PREFACE.

Roy Bahadur Jogendra Chunder Ghose, whose speeches I am publishing, is one of the most remarkable men of this country. The son of Sir Chunder Madhub Ghose late Judge and officiating Chief Justice of Bengal and grandson of Roy Bahadur Durga Prosad Ghose, who early in the last century made the settlement of half of Bengal, he was a distinguished graduate of the Calcutta University, an able pleader of the High Court, the first elected Fellow of the Calcutta University and a member of its Syndicate. He was elected a member of the Calcutta Corporation by defeating Mr. C. R. Das, and became a member of the old Bengal Council by defeating Maharaja Bahadur Sir Manindra Chunder Nundy, and he was a member of the first reformed Council representing the Calcutta University by defeating its Vice Chancellor Sir Nil Ratan Sarkar. The Swarajists have this time captured the University seat. The beneficent activities of Roy Bahadur Jogendra Chunder Ghose are too many to narrate here. Mr. Harold Mann said of him that there is no beneficent work in Bengal which has not proceeded from him. A Swarajist leader wrote to him “what you have not done for Bengal is probably not worth doing”. Sir Shumsool Huda wrote of him as one “who has done more than any other to advance the cause of this poor country.”
One of the first works of his life was while he was still an undergraduate to establish for the first time Night Schools for the working classes where he taught himself. His next notable work was to take up the cause of Assam coolies. At his own cost out of his first earnings as lawyer he employed agents in the main stations in the route of emigration to prevent fraudulent recruitment. The number of coolies at once fell by thousands. He then moved a resolution in the National Congress for abolishing this system of legalized slavery. The Government has since repealed the obnoxious Emigration Law and practically abolished the system.

While in the Senate he was one of those through whose exertion the B. Sc. degree was instituted, notwithstanding the strenuous opposition of Sir Ashutosh Mukerji and his friends. He was however unfortunately defeated by one vote in the Senate in his attempt to improve the physique of the youth of Bengal by making physical education compulsory.

In Calcutta some of the widest roads and the underground drainage of the suburbs were carried out mainly through his exertions. He got a certificate of honor for his good work from Sir Alexander Mackenzie even after his seconding a vote of censure against him which was carried in the Corporation. He resigned the Municipal Commissionership as a protest against the reactionary Municipal Act introduced by Sir Alexander Mackenzie which he had the satisfaction of seeing repealed in the last Council.
He is the founder and Secretary of the Association for the Advancement of Scientific and Industrial Education of Indians, which has sent over 400 young men to most of the principal foreign universities of the world. His students have started 20 new industries. About 12 D. Sc.s and Ph. D.s and 30 Msc.s and 100 B.Sc's of the Universities of London, Edinburg, Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds Berlin, Paris, Basle, Cornell, Michigan, Ohio, California, Harvard, Illinois and Tokio are among his students, who are employed in most of the Colleges of India as professors. On account of his strenuous efforts in the cause of foreign education, the Nabya Bharat, one of the leading magazines of Bengal, described him as the Mikado of Bengal.

The late Raja Peary Mohun Mukerji the leader of Hindu Society and Sir Manindra Chunder Nundi wrote of him that by sheer force of the number of the students sent abroad he has broken down the ancient social barriers against sea-voyage which have practically disappeared from Bengal only since the Association was established. The Bangabashi the leading orthodox paper of Bengal, on account of the defeat inflicted by him at a great public meeting at Burdwan on the reactionary party led by the famous writer Indra Chandra Banerji, in a bitter poetical attack on him wrongly ascribed the destruction of Hindu Society to him.

But all the above are the fleeting works of the man. He is above all a scholar and author, a philosopher and religious teacher. Only as such he will be
remembered by future generations. His great work on the principles of Hindu Law in three volumes is a unique original production which has greatly helped, as a judge of the Privy Council said, in clarifying Hindu Law and liberalizing it. His translations of all extant Sanscrit texts and commentaries, which have come down from 2500 B.C. to the present day, is a monumental work, the like of which is not to be found in any other country, and as was said in the Bengali Papers at the time “will last as long as Hindu Law and the Sanskrit language will last”. His Tagore Lectures on Impartible property and Endowments are also standard works.

But his greatest work is his Positive Religion in which he has vindicated pure theism. His encyclopaedic knowledge and unrivalled erudition and spirituality has enabled him to marshal and criticize all ancient and modern scientific and philosophic theories and ideas and to establish the personal God. It is a book, as an eminent European professor wrote, which could only be “the outcome of long reflection and a grand experience.” Indeed without the varied experiences of life, a book of true spiritually is not possible.

In the Legislative Council, he was next to Sir Surendra Nath Banerji, its most eloquent member and was practically the leader of the House. Against the opposition of the Government and the ministerial party,

*A detailed account of the works done by the Rui Bahadur will be found in the appendix.*
He carried his proposals for establishing charitable Dispensaries in every Thana and village union and for the supply of drinking water in the rural areas. The Government and the ministerial party, who have been posing as champions of constructive work without doing anything but imposing fresh taxes, bitterly opposed him and grossly abused him for these resolutions as extremist. The resolutions have however since been given effect to and the 50 millions of the poor people of Bengal will have medical relief and drinking water in the course of a few years. It is an achievement not very spectacular but more beneficent than any that has been carried out hitherto. It was he again who brought in the unfortunate girls of Bengal within the protection of the Bengal Childrens Act, notwithstanding the opposition of the knighted ministers of the crown. He supported the Government and the European community in protecting their just rights and was thanked by them several times, a member of the Executive Council telling him on one such occasion that he was the most honest member of the Council. But it is a strange fact, which shows why the British rule is universally unpopular, that he was several times grossly abused by those very Europeans, whose just interests he safeguarded against extremist attacks, and that the member of the Executive Council mentioned above who is now a Chief Commissioner, because he refused to withdraw the inoffensive word Zid in connection with the paper books of the High Court used towards a favourite Judge.
who subsequently quickly fell from favour and came to be regarded as an extremist, was instrumental in his leaving the Council on the occasion.

He led the historic attack on the exorbitant ministerial salaries communal representation, regulation of cow-slaughter, the revolutionary changes in the Calcutta Municipal Act, which made him very unpopular with Government officials and so-called liberals. He was equally disliked by the extremists, whose demands he could not support when he considered them to be unjust and unreasonable.

He was perhaps the strongest champion of the middle classes in the Council and led the attack against unwise retrenchment, disastrous to progressive administration and to the educated classes of this country.

His speeches are models of eloquence and political wisdom and every political aspirant would do well to read them. I have thought them worthy of ranking among the best of their kind delivered in any Legislature and of preserving them in a book.

B. ROY CHOUDHURY

39/1 Lansdowne Road, Calcutta.
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