no room for making any such suggestion, as the Government of India and the Government of Bengal are agreed that the new University should be a residential one, and the point is no longer open to discussion; and my only reason for giving expression to the adverse opinion is to show that while a residential University has certain advantages, it has also certain countervailing disadvantages, and that it is not easy to say which side preponderates.

"A residential University is more adapted for physical and intellectual education than a non-residential University by reason of its being able to provide better teachers and appliances and more regular supervision than what students



can secure if left to themselves, and by reason of its relieving students from the trouble of looking after their board and lodging, and ensuring for them a certain measure of comfort. But it is less adapted for moral and religious education by reason of that very excess of help, assurance of comfort, and regularity of supervision, which are less helpful in training men for the rough world outside the college walls, where they have to be resourceful in emergency, to struggle patiently and cheerfully with adversity, and to accept the inevitable with calm resignation to a Will that is inscrutable and supreme. Living with parents or guardians, or in small messes under suitable occasional supervision, is far more elastic, gives students far better opportunities of mixing with human beings as human beings and not merely as students, and is far more conducive to the growth of those moral and spiritual qualities so necessary for the world, than the rigid routine and dead level uniformity of life in a large hostel, where the largeness in the number of boarders must make discipline to a great extent more mechanical than personal. Moreover, differences of caste, creed and colour may create unforeseen difficulties in this country. Then again, judging from facts, it can not be said that the graduates of the non-residential Scottish and German Universities compare unfavourably with those of the residential Universities of England. But I need not pursue the point any further for my present purpose, which is only to caution advocates of the residential



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system against being too sanguine, and against seeking to enforce it everywhere. Let us wait and watch how it works at Dacca."

There is considerable force in Sir Gooroodass's argument against the establishment of wholesale residential Universities in India from the social and economic points of view. The cost of living in a residential University is prohibitive in the case of a considerable number of students drawn from the poorer sections of our community who would prove no burden to their poor parents if they live with them at home. The burden is felt most severely where there are several children in a family to be educated. Moreover, it has often been observed that Hindu boys living for sometime in hostels and messes, neglect their daily religious duties and practices and become used to a mode of living widely different from that prevailing in their village homes. They feel as "fish out of water" when they go back to their native villages and find it difficult to adapt themselves to their home environments. Their relatives and friends in the village naturally view with alarm the change in their living, habits and conduct. The strength and sweetness of family tie suffer by long residence in hostels in large towns and this is a matter of momentous importance in the family life of a Hindu.

**Technical Education.**—Sir Gooroodass had always been a strong advocate of technical education. So early as 1891, he had the foresight to recognise the necessity for a course of technical



education in the Calcutta University and in his Convocation address for the year as the Vice-Chancellor of the University, he observed that the learned professions and all departments of service, whether public or private, in which persons who have received a liberal as distinguished from a technical education could find employment, were getting daily more and more over-stocked. Some true friends of the country thought that the kind of education which the University now encouraged could not be regarded as useful for all those who were seeking it and that it was time that the University should begin to recognise the necessity of technical education and institute examinations and confer marks of distinction for its encouragement.

A short time before his death, in spite of his failing health, he applied himself strenuously in formulating a scheme for the institution of Degrees in Commerce, Agriculture and Technology in the University of Calcutta. The writer had the honour of being associated with Sir Gooroodass in the Committee appointed by the Senate to draw up the scheme. Sir Gooroodass was most anxious to see the scheme passed by the Senate and while still in a bad state of health, he attended the meeting of the Senate and proposed the resolution himself with his usual clear and logical eloquence and had the satisfaction to see that the scheme he nurtured with so much care and at such great sacrifice of health was unanimously adopted by the Senate. He said :—

“ It might be said that commercial education, agricultural education and technological education,



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are very good in their way, but why should the University be asked to take them up. That was the idea that was shared by the great English Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. But there was a time when these views were practically sound. But times have changed. Not only has caste been broken in India, but its equivalent has disappeared in the West also. The son of an agriculturist is no longer an agriculturist; a barber's son becomes a Lord Chancellor, and a painter's son also. Here in Bengal, one belonging to the cultivator caste became the founder of an institution for the cultivation of Science; and an orthodox Brahmin, though too late in life, is anxious to take to agriculture. The struggle for existence is growing keener and keener and little knowledge that sufficed for successful agricultural pursuits and technological occupations a hundred years ago will no longer do. You must bring in greater knowledge and demand from Nature with all her kindness larger returns for your labour, and you must therefore help your labour with learning. We are now beginning to appreciate the dignity of labour, and you can only show your just appreciation of it by the introduction of the above-mentioned subjects into your seats of learning."

He disapproved of the action of the Dacca University Committee in not including Agriculture as a Department of the University. He observed that Bengal was pre-eminently an agricultural country and that Agriculture was the occupation of by far the greater part of the population. The progress of



society with its increase in numbers on the one hand demanded improvement in agriculture, while the progress of science promised fair prospect of such improvement. If the new University added a Department of Agriculture and conferred degrees in Agriculture, many young men who now wasted their energies to obtain unprofitable Degrees in other Faculties, would readily take to agricultural pursuits to the great relief of overcrowded departments of employment, to their own profit and to the general well-being of the country.

During the troublous times of the partition of Bengal when there was a great clamour for national education and national University, a National College with a department for technical education was founded in Calcutta under the patronage of some of the prominent educated leaders of Bengal. Sir Gooroodass, being a great advocate of technical education, saw great possibilities in an institution like this for the advancement of technical education in this country, and he devoted much of his time and energy to promote the interests of the college. The literary side of it, being a copy of the Calcutta University, ultimately failed to draw sympathy and patronage from the public, and it had practically to be closed. The technical side has, however, continued to live a useful life. It has recently been rejuvenated by a princely donation from the late Sir Rash Behari Ghosh, the greatest benefactor of education in Bengal.

**Religious Instruction.**—As an orthodox



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Hindu and a man of intensely religious turn of mind, Sir Gooroodass was ever anxious to devise ways and means for imparting some kind of religious education to our boys in schools and colleges. Although fully recognising the difficulty that lay in the path of a Government professing neutrality in religion in making suitable arrangements for such education in Government schools and colleges, he thought there would be no difficulty in initiating the boys, whatever denomination they might belong to, into those first and fundamental principles which formed the basis of all religions.

His idea was that the religious education of a boy should consist in the first place in the teacher's impressing on him the beliefs common to the principal religions of the earth, and they include belief in the existence of God as the Creator and moral Governor of the universe and as a Being whose attributes are infinite, and also belief in the immortality of the soul. The teacher should in the second place impress on his pupil the truth that all our duties are, either directly or indirectly, duties to God; that He sees where no human eye can see and that every violation of His laws carries with it inevitable evil consequences which we shall have to bear. The pupil should also be taught the salutary lesson that everything happens in accordance with the inexorable laws of God, and that he should submit to the inevitable with calm resignation. And lastly, it should be the duty of a teacher to endeavour to awaken in his



pupil's mind the consoling faith that as the universe is governed by an all-powerful and at the same time an all-merciful Ruler, everything must lead to the good of all in the end.

Religion, according to Sir Gooroodass, like morality, has to be practised and not merely to be professed, and practised not merely in the sense of observing certain forms and formalities, but in the sense of moulding all action and the whole life according to it. "The pupil should be told with all the earnestness of which the teacher is capable, to remember that God is with him everywhere and at all times, and that everything is in Him. To the Hindu boy, he might cite the well-known text of the Geeta :—

“यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वत्र मयि पश्यति।

तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मेन प्रणश्यति॥”

“He who sees me everywhere, and ever in me, never loses me and I never lose him.”

Of formal prayer, he would say nothing except this, that if it consisted in mere words, “words without thoughts never to Heaven go.”

He would advise the teacher not to dwell on controversial points in religion, as the intellect in boyhood was unfit to discuss such questions.

For direct religious education, he thought that the home and not the school should be the right place for it.

As regards religious instructions in boarding institutions, he supported the opinion of Sir



J. Fitch who in his Lectures on Teaching, very properly observed that where a school was a boarding institution exercising control over the whole of a boy's time, it should provide for religious education. Sir Gooroodass had to deal with this question in his note on the Dacca University Committee's Report, and he observed that it was difficult no doubt to lay down rules or principles regarding religious instruction and observance in the University, but it could not be said to be impossible. He says :—

“The difficulty, however, has to be met in a residential University. We propose to control the conduct of the student during all the 24 hours of the day, to provide for his physical and intellectual training, and also to some extent his moral training; and it is most undesirable that his religious training should be wholly neglected. A student who is religiously inclined will, it is true, arrange for his prayers and observances; but in the majority of cases, the greater truths of life which religion teaches, and the higher duties which it inculcates, but the fruits of whose performance lie in the remote future, will be neglected by reason of the lesser truths and less paramount duties, the fruits of whose performance are immediate, engrossing all our attention. I would, therefore, suggest that facilities for prayers be afforded, and some time set apart for prayer in the daily routine of the hostel, to call the attention of students to their religious duties.”

**Moral Education.**—Sir Gooroodass was ever



anxious to do as much as possible for the moral education of our boys in schools and colleges. In his first Convocation address in 1890, he referred to this matter and tried to impress upon teachers the necessity for paying close attention to it. He observed :—

“ There is one other educational question discussed during the past years upon which I ought to say a few words, I mean the question of moral education. From its paramount importance, it has naturally attracted great attention and from the difficulties attending its solution, it has given rise to much discussion and difference of opinion. Owing to the intimate connection between morality and religion on the one hand and to the necessity of observing religious neutrality on the other, systematic moral education has been considered impracticable. At the same time, it cannot for one moment be denied that if the object of education is not only to enable the student to pass the examinations and win prizes, but is to make him a useful member of society, mere intellectual education is a most incomplete education. It has often happened that brilliant intellectual gifts have been frittered away or, what is worse, applied to mischievous ends, while comparatively moderate talents, aided by honesty of purpose and strength of character, have achieved great and good results. The truth is that sharp intelligence without sound moral nature can no more make a useful man, than fine implements can carve a beautiful image out of rotten wood.

“ But if moral education is so necessary, how is



it to be given? I think the difficulties in our way, though great, are not insurmountable. Happily for man, the cardinal truths of morality are well known, easily intelligible and well recognised. The difficulty lies not in knowing them in theory, but in following them in practice, and to meet this difficulty, example is no doubt infinitely more efficacious than precept. If then we follow the plan recently adopted by the University in regard to the Entrance course in English, and in prescribing the course in literature, select pieces which illustrate the beauties and excellences not only of style but also of character, and if the teacher dwells not only upon the grammatical and philological points, but also upon the moral lessons taught by each piece, we may have a fairly efficient substitute for systematic moral teaching. This plan may, perhaps to some extent, interfere with the teaching of languages, but the advantage gained will outweigh the apprehended disadvantage.

"A great deal, however, will depend on the personal influence and example of the teacher. Arnold has done for Rugby more than a library full of moral text-books could do; and the same must be the case everywhere."

**Physical Education.**—In his Convocation address in 1892, he referred to this subject in the following terms :—

"Perhaps the most potent of all reasons why our education often fails to improve and invigorate the mind, and why the promises of youth are in



many cases so little fulfilled in later years, is our deplorable neglect of physical education. Any attempt to improve the mind without invigorating the vital energy would be like an attempt to increase the efficiency of machinery by mere internal adjustment without supplying adequate motive-power. Those who are entrusted with the management of schools and colleges should never forget their responsibility in this matter. They should strongly impress upon their students the indispensable necessity of attending to health, and they should encourage healthful and harmless physical exercise, and supply facilities for it, without, however, introducing any element of compulsion or restraint."

He was, however, against violent and prolonged exercise of any kind which he thought was not suited to the constitution of Bengali boys and which often interfered with their hours of study.

**Special Colleges for Well-to-do Classes.**—As an orthodox Hindu, he was a supporter of the caste system which he thought, had been a great factor in maintaining equilibrium in the social relations of the Hindus for thousands of years and in preventing the disastrous consequences of labour troubles which the West is at present experiencing. But as a student of the Geeta, he never harboured any feeling of dislike or contempt for any man who was inferior to him in caste but entertained love and good will towards all people who were blessed with the same divine essence as he himself was,



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and it was only *Karma* which he believed made the social distinction. But he denounced in no measured terms the perpetuation of any distinction by reason of caste, creed or wealth in the sacred temple of learning. When the Hastings House school was founded in Calcutta a few years ago for the purpose of educating Indian children belonging to the wealthy classes, he was strongly opposed to such a measure and openly condemned it. In these days of democracy, the organisers took a wrong step in starting a school on the basis of wealth and social prestige, and it was no wonder that the school met with scant sympathy from the public and died a premature death.

Sir Gooroodass strongly disapproved of the recommendation of the Dacca University Committee for the establishment of a college for the well-to-do classes. He made the following observations in regard to this question:—

“But the establishment of a college for the well-to-do classes as a part of the University is open to grave objection. In the first place, there is no necessity for such a college in connection with the University, as it is not proposed that students of that college should all read for University Degrees and as the classes for whom such a college is intended have ample means to establish a special college for themselves.

“In the second place, the inclusion of such a college in the University will impair the integrity of University discipline by the unequal treatment of the rich and the poor side by side, and will give



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rise to unhealthy feelings in each class towards the other.

"In the third place, those for whom it is intended will benefit far less by studying in such a college than they would by becoming students of an ordinary college and joining in the competition with a better though poorer class of students.

"To introduce distinction between the rich and the poor in the temple of learning would ill accord with one of the noblest and most cherished of human sentiments."

**Post-Graduate Teaching and the raising of the University Examination fees.**—On the question of the raising of the examination fees, the poor students found a ready supporter in Sir Gooroodass. He never forgot his own experiences in the matter or the difficulties that beset the path of an earnest student daily struggling with poverty. When the question of the enhancement of fees came up for consideration at the meeting of the Senate on the 16th April 1917, Sir Gooroodass entered a strong voice of protest against the proposal. He said that it had to be most carefully considered whether it was proper to increase the financial burden of the guardians of the candidates at the Matriculation and Intermediate Examinations, who belonged very largely to the poorer middle classes of the society, and he hoped the meeting would lend a judging if not a willing ear to the few words he wished to say on the subject. The recommendation of the Committee regarding the raising of Examination fees was open to various



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grave objections. In the first place, it threw an additional, onerous and to a large extent, unjust burden on guardians of the candidates ; secondly, it imposed the burden without any adequate enquiry ; and thirdly, the necessity of the increase in fee recommended by the Committee had not been established. The proposed increase in the fee was 25 per cent for the Matriculation and 20 percent in the I. A. and I. Sc. Examinations. They should remember the poverty of an average student. He did not draw on his imagination when he said that, before examination time, many students went from door to door to beg, so that they might scrape together the 12 or 25 rupees they had to pay before they were admitted to the examinations. It seemed to be unfair to raise the fees of the candidates at the lower examinations who already paid a fair amount which not only covered the whole of the examination expenses, but left a large surplus, in order to have a fund that was to be devoted to the purpose of Post-graduate teaching. That would be (to avoid a harsher word) taxing Peter to pay Paul. Then it might well be asked whether there was any adequate enquiry into the matter and whether there was any real necessity for the measure proposed by the Committee. They should raise the tuition and examination fees of Post-graduate students so as to make the Post-graduate classes self-supporting. The Committee was silent on that point. He maintained there was no justification for the raising of the examination fees of



the Matriculation and Intermediate candidates. He quite agreed that some Post-graduate teaching was necessary and useful. If available funds permitted, they might introduce desirable improvements and take suitable steps for further developments. But funds for such purposes should not be collected in a hard-hearted manner. They should rather confine themselves to making provision for the minimum requirements of Post-graduate teaching. Post-graduate teaching was all very well. But the staff should be limited to a small number of first rate men to guide instead of to coach students. They might well refrain from making provision for tutors and coaching for examinations. They should confine themselves to assisting the good student but not try their utmost badly to work up inferior material with mediocre agency at disproportionate expense. (Minutes of the Senate, Part I. 1917, Page 407)

**Classical Language *versus* Science.**—While Sir Gooroodass Banerjee was a keen advocate of the study of classical language by our University students, he freely acknowledged the beneficial influence which the study of Science, even in an elementary form, exercises over the education of our youths. In his opinion, a classical language at the Matriculation stage should be a compulsory subject, because at no other examination, they could find a place for it as such. No graduate of the Calcutta University should be without some knowledge of a classical language; and the reason for that was that some of the great



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set truths of life and learning, those that the human intellect saw first, were to be found originally in their pristine simplicity in some one or other of the classical languages. One of those languages, therefore, ought to be known by everyone who was to claim the rank of a University graduate. A classical language should, therefore, be compulsory if not in any other, at least in the Matriculation stage. On the other hand, some knowledge of elementary Physics and Chemistry was very necessary for a student at that stage, because some little knowledge of Physics and Chemistry was a *sine qua non* for the study of any other physical science. But apart from the truths they teach, some knowledge of those sciences has a higher claim to find a place in the Matriculation course, and that is by reason of the mental discipline they secure.

**Study of the Bengali Language.**—The importance of the study of the Bengali language and literature from the Matriculation to the highest stage in the Calcutta University has now been fully recognised and this has been brought about by the unflagging interest and determined efforts of Sir Asutosh Mookerjee assisted by some of his colleagues in the Senate of whom the name of Sir Gooroodass requires honourable mention. There was a time when the question of the introduction of Bengali even in the undergraduate stage met with a solid opposition in the Senate and even many Indian members looked upon it with great disfavour and suspicion.



When the New Regulations were being framed by the Senate in 1905, a motion was brought forward to the effect that Vernacular composition should be made obligatory upon candidates at the Matriculation examination. The motion was received with ridicule and the result was that there were only four persons in a Senate of seventy to support it. Sir Gooroodass was one of the minority of the four and Sir Asutosh Mookerjee was another.

Long before 1905, however, Sir Gooroodass had recognised the importance of the study of Indian Vernaculars, particularly Bengali, by our students in the different University examinations, and he made a special reference to this subject in his Convocation address in 1891. He said :—

“I also deem it not merely desirable but necessary that we should encourage the study of those Indian Vernaculars that have a literature by making them compulsory subjects of our examinations in conjunction with their kindred classical languages. The Bengali language has now a rich literature that is well worthy of study, and Urdu and Hindi are also progressing fairly in the same direction. In laying stress upon the importance of the study of our Vernaculars, I am not led by any mere patriotic sentiment, excusable as such sentiment may be, but I am influenced by more substantial reasons. I firmly believe that we can not have any thorough and extensive culture as a nation unless knowledge is disseminated through our own vernaculars. Consider the lesson that



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the past teaches. The darkness of the Middle Ages of Europe was not completely dispelled until the light of knowledge shone through the medium of numerous modern languages. So in India, notwithstanding the benign radiance of knowledge that has shone through one of the clearest media that exist, the dark depths of ignorance all round will never be illumined until the light of knowledge reaches the masses through the medium of their own vernaculars."

Sir Gooroodass was for many years a member of the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad and took an active interest in its affairs. The Bangiya Sahitya Parishad is an unique institution of its kind in Bengal and has done yeoman's service to the cause of Bengali literature by its collection and publication of many rare and valuable manuscripts and books in that language. Its museum contains a rich collection of inscriptions on stones and of ancient coins and other relics of Hindu and Buddhist civilization. Its motto is advancement of Bengali literature and it has done more than any other literary body in Bengal to help the growth and development of the Bengali language. At the time when the New Regulations of the Calcutta University were being framed, the Parishad appointed a sub-committee to consider how best to advance the study of the Bengali language and literature in the local University and Sir Gooroodass took a leading part in the deliberations of this Committee. It was he who drafted a letter which was addressed by the Parishad to the Calcutta



University insisting upon the imparting of instructions to Bengali students in all subjects (except English) from the lowest up to the highest stage of their University career through the medium of the Bengali language. Sir Gooroodass invariably lent his support to the introduction of Bengali as the medium of instruction in the Calcutta University whenever any question bearing on the subject came up for discussion.

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## CHAPTER XI

### SIR GOOROODASS IN PRIVATE LIFE

Sir Gooroodass Banerjee's private life was as sweet and pure as his public life was brilliant, upright and useful. His was the ideal patriarchal Hindu family in which four successive generations lived together under one and the same roof in harmony, peace and happiness.

No mother could be proud of a more dutiful son than Sir Gooroodass's. Her wishes were fulfilled and her orders obeyed even before they were translated into words and with a scrupulous fidelity to details. Personal comforts, conveniences and interests were of no consideration to Sir Gooroodass at any time in his long life, so far as his mother's wishes were concerned. Sir Gooroodass was unfortunate in losing his father at an early age. His filial affection and sense of duty which in ordinary circumstances are divided between the parents, were wholly concentrated on his mother who was to him a living god on earth. The high unselfish character and the simplicity of life of the pious old lady precluded the possibility of the imposition by her of any demand on the son on her personal account. The interests of her son, though naturally uppermost in her mind, were never allowed by her to supersede



the consideration of any matter, however trifling it might be, touching the well-being of any person within or outside the family circle, or to transgress the time-honoured traditions of the orthodox Hindu family. She lived to see her son become one of the greatest men in Bengal but this did not in the least change her conduct or bearing towards her poor relations and dependants. Sir Gooroodass's high character and exemplary conduct were moulded after his good and great mother. The story of the mother taking the son to task for studying overtime in order to secure the gold medal in the Law Examination of his year in competition with another brilliant contemporary of his, as related in a previous chapter, sufficiently illustrates the self-less and generous character of the lady. The well-known English adage that "a tree is known by its fruit," is nowhere better exemplified than in the case of this pious Hindu lady and her illustrious son.

To his children, Sir Gooroodass was a most affectionate father, discreetly indulgent but a strict disciplinarian in all matters relating to their physical, moral, intellectual and spiritual advancement. He watched with great solicitude over their conduct at home at all times during prayer, study, play, recreation and meals. Every one of them was expected to perform regularly the daily religious duties of a Brahmin and no laxity would be tolerated by him on any consideration whatever except in case of illness, and he himself was their great ideal in this matter. Disregard of personal comforts and conveniences for the sake of his religious belief was



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a notable feature of his character. As an orthodox Hindu, he would not touch any food in the morning before he had finished his *pooja*, and on certain special days, it could not be finished before 1 P.M. This habit made him wonderfully immune from the effects of fasting and privations. While indisposed, he sometimes used to attend the High Court day after day without taking any food except a little barley water. As a member of the first University Commission, he had to travel great distances all over India, and on many occasions, passed a day or two in fasting when he could not get food prepared according to orthodox Hindu style. I have known him to work in the Senate for hours together without taking any food when indisposed and he seemed to feel none the worse for it. All his children imbued this spirit of sacrifice for the sake of religion from the honoured head of the family and it grew a habit with them. The old Hindu way of showing reverence to parents and elderly relations by taking the dust of their feet and placing the same on the head in the morning was a most pleasing sight that could not escape the observation of an early visitor to the house of Sir Gooroodass Banerjee.

In matters of personal cleanliness, he was very particular and he was successful in inculcating this good habit among his children.

As an orthodox Hindu, he had great faith in the sanctity of the Ganges water, and in his earlier days and even while he was a Judge of the High Court, he could be seen on Sundays walking all the way



from Narikeldanga to Baghbazar to take his bath in the river. He was a familiar figure to the people living in those parts of the town through which he had to pass on his way to the riverside. I remember very well how people, old and young, men, women and children, used to flock to the front doors or at half-opened windows on the roadside to take a glimpse of the great Judge who still retaining the old Hindu faith in the sanctity of a bath in the river Ganges, used to wend all that way from Narikeldanga to the riverside on foot.

An amusing incident is reported to have occurred during one of his regular Sunday excursions to the riverside. One day when Sir Gooroodass was returning from his bath dressed in a simple *dhoti* and *gamcha* (napkin), an elderly Hindu woman who was standing at the door of her house, mistook him for a *Poojari* Brahmin (priest) and asked him if he would do her the favour of performing the *pooja* of her family god, as her family priest was ill and could not attend. Sir Gooroodass with a sweet smile accepted the invitation, entered the cottage, sat before the family god, performed the worship in all its minute details, tied up the simple offerings (rice and fruits) in his napkin and left the cottage with this homely bundle. We do not know what the woman thought when she came to know afterwards that she had made the great Judge of the High Court to act as her *poorohit* (priest) for that day. But so far as Sir Gooroodass was concerned, he did the duty cheerfully as he thought that *Pooja* was the first and the most important duty



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of a Brahmin over all other duties. This speaks volumes of his natural simplicity, his strong faith in the religion of his forefathers and his high sense of duty as a Brahmin.

He built a small house at Baghbazar on the river Hooghly for his mother's residence during the last days of her life. And here he was removed at his own request a few days before he died, firmly believing in the sanctity of the river and the high stage of spiritual life one attains if one is fortunate enough to breathe his last breath within sight of the river and with the touch of its holy water on his person.

As a neighbour, he was good, kind and always helpful. He had often to act as a referee in matters of dispute occurring in the locality and his decision was accepted as final by the parties concerned. For settling such disputes, he had often to devote much time and thought amidst his multifarious public duties but he never grudged such personal sacrifice which proved to be the means of saving many families from pecuniary ruin and other consequences of deadly enmity among the members. In all their pleasures and sorrows, he was the friend, guide and philosopher of his neighbours, and no event of any importance could take place in the neighbourhood without his knowledge and approval. As a votary of education, he was very keen to see that the poor men of the locality were given all facility for educating their boys, and with this object, he took the lead in the founding of the Narikeldanga High School



to which he not only gave considerable financial support but up to the last day of his life, took an active part in its management. He also helped the establishment of a library in Narikeldanga which has proved to be a valuable agency for the spread of knowledge among the people of the locality. He took great pleasure in regularly helping the children of his neighbours in their study, and on Sundays, the venerable old gentleman could be seen clad in a white *dhoti*, squatting on a mat spread on the floor, surrounded by the children of the house and those of his neighbours, spending hours explaining their lessons with a smiling face and unruffled temper.

He was a man who never subordinated the dictates of his conscience to worldly considerations. He never courted the rich nor the influential for the advancement of his own interest or that of his own people. He was the most reluctant person to remain in anybody's obligation on the ground that to do so might lead him to a delicate situation requiring compromise of his cherished principles. This rigid adherence to his ideals sometimes proved inconvenient to the interest of his own people. As a Judge of the High Court, he would not allow his *vakil* sons and son-in-law to appear in cases which were to be tried by him.

As a citizen, he was a most law-abiding and useful person. His opinion in all matters connected with the improvement of civic life was eagerly sought for and greatly respected by all sections of the community. He did not participate in politics



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proper, even after his retirement from the Bench, but his opinion on important public questions used to be sought for by the leading political organisations in this city. His was a never-failing welcome figure in all movements organised in the city for the advancement of the intellectual, moral, spiritual, economic and social life of the people, particularly of his own community. In these movements, he would give the foreplace to other men and work quietly and earnestly by remaining in the back ground. With all his great personality, he was most modest and unobtrusive in all public meetings. He would often be found quietly taking a seat in the second or third row in preference to the front bench and on one occasion when the present writer requested him to take a front seat at a public meeting in which he was one of the principal speakers, he courteously declined to do so and smilingly said that if one only knew where to sit, one would never have the trouble of having to quit it.

In 1879, he was appointed an Honorary Presidency Magistrate. He was for some time a Municipal Commissioner of Calcutta. In 1887, he was returned to the Bengal Legislative Council as one of the representatives of the Corporation of Calcutta and he rendered valuable help there in the getting up of the Calcutta Municipal Act which was passed in 1888. He was made a Knight in 1904.

I have already referred to the great interest he took in the welfare of the student community and the great love he bore for them. As one of the Sectional Presidents of the Calcutta University



Institute, he came into close contact with a very large number of students of all denominations living in Calcutta and it is not too much to say that he used to take almost a paternal interest in them. He was most anxious to see our students grow up physically, morally and intellectually strong and that they were brought up according to the time-honoured traditions of their races. Being himself an orthodox Hindu, he had unflinching faith in the religious belief and practices of his forefathers and succeeded in inculcating this faith among his own children and grand-children. He was very keen to see that all Hindu students should undergo the strict discipline enjoined by the Hindu shastras in the system known as *Brahmacharyya*. It has already been stated that he was never in great favour of wholesale introduction of the residential system of education in this country, as he was of opinion that it seriously interfered with the religious practices of Hindu students and encouraged laxity of discipline in their habits, customs and conduct in relation to their family and social life. He would give liberty of action to students within certain limits but would strongly discourage any sign of license or frivolity in student life. When the question of students staging plays for purposes of recreation came up for discussion in the Calcutta University Institute, there were some principals and professors of colleges who discountenanced the proposition on grounds of morality and interference with their studies. Sir Gooroodass supported the

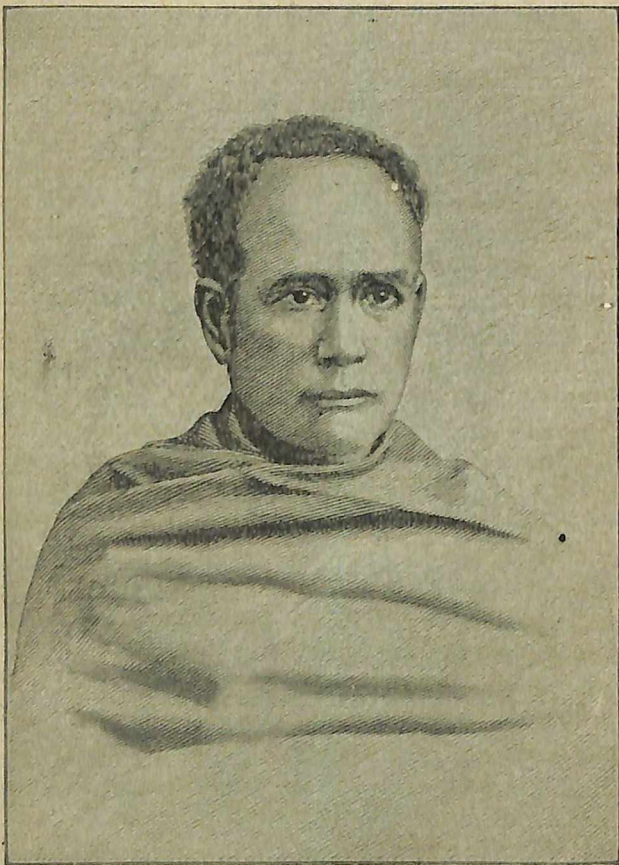


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proposition with this limitation that the play to be staged was to be approved by a competent senior member of the Institute and that some senior members should always be present during the play. When the junior members clamoured for direct representation on the Executive Committee of the Institute, Sir Gooroodass strongly opposed the proposal but advocated their representation through some senior members elected by them for the purpose. He was, however, in a minority and the proposition was carried. Subsequent events have shown that Sir Gooroodass's opposition was based on great foresight and practical wisdom.

As a lawyer and a Judge, he had great opportunities of studying human character in its various phases, its strength as well as its weakness, and he did not hesitate to apply his experience thus gained to matters purely domestic. On the occasion of a visit to his family dwelling house at Narikeldanga, the writer was taken by Sir Gooroodass to a number of neat, decent and separate buildings surrounding the main house which he said he had erected for his several sons—one for each. Although a staunch supporter of the joint family system, he could well read the signs of the times which unmistakably pointed to the extinction of the system before long, and, therefore, to avoid future troubles, he had made provision for separate habitations for each of his sons. The writer observed that there were separate drains running from each house which seemed to him as so much waste of land and money and he suggested that a common drain for all the



PANDIT ISWARA CHANDRA VIDYASAGARA C.I.E.



houses would have been a matter of greater economy and would have served the purpose equally well. Sir Gooroodass smiled and said that he had done it on purpose and he related a case which he had dealt with as a Judge in which two rich brothers fought bitterly over a common drain and were in the end utterly ruined. He made use of this experience when constructing the houses for his sons, although he was quite sure his sons were too good to make him apprehend such a contingency.

He was an orthodox Hindu but there was not the slightest tinge of intolerance of other religions in his orthodoxy. He firmly believed that all religions lead to the same goal. He always held great reverence for the life and teachings of Jesus, and he often used to relate before the members of his family for their instruction, various incidents from the life of the great Arabian Prophet. His orthodoxy, moreover, was confined to the limitations prescribed by the ancient Hindu scriptures. Where such injunctions were at variance with the present day customs and practices of the Hindu society, he adhered to the former and ignored the latter. The great Vidyasagar was put beyond the pale of the Hindu society on account of his advocacy of widow-remarriage. Sir Gooroodass, however, did not hesitate to invite him on the occasion of the *shradh* ceremony of his mother. Vidyasagar had unbounded admiration for Sir Gooroodass for his deep devotion to and great affection and reverence for his mother which he said was an uncommon phenomenon at the present age.



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Sir Gooroodass was a supporter of the *sea-voyage* movement.

He was a strong supporter of early marriage and this was a matter over which there was an irreconcilable disagreement between Sir Gooroodass and some of his friends and admirers including the writer of this book. Sir Gooroodass was once pleased to observe that while there were so many matters in which he and the writer were in full agreement, it was a matter for regret to him to find the latter sometimes flying at a tangent over certain problems of social reform, but he felt sure maturer years would help him to get rid of some of his outlandish ideas.

His charity was great but he never allowed his right hand to know what his left hand gave. He used to give regular help to many a poor student. No applicant for relief would go away from him without getting some help. The writer had once a talk with Sir Gooroodass in the matter of help being given to strangers of the *bhadralok* class whose number seemed to be on the increase. Sir Gooroodass said that in case of beggars of this class, his practice was to give them a small amount at their first call on the ground that they might be deserving cases after all, and as he did not know their antecedents, he would give them just so much as would enable them to get one meal at least for that day. He was a supporter of most of the charitable institutions in this city and the writer had the privilege of associating himself with Sir Gooroodass in the management of some of them.



It was a strict principle with Sir Gooroodass neither to lend nor borrow money. He often used to quote the lines of the immortal poet—

*"Neither a borrower nor a lender be. For loan oft loses both itself and friend, and borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry."*

It so happened that while he was at Berhampore, the Nawab Nazim urgently wanted a loan of Rs. 20000, and knowing that Sir Gooroodass was in a position to accommodate the Nawab, Mr. Cox, the Private Secretary of the Nawab, approached Sir Gooroodass and proposed the loan carrying an interest of Rs. 3 per cent per month (i.e. Rs. 600 per month) and in case of non-payment of interest for 6 months, it would be added to the principal. Sir Gooroodass gently but firmly declined the advantageous terms observing that they were precisely the very things that dissuaded him from accepting the offer. Sir Gooroodass enjoyed the fruits of his wisdom and discretion throughout his long life. We know for certain that he never experienced the worry and humiliation of being a debtor and it was his good fortune to be spared the pain of ingratitude and estrangement of indebted friends.

Sir Gooroodass's sense of self-respect was very strong and he would strongly protest against any attempt on the part of any man to trifle with it. He was very loath to ask for the slightest favour of any kind from any one.

Many years ago, at a meeting of the Faculty of Arts convened for the purpose of electing its

representatives on the Syndicate, a large number of names were proposed, and before they were put to ballot, Mr. W——, a high European Government official, suggested that the number of members present should be counted before the distribution of ballot papers to see that the ballot papers did not exceed the number present. Now such a procedure had never before been called into practice in any of the meetings of the Calcutta University and Sir Gooroodass felt very indignant at the insinuation of dishonesty on the part of the members of the Faculty which was involved in the suggestion. He made a vehement protest against the proposal saying that Mr. W—— should remember that they were members of the University and that was a sufficient guarantee to prevent ballot-papers exceeding the number of members present. On this, Mr. W——apologised and retracted his statement.

Another incident may be related here. When he was a Vakil of the High Court, he appeared in a case in a mufussil Court before a District Judge. The Judge had some doubt in his mind as to his being a Vakil of the High Court on account of his very young age and boyish appearance and addressing him said ;—"How am I to know that you are a Vakil of the High Court?" Sir Gooroodass respectfully replied that his junior who was a pleader of that Court would tell his Honour that he was what he represented himself to be. The Judge said that he was not satisfied to which Sir Gooroodass replied,—“Very well, Sir, I take my stand here on



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LT. COL. S. P. SARBADHIKARI C.I.E.,MD.,I.M.S



my right as a Vakil of the High Court. Your Honour may prosecute me for false personation if so inclined." It is needless to add that the matter ended there.

The late Lt. Col. S. P. Sarbadhikari, C.I.E., M.D., I.M.S., attended Sir Gooroodass in his last illness. He related to the writer the impression the great man left on his mind in the last days of his life. While suffering from agonising pain caused by the fatal illness, he never betrayed it in his looks or in his movements lest it would cause pain and anxiety to those who were nursing him. As he was declining, the influence of the mind over the body was more and more asserting itself. It was then only that one could see what a strong mind was encased within his weak and frail body. Nobody, not even the physicians, could prevent him from talking to his friends and relations who came in numbers to pay their last respects to the great man after his removal to the river side. He used to say that this was his last opportunity to speak to them and he would not allow his physical disability to stand in the way of fulfilment of their wishes. The shadow of death was hovering on his face, still there was no sign of fear or despondency visible on it. He would go on conversing with his visitors on religious and philosophical topics and on the Life after death. Even in this condition, he would give advice in worldly matters to his own people who he thought were in need of it.

It is the custom with the Hindus to raise an

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effigy of wood of *bael* tree (*Ægle Marmelos*) in honour of the departed parents and near relations when they die full of age, and Sir Gooroodass knew his sons would do it. He had a garden surrounding his family residence in Narikeldanga containing among others many *bael* trees whose fruits he highly prized, and he directed his sons in his death-bed which of the *bael* trees they should cut down to prepare his effigy. Considerable portions of the day used to be passed in the reading of portions of the Katha Upanishad and of the Bhagabad Geeta for which he had the highest admiration and reverence as books of religion and which he inherited from his father. Like a true Hindu with boundless love and faith in his Master and in a Future Life, his whole life was a preparation for death and when it at last came, he met it with cheerfulness, courage, faith and hope, and his soul left the shattered frame like a man who casts off his old garments to put on a new one.

The Hon'ble Mr. W. C. Wordsworth who presided at a meeting of the Syndicate held on 28th Nov. 1918 in the absence of the Hon. Sir Lancelot Sanderson, the then Vice-Chancellor, addressed on behalf of the Syndicate, a letter of sympathy to Sir Gooroodass in his sick-bed in which he prayed for his speedy recovery and expressed the hope of being benefited by his counsels of wisdom again in University matters. Dr. S. P. Sarbadhikari was the bearer of this message of sympathy to Sir Gooroodass three days before his death. Sir Gooroodass was then too ill to write with his own hands but



THE HON. SIR LANCELOT SANDERSON Kt., K.C., M.A., LL.B.  
VICE-CHANCELLOR, CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY, 1918-19.

*Reproduced from "The Sheriffs of Fort William"*  
*by Charles Moore.*



he dictated the following reply which Dr. Sarbadhikari wrote down and it was signed for Sir Gooroodass by his eldest son :—

“ Many thanks for your very kind letter of November 28th, 1918.

“ I am indeed deeply grateful to you and your esteemed colleagues for that touching message of hope.

“ May the abundant grace of my Maker and the over-flowing sympathy of my fellowmen which have so far sustained me during trial and tribulations continue to be vouchsafed to me in going through whatever has still to be faced.”

Sir Lancelot Sanderson was the first President of the Committee appointed by the Senate to raise a suitable memorial to Sir Gooroodass in appreciation of his invaluable services to the Calcutta University.

At about 1 P.M. on the last day, his pension cheque arrived and his people were troubled in their mind if it was proper for them to put it before him for endorsement. He came to know of it, understood their difficulty, asked the doctor if in his opinion he was in a fit state to sign and when fully assured of it, he took the cheque and in a shaking hand endorsed it on the back, observing that this was his last pension and he hoped the Bank would admit his signature. After this, he asked his attendants to open the window facing the river. He kept his gaze on the river, and settled down quickly in deep communion with his Maker. One of his sons began to read the Geeta which he listened

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to with rapt attention. He never spoke a word afterwards to any body. As death was approaching, instead of any signs of struggle, his face appeared to be illumined with a heavenly radiance, and peace and serenity sat there. His confiding soul ultimately took rest in the bosom of his Father at 10-50 P.M. on the 2nd December, 1918.

Thus died the good Sir Gooroodass Banerjee the coveted death of a true Hindu, on the bank of the holy river, gazing on its dancing stream, and with the sweet and hope-inspiring words of his ever favourite Geeta making celestial music in his ears. Great as he was in life, he was still greater in death. Both in his life and in his death, he has left behind an example which all men, whatever their nationality, creed or colour may be, would do well to imitate.

He has left behind him his widow, four sons and two daughters. Babu Haran Chandra Banerjee, M.A., B.L., who is the Secretary to the Council of Post-Graduate Teaching in Science in the Calcutta University, is his eldest son. Rai Bahadur Dr. Sarat Chandra Banerjee, M.A., D.L., the popular President of the Calcutta Improvement Trust Tribunal is his second son. Babu Upendra Chandra Banerjee, M.A., B.L., an officer of position and responsibility in the office of the Accountant General, Central Revenues, comes next and Babu Surendra Chandra Banerjee, M.A., Professor of Botany in the Presidency College, is his fourth son. His eldest daughter is married to Babu Manmatha Nath Mookerjee, M.A., B.L., a disting-



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ished Vakil of the Calcutta High Court. His youngest daughter is the wife of Babu Sudhansu Sekhar Mookerjee, B.L., also a Vakil of the Calcutta High Court.

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## APPENDIX I.

## SONGS

(Composed by Sir Gooroodass Banerjee)

[ ১ ]

ON THE KING-EMPEROR'S VISIT TO INDIA

সিন্ধুরা—তেওরা ।

কৃতার্থ ভারতবাসী—তব শুভ আগমনে ।

জানি না রাজরাজেশ্বর, পূজিব তোমায় কেমনে ॥

অতুল রাজ-সম্মান, দিয়াছেন ভগবান্,

আমরা কি দিব আর, ভক্তি-পুষ্পাঞ্জলি বিনে ॥

সতত প্রজাবৎসল, বশোজ্যোতি সুবিমল,

রেখেছ বিপুল রাজ্য, কি আশ্চর্য্য স্মৃশাসনে ॥

তোমারি গুণের তরে, দৃঢ় ভক্তি প্রেমভোরে

রয়েছে মোদের প্রাণ, বাঁধা তব সিংহাসনে ॥

১২ই ডিসেম্বর, ১৯১১ সাল ।

[ ২ ]

WELCOME TO DR. RABINDRA NATH TAGORE

গীত ।

উঠ বঙ্গভূমি মাতঃ ঘুমায়ে থেকোনা আর ।

অজ্ঞান তিমিরে তব স্নপ্রভাত হলো হের ।

উঠেছে নবীন রবি, নব জগতের ছবি

নব 'বান্ধীকি-প্রতিভা', দেখাইতে পুনর্বার ।



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হের তাহে প্রাণভরে, সুখতৃষ্ণা যাবে দূরে,  
ঘূচিবে মনের ভ্রান্তি, পাবে শান্তি অনিবার ।  
'মণিময় ধুলিরাশি,' খোঁজ যাহা দিবানিশি,  
ও ভাবে মজিলে মন, খুঁজিতে চাবেনা আর ।

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[ ৩ ]

WELCOME TO SIR JAGADIS CHANDRA BOSE KT.,  
D.Sc., F.R.S.

শ্রীযুক্ত সার্ জগদীশচন্দ্র বসু মহাশয়ের  
সংবর্ধনা উপলক্ষে—

পূর্ববী—আড়াঠেকা ।

এস এস সুধীবর, এস এ শুভ মিলনে ।  
ধন্য মানিতেছি সবে, এ তব নব সম্মানে ।  
বিজ্ঞান-সিন্ধু মহুনে, আপন প্রতিভাশুণে,  
লভেছ যে তত্ত্বরত্ন, অতুল মর্ত্য্য ভুবনে ।  
জড় বুদ্ধি ভ্রমভরে, জড় বলে দেখে যারে,  
তাতেও চৈতন্য-শক্তি বিরাজিত সর্বক্ষণে ।  
ঋষিগণ পুরাকালে, দেখিলা যা যোগবলে,  
তুমি অপূর্ব কৌশলে, দেখালে তা সর্বজনে ।  
ধন্য দিব্যদর্শী তুমি, ধন্য তব জন্মভূমি,  
উজ্জল তাঁহার মুখ পেয়ে হেন সুসন্তানে ॥

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## APPENDIX I

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### কলিকাতা-বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়-সমিতি সাক্ষ্য-সম্মিলন ।

শ্রীযুক্ত ডাঃ সার্ প্রফুল্লচন্দ্র রায় কেটি, সি, আই, ই ;  
ডি, এস, সি ; পি, এচ, ডি ।

ও

মাননীয় শ্রীযুক্ত ডাঃ সার্ দেবপ্রসাদ সর্ববাধিকারী কেটি,  
এম, এ, এল্, এল্, ডি, মহোদয়দ্বয়ের অভ্যর্থনা ।

(RECEPTION TO SIR P. C. RAY AND  
SIR D. P. SARBADHICARY)

### পূরবী—আড়াঠেকা ।

এসেছি ভেটিতে ওহে যুগল বঙ্গ-ভূষণ ।  
প্রতীক্ষা করিয়াছিহু তোমাদের আগমন ।  
গিয়াছিলে দেশান্তরে, বুঝাইতে বিদেশীয়ে,  
স্বদেশের শিক্ষা দীক্ষা, ধরেছে ফল কেমন ।  
প্রতীচ্য-স্বধীনচয়ে, শুনিয়াছে সবিস্ময়ে,  
তোমা দৌহাকার মুখে, সার সরস বচন ।  
লভেছ বাঞ্ছিত ফল, বঙ্গের মুখ উজ্জ্বল  
করেছ তোমরা, যথা দিয়াছ হে দরশন ।  
বাড়াতে আপন মান, চাহনা কেহ কখন,  
তাই তোমাদের গুণ, গাইবারে চাহে মন ।



SIR GOOROODASS BANERJEE

CSL

[ ৫ ]

A HYMN ON THE OCCASION OF  
THE SERVICE-PARADE OF THE BENGAL  
AMBULANCE CORPS

রাগিণী ললিত ( বা অন্য রাগিণী )

তাল—আড়াঠেকা ।

বিতর করুণা বিভূ এ তব সেবকগণে ।  
লোক-সেবা তব সেবা ভাবে তারা একমনে ।  
আত্মজন পরিহরি, বিপদ ভয় পাসরি,  
চলে তারা দেশান্তরে সেবিতে আহত জনে ।  
জননীর সুসন্তান, বাড়ায়ে দেশের মান,  
সাধিবে রাজার কার্য্য, এই সাধ রাখে মনে ।  
ঘোষিয়া রাজার জয়, যেন তোমার কৃপায়  
হেসে ফিরে আসে, এই বাচি হে তব চরণে ।

Vouchsafe Thy mercy unto these Thy Servants Lord,  
Service to man is Service Thine they firmly trust.  
Leaving those dear to them, forgetting danger and fear,  
They start for a distant land, the wounded to nurse.  
Worthy sons of their parents, adding to their  
country's fame,  
Their Sovereign Lord they cherish the wish to serve.  
May they by Thy grace come joyfully back,  
Proclaiming the victory of their King-Emperor—  
This is our humble supplication at Thy feet.



## APPENDIX I

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[ ৬ ]

ON THE OCCASION OF THE ENTERTAINMENT OF THE  
MEMBERS OF THE CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY  
COMMISSION BY THE CALCUTTA  
UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE.

গীত ।

স্বাগত হে সুরধীবৃন্দ এস এ শুভমিলনে ।  
আশাপূর্ণ মুখে বঙ্গ চেয়ে তোমাদের পানে ।  
কিসে বাঙ্গালীর শিক্ষা, সুপথে হইবে রক্ষা,  
হয়েছ তোমরা ব্রতী, সে সমস্তা সমাধানে ।  
প্রথমে জড়ের তত্ত্ব, জাহ্নুক যে পারে যত,  
শেষ লক্ষ্য পরমার্থ, একথাটি রেখো মনে ।  
প্রেমঃ যাহা দিতে হবে, সঙ্গে সঙ্গে বলে দিবে,  
শ্রেয়ঃ নহে হেন প্রেমঃ, হয় মোহ যেন জানে ।  
ভারতের মতি গতি, ভারতের পুণ্য স্থতি,  
ভঞ্জে যেন—এ মিনতি, তোমাদের সন্নিধানে ॥

Welcome Savants, this grateful gathering grace ;  
Bengala greets you with expectant face-  
For yours is now the solemn charge to find,  
How best to guide Bengala's youthful mind.  
First in material lore your learners train,  
Spiritual knowledge last they must attain.  
Give them the pleasant but let them beware,  
The pleasant that's not the good, is delusive snare.  
See that Ind in thought and in deed lives true  
To her hallowed past.—This is our prayer to you.



SIR GOOROODASS BANERJEE

CSL

[ ৭ ]

RECEPTION TO  
THE HON'BLE SIR SANKARAN NAIR, KT.  
(Rammohan Library)

পূরবী—আড়াঠেকা ।

ভারতীর বরপুত্র ওহে ভারত ভূষণ ।  
আনন্দে নাচিছে হিয়া পেয়ে তব দরশন ।  
শুদ্ধমতি সুপণ্ডিত, অবিশ্রান্ত দৃঢ়বত,  
তাই তো তোমার লাগি, অনুরাগী সর্বজন ।  
ভারতের শিক্ষাদীক্ষা, সুপথে করিতে রক্ষা,  
শুরুভার তব করে, রাজা করেছেন অর্পণ ।  
ধন্য তুমি মহামতি, ধন্য সেই নরপতি,  
যাঁর সুশাসিত রাজ্যে এই শুভ সম্বটন ।

*Bharati's* darling, Bharat's ornament bright,  
Our hearts are dancing joyful at thy sight.  
Pure of heart and versed in varied lore,  
Untired in work, in duty firm e'er more,—  
These virtues thine make thee beloved of all.  
To keep education from error free—  
This sacred charge the King has laid on thee,  
Blest thou noble soul, blest our gracious King,  
Whose righteous rule doth such a blessing bring.



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[ ৮ ]

WELCOME TO

SIR DEVAPRASAD SARVADHICARY Kt.

C.I.E., M.A., LL. D.

অভ্যর্থন-সঙ্গীত ।

ইমন কল্যাণ—যৎ ।

এস এস সুরিরত্ন এস হে বঙ্গভূষণ ।  
মিলেছি আমরা আজি গাহিতে তোমার গুণ ।  
ধীরমতি সুপণ্ডিত, নির্মল শুদ্ধ চরিত,  
কর্তব্য-পালনে রত, দৃঢ়ব্রত একমন ।  
কোমল সৃজন সনে, কঠোর হৃষ্ট হর্জনে,  
আত্মপর নির্বিশেষে, সদা ত্রায়পরায়ণ ।  
ব্যাপি বর্ষ চতুষ্টয়, তব বিশ্ব-বিদ্যালয়,  
চালাইলে বাধাবিল্ল অতিক্রমি' অনুক্ষণ ।  
লাভালাভ জয়াজয়, সম ভাবা সোজা নয়,  
তুমি কিন্তু সুখ দুঃখ ভেবেছ সব সমান ।  
ধন্য তুমি মহামতি, এ নহে সহজ অতি,  
দেশ-হিতে অকাতরে এত স্বার্থ বিসর্জন ॥

২২শে মার্চ, ১৯১৮ সাল ।

[ ৯ ]

SONG ADDRESSED BY THE INSTITUTE  
TO HER MEMBERS  
ON HER BIRTH-DAY CELEBRATION

পূরবী—আড়াঠেকা

( বা অন্য কোন সুসঙ্গত সুর )

সফল জনম মম হবে কিসে, জানিবারে,  
ডেকেছি হে সুধীগণ বড় ব্যাকুল অন্তরে ।  
আজি মম জন্ম দিনে, কত আশা আসে মনে,  
পূরে সে সব কেমনে, শিখায়ে দেহ আমারে ।  
চাহিনা কোন উৎসব, নিত্যকন্মে যে গৌরব,  
তাই যেন হয় লাভ, সাধি কার্য্য ধীরে ধীরে ।  
ঝঙ্কাবাতে বহাশ্রোতে, কবির কল্পনা মাতে,  
ভাবে মন ভরে, কিন্তু অভাব কারো না পূরে ।  
মৃদু মন্দ সমীরণে, ধীর ধারা বরষণে,  
বাঁচে জীব লভে অন্ন, সবে ব্যগ্র তারি তরে ।  
হে মম বান্ধবগণ, শুদ্ধ কর দেহ মন,  
তাজ প্রেয় : ভজ প্রেয়ঃ, নিত্য স্মৃতি লভিবারে ॥



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[ ১০ ]

THE NARIKELDANGA INSTITUTE

ANNIVERSARY

1916.

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এস এস বন্ধুগণ এস এ শুভ মিলনে ।  
বর্ষ গেল বর্ষ এল এ ছয়ের সন্ধি-স্থানে ।  
এক যায় অঁর আসে, কেহ কঁাদে কেহ হাসে,  
দুঃখ সুখময় এই, পুনঃ পুনরাবর্তনে ॥  
যে গেছে ফিরে পাবেনা, যে আছে তারে ছেড়না  
বৃথা গতানুশোচনা, মন রাখ বর্তমানে ।  
উৎসবে কি প্রয়োজন, নিত্যকর্ম্মে দেহ মন,  
পাইবে পরমানন্দ, সাধি কার্য্য সযতনে ।  
কর্ম্মে তব অধিকার, ফল চাহিও না তার,  
যদি কিছু থাকে ফল, অর্পিবে বিভূ চরণে ॥

[ ১১ ]

PRIZE-DAY

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATION, BENGAL

পুরবী

ভুলনা আনন্দময়ে আজি এ আনন্দ দিনে,  
সুখে স্থৈর্য্য দুঃখে ধৈর্য্য কে দিবে আর তিনি বিনে ।  
সুখ দুঃখে দুঃখ সুখে, বিজড়িত মর্ত্যলোকে,  
সুখ দুঃখ অমিশ্রিত, নাহি হেথা কোন থানে ।  
সুখ দুঃখ সম হেরি, জীর্ষা ঘেষ পরিহারি,  
লোক-হিতে হও রত, যথা শক্তি যথা জ্ঞানে ।



CSL

## APPENDIX II

## A FEW LETTERS

51, SANKARITOLA, CALCUTTA,  
*The 22nd October, 1888.*

MY DEAR DR. BANERJEE,

My sincerest congratulations on your elevation to the Bench. No man deserved it better. In giving you a well-balanced intellect and a temper that cannot be ruffled, God has made you a Judge *par excellence* by nature. May He prolong your life so that you may continue with ever increasing usefulness to be an honour to our country, once glorious and alas! now how fallen, is the earnest wish and prayer of

Your sincere admirer  
MAHENDRA LAL SIRCAR

---

HAZARIBAG GREEN VILLA,  
*24th October, 1888.*

MY DEAR GOOROODASS,

I have perused with great delight in the "Englishman" of the 22nd instant which I have received here to-day that you succeed Mr. Justice Cunningham. Accept my sincere and hearty congratulations upon the success you have achieved. By your learning, industry, perseverance, capacity for work, superior intellectual capacity and above all by your thorough rectitude of purpose and independence of character, you have richly deserved the honour that has been



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conferred upon you. I have not the least doubt that you will sustain the reputation that you have deservedly earned, in this new walk of life. I cordially welcome you as a valuable co-adjutor and colleague.

With best wishes,

I remain,

Yours very sincerely,

ROMESH CHUNDER MITTER

---

MADHUPUR,

25th October, 1888.

MY DEAR DR. BANERJEE,

Allow me to couple the usual Vijaya felicitations with my sincere congratulations on your elevation to the highest honour which a native of this country can aspire to. What has been so long confidently anticipated has come to pass to the great joy of your friends and admirers, whose number, I am glad to say, is legion, and who are well aware that you are the only one who is entitled to the unique distinction of being called “*सजातशतृ*” in this “iron age.”

It is my fervent prayer that you may live long to enjoy the prosperity and happiness with which God rewards unassuming goodness, and unpretentious purity.

Believe me,

With the kindest regards,

Yours ever sincerely,

NILMANI MUKERJEE

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SIR GOOROODASS BANERJEE

CSL

THE PALACE, MOORSHEDABAD,

27th October, 1888.

MY DEAR GOOROODASS BABU,

It is long since I have had the pleasure of seeing or hearing from you ; but I have always been happy to learn from the papers and other sources that you have been doing as well in the world as one could wish for. I now learn that you have been appointed a judge of the High Court. Government by honouring you with the appointment, has honoured the whole native community ; as by your character and attainments you are indeed an ornament to our society. I congratulate you heartily on the honour which Government has thus conferred upon you, an honour which I hope you may long continue to enjoy with every credit and success.

Trusting you are quite well,

YOUR SINCERE WELL-WISHER

HUSSAN ALI MIRZA.

---

3, KYD STREET,  
October 31st, 1888.

MY DEAR DR. GURU DAS,

I have just returned from Dehli and Agra and hasten to congratulate you on your well earned elevation to the High Court Bench.

Not only you yourself but the public also are to be congratulated on the selection made.

Yours sincerely,  
H. L. HARRISON

---



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I, PUDDOPOOKER SQUARE,  
KIDDERPORE,  
1st November, 1888.

MY DEAR GURUDASS BABU,

I sincerely congratulate you on your elevation to the Bench. I am especially delighted that a *Banerjee* has at last been selected (though the *first* opening made in the Bench was for a Banerjee), and that the choice has fallen upon the fittest among them.

\* \* \* \* \*

Believe me,  
Yours sincerely,  
HEM CHANDRA BANERJEE.

---

NATTORE,  
5th November, 1888

MY DEAR SIR,

I read in this Week's Calcutta Gazette of your appointment as a Judge of the High Court. Allow me to offer you my most sincere congratulations on your accession to the Bench. It is remarked in some of the native papers that the appointment has caused great heart-burning to the Mahomedans. It is singularly unfortunate that attempts should be made by those who ought to know better, to turn any thing and every thing into a race question. I may however assure you, if indeed such assurance be needed, that whatever others may think, those at least among the Mahomedans who have the privilege of knowing you personally, cannot



SIR GOOROODASS BANERJEE

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but feel that a happier choice could not have been made.  
Hoping you will live long to enjoy these honours,

I remain,  
Yours sincerely,  
SYED SHAMSUL HUDA

---

NYNEE TAL,  
*October 18, 1889.*

MY DEAR GURU DAS,

I felt very much for you on hearing of your great sorrow, for it was only the other day that you were telling me how much you owed to your mother and I know from the old Berhampore days what deep affection you felt and what a devoted son you have been. This last must be your great consolation. It is not two years since I lost my mother who was to me all that yours was. Therefore I can thoroughly sympathise with you.

You must get over this sorrow by feeling that she is happier somewhere else, to us unknown, and free from all the troubles of this life. I hope that your sickness is nothing much.

Yours very sincerely,  
H. T. PRINSEP

---

43, CHOWRINGHEE,  
CALCUTTA,  
*November 14, 1889.*

MY DEAR BANERJEE,

I had heard of your great loss and know from experience that such a blow is not softened by the fact that it had been expected. Nothing but the conviction that there is another world where what is wrong here will be set right, is any comfort and that I know you



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have. Do not trouble about work or about your leave. In any case, I shall take care that you are not troubled until you are strong enough to come back.

Yours sincerely,  
W. COMER PETHERAM

---

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, CALCUTTA,  
*December 10, 1889.*

DEAR MR. JUSTICE BANERJEE,

The Vice-Chancellorship of the Calcutta University will shortly be vacant owing to the retirement of Sir Comer Petheram. The Chief Justice has, as I dare say you are aware, retained office until now at my request in order to give me an opportunity of making a careful selection which I could not have done while I was at a distance from this place.

I am convinced that no one could fill this honorable and important position in a manner more satisfactory to the University and to the public than yourself, and I venture to express my hope that the offer of the appointment, which I now make to you, will be agreeable to you, and that I shall have your permission to announce that it is accepted.

I am, dear Mr. Justice Banerjee,

Yours very truly,  
LANSDOWNE

---

NARIKELDANGA,  
*10th December, 1889.*

DEAR LORD LANSDOWNE,

I feel deeply thankful to your Excellency for your



SIR GOOROODASS BANERJEE

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doing me the honour of offering me the Vice-Chancellorship of the Calcutta University, and still more so for the exceedingly kind terms in which you have been pleased to make the offer. I deem it my duty to accept your Excellency's kind offer most thankfully and to do all that in me lies to make myself useful for the responsible office to which you have been pleased to think of appointing me.

I remain, dear Lord Lansdowne,  
with profound respect,  
Yours obediently,  
GOOROODASS BANERJEE

---

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, CALCUTTA,  
*10th December, 1889.*

DEAR MR. JUSTICE BANERJEE,

I am delighted to learn that you are able to accept the Vice-Chancellorship. I congratulate you and the University.

With best thanks for the courteous terms in which you have written to me, I am,

Dear Mr. Justice Banerjee,  
Yours sincerely,  
LANSDOWNE

---

36, CHOWRINGHEE,  
*12-12-89.*

MY DEAR GURUDASS,

You will allow me with all respect to give you my most hearty congratulations on your appointment as Vice-Chancellor of the University.

I am sure you value the appointment as a high honor.



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It is I believe the very best which could have been made and will be acknowledged by every Member of the Senate with acclamation.

Yours sincerely  
H. J. S. COTTON

সনমস্কার সান্ন্যাস নিবেদন—

অনেক দিবস পবে কোর্টে যাইতেছেন—পরিশ্রম হইতেছে, কেমন আছেন? জানিতে বাঞ্ছা করি।

আপনি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে যে সর্বোচ্চ পদ লাভ করিয়াছেন, যাহা অত্মপি কোন বাঙ্গালীর ভাগ্যে ঘটে নাই। এ সংবাদে কতদূর আনন্দিত হইয়াছি, তাহা পত্রে লিখিয়া প্রকাশ নিতান্ত অসম্ভব। পরং কোন আনন্দই মর্ত্যগণের “যন্ন হুঃখেন সংভিন্নং ন চ গ্রন্থমনন্তরং” হইবার নহে, সুতরাং এই আনন্দ প্রকাশের সময়েও একটু হুঃখ এই হয় যে পুণ্যশ্লোকা ভবন্মাতৃদেবী এ পদটীও দেখিয়া যাইতে পারিলেন না। তিনি অগ্নও জীবিত থাকিলে না জানি কেমনই আনন্দিতা হইতেন। যাহা হউক, আপনি যে উত্তরোত্তর এ রাজ্যের অতুচ্চ পদ সমস্তে অধিরোহন করিতেছেন, ইহাতে সেই পরমেশ্বরের পরাংপরের অপার করুণাই প্রকাশ পাইতেছে। অতএব কায়মনোবাক্যে তাঁহাকেই ধন্যবাদ প্রদাতব্য এবং আপনার নীরোগ দীর্ঘজীবন সতত প্রার্থনীয়। যেহেতু আপনার জীবন এক্ষণে বাঙ্গালী জাতির পক্ষে বড়ই মূল্যবান হইয়া উঠিয়াছে। ঈশ্বর আপনার সর্বতোমঙ্গল করুন।

\* \* \* \* \*

ইতি তাং ৫ই পৌষ ১২২৬ সাল

একান্তানুগত

শ্রীসত্যব্রত শর্মা

১৬/১ নং ঘোষের লেন

শ্রীরামঃ শরণম্

প্রিয় গুরুদাস বাবু—

প্রথমে মনে করিয়াছিলাম যে আপনার সহিত আর লৌকিকতা কি করিব, অন্তরের ভাব আর বাহ্যে কি জানাইব। কিন্তু ভালবাসা আসিয়া “চাপলায় প্রণোদিতঃ” করিল; ভোরের সময় নিত্যকৃত্য করিতে বসিয়া এই পত্রখানি লিখিতে যেন কেহ আসিয়া উপদেশ দিল—হুকুম দিল। তাই লিখি।

আপনি যে কয়েক বৎসর হইতে আন্তরিক যত্ন ও পরিশ্রম সহকারে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের কার্য সম্পন্ন করিতেছেন, গোলযোগ সকল নিবারণ করিবার নিমিত্ত বিহিত চেষ্টা করিতেছেন, ইহা ঈশ্বর জানিয়াই যেন বড় লাটের দ্বারা তাহার ফল দিলেন, বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের কর্ত্তা করিলেন।

আশীর্ব্বাদ করি, নীরোগী হইয়া উক্ত সম্মান ভোগ করুন, দেশের উপকার করুন, বঙ্গের মুখ উজ্জ্বল করুন।

এ স্থলে ইহাও বক্তব্য যে “এ সময় বাঙ্গালী ভাইস্ চান্সেলার হওয়া ভাল নয়, সাহেব দল উদাসীন হইবেন” এইটী আমার মত। কিন্তু যখন বাঙ্গালীকেই দেওয়া কর্ত্তৃপক্ষের ইচ্ছা হইয়াছে, তখন আপনাকে দেওয়া যে ঠিক হইয়াছে সে বিষয়ে সন্দেহ নাই। আপনি হওয়াতে অনেক সাহেব খুসী হইবে। আপনি উভয়-দলকেই খুসী করিতে পারিবেন আমার বিশ্বাস। আপনার প্রতি কাহারও রাগ বা বিদ্বেষ নাই। ইতি—

শ্রীমহেশ চন্দ্র শর্মা



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PACHAMBA,  
30th October, 1890.

MY DEAR DR. BANERJEE,

It is only at this place that I have had an opportunity of reading your address at the last meeting of the Senate, and I feel an impulse to write to you at once with what deep pleasure I have read it. It is eloquent in the highest sense of the term, as beautiful in language and diction, as replete with thought and argument. I think Lord Lansdowne ought to be proud of his Vice-Chancellor as certainly we are. After your speech I think the Syndicate can await with indifference, the final issue of the matter.

\* \* \* \* \*

Yours sincerely,  
A. M. BOSE

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51, SANKARITOLA, CALCUTTA,  
*The 24th January, 1891.*

MY DEAR DR. BANERJEE,

The other day I could not wait to receive your congratulations, for which I am not sorry as they were undeserving on my part. To-day I could not wait for a similar reason to offer you my congratulations, and I am very sorry for this, as in my humble opinion yours has been one of the best convocation speeches that has ever been delivered in our University, not excepting even Sir Henry Maine's and Lord Lytton's. I only hope that your sound and weighty advice and your earnest and eloquent appeal have not fallen on deaf ears. The last part of your speech ought to be written in letters of



SIR GOOROODASS BANERJEE

CSL

gold for the admonition of graduates of all our Indian Universities.

Ever sincerely yours,  
MAHENDRA LAL SIRCAR

NARIKELDANGA,

.. March 6, 1893.

DEAR SIR,

You have requested me to let you know how I liked last evening's performance of Macbeth in Bengali at the Minerva Theatre, and I am glad to say that I was exceedingly pleased with it. The stage arrangements, except as to one or two matters, such as the appearance of Banquo's ghost at the banquet scene (as to which again there has been some difference of opinion) were very good; the scenes were excellent, and the perspective effect of some of them was complete; and the acting especially that of Macbeth and of Lady Macbeth (except in the somnambulism scene which admitted of some evident improvement), was very successful. The chief merit of the play consists no doubt in rendering Shakespeare into Bengali. I have not had any opportunity of reading the translation, but so far as one can judge from witnessing the play only once, I think it is faithful, elegant and in many places powerfully expressive. I must not here omit to mention that the concert was quite in keeping with the general excellence of the other accompaniments of the play.

Yours sincerely,  
GOOROODASS BANERJEE



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MINERVA THEATRE,  
*The 7th March, 1893.*

MY DEAR SIR,

With no ordinary pride, I recall to memory those days of Arcadian bliss when I had the honour of being in the same class with yourself. I have been ever since watching from a respectful distance with redoubled interest your exceptionally glorious career, in which, pardon the remark, I cannot but take a personal interest notwithstanding the wide gulf intervening between one who is now so justly "the observed of all observers" and the other rotting in merited obscurity. I realise at my cost the homely Bengali adage,

“এক বাড়ির বাঁশেই ফুলের সাজি আর মেথরের বুড়ি হয়।”

It is for you to judge how far even in my humble lot I have succeeded in getting out the filth at the hands of the *Methar*. With these prefatory remarks I beg to avail myself of your kind permission to send you here-with our Visitors' book which I have purposely kept un-opened till now, as poor as I am I have sufficient self-respect not to thrust myself on anyone in whose sound judgment I have not sufficient confidence. As I have taken a bold step in attempting to popularise Shakespeare on the Native stage, I have, I fear, thrust my finger into a bee-hive, and my competitors in the field have been moving heaven and earth to throw cold water on my attempt. Hence your kind remarks in our Visitors' book will indeed be quite in time to protect me from my adversaries. Kindly take the trouble to dwell on all the points connected with our stage including the concert. The reason why I aspire to the honour of having the remarks entered in that book in preference to a separate slip of paper is simply to



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make the former have an auspicious beginning at your hands.

Respectfully yours,  
GIRISH CHANDRA GHOSE

NARIKELDANGA,  
*February,—1897.*

MY DEAR SIR ALFRED,

More than once I thought of calling on you ; but I have given up the thought as I fear these farewell visits must cause severe strain on a mind endued with such keen and refined sensibility as yours, and as I hope I shall have an opportunity of meeting you at the convocation of the University.

I cannot however refrain from giving some expression, inadequate as it must be, to the deep feeling of regret which your approaching retirement from India has occasioned.

I have had the honour and the pleasure of working with you for about one year in the Bengal Legislative Council, and for many years in the University ; and though we have had our differences of opinion on divers points, your never failing courtesy, your dignified and genial manners, your perfect fairness in debate and your rare power of comprehensive grasp and clear expression have left on my mind an impression which my regret for your retirement is serving to develop and intensify, and which will long be cherished with feelings of respect and admiration.

Not being of a demonstrative turn of mind myself, and knowing well that you are the very reverse of that and have always done your good offices to others in



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a most quiet and unostentatious manner, I felt considerable hesitation before writing this letter ; and I write it at last under an impulse which I find it difficult to resist. Why I felt this impulse I leave it to you as a psychologist to determine ; and if your psychology fails to solve the question, I leave it to your goodness, which I am sure will never fail, to pardon this intrusion at a time when you must be very busy.

Heartily wishing you health and happiness,

I remain,

Yours very sincerely,  
GOOROODASS BANERJEE

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9, LOUDON STREET,  
20th February, 1897.

MY DEAR DR. BANERJEE,

Your most kind letter touches me very deeply. I cannot conceal from myself that your estimate of me is altogether too favourable ; but that does not prevent me from taking pride and pleasure in your letter, for you are one of those who say no more than they feel.

I need not tell you of the admiration and regard in which I have always held you. You have been a sincere and constant friend to me, and the memory of your friendship will dwell with me as an abiding possession.

May I ask you to accept the accompanying photograph ? I shall be glad to know that you will keep it by you.

With every good wish I remain,  
Very sincerely yours,  
A. CROFT.

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SIR GOOROODASS BANERJEE

CSL

শ্রীশ্রী:—

৮৫ নং গ্রেটস্ট্রিট, কলিকাতা,

১লা জুন, ১৯০২

প্রণাম পূর্বক নিবেদন—

আপনার টেলিগ্রাম ও দুইখানি আশীর্বাদ পত্র পাইয়াছি। আপনার যত্নে ও গুণে কেবল আমিই যে উন্নত হইয়াছি এমন নহে; আপনি বাঙ্গালী মাত্রেই গৌরবের স্থান এবং বাঙ্গালী মাত্রই আপনার নিকট কৃতজ্ঞতা পাশে বদ্ধ। আপনার বিজ্ঞা, বুদ্ধি ও জ্ঞানপরতাই সার ফ্রান্সিসের উকীলদিগের উপর শ্রদ্ধার ভিত্তি। আপনার যত্নে সেই শ্রদ্ধার বিকাশ হইয়াছে। হাইকোর্টে তিন জন উকীল জজ্ হওয়া সামান্ত কথা নহে। ইহাতে গবর্ণ-মেন্ট ও সার ফ্রান্সিস আমাদের সকলের ধন্যবাদার্থ; কিন্তু যিনি প্রকৃত ধন্যবাদার্থ, তাঁহার কথা কেহ মনে করে না; তিনি একরূপ নিম্পৃহভাবে নিজের গুণ প্রদর্শন করেন এবং একরূপ অপ্রকাশিত ভাবে কর্মক্ষেত্রে কর্ম করেন যে বিশেষ প্রণিধান করিয়া না দেখিলে তাঁহার কিছুই জানা যায় না।

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প্রণত

শ্রীসারদা চরণ মিত্র

BANGALORE,

December 23, 1903.

MY DEAR DR. BANERJEE,

I am very sorry to read in the papers an announcement that you are about to retire from the High Court. I hope that rest will soon restore your health and that



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you may still be able to give the advantage of your knowledge and experience in other departments of public work. There is much to be done with the University during the next few months. With best wishes for the New Year,

Believe me to be,  
Yours very truly,  
J. A. BOURDILLON

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NARIKELDANGA, CALCUTTA,  
*December 29, 1903.*

MY DEAR MR. BOURDILLON,

I thank you most sincerely for your kind note of the 23rd Instant and for your kind wishes for me.

I am going to retire from the High Court not so much on account of ill health as from a feeling that I have been there long enough. I am glad to say that I am now much better than I was about this time last year ; I have tendered my resignation because having served as a Judge for fifteen years, I think it is time that I should leave and some one else should take my place.

As a native of India, I feel thankful to you for the interest you take in the problem of University reform in the country.

With best wishes for the coming new year,

I remain,  
Yours very truly,  
GOOROODASS BANERJEE

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SIR GOOROODASS BANERJEE

CSL

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, CALCUTTA,

*January 30th, 1904.*

DEAR MR. BANERJEE,

I have been reading in the newspapers the very honourable and befitting tributes which were paid to you in the High Court yesterday on the eve of your retirement from the Bench. As the Head of the Government at the time when this event so universally regretted takes place, I should like to add my word of congratulation and thanks to you for your long and distinguished career of public service, and of good wishes in whatever sphere of activity and usefulness (for you could not remain idle) your leisure may tempt you to embark.

When I first arrived in Calcutta, I was informed that there was on the Bench of the High Court an Indian Judge who to personal high character and the intellectual aptitudes of his race, added a profound acquaintance with the principles of Western jurisprudence and in whose mind and speech might be observed a quite remarkable blend of the best that Asia can give or Europe teach. When I made his acquaintance, I learnt that this description was correct and now that he is about to retire from public life, I cannot dissociate myself from the valedictory tributes that are being paid to one who has been such an ornament to his profession and his country.

I am, Dear Mr. Banerjee,

Yours very truly,

CURZON



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NARIKELDANGA, CALCUTTA

31st January, 1904.

MY LORD,

I received last evening Your Excellency's kind letter.

I do not know how to express adequately my deep feeling of thankfulness to your Excellency for the exceedingly kind terms in which you have been pleased to speak of me and of my humble services to the public. I will only say that it is my singular good fortune that my retirement from service takes place at a time when there is at the Head of the Government a statesman and a scholar of rare ability and attainments, who, amidst the engrossing duties of his high office, and while grappling with some of the most difficult problems that can occupy the attention of a ruler, could find the time and feel the inclination to discern any little merit that there may be in an humble individual like myself, and who, if he is inflexibly severe to all that he deems bad, is indulgently sweet to whatever has the least claim to be considered good.

I remain, My Lord,

Your Excellency's humble and obedient servant,

GOOROODASS BANERJEE

HIGH COURT, BOMBAY,

31st January, 1904.

MY DEAR BANERJEE,

To-morrow, I believe, witnesses the severance of your long, valued, and honourable connection with



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the Calcutta High Court, and as a former colleague and a sincere admirer, I cannot let the occasion pass without a word. It will not be without a wrench that you leave the Court, or that your colleagues part with you : but the time, I suppose, must come to all busy men—at least to such as reflect on things—when they yearn not for ease, but for a fuller chance of thinking out for themselves, and seeking after the greater truths of life. If it be within their power to satisfy this yearning, then they may be accounted happy : and in this view I felicitate you, though not without regret that time has passed so quickly.

Into your retirement you will carry the good wishes of many colleagues past and present, but none more genuine than those of your sincere friend,

LAWRENCE JENKINS

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NARIKELDANGA, CALCUTTA,

*3rd February, 1904.*

MY DEAR SIR LAWRENCE,

I have received your kind note of the 31st of January last and I thank you most heartily for the kind words you have said of me and the good wishes you have expressed for me.

The best part of your letter remains however to be acknowledged and I know not how to thank you adequately for that. It is that part of the letter in which you so feelingly allude to the yearning for search after the higher truths of life as being the real reason for retirement with reflecting minds. In referring to this, you have pointed to the true Brahmī-



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nical ideal of retirement and you have acted towards me the part of a true and valued friend and have touched a cord which has been vibrating long and which will go on vibrating till it breaks.

I cordially thank you for your felicitating me on my chance of satisfying the yearning you have so touchingly alluded to, but I tremblingly stop with the question—will that satisfaction ever come?

Yours ever sincerely,  
GOOROODASS BANERJEE

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51, SANKARITOLA, CALCUTTA,  
*3rd February, 1904.*

MY DEAR DR. BANERJEE,

I have read about your resignation with the deepest concern. I am glad to learn it is not health which has compelled you to take the step so disastrous to our country, especially at the present moment. However, your motives for doing it are the noblest imaginable, and I have reconciled myself to the loss the country will sustain on that account. But I believe and I earnestly hope and pray that you will yet do greater good to the country and the world otherwise than as a Judge.

If I had been capable of taking a short drive, I would have done myself the pleasure of seeing you at your home, but for more than a month I am so bad that I can scarcely do anything.

With heartfelt prayer for your health and long life,

I remain,  
Ever sincerely yours,  
MAHENDRA LAL SIRCAR

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SIR GOOROODASS BANERJEE

CSL

77, RUSSA ROAD NORTH,  
BHOWANIPORE,  
12th June, 1904.

MY DEAR SIR,

Allow me to offer you my sincere thanks and deep gratitude for your kind congratulations and good wishes ; they have to me a special value as coming from one who helped me most materially at the turning point of my career on the 25th March, 1887, and who has been, since then, the best of my friends. I trust you may be spared long to benefit us by your advice and guidance.

Yours sincerely,  
ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE

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I CARLTON HOUSE,  
TERRACE, S.W.,  
June 24, 1904.

DEAR SIR GOOROODASS BANERJEE,

I need only add to the letter which I wrote to you upon your retirement that it has been a sincere pleasure to me to set the seal of the Sovereign's approval upon your long and honourable career by proposing you for the Knighthood which is announced in to-day's Gazette and which I hope that you may live long to enjoy.

Yours very truly,  
CURZON

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NARIKELDANGA, CALCUTTA,  
July 12th, 1904.

MY LORD,

I am deeply thankful to your Lordship for your



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kind note of the 24th of June last, and for your recommending me for the Knighthood which His Majesty the King-Emperor has been pleased to confer on me.

I would here beg leave to add, that as an humble admirer of your rare ability and attainments and of your uncommon love of justice, I have read with intense delight the accounts given in the papers of the high academic and civic honours that have been conferred on your Lordship during your short stay in England.

I remain, My Lord,  
Your Lordship's humble and obedient servant  
GOOROODASS BANERJEE

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77, RUSSA ROAD NORTH,  
BHOWANIPORE,  
24th June, 1904.

MY DEAR SIR,

Allow me to offer you my warmest and sincerest congratulations on your Knighthood, which, after all, is an inadequate and belated recognition of your many services to the country; it might have come fittingly when the first Indian Vice-Chancellor retired from the Vice-Chancellorship.

Yours sincerely,  
ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE

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KIDDERPORE, BEDFORD PARK,  
CROYDON,  
June 24th, 1904.

MY DEAR SIR GOOROODASS,

I was delighted beyond measure to see in this morning's papers that the Government have honoured



SIR GOOROODASS BANERJEE

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themselves by conferring on you the dignity of a Knight and I hasten to offer you my hearty and most sincere congratulations on the event. If you will permit me to say so, you have served the country in every capacity occupied by you with ability above the common, with a singleness of purpose not often seen in public men, and with a devotion to duty which leaves nothing to be desired. It is not so much as a Judge that I admire you, though you were from the beginning an honest, conscientious, courteous and capable judge and continued so to the end. You have won my affectionate regard and admiration as a patriot and a man of independence of thought and action. The true interests of our country and the welfare of our young men have always been foremost in your mind and I trust that in your retirement, health and strength will be vouchsafed to you to work for the ends you had in view for the advancement of the cause of the country. Our friend Mr. Rajnarayan Mittra who has luckily passed safely through the severe operation in the throat he has lately undergone and who is now seated in front of me asks me to give you his *pranam* and joins me in wishing you a long and happy life in the midst of your family and descendants.

With the kindest regards,  
Believe me,  
Ever yours most sincerely,  
W. C. BONNERJEE

THE PRASAD,  
June 24th, 1904.

MY DEAR DR. BANERJEE,

It has afforded me very great pleasure to see, in



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this day's Englishman, the announcement that it has pleased our Gracious Sovereign to bestow on you the personal distinction of Knighthood, an honour which, it will be universally admitted, could not have been better or more deservedly bestowed. You will remember that it was only a very few days back that in the course of conversation with you, I was referring to this subject with an expression of surprise at the seeming want of recognition on the part of the Government, of your eminent services, and you can well imagine with what unfeigned delight I find my fondly cherished hope so soon realized. Allow me to offer you my warmest congratulations, accompanied with my hearty wish that you may live long to enjoy the distinction and continue to serve your country with that whole-hearted devotion which has hitherto characterized your distinguished career, though it may now be in a different sphere of action.

Yours sincerely,

JOTEENDRA MOHUN TAGORE

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8-2, LOUDON STREET, CALCUTTA,

*June 24th, 1904.*

DEAR SIR GURUDAS,

Accept the sincere congratulations of an honest admirer of your life and career on the recognition of your long and meritorious work for our country by the Government of the day. Titles can add nothing to the claims which you have on the esteem and respect of your countrymen, but none the less, your countrymen sincerely rejoice when they find a great and a good man



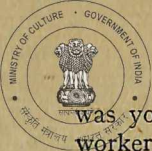
## SIR GOOROODASS BANERJEE

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among themselves deservedly honoured by the powers that be.

My personal relations with you, and my respect for your abilities and character, stretch back through a period of forty years. I sat at your feet as a humble learner in the Presidency College in the olden days ; I have watched your distinguished career, first as a member of the Bar and then as a Judge of the High Court with admiration ; and I have watched with still greater admiration your endeavours to help all public movements, and your devotion to the cause of our country all this time. And if anything can add to these claims to our esteem and affection, it is the simplicity and purity of your private character, the charm and beauty of your private life, which is an example to your countrymen. A moderation which conciliated opponents, a sweet reasonableness which disarmed opposition, continued with an unflinching and unwavering adherence to the principles which you held to be true and correct, have ever marked your high and useful career. As a Judge of the High Court, you won the esteem of the nation ; as Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, you helped the education of younger generations ; and I have still more pleasant recollections of the kindly and sympathetic help which you, descending from your high position, rendered to us in encouraging and helping the formation of a healthy Bengali literature. The example of your life-work will live among our countrymen as a valuable asset and as an inspiring memory.

Pardon me for writing all this ;—it is not often that I have time to indulge in sentiment in the midst of my laborious work. But your name in the papers of yesterday called back to my mind memories of nearly forty years, and if I have written down hurriedly what I felt, you will, no doubt, overlook the indiscretion of one who



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was your old student and is now your humble fellow-worker.

Believe me,  
Ever yours sincerely,  
ROMESH CH. DUTT

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VISHRAM BAGH, MAILAPUR, MADRAS,  
*25th. June, 1904.*

DEAR SIR,

As one of your humble admirers in the south, I beg to be allowed to tender my hearty congratulations to you on the Knighthood conferred by the Government. When I called on you last Monday, you thought you were not likely to be very much in the favour of the Government. But the announcement in the Gazette shows that your valiant championship of the people's cause has been rightly appreciated. I hope your misgivings are not well-founded and your wisdom and experience will be frequently utilised by the Government to its own advantage and that of the community.

I remain,  
Yours faithfully,  
P. S. SIVASWAMY AYER

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55, CANNING STREET, CALCUTTA.  
*25th. June, 1904.*

MY DEAR SIR,

Will you permit me to add my humble note of cordial congratulations to the many you must have received.



SIR GOOROODASS BANERJEE

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The Knighthood has come very tardy, but what gives your friends and admirers most unfeigned gratification is that it is conferred on you for good and great public services, and not for practising the arts of a sycophant. I can't tell you how truly sorry I was the day you retired from the High Court and I said to myself and my friends "Here goes a thoroughly independent, impartial and clever judge, who had no favourites at the Bar." Alas ! for how many judges can this be *sincerely* said.

My earnest prayer is that you may live long to enjoy this honour in peace and gladness.

With high esteem and regards,  
Believe me,

Yours sincerely,  
M. R. MEHTA

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ST. XAVIER'S COLLEGE,  
10 & 11, PARK STREET, CALCUTTA,  
25th. June, 1904.

MY DEAR OLD FRIEND,

You will believe me when I tell you how happy I am to see His Majesty recognising publicly your long and loyal services on the Bench and in all matters connected with Education. Your manly independence, I am glad to say, has not deprived you of just reward and I congratulate you heartily for an honour which you did not seek, but which you so well deserve.

Very sincerely yours,  
E. LAFONT S. J.

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14, LOUDON STREET, CALCUTTA,  
*June 26, 1904.*

MY DEAR BANERJEE,

I wish you to accept my most cordial congratulations on the honour recently conferred upon you by His Majesty. It is especially pleasing to myself to find that the long and meritorious public services of so valued a friend and colleague have been recognised, and I am confident that such recognition will be welcomed by your numerous Indian and European friends.

I can only wish you many years in which to enjoy it, and solicit myself,

Your sincere friend,  
FRANCIS W. MACLEAN.

---

77, RUSSA ROAD NORTH, BHOWANIPUR,  
*30th. June, 1909.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I am deeply grateful to you for your kind letter, which has a special value to me as coming from one who had a considerable share in moulding my career. I hope you will be spared long enough to bless me in my future work.

Yours sincerely,  
ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE

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C/o. MESSRS. ALEX. LAWRIE & Co.,  
14, ST. MARY AXA,  
LONDON E. C., ENGLAND.  
*30th. June, 1904.*

MY DEAR BANERJEE,

I hope you will accept the sincere congratulations of your late younger brother in the Court on the well-



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merited honour conferred upon you in the Birth Day Gazette. I am quite sure that the news must have been received with pleasure by all who know you personally and officially, as it certainly was by myself. Apart from all other considerations, I am very pleased to welcome so conspicuous a refutation of the assertion which we so frequently see and hear that honours are reserved for those who seek them even at the cost of their independence and self-respect.

Believe me,  
Yours sincerely,  
J. F. STEVENS

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NARIKELDANGA, CALCUTTA,  
*July 25, 1904.*

MY DEAR MR. WOODROFFE,

I am extremely sorry that I could not see you before you left Calcutta. I keenly feel this regret not only because you have always been so kind to me, but also because you are one of those few foreigners of high position who have been so sympathetic towards even the humblest of my countrymen. One cannot blame your countrymen very much for want of sympathy, when two races differ so widely in so many ways as Europeans and Indians; it is no wonder that the one does not sympathize much with the other. It is only now and then that we find a man with a heart so large by nature and so refined by culture as to be able to feel for a different race and to appreciate its peculiarities without being offended by them.

Your Indian career has been one of uncommon success, not sought but deserved. Your great ability, varied acquirements, high character and genial temper won for you the respect and love of all who came in



contact with you. You kept alive the highest traditions of the English Bar. A fearless independence and unflinching adherence to principle invariably characterized your conduct in the discharge of the forensic and other official and non-official duties that devolved upon you.

I do not know whether Indian litigants will still have the benefit of your valuable professional aid before the Privy Council.

It is some satisfaction to your Indian friends that your connection with India has not altogether ceased, and that you have left here a son who is sure to prove a worthy son of a worthy father. When at the Bar, the learning, ability and fairness displayed in his advocacy made an impression upon all who heard him ; and within the short time he has been on the Bench, he has, as I learn from several of my friends among the Vakils, already won golden opinions for his patience and soundness of judgment. I had the pleasure of meeting him at an evening party on Saturday last when I got from him your address. I learnt on enquiry that he liked his judicial work as I had reason to suppose from the nature of his temperament and his modes of thought.

I write these few lines, because having missed the opportunity of personally bidding you good bye when you left Calcutta, I had been thinking of writing to you. And if I have said anything about you, it is because in thinking of you, memory fondly recalls in vivid colours the features of a character so high, so well proportioned in every direction, and altogether so good and and so rare.

With the best wishes for you,

I remain,

Yours sincerely,

GOOROODASS BANERJEE



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WARE, LYME REGIS, DORSET,

18-8-1904.

MY DEAR SIR GOOROODASS,

I thank you heartily for yours of the 25th July, though I am bound in truth to say that your delineation of my character and attainments leaves me in doubt as to my identity. Of one thing at least it satisfies me that is appreciation all too favourable which you formed of me. That appreciation I value greatly, how greatly I can only express by the assurance that there is no man amongst your countrymen whose good opinion can I compare with yours.

I congratulate the Government of India in having, though tardily in some degree, recognised your worth as a Judge and a champion of Education.

It would have been a reproach to me not to have sympathized with your countrymen. I cannot however regard myself or my countrymen who live their lives in India as foreigners. We and you are fellow-citizens, members of a great Empire working for the good of India in our measure as one of the component parts of that Empire. Forgive me, if I add that to regard us as foreigners is but to throw difficulties in the way of that sympathy you so keenly appreciate and which is to be so much desired. I wonder if you have ever thought how much Catholicism has to do with the fulness of that sympathy. Think of Ripon, Mc. Donnell, Pigot, Finucane, Nolan, O'Donnell, O'Kinealy, to mention only a few names. I think it has Catholicism in a world-wide creed. It is not national or insular. It teaches, therefore, not only the unity of the faith but the unity of man. It looks out upon the nations, and regarding all men as redeemed from the poison of the evil one and truth as one, has no favoured nation clause



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in its charter, regards all men as her children and respects the fragments of truth which constitute the life of each nation or people as beams of that sun of Justice which shines full orb'd in Herself. Unfortunately Christianity is presented to the people of India in a maimed form bereft of philosophy, disjointed and insular, unsympathetic and narrow.

You are a thinker. Think over this thought and believe me with the kindest regards,

Yours very sincerely,  
J. T. WOODROFFE.

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NARIKELDANGA, CALCUTTA,  
*December, 1904.*

MY LORD,

I beg leave to send a copy of my little book on Education and a copy of my note on the Civil Procedure Amendment Bill for your Excellency's kind acceptance. They are both imperfect in many respects; but I venture to hope that they may not be altogether unacceptable to a statesman and scholar who takes such deep interest in the matters they relate to, and who has always been so kind to their humble author.

I trust Lady Curzon is now quite well and we hope that we shall soon have the pleasure of respectfully welcoming Her Excellency to India once more.

I remain, My Lord,  
Your Excellency's most obedient servant  
GOOROODASS BANERJEE

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SIR GOOROODASS BANERJEE

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GOVERNMENT HOUSE, CALCUTTA,

*December, 18th, 1904.*

DEAR SIR GOOROODASS BANERJEE,

I have looked with extreme interest into your wise and practical examination of the sort of education that an Indian youth ought to acquire and the manner in which he ought to acquire it.

I hope that your countrymen will study your words and follow your advice.

I am particularly glad that you fall foul of those mischievous and detestable "keys". They never open any lock but they break a great many that might otherwise be opened.

Lady Curzon continues to progress slowly. But it will be some time before I learn from the doctors whether she can ever come out again to India.

Yours sincerely,

CURZON

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OOTACAMUND,

*28th. May, 1905.*

DEAR SIR GURUDASS BANERJEE,

Many thanks for your letter of the 24th. conveying your warm congratulations. The chorus of Indian approbation almost frightens me as it is scarcely possible to satisfy the expectations aroused. It was not kind of you to refer to the Education Commission to recall you to my remembrance, as if all India did not know you. Bengal has so forged ahead that I shall look for guidance mainly to Bengal and to you in particular. Your advice on any question I might have to deal with,



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will always be very welcome, whether unasked or not, and in the very unlikely event of the advice not being followed, you may take it, that it is due to adverse influences which I could not get over.

Many thanks for your books. I have already seen one of them. I undertake to master them.

Yours sincerely,

C. SANKARAN NAIR

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GOVERNMENT HOUSE, DARJEELING.

23rd May, 1912.

DEAR SIR GOOROODASS BANERJEE,

With the concurrence of my Council, I have decided to appoint a Committee to frame a scheme for a teaching and residential University at Dacca. I enclose for your confidential information a copy of a letter of instruction received from the Government of India and a copy of the draft of the Resolution which the Government of Bengal will issue in appointing the Committee. From these, you will be able to gather the general lines on which it is proposed to proceed. The Committee will comprise about fifteen persons, and it is proposed to appoint Mr. Nathan as President. In view of the importance and difficulty of the task, I am very anxious that the Committee should include those who are most competent to deal with the subject.

I have heard of your great learning and experience as a past Vice-Chancellor in University affairs and your keen interest in all educational matters and I am very anxious to have the benefit of your assistance



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and advice on the Committee. I hope, therefore, that you will be able to join the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

CARMICHAEL

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NARIKELDANGA, CALCUTTA,

25th May, 1912.

To His Excellency the Governor of Bengal,  
May it please your Excellency,

I beg most thankfully to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 23rd May, 1912, in which your Excellency has done me the honour of asking me to join the Committee which you have decided to appoint for framing a scheme for a teaching and residential University at Dacca.

In reply I beg to say that, while earnestly wishing I could place my humble services at your Excellency's disposal, and after giving the matter my most anxious consideration, I regret very much that for the reasons submitted below, I feel constrained to express my inability to join the Committee; and my regret is all the more keen by reason of the very kind terms in which your Lordship's request is made.

In the first place, I gather from the nature of the work outlined in the Resolution of your Government that the Committee will have to hold most if not all of its sittings at Dacca; and if that is so, my joining the Committee will require a re-adjustment of my existing public and private engagements and of my habits of life, the strain of which will, in the present state of my health, be too much for me to bear.

In the second place, I have great doubt whether



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it would be proper for an ex-Judge of the Bengal High Court to sit on an official Committee under the presidency of one whose official rank is much below that of a High Court Judge. In saying this I must guard against its being thought that my doubt is the outcome of any personal feeling. Personal feeling should always be subordinated to public duty, and in the present instance, personally I have high regard for the gentleman who is proposed to be appointed as President and with whom I worked pleasantly as a member of the Indian Universities Commission of which he was the Secretary. The real reason for my hesitancy to join the Committee is my apprehension that by doing so, I may compromise the dignity of the judicial office I had the honour of holding.

I fear my letter is become rather long, but I hope your Excellency will excuse me for this, as I deem it my duty to lay before you fully and unreservedly the reasons which have influenced my decision, so that your Excellency may know them though you may not approve them.

I remain,  
My Lord,

Your Excellency's most obedient servant,  
GOOROODASS BANERJEE

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GOVERNMENT HOUSE,  
DARJEELING,  
29th May, 1912.

DEAR SIR GOOROODASS BANERJEE,

Thank you for your letter of 25th. I am of course sorry you cannot be a member of the Committee on Dacca University, as I feel sure your advice would



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have been most valuable. However, I feel sure you are also a good judge of what is proper for a man in your position to do. My ignorance as to how things are looked on in India must be my excuse for not having thought of the point.

Perhaps though after the Committee reports to me, you will not mind giving me the benefit of your criticism on its proposals.

I am very anxious that some good should result from the idea. I am glad to hear that you have a high regard for Mr. Nathan. I have seen very little of him but have formed a good opinion of him. I asked him to undertake the work of presiding over the Committee, which will imply a great deal of hard work, and asked to have lent to us for the purpose by the new province—Behar and Orissa—because of what I heard as to his capabilities from men who I believe know the civil service well.

I hope I may have the pleasure of seeing you in Calcutta at the beginning of July.

Yours very sincerely,  
CARMICHAEL.

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NARIKELDANGA, CALCUTTA,  
*30th May, 1912.*

MY LORD,

I do not know how to express adequately my thankfulness to your Excellency for your very kind letter of yesterday.

The feeling that arises uppermost in my mind on its perusal is one of intense regret that I could not place my humble services at the disposal of a Governor who, as a true statesman, can view things so entirely



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without passion or prejudice, and who is so anxious to see that all his measures lead to good results. It is, however, some relief to me to find that your Lordship appreciates the difficulty of my position when you hint at "how things are looked on in India." The conduct of a judge, specially if he is an Indian, is watched with a jealous eye in this country, and one can never be too careful about the dignity of the judicial office. An humble individual like myself can add very little to that dignity, but I must, though no longer in office, avoid doing anything which might possibly detract from it.

It will certainly be my bounden duty to submit to your Excellency, when required, such observations on the report of the Dacca University Commission as may occur to me, to make its scheme productive of the best results according to my lights.

I shall with the greatest pleasure wait upon your Excellency on your return to Calcutta, whenever you are pleased to ask me to do so.

I have taken the liberty of sending for your Lordship's gracious acceptance, a copy of a small book on Education which I wrote some time ago. It is an elementary book and is full of imperfections; but I have ventured to place it before you in the hope that it may not be altogether without interest to a statesman and scholar who is so anxious to acquaint himself with Indian views on important questions.

Trusting that your Lordship is in good health and finds the weather at Darjeeling quite agreeable,

I remain,

My Lord,

Your Excellency's obedient servant,

GOOROODASS BANERJEE



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GOVERNMENT HOUSE,  
BARRACKPORE.

*4th January, 1913.*

DEAR SIR GOOROODASS BANERJEE,

I hope you will not think me too relentless, but I hope you will remember your kind promise made to me at the end of last May to send me such suggestions as you should think worth making after you have read the report of the Dacca University Committee.

I am taking the opportunity of some quiet days here to read the report myself.

I read your little book on Education with great interest and so can now express my thanks to you for it more genuinely than I could before reading it.

I shall, I hope, be back in Calcutta on the 14th. Perhaps if convenient to you, you might come and see me one day after that.

Yours very sincerely,  
CARMICHAEL

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HIGH COURT, CALCUTTA,  
*18th December, 1914*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I value anything from your pen, and let me assure you of my gratitude for your book on "The Education Problem in India," a topic on which you, if anyone, are qualified to speak.

Ever yours sincerely,  
L. JENKINS

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3, MIDDLETON ROW,  
CALCUTTA.

*13th December, 1914.*

DEAR SIR GOOROODASS BANERJEE,

Your book is so interesting and of such obvious importance that I hoped to be able to read it at once, and I consequently postponed acknowledging its receipt until I had been able to study it. But unfortunately I have not been able as yet to give it proper attention, and I can no longer omit to thank you for sending it to me or to assure you of the sincere appreciation with which I have read the kind words which have accompanied your gift.

I have sad reason to know how little I can effect for the cause of education in Bengal during the brief tenure of my present appointment, but I have some hope that the epitaph that will eventually be written on my efforts will give me credit for the good will and the affection for Bengal which have inspired them, however poor they may prove to have been. And they shrink to very small proportions when I think of the work which has occupied the lifetime of the scholar whom I am addressing.

With very kind regards,

Believe me,  
sincerely yours,  
P. C. LYON

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*13th December, 1914.*

DEAR SIR GOOROODASS,

I have been reading with pleasure your book on



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"The Education Problem in India." It was good of you to send it to me. There are of course some points on which we agree and others on which we disagree; but I am always glad to hear the "other side" of the question, specially when it is stated with the charm and lucidity of Sir Gooroodass.

With kind regards,

I remain,  
Yours sincerely,  
N. D. BEATSON BELL

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202-2, LOWER CIRCULAR ROAD,  
CALCUTTA,

*The 17th February, 1915.*

MY DEAR SIR GOOROODASS,

I beg to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of a copy of your booklet on the Education Problem in India. I have read a good portion of the book and hope I have profited by it. Your observation that too much supervision and too much guidance involve waste of time and energy is one to which I myself drew attention in the speech which I delivered in E. B. & Assam Legislative Council, but I can not say that I was able to convince any of the official members of that Council.

Yours sincerely,  
S. HUDA

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SIMLA,  
*3rd April, 1915.*

MY DEAR SIR GOOROODASS BANERJEE,

I thank you very much for your kind letter. I



think that you have really got all that you require for the Hindu University. I thank you very much for your far too kind remarks about my speech. I am used to kindness from you and although we do not see eye to eye on every point of education, I can assure you that in leaving India, I leave no one behind for whom I have a higher regard and respect than yourself. To us of the western world, the old Hindu ideal is not a very attainable thing and yet when one thinks of this terrible war and all that modern civilisation is ending in, one cannot but fall back at times on the great ideals of Hinduism of which I regard you, as the public generally regard you, as one of the great exponents in your life and thought.

Will you very kindly forgive a dictated letter as my wife is seriously ill and I am very busy indeed and have fever so that I really cannot write letters with my own hand.

With renewed thanks and most sincere regards,

Yours sincerely,  
HARCOURT BUTLER

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NARIKELDANGA, CALCUTTA,  
*8th September, 1918.*

MY DEAR RAI BAHADUR,

I have read with great pleasure and no small profit your interesting and valuable paper on "The Milk-Supply of Calcutta, its Hygienic, Commercial and Social Aspects."

Considering the importance of milk and milk-products in the Indian dietary and the extent of their adulteration, the necessity of improving their quality



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and increasing their quantity can hardly be overstated. And it may be hoped that this paper, coming from the pen of a distinguished scientist and a recognised leader of thought in our community, will help the solution of the milk-supply problem, by disseminating sound knowledge and sober views on the subject.

The paper deals, in the first place, with the sources of milk-supply, the composition of pure milk, the extent and nature of its adulteration, and the detection of adulteration by simple tests. It then discusses the question of milk-supply in its hygienic and commercial aspects, and among other measures for securing improved and increased supply, it recommends the establishment of model dairies, the providing of good pasture grounds, the opening of milk-markets under proper control, and the institution of prizes for encouraging good dairy management. And lastly, it reviews the social aspects of the question. It appeals to Government, to Municipal authorities and to the people, for co-operation in the matter ; and that appeal, it is hoped, will find a ready response.

The paper deserves careful study by everyone interested in the welfare of the community.

Yours sincerely,

GOOROODASS BANERJEE

To Rai Chunilal Bose Bahadur

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NARIKELDANGA, CALCUTTA,

*8th September, 1918.*

MY DEAR RAI BAHADUR,

I have read with much interest your admirable paper entitled "Some Practical Hints to improve



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the Dietary of Bengalis." The subject is one of vast importance. It concerns both the rich and the poor. The great deficiency of nutritive ingredients in the Bengali's dietary tells materially on his body and indirectly also on his mind, and if the defect is not cured in time, things will go from bad to worse. But the problem of improvement is as difficult as it is important and the difficulty arises from the poverty of the people and is enhanced by religious sentiment excluding several articles from the dietary.

It is matter for no small congratulation that this important and difficult subject is taken in hand by a writer of your ability and attainments who is not only a learned physician and chemist but has made the food-question his lifelong study, who is gifted with a rare power of lucid popular exposition of recondite truths of science, and who is animated by an earnest desire to serve his countrymen. And this paper, as might be expected, is well worthy of its author.

It does not indulge in vain recommendations which the poverty of the people would render impracticable or which their sentiments would make unacceptable. It treats of the subject in a simple but methodical manner, considering first of all in detail the articles of the ordinary existing dietary and pointing out its defects, and it then suggests simple practical modes of removing those defects. The guiding principle throughout kept in view is not to add much that is new, but to utilize and turn to the best advantage all that is old, by easily practicable and improved modes of preparation, and to avoid all that is rare and costly and avail of everything that is cheap and easily procurable.

Certain popular ideas regarding the exaggerated importance of meat have been sought to be corrected,



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and the true physiological action and value of different articles of diet have been explained in language as simple and free from technicality as could be desired.

This valuable paper should be circulated as widely, and the suggestions contained in it followed as fully, as possible.

With best wishes,

I remain,

Yours sincerely,

GOOROODASS BANERJEE

To Rai Chunilal Bose Bahadur

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### APPENDIX III.

#### OBITUARY NOTICES

##### *References in the Calcutta University*

His Excellency Lord Chelmsford, Chancellor of the Calcutta University, presiding at the Convocation on the 16th December, 1918, made a feeling reference to the loss suffered by the University by the death of Sir Gooroodass Banerjee. His Excellency said :—

“ Among the great men eminent in your records is one who has passed away during the last few days and whose loss casts a gloom over our proceedings. The memory of Sir Gooroodass Banerjee, the first Indian to be selected as your Vice-Chancellor, will long be cherished among you. His image will rise to your minds as that of one who, even in extreme old age, retained a buoyancy of demeanour, an alertness of intellect, which one looks to find among men entering on the prime of life. More than that, he was a living refutation of the view that Western lore is incompatible with Eastern simplicity and manners. He had drunk deeply at the wells of Western thought and science. Yet he held firmly to all that is best in the civilization wherein he was born. He has left an example to us all—modest, untiring, cheerful and large-hearted to the end.”

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The Hon'ble Sir Lancelot Sanderson, Kt., K.C., M.A., LL.B., Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, made the following observation on the same occasion :—

“ By the death of Sir Gooroodass Banerjee, the



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University has sustained a great loss. He was appointed a Fellow of the University in 1879 and he served as Vice-Chancellor from 1890 to 1892. His interest in the University and in all connected with it was unlimited, and his zeal for its welfare was unbounded. There is no doubt that we have lost a great and valued friend, and the students who were his particular care, will bewail his death. He was a great scholar and a man who devoted his whole life, whether as a Judge of the High Court or in other capacities, to the public service, and he will always be remembered as one of the foremost men of his time. But by those who knew him personally, his memory will be treasured mainly on account of his engaging personality, his simplicity and sincerity, his unfailing courtesy and kindness of heart. Truly he was a great man; let the memory of him remain with us as an example of how a man's life should be lived."

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At a meeting of the Senate held on the 30th December, 1918, for the purpose of taking steps for perpetuating the memory of Sir Gooroodass Banerjee at which His Excellency Lord Ronaldshay, the then Rector and now the Chancellor of the Calcutta University presided, His Excellency spoke as follows:—

"Before I call upon the Hon'ble the Vice-Chancellor to move a resolution, I should like to place on record my own sense of the great loss which Bengal has sustained in the death of Sir Gooroodass Banerjee. One of the greatest assets which a country can possess is the example of the lives of its great men, and it is fitting, therefore, that the country should see that their memory is perpetuated. And, if I may say so in passing, it seems to me particularly appropriate



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that the University should take the lead in this matter. For if there was one subject more than any other with which the late Sir Gooroodass Banerjee was identified, I should say it was the subject of educational development of this country. A brilliant scholar himself, he took a keen interest and played a conspicuous part in the development of education in Bengal. He was the first Indian Vice-Chancellor of the University of Calcutta. He was a member of the Indian Universities Commission in 1904. He was a man of extraordinary versatility. There is no need for me to refer to his fame as a lawyer which is widespread. He was, I believe, a fine mathematician, and as such naturally took a great interest and was one of the prime movers in founding the Association for the Cultivation of Science in Calcutta. He was an ardent admirer of Bengali literature and he was a profound student of the Hindu scriptures. He was a man of wide sympathies himself. His own social views, I believe, were strictly orthodox, and he was naturally a keen supporter of the scheme for the Hindu University in Benares. All these activities are examples of the tremendous and abiding interest which he took in educational matters. He was one of those men to whom his country owes a deep debt of gratitude, and it is right and proper, therefore, that his fellow-countrymen who mourn his loss, should take such steps as are appropriate permanently to mark their appreciation of his life and his example."

The following extracts from the speeches of the Hon'ble the Vice-Chancellor and some of the other distinguished members of the Senate are given :—

The Hon'ble Sir Lancelot Sanderson, the Vice-Chancellor, said :—

"Sir Gooroodass Banerjee was so well-known to



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you all, his character, his high ideals and his unflagging zeal in connection with University affairs were so much appreciated by you all, that it seems to me it would be superfluous to dwell upon them at any length. "To guard a title that was rich before, to gild refined gold is wasteful and ridiculous excess." At the same time, it is only fit and proper, and it is my desire that we should express our most sincere and whole-hearted sorrow at the death of Sir Gooroodass Banerjee and the loss which we have sustained. That the University has sustained a very great loss, no one can doubt. Sir Gooroodass Banerjee was not only, as His Excellency has mentioned, a very great scholar, but he was also a man of large experience and practical knowledge, and his intimate and close connection with the affairs of the University rendered him a councillor of much weight and wisdom. There will be in the near future questions coming up for consideration which will present many difficulties, as for instance, the re-organisation of the University and other matters which must arise out of the University Commission's Report, and it is indeed much to be regretted that we shall not have the benefit of the wise and sound counsel which we should have obtained from Sir Gooroodass Banerjee. Let us, therefore, endeavour to follow the example which he has set and to approach these questions which must come before us very shortly, in the spirit which he would undoubtedly have approved, viz., earnestness, good will and moderation. I beg to move that the Senate place on record its deep sense of the great loss which the University has sustained through the death of Sir Gooroodass Banerjee, who was a Fellow of the University for forty years and Vice-Chancellor for three years from 1890 to 1892, and that a copy of the resolution be sent to the head of the family of which



the late Sir Gooroodass was such a distinguished ornament."

The Hon'ble Sir Asutosh Mookerjee said :—

"A feeling of indescribable sadness comes upon me as I rise to second the resolution which has been moved by the Hon'ble the Vice-Chancellor. My memory takes me back thirty years to the day when I first came to this University as a young member of the Senate, and found the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Gooroodass Banerjee, as he then was, one of the foremost leaders amongst a galaxy of brilliant men all of whom save one, have now departed. The sole survivor is Sir Rashbehary Ghosh, who has expressed his regret at his unavoidable absence this evening. Even at that stage of the career in this University of Sir Gooroodass Banerjee, his work was distinguished by that zeal and devotion which have never been surpassed and hardly, if ever, equalled in our annals. \* \* \* The character of his work which impressed us most was his rectitude of purpose, his unflinching adherence to what appeared to be, in his judgment, the best in the interests of the University, and no detractor, if indeed he has any detractor, will ever venture to suggest that in what he did he was animated by any feelings or motives other than the best interests of this University. Of him we may say without fear of challenge or question that in him India has lost one of the greatest of her sons, one who devoted all his best energies during a career of unexampled brilliance for the benefit of his fellowmen. His life was truly unselfish and will be an example to generations to come. It grieves me to think that the chair which he occupied is vacant this evening, and that must be the feeling which animates every one here."

In moving the second resolution for raising a suit-

able memorial to Sir Gooroodass Banerjee, the Hon'ble Sir Devaprasad Sarbadhicary said :—

“ No memorial that we could think of raising to perpetuate the memory of the late Sir Gooroodass Banerjee could be fitting in the larger sense, for he by his life and character and by his teachings and examples, has left behind him a memorial, all his own, much more telling and effective than would ever be in our power to secure. To those who were associated with him in the work here or in the larger world outside, the memory of his life will be always dear and sacred, and the vacant chair to my right to which reference has already been made will pointedly remind us of what we have lost. It will always remind us not merely of the gap that the loss has caused to the Senate, but of the greater gap in the community of which he was an ornament, guide and inspirator in a real and unconventional sense. And for those who were privileged to see how it is given to a good man and true to die bravely, calmly, almost cheerfully, the remembrance of Sir Gooroodass's last hours will be a memorial for all life. Simple life and high thoughts are mostly supposed to be people's ideals, but to end his days in the way that was Sir Gooroodass's high privilege, was worthy of the sage, the *Rishi* and the ascetic indeed. One of his death-bed sayings was “ You will probably meet in the Senate and speak of my having died full of years and full of honours ; but what does it signify ? I should like to see that ideal realised by my fellowmen for which I have lived and striven.” If the memorial that we can raise in his honour be anywhere approaching the ideal and inspiring it, that alone would satisfy. It will be for the generations that come after us to take up the story of his life, and the greater story, I say deliberately, of his death inspired with the underlying thoughts they



would go forth to the world, and the stories will be invaluable as national assets as few stories of life and death have been."

At this meeting, a Committee of the members of the Senate with Sir Lancelot Sanderson, the Vice-Chancellor as the President, was appointed to give effect to the above resolution.

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*References in the High Court*

Mr. Ram Charan Mitter, C.I.E., M.A., B.L., Senior Government Pleader, said :—

"In 1888, Dr. Gooroodass was given a seat on the Bench of the Court. During the years 1890 to 1892, he performed the duties of the Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University in addition to his duties as a Judge of this Court. Although the rule of retirement at 60 years of age did not apply to him, Mr. Justice Banerjee retired just on the completion of the age of 60 years in February, 1904, in order that he might not block up the promotion of other deserving Indians to the Bench and also that he might devote greater attention to the education of our youths. And true to his determination, from the day of his retirement from the Bench of this Court to the date of his last illness in October, 1918, he was always busy with the affairs of the Calcutta University. During this period, there hardly was any public movement calculated to improve the welfare of the Indians in which he did not take an active part and yet with all these engagements, he found time to bring out treatises on religious, mathematical and legal subjects. In private life, Sir Gooroodass was a man of wide sympathies. He always acted strictly up to the high



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standard of morality which he preached to his students and never swerved from the path of rectitude. Such briefly was the many-sided useful career of Sir Gooroodass Banerjee. To know him was to love him and adore him. By his death, the Senate of the Calcutta University and the student community in general have lost an excellent guide and instructor and India has lost one of her ablest sons to whom she could always confidently look up for advice and I have lost a valued friend."

The Hon'ble Mr. T. C. P. Gibbons, the Advocate-General, said :—

My Lords,—May I add on behalf of the Bar a few words to what has been ably said by the learned Government Pleader in reference to Sir Gooroodass Banerjee. I had the pleasure of meeting him only once and on that occasion, I must say, he struck me as being a striking example of old-world courtesy. He made a speech on that occasion which was a marvel of neatness and accuracy, extremely well put and admirably delivered, and one could see perfectly well that he was an honourable kind-hearted gentleman. That was the only time that I met him; but of course I knew of him and heard of him from the very first moment that I arrived here. When he was on the Bench, I was told that the then Chief Justice, Sir Francis Maclean, chose him as his colleague and he continued to sit with the Chief Justice during the whole of his career, showing that he was greatly appreciated by the then Chief Justice. He was a great lawyer, a most lovable man, an orthodox Hindu and we, whether English or Indian, whether Vakils or members of the English Bar, look upon his memory with respect and we feel that we have lost a great lawyer, a great Indian, and many of us lost a great friend. He leaves behind



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him a somewhat large family to mourn his loss. Let us hope that they will follow his path. Let us hope too that his son-in-law, who is well-known to all of your Lordships and who is respected not only by the Vakils but by the Bar, may live—they may all live—to follow the example of that great man who has gone before.”

Mr. Kalinath Mitter, C.I.E., Solicitor, said :—

“ My Lords, on behalf of the Law Society of Calcutta, I mourn the loss of Sir Gooroodass Banerjee not less than his own sons do. He was my fellow-student. We were brought up together. He rose very high but still his general conduct and behaviour towards me was the same as before. As a Judge of this Court, he was respected by every one,—he was respected by the litigants of this Court, by the members of the Bar, by the members of the Vakil Bar and by us. As an Indian gentleman, he was the best man we had got and by his death India has lost one of her brightest jewels. I associate myself with everything that has fallen from the Advocate-General and the Senior Government Pleader. The Hindu community and we, one and all, mourn his loss.”

The Hon'ble Sir Lancelot Sanderson, Kt., Chief Justice of Bengal, spoke as follows :—

“ Mr. Advocate-General, Mr. Senior Government Pleader and Mr. Kali Nath Mitter,—My learned brothers and I desire to associate ourselves with what has been so ably said at the Bar and express our great regret at the death of Sir Gooroodass Banerjee. By his death, the country has sustained a very great loss. For many years and in many ways, Sir Gooroodass Banerjee devoted his life to the public services. He was a Member of the Bengal Legislative Council and served as the Vice-Chancellor of the University and in those



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capacities and in many others, he employed his whole power and influence for the public good and in the interest of the community. He was a Judge of this Court for a great number of years and during all those years, he upheld the great traditions of this Court in a most worthy manner. There is no doubt that his name will long be remembered as one of the foremost and most useful men of his day. There are other characteristics upon which I would dwell for a moment. He was a man of engaging personality; his life was noted for simplicity and sincerity; he was a man of great accomplishment and a great Sanskrit scholar, and, as has already been mentioned by the learned Advocate-General, he was a complete master of the English language. His speeches were remarkable for the fluency and the style which he employed and which I have always admired. In the truest sense of the word, he was a perfect gentleman and I think we may well apply to him the words of Shakespeare, "the kindest man, the best conditioned and unwearied spirit in doing courtesies." He held a position which was perhaps unique in the society of Bengal and his place will be very hard to fill. It only remains for me once more to express on behalf of my learned brethren and myself our very great regret at his death and to ask you to convey to the members of his family our sincere condolence with them in their bereavement".

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### *Reference at a public meeting held in Calcutta.*

The Maharaja Bahadur of Durbhanga at a public meeting held in Calcutta spoke as follows :—

Gentlemen, I thank you for the honour you have done me by asking me to preside at this meeting;



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my duty this evening is a melancholy one, though there is the satisfaction that I am allowed this opportunity of adding my humble tribute to the memory of a dear and valued friend, whose name and example, now that he is dead, will be a burning spot in the tablet of my remembrance—for ever an inspiration and an ideal. To me, the personal loss is very keen ; and the image that I will hold in my mind is, in the expressive language of the vivid pen-picture of His Excellency the Viceroy of one “who even in extreme old age, retained a buoyancy of demeanour, an alertness of intellect which one looks to find among men entering on the prime of life.” It is a trite saying that it should be the constant endeavour of young men to retain the best and purest instincts of their culture—assimilate the best and purest features of occidental culture and make a happy blend of the two. Persons who parade sentiments of this kind and who talk glibly of the fusion of the East with the West are common enough. But few have realised what is really meant by such blending. Sir Gooroodass Banerjee was a living example of such harmonious blending —“a living refutation of the view that western lore is incompatible with eastern simplicity and manners.” He exemplified in his life that to be a Hindu of the old type, does not mean that one’s views should be narrow or bigoted—that to be versed in Western thought and science does not mean that one should fall a prey to its glamour. To him was given the gift of seeing life whole—of seeing life steady ; the gift of regulating his life in the supreme conviction and realisation of the purpose and meaning of human existence.

“It is impossible to exaggerate the value at this hour of national tribulation, in these times of “conflicting ideals,” of men of this nature who carry “music



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in their hearts," diffusing the harmony that resides in them to all they come in contact with. Such a man was Sir Gooroodass with rare harmony in his soul, a fountain of "sweetness and culture"—one from whom emanated the vital breath of whatever was pure, healthy and high-souled in life. There was a serenity in his life, an earnestness of purpose. I am not going to deal to-day and I shall leave it to the successive speakers with his pre-eminence in the Bar or his pre-eminence on the Bench, nor even with his pre-eminence as an educationist. To me, the most striking quality in him was his pre-eminence as a Hindu. He was a Hindu of the purest type, the staunchest pillar of Varnashrama Dharma, one to whom the glorious tenets, doctrines, ceremonials and observances of Hinduism were no dead letter but a living thing affecting every fibre of his life. He demonstrated that to be a believer in Varnashrama Dharma is nothing to be ashamed of,—that Varnashrama Dharma is, far from being a curse to India, a thing of the rarest beauty if properly understood and rightly observed. I shall always miss him in the various activities concerning Sanatana Dharma which may be necessary in the future. In the past, his help, his counsel, his sympathy have been invaluable and in the future, there shall always be a void. To-day we are mourning the death of one who was in his life, a brave but unostentatious leader, a resourceful and earnest colleague and whose example, after his death, should be a sacred memory and an inspiration to young India."

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*Reference at the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science.*

Raja Peary Mohan Mookerjee, C.S.I., M.A., B.L.,



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President of the Association, moved the following resolution at a Special General Meeting :—

“ That this Association desires to put on record its sense of profound sorrow and of the irreparable loss it has sustained by the death of its Senior Vice-President, the late Sir Gooroodass Banerjee, who was a member of the Association at its original foundation and served on the Committee of Management for forty-one years, and as a Vice-President for nearly twenty years. Through this long period, Sir Gooroodass Banerjee was one of the most active supporters of the Association, took the liveliest interest in its work, contributed liberally to its funds and lent the weight of his influence on its behalf. He was ever unfailing in his presence at the meetings of the Association and of its Committee of Management, and his weighty counsel was most highly valued. To the workers of the Association, his death comes as a poignant personal sorrow.

“ Inspiring deep respect and affectionate veneration in all those whose privilege it was to meet him, his presence at the meetings of the Association grew up to be a source of strength which was ever looked forward to, and has now to its irreparable loss, been removed. He has, however, left an imperishable memory of a life well and truly spent in the most beneficent activities, not the least of which was his constant guidance of the work of the Association, in securing educational and scientific progress. Sir Gooroodass has left the country richer than what it was before, for the richest legacy which a man can leave to posterity is the example of his life and character. His peaceful death after a life of strenuous work at an advanced age with the solace and hopes of a pious Hindu offers no palliation to the sorrow of his countrymen who in every social and educational function, will sadly miss his genial personality,



the spirit of *noblesse oblige* and the wise counsel of a man who had made himself eminently useful in his native land."

The second resolution was: "That the Committee of Management be requested to take early steps to raise a suitable memorial to Sir Gooroodass Banerjee."

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### *Press References.*

"It is with a heavy heart and under a profound sense of loss that we have to announce the death of Sir Gooroodass Banerjee, which melancholy event took place on Monday night at his residence in Baghbazar on the side of the Ganges. All his life, he was a true Hindu, devoted to the principles and practice of his religion and he has died peacefully, surrounded by the love and homage of his countrymen and with the consciousness of having lived a well-spent life. A great and good man has passed away—one whose vast learning, splendid endowments of head and heart, deep piety, purity of character and loftiness of aims and principles in life entitled him through generations yet unborn to the admiring gratitude of posterity. Though not born with a silver spoon in his mouth or any of the adventitious circumstances that help a man in the world, he made his way by dint of merit and character to an exalted position not only by occupying with dignity one of the highest offices open to an Indian but also in the esteem, regard and affection of his countrymen. Indeed it may truly be said that he was the patriarch in our national life of Bengal. Not a public movement, good and true, but at once enlisted his hearty sympathy and support. The development of education was the deep concern of his heart. At a time when the Calcutta University Commission is



Still sitting, it is interesting to recall the vigorous note of dissent which he wrote as a member of the Indian Universities Commission in 1902. The concluding words of his luminous note deserve seriously to be pondered over by iconoclastic educational reformers at the present moment.—“While yielding to none in my appreciation of the necessity for raising the standard of education and discipline, I have ventured to think that the solution arrived at is only a partial solution of the problem and that we should aim not only at raising the height but also at broadening the base of our educational fabric. And where I have differed from my learned colleagues, I have done so mainly with a view to secure that our educational system is so adjusted that while the gifted few shall receive the highest training, the bulk of the less gifted but earnest seekers after knowledge may have every facility afforded to them for deriving the benefits of high education.”—Wise words these which deserve to be inscribed in letters of gold on the portals of the Education Department that is so anxious to raise the height at the expense of the base and make education available to the few. Had education been the luxury of the rich, we doubt whether there would have been a Sir Gooroodass Banerjee to guide his countrymen with his mellow wisdom and rich experience. He was the Prince of graduates of the Calcutta University, having topped the list in all scholastic examinations. In the stern and relentless examination in practical life, he was also eminently successful and showed the strong and beautiful stuff he was made of. Indeed, the word *success* is writ large in his long and strenuous life. He was successful as a lawyer, a judge, an educationist in the true sense of the term, a public man and a leader of his countrymen. As a Vakil, he rose to the highest pinnacle of fame by his profound



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knowledge of law and mastery of facts. Whether at Berhampore or in Calcutta High Court, Dr. Gooroodass Banerjee represented all that was best and noblest in the legal profession. On the Bench, he was literally an ornament, whose lucid and well-reasoned exposition of law, specially of Hindu law, and uncompromising independence of character have earned for him an honoured position among the foremost Judges in the land. He enjoyed in a pre-eminent measure the confidence of his colleagues, the Bar, the litigants and the public and all had the supreme faith that Mr. Justice Gooroodass Banerjee could never do a wrong. But though law was his vocation in life, the work of education was near to his heart and nothing gave him greater pleasure than to help in the progress of education in all its branches and the spread of sound educational ideas. He was the first Indian Vice-Chancellor of the University and was for a long time an indefatigable member of the Senate, which profited so much by his counsels of wisdom. As a leader of the community, he was, though the least self-assertive and ever disposed to place himself in the back-ground, honoured and respected by all classes and sections of the public. His sage advice was eagerly sought for in connection with various progressive movements. He was assiduous in his exertions for the success of any cause calculated to benefit his countrymen in any department of life. But more than everything else, he was a man of the truest metal possessing a sweet and lovable personality, a magnetic and winsome character, white as snow and pure as lily. When we think of him, we cannot help feeling how much learning, how much modest and unassuming simplicity, how much piety and how much patriotism have passed away with him. That voice which everybody was glad to hear is hushed in



The silence of death. But if to live in the hearts and memories of those we leave behind is not to die, Gooroodass Banerjee is not dead. From his frail bark, the noble soul has winged its flight. But he has left behind a shining example of life's work done with a high sense of duty, which like a beacon-light, will continue to elevate and inspire his countrymen. He was a prince among men,—one of God's elect, who sent all around the fragrance of a sweet and beautiful life and character. It will be long long before the void which his death has caused, will be filled. As the poet has said, "he most lives who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best" and such a noble life was lived by Sir Gooroodass Banerjee. He has been taken away from us at a critical moment when more than ever his wisdom and experience would have been of great help to the country. But so long as greatness of manhood and goodness of character are regarded as the assets of the world, Gooroodass Banerjee will enjoy an immortality which is not given to all the sons of men, to whom his countrymen will turn, as to a venerable repository of sweetness and light, for inspiration and guidance. May his soul rest in peace in the bosom of his Maker he loved so well!"—*Bengalee*, 4th December, 1918.

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"A great Indian has just passed away in the person of Sir Gooroodass Banerjee, whose death on Monday night must have come as a shock to the public, for hardly anybody had heard of his illness. The country is the poorer by his loss, for he was a true knight in every sphere in life. A more devoted and orthodox Hindu, a more pious man, a greater educationist, a sounder lawyer than the late Sir Gooroodass has seldom, if ever,



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been known. His life was unique and demonstrated, above everything else, that it is possible to combine plain living with high thinking and that no Indian need imbibe Western manners and customs at the sacrifice of his own, even when sitting on the High Court Bench. Fearlessly independent, both as a Judge and a publicist, the late Sir Gooroodass's views on any matter of importance commanded high respect. His famous Note of Dissent, as a member of the Indian Universities Commission, is but one instance of his strength of character. He was a member of many public bodies and the University of Calcutta, of which he has been a Vice-Chancellor, will miss most keenly the sobriety and wisdom of his counsels."—*Englishman*, 4th December, 1918.

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