

ACHARYYA
PRAFULLA CHANDRA RAY
(Sir P. C. Ray)
AND
HIS MANY-SIDED ACTIVITIES

By
AN ADMIRING PUPIL

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CHUCKERVERTY, CHATTERJEE & CO., LTD.,
BOOKSELLERS AND PUBLISHERS,
15, College Square, Calcutta.

Price Twelve Annas only.

INTRODUCTION.

The name of Acharyya Prafulla Chandra Ray is familiar to every one, old and young, learned and ignorant, not only in Bengal but all over India. In fact it has become a household word throughout this vast continent. For a long time I have been thinking of writing an account of his achievements, but have fought shy of the task, lest I should prove unequal to it. Of late, however, some pamphlets dealing with his life have been published both in Bengali and English. It is not my purpose here to follow the course adopted in them and give a chronological summary of the chief events of his life; what I propose to do is to place before the reader a short account of his glorious achievements in the field of science as well as in many other spheres of life, so that he may form an idea of his versatile genius, concentrated application and wonderful capacity for work. Examples of such religious devotion to self-imposed duties, such utter contempt of personal comforts and such ardent zeal to raise one's own country in the estimation of the world outside by untiring and ceaseless work

in different spheres of activity throughout a long life, may not be very rare in the Western World, but in the enervating atmosphere of enslaved and poverty-stricken India, a life like that of Acharyya Prafulla Chandra is certainly a thing calculated to fill one with amazement. One cannot fail to profit by the reverent contemplation of such a life. I am afraid, however, that the world at large have not been able to form definite ideas about his character and activities. And this is because he has not found quite the right sort of biographers. For one must be at the same time a scientist, an educationist, an industrialist, a social reformer, and a politician in order adequately to perform the difficult task of giving an account of his life. Though, indeed, I cannot claim many or almost any of those qualifications still I can vouch for a very close contact with him for the last sixteen years; and still my relations with him are unbroken and intimate. I, therefore, think that I can without presumption, try to help the public to form a proper estimate of his many-sided activities and this I intend to do by giving my own experiences about the daily life of this illustrious man.
