

LIFE AND EXPERIENCES
OF
A BENGALI CHEMIST

VOLUME II

PRAFULLA CHANDRA RÂÛ

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PREFACE

In the preface to the first volume of this work it was mentioned that "a large mass of materials has been left out" and that "if circumstances prove favourable a supplementary volume may come out later on." I have now the satisfaction of presenting the second and concluding volume, which, for aught I know, may prove to be my swan-song.

It was with considerable diffidence, nay with fear and trembling, that I presented the previous volume to the public, but I was somewhat agreeably surprised at the favourable reception accorded to it not only in India but also in England and America. As a chemist I consider myself an international property and some critics have naturally hinted at the large amount of space devoted to matters which might be considered as extraneous and foreign to the life of a chemist, pure and simple. I submit, however, that those who have closely watched my career will not have failed to notice that I have been something more than a mere chemist. True it is that throughout my active career, now extending over half-a-century, I have served Chemistry as the Goddess of my idolatry; to her I have been a whole-hearted devotee, and even at this advanced age she claims me as her own. But it should not be forgotten that the present volume and its predecessor include my "life and experiences." This is my apology for the presentation of the diverse activities connected therewith.

Social and economic problems relating to India and especially to Bengal have always claimed a portion of my attention, and thus what I have written is inextricably interwoven with my life and experiences. If now and then I have been drawn into realms which might be considered as political it is because, as Professor Bowley observes, "*economic and political events cannot be disentangled.*"

As an educationist I have devoted considerable space in this volume to matters educational. I have traced its progress

since the beginning of British rule in India and have been unsparing in criticising the wrong direction it has taken to the serious detriment of the future prospects of our young hopefuls, who have been accustomed to look to an academic career alone as a passport to success in life.

The saying is generally ascribed to that prince of diplomats, Talleyrand, that language was given to man to disguise his thoughts ; the student of science, however, cannot agree with the above dictum and he is inclined to call a spade a spade. Hence my considered opinions on a variety of subjects dealt with in these volumes have been freely expressed and sometimes, I am afraid, with brutal candour.

I have reproduced *verbatim et literatim* several passages from my essay on India published half-a-century ago. It is sad to reflect that there has been no material change of policy of the British Government during the last fifty years ; any change that has occurred is only a *change for the worse* as evidenced by the New Constitution. The problems—social and economic—which were acute then have become acuter still.

It now remains for me to express my indebtedness to Professor J. C. Ghosh, Head of the Department of Chemistry, Dacca University, for many useful hints and criticisms. Dr. P. K. Bose, my colleague and ex-pupil, has laid me under a deep debt of obligation by taking upon himself the arduous task of looking through the proofs and preparing the table of contents and the index. He has also furnished me with many valuable suggestions.

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P. C. R.

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