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SIR

ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE
A STUDY



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TO MY
DEPARTED FATHER



CSL

Our best thanks are due to the Hony. Secretary,
Calcutta Review for permitting us to use some of their
blocks in this book.—Publishers.



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SIR
ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE
A STUDY

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BY
PROBODH CHANDRA SINHA

With A Foreword By
PROF. C. V. RAMAN, D.S.C., F.R.S.
And An Introduction By
SIR P. C. RAY, KT., C.I.E., D.S.C., PH.D.

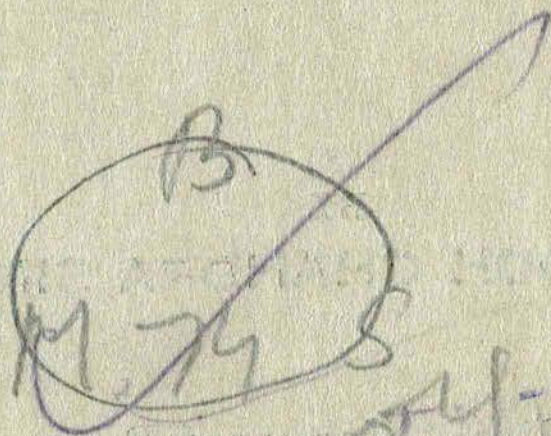


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PREFACE



The present work, as its title indicates, is really a study of the various aspects of the life and character of the great man who was universally regarded as the most powerful personality and the greatest reformer in the realm of higher studies and researches in the India of today. It is neither an ideal biography, nor has it any pretensions to completeness. But it aims at giving a glimpse of the great man in his many-sided interests and wide-ranging activities; it seeks to give an estimate of his complex character and his virile and versatile personality, to review his lifework and to interpret his life, indicating the part it played in our national life and in the forward march of our country to its higher and nobler destiny.

The work was originally begun four years ago; in the course of preparation and publication, it has passed through many vicissitudes, along with the author.

Messrs. R. Cambay & Co. had first taken up the task of publication; when it was nearing completion, by mutual consent, the task was transferred to the present publishers—Messrs. The Book Company Ltd.—to whom his thanks are due for the alacrity with which they brought it to a finish



PREFACE

in a short time; he is also thankful to Mr. S. C. Kerr of Messrs. R. Cambray & Co. and Mr. N. C. Sen of Sakha Press for their courtesy and consideration.

It is the author's pleasant duty to acknowledge his deep indebtedness to the large circle of his friends and well-wishers, who have been good enough to extend their sympathy and help in this his first literary venture. From its very inception Mr. Panchanan Mittra, M. A., P. R. S. and his brother Mr. Pulin Krishna Mittra, M. A. have been an unfailing source of help and inspiration. Then at a critical period he received enthusiastic encouragement from no less a personage than Dr. C. V. Raman; just before the book went to press, Dr. N. C. Ganguly, then Literary Secretary, National Council, Y. M. C. A. offered him enthusiastic support. Prof. Radhakrishnan, too, evinced the keenest interest in this work and gave him active help and advice, lately. He is also grateful to Sir Ewart Greaves and Sir P. C. Ray for their generous encouragement. He cannot, however, fail to mention his debt of gratitude to Rai Bahadur Dr. B. K. Roy, Civil Surgeon (Retd.), Purulia, who treated him and cheered him up in his protracted illness.

In conclusion, he must ask for the indulgence of his readers for the misprints and defects which he could not remedy in the present edition.



PREFACE

The author's task is now finished—at least, for the present. Most that comes rushing to his mind after four years of trials and tribulations, must now remain unsaid. He has striven and spared himself no pains, and the result?—the result he is content to leave in the lap of the gods.

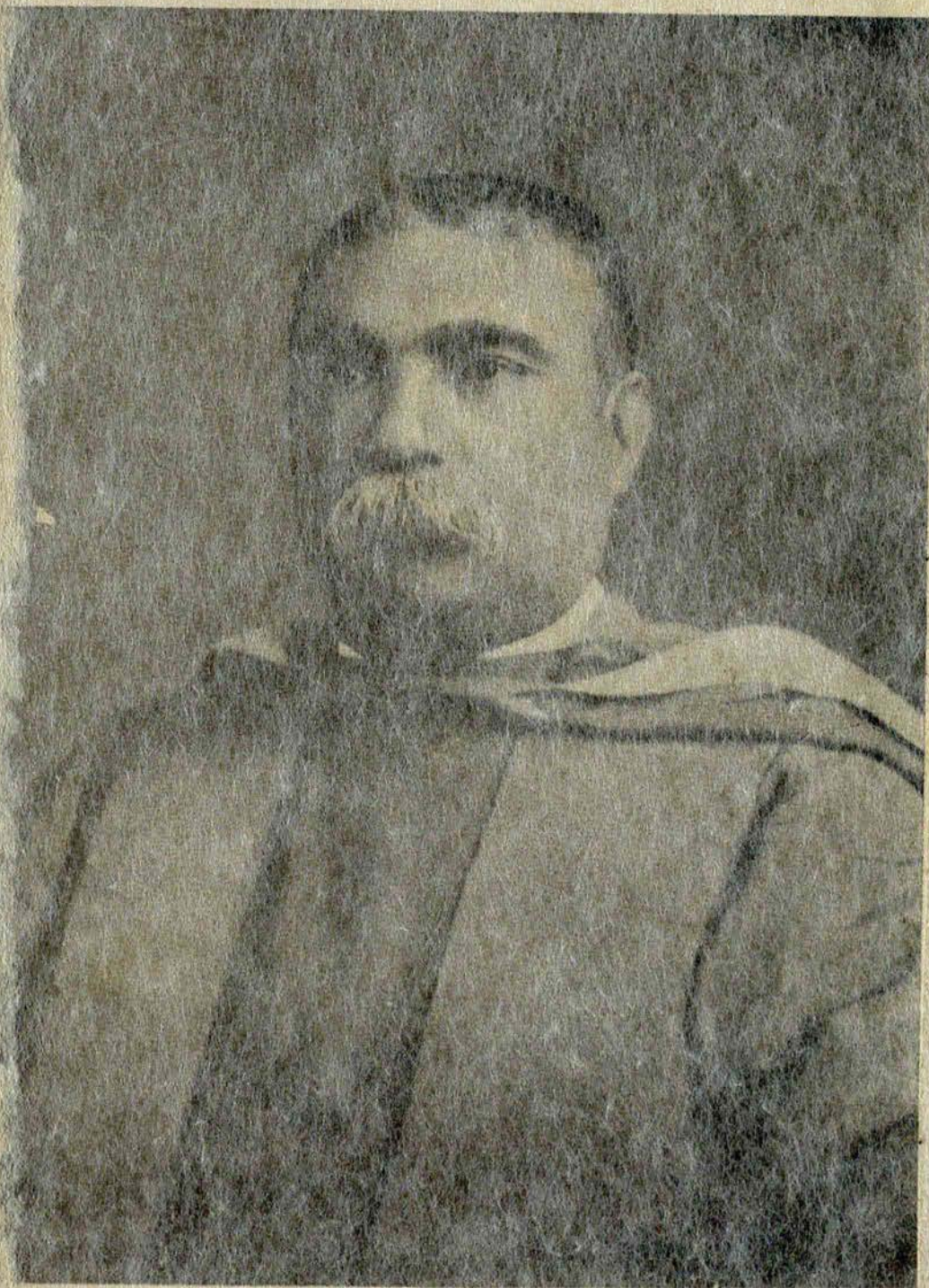
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Calcutta, 17th September, 1928.*

P. C. SINHA



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Charles Mackay



CONTENTS

	Page
Foreword By Dr. C. V. Raman, D. Sc., F.R.S.	XVI
Introduction By Sir P. C. Ray, Kt., C.I.E., D. Sc., Ph. D.	XVII

CHAPTER I

Introduction	1—19
--------------	-----	-----	------

CHAPTER II

Early Life

The ancestral home in Hooghly district— his father, Ganga Prosad—Asutosh's birth—his father's interest in him— The influence of illustrious men on his infant mind—his early ambitions—his mother—his eminent tutors—his admission into high school, its famous Head Master and Assistant Head Master—his varied reading and early fame, his proficiency in Mathematics —the boy becomes a Member of London Mathematical Association— his love of study	20—35
---	-----	-----	-------



CHAPTER III

Academic Career

Asutosh's admission into the Presidency College, its fame, its staff, its library and its students—Publication of his thesis in England—the range of his studies—his peculiar illness and recovery at Gajipur, his fresh illness—The result of I. A. Examination—Asutosh, a vegetarian—his early interest in University affairs—he takes the more difficult course in B. A.—his activities at the College—his achievements in B. A., M. A., P. R. S., M. A. (Science)—his interview with the Director of Public Instruction and refusal of service—Joins City College as a law student—Interview with Vice-Chancellor—At the auction sale of a library—Articled to Dr. Rash Behari Ghosh. ... 36—52

CHAPTER IV

Active Life and Sudden End

Asutosh becomes a Fellow—his election to the Syndicate in his 24th year—his memorable resolution for inclusion of Bengalee in the curriculum—his Doctorate—his appointment to the



Tagore Professorship—his election to the Bengal Council and nomination to the Calcutta Corporation, he is returned to the Imperial Council—he makes his presence felt in the Council and the Select Committee on the Universities Bill—his fight and attitude on it—his elevation to the Bench when he was 40, he becomes Vice-Chancellor—his subsequent reforms and labours in the University—his second Vice-Chancellorship—his many-sided interests and wide activities—The University Commission—he becomes Acting Chief Justice—he retires early and takes up the Dumraon Case at Patna—his dramatic end—the last fateful journey to the place of his birth—the unique homage and nation-wide grief

...

...

...

53—78

CHAPTER V

The Man—A Closer View

His filial affection—Remarriage of his widowed daughter, its significance—His devotion to his parents—his favourite delicacy, time-honoured way of keeping invitations—The simplicity of his dress at home and abroad—his eagerness to attend social functions

CONTENTS

—Enthusiasm for historic places—his accessibility and amiability, frankness and affableness—His open mind—The humane and emotional side of his nature; its warmth and sympathy—His keen interest in the affairs of his friends and acquaintances—his encouragement and inducement to promising scholars and scientists—his manly stand by a distant school against the wrath of the Government... 79—110

CHAPTER VI

The Intellectual Giant

The tendency of the age—Asutosh, a profound student and intellectual giant, his versatile scholarship, vast erudition and academic degrees—The student is not the man of action, Asutosh, Gladstone, Roosevelt among the exceptions to the general rule—No great original work commensurate with his intellectual powers—Tributes to his rare scholastic and intellectual eminence—his brilliance as a mathematician, his European fame—His greatest work, the paper on Monge's Differential Equation to all Conics—its recognition by pre-eminent scholars in Europe and India—His life-work ... 111—137



CHAPTER VII

The Brilliant Judge

His pre-eminent position in the premier High Court—his brilliant record—The importance and intrinsic worth of his judgments—Some of them referred to—his last memorable judgment, a historic one—his criticism of various parties—Refutation of the Stephen (J)'s interpretation of Sec. 34 of Indian Penal Code, his search for principles and precedents from far and near, his own authoritative interpretation and terse comments—his remarks on the trial—his clear interpretation and disapproval of the limited jurisdiction created by Clauses 25 and 26 of the Letters Patent—his reference to the British procedure of invoking clemency of the Crown—his reasons for dismissal—Striking tributes of the Bench and the Bar as well as of the Press on his retirement—Factors contributing to his singular success on the Bench—Estimate of Sir Sivaswamy Iyer...138—166

CHAPTER VIII

The Reformer in the Realm
of Education

The greatest reformer in the realm of Education and a creative force in the field



of 'advancement of learning'—Pre-University periods—The Despatch of 1854—The Act of Incorporation and the establishment of the University of Calcutta—Lords Ripon's and Curzon's Commissions—Indian Universities Act and the Regulations framed by Asutosh's Committee—Difference between the two Acts and change in the conceptions of the Ideal and functions of the University—conditions of development—Asutosh's task—Reforms in the schools and colleges—University Law College, University Professorships and Lecturers in the domain of Letters—University College of Science and Technology, Dr. Mohendra Lall Sircar and his Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science, the princely gifts and endowments of Sir Tarak Nath Palit and Sir Rash Behari Ghosh, Government's indifference—University Readership Lectures by world-renowned savants and eminent scholars—Post-Graduate Consolidation Committee and the Councils of Teaching in Arts and Science—Further gifts by Sir Rash Behari, Kumar of Khairra, S. G. C. Ghosh and Asutosh—his second Vice-Chancellorship, financial crisis,—“Reform” controversy—more departments



opened—Sumtotal of his works and innovations, their criticisms and appreciations—his fidelity to the Ideal upheld by advanced thought—Farreaching effects of his achievements... ... 167—248

CHAPTER IX

The Powerful Public Man

His unique position in public life—his activities in the legislature and brief career in the old Imperial Legislative Council—he was a skillful parliamentarian but no typical politician, his shrewd suspicion of an 'unenlightened' democracy—his strong views on the place, the rights and functions of the University in the body politic—We uniformly upheld the grand democratic doctrine of Napoleon—his emphatic views on the question of students and politics—The conflict of his opinions, his policy and his actions with those of Mahatma Gandhi and Deshabandhu Das, the call of the leaders of the Non-co-operation Movement to boycott educational institutions in touch with the Government, the student's response and Asutosh's bold stand in Bengal—The two standpoints and policies, an estimate of their respective



consequences, their practical worth and
moral excellences... 249—272

CHAPTER X

The Statesman

A subject country is no training ground of statesman—The dearth of statesmen in India of today, due not to any inherent or constitutional defect, but to the political subjection—Among the solitary statesmen of India, Austosh shone prominently—his achievements and labours—his statesmanlike insight and wisdom, the breadth of his vision and the clearness of his perspective—The remarkable record that he left, worthy of any statesman of the world—the most important of his acts of statesmanship ... 273—287

CHAPTER XI

The Administrator

Administrative genius in a great jurist—Judge and scholar, a rare spectacle in life—Asutosh, the great administrator and the miraculous man of action in the University—his unusual burden and tremendous responsibilities of his office in the abnormally critical periods in the annals of the University and of the



country—the singular success of his tenure—Factors contributing to the difficulties of the office, nature of his duties and his tasks—his works enumerated—An estimate of his genius and his achievements as an administrator. ... 288—301

CHAPTER XII

The Speaker

Asutosh, one of the foremost speakers of his generation, but not a born orator—his great debating qualities and dialectical skill—Two of his typical speeches—his last Convocation Address at the Calcutta University, was memorable and historic—The speeches reveal the intellectual supremacy and inner calibre of the man—the nature of his eloquence—Asutosh, compared with some of the master orators of modern Bengal ... 302—309

CHAPTER XIII

The Friend of Learning

Asutosh, the greatest friend of the scholars and the students—his love of learning knew no 'scientific frontier' nor his encouragement of scholarship and talent any artificial barriers—he not only nationalized but internationalized his



CONTENTS.

University—his discouragement of 'the principle of nationality' and his catholicism and universalism in higher study and research—he upheld the grand democratic doctrine of Napoleon—his exertions for the scholars and students. ... 310—315

CHAPTER XIV

The Leader

Asutosh, a born leader, in the higher sense of the term—A reformer is always a leader—his abiding qualities as a leader, the peculiarity of his environment and of the field of his leadership—a ruler of his fellow men, he was no mass-leader like Lokamannya Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi—Instances of his superior leadership—he was a thought-leader of his people and a guide to future generations. ... 316—327

CHAPTER XV

The Patriot

Patriotism was the breath of his nostril—A subject country has little scope for patriots—Government service is the grave of patriotism, Asutosh an exception to the general rule.—The nature of his patriotism,—not politics, but his



University claimed his energies—The negative aspect of his patriotism, he was a Bengali of Bengalis and an Indian of Indians—The positive side of his patriotism, his unique sacrifice on the altar of his University, 'the handmaid of our common motherland'—The call of his country swept the thinker and the scholar and the intellectual giant—His grand sacrifice and patriotic labours. ... 328–343

CHAPTER XVI

The Idealist

Asutosh, the seer, the prophet and the mystic—Thanks to the tendency of the age and march of civilization the idealist is pushed to the background—The atmosphere of a subject country like India is not conducive to the rise of the idealist—The need of a lofty idealism but fewer idealists today—The Ideal of a greater India, dreamt by her glorious sons left severely alone—Asutosh compared with some of our greatest idealists—An exposition of his Ideal and of his lofty idealism in the reformation and renovation of his University, his faith in the future of Bengalee Literature—The value of



his Ideal—thanks to his brilliant career and versatile personality, the great idealist did not receive his due in his lifetime but future generations will acclaim him and appreciate his idealism. ... 344—361

CHAPTER XVII

The Representative Man

The great men like Asutosh constitute a class by themselves—The secret of their advent and popular misconception—Emerson throws a flood of light on it—‘The river of thoughts and events’ and ‘the ideas and necessities that forced’ Asutosh onward—The great Renaissance movement in India and in the East—Ram Mohun Roy, the maker of modern India, his lifework—The impact of the West and its effects upon India—The great awakening, the clash of ideals old and new and progress of new ideas—The rage of westernization and the need for a ‘Return Movement’—Asutosh, at once a foremost product and champion of this revivalism—Keshav Chandra Sen’s fame in Europe and Vivekananda’s achievements in America and their salutary effect upon the great Movement in India—Its



religious, literary, cultural and social aspects—Ishwar Chandra also paved the way for Asutosh's advent and work—The Bengalee literary genius and its singular output—The political turmoil, the tense atmosphere and the virulent agitation (in the eighties)—Three pre-eminent Indians and their labours—Real nation-wide progress yet to come—Its first requisite—The educational advancement, educational reformer and worker—Asutosh's advent, another necessity—His simple strenuous patriotic life, an antidote to growing denationalisation and lethargy. ... 362—403

CHAPTER XVIII

Character and Personality

Asutosh an impressive figure, outwardly—'the most powerful public character'—the complexity of his character—his greatness unlike Lokamannya Tilak's, Deshabandhu Das's, Mahatma Gandhi's or the great Rabindra Nath's—The unique synthesis in his character, its limitations and advantages—Asutosh and Tilak—his personality, like Disraeli's—its striking qualities—The Bengal Tiger and the British Bulldog—A rare and remarkable combination in his personality;



his intellectual ascendancy, his imagination and practical sense, his all-embracing emotioalism and intense spiritualism—his ambition, his love of power and pomp—his eagerness for effect—his spirit of independence—The secret of his success and of his popularity—The misunderstanding of, and paradox in, the great men, Chittaranjan and Asutosh, an explanation of popular misunderstanding—Asutosh, compared and contrasted with some pre-eminent personalities—Striking references by different eminent scholars and leaders to different traits in his character, different men stressed different characteristics ... 404—453

CHAPTER XIX

His Life-Work and Message

Asutosh was not responsible for the Act of 1904 or for the absence of ideal results and method—The overcrowding of the legal profession, its disastrous consequences—Asutosh's life-long association with Governmental institutions and, his aloofness from the Freedom Movement in the sphere of politics, unlike Deshabandu Das and Pandit Malaviya—parasitic tendency of big organizations, the rise of the Calcutta University eclipsed



CONTENTS.

the life and prevented the growth of other institutions, the country's loss on that account—his disassociation with the National Congress, but 'his heart was in unision with his time and country'—his contribution to the great forward movement in various ways—he tried to save India's eternal soul and rouse her creative spirit—he demonstrated India's capacity to add to the common heritage of humanity, and stimulated her genius for mastery, of European Science and Thought—Asutosh, a world-personality, his visualization of the path of human progress and his contribution to the international understanding and harmony—The verdict of posterity, a maker of modern India, a hero of action, a representative man and a great builder.—Asutosh's Message ... 454—186

APPENDIX

Democratic control in the University—Asutosh's Lucknow Speech. ...	489—505
Ideals of Vice-Chancellorship—Correspondence between Lord Lytton and Asutosh ...	506—518
Index ...	519
Errata ...	531



FOREWORD

Few will question that a biography of Sir Asutosh Mookerjee is well worth writing. The extraordinary abilities and personality of the man commanded admiration and respect from all, and a record of his life and achievements cannot fail to prove an inspiration to his countrymen, young and old, both now and in future generations. Combining in himself the intellectual outlook of a great scholar with the Napoleonic vigour of a man of action, Sir Asutosh had few equals in his life-time, either in India or outside it. In attempting, for the first time, to collect the available materials concerning the life of Sir Asutosh and presenting them in a readable form, Mr. Sinha has rendered a distinct public service. It must have required no little courage for one not previously known as an author and possessing no resources or influence, to venture upon such a task. I plead for a favourable and indulgent consideration of his efforts and commend them to the notice of the public.

210, Bowbazar Street, Calcutta,

The 10th September, 1928.

C. V. RAMAN



INTRODUCTION

BY

Sir P. C. Ray

The sixties of the last century drew into Bengal some of the mightiest souls who were destined to leave their mark in almost every field of international culture. Vivekananda who carried the banner of Hinduism in the Chicago Parliament of Religion, Rabindra Nath Tagore who won the Nobel prize from Sweden, J. C. Bose who founded the Temple of Science in the India of today, were all born within a few years in the early part of the decade; it was this decade which ushered in as well the mightiest academic organizer and builder in the domain of higher studies and researches and closed with the birth of that champion of national emancipation and freedom, that unfailing friend of suffering humanity—Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das. It seemed as if the mighty spirit of Civa was astir in all the fields of thought and knowledge and was everywhere breaking down barriers for sowing the seeds of new creations. In a recent remarkable brochure 'The Dance of Civa' ('Today and Tomorrow' series) Collum points out to some of these heroic figures, "as a conveniently identifiable point from which to date the dawn of new thought, just as today we put our finger on Socrates when we wish to



focuss our view of the beginning of that newth thought which inspired the West for centuries."

Is it a mere coincidence that all these pioneering souls were stirred by the same spirit; of each of whom could be said, as has been said by the author, of Sir Asutosh: 'He worked for the 'Return Movement' in India; he laboured to bring about a wide-ranging Indian Renaissance, an intellectual regeneration through a nation-wide progress of education. ...he made it the mission of his life to blot out the stigma of India's cultural inferiority, to explode the fiction of her intellectual defeat and raise her once more to her lofty pedestal of glory.'" But it would be a gross misreading, a superficial estimate, a skin-deep interpretation, if only the forces of reaction are seen moving in any of these. Too deep and original, each was pulsated by a keen national instinct to create a new age, to bring forth a new life in the old *corpus* of India's national heritage. The Hindu spirit of conserving the old forms as much as possible and yet transforming them out of all recognition by new leaven was always there.

It is too early in the day to judge of Sir Asutosh's achievement by the stability of the measures carried out by him; but it is quite clear that his life and activities were, as has been nicely put by the author, of a piece with those of other great nation-builders of India who are the direct products of the movements destined to herald a higher,



holier, deeper humanity to come. It is in this sense that each of the mighty personalities of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in a land with scarcely a political being of her own, has a world importance. It is quite true that their comparative worth would be appraised more or less by the depth and intensity of their inner ideas, by their breadth and universality of culture, as also by their success in the field of action; it is in the last category that Sir Asutosh would figure along with many a national hero.

A mere slavish imitation of the dazzling glories of the resplendent West would not have entitled him to the gratitude of posterity. Had not the things he fought for somewhere, somehow—deeper roots within the very heart of the nation, had they not been quick with the pulsations of a new life of the nation, nay of the new world-age slowly but surely coming into being, even a fraction of his success could not have been achieved by him and his words and actions could not have become the mottoes and models of his contemporaries.

Alas! when India herself is still but an object of ridicule and pity, it is hardly the time to judge her great men; but when the faint glimmering dawn of today bursts forth in the glory of her midday sun and the ideas for which our national heroes worked receive their fruition, contemporary records will be eagerly canvassed by the historian of our period.



Posterity will judge Sir Asutosh, and rightly too, as the greatest reformer, 'a creative force,' in the realm of education and research—as the author has eloquently said. Indeed, the vital problem of a nation—particularly of a nation, in the firm grip of a foreign power and weighed down with many age-old customs and usages, yet destined and determined to come into her own in the world of nations—its problem is mainly in the field of education. Its educational methods indicate its sincerity and fitness in the preparation for the achievement of that goal. When the Indian ideal of life as the seer K. C. Satyasrayi points out, is accepted to be the building-up of a perfect body for a perfect mind and the perfect mind for the highest spirituality, it will be recognised that we need scientific, vocational and economic education ; secondly, culture of the highest thoughts; and thirdly, spiritual meditation. India, when she finds her own, would not stop short of any ideal which does away with this tripartite system of education—material, mental and spiritual. Perhaps to Sir Asutosh was not given the task of creating a new world of his own and to forge a new system which would be at once the admiration and despair of the world ; but to him was surely given to work out the miracle of naturalizing a plant of temperate zone in a tropical region on which it was languishing so long under artificial conditions ; so that it could burst forth in the open



air with the grandeur of tropical foliage. Here again, as the biographer has very rightly pointed out, what Dr. Rajendra Lall Mitra tried to do by refusing to sail abroad, yet beating the best Western savants in their own fields by personal achievements, what the Science Association of Dr. Mohendra Lall Sircar and Bengal National Council of Education were trying to give shape to with indifferent results,—thanks to the non-co-operation of the Government with the people—Sir Asutosh brought about with great success.

Nationalism and internationalism in culture are problems of the deepest moment today. Sir Asutosh tried to sink his fountains of education deep into the wells of national traditions with the help of a foreign machinery and at the same time took care that the fountain provided the most delicious beverage to all nations. He tried to rise above parochial patriotism which is eating into the very vitals of the body politic and his curricula in Vernaculars and History would show how much anxious he was to bring about a synthesis between Bengal and the other Provinces of India; all these indicate his healthy enlightened and intense nationalism.

Asutosh would be recognised as one of the greatest of Indians—one who tried to build up a nation, to force her pace and to bring her up to the level of the advancing nations of the West, by rousing her sense of past glory as much as by trying



to evoke national self-respect and quicken national self-consciousness and self-confidence by her present achievements. Indeed he fondly dreamt of making Calcutta a centre of Indian culture before the transfer of Capital gave a rude shock to his cherished desires ; but he did not try to create a new centre like Benares or Aligarh around the aspirations of newly growing communal currents.

Veteran fighters and workers, redoubtable leaders and patriots—men who had grown grey in the service of their country, men who had been in the thick of the fight—all looked to him to guide and lead the nation on to victory in the wider fields as he had done in the academic sphere. For it was recognised that he had the unbounded self-confidence and unique moral and intellectual equipments and resourcefulness to work out the salvation and uplift of his country with the conditions imposed by history; and it was nothing short of a grim national calamity that he was taken away from us too early to begin and to bring this work to fruition.

*University College of Science,
92, Upper Circular Road,
Calcutta*

Dated 7th August, 1928

P. C. RAY



29th June 1864 -

Sir Asutosh Mookerjee—A Study.

CHAPTER I.

Introduction.

"Men are always rare in all countries through whom the aspiration of their people can hope to find its fulfilment, who have the thundering voice to say that what is needed shall be done ; and Ashutosh had that magic voice of assurance. He had the courage to dream because he had the power to fight and the confidence to win—his will itself was the path to the goal... My admiration was attracted to him where he revealed the freedom of mind needed for work of creation..... It had been possible for him to dream of the miracle of introducing a living heart behind the steel framework made in the doll factory of bureaucracy... The creative spirit of life which has to assert itself against barren callousness must, in its struggle for victory, wreck things that claim only immediate value. We can afford to overlook such losses which are pitifully small compared to the great price of our object, which is freedom. Ashutosh heroically fought against heavy odds for winning freedom for our education."

RABINDRA NATH TAGORE.



Advents of truly great men—men who 'correct the delirium of animal spirits, make us considerate, and engage us to new aims and powers',—men from whom 'our life receives some promise of explanation'—are like the angels' visit, few and far between; sometimes, there come in our midst men, who, rising into eminence, become the most prominent figures in the social or public life of their country; some, again, make the greatest noise and sensation, attract a good deal of attention or even admiration, by prosperity and popularity attained in some sphere of life or by greatness thrust upon themselves; after their death, they are mere names—at best, a tradition, for sometime to come; but the great men, the representative men of their times, the leaders of thought and heroes of action—men who are the highest products of our civilization and culture, are not buried into oblivion so easily—the lustre of their lives lives long after they are dead and gone; for, they live, after their death, in their lifework, in the changes wrought, in the spirit fostered, in the ideas championed and in the ideal bequeathed to the succeeding generations. But the questions arise: who are really the blessed souls that constitute this type of great men? what is the *sine qua non* of this kind of greatness? what is the true standard by which to judge and assess it? How to understand and appreciate the great, as also to distinguish them from a host of others who may have all the lime light of popularity and prominence, nay who



may even claim some pre-eminence, but who can no boast of much of the abiding, intrinsic qualities and paramount factors constituting greatness? And it is only with a sympathetic understanding, a sense of fairness and dignity, and with a worshipful spirit that we can hope to do justice to the great and avoid falling into pitfalls of the barren controversy and conflicts of opinions that centre round these tions; the key to the secret of their greatness and the mystery of their advent does not belong to lesser critic but to the ardent student.

Greatness admits of no clear-cut, easy and precise definition; nor is it any rare quality of head and heart; rather it is a cluster of attributes, a preponderance of a quality or qualities that mark a man out from among his contemporaries and enable him to change, to influence or mould—in whatever great or small degree—his time and his environment, and leave the marks of his genius or the example of his noble soul behind—the heritage of his posterity. He, indeed, is the great man, who, by dint of his intrinsic worth and achievement and work in some walks of life or other, towers head and shoulder over the common run of men, one who lives altogether on a higher plane, as it were, adding the lustre of his life on the people below. 'I count a great man' says Emerson, 'who inhabits a higher sphere of thought, into which other men rise with labour and difficulty; he has to open his eyes to see things in true light and larger relations. He is



great who is what he is from nature'. Judged by this supreme standard, the greatness of Asutosh is clear enough; nothing can describe his greatness or establish his title to be ranked among the great representative men of their times, so easily and briefly as these few words—he inhabited 'a higher sphere of thought' and could 'do his best thing easiest and was what he was from nature'. Any one who has followed his remarkable career, or has come into contact with him, any one who will study his life seriously or will have a casual reading, will not surely fail to be impressed with the central fact which emerges beyond the shadow of the faintest doubt—the fact, namely, that here is at last a man who lives, moves and has his being in a different region; here indeed, is an individual who occupies an enormous space in the public life of the country, who, by his prodigious and prolonged activities in more than one important field of work has literally made history, linking his own lifestory with the story of the national progress and national prosperity, who, moreover, seemed to belong not to this old, familiar, matter-of-fact world of ours, but to a loftier realm, overflowing with faith and hope, glory and vitality,—a world which seemed to be the ultimate source of his greatest urge and highest inspiration and unfailing idealism! He had something of the extraordinary in all he did and spoke and thought; all his speeches and addresses, all his labours and



INTRODUCTION.

thoughts—not to speak of his ideals and faith—bore the impress of his genius and the stamp of his versatile personality; none the less, were they, the ordinary outturns and expressions of his nature, springing from it with the easy, simple and spontaneous flow of a rivulet. And the presiding angel of his life endowed him with a prophetic vision and piercing ken with which he saw things in their true colour and larger relations.

Throughout his career, this angelic vision, this truer, inner light never failed him, and there was always a glow of idealism, a breadth of outlook, a firm grip of the actualities as well as of the potentialities and a rare faith in the ultimate triumph of truth and of his cause; the momentous question of principles and policies that he dealt with, or the many intricate and complex problems that he tackled, the enormous, difficult and multifarious works that he brought himself to perform, the uphill tasks that he applied himself to, lastly the epochmaking achievements that he could point to as his contributions to the national awakening and uplift and to the progress of human thought and knowledge, would have crushed any other individual of his generation by their sheer weight and variety, no less by their difficulty and complexity. But then, he was 'strong as Nature is strong, who lifts the land into the mountain slopes without effort, and by the same rule, as she floats a bubble in the air.'



But however great a man may be in the possession of intrinsic worth or genius, whatever prominence he may acquire and pre-eminence he may attain, he will surely not reach the zenith of human greatness, unless and until he 'abolishes himself' and his spirit 'diffuses itself'; unless and until he gives his very best to, and loses himself in the service of, his fellow creatures. The goddess of our life is a jealous deity and will not suffer any one to retain his greatness or his fame but will consign him to the dustbin of oblivion or obscurity, contempt or apathy, either in his lifetime or after his death—no matter however high his place in our midst—if he does not thoroughly identify himself with the fortunes of his fellowmen, if he does not champion their cause; the fact is, an individual is so indissolubly linked with human society,—with his country, particularly,—that he can not isolate himself thoroughly,; unfortunately—specially in our country, in these days—it happens, more often than not, that an individual, as soon as he is able to rise to some eminence, manages to forget the larger relations in which he stands to the society and the country; but the violation of this fundamental law of human society and civilization, brings its own punishment; he is often disillusioned; his fall, in some shape or other, is sure to come in life or after death. But the truly great never lose sight of the organic, intimate and innate relation of the individual to the society, and will not, as if by instinct, live their



INTRODUCTION.

lives in glorious isolation and solitary independence in the midst of society. And Asutosh, who was one of 'nature's darlings' and in whom had taken place, in a striking degree, a harmonious development of man's bright side, his brilliant parts and his higher nature, gave the very best of his Godgiven gifts and devoted most of his un-common capacities and exuberant energies, not to the furtherance of his narrow self-interests, but to the promotion of the larger interests and the greater cause of his fellow creatures; he worked, day and night, he strove hard, he fought tooth and nail, he did all these and more for the fulfilment of the larger, better and higher life of his people,—the life of which he had had such a sure and fascinating vision,; it was the mission of his life to hasten it, to herald it; it was, as he once said in a pathetic strain, his day-dream, for the realization of which he lived his life and staked his all.—and he rejoiced to do it.

There is seldom any uniformity in human greatness. The great are great in various ways and can hardly be judged by a hard and fast standard. They vary according to the tradition, culture, history and influences of their respective race, their society and their times; there are great men the simplicity of whose life and lifeworks is apparent and they are, thus, easy to understand and easy to appreciate; there are those, again who, by the complexity of their characters, and by the farreaching and, for the time being, controversial nature of their



works and achievements, offer a difficult problem to the student of contemporary biographies; such a man was Asutosh Mookerjee. His was a complex character—his mode of living was simple to a degree; he had a personality, at once, magnetic, dynamic and commanding, at times elusive, destined not only to make itself felt and to cut its own way in the world, but also like Disraeli's to bend to its course, by its irresistible force and vigour, every thing and every body—public opinion and institutions, high officials of the state and prominent public men—a personality, destined, in short, to lead, to rule, to lord it over, as it were. The very field of his activities and the nature of his principal work would not have acquired too much exertion of his giant's strength and energy, in the ordinary favourable circumstances—under a national Government and in these days of democracy and enlightenment; and his genius would have found other and more suitable channels of expression and more scope and field; perhaps the fund of his extraordinary working capacity would not have been so exhausted in such a manner—perhaps his health and his constitution would not have been undermined so fatally as to make for so sudden, so sad a collapse, in the normal course of 'advancement of learning' in various stages; and he might have been spared to his country men for some time to come when, of all things, his services, his experience, his moral and intellectual powers, his statesmanship, above all his enlightened



INTRODUCTION.

patriotism and his sage counsel, were in urgent requisition. But who can overrule the decrees of fate? who could foretell a little before his death at Patna that this intellectual giant, this hero of work, this ruler of men and leader of thought—this prince among men would breathe his last in such tragic circumstances?

It was the the proud boast of Disraeli that he had to 'educate' his party; really it was not without a subtle process of 'education' that he could have wrung out of his party the second great Reform Act of the last century. But the task of Asutosh was not merely to 'educate' his party, to harness public opinion—Indian public opinion in particular—to his side, but also to 'educate' his superiors, to prevail upon his masters, the earthly arbiters of his country's fate, who were, by no means, always over-sympathetic to him, his policy or his line of action. Unlike Disraeli, who, once installed in the leadership of his party, came to the helm of affairs of his country and became one of the few dictators of Europe in the normal course of events, Asutosh had to face and overcome one stumbling block after another and put up a stubborn fight for his ideal, for the independence and integrity of his University, to the end of the chapter; and out of the protracted struggle and controversy, that he had had to carry on times, without number, between the forces of progress represented by him and in his personality on the one hand and the



forces of reaction and retrogradation represented by a powerful autocracy and a strong bureaucracy, between an individual representative of the people and the alien Government of the land Asutosh invariably came, with flying colours. In the violent contact with the powerful authorities, in his strenuous and continuous struggle to realize his lofty ideal of the greatest temple of learning and research in Asia, reviving the glories of Nalanda and providing for the development of the studies of letters and sciences in their highest stages, no less for the widespread diffusion of a liberal, popular, secondary and University, education among all sections of his countrymen in ever-increasing numbers—in this lifelong struggle, his herculean strength and energy, his indomitable will and perseverance, his marvellous powers of organization and construction, of expression and of persuasion, in brief, his towering personality and his sterling character, were seen, and shone, to the best advantage.

He was one of those few characters that reflect the better mind of his people, champion the loftier ideals of the age, and sum up in themselves, the higher trends and tendencies of his race, struggling for expression and outlets; his was one of those lives that change and shape the course of events and things, and inaugurate a new era in the history of their country. No doubt he had less of the 'Himalayan height' or of the 'Pacific depth' that characterise these heroes, but the range of his



INTRODUCTION.

powers, the massiveness of his intellects and the versatility of his personality went a long way to make up for this deficiency; and the fields of his activities and thoughts as also of his knowledge and scholarship were enormous and varied. Like some glorious phenomena of Nature, which command our awe and wonder but paralyze our attempt at definition, his personality defies, and suffers from, analysis. His was the life that impressed upon his fellow creatures the magnitude and extent of its greatness and shines today in its own grandeur, now that he is dead and gone. He was one of those rare figures on the world's stage, those dominant and baffling characters—who, not exactly, 'like the poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage and is heard no more', but more resembling the burning sun,—come and dazzle our globe with their innate brilliance, infuse new life and lustre into the men and things around, and drop off, leaving a deep and dismal void behind.

Men have tried to codify, capture and even dogmatize about truth and even to compress it in the narrow groove of a sentence or a few words; these, the world accepts as its mottoes investing them with the sanctity and authority of guiding principles of life. But the great truth revealed in human life—the truth that manifests itself in the lives of the great men—can not be crystallized into, or judged by, so many sayings and mottoes based on halftruths and malobservation. The lives of great



men abound with paradoxes and perplexities—so many deviations and departures from average, humdrum, matter—of fact—lives and would have been the less striking and appealing, but for these. Nor are we to expect all the monopoly of goodness or greatness, wisdom or morality, fidelity to some fixed principles or constancy of conduct, from our heroes and our great men. 'No man' says Emerson, 'in all procession of famous men is reason or illumination or that essence we are looking for, but is an exhibition, in some quarter, of new possibilities'.

The lives of the great men all the world over illustrate and establish the important fact that greatness in humanity does not presuppose perfection or absolute right or merely abstract morality, rather the many frailties and faults, defects and shortcomings that flesh is heir to, the great are not altogether free from. And no one will claim for Asutosh a greater or more absolute immunity from these common failings and foibles than others or greater masters and heroes of ancient and modern times. But we of the present generation are all too full of the glare of his life, too much dazzled by the brilliance of his career, too profoundly impressed by his personality and too much affected by his life-work to have a clear perspective and a dispassionate view of his failings; we may profitably leave the task to the next generations.

Nevertheless, the life of Asutosh was remarkable and it is greatly interesting and instructive



for its many paradoxes and its rare peculiarities ; it was the living refutation of many accepted notions and ideas applicable to ordinary men. Man is said to be the creature of circumstances ; no doubt he is so, to a certain extent ; but it was the chief glory of Asutosh's life that with a resolution made at the dawn of his manhood, he broke down, one after another, the iron barriers of circumstances till he had the satisfaction of finding—as far as possible under human limitations—his cherished dreams of boyhood and youth, as accomplished facts. Under the benevolent despotism of Britain—until very lately—the Indians are having every thing done for them by their British rulers ; they have had no say, not to speak of any initiative, in a great national policy or programme ; nor are the means to carry this out, within their easy reach ; but Asutosh rose superior to his environment and soared above his predecessors ; he launched upon a big and far-reaching policy, and translated into action, his great scheme of national advancement in the domains of popular, secondary, higher, education and culture, as also in the realms of highest researches and original thinking. As the late Mr. Gokhale said from his place in the Indian Legislative Council—and it is almost a truism—that the Bengalis are the most emotional people of India ; but the reverse proposition is too readily supposed to be necessarily true ; and it is generally taken for granted that any sustained work and protracted activity



must be conspicuous by their absence among them ; that they are a race of lawyers, speakers and clerks ; but the lives of Asutosh, of Sir R. N. Mukherjee, S. J. Buttokristo Paul, Sir J. C. Bose, Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore, Dr. P. C. Roy and of many other eminent men as well as the pioneer workers in the sphere of social reform, educational expansion and industrial activities independent of the Government of the country, give the lie direct to the common belief and are proof positive of the active, constructive and organizing faculties of the Bengalis. Born in a subject country, weighed down under a foreign yoke, fettered hand and foot and bred in a society which revels in a morbid conservatism and blind orthodoxy, Asutosh was the freest man under the sun ; freedom was the breath of his nostril, the bedrock of his whole being, his watchword and a guiding, controlling, overmastering principle of his life ; a member of a subject race of dwarfed stature and stunted growth, the child of a society which groans under the load of a hundred old customs and superstitions and is more dead than alive, he was the mightiest monarch of all he surveyed ; there was something regal in his manners and modes and moods ; he thought like a king, spoke like a king and had had his own ways like a king, in fine, he attained his herculean strength and his giant's stature, he stepped into his place in public life, as of right, in the circumstances the degrading forces of which were sure to suppress and dwarf all



other than exceptionally great and gifted. Bengal, for the matter of that, India has produced many great men in the present stage of her reniassance; many are the geniuses and prodigies, sublime characters and lofty idealists, thinkers and men of action, who have shed a lustre on the land of their birth; but few are those who like Asutosh, have worked in the service of their motherland and of the humanity—worked incessantly, indefatigably and fearlessly—setting forth before themselves and thier countrymen, the highest ideal and striving steadfastly and tenaciously to attain it; few are those, who, like him, are born with a mission, as it were, and have made it the be-all and end-all of their lives to reform, to transform, to change and mould, in the light of a newer, broader and higher ideal, some social, educational or political, systems or institutions; fewer are those who like him, are endowed by nature with such singular and varied intellectual powers, force of character and spirit of independence which help them in becoming pioneers and original thinkers, leaders of men and of thought; very few are those who, like him, chalk out boldly a path for their people to tread on and are fortunate enough to lead them on within sight of the promised land; fewer are those who have moreover, the privilege of constructing and leaving behind themselves, some growing, thriving and living monuments of their lives, just as Asutosh, by his undying faith and idealism, his sheer ability



and untiring efforts, has built a beautiful and glorious temple, essential to the national growth and greatness and pulsating with a new energy, instinct with a new life and aglow with a new light—a temple for the hundreds and thousands of his countrymen to be sanctified and bathed in, in the sunshine of knowledge and culture.

If this ancient land of ours with a glorious past and a hoary civilization and culture, if it is so long under the sway of a foreign power, if it is so helpless and unable to raise its head in the comity of nations, it is not because there has been suddenly a dearth of intellect amongst us, but because there has been a dearth of men, manly, patriotic and broadminded, men of the type of Asutosh who could stand erect, speak out and act up to, Truth, face and love Truth, and live and die for Truth ; if our society which was once a nursery of liberalism and fraternity, if it is today in a stagnant and lifeless state, it is due not mainly to a lack of lofty ideas and pious wish, but to a want of lofty and steadfast, characters, like Asutosh. If the essential condition of national life and national progress and pre-eminence is to add to the fund of human knowledge and contribute to the forward march of human thought, it has been the unique privilege of Asutosh to have heralded the dawn of this national greatness in the not very distant horizon by building for the first time in modern India, the very highest departments of studies and