

MY REMINISCENCES

I joined the 4th class of the school in 1896. The institution then had only F.A. classes in the college department and it was housed in an old residential building on the Bowbazar Street near its junction with Amherst Street. I came from a village having previously passed the minor examination. The first thing which struck me was Girish Babu in *dhoti*, shirt and *chadar* instead of being in European dress. He stuck to this dress always and the only occasion when he appeared in European costume was on the day when the University Commission visited the College. He certainly in the eyes of many of us did not look as dignified as in *dhoti*, shirt and *chadar*.

With the starting of B.A. classes the college moved into a large building right on the Bowbazar Street, without any compound and the noise of passing tram cars was very disturbing during class hours. When the college moved to Scott lane the surroundings were quiet.

When I was in the 3rd class of the school one rainy day the class teacher for a period being absent Girish Babu himself came to take the class. He taught the difference between "to love" and "to be loved" and as I happened to be able to explain it he asked my name and he remembered it ever afterwards.

The college soon became popular and sections had to be opened for F.A. classes. As far as I remember the 4th year B.A. class in my year had 225 students on the roll.

Late Lalit Kumar Banerji, Professor of English literature, lectured for the whole period without any extraneous talk, sitting on the chair, all the time looking towards the class with broadly open large eyes but certainly not to the students and occasionally wiping his forehead with a folded handkerchief held in the right palm. I doubt if any student ever came into intimate contact with him. The case was different with Prof. E. M. Wheeler, who mixed with the students very freely. Pandit Chandradoy Bidyabinod, Professor of Sanskrit who later left to assume the editorship of the *Hitabadi*, was grandmotherly in his dealings with the students. Prof. Shyamadas Mukherji, Professor of Mathematics, seemed to live and think in a peculiar atmosphere of his own.

I had Biology comprising Botany and Physiology, in my B.A. Both these subjects were taught by Girish Babu who dictated notes which alone were sufficient to enable one to pass the examination. Curiously enough it was on the strength of these two subjects that I was selected for the post of Assistant to the Entomologist Agricultural Research Institute, Pusa without any recommendation from any one. I thus became an Entomologist, Sericulturist and bee-keeping expert. How a chance determines one's career !

Girish Babu always commanded respect of all students who were however careful to keep themselves at a respectful distance from him. I spent about 31 years of my service in Behar and Burma. But whenever I happened to come to Calcutta I paid my visit of respect to him at his house and he took a genuine pride whenever I presented him with copies of my publications.

I cannot close this note without expressing my gratitude to the college. Coming from a family with straitened circumstances I was admitted into the school on a concession fee of one rupee per month on the recommendation of a relative and this was the fee I paid right upto the B.A. Class. Many students like me are grateful to the institution for similar help.

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