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**DEWAN RAMCOMBEN:**

BY

**PEARY CHAND MITTRA,**

AUTHOR OF "THE BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF DAVID HARE,"

"SPIRITUAL STRAY LEAVES,"

AND

"STRAY THOUGHTS ON SPIRITUALISM."



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TO  
THE MEMORY  
OF  
SARAMADIE RAJAHYE HINDUSTHAN

RAJ RAJENDRA SRI MAHARAJA DHIRAJ  
SEWAI RAM SING BAHADOOR,  
*Maharaja of Jeypore, G.C.S.I., I.C., C.I.E.,*

THIS work is dedicated as a small, but sincere token of respect for His Highness leading an exemplary life and devoting himself to the promotion of the happiness of his subjects, thus rendering his administration beneficent and a model to many other Indian Princes.

The late Maharaja was an encourager and admirer of Horee Mohun Sen, the eldest son of Dewan Ram-mul Sen; and while alive, he was pleased to grant me his permission to dedicate this work to His Highness.

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# L I F E

OF

## DEWAN RAMCOMUL SEN.

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THE Ain-i-Akbari makes mention of the Vaidya Rajas, that is, the Sen Dynasty, although it is maintained by certain oriental scholars that the Sens were of Kshatriya caste. Of the Sens, Ballal and Lakshman were great encouragers of learning. The Vaidyas are known not only to have claimed equality with Brahmans as twice-born men, entitled to the *paita*, but distinguished themselves as scholars and authors. They received a general education and learnt and practised medicine in all branches. The following are some of the Vaidya authors—Madhab Kar, author of *Nidan*; Bijaya Bakshit, author of *Vaidya Madhukosh*; Biswanath Kabiraj, author of *Sahitya Darpana*; Chakrapani Datya, author of *Chakradatya*; Kabichandra, author of *Ratnabali*, and Bharat Mallik. The Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Kayasthas, Vaidyas and people of other castes were settled in different parts of Bengal before Bengal fell into the hands of the Mahomedans. Manu and Colebrooke say that the Vaidyas were of Brahman father and Vaisya mother. This may have been true in some cases, but in Ancient India there



was originally no caste, and it is profession and calling which created and multiplied caste. It is, therefore, mythic to trace caste to birth. It was held that a Chandala was higher than a Brahman if he was a holy man.

Rameomul Sen's ancestors claiming descent from Ballal Sen were settled in Gariffa, a village in the the 24-Parganas District, opposite the banks of the River Hughli. Ballal was Adisur's daughter's son. Ramcomul was the son of Gakul Chandra, and was born on the 15th March, 1783. He had an elder brother named Madan and a younger brother named Ramdhan. Ramcomul was not of illustrious filiation, nor was he born with a silver spoon in his mouth. But he belonged to a family of hereditary *prestige*, and high in a social point of view.

When Ramcomul was born, Calcutta was being formed and settled into a metropolis. Calcutta owes its origin to Job Charnock, the Agent of the East India Company at Hughli. In 1678-79, he married a Hindu lady whom he rescued from being burnt as a *sati*. He took a liking to Calcutta, because in going to and coming from Hughli, he halted at Baitak-khana under the shade of an umbrageous tree, and enjoyed the repose of his *húka*. Charnock was molested by the Faujdar at Hughli, and he decided upon making the site, where the tree stood, the scene of his future labors. In 1688, the Company was permitted to purchase the Zemindari rights to the villages



of Gobindapur, Sutanati and Calcutta, called after the goddess Kali, and in 1700, these villages were purchased. The fort was built on the site of the Fairlie Place, Custom House and Kaila Ghat. In 1771, Calcutta was "a straggling village of mud houses, the whole of the ground south of Chand Pal Ghat being thickly covered with jungle and forest trees." The limits of Calcutta were from Chitpur to Cooly Bazar. Gradually, Simla, Malanga, Mirjapur, Hogaleuria, and Short's Bazar were acquired. The most ancient Hindu families then in Calcutta were the Sets and Basaks, who were engaged in mercantile pursuits, and supplied piece-goods to the English merchants. From different parts of the world, Europeans, Moguls, and Armenians began to pour in. There was an active trade, and in 1737, we had "opulent merchants, gold plentiful, labor cheap, and not one indigent European in India." In 1756, Calcutta was taken by Seraj-ud-daula and the horrors of the Black Hole were committed, but in 1757, Calcutta was re-captured by the English. The population of Calcutta was governed by a Zemindar, who was the Collector, Judge and Police Administrator. In 1773, the Supreme Court was established. In 1775, the Police was remodelled, and in 1780, Commissioners of Conservancy were appointed, who levied two annas on the rupee on the rent of shops and one anna on the houses.

Subsequently rules were passed for the maintenance of the police, method of work and the estab-



lishment of the conservative and adjudicative police. In 1784, the *Gentleman's Magazine* says—"There is no branch of European commerce that has made so rapid a progress as that to the East Indies." On the 27th January, 1794, Sir John Richardson and others were appointed Justices of the Peace. Population went on increasing fast. Many native families were settled in Gobindapur, and they had to remove when the new fort—the Fort William—was built there.

The Armenians and Portuguese, who had left Calcutta, afterwards returned on the invitation of Charnock. The gain of the merchants was evidently high, notwithstanding the monopoly of the East India Company, and the discouragement to private industry and enterprise. Stavorinus, who wrote in 1770, bears testimony to this fact. It is the commercial importance of Calcutta that drew into it natives from all parts of Bengal. The activity in the export and import trade, the building of ships, the establishment of Courts, the increase in the numerical strength of the Government offices, the requirements of private merchants for assistants, widened the sphere of occupation to the natives of Bengal. In 1799, the native banians, sarkars and writers, are described as carrying on the greatest part of the retail trade of Calcutta. In Calcutta, certain Bengalis who had made money, began to distinguish themselves in the estimation of the European community.



But education was totally neglected for some time. In 1796, a few native children only were taught by Europeans. Spelling books and copies for writing were introduced into native houses, and native teachers possessing a smattering of the English, were employed as private schoolmasters, or they opened schools. The desire of making money served as a great incentive to English education, as Persian education was sought for under the Mahomedan administration. Men like Ramdulal Day learnt only a little of the Bengali language and accounts, and a few English phrases and colloquial English, and with such knowledge, served as ship-sarkars and banians of American captains and merchants. As natives made money, the study of the English language was encouraged, but for a time low and broken English or half-English and half-Bengali was spoken, and sometimes gesture language was used, as Gulliver made himself understood by the Lilliputians.

In 1800, the College of Fort William was established in Calcutta for the encouragement of learning.

Several leading native families had been settled in Calcutta. Jayaram, one of the Tagores, was here when the Fort William was built. Nabakrishna was in the service of Clive. Nakur Dhar, who is said to have lent at one time several lakhs to the Government in coin, was an old inhabitant of Calcutta. Rajas Baidyanath and Nrisinha were descended from him. Madan Mohan Datta, who was the Dewan of the Export Warehouse, was a contemporary of Raja



Nabakrishna ; Ramdulal's mother was his cook, and Ramdulal was brought up with Madan Mohan's sons by a pandit. In those days, penmanship, quickness in calculations, and a knowledge of zemindari accounts were considered great accomplishments.

Rameomul's father knew Persian, and was a Sheristadar on a salary of fifty Rupees per month in Hughli. Ramcomul was placed for tuition under a Siromani Vaidya, and learnt the elements of the Sanskrit language. He often asked for lessons, and his tutor remonstrated—Rameomul used to say “a man must eat according to his appetite.” He came to Calcutta and commenced his English studies at Ram-jay Datta's at Colootolla about 1801. Rameomul says “I studied English at a school kept by a Hindu up the river where the boys used to make extracts from Tulinama and Arabian Nights which were used as class-books, there being no Dictionary or Grammar.” He bought a small house at a place, now the site of Colootolla Street. This he sold and purchased the house in Colootolla, formerly occupied by Madhab Chandra Sen. We had not the art of printing here before A. D. 1780. Nor was there any Bengali work compiled before A. D. 1500. The first biographical work in Bengali was the life of Chaitanya. In 1567, Krishnadas Kabiraj, of the Vaidya caste, and a disciple of Chaitanya, wrote his life. Then we had Mansa, Dharmagana, Mahabharat by Kasidas, Ramayan by Kirtibasa, Chandi by Kabikankana and Annada Mangala by Bharat



Chandra, the two last under the auspices of Raja Krishna Chandra of Nadia. The only works which were read in the Patsbalas, were Gurudakshina and the rules of arithmetic by Suvankara. In Ramcomul's case, school education was apparently of little or no use in the development of his mind. There were no good schools nor were there proper elementary books in Calcutta at the time, and Ramcomul had not the means of paying for private tuition.

Poverty must have compelled Ramcomul to give up all idea of seeking for education elsewhere, as he began life in Calcutta on the 19th November, 1800. He was in the service of Mr. Namey on the 10th December 1802. Namey was an Assistant of Mr. Blacquiere, Chief Magistrate of Calcutta. On the 10th December, 1803, Ramcomul was married. In the same year his father brought him to Mr. R. Blechynden, the Civil Architect of the Government, and under him he served as an apprentice. In 1804 he obtained an appointment in the Hindusthani Press, on a salary of eight Rupees per month. In 1808 he was in the service of the Chadni Hospital. In 1812 he was under Colonel Ramsay at the Fort William College. In 1818-19, Ramcomul, who must have attracted the notice of Dr. H. H. Wilson while in the Hindusthani Press, was appointed a clerk of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, on a salary of Rs. 12 per month, and he discharged his duties so satisfactorily that he was afterwards appointed the Native Secretary, and he



rose from that office to a membership of the Council.

Ramcomul's life was a life of industry, perseverance and trial. His thirst for knowledge was great. When so situated, the soul goes on disenthraling itself, and its progressive development is gradually manifested. School education is more or less *cramming*, and does not in all cases answer the *real purpose of education*.

Thus from a very early age, Friend,  
My thoughts by slow gradations had been drawn  
To human kind and to the good and ill  
Of human life ; nature had led men on.—*Wordsworth*.

This is soul or self-development.

In time Ramcomul became an excellent English scholar, and acquired a knowledge of classical Bengali and Sanskrit. The development of his intellect and his high moral principles gained him friends and admirers among the European community and Government officials. From a compositor, on a salary of 8 Rs. a month, he now became the Dewan of the Calcutta Mint. His efficiency was so fully established there, that he afterwards became the Dewan of the Bank of Bengal. He was called upon to exercise the greatest amount of vigilance and judgment in the performance of his duties, and he was the right hand of Mr. George Udny, the Secretary of the Bank. Some how or other he got into hot water with George Udny. This came before the Directors, but Ramcomul came off with flying colors. The Directors placed unlimited confidence in him, and



he was often asked to attend their meetings to give them the benefit of his advice.

With his own advancement in life and his acquisition of a competency, Ramecomul's thoughts were directed towards the means of benefiting his country. Finding that education was the panacea for the complicated diseases of India, he brought his whole heart to bear on the best means of facilitating the acquisition of the English and Vernacular languages.

The Hindu College was opened on the 20th January 1817. In the same year the Calcutta School Book Society was established. In 1818 the Calcutta School Society was formed. The General Committee of Public Instruction was appointed in 1823. Ramecomul Sen's connection with the Hindu College as a member of its Managing Body, commenced from an early date. Kerr in his Review of Public Instruction mentions the name of Ramecomul Sen as of one, who took an active part in the establishment of the Hindu College. Being a sincere orthodox Hindu, he considered it a sacred duty to oppose heterodoxy in every form and was, therefore, instrumental in dismissing Mr. DeRozio from the Hindu College, when it was found that his teachings had produced a body of young men who were pulling Hinduism to pieces, and infecting every nook and corner of the city with sentiments and doctrines, fatal to the established religion of the Hindus. The impetus which Ram-mohun Roy had given to free enquiry and the progress of ideas, had already penetrated the citadel of



orthodoxy, and any further independence and aggression could not be tolerated.

Ramcomul was a member of the Council of Education from 1839, when that body was composed of Sir Edward Ryan, Mr. C. H. Cameron, Dr. Grant and other distinguished personages. Of the School Book Society he was an active member from the commencement. The idea of the Bengali and English Dictionary must have been suggested to him while in the prosecution of his labors as a member of the School Book Society's Committee. He was a co-laborer with Dr. Carey, and his connection with the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of India of which Dr. Carey was the founder, commenced soon after its formation. In 1829 he was the Native Secretary and Collector to the Society. He contributed to the "Transactions" an article on the Manufacture of Paper. In 1844 he was one of the Vice-Presidents.

His love of Sanskrit literature was so great that he built a house near the Hindu College now known as the Albert Hall, where he liked to pass a short time with the Professors of the Sanskrit College, with which he was connected as Secretary. Ramcomul's love of education became so well known that he was requested to take a part in the management of the Parental Academy, now known as the Doveton College. Although the trouble he was called upon to take did not benefit his countrymen but a race foreign in every respect, yet he did not hesitate to





accept this labor of love, his conviction of education being productive of measureless blessings being so strong.

Ramcomul Sen was a zealous member of the District Charitable Society, although it was an institution established to administer relief in a way very different from the mode in which his countrymen gave charity. When a Sub-Committee was appointed for relieving the native poor of Calcutta, the town was divided, and divisions were bounded and defined. Ramcomul Sen circulated an address to the wealthy natives, calling on them to support the Society, and pointing out the "evil effects attending indiscriminate largesses of the kind, the painful weariness and contagion of diseases, the loss even of life, to which crowds of squalid mendicants, who gather together from distant parts on occasion of death of a wealthy relative, are exposed." The Committee referred to, consisted of a number of European and native gentlemen, of whom Ramcomul Sen was one. In 1834 he was elected one of the Vice-Presidents, as a mark of distinction.

In 1830 Ramcomul completed his English and Bengali Dictionary of 700 pages, which Mr. J. C. Marshman, the Editor of the *Friend of India*, pronounces "the fullest and most valuable work of its kind which we possess, and will be the most lasting monument of his industry, zeal and erudition. It is perhaps the work by which his name will be recognized by posterity."



Before the establishment of the Medical College, Lord William Bentinck appointed a Committee, of which Ramcomul was a member, for the purpose of reporting on the state of medical education in Calcutta.

We will give a few extracts from Dr. H. H. Wilson's letters to Ramcomul, and wish we could give the extracts from the letters of the latter, but they are not forthcoming :—

*5th January 1833.*

"A few years more, and I hope you will be able to devolve the important situation you hold upon one of your sons, and withdraw to a comfortable and honorable leisure, engaged only in the improvement of the succeeding generation in which you have always taken so zealous a share."

*23rd February 1833.*

*High estimation in which Ramcomul was held.*—"I have never had a fancy for being idle, though far from being such a pattern of industry as yourself. Give my kind regards to both the young men, and assure them that nothing will give me greater satisfaction than to hear that they are treading on their fathers' footsteps and establishing a like character for talent, industry and integrity—the two latter are entirely in their power; talent is to a certain extent inborn, but enough is attainable by ordinary exertion, when no natural deficiency exists to conduct every man respectably and successfully through life."

*27th June 1833.*

"I have written to no one yet but Mr. Siddons. You come next in my correspondence. I have not yet seen Ram Mohun Roy, and do not know what he is about. London is a wide place, and all the people are in such a bustle and so exclusively engaged in their own concerns, that an individual finds himself quite lost and utterly insignificant amidst the mighty mass."



*English People.*—"We have had every variety of temperature and frequent alternations of rainy chilly days with sunshine and warmth; the effect of this upon the vegetable world is highly advantageous, and corn, fruit and flower are or are likely to be abundant. The people here are nevertheless discontented—dissatisfied with the Government and displeased with themselves. The fact is that it is their own fault. They all live beyond their means, spend more than they can afford, and when they suffer for their folly, plead the hardness of the times, and the pressure of taxation. They cannot be very badly off, it has been said in one of the papers, when they can raise about a lakh of rupees a day to support Italian singers, French dancers, and other foreigners, whose trade it is to entertain the English public, not to mention actors, singers, dancers, and other exhibitors of English growth. In spite of the want of such persons, you are much happier in Calcutta, and much more rationally and soberly occupied than the good people of London, though they think themselves the wisest and best in the world. I prefer by far the good sense of my old friends in the East—particularly my native friends."

After Dr. Wilson was installed as Boden Professor of Sanskrit at the Oxford University, he wrote on the 9th October, 1833.

*Ram Mohun Roy.*—"He had no intention of returning immediately, and Fate ordained that he should not return at all. I am very sorry for it. He would have come back a more reasonable man, much more moderate in his views than he was in quitting India."

*Charter.*—"You are on the eve of great alterations in the administration of the affairs in the East, not all for the better. I am afraid fresh burdens will be imposed upon the revenue, to the gain of the public creditors, perhaps, but the loss of the public."



On the 21st December, Dr. Wilson writes—

*Commercial Failures.*—"The destruction of property and credit by the failure of the Calcutta houses has been most distressing ; but the commerce of the country will perhaps benefit by it as storms purify the air, and do more good in the end than calm. The system was rotten to the core, and being overturned, trade will be no more unhealthy."

*Studies in the Hindu College.*—"I hope the Political Economy lectures will not be introduced. They will be of no use. Those on Law, if properly given, would be very beneficial,\* but it requires attainments of an unusual character to give them properly."

*Sanskrit College.*—"Is in a worse way than the Hindu College apparently ; for the Education Committee seem to be English-mad. They will do much more harm than good by their precipitation, and disgust a considerable body of valuable men, both Pundits and Moulvis, who with a little perseverance and management would have come to be useful instruments. I have had some account from Mr. Prinsep of the state of things, and am sorry to see the Committee relinquishing a gentler system for one of rash and violent theory."

*Ram Mohun Roy.*—"In a letter I wrote to you I mentioned the death of Ram Mohun Roy. Since then I have seen Mr. Hare's brother, and had some conversation with him on the subject. Ram Mohun died of brain-fever ; he had grown very stout, and looked full and flushed when I saw him. It was thought he had the liver, and his medical treatment was for that and not for determination to the head. It appears also that mental anxiety contributed to aggravate his complaint.

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\* In 1832 Mr. Theodore Dickens was appointed Professor of Law. He lectured from Blackstone and, I must say, failed to make himself instructive. He was succeeded by Sir John Grant after he came from Bombay. His lectures on jurisprudence, ethics and metaphysics, were very interesting.



He had become embarrassed for money, and was obliged to borrow of his friends here ; in doing which he must have been exposed to much annoyance, as people in England would as soon part with their lives as their money. Then Mr. Sandford Arnot, whom he had employed as his Secretary, importuned him for the payment of large arrears which he called arrears of salary, and threatened Ram Mohun, if not paid, to do what he has done since his death, claim as his own writing all that Ram Mohun published in England. In short, Ram Mohun got amongst a low, needy, unprincipled set of people, and found out his mistake, I suspect, when too late, which preyed upon his spirit and injured his health. With all his defects, he was no common man, and his country may be proud of him."

6th March 1834.

*Conversion.*—"I was very happy to see the decision of the Court in the case of the youth who had been beguiled into Christianity ; for, though I think conversion must and will take place very extensively, yet I do not think it should begin with young lads whilst under the parental authority, and before they have either ability or right to think or act for themselves. I hope the decision will set the minds of our native friends at rest, and induce them to continue to send their sons to the College."

*Sanskrit.*—"I am going to publish a translation of the *Sankhya Bhashya* with Mr. Colebrooke's translation of *Sankhya Karika*, and then the translation of the *Kaumadi*. I must do something of this kind, for my credit's sake ; but to say the truth, the people here care nothing about Sanskrit. They care equally little about anything literary, and not much about anything scientific. Eating, ostentation and politics are the total of English existence. I have a very mean opinion of my countrymen."



30th May 1834.

*Bank of Bengal*.—"I am sorry too to find you have been a loser by the sad commercial failures, as well as myself and others, and that the emoluments of your situation in the Bank have fallen so far beneath your expectations. As, however, the state of things must mend, and no doubt will be all the better in the end, after the annihilation of the artificial capital and return to a sounder system, the prosperity of commerce and of the Bank will revive."

*Asiatic Society*.—"Is one of the most creditable institutions established by the English in India, and has been the means of doing much good—animating such men as Jones and Colebrooke to make the Hindus known to Europeans. As far as I have yet had an opportunity of comparing it with Societies here, it need not shrink from a comparison, containing as much talent and energy as any, and conducting its proceedings with quite as much method and spirit. There is a morbid vanity about Englishmen that disposes them to undervalue everything that is not of their own country and in it also, but I am not quite satisfied that London itself does not offer a more intelligent or active scene than Calcutta. There is great talent here, no doubt, but it is less concentrated, and what I did not expect there is great idleness—great waste of time, as reading newspapers and walking about the streets. Even in Oxford there is little study—not above four hours a day, at most from 9 till 1,—then people go and walk or ride till near 5, dine at 5 and talk till 10, go to bed and get up at 8 next morning. What can be effected in these few hours?"

20th August 1834.

*Sanskrit*.—"If Sanskrit is discouraged in India, the Pundits must adjourn to Europe; but neither Lord William, nor Mr. Trevelyan, know what they are doing when they seek to discountenance it. Upon its cultivation depends the means of



the native dialects to embody European learning and science. It is a visionary absurdity to think of making English the language of India. It should be extensively studied, no doubt, but the improvement of the native dialects, enriching them with Sanskrit terms for English ideas, and to effect this, Sanskrit must be cultivated as well as English."

*Lord William Bentinck*.—"Is an ignorant man. He has a vigorous mind and quiet observation, but he never reads and, therefore, often judges wrongly."

*Society in England*.—"The people here are so taken up with themselves that they cannot bestow much attention upon others. It is the same amongst themselves. England is divided into many little Englands—there is an England of fashion, of classical learning, of antiquities, of science, of profession, of commerce, of speculation, of politics—all dabble in the last; but in each of the former, it is a mere accident if one of one set knows anything of what is going on in another. The sets were very large, comprehending many thousands each; so that there is a wide field of interest, only that it is local and disconnected. Books are printed at the University Press which are never heard of in the Royal Society. The Philosophical Transactions have not six readers in Oxford, and the Royal Asiatic Society's proceedings are unknown to both. The Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature even do not find their way to the College libraries or reading-rooms, and if publications and proceedings immediately under their own noses are not scented, we need not marvel that Bengal Researches and Asiatic Journals do not attract notice. It is of no use to calculate on popularity in England. It is not to be had for any thing but a novel or a newspaper."

*Roman Character*.—"Mr. Siddons sent me the brilliant project of substituting the Roman letters for Devanagari—an inferior for a superior body of representative sounds and an alphabet inconsistent but with the genius of the Indian



languages. The great comfort in all these absurdities is their impracticability. It is loss of time to object to what will never be—the notion has not even the merit of originality. Look at Gilchrist's *Sakountala*, *Polyglot Fables*, &c. Who ever does look at them? Trevelyan is another Gilchrist, rather better taught perhaps, but quite as absurd."

25th September 1835.

*How time spent.*—"There is much less leisure and more indolence in England than in India. We do not sit here agreeably and uninterruptedly from morning till evening as in Calcutta. The streets are open at every hour, and there is a person to be visited, an article to be procured or a walk to be taken which wastes many a good hour in the open air or breaks in upon those spent at home. Then people leave their houses altogether frequently during the summer, and spend six weeks or two months in literally doing nothing."

*Indian Commerce.*—"There seems every likelihood of some remission being made upon the sugar duties here, and that will give some spur to your agriculture. Should the discovery of tea turn out well, that will be a great thing for the north-east part of the country at least, but some time must elapse before much can be effected. It must be owned that the people of England, the mercantile and Parliamentary people at least, are too greedy for their profits to treat Indian commerce with justice, but it is very much your own fault. You submit too quietly. There is a moral as well as a physical force. You employ neither. The latter is out of the question, but you might exert the former. You should hold meetings and petition—petition—petition. Again and again petition the Government of Bengal, the Court of Directors, the Board of Control, whenever you think yourselves aggrieved. There are plenty of clever barristers in Calcutta, if you distrust your own clerks, who will draw up such petitions, but you must hold public meetings, and talk about them and talk boldly too.



You can do such things to pay compliments. Why not meet to discuss your rights ? I am no friend to agitation in general, but it is necessary for India. *In her commerce alone she is seriously injured ; her manufactures are annihilated, her raw produce burthened in England with heavy duties, and English manufactures forced upon her duty-free. There is no equity in this, and it would not be endured. It could not have happened if the Government of India had been independent.* There are other points on which reform is required, but it will not be granted if it is not asked for perseveringly, and loudly demanded."

*Sanskrit Literature.*—"You speak in proper terms of the absurd plans of Mr. Trevelyan to abolish oriental literature even to its alphabet. The scheme is monstrous and impracticable, and time will show, but, in the meanwhile, it will do much harm ; dividing and distracting the sentiments of the friends of native education and interrupting all that was proceeding so quietly and so well. The opposition made by the natives in their petition against the abolition of the Sanskrit College and Madrisa was well timed, and the departure of Lord William will have also suspended the evil designs of Messrs. Macaulay and Trevelyan. If you suffer them ultimately to prevail, you will have yourselves to blame. I am as friendly as they are to a wide extension of English, and promoted it far beyond what they will ever accomplish. They write about it. I worked at it as you know ; but I saw no incompatibility between the cultivation of the classical languages of India and English, and I am still of opinion that real improvement—the elevation of the minds of the people—cannot be effected without both classes of languages being studied."

*Lord William Bentinck.*—"I am aware of the meetings at the College in honor of Lord and Lady William Bentinck. I think you were extremely mistaken in your appreciation of their merits ; but still I like to see a public feeling growing



up amongst my Calcutta native friends. When they gain courage and, above all, combine, they will do for themselves much more good than the Government can do for them by multiplying ill-paid offices."

31st January 1844.

Dr. Wilson wrote as follows :—

*Oriental Text Society.*—"I have not had an opportunity yet of communicating the contents of your letter to the Committee, as there has not been any meeting, Sir Gore Ouseley, who is the President, having been out of town. We are to meet in a few days, when I shall make your liberality known to them; and recommend them to nominate you as their representative in Calcutta, giving you authority to appoint whom you will, to collect subscriptions and make what arrangements you think advantageous. Are you intimate with Mr. Millet? He has written lately to Mr. Bayley on the subject of printing the Vedas, and has shown great and liberal zeal in the cause."

*Numismatics.*—"I want to get for the Numismatic Society of London a set of native (purely native) coining instruments, such as were used in the Indian Mints before the English were heard of, and such as are still used, I dare say, in some parts of Central India or possibly even at Lucknow. I want particularly the stand and hammer with which the dye is struck, or rather the upper and under faces of the dye itself. I want the clay ingot mould, the ladle long, common scales, adjusting apparatus, &c., but it must be genuine Indian, unadulterated—nothing European. I strongly suspect that the instruments will turn out to be very much the same as those used by the Greeks and Romans, and will throw more light upon the coinage of the ancient nations than a hundred antiquarian dissertations."





In 1835, Dr. Martin addressed a letter to the Governors of the Native Hospital in Calcutta, urging the necessity for the establishment of a Fever Hospital in a central part of the Native Town. The Governors assembled to take the subject into consideration, and among those who submitted their notes and observations was Rameomul Sen, showing not only an acquaintance with sanitation, but a catholicity of views unexpected from an orthodox Hindu, who hesitated not to find fault with the sacred water of the Gunga, and denounce the ceremony of *unterjole* in the cause of humanity. His notes may be looked upon as an outline of the sanitary measures subsequently adopted in Calcutta.

The Governors passed Resolutions and forwarded them to the Government. Public meetings were held, subscriptions raised, and Dr. Martin addressed the Governor-General on the subject. A Committee was then appointed by the Government of Bengal. Rameomul was a member of the Committee, composed of Sir Edward Ryan, Sir John Grant, Dr. Martin, Dwarkanath Tagore and others. The range of subjects embraced in the enquiry was large, but all bore on the sanitation and on the immediate medical aid required. The enquiries made by the Committee were ramified under different heads, and the results have led to the improvements in drainage, water supply and other local reforms, with which the city is now blessed. The Report of the Committee of which Sir John Peter Grant was the



Chairman, contains the notes and observations by Ramcomul Sen and Dr. Jackson which are as follows :—

“Of all charitable institutions, the establishment of hospitals for the relief and preservation of health of the poor and infirm, is of the greatest benefit and utility, particularly in a metropolis like Calcutta, to which people from every part of the country resort.

There is a General Hospital, a Sanatorium, and other institutions, which afford medical relief to Europeans; but there are none which are of adequate service to the immense number of poor, homeless and helpless Native inhabitants and emigrants, in and about the Town of Calcutta. It may be said that there is a Native Hospital, and two Public Dispensaries, but the people do not generally avail themselves of the benefit of these Institutions.

The dispensaries supply medicines to such persons as are able to attend personally, and to show themselves to the Superintending Surgeon or Apothecary, but if the dose of medicine they receive does not produce the expected relief, or operates with any degree of violence, or if their illness increases, they do not present themselves again or apply for more medicines, and nothing more is known of their history. Indeed there are many who receive medicine from the dispensaries, but do not take it at all. The Native Hospital is well calculated, and was originally established, for patients laboring under external or accidental injuries, such as are constantly sent by the Police; but people affected with fever or other diseases, of whom great numbers die annually, derive hardly any benefit from it, and considering their habits, customs, and religious scruples, it is not to be wondered at that they are averse to accept the relief held out by this institution, and that they would rather die in their huts and cottages, than have recourse to the Native Hospital, which



admits indiscriminately, and without separate accommodation, patients of all classes and castes. The object of these few notes is to suggest something for the relief of persons of this description.

Fever is unquestionably the most prevalent complaint in and about Calcutta, and the causes are very ably stated in the accompanying Paper by Dr. Martin. The following may be stated as amongst the various causes productive of fever :—

1st.—Want of tanks in different parts of the Native Town to supply wholesome water for drinking.

2nd.—Accumulation of filth and stagnant water.

3rd.—Shallow tanks, with unwholesome water.

4th.—Digging pits and holes and leaving them open.

5th.—Drains.

1st.—The want of good tanks in Calcutta is severely felt by the Native population. The only public tanks we have in Town are—

Loll Deghee,  
Wellington Square,

Puttuldanga, and  
Hadua.

The 1st of these is crowded from six in the morning to ten at night, and were it not for its communication with the River, it would be dry between April and May every year.

Of the 2nd the water is said not to be very good.

The 3rd one is shallow, and the little water which it contains in the dry season is not fit for ordinary purposes. It has, moreover, been spoiled by being frequently filled with water, carried from the public drains.

The water of the 4th is very little used, but owing to what cause I do not know.

As to the River, I need not describe the insalubrious and filthy state of the water during the greater part of the year, which is known to almost every one, and for want of proper



reservoirs, poor people are obliged, from their circumstances, to use any water which they find conveniently within their reach.

II. The drains of Calcutta, as far as regards passages for carrying off the rain water into the River and Circular Canal, are tolerable, but the sewers in most parts of the Town are in a very offensive state, independent of the accumulation of stagnant water from kitchens, &c.

III. There are a great many shallow tanks within the Town, which have very little water, and that of the worst quality during the greatest part of the year, the effluvia from which is sufficient to sicken people passing or living by them. Many of these are yearly filled up with street sweepings and rubbish collected by the Conservancy people, who throw into them all sorts of dirt, without regard to the distress and annoyance felt by the people living about them : some of these take a year or two to be filled, during which the water of the neighbouring tanks and wells may be vitiated and become unfit for use. I am not prepared to state how far it does not even contaminate the air about the place, but nothing can be more offensive and disgusting to the feelings generally, than a residence in such a neighbourhood at the time.

IV. The practice of allowing people indiscriminately to dig holes and pits, for raising the floors of their huts and other purposes, allowing these holes to remain open or half filled with all the refuse and nastiness of the neighbourhood, is another serious source of evil, both as regards drainage and atmospheric purity.

V. I have said that the drains are kept in tolerably good condition, but they cannot do much good to the inhabitants so long as private tattees and privies are allowed to remain on both borders of them in rows, in which the contents accumulate, and are periodically let off into the same drains to be washed away by the rain.



In the Suburbs of Calcutta, the drains are badly kept—water does not find its free passage in them, and amongst crowded gardens, full of marshy places surrounded by jungal, the free circulation of air is prevented, while the decayed leaves and vegetable substances thrown into the stagnant water create malaria and produce fever. I have seen that few of the labourers, peasants and poorer class of people living in the Suburbs, escape its effects, and even the higher class of people are attacked with it, and a large portion of them fall victims to it.

Those who cannot afford preventive means, such as covering of the body, raised bed, &c., and are obliged to live upon succulent vegetables, lie on the damp ground, are bare-footed, and bare-headed, suffer more, and the fever becomes frequently general and epidemic in certain spots.

People from various parts of Bengal come to Calcutta to seek for employment, to beg charity and assistance from their friends and acquaintances, and for speculations.

They come and live with persons who are employed in offices, and workmen, and those who follow menial professions, and whose means are very limited. If they are able or willing to live separately, they hire lodgings in some huts or old buildings, the small apartments of which are let from 2 annas to 2 rupees a month. These people do not possess a sufficient quantity of clothing; they are naked almost day and night; they have no bed, and lie down on mats and leaves spread on the damp ground in their cells or holes—in hot weather they sleep out in open places, and on the borders of the road, exposed to the weather, and all its changes.

When they get fever or cholera, they have nobody to attend on them, nor have they any means to procure medical aid, clothing or food suitable to the state of their health. If it is fever, it increases and becomes violent day by day:



many cannot afford to buy even a dose of *Pachun*,\* which costs but one pice, and even if the people of the house or their neighbours give him pice enough to purchase it, they have neither place nor means to prepare it ; and destitute of all the comforts and necessities of life, their illnesses soon arrive at a stage in which their recovery must be considered doubtful, and always dangerous ; while they are, without any care and attention being paid to them, exposed to the vicissitudes of atmosphere, with nothing but unwholesome water for drink.

The friends of the miserable being with whom he lives, or at whose place he hires his lodging, finding his case bad, become alarmed, send for a *Bydat* to prescribe for him. Because the landlord or host now becomes involved in another difficulty, he cannot attend himself to the sick, and neither has or can give means to take proper care of him, and, therefore, to get rid of his sick tenant or guest, these are the modes usually resorted to : he procures him either a boat or dooly to carry him to his family, in the country, which he never or at least seldom reaches. By the shaking and agitation he receives in his weak state, exposed to the weather, he soon dies. I have seen boatmen and bearers often put down such men on the ghats and bank of the river, &c., where in a few hours they have expired, or are often attacked by beasts of prey before they cease to breathe.

*2nd.*—The second and more convenient mode adopted in Calcutta for disposing of such men, is to carry him to the bank of the river, and there to place him under the charge of some hired people at the ghat of the river, waiting his dissolution.

This mode is considered more convenient and less expensive both for the deceased as well as the persons to whom

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\* The commonest and cheapest Native remedy.

† Native Doctor.



he was attached. Another reason for this also is the well known Hindoo belief, that when a sick man considers that he has no hope left of being recovered, he had better die by the holy stream. Allowing the sick to die in his cell, and throwing his body into the stream, is reckoned infamous and disgraceful both to the survivors and friends of the deceased, and cruel and unbecoming in the persons with whom he has lived. But if he dies on the bank of the Ganges there is some consolation for his family and friends, and at the same time it saves the landlord or his host from the reproaches, which might otherwise be poured upon him by the friends who think that they have done all that could be offered to a man in a dying or distressed situation. They are supposed to have administered him medicine, supplied him with food, and have done the last service a dying man requires, and at the same time not suspected of having robbed the deceased of his property. For if his friends or his landlord allow him to die in the house they are afraid of being annoyed by the Police, who would come to investigate the cause of the man's death, and make enquiries as to whether he had left any property, before they would allow the dead body to be removed. It is not always an easy task to get rid of the Policemen without some trouble and expense. Besides, nobody but persons of his own class or caste could or would touch the dead body, much less dispose of it.

It is to these circumstances that the *Unterjale*, or Ghaut Murder, owes its derivation, about which so much has of late been said in the Calcutta papers.

To save people of this description and those whose cases prevent them attending at the existing Institutions for medical aid, a place in the central part of the Native Town has long been wanted—I mean a Hospital on a moderate scale to receive houseless and friendless and sick Natives, in which they can obtain common medical aid and attendance, and a temporary asylum during convalescence.



The little Hospital attached to the Medical Class of the Sanskrit College, lately abolished by order of Government for the sake of the new Medical Institution, did considerable good as far as its limited means allowed; and I am persuaded that an establishment of this kind, founded on such a principle and conducted under such an arrangement as would guard against any invasion upon the religious scruples and prejudices of the sick, will be highly beneficial, and recognized as a blessing conferred upon the people. The expense in the beginning will be trifling, and the respectable Hindu inhabitants of the Town, when they understand fully the principle of the Hospital, and are able to measure the good done by it, will come forward to give both donations and subscriptions liberally. I cannot close these hints without offering to Baboo Ramcomul Sen my best thanks for his prompt and valuable assistance in furnishing me with the minute information respecting the feelings of the Natives, especially the Hindus, on the subject of Hospital discipline, and the reason for their present dislike to avail themselves of our treatment and care: he has executed his task so completely, that I have had little left to do to arrange and bring together what he supplied. The notes and observations bear the impress of a thorough knowledge of the city and a benevolent desire to heal and help the sick.

A. R. JACKSON.

Ramcomul Sen's evidence given before the Municipal Committee is as follows:—

Q. 1. The late fires in Calcutta have caused destruction of property to a considerable extent, and the Governor-General has asked us to report upon the case. The Chief Magistrate seems to have some objection to compel the people by law to build huts with mud walls and tiled roofs instead of mat walls and straw roofs, what do you think is the difference of value between these two sorts of huts?—A. There are three different



kinds of mud-walled huts—the 1st, mud wall built from the foundation to the edge of the chopper, gradually sloping; this sort of wall cannot be erected in Calcutta, the soil is not suited for it. The 2nd, *Chitta-berra*, made of Bamboo branches covered with mud. This is also objectionable here on account of the dampness of Calcutta being more than that of the Mofussil; 3rd, Gurran sticks covered with cow-dung and clay. This kind will answer the purpose better, last long and is not liable to fire. The difference of expense is comparatively small, the only difference is in the value of tiles. Formerly straw was very cheap, now it is very dear, and therefore the people in building huts use common straw called Beechally, which lasts only twelve months; one difference is in making the frame, which for a tiled hut requires to be made stronger and closer. These sticks may be used and the tiles preserved for 30 or 40 years, so, though dearer at the beginning, they are cheaper in the end, but the difficulty is in finding ready money for the expense of building.

Q. 2. What is the expense?—A. It must depend upon the sort of hut erected. There are choppers from twelve annas to five rupees and ten rupees. The money is required to be laid out all at once. The better sort of huts require time to be built, the tiles cannot always be had here—they are imported from Barrackpore, &c.

Q. 3. What do you suppose is the difference of cost between the tiled and straw huts of the same dimensions?—A. The difference in the cost of straw and tiles. The difference between strong substantial straw huts and tiled huts I should estimate at 50 per cent., i.e., if the one cost ten rupees, the other will cost fifteen. The mats and sticks are spoilt in twelve months.

Q. 4. What is the feeling of the Natives as to the preference for the sake of convenience, health, cleanliness, &c. Have they any prejudice?—A. They would have tiled huts if they could afford it, there is no objection in regard to filthiness,



people living in such huts care little for dirt. I think they all prefer tiled huts; people who live in those huts are out the greater part of the day and do not regard the heat. They have no prejudice or feeling save the difference of expense. Straw huts properly thatched are cooler and keep out rain, cold and dust better than tiled ones, but being more liable to fire.

Q. 5. Then you think the expense is the sole preference?—

A. Certainly, I think the tiled huts are gradually increasing; formerly there were three-fourths of the huts in town straw built, now there are more than half tiled.

Q. 6. Do you know the proportions of the huts, built by the landlords and the occupiers?—A. There are three classes; 1st, huts built by the proprietors of land; 2nd, land being rented by an individual he builds huts to be let; and 3rd, the land being rented by the ryots at a small charge, they build huts at their own expense; this class is the largest proportion, more than half. I would say two-thirds.

Q. 7. Then the expense of building in case of compulsory law would fall on the poorer classes?—A. Certainly it would fall upon the tenants, the poorer class, and not upon the richer, and it would be considered a forcible measure.

Q. 8. Do you think the feelings of the Natives would be opposed to such a law?—A. Not of those who could afford, they would build, the poorer part would leave Calcutta and go into the Suburbs, and elsewhere.

Q. 9. Would not the proprietors of land suffer a loss of rent then?—A. I think the loss would be temporary, they would return again and build in Calcutta when able to do it.

Q. 10. What do you think of the expediency of passing such a law?—A. I think it would be very hard upon poor people, who cannot afford the expenses, if such law is passed generally, but if partially, it will not be so, I mean where there may be pukka houses, or number of tiled houses, building of straw huts there may be prohibited.



Q. 11. Is not the evil complained of now, that pukka houses are destroyed by the neighbourhood of straw huts?—A. Yes, by the late fires more pukka houses are burnt than I have ever known before; I would not build a pukka house near such huts.

Q. 12. Would the poor go into the Suburbs because they could erect there huts cheaper, and would not that lead to the landlords building tiled houses?—A. Yes, they would go into the Suburbs because they could build at cheaper rates; if such law is established that proprietors may build tiled houses in the most populous part, such as the border of public roads, bazars, &c., and let to advantage; that in the Suburbs I do not think they would lay out money for building tiled houses, but only build straw huts, and it would only be removing the evil to the Suburbs.

Q. 13. We want to know whether the landlord would build tiled houses seeing the ryots going out of his land?—A. I would not; if I have land, I would rather let it out to the ryots to build their own houses, than build upon it myself, as in case of proprietary buildings the tenants have no interest in them, and they frequently run away and the rent is lost.

Q. 14. State your opinion as to the expediency of such a law?—A. It would be expedient to introduce a partial law dividing the Town into districts, and appointing Committees with discretionary power to decide whether straw huts may be built at a certain place or not, and that no man should build a hut without the authority of the District Committee; but if a general law is introduced to prohibit the erection of straw huts, it will be very hard. In places where there are no pukka buildings, the effect of such a law would be very hard, such as in Bamunbustee, and the ryots would leave the place.

Q. 15. Then you think a partial regulation would be expedient under Committees?—A. Yes, where prohibition with regard to situation and circumstance is inexpedient.



Q. 16. How should these Committees exercise their discretion?—A. The Committees are to act under the authority of the Police.

Q. 17. Won't that be inconvenient, and what are the Committees to do?—A. The Committees should act under the authority of Government where there are a number of tiled huts or pukka buildings, they will authorize no straw huts to be built there, nor in a direction likely to communicate or extend fire, should it break out. The Committees being residents would know their own interests and act accordingly.

Q. 18. Then your opinion is against the general compulsory law, but you would vest the discretion of prohibiting to Committees of inhabitants?—A. Yes.

Q. 19. Do you know the amount of property destroyed by the late fires?—A. It is impossible to ascertain it, but I should think it is overstated in the papers. I have observed the property being removed on the alarm of fire, upon several occasions.

Q. 20. What do you estimate the average loss to a family?—A. I think each family must have lost 20 to 30 Rs. ; no, that is too much, I think 10 Rs. the most, exclusive of the value of the huts.

Q. 21. There is a proposition before the Committee of District Charitable Society to raise money by subscribing to relieve the sufferers by fire; suppose the Committee raise a large sum, do you think that if that money was properly distributed, a compulsory law might be enacted?—A. I do not think the subscription will amount to such a sum, that you can afford relief to all to enable them to erect tiled huts.

Q. 22. Suppose the subscription is raised to the amount of 30,000 rupees?—A. I do not think it will be raised to that extent, that will enable you to give relief to the people to build tiled huts throughout Calcutta and the adjacent place; and unless the whole is tiled, I mean rebuilding those destroyed by fire, and changing the remaining straw huts for tiles, the safety and



security of the former will be nominal, and the danger is not removed.

Q. 23. Supposing that difficulty is overcome, would you agree to a compulsory law?—A. By no means. I think a compulsory law ought not to be enacted under any circumstances, because straw huts and temporary houses composed of combustible materials, are often erected even by rich people, which cannot be prevented.

Q. 24. Would tiled houses add to the insalubrity of the place?—A. Considerably, unless they are made sufficiently apart, having space for ventilation of air, and the mud requisite for their houses is supplied, they excavate holes which remain full of stagnated water, and gradually filled up by filth.

Q. 25. Then you think that without proper sewerage and drainage it would cause unhealthiness?—A. Yes, unless the cutting of the hole is prevented. Besides, tiled houses are built so close together, that in many places a free circulation of air is often prevented.

Q. 26. Then perhaps fires are necessary to keep the Town healthy?—A. If I am not mistaken the dampness with which the air is impregnated is destroyed, and the unhealthiness is in some degree removed by fire. My medical friend sitting before me (Dr. Jackson) will be able to give an opinion better than I can offer.

Q. 27. In Captain Birch's plan he proposes to Government to compel the landlords to lay out their ground, do you see any objection to that?—A. That depends on the value of the ground, the proposition cannot be carried into effect in all the divisions of the Town. The huts must be built to the occupier's convenience; but unless something of this kind is done, the Town can never be beautified. I would be content to leave this to the Committee of inhabitants.

Q. 28. In the Committee of the District Charitable Society, the sum raised is contemplated to be distributed in loans



amongst the sufferers under the management of Native Committees, do you think they will be able to protect against fraud, &c.?—A. I do not think it safe to lend the money; you may make donations at once; there are some obstacles; there are people who are able to build tiled houses, but do not because they often change their habitations, and some are not stationary there, living in hired land, will not pay its rent, and the huts will go to the payment of the ground rent, so the loan will be lost.

Q. 29. That would perhaps induce them to have a fire next year, what part do you think of huts burnt would be made of tile by the people themselves?—A. About one-tenth.

Q. 30. It is proposed by the Council of the Medical College that there should be an union between that Institution and the proposed Fever Hospital, is there any objection to that?—A. The proposed Hospital is intended for Hindus and the superior class of Natives, and the arrangement must therefore be different from the ordinary rules of a public Hospital, I think it is very objectionable. The Natives will have prejudices, if it is joined to the College.

Q. 31. Suppose the Fever Hospital is separated from the College by a wall?—A. There would be an objection still, the impression, that it was the site of the Police Hospital, will not be removed for a long time, the horror of dissection is great, and no man will allow himself to be an object for the instruction of the pupils of the College; people will think it is not for the cure of the patients, but for the benefit of the pupils.

Q. 32. Then you think it would be inexpedient to unite the two Institutions?—A. I think the Hospital ought not to be united with any establishment of the kind; it ought to be a distinct institution by itself. The Natives would not like the body of students to come about them. People for whom it is intended would not like to go there. It is well known, that they would rather die in want of medical aid or lose the chance of



recovery, than go to a Public Hospital where their feelings and prejudices are not attended.

Q. 33. Do you know that the Natives like to be visited when sick by a crowd of visitors?—A. They like their friends and relations to come, and one or two at a time.

Q. 34. How would you give scientific and practical knowledge to the students of the College?—A. They have access to the Dispensaries, and the Police, Native and General Hospitals; and they may visit the proposed establishment two or three at a time, to learn the practice, and after they have finished their collegiate studies, they may be attached to any of these establishments for a fixed time, and have practical knowledge, &c.

Q. 35. Does not this objection apply to the present Native Hospital?—A. The present Native Hospital has patients mostly belonging to the lower class of Natives, they are servants of Europeans, and sent by the Police; they are helpless while in the Hospital, and are obliged to submit to one rule, I believe what is applicable to all, and therefore people do not go there so much as they would otherwise. If the practice and rules of the Native Hospital be fully introduced to the Fever Institution, I am afraid the object will fail; my ideas are always for moderation. I do not like to be defeated when I can help it. The Natives do not yet know nor understand an *Hospital* well, and whatever is done regarding it, ought to be done with caution consulting their feelings.

The evidence given is straight-forward, shows an intimate acquaintance with the condition of the poorer classes and an earnest desire to protect them.

Ramecomul was always a hard-working man. He never shrunk from work, and was a model of industry. The incessant labor both of the body and mind began gradually to tell on his constitution.



He tried a change here, but not finding himself better, he went to Gariffa, where he lived for twenty-one days on the river. Two days before his death he was unable to speak, though he appeared to be fully conscious of what was going on. He seemed to be aware that he was about to depart and was therefore absorbed in *Jup* two days before coming to Gariffa. Before he lost the power of speech, he impressed on the members of the family the duty they had to perform to each other. On the 2nd August 1844, he died at the age of sixty-one, sincerely and deeply regretted by every one who knew his sterling qualities. He was a vegetarian, and as he suffered from illness for years, he took very spare diet—tea and *jilapy*, and after office work, a small quantity of rice. He entertained his English friends with tea, but never joined although he was hospitable and jovial. During winter he used to collect his sons and grandsons round fire, gave them baked *chapatees*, and taught them to count *Harakrishna* on the finger as an initiatory teaching in godliness. He often thought of God and used to think of the Great Power before he took his food. It was his practice to transport himself often to the spiritual region and compose hymns. He used to spend his evenings hearing Puranas and conversation with pundits. His habits were simple. He sometimes cooked his own food. His life was a life of simplicity.

His views were Catholic. When the nephew of Sham Chand embraced Christianity, his family was



outcast. The catholic-minded Ramcomul interfered and brought about a reconciliation.

Ramcomul was hospitable. Annually 1,000 or 1,200 Vaidyas sat to *jalpan* at his house, and he entertained them to promote fellowship. He used to invite them *personally* to show his humility. He observed *Ekadasi* and daily performed his poojah in a devout spirit. He was consulted by Lord William Bentinck. Mutty Lall Seal often came to him for advice. At home he led an irreproachable life. He was an affectionate husband, a loving father, a model grandfather and the exemplary head of a family.

In the Report of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of India for 1844, the following notice is taken of him—"Among the members who have been taken away from the Society by death, Ramcomul Sen may perhaps be reckoned as the foremost whose loss has to be deplored. Connected with the Society very shortly after its formation, he was one of the few of its remaining original members. For several years he held the post of Native Secretary and Collector, and at a more recent period he was a Vice-President of the Institution. The good example he set his countrymen, and that too at a time when they gave little or no attention to any matters connected with the welfare of the country, is deserving of much praise. In his regular attendance at the monthly meetings and in the lively interest he took in agricultural pursuits, the



Society regrets to find that he stood almost alone among the Native members of the Institution."

The death of Ramcomul was deeply regretted by the different Societies of which he was a member. Five days after the death of Ramcomul, a public meeting was held at the Rooms of the Asiatic Society. Sir Edward Ryan presided—

"The Secretary announced with deep regret to the Society the death of an old and highly talented associate and formerly a valuable servant of the Society, Dewan Ramcomul Sen, a gentleman not less distinguished by his great attainments, his enlightened views, his steady attachment to the cause of education, and his untiring energy and industry in every good and useful work by which the community, Native or European, could be benefited, than by his modest and even retiring character and extensive charity.

"The friend and correspondent of Mr. Colebrooke, Professor Wilson, Mr. W. B. Bayley, and many other gentlemen formerly connected with India, he was known in Europe as here, as one possessing not only great acquirements in the literature of his country, but an ardent desire to see its children regain a place amongst the families of the human race; and towards this noble end, and for a whole life were his strenuous endeavours directed, perhaps, indeed, with too much zeal; for there is reason to believe that he fell a sacrifice to over-exertion to study, super-added to the labors which his highly responsible situation of



Dewan of the Bank of Bengal necessarily imposed on him.

“The Hon’ble the President proposed, and it was agreed to *nem. diss.* that a letter of condolence expressing the deep regret of the Society should be addressed to his family—

“To

“BABOO HOREE MOHUN SEN.

“SIR,

“I am desired by the Hon’ble the President and Members of the Asiatic Society to convey to you and to request that you will express to the other members of the family of your late father the deep unfeigned regret with which the Society has learnt his decease.

“They cannot, Sir, on such an occasion, refrain from testifying to you and his relatives and friends the high esteem which his literary acquirements, his steady advocacy of the cause of Native Education, his many private and public virtues, and his long and valuable services to the Society, had won for him from its members and from every friend to literature in India and Europe to whom he was known; nor will the Society cease to cherish his name and deplore his loss as one of the most distinguished and most deeply lamented of their associates.

I am, &c.,

H. TORRENS,

“MUSEUM, }  
“9th August 1844. }

V. P. & Secy., Asiatic Society.”

15th August 1844.

*The Friend of India*, then the leading English Journal in the country and under the editorial management of the late Mr. John Clarke Marshman, C.S.I., spoke of Ramcomul Sen in the following handsome and appreciating terms :—



"During the last week the papers have announced the death of Ramcomul Sen, the Dewan or Treasurer of the Bengal Bank. The elevated position which he had attained in the native community of Calcutta, and the great influence which he enjoyed among his own countrymen, seem to demand more than a mere passing notice of his decease. Of the native gentlemen who have raised themselves to eminence in the Native Society of Calcutta, by the acquisition and distribution of wealth, within the present century, Ramcomul Sen will be freely acknowledged as the most remarkable. Others have risen from equal obscurity to greater wealth, but none have been distinguished for their intellectual attainments. Bishonath Moteelall, lately Dewan of the Salt Golahs, began life with eight rupees a month, and he is generally understood to have amassed twelve or fifteen lakhs of rupees before he was required to relinquish his office. The father of Babu Ashootosh Deb, the founder of that wealthy family, served a native master at five rupees a month, before he became a clerk in the late firm of Fairlie, Fergusson & Co., in whose employ, and also in that of the American merchants—who named one of their ships after him, Ramdulal Dey,—he accumulated a colossal fortune. The present dictator in the money-market, the Rothschild of Calcutta, Motee Babu, began his career with the humble salary of ten rupees a month. Ramcomul Sen also was the architect of his own fortune, and began life as a compositor in Dr. Hunter's Hindusthani Press at eight rupees a month; and, though he is said to have bequeathed a smaller sum to his family than the accumulations of any of the native gentlemen we have mentioned—no report carries his fortune beyond ten lakhs,—yet he has attained a more solid renown from his connection with the progress of knowledge and civilization among his own countrymen, of which he was one of the most strenuous and distinguished promoters.



“He did not long continue in the subordinate situation of a compositor in the printing office. He attracted the notice of Dr. Wilson, now Professor of Sanskrit in the University of Oxford, who discovered his natural abilities and his thirst for knowledge, and took every opportunity of bringing him forward. His first promotion, we believe, was to some subordinate situation in the establishment of the Asiatic Society, which introduced him to the notice of some of the most distinguished members of European society. He had early applied with diligence to the acquisition of English, which he spoke with considerable fluency. At the time we allude to, a good colloquial knowledge of English was rare, and the possession of it was a sure passport to distinction. Ramcomul Sen soon came to be recognized as a leading man in the small band of enlightened natives in Calcutta. On the establishment of the Calcutta School Book Society, he was placed on its Committee, and materially assisted its operations by the compilation and translation of several useful works. When the Hindu College was set on foot the year after, the organization of it was in a great measure entrusted to him, through the recommendation of his constant patron, Dr. Wilson. Here he had an opportunity of indulging his ardour for the spread of knowledge among his own countrymen, and of exhibiting his natural aptitude for managing the complicated details of business. His position in this institution materially improved his standing in Native society, and laid the foundation of that influence which he subsequently acquired. Three years after the establishment of the Hindu College, he projected the publication of an English and Bengali Dictionary in conjunction with Mr. Felix Carey, the eldest son of Dr. Carey ; but his death in 1822, before a hundred pages of the work were printed, suspended its further progress. It was, we believe, soon after this undertaking that Ramcomul Sen was placed at the head of the Native establishment of the Mint by Dr. Wilson, the Assay



Master. This highly responsible and lucrative appointment raised him to great distinction, and his mansion in Colootolair became the resort of the wealthy and the learned, and the fame of his greatness spread far and wide through Bengal. In 1830, he resumed the project of the Dictionary, and with great personal labor completed the undertaking, and carried through the Press a quarto volume of 700 pages. It is by far the fullest and most valuable work of its kind which we possess, and will be the most lasting monument of his industry, zeal and education. It is probably the work by which his name will be best recognized by posterity.

"After the departure of Dr. Wilson to England, he quitted the service of Government, and accepted the office of Native Treasurer of the Bank. Some months back, his constitution began to exhibit symptoms of that decay which had been accelerated, we have no doubt, by the extraordinary personal labour to which he submitted, and which had been one of the main instruments of his elevation; and he expired, about a fortnight ago, at his family-residence in the country, opposite the town of Hughli.

"There is scarcely a public institution in Calcutta of which he was not a member, and which he did not endeavour to advance by his individual exertions. He was on the committee of Papers of the Asiatic Society; he was a Vice-President of the Agricultural Society; he was one of the Committee of the School Book Society; he was a Manager of the Hindu College. He was equally honored in the European and Native community, and had long been considered as one of the most eminent and influential natives of the metropolis. Though he continued through life the principles of a rigid, and in some respects, of a bigoted Hindu—for he was never in advance of his own creed,—to him belongs the great merit of having taken a leading part in the efforts which were made for the diffusion of knowledge among his own countrymen at the period when Lord Hastings, for the first time, repu-



diated the idea that the ignorance of the people was the firmest safeguard of our Empire. He was one of the chief instruments in the establishment of those institutions which have diffused European science among the Natives, and so greatly raised the tone of Native society."

On the 2nd November 1844, Dr. Wilson wrote the following letter :—

"The accounts I had received from Dr. Grant and Mr. Piddington of the state of Ramcomul's health, had prepared me in some degree for the melancholy result which your letter announces and which I most sincerely lament. The confidential intercourse of many years had made me thoroughly acquainted with my late friend's merits, and his tried worth had secured for him my esteem and affection. A more sound and sterling character the Society of Calcutta, Native or European, cannot boast of. The good of his country, the elevation of his countrymen, were the great objects of his life; but he never made a parade of his public spirit and rather shrank from than courted notice. While honestly and earnestly laboring for the advancement of the rising generation, he was not in a hurry, he did not wish to precipitate changes, but to let them develop themselves gradually and safely. Hence he was somewhat less popular than several of his more ardent and ambitious associates; and was only appreciated, as he deserved to be, by those who knew him. Of these I was proud to be one, and from my opportunities of observation which were more close and constant than those of most of his friends, I know that he was from first to last the most efficient, though not the most obtruding, friend and promoter of native improvement.

"My acquaintance with Ramcomul commenced towards the end of 1810. He was then in the service of Dr. William Hunter, and amongst other duties was the managing man



of the "Hindustani Printing Press," of which Dr. Hunter was the principal Proprietor. At that date Dr. Leyden and myself joined Dr. Hunter in the property, and when that gentleman and Dr. Leyden went to Java early in 1811, they left the Press under my charge, nominally at least, for I was a young man too little acquainted with the business of printing, and the real conductor and superintendent was Ramcomul. Dr. Hunter and Dr. Leyden both died in Java, and the Press came almost entirely into my hands. I was joined by Captain Roebuck, Ramcomul continuing to conduct all the business details until 1828, when the establishment was transferred to other proprietors. He was also at the same time Sarkar to the Asiatic Society, of which I was Secretary, and these duties and occupations brought us daily and hourly together, and afforded me every opportunity of knowing his ability, integrity and independent spirit. I esteemed him and loved him, and trusted him with the management of my private affairs, which benefited by his regulation of them, much more than by my own. We had many objects in common. Although he had not had time to make much advance in Sanskrit, he was deeply interested in the language and literature and in its professors. He was an excellent Bengali scholar as you know, and these acquirements and his connection with the Asiatic Society, of which he eventually became the Native Secretary, fostered in him that love of knowledge which was one of the peculiarities of his character. In the course of time he became Dewan of the Mint, and about the time I left Calcutta, Cashier of the Bank. I left India in 1833; a period of twenty-three years, therefore, had passed since I have first known him, and during the whole of that time, I found him uniformly and consistently intelligent, indefatigable, upright and calm. I never for one moment saw him slow of comprehension, weary of labor, discomposed or angry, and I never had, nor do I believe any one connected with him, ever had a momentary



doubt of his probity, notwithstanding the large pecuniary interests which were in his keeping. His labor at the Mint was at most times intense for ten or twelve hours a day, yet he was always cheerful and alert, and truly placed his happiness in the faithful discharge of his duty. To me he was of infinite value as an adviser in all my intercourse with his countrymen, and as a colleague, upon whose judgment and discretion I could always implicitly rely and whose personal regard and just appreciation of my motives secured me his assistance and support. In short, in the Press, in the Asiatic Society, in literary pursuits, in the Mint, in the College, we were constantly united, and it must be a subject of grateful recollection to recall the long and uninterrupted cordiality with which through so many years our objects were the same. There were very few in Calcutta from whom I felt so painful to part, as from my friend Ramcomul Sen; and it was some, though inadequate, compensation to maintain with him a correspondence upon subjects in which we still continued to take common interest. I always looked for his letters with impatience, and valued them not only as proofs of the same activity of mind by which the writer was distinguished, but as evidences of undiminishing regard. It is some comfort to know that it continued unimpaired to the end of his existence, and I shall cease to remember him with affection and esteem when I cease to be."

Ramcomul's short account of the Charac Poojah ceremonies and a description of the implements used was read before the Asiatic Society in 1829.

Ramcomul was a Governor of the Native Hospital at Dhurramtollah, and, although quite unpretending and unobtrusive, and, although education, agriculture, charity, sanitation and enquiry into Hindoo literature and science, occupied his mind, yet when



compelled by duty, he constitutionally and respectfully raised his voice against such measures of the Government as he thought were injurious to the country. With this view he was a member of the Landholders' Society, and when a monster meeting was held on the 30th November 1839, he spoke as follows, and his speech was considered "very neat and appropriate"—

"We have been patient during the last fifty years, relying on the *dharma* (the deity from heaven) and depending on the *dharmavatars* (the public functionaries in India). Now compare the condition of the zemindars alone prior to 1793 and in 1839, and say whether they have been raised or reduced; if they are fallen, we should no longer be silent in seeking redress and amelioration by making our situation known to the *dharmavatars* in England; this is the best opportunity offered to us, and we should without delay join the Society established in London, where we must have an agent; the name of one of the leading men in the Association is known to us (by public prints) and from his character and philanthropic acts, no doubt, we shall have benefit. The agency will cost you some expense, but it will not be one-tenth of the cost incurred by the zemindar in the Collectors and Judges and Magistrates' cutchery annually, and 9-10ths will be saved at the end."

Although Ramcomul was a strict orthodox Hindoo, yet he was liberal in his ideas. He encouraged English education. He encouraged the spread of medical science. He denounced indiscriminate charity, and held that alms given to undeserving persons was so much not given to deserving persons. The first person who condemned in Calcutta the practice of



carrying the dying to the river was Ram Mohun Roy. The practice of plunging a dying person into water in the hope that the soul purified by the Ganga may ascend to heaven, was condemned by Ramcomul, who called it "*Ghaut Murder*." With regard to the Charas Poojah, he thought that the whole body of the Hindoos should not be charged "with the absurdity of the act." He was friendly to the intercourse with European gentlemen, and he received and entertained them at his garden-house at Manicktollah.

In early times several Hindoos rose from obscurity. Nabakrishna was wandering in Sobha Bazar. Clive's messenger was in search of a man who could read and explain Persian documents. Nabakrishna offered his services, and his knowledge of the Persian language was the cause of his rise. Ramdulal Dey was in the service of Madan Mohan Datta, on a salary of five Rupees a month. He rose gradually from a sarkarship to the banianship in the firm of Fairlie, Fergusson & Co., and was himself a ship-owner. Mutty Lall Seal began his life on a salary of Rupees 8 per month. Dwarkanath Tagore rose also from obscurity, and, though not of high culture, he was indebted to his strong common-sense for his intellectual and social elevation. If any native broke down the bridge separating the Europeans from the Natives, Dwarkanath did, and there is no native of Bengal to whom the Crowns of England and France showed so much respect as to Dwarkanath. His most liberal charity to public Institutions and to his numerous friends and



acquaintances, and, in fact, to every one who sought for help from him, will immortalize his name as the most generous native who lived in this city. The life of Sir Rajah Radhakant is instructive, because he devoted his whole life to the cultivation of letters and the diffusion of education among his countrymen. His unwearied labors, as a member of the Hindu College, and of the School Book Society, and the impetus he gave to female education, will ever endear his memory to every native of Bengal. The biography of Ram-comul Sen is exemplary, because he received no collegiate education, he struggled with poverty, and he began life with eight Rupees a month. Whether owing to natural intelligence or uncommon industry, or unblemished character, or a combination of all the qualities, he was not slow in rising, and what is most commendable in him, was that he did not live to amass money and enjoy worldly grandeur; but it was his constant study to make himself an instrument in the amelioration of the intellectual and moral condition of his countrymen—in relieving the destitute and helpless classes of the city, in giving medical aid to the sick by the discovery and prevention of the causes of disease, and in the promotion of sanitation. From a compositor, he raised himself by dint of industry, like Benjamin Franklin, to the foremost position among the natives of Bengal, respected by the Europeans and Natives alike. Although he firmly adhered to his religious persuasion and did not give in an inch to any of his European friends religiously



or socially, he was not the less respected. He and Sir Rajah Radhakant who mixed with the Europeans so much, were of one persuasion—they were both Vaishnavas, felicitating in the idealism and ecstasy of the *bhakti*—the love of God, whether in *form* or *essence*, being the dominant principle of their thoughts and deeds. Sir Rajah Radhakant said to an American Missionary—"My religion is *sâlokya*, to be in the same place (world) with God; *sâmipyā*, to be drawing ever nearer to God; *sâjujya*, to be joined in perfect communion with God—and *nirvāna* to be lost in God." Ramcomul must have thought and felt in the same way, and it is thus evident that the religion they professed was pure monotheism, although they countenanced idolatry to prevent the mass from taking to atheism. Remarks are often made that there is more religion in the old Hindu than in Young Bengal. It is painful to admit that there is much truth in the statement. The old Hindu thinks of God and the next world, although his conception of both may not be from the soul-state, but the bulk of Young Bengal denies God and the immortality of the soul. He looks upon life purely protoplasmic, and considers Huxley, Spencer, Mill or, perhaps, Bradlaugh, as an infallible guide. Ramcomul had an earnest desire to serve others. On one occasion an European friend of his asked him to become security for him for Rupees fifty thousand. Without a moment's hesitation he agreed to the proposal. This is rather



uncommon. To the District Charitable Society he offered a piece of land for the construction of the Alms House.

Ramcomul left four sons. The eldest, Horee Mohun, was born on the 7th August 1812 and was educated at the Hindu College. His first employment was under Dr. Wilson in translating the Puranas. He was appointed Dewan of the Mint, and afterwards of the General Treasury, where Mr. Oakes, the Sub-Treasurer, bore the highest testimony to his ability and efficiency. He subsequently became the Dewan of the Bank of Bengal, which appointment he resigned owing to a difference between him and Mr. Charles Hogg, the Secretary. He felt that if he continued, his independence would be compromised. He was a member of the Mechanics' Institute, Lyceum, Landholders' Society, British Indian Society, British Indian Association, and took an active part in the Exhibition of Arts in the metropolis, held under the administration of Lord Dalhousie. He was a member of the Asiatic Society, of the Agri-Horticultural Society of India, and of the Native Committee of the District Charitable Society. He was a Vice-President of the Agricultural Society for some time, and also of the Bethune Society. He worked for some time as the Secretary to the Committee appointed by the Hindus of Bengal against the proposed *lex loci* (Act XXI of 1850), and shewed that he was a working bee. He corresponded with Mr. Leith, the Committee's Agent in England, with Lord



Monteagle and Lord Elphinstone, who had promised to support the petition. He acted as Joint Secretary with Debendernath Tagore to the Hindu Charitable Institution, which was a Hindu Free School, opened by public subscription, as a counterpoise to the Seminary established by Dr. Duff. Horee Mohun was not only a gentleman of high intelligence, of an æsthetic turn of mind, but of untiring energy. After the Mutiny, when a durbar was held at Agra, Horee Mohun, who was already favorably known to the late Maharaja Ram Sing of Jeypore, brought himself to His Highness' special notice. On the death of Pundit Sheodeen, the Maharajah sent for Horee Mohun, but it was not till 1868 that Horee Mohun was appointed to act as the Chief Adviser to the Maharaja when he introduced several reforms in the different departments of the State. The *Hindoo Patriot* of the 27th June 1864 thus speaks of Bengalis in Native States :—"The announcement that Babu Horree Mohun Sen, the well-known son of the well-known Babu Ramcomul Sen, has been invited by the Maharaja of Jeypore to assume charge of the Ministry of the Raj in succession to Pundit Sheodeen, the deceased Minister, is gratifying in the highest degree. If this rumour be true, it foreshadows a bright future for the State of Jeypore. But the policy of vesting educated Bengalis with ministerial powers in Native States for the first time, inaugurated by His Highness of Jeypore, involves a question of the deepest moment to



the destinies of the subjects of the Native Princes, and to the stability of the British power in the East." It was purely owing to Horee Mohun's high administrative abilities, that the Maharaja's opinion of educated Bengalis had been raised, and His Highness took several Bengalis into his service. The *Bi-Weekly Observer*, published some time ago at Cawnpore, spoke of Horee Mohun thus—"The reforms which have been introduced into the several branches of the administration of Jeypore are attributable to the influence of the Political Agency and chiefly of Babu Horee Mohun Sen, a very able and educated Native of Bengal. The deep interest which this gentleman took in the welfare of the Jeypore State, and the vigorous decision with which he is carrying on important reforms in a Native State, notwithstanding the almost overwhelming opposition from intrigue and ambition inseparable from a rich native court, deserve the highest commendation." He was held in high estimation by the Political Agent and all the European residents of Jeypore. Horee Mohun's views as to improving Jeypore internally and externally were large. He established the Council, and the Members had to be sworn in, and it is indeed a matter of gratulation that the Maharaja showed advanced appreciation of civilized ideas, and readily adopted whatever he found was calculated to promote the happiness of his people. Horee Mohun placed the Jeypore College on an improved and efficient footing. He was instrumental in the establishment



of the School of Arts. He advised the Maharaja to introduce gas into the city. There are several other measures which he thought of, but which were not carried out because of his death.

Horee Mohun was a good musician, and was so fond of his piano, that he took it with him in his river excursions. He knew the Sanskrit, Bengali, Persian and Urdu languages. He was an affectionate father and brother. He left five sons—Jadunath, Mahendranath, Jogendranath, Norendranath and Upendranath. All these gentlemen, except Norendra, are in Jeypore, and in the service of the Maharaja. Upendra has inherited the æsthetic bent of his father, and is the Principal of the Jeypore School of Arts. Norendra was the pet son of Horee Mohun. While he was studying for the attorneyship, he began to write for the *Indian Mirror*, established at the expense of Babu Debendernath Tagore. It was then a fortnightly paper. Norendranath, who is a Solicitor of the High Court, is the Proprietor and Editor of the *Indian Mirror*, the first daily native paper in English. It reflects highest credit on him that for the purpose of establishing the *Indian Mirror*, he has not only shown commendable zeal and energy, but has made sacrifices showing that he has inherited the love of literature which his venerable grandfathers possessed. As regards character, Norendra is an example to young men of his age. He is also the first and only Notary Public among native Solicitors, a Registrar of Marriages under Act III of 1872 for Calcutta,



and the constituted Vakeel or Agent, in Calcutta, of His Highness the Maharaja of Jeypore. He has also for several years been a Member of the Committee of the British Indian Association.

Mahendranath is in charge of the English Department of the Jeypore State, and of the Raj Press, and is also Editor of the *Jeypore Gazette*.

Jadunath is a Member of the Jeypore Council.

Besides the sons, Horee Mohun left a daughter, the mother of Mr. B. L. Gupta, one of the Magistrates of Calcutta.

Peary Mohun, the second son of Ramcomul, was born on the 17th March 1814. He was of a religious turn of mind. Like his father he was a Vaishnava and put on a *Tilaka*. He was the Dewan of the Calcutta Mint. Previously he had been Banian of Bagshaw & Co. He died at the age of thirty-four, on the 27th October 1848. He left three sons—Nobin, Keshub and Krishnavihari.

Bungsidhur, the third son of Ramcomul, succeeded Peary after his death, as the Bullion-keeper of the Mint. He was very fond of music, and could play upon a number of instruments.

Mooralydhur, the fourth son of Ramcomul, is a Solicitor of the High Court. He was educated, like his brothers, at the Hindu College, where he obtained a certificate of high proficiency in English. He was first an articled clerk, and afterwards a partner of Mr. Barrow. Mooralydhur's face shows what his heart is. Affability and *bonhomie* in him are



unprompted. He is an Honorary Magistrate, and was some time ago an elected Commissioner of the Calcutta Municipality.

Ramcomul used to call Keshub--Beso. Before his death, he said to Peary Mohun, "Peary, your son Beso is destined to be a great man--a religious reformer." One would think that Ramcomul's spirit guides Keshub Chunder. Keshub Chunder's Brahmoism has a tinge of Ramcomul's Vaishnavism. Both the grandfather and grandson call God 'Hari.' The grandson treads the footsteps of the grandfather in being a *vegetarian*, in singing hymns, and glorifying God by *Sankirtan* with the aid of his grandfather's instruments, *khôl* and *khartâl*. The spiritualists would say that the spirit of Ramcomul is Keshub Chunder's guardian angel.

Krishnavihari, the younger brother of Keshub Chunder, edits the *Sunday Mirror*. He is a member of the Senate of the Calcutta University, and his face is the very image of innocence.

I have taken some trouble in writing the biography of Ramcomul Sen, because it is, *psychologically* considered, fraught with instruction. Some men, says Shakespeare, are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust on them. Ramcomul was not born great, nor had he greatness thrust on him, but his mission was to achieve greatness. Let us respect the memory of this self-made man and real benefactor of our country.

I have read with great interest an excellent work entitled "ভক্তি চৈতন্য চন্দ্রিকা," from which the following extracts are made :—

"আধুনিক ব্রহ্মজ্ঞানীদের মধ্যেও অনেকেই বৌদ্ধভাববিশিষ্ট শূঙ্খ নিরাকারবাদী, হরির মাধুর্য্যরসে বঞ্চিত তর্ক বিতর্ক মতামতের বিবাদই তাঁহাদের সর্বস্ব। তবে ইদানীং কয়েক বৎসর হইতে গোস্বামি-শিষ্য পরম বৈষ্ণব শ্রীযুক্ত রামকমল সেনের পৌত্র ব্রহ্মানন্দ শ্রীযাম কেশবচন্দ্র সেন নীরস জ্ঞানকাণ্ডের স্রোত কিরাইয়া দিয়া নিরাকার চিন্ময় অনন্ত ব্রহ্মেতে ভক্তিপ্রেম অর্পণ করিবার শিক্ষা প্রবর্তিত করিয়াছেন। তাঁহার ব্যবহার দৃষ্টান্ত ও শিক্ষা ভক্তিপথের অনুকূল বটে, তিনি কতক পরিমাণে এ বিষয়ে কৃতকার্য্যও হইয়াছেন। তাঁহা কর্তৃক প্রকাশ্য এবং গোপনে, জাত ও অজাতসারে, সমাজের মধ্যে ভক্তির স্রোত প্রবাহিত হইতেছে, ইহা দ্বারা ব্রহ্মজ্ঞানীদের কঠোরতার ভাব অনেক দূর হইয়াছে।"

"প্রায় অর্ধ শতাব্দী গত হইল সুবিখ্যাত রাজা রামমোহন রায় কলিকাতা নগরে ব্রহ্মসভা স্থাপন করিয়া বেদান্তপ্রতিপাদ্য এক নিরাকার পরব্রহ্মের উপাসনা বিষয়ে উপদেশ দিতেন, হিন্দুশাস্ত্র পাঠ করিতেন। তাঁহার মৃত্যুর পর প্রসিদ্ধ পিরানী বংশীর দ্বারকানাথ ঠাকুরের পুত্র শ্রীযুক্ত দেবেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর এই সভার ভার গ্রহণ করেন, এবং বৈদান্তিক ব্রহ্মবাদের সঙ্গে অপেক্ষাকৃত সরল উপাসনা আরাধনা প্রচলিত করেন। ইনি ভক্তিপথের বিরোধী, সুতরাং চৈতন্য মত-প্রভুকে তেমন বড়লোক বলিয়া জানেন না, কিন্তু ইহঁার জীবন ঋষিদের ন্যায় অতি মহৎ, দেখিলে প্রশংসা করিতে ইচ্ছা হয়। রামমোহন রায় প্রতিষ্ঠিত শূঙ্খ ব্রহ্মজ্ঞানকে দেবেন্দ্র বাবু উপাসনাদি দ্বারা অনেক পরিমাণে ছন্দয়গ্রাহী করত তাঁহার প্রবর্তিত ধর্ম্মকে কতক পরিমাণে উন্নত এবং বর্দ্ধিত করিয়া কিছুদিন সভার কার্য্য চালাইলেন। তদনন্তর রামকমল সেনের পৌত্র এই ধর্ম্ম এবং সভাকে বিধিপূর্ব্বক সংস্কার এবং কার্য্যকর করিয়া তুলিয়াছেন। এক্ষণে ইহা একটি ধর্ম্মসম্প্রদায়ের মধ্যে গণ্য হইয়াছে। এমন কি, শিক্ষিত কৃতবিদ্যাদের মধ্যে ইহার ধর্ম্মের আবশ্যকতা স্বীকার করেন, তাঁহারা প্রায়ই ইহার মধ্যে আছেন। কেশবচন্দ্র সেন যে সকল ধর্ম্মমত এবং সাধনানুষ্ঠান প্রচলিত করিয়া-ছেন, তাহার মধ্যে বিচিত্র অভূত ভাব দেখিতে পাওয়া যায়।"



In these extracts Keshub Chunder is described as the grandson of the eminent Vaishnava, Ramcomul Sen, who is supplanting the dry abstraction of the Brahmas by the substitution of *bhakti* or devotional mode of worship.

In ancient India, God could only be worshipped through the soul—such was the teaching of the eminent *Rishis*, which the Vedas, Upanishads, Darsanas, and more specially works on *yoga* clearly show.

It is very important that this high mode of worship should be explained, and I cannot do better than give a few texts from the Upanishads:—

তপসা ব্রহ্ম বিজিজ্ঞাসস্ব ।

Seek God by devout meditation.

হিরণ্ময়ে পরে কোষে বিরজং ব্রহ্ম নিষ্কলম্ ।

তচ্ছ্রু ভংজ্যোতিষাং জ্যোতিস্তদ্ যদাত্ম বিদো বিদুঃ ॥

Those who know their own souls, realize the pure invisible light of light, transparently white, existing in the bright and highest region of the soul.

How is then a worshipper to realize God within ?  
জ্ঞান প্রসাদেন বিশুদ্ধসত্ত্বতত্ত্বং তং পশ্যতে নিষ্কলং ধ্যায়মানঃ ।

The only path to divine knowledge is wisdom.

অধ্যাত্মযোগাধিগমনে দেবং মত্ত্বা ধীরোহর্যশোকৌ জহাতি ।

Wise people by spiritual exercises bringing their souls to God, can know him and become free from nervous pleasure and grief.

যদা সৰ্ব্বে প্রভিদ্যন্তে হৃদয়স্যেহ গ্রন্থয়ঃ ।

অথ মর্ত্যোহমৃতো ভবত্যেতা বদন্তুশাসনম্ ॥



When the bondage of the soul is destroyed, the worshipper realizes immortality.

In another text the spiritual state or the *samādhi* in which we see divine light, is called *sāmya*, the highest state we can obtain here.

শাস্ত্রোদান্ত উপরতস্তিতিকুঃ সমাহিতোত্ত্বা আত্মন্যোবাস্তানং  
পশ্চতি ।

The seeker of divine knowledge, by governing his external and internal senses, being full of spiritual ideas, by practising and by being in *one state*, can see God within himself.

Therefore, we are called upon to sing and meditate on the *Gāyatri*—"Let us meditate on the adorable light of the Divine Ruler, may it guide intellects."

The highest form of worship is, therefore, from the natural to the subtile body, and from the subtile body to the soul. The great invisible light cannot be approached till we ourselves are in psychic state. This is what the *Rishis* did, and they have given us this instruction, which we are required to carry out practically. The higher the conception of God is, the higher is the worship; and the higher the worship is, the more it merges in the soul.

It was found, however, that the worship of the Invisible God through the soul could be done only by a few, and it was necessary to lower the form of worship for the multitude. This gave rise to the practice of *bhakti*, an entranced and exalted state of the mind or brain, in which the soul is not subjective; and it led to the creation of infinite finite Gods and



numerous sects. There is no doubt that among the *bhakti* followers, there were many godly men and women, although they were idolators. *Bhakti*, psychologically considered, is from the mind, which is evidenced by the trance state to which it gives rise. Now all states of the mind must merge in one lasting state of the soul or truly spiritual state, when to quote Gita, "wisdom shineth forth with the glory of the sun and causeth the Deity to appear." According to the *yoga*, the different progressive states of the mind are—

1. *Prāṇāyāma*—Reverie or abstraction.
2. *Pratyāhara*—Suspension of the senses.
3. *Dhāraṇā*—Somnambulant state.
4. *Dhāyana*—Clairvoyant state.
5. *Samādhi*—Spiritual state.

Swedenborg says "the wiser a man is, the more will he be a worshipper of the Deity."

Truly says Young—

"A Deity believed is joy begun;  
A Deity adored is joy advanced;  
A Deity beloved is joy matured."

"Joy matured" is in the soul.

*Bhakti* or devotion, well analysed, will be found to be a *feeling*, but not serene wisdom, and is therefore more or less *molecular*. In the Srimat Bhāgavat, the anchor-sheet of the Vaishnavas, *bhakti*, which is considered more efficacious, is described to be of two kinds, viz., *नित्य* and *निष्ठ*—and the modes of worship are



জ্ঞানযোগ, ভক্তিযোগ ও কর্মযোগ। The last leads to the second, and the second to the first.

*Bhakti* is no doubt one of those exercises which lead us to progression, but is not a *finality*. The wisdom principle is in the soul—the impress of God, and there is no *mukti*, or *nirvāna*, until the worshipper attains the *samādhi* state. *Bhakti* is an excellent preparatory state—it is a mode of worship which is well suited to the bulk of the people, men and women, and, if devoutly practised, it gradually leads to higher states.

There is thus a vast difference between the *bhakti* state and *samādhi* state, or the mind state and soul state. If Babu Debendernath Tagore does not think highly of the *bhakti* mode of worship which the author of the work above referred to, imputes to him, it must be on the ground that the *bhakti* worship does not give us *parājñān*, which the soul worship does. But the writer will find that he is mistaken. Debendernath is not opposed to *bhakti*. On the contrary, he feels the efficacy of it so much that he himself says in his exposition of Bráhmadharmā “ভক্তিযোগই পরম যোগ। ধর্মপথের যে জ্ঞান অতি দূরবর্তী বোধ হয়, ভক্তিপ্রসাদাৎ নিমেষমাত্রে তাহা নিকট হইয়া আইসে।”

Let us closely observe the distinction between soul and non-soul. The non-soul is intended to be a stepping stone to the soul—the means to an end—and while we employ whatever non-soul means we wish, let us not forget that our mission is to develop our



souls that we may be brought to the state in which we may realize divine light—"কুদ্র সত্তে দক্ষিণঃ মুখং তেন মাংপাহি নিত্যম্।"

But we all know that, a teacher, however exalted he may be, cannot elevate others unless he goes through the preparatory stages. *Bhakti* worship is no doubt the best preparatory and popular worship. I have no doubt that both Debendernath and Keshub fully understand জ্ঞানযোগ and ভক্তিযোগ। While the beloved Pradhán Achárya of the Adi Samáj is diffusing জ্ঞানযোগ, sweetened with the nectar of ভক্তিযোগ, dear Keshub Chunder is working on the devout feeling of the people, thinking that this will lead to জ্ঞানযোগ। We feel indebted to both these teachers, and wish them success. Our grateful thanks are also due to Keshub Chunder for his labors for many years in promoting female education, cheap literature, intellectual culture, and other improvements of a social and moral nature.

I cannot conclude without praying that he and all members of the Sen family may live long and continue, by the blessing of God, to benefit the land of their birth, thus doing honor to the memory of that truly good and great man—Ramcomul Sen.

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