



## *our chronicle*

The Genius of the Race calls—will you not march to the time, heads upraised, eyes shining, muscles brawny and heart pure? In purity, in sincerity, in high energising will be your salvation. To such a high ideal of living and dying for a new world, therefore, do you address yourselves and even if you appear to fail, such failures will be more precious than short-cut triumphs of a day.

—G. C. Bose.

## OUR CHRONICLE

### FULFILMENT OF THE MISSION

SINCE the foundation of the Calcutta University, Calcutta Colleges were mostly Missionary and Government-owned. The great Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar had shown the way how college education could be organized by private enterprise and managed by the people themselves. The privately managed Colleges of the time were The Metropolitan Institution (founded 1879), The City College (1881), and The Ripon College founded in 1884 by Surendra Nath Banerjee, a great son of Bengal and a maker of his nation. Giris Chandra had all these noble examples before him but he revealed his own genius in naming his college, 'Bangabasi'. There is a peculiar charm in the name, though it is not easily recognized. The name, of course, was suggested by his illustrious cousin Jogendra Chandra Bose who had made the name 'Bangabasi' famous and a household word in Bengal by his Bengali Newspaper of the same name. The college started on a proprietary basis. Ripon College of Surendra Nath was also of the same character. The circumstances of the times made it a compelling necessity for those two colleges to be so. Giris Chandra was the Institution and the system worked right. The college gradually gained strength, though the proprietor suffered much pecuniary loss and even, at times, had to pawn his wife's ornaments to meet the monthly bill. But the passing of the University Act of 1904 changed all this.

The college had a chequered career and it had its ups and downs; but throughout its whole course the College has maintained a special quality of its own. The college had been an asylum for all political sufferers—students and teachers. Students who could not get a seat in any college because of their political activities readily found a place here. Professors who incurred the wrath of the alien Government for their politics were safely billeted here. Netaji Bose had the doors of almost all Calcutta Colleges shut against him because of his past record. In his autobiography<sup>1</sup> he appreciatively speaks of this college which he thought of joining. The founder Principal's boldness in thus

<sup>1</sup> An Indian Pilgrim ; page 103.

keeping the doors of the college open for all political sufferers in the national cause may now be measured in retrospect.

### **The College Building**

The college had its first home at 116 Bowbazar Street where the school was started. It was a rented house and the classes had to be spread in two houses close to each other. The college had its own building in Scott Lane in 1903 and then "the Institution was a school and college of the usual linked type of those days". The 1905 report of the commission appointed by the Senate of the University of Calcutta says, "The College has premises owned by the proprietor and not rented, but there is a mortgage on the property not yet fully paid off"

The Scott Lane building was purchased in 1902. It is not large enough to accommodate all the four classes but it had a spacious compound and the authorities thought of adding to its rooms by erecting a block on the right by July 1903. We glance over the pages of the College Magazine and a picture of the past comes vividly before us. The writer of the notes in the College Magazine (January 1903) in his own inimitable way thus records:

" Our present position down a narrow lane in the midst of a colony of fishermen does not sound very attractive. But it has its advantages. We have got away from the din of tram cars and blacksmiths and the roar of a busy thorough-fare, and can now possess our souls in peace except when an emphatic parrot shrieks from a neighbouring window."

The site is not an ideal one for a college. The academic atmosphere is disturbed by sounds holy and unholy, emanating from the lane and the neighbours' houses. But one has to bear in mind the handicaps of a college financed and managed by a private individual with a bold vision and practically no resources. The 1905 report of the University Commission again remarks, "The building was extensive but not architecturally of an impressive character".

No apology is needed for the unimpressive character of the College Building. One has to remember the circumstances under which colleges like these sprang up. As the students grew in number from year to year and as the finances permitted attempts were

made to extend the accommodation. A review of the way how more rooms were found for the use of the college provides an interesting study. The right wing block was erected in 1903. In 1918 removal of several of the school classes to a hired building in the immediate neighbourhood (where 'Banimandir', a girls' school is situated now) placed the entire third and fourth storeys of the school building at the disposal of the college. This brought about a marked improvement as regards accommodation for the college department. The library was now removed to a big hall in the second storey where the fourth year B. A. classes used to sit and the old library room was added to the Botanical Laboratory.

A new wing on the left side comprising the present rooms numbering five, six and seven was completed in 1922.

The buildings of private colleges in Calcutta suffer by comparison with those in other provinces like Patna, Cuttack, Allahabad, Agra etc. and the reasons are obvious. An alien Government and their henchmen here stood as silent observers, as these colleges sprang up and secured buildings not made or designed for such. A little room was eked out to meet the pressing needs as occasions for such arose, and every little empty space came to be filled up with rooms for the use of the students. No wonder then, that there is no architectural beauty or grandeur, and no open space for greenery or sport.

But as years rolled on, Scott Lane changed its features for the better, and what was at the early stage a lane populous with fishermen and bustee-dwellers gradually became respectable-looking. The College building also marched with the times and endeavoured to appear imposing and attractive.

The aim was to separate the School from the College, as it was long felt that schools and colleges should not be housed in the same premises. The foundation stone of a new building for the School on an extensive plot of land at St. James Square was laid by the Rector, Mr. G. C. Bose<sup>1</sup>, on the 12th March, 1938. The School was shifted there in 1939, and it now enjoys an edifice worthy of its name. The removal of the school to a separate building led to the release of a number of rooms and the College, besides adding to its lecture halls, found accommodation for providing a spacious Common Room for students. It was a long felt want that the students of the College had no suitable rooms where they

<sup>1</sup> Principal G. C. Bose became Rector in 1934.

might retire in periods of recess or rest immediately before and after their classes. This want was removed by providing a commodious Common Room adjoining the present office room in the ground floor.

The College had by this time purchased a plot of land (not an open plot but a ramshackle building) adjoining the College compound at 18, Scott Lane. The idea was to build an up-to-date laboratory and a lecture gallery on this newly-acquired site. But the war came, and this idea did not get materialized. Yet the College hopes that ere long this would be done. But the site was used for the purpose of a more attractive Common Room and a big hall. The hall has been named G. C. Bose Memorial Hall and was formally opened by the present president of the College Governing Body, the Hon'ble Mr. Justice C. C. Biswas in 1942.

The outside view of the College building was renovated at a cost of fifty thousand rupees in 1946, and it brought a look of modernity to the "not architecturally impressive" building. Efforts are still being made to extend accommodation. Two new rooms have been recently completed (August 1948) on the back side of the main building, and much extension is being made to the present Biological laboratories to provide a separate laboratory for classes in Zoology in which we have just secured affiliation. A new staircase is about to be completed, and the Governing Body has sanctioned a lac and a half for the erection of a four-storeyed structure for lecture theatres on the site of the present G. C. Bose Memorial Hall.

### **Builders of the Institution**

The idea of the institution originated with Principal Bose and the encouragement came from Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. But he secured active support and co-operation from some of his friends, three of whom were with him in England. They were Bhupal Chandra Bose, Byomkesh Chakravarty, and Satyendra Prasanna Sinha.<sup>1</sup> They joined the College as teachers. Rakhal Das Bose was the other of his very devoted and selfless co-workers. Srijut Bose was the Head Master of the School and used to teach

<sup>1</sup> All of them became famous in after life. Bhupal Chandra Bose became the Deputy Director of Agriculture, Assam, and was the father-in-law of Sri Aurobinda; Byomkesh Chakravarty became the leader of the English Bar in Calcutta and Satyendra Prasanna Sinha became Lord Sinha of Raipur.

History in the Intermediate classes. He was also, for sometime, the Superintendent of the College and could command respect by his grave demeanour and dignity of manners.

### **Life of the College from Year to Year**

Acharya Giris Chandra Bose started a school with twelve students on the rolls. The College, as has already been stated, came into existence in 1887. The chronicle of the College reads like a romance, for sixty years of its life is a record of continuous progress and achievement.

It was affiliated to Calcutta University up to the First Arts standard in June, 1887, and it remained a second grade college for nine years. During this time the number of students on the rolls varied from 43 (on Dec. 31, 1889) to 100 (on Dec. 31, 1895). The University results were satisfactory. In the very first year of its sending up candidates for the F. A. examination one of its students stood 8th in the University. The College secured prizes in Chemistry, Physics, Sanskrit and History in different years. It won the Duff Scholarship for Mathematics in 1891, the fifth year of its existence, and the Duff Scholarship for Physics and Chemistry in 1902. Since then the College has all along maintained this standard of efficiency.

The affiliation for B. A. came in 1896, Latin, then, being one of the subjects taught here. The first batch of students for the Degree examination appeared in 1897. In the first few B. A. examinations the results were not satisfactory, and such was the case with similar institutions in Calcutta. The colleges in those days had to labour under the disadvantage of almost invariably losing their best students after the F. A. examination as the Presidency College attracted almost all students for the Degree course. But it was noticed that after some years a sense of attachment to the College was springing up in the mind of the students, and the result was that there had been an increasing number of old familiar faces in the third year classes.<sup>1</sup>

The institution then consisted of two departments, the Arts, and the Law ; the latter teaching the full course of study prescribed for the B. L. and Pleaderships examinations. A new and special feature of the Arts department was the arrangement

<sup>1</sup> College Magazine, January 1903.



for teaching the B. Course in Biology<sup>1</sup> in addition to Physics and Chemistry. The Law Department had a big Law Library for the use of the Law students free of any charge. The special feature of the Law Department was the inclusion of two of the greatest legal luminaries of India both of whom were life-long friends of Principal G. C. Bose. They were Satyendra Prasanna Sinha (afterwards Lord Sinha) and Byomkesh Chakravarty.

The College was also authorized to send up candidates for M. A. examinations. M. A. classes in English were formed under the guidance of Professors E. M. Wheeler and Lalit Kumar Banerjee. But the number of students offering for these examinations was low. From 1898 to 1903 there came out only six M. A. Graduates in six years in different subjects. In 1903 the College had twelve candidates preparing for the M. A. examination.

The college had from its beginning a reputation for science teaching. The necessary appliances for science teaching were purchased in course of years<sup>2</sup> and addition was made to the equipment and instruments for the laboratories of Botany, Physics and Chemistry.

The year 1905 saw the beginning of a new life in Bengal. Curzon's efforts to paralyse Bengal had unexpected results, and the whole of Bengal was pulsating and throbbing with a new spirit of adventure and suffering. The day when the partition was announced was a day of protest, and on hearing the news the Principal immediately closed the College. A minor incident of the day in the College brings out the personality of the Principal. Prof. Wheeler was in his class when the notice for closing the College was in circulation; and after reading out the notice to the class the Professor was continuing the unfinished part of his lecture for the day. Principal Bose got annoyed at this, and rushing to his class emphatically declared, "Mr. Wheeler, I say, Mr. Wheeler, the College is closed" And it had its desired effect.

### 1906-1911

The year 1906 saw the passing of the University Regulations and it brought vast changes in the life of the College.

<sup>1</sup> 'The College makes a speciality of Biology for the B. A. examination and in Mr. G. C. Bose it possesses a teacher whose attainments speak for themselves'—Report of the University Commission, 1906.

<sup>2</sup> Scientific apparatus arrived in the early part of August 1904—College Magazine, 1904.

In view of the new regulations, new courses of studies were introduced from the beginning of the session in 1907. Every subject of study had a set of professors exclusively devoted to it, instead of the old system when a professor could teach more than one subject.<sup>1</sup> On the science side, the Intermediate and Degree courses in Physics, Chemistry and Botany were the special line adopted in the College. Proper arrangements for practical classes were made and the University grant<sup>2</sup> of Rs. 12,000 only was wholly used in fitting up and equipping laboratories and lecture theatres in the most approved modern fashion. There were alterations in the building to meet the new situation, and the laying out of gas pipes, the construction of a gas reservoir, and electric fittings<sup>3</sup> were undertaken under expert supervision. The suggestions for these reforms and plans for these innovations came from the then two Inspectors of Colleges.

The arrangements for the teaching of literary courses were also fully and carefully matured. Prof. Lalit Kumar Banerjee, reputed for his scholarship and teaching of English literature, was joined by Prof. Monoranjan Moitra, a very young scholar with Triple Honours in English, Philosophy and Sanskrit and a first class first in English. Mr. A. K. Ghosh, with a History Tripos of Cambridge, took charge of the History classes. In Babu Panna Lal Bose, who later showed his eminence as a Judge in the famous Bhowal case, the College had a very able professor of Philosophy. Pandit Bhagabat Kumar Sastri, well known as a Sanskrit scholar, took charge of Sanskrit, and Babu Sashi Bhusan Sarkar whose attainments in Mathematics were in those days beyond dispute, was entrusted with the teaching of Mathematics.

One reads with amusement the records of these days to find that an attempt was made by some to refuse affiliation to the College for the Science side. But the undauntedness and irrepressibility of the Principal tided over those difficulties. Mr. Bose was a Fellow of the University, and when he tabled a resolution as a protest against this refusal, to enquire into the conditions of sister institutions who were favoured with the Science affiliation,

<sup>1</sup> Principal G. C. Bose taught Chemistry, English and Logic in addition to his own subject, Botany. There were some professors teaching more than one subject.

<sup>2</sup> Government placed at the hands of the University, a sum of Rs. 80,000/- for distribution among the Colleges.

<sup>3</sup> The Electric installation was completed by Messrs. Kilburn & Co., Aug. 1907.



it caused a sensation in University circles. He was, however, persuaded to withdraw his resolution which created so much flutter in the dovecotes of vested interests, and the necessary affiliation came at last to the College in 1908.

There was no provision to teach vernacular in colleges in those days. Acharya Giris Chandra fought for this, and though the claim for introducing vernacular in the curriculum of studies in colleges is made by others, the contribution made by Principal Bose to this, is not to be ignored. He taught his subject mainly through the medium of Bengali and with the specimen of local flora. It was his custom to explain his standpoint, with regard to this, to the new comers in the college every session, as it was very unfortunately considered in those days that a college teacher who explained his subject in Bengali was not of much worth.

During these years there were some innovations in the teaching side. In 1908, arrangements were made for teaching vernacular in the first and third year classes as a tentative measure under the able guidance of Prof. Lalit Kumar Banerjee, and tutorial work in English was introduced. This received approbation and the Inspectors appreciatively reported, "The Principal has made arrangements for tutorial assistance in the subject of English in the first and third year classes. His method appeared to be very satisfactory."<sup>1</sup>

In 1910, the College ceased to be proprietary and came to be managed by a Board of Trustees. The 1905 Report of the Commission appointed by the University (Part I) records, "The Principal would be glad to make over the whole responsibility of the College to trustees and we understand that he would not put forward any claim to compensation for capital already spent in the institution." This desire of the proprietor came to be fulfilled in 1910 when the trust deed of the College was executed and duly registered. The Board of Trustees was formed with five members, and conveyance was made to the Hon'ble Mr. S. P. Sinha and others on the 15th February, 1910. The Governing Body of the College, which had been functioning since 1906, now became enlarged, and Raja Peary Mohan Mukherjee who was its President from the very beginning continued as such.

The College passed through difficult days, and the need of a grant from Government was sorely felt and the trustees of

<sup>1</sup> Inspection Report 1908.

the College secured a grant of Rs. 33,500 so that the "college buildings are put into proper state of repair." On assigning the premises to the Secretary of State for India<sup>1</sup> the college also received grants-in-aid for some years up to 1911. Government then began to interfere in the administration and impose conditions, acceptance of which would have changed the character of the Institution. So the Principal declined to receive grants-in-aid and from 1911 the College did not receive any help from Government. Due to some differences of opinion the Founder Principal and the men at the helm of affairs in the University did not have much love lost between them, and many were the occasions when the fortune of the college hung in the balance.

But the College continued and the College wanted to live and function according to its ideals. The College motto, "প্রতিপাতেন পরিত্রায়েন সেবয়া", fittingly chosen from the "Gita" rightly upheld these ideals.<sup>2</sup> The suggestion to use this line from Bhagavad Gita emanated from Prof. Lalit Kumar Banerjee. It was readily accepted and the students of the College now find inspiration and guidance from this in their quest of learning here.

Affiliation for the B.A. and B.Sc. classes according to the new scheme was granted to the College in January, 1910. Law classes were already voluntarily closed, and according to the new Regulations there could not now be any provision for M.A. classes in private colleges.

### 1912-1929

The College saw through the years of the first World War (1914-18) without any marked change in its day to day life. There were then three sections for each year in the Intermediate and one only for the B.A. and B.Sc. classes each. During this period the College was fortunate to welcome some distinguished visitors to its precincts.

On 17.8.16, Sir Sankaran Nair, the then Education Member of the Government of India, accompanied by the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Deva Prosad Sarbadhikary, visited the College and made enquiries about how the students were taught and how they lived. Government was now anxious about the residence

<sup>1</sup> Calcutta University Commission Report 1917-19, Vol. VII—Trust deeds of colleges.

<sup>2</sup> College Magazine 1903 analyses the significance of the motto.

of college students and during the Christmas of 1916 the Viceroy along with the Director of Public Instruction paid a visit to the attached messes of the College.

In 1917, there was a remarkable event in the College when Dr. Deva Prosad Sarbadhikary, the Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University, presided over a meeting attended by many eminent persons to recruit men for the army from colleges. A young professor of Logic was the first to enlist, and this caused so much enthusiasm that students offered themselves for recruitment in numbers beyond all expectations.

The same year saw the coming of the Calcutta University Commission (otherwise known as the Sadler Commission) to the College on 29.11.17, at 11 A.M. The Founder Principal dressed in milk-white *dhuti* and *chaddar* presented an impressive appearance, and the personality of the man beamed out in all its dignity and courage. The members of the Commission were shown round the laboratories and the classes at work. Their programme ended with a visit to the College Hostel (Canning Hostel) which had been newly opened.

In 1919, the Governor of Bengal and the Rector of the University paid a visit to the College on the 11th of February. The Principal and the Director of Public Instruction, Mr. Wordsworth, received him at the College gate and the University Infantry Corps gave the salute on the College grounds.

Thus the College which grew and maintained itself on its own resources now attracted the notice of Government. But this unexpected attention to the College was not wholly benevolent. The College came to be believed as a hot-bed of political workers and some of its students were involved in terroristic activities. The College was on the black list of the police, and Government spies were in numbers among the students. In such a difficult situation the tact and wisdom of the Principal went a great way towards saving the College from the wrath of the bureaucracy and the selfless band of teachers also played their part well. But the students and teachers of the College continued to remain branded in the eye of Government.

The political situation in the country soon took a serious turn and the 1921 movement threw the educational life of the College into a turmoil. Boycott of colleges was one of the programmes of action in the movement for liberation of the country from foreign domination. The students struck work and for two brief periods, one in December, 1921 and another in January,

1922, the College remained closed for sometime. The academic life of the College stood almost paralysed.

The non-co-operation movement had left its impress on the activities of the students, and the Students' Association was organized and given a new life under the inspiring guidance of Professor Nripendra Chandra Banerjee. Professor Banerjee resigned Government service at the beginning of the movement of 1921 and subsequently joined the College. The Professors' Union formed in 1919 now began to take part in the affairs of the College and on a representation from this body the College had its telephone connection in 1926. A students' Residence Committee was also formed under the aegis of this Union and Prof. Bhababibhuti Bhattacharjee as Secretary drew up interesting and informative reports of the condition of residence of students staying in private houses and messes.

Death took its toll from among the members of the staff and we have to record here the death of some professors. Harendra Nath Mitra who had made his mark as Professor of Botany since 1912, died on 29.9.25. A career of promise was thus prematurely cut short. Benode Behary Ghosh who, as Head of the ministerial staff of the College, rendered inestimable service to the College for nearly thirty years breathed his last on 11.2.26. Prof. Nalini Kanto Sen Gupta who was the senior Professor of Mathematics died at Allahabad on 21.9.26. The death of Rakhal Das Bose was also a very sad event for the College. He was an efficient Head Master and Superintendent of the School, and in the College his reputation as a lecturer in History was beyond dispute. The loss of the School and the College in the death of such a man was irreparable.

But the College prospered in spite of these mishaps and it was noticed that the popularity of the I.Sc. course of studies was on the increase. The College was recording exceptionally good results in the I.Sc. Examinations and there started a rush of students in these classes—a rush which is still continuing. But since 1922 the number of students reading for the I.A. course began to dwindle, and this was the case in almost all Calcutta colleges.

The year 1924 was a glorious year for the College as its I.Sc. students captured no less than six positions among the first ten of the successful candidates in the University. Out of 20 scholarships awarded by Government as many as 10 were captured by our students. And uptil now the

College has maintained this standard of excellence specially in the I.Sc. results.

The appointment of Professor Jitendra Nath Chakravarty<sup>1</sup> as Vice-Principal introduced a new feature in the College administration. He was a very successful and popular Professor of English. The pressure of work proved too heavy for the Principal, particularly with regard to the signing of a large number of application forms for the University examinations, and there was the need for an energetic Vice-Principal. It was a theme of discussion in the College and outside how in the presence of senior distinguished men like Lalit Kumar Banerjee and Kalidas Mallick, the choice fell on this young man. But the selection proved very successful and the devotion to duty and energy shown by this promising young man drew unstinted praise even from unexpected quarters.

Vice-Principal Jitendra Nath Chakravarty was a man among men and what a man ! In appearance he was like a giant but the heart was like that of a child. He had the unique good fortune of never having an enemy. His personality established a bond of love and attachment between the administration and the students of the College. Principal Bose was held in reverential awe by the students and the members of the staff and the Vice-Principal, by his pleasing manners, formed a vital link between the Head of the Institution and the rest.

It was really a strange freak of nature that a strong man with a sturdy spirit like him had been stricken down with high blood pressure and consequent cerebral hæmorrhage which, though it was not fatal, made him a confirmed invalid for a large number of years. But his mind was left unimpaired. It was still full of vigour. The spirit glowed though the body failed ; and in the weakened condition of one leg, he would often come to the College in a rickshaw and assist the College administration with a remarkable personality. He thought about the College and worried for its betterment till the last days of his life.

### **The 13th September, 1929**

The 13th of September is a day of painful memory to the College as on this day in 1929 Sriman Jatindra Nath Das, a fourth

<sup>1</sup> Prof. J. N. Chakravarty joined the College in 1919 and was Vice-Principal from 1927 to 1947.



year student of the College and President of the Students' Association, breathed his last at Lahore Central Jail after a prolonged fast. Jatin Das has shed glory over the College from where many patriots of the country, known or unknown, have gone out. His death convulsed the student world as no event had done before. Since his death our students had been observing the 13th of September every year as Jatin Das Day, when his portrait in the College is garlanded and prayers are offered for his departed soul.

### 1929-1938

The death of Professor Lalit Kumar Banerjee at the age of 62 on November 29, 1929, cast a gloom over the College. The Principal felt it as a personal loss, and the loss was believed to be irreparable. He attained a unique distinction as a scholar and as a teacher of Shakespeare and the College has yet to find one who can replace him.

Within a brief period of three years the College lost another outstanding figure in the death of Professor Kalidas Mallick in 1932, and Principal Bose seemed to be the only survivor of the band of devoted workers who saw through the difficult days of the College and contributed much to its name and fame. The memory of Prof. Nalini Nath Ghose who died in 1938 still haunts us as he won the heart of all by his unassuming manners and devotion to duty not only as a student in the College but also as its worthy teacher.

The storm that was to burst with the 1931 movement was in the offing and there was a lull in the political activities of the country. With the starting of the movement of 1930-31 a serious commotion ensued in all aspects of the life of the country. Educational institutions could not escape the consequences of this nation-wide unrest the picture of which is thus faithfully recorded by the college magazine for 1930 (July to December)

"Violent political storm swept the country when students kept aloof from their sequestered cloisters, when the college gates were daily picketted by students lying prostrate, when even the guardians of law and order paid scant respect to the sanctity of the sacred precincts of educational institutions."

Bangabasi College had its share of suffering, and on more than one occasion police sergeants with revolvers and batons rushed



into the College classes and even the Principal's room. The calm dignity and grandeur of the old Principal were like a sheet anchor in those days of unprecedented storm and stress.

In 1933, Professor Prasanta Kumar Bose<sup>1</sup> came back from Oxford after getting his Honours degree there. Principal Bose had sent this youngest son of his to Oxford, and when young Bose returned hopes were expressed to have him placed in some responsible position in the College administration. Principal Bose was in indifferent health at the time and he was persuaded to accept the suggestion of the Professors' Union that young Bose might be the Principal and Principal Bose might remain associated with the College as its Rector.

For years together father and son worked side by side, one looking after the day to day administration, and the other being in charge of the finances and the direction of the policy of the College. Rector G. C. Bose could never sit idle. His attendance in the College punctually from 11 A.M. to 3-30 P.M. was regular in a clock-like manner. No one could discern any difference in his manner and deportment but he gradually slid into the position of an elderly Statesman in the College administration. He had been slowly but surely guiding his son into the path of efficient administration of the College.

In 1937, two prominent persons closely connected with the College were snatched away by the cruel hand of death. They were Krishnalal Dutt and Bhupal Chandra Bose. We have had occasion to refer earlier to the contributions of Bhupal Chandra Bose to the College. The former was a distinguished Government servant and after retiring as Accountant General, Madras, became a very important member of the College Governing Body. His services as financial adviser to the College were inestimable.

In 1934, Principal G. C. Bose retired from his office and became the Rector of the College. His youngest son now stepped into his shoes. But as Rector, he continued to direct with absolute efficiency the complex government of his beloved College to the last month of his earthly existence. At eighty-five years of age, the thin, emaciated, but proudly erect figure could still be seen doing the daily round of corridors and lecture-halls, and four flights of stairs could hold no terrors for him. The teachers

<sup>1</sup> He joined the College as a Professor of English in 1929 and went to England on study leave.

and the taught were inspired with a singular confidence. So long as that venerable figure passed and repassed, they felt, all would be well.

Ultimately, as was fitting, it was his zeal for College affairs which brought about the inevitable end. And, even when death came, it had to approach cautiously, struggling step by step with that bold and tenacious spirit. Towards the end of November 1938, a little boil made its appearance on the nape of his neck. It was very painful, but otherwise it caused little anxiety. And he *would* insist on attending a meeting of the Governing Body. He came in from the meeting feeling very ill ; from next morning he had to take his bed ; and, in course of three or four days, the simple boil had developed into a malignant carbuncle. The gravity of the case was realized ; and the doctors left no stone unturned to burst the carbuncle. In the end it did burst ; but the long struggle had left its mark : the vitality was sapped. The doctors began to shake their heads ; but still the vein of iron held firm. At last, New Year's Day—the day on which, by an irony of fate, Bangabasi School was to begin a new phase of its existence in a modern building—saw the beginning of the end. A little after mid-day, the heart and pulse were felt to be definitely failing ; and only then did the last, lingering, despairing optimism of those around him break down. They realized that it was now a question of hours ; and, as the gloom of a winter's night settled like a pall over the house, the question of hours was reduced to one of mere minutes. The last scene will never be forgotten by those that witnessed it. The venerable educationist, his distracted lady clasping his hand, lay gasping on the bed. Round the bedside, clustered in a circle, stood or kneeled the daughters, the grand-daughters and the daughters-in-law, gallantly checking the swelling tears to chant the sacred *Hari-nama* in broken chorus. On the floor, with heads bent and lips moving in silent prayers, sat the sons and grandsons, listening to the family priests reading out the relevant chapters from the Gita. Outside, on the verandahs and passages, and filtering out to the stairs and the courtyard below, stood huddled groups of relatives, friends, colleagues and menials, gathered from all over Calcutta to pay their last respects to the departing educationist. The end was not long in coming. Soon after the clock had struck nine, there was a last convulsive shudder, a final gasp, and, amid the heart-rending wails of the stricken family, the soul of Giris Chandra passed out on its last journey.

### 1939-1947

We found darkness falling before us in the loss of the man who was the Institution. But the Rector was 86 and he died in the full splendour and ripeness of his life and with the satisfaction that the College was in the safe hands of Principal P. K. Bose and his colleagues. Most of them had shaped their career under his inspiring guidance and completely identified themselves with the Institution. Their slogan now was 'work as usual'

The College was now on a firm footing. It had tried to work up to its accepted ideals and the number of students was fairly large. But with 1942 a crisis overtook the entire educational life of the country and Bangabasi College could not escape the pressure of the time. The bomb scare practically emptied the city and the College classes were reduced to unbelievably low numbers. As an experiment a branch of the Institution was opened at Kushtia. The story of the experiment is not much edifying reading. It was a case of promises unredeemed, hopes unfulfilled, and energies misspent. We had to get out of this venture as it turned out to be a financial burden to the parent institution. A great financial stringency overwhelmed us and the College eked out its existence with rigid economy and drastic cuts in the teachers' salary.

For two years and a half this crisis continued but things looked up in 1943-44. All cuts in the pay were gradually restored and substantial increments were granted. The deductions in the salary have now been paid off. Those dark days of the College are happily now memories of the past; they bring, at the present time, into prominence the team work and whole-hearted co-operation of all the members of the staff as the College pulled as one man during a crisis which threatened its very existence. As a result the College came out of that ordeal in a splendour which is manifest today in all spheres of College activities.

Now we can look to the future with confidence and courage, and the College today can aspire to play a prominent part in consolidating the freedom which has been so gloriously won by Gandhiji's ideals. Bangabasi College has justified its existence and the future holds out a career of greater promise. Let us all hope for the glory yet to be achieved, and with hearts buoyed up and minds happy and contented, we can face the future. We can, however, make endeavour, sincere and devoted, but the results are in the hands of the Almighty.