



REACTIONS AND
RECONCILEMENT

Principal Abu Hena

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PRINCIPAL ABU HENA



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**DEDICATED
TO
ALL MY FORMER PUPILS
AND
COLLEAGUES**

Publisher's Note

In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.

The Author Late Mr. Abu Hena, Principal Abu Hena as he is commonly known was a founder member of Pakistan Co-operative Book Society, Ltd. This writing of his, encompassing thirty two years of teaching and administrative experiences in Bengal and later in East Pakistan; was first published in 1969. His pupils, relatives and colleagues received it with great enthusiasm.

Written with clarity and sincerity of purpose, his writing has an inner appeal to the people. The gradual changes in aptitude and attitude of teachers and pupils towards social and socio-political upheavals have been portrayed very clearly by the author. We feel, reprinting of this book has become necessary for two reasons. First of course due to its depleted stock but the second one which we feel is the most important one, is author's portrayal of campus activities of his days and the role teachers and pupils played in building the society. At a time like now when the campus activities have become extremely violent with direct and indirect support from outside, this book is going to give guideline to the nation on many issues.

We are really proud to present, second edition of this book to conscientious readers.

November, 1996

Munawwar Ahmed

Vice Chairman

Bangladesh Co-operative Book Society Ltd.

Chittagong-Dhaka

Preface

This book in the form in which it is being published contains an account of my working life in education in the first grade Government Colleges of Undivided Bengal for twenty five years and later for six years and three months in those of East Pakistan. The first twenty five years includes a two-year spell of my work in the Bengal Secretariat, Calcutta, as Director of Public Information. I began as a Lecturer in English in 1922 and ended up as Principal in October, 1953, on superannuation in Government Service. After an interval of ten days only I had an eleven year run of academic work at Dacca University where I had a second and final superannuation on the 30th June, 1964. Early next month I began writing the story of this forty two year period of my activities and experiences and although there was a break of two to three months in holidays away from Dacca I completed the Government Service part of the memoirs early in April, 1965. Pending the writing of the Dacca University portion I looked round for print and publication prospects which showed, though not unexpectedly, rugged contours. I was reminded how the work had no commercial value. In April, 1965, paid, printed products at Dacca were not attractive. Vast improvements have since been made and the position is altogether different now. The only respectable printing and publishing firm then- it still holds its pre-eminent position- was the Pakistan CO-operative Book Society. It struck me that since I was one of its founder-members and also shareholders and directors I might receive help and encouragement from the management. Mr. Niaz Mohammad Khan's initiative in the foundation and successful conduct to the Pakistan CO-operative Book Society while he had been Commissioner, Chittagong Division, shortly after Independence, and my close association with the enterprise when I had been Principal, Chittagong College, and also later at M. C. College, Sylhet, have been described in the relevant Portions of my narrative. At the Printing Press Building of the Book Society at Dacca- the administrative headquarters are located at Chittagong- I met the General

Manager, Mr. Bakhtear, with the manuscript and found him sympathetic. Since the Society was not purely commercial he didn't rule out publication on intrinsic merit provided the Board of Directors, as well as the authorities of the Asia Foundation, who were the Donors of the Printing Press, approved. By November, 1965, I submitted typed scripts for their glance and consideration. In August, 1966, I received a very encouraging letter communicating their approval for printing and publication. I was told proofs would soon be available in steady instalments. Nine months elapsed since then but no proofs were available. In April, 1967, in course of a visit to Chittagong I met Mr. Bakhtear and found him unhappy over the direction and conduct of the affairs of the Book Society. He told me, however, that in near future I would be getting the proofs. Very fitfully and in small instalments, mostly after inexplicably long intervals, they arrived. Any Zeal on our part to have things expedited would receive a reminder that this job could be done only when other important jobs were not pending. Final proofs of the book upto October, 1967, have been corrected and I am told final printing made as well. In the middle of October, 1968, being asked by the firm, I am writing this preface. The original arrangement with Mr. Bakhtear was that the Dacca University portion of the work would be incorporated as well. This I completed in due course and runs to about two hundred and fifty pages in manuscript. Keeping in view the time that the Book Society has taken in printing the book in its present form I cannot persuade myself to trust the remaining portion to its care although it is an integral portion of the whole and although some complications may arise regarding a second volume under the same title. Nevertheless I record my sense of grateful appreciation of the gesture of good will and support accorded to me by the Pakistan Co-operative Book Society Ltd. through the good offices and commendation of Mr. Bakhtear.

The book sets forth in chronological order the Colleges in which I worked and among which I had to make my movements on account of the exigencies and requirements of Government Service. The geographical Location of the institutions, their sites and structures, their environments together with their residents, their customs and manners, their social, economic and political predilections and my contact and relations with them in the course of the execution of my duties, or outside

my occupation have been glanced at. But the central theme throughout has been the work I did, the command under which I did it or how I did it when the leadership was mine. Naturally I have delineated the character of my prominent colleagues and pupils, their ways and manners, their successes and failures, their strength and foibles. And throughout the book there has been an unmistakable indication of the terms and conditions in Educational Service in which the staff hierarchy including myself had to do the work. At a moment when Pakistan has been celebrating with pomp and grandeur its Decade of Reforms in the twenty first year of its independent existence the period from 1922 to 1947, and thereafter from 1947 to 1958 would be ancient history-the first twenty five years beyond average memory the second ten years or more not worth remembering on account of its chequered run. And my book in its present form recording events and conditions upto October, 1953, is well-nigh swallowed up by the forgotten past- however much it may have dealt with the aftermath of the First World War in the Non-Cooperation Movement, or an evolutionary shift in the Muslim politics of the sub-continent leading to the birth of Pakistan or the course of the Second World War and its aftermath the bloody Hindu-Muslim Civil War. I have no illusions about its value or readability. In sharp contradiction to the present pattern of life in Pakistan, we at Rajshahi or Chittagong Colleges had a mixed and variegated texture. Many characters in this story are those of Hindus or Europeans. Their interest may therefore be nil.

But here is the long, long story of a teacher, ardent and dedicated, who for forty two years stuck to his duties against paralysing odds, against backbreaking, soulkilling frustrations. He has gone on loving his work and his pupils and his academic circles with passionate devotion and very great intensity of emotions. His susceptibilities have always been keen; his reactions to what he considered unjust and unfair, stupid, selfish, hypocritical, pretentious, pompous or treacherous, indecent, undisciplined and undignified, have been sharp, given him pain and anguish for days and nights. But he has never lost sight of his direction and purpose. The Promethean fire to grow and evolve, to love and cherish, to suffer and not to be seduced still burns softly at seventy, though bright and hot in younger periods. And these have given him his reconciliation. "Reactions and Reconciliation" aptly sums up the

essence of my life and work as an educationist.

The whole of the present book and the volume to follow bringing the account to 30th June, 1964, has been diary-based since the early 1930's. The earlier portions, namely, Chapters I & II, have been written from photographic plates in memory's volume. Since 1932 I went on making jottings of important, unimportant, miscellaneous things including prices of daily necessities of life, in my diaries of the respective years. During my many transfers from Rajshahi to Calcutta or Calcutta to Chittagong or Chittagong to Sylhet or Sylhet to Dacca I carried them with my personal belongings- one or two such diaries are missing and in writing about the missing period I have refrained from giving dates and hours. Entries in many have been sketchy and in many others fairly full. As I have always lived a fully occupied life I had to make the entries at odd hours of the day or late in the evening or early next morning. I maintained these diaries (and I have still been doing so) not with any conscious motive of utilizing them later but as memoranda so that in any statement I might have to make in private or official life I might be definite and concrete. On my retirement from Dacca University when I was inspired by some of my sons and friends to write these memoirs the diaries proved unfailing guides and of inestimable value. Minor factual errors may have occurred here and there when I wrote in the absence of definite data. A particular pupil may have missed a first class in his Honours degree but won it in his M. A. another may have been a Calcutta University Honours man but in my enthusiastic admiration of their solid achievements otherwise I may have attributed double first class in both Honours and M. A. Since the writing of the book three years and a half have elapsed and the status and occupations of many people figuring in the narration have meanwhile changed. Many may have resigned or retired and some have died. Errors and omissions in these directions may please be excused. My friend Mr. Altaf Husain fell seriously ill in April, 1967, rallied and resumed his duties as a Central Minister but succumbed to another setback in May, 1968. The prediction I made in 1927 at Islamia College, Calcutta, in the course of a farewell function turned out very correct. I said his would be a remembered name, and his is a remembered name, to be sure. Our former distinguished pupil and one of the earliest of Muslim student leaders, Abdul Waseque, has since breathed his last, reportedly under

pathetic circumstances but the very fact that he has left his properties to the improvement of education in his own native place adds a new dimension to his life and career.

This book is exclusively a product of my own private room written in consultation with the diaries of the years available before me. All its weakness and defects are mine. The conflict of the Muslim students of Rajshahi College (Chapter III) with Dr. P. D. Shastri who was not only highlanded and tyrannical to them but who wickedly and unjustly fastened all the blame on me has been described with day to day developments. Similarly my ordeal at Chittagong College as Principal in 1946 and 1947 at the hands of motiveful, motiveless malignity has been treated with day to day, hour to hour details. I had some sombre hours and experiences at M. C. College, Sylhet, as well. I felt they called for concrete illustrations which have therefore been embodied. But what about the incorporation of routine events and functions round the years during my administration? Who cares for such details in an educational institution? Surely life in other spheres in the modern world of breathtaking discoveries and achievements and simultaneously of awesome armaments of annihilation doesn't justify the treatment of such ephemeral things. They, at their worst, may be put down against my personal vanity. At their best they are the unpruned exuberance of a passionate soul that has failed to make appropriate distribution according to priorities. They also proceed from peculiar convictions of mine. I hate generalities and generalisations, unsubstantiated claims, and professions, words without substance or sincerity, copy book theories and speculations, platitudes decked out in grandiose scholarship. At the present moment floods of such writings and reports, theses and dissertations in Pakistan are causing submersion of the reading public and devastation to their intellect. It is difficult to foresee how soon the land can be saved from such thoughtlessly produced calamities.

These last have the closest and what appears to many disastrous links with the state of education in the country, or speaking directly, in East Pakistan. We are being taught to believe that our knowledge and learning have been spreading to the utmost bound of human thought, that our ever increasing number of authors and writers is attaining to new heights of original thinking and creativity. Our State is prompt to

award cash prizes and medals and certificates to the outstanding among them. Similarly students of schools and colleges and Universities securing good places in examinations are the recipients of gold medals plus cash prizes plus talent and merit scholarship plus overseas scholarships. Teachers at the same levels are having lavish grants and awards. The old system under the British rulers is being crucified in order to be replaced by newer and fresher systems to contribute to wealth, prosperity and national glory. The recommendations of the Commission on National Educational are not only being implemented over the years but a new Commission of Education Planning for the Utilization of Manpower Resources has been appointed and working to make education useful and to eliminate waste. The syllabi at all levels, it is claimed, have been broadbased and courses of study diversified to suit national requirements and that importance is being given to technical, vocational, Engineering education. True the expansion of educational facilities during the last ten years has been phenomenal. The number of Universities and educational institutions of all types including technical, technological, professional ones has been steadily increasing; enrolment of students and trainees in each category is increasing too. Brochures just published from educational institutions all over the province in celebration of the Decade of Reforms show the most gorgeous EDIFICE of education with a magnificent facade. The claim to the phenomenal expansion of educational facilities together with the simultaneous and astronomical increase in outlay and allocations is being rightly made. What is omitted, however, is the increase's proportion to the total population of East Pakistan and their total requirements. It is infinitesimal. Our Commission on National Education was discreetly (or shall I say disgracefully) silent on the financial implications of a plan of universal, free, compulsory primary education. The Sargent Plan of the British rulers shortly before the Independence had the courage and the honesty of working them out. The examination of the educational requirements of India by the Sargent Commission, their findings and recommendations, were in concrete, specific, definite terms against the generalities of the Pakistani Commission. It is one thing to overhaul an old machinery requiring renovation but it is altogether a questionable move to destroy and dismantle a strong, solid installation of proved service for the substitution of incomprehensively

complicated and outrageously newfangled and unsuitable gadgets of the American system. This the Pakistan Commission did and had to abandon many of its novel features when challenged by the students. Every progressive State has to provide for universal education, to divert students to courses of studies according to their aptitude or in relation to their physical and mental handicaps with the object of making them earning and productive units. Every civilized State in the course of its development had to fully examine the pros and cons of useful education as well as liberal and cultural education, of technological, mechanical, purely scientific education as well as humanities and classics. The library of each such State is well stocked with books of research and findings on these aspects of education, and the stock is being replenished everyday by the latest works of wise men and true. But here in Pakistan to our misfortune theories, opinions, speculations debated, rejected or accepted long ago, are being picked up according to peculiar motivation and paraded before the public as original and revolutionary. The naked, resultant truth is that behind the facade of the Palace of Education already built or being built there is nothing intrinsically sound or substantial. An appalling crisis hangs over our head despite our four Boards of Secondary and Intermediate Education, one Board of Technical Education and five Universities and despite the investment of astronomical sums of money. Syllabi at each level are not being laid on the foundations of knowledge and learning but on the current Pakistani history, geography, civics, economics, literature, philosophy, ideology and so on. To this end books for each stage are being written according to orders, or standard works at higher levels being processed a new by Pakistani writers. That Pakistan's history, culture, traditions should form a part of syllabus and that works of our scholars should be encouraged, introduced and read are not being questioned. The first part of the last sentence should be considered in the light of "how much, at what stage of learning and in relation to those of the world at large"; the second part in relation to the intrinsic merit of the works. Books being written according to orders and on topics and subjects 're-oriented' by the Government are mostly worthless and do not add to information or enlightenment. They are also written to win prizes and medals. The framers of syllabi by the Textbook Board of East Pakistan upto classes VIII and those from IX to XII by the Boards of Secondary and

Intermediate Education have their gospels in the recommendations of Education Commissions. The number of subjects to be read and tested in examinations is unwieldy and much too heavy for students upto the SSC stage. It is said humanities must be wedded to science and science is to be tempered by humanities. The net result is students become Jacks of all trade and masters of none. The British system when we were children was found to get to the same result and was therefore replaced by Arts and Science branches at the end of the Matriculation Examination, according to aptitudes of the students so that the higher the students went up, the better and more specialised their knowledge became. The position now is that at each level from Middle of S S C to the H S C and then to the Degree level there are a number of subjects which are common and must be gone through whether suitable or merely repetitive doesn't matter. Questions of a general nature and vague in scope are repeated for example in civics, economics, history, literature and grammar in each examination upto the degree level. Their answers also are equally, if not more outrageously, vague and senseless although much is being said about the target being changed to objective questions and specific answers. From bottom to top one comes across nothing but sciolism in the majority of cases. I am still associated with the assessment of performances of examinees from the Intermediate (or HSC) Examination to the highest in the land. This job is giving me (and also to hundreds of other examiners who have the frankness to confess) deepest pain, agony and tragic horror from experience of the work of 70% candidates who convince us that the adoption of unfair means in the examination halls is rampant and universal at the HSC Exams and in the cases of those who go higher up in the rungs of the ladder there is nothing but chaff and nonsense. And yet Boards and Universities are giving them certificates and diplomas of Pass. In competitive examinations for jobs and places 90% have to be rejected. Conscientious examiners feel guilty of perpetration of atrocities themselves by helping to keep the DEGRADATION alive.

All Boards and Universities, all academic committees and organisations have been completely officialised; the administrative heads and functionaries are being appointed by the Government who dictate and have their own way through their own men. Not the slightest vestige of independence is tolerated. Deans, Provosts, Heads of Departments,

Principals and Professors of Colleges have simply to carry out the orders of the bosses. In the districts the Deputy Commissioners are the dictators. An increasing number of non-Government Colleges is being provincialised. This would appear to be a commendable move, especially in the context of less than half a dozen Govt. Colleges that the British Government established, and we, in our time, had to move among three of them in the whole of Bengal. As Inspector of Colleges Dacca University from 1953 to 1956 I had direct, personal experience of the wretched state of finances and of paucity of teaching staff or of the inefficiency of many who were available. Laboratories were either ill-equipped or existed in name only. Buildings and structures were poor and inadequate. The present Government's taking upon themselves the responsibility of running Degree Colleges at district quarters cannot be too highly spoken of. But in the context of the strangle hold that the Government now have over the Universities and the Education Boards and official Colleges, the overnight provincialisation of an ever increasing number of private colleges suggests the extension of octopus control. And where are the Principals and teachers competent enough to staff them to remove existing inefficiency. Even before the addition to the list there was paucity of distinguished heads and teachers. Secondary Education Boards have very largely to depend on Government Educational Services for their Chairman, Secretaries and Controllers of Exams. And what is the use of founding and running new Govt. Colleges with the poorest specimens of administrative and teaching staff? In the name of efficient handling of SSC and HSC institutions and examinations one Secondary Board of the province has been increased to four on a regional basis. The four Boards are gradually having costly office and residential buildings and a phalanx of bureaucrats the like of which the British bureaucracy could never contemplate. Each Board has become a powerful vested interest to feed and keep alive a rotten state of school and HSC education. The expansion of physical facilities for education from lower to higher stages has undoubtedly been stupendous but its gigantic body has a cancerous vitality. The average teacher has no mission to fulfil; the average student does not read; he has nothing to learn. On the contrary the students have their political organisations and distinctive creeds and activities to correspond to the creeds. These are provincewide and function from the Degree level to the University with a crescendo of campaigning that is fast becoming terroristic. Some of

the student organisations are the counterparts in educational institutions of the political groups (all such discredited now) but what is most disconcerting is that the University authorities and the Government of the country are fostering, patronising and using their own group in the furtherance of their own vested interests. During the British regime the Hindu-Muslim feud created its own tools which were used for strikes and demonstrations but in recent times at Dacca University classes and residential halls rival groups are settling their scores with daggers, knives and lathies. The graph of strikes and demonstrations, of clashes among groups till the beginning of 1964 moved along non-violent or pardonably violent lines. Since the March Convocation of 1964 it is having a path of arson, assault with deadly weapons, beating up of opponents and stabbings- lawlessness practised by gangsters. In the second volume of the present memoirs I have indicated such events upto 30th June, 1964. When I use the expression 'recent times' I have not only in mind the stabbings, looting, beating up etc. that began on the 15th October, 1968, in the midst of the celebration of the Decade of Reforms in Education, and after a week's run led to the closing down of the University sine die with effect from the 22nd October, but also to some more cases of notorious gangsterism that have occurred since February, 1966. On the 15th February of that year when a special Bench of the Dacca High Court found the Vice-Chancellor and Syndicate of Dacca University guilty of Contempt of Court and delivered judgment (The Supreme Court set it aside on the 14th July) in the proceedings initiated by Dr. A. N. M. Mahmud, Head of Economics Department a group of persons (reportedly students of the National Students Federation) immediately afterwards started rowdyism in the High Court Premises, damaged Dr. Mahmud's car, beat up newsmen and Press photographers; they got a passing bus emptied of passengers, boarded it and drove to Dr. Mahmud's flat in the University Staff Quarters at Nilkhet and assaulted Dr. Mahmud mercilessly as a result of which he was bleeding profusely and removed to Dacca Medical College Hospital. Dr. Mahmud's Room in the new University Arts Buildings was also attacked; its furniture was damaged, glass panes shattered. (Other developments arising out of this assault are for the historians to record.) The University was declared closed till 1st March. When it reopened on the 2nd it had to be closed down again till 17th April. At 2-30 p. m. on

the 2nd March, 1966, the students clashed in S. M. Hall, one was wounded; some property of the Hall including window panes and crockery were broken by students. Two groups of students, one group supporting strike and another opposing it, fought inside S. M. Hall Dining Hall. A second round was fought behind S. M. Hall. The assailants came from the Iqbal Hall direction. Inmates of different rooms of S. M. Hall were attacked late at night on the 1st March and severely beaten, reportedly by the same group who assaulted Dr. Mahmud. About 80% students of S. M. Hall left by the evening of the 2nd. What the fate of the 74 teachers who protested against the assault on Dr. Mahmud or what the latter's own fate has been is for the historian to record. Let us now turn for a while to post-Hall-Union elections disorder and lawlessness at the end of January and beginning of February, 1967. For a week gangsterism had its own way, especially in F. H. Hall and Dacca Hall with the result University classes were suspended for eight days. There were arson, assault and destruction of belongings of students. The incidents began at Dacca Hall and extended to F. H. Hall where arson and assault occurred in broad daylight; students were beaten, doors of their rooms were broken open and books and beddings burnt right in front of Hall officials who failed to stop these. The Provost of F. H. Hall, Mr. Wadudur Rahman, had to resign as a sequel. A photograph of students demonstrating in front of the Vice-Chancellor's house when the Police threw a cordon round the demonstrators was published in the Pak Observer. The Police had to guard the campus for several days. The Pakistan Observer in its issue of the 7th February, 1967, reported that the Dacca University syndicate had expelled for three years Saidur Rahman, a student of F. H. Hall for his complicity in the F. H. Hall disturbances. In the same issue it was reported that Dr. Osman Ghani confirmed on the preceding evening that the University authorities had allotted Rs. 3,000/- for financial help to the students of F. H. and Dacca Hall, who had lost their belongings in the disturbances. The same newspaper in its issue of the 4th February, 1967, reported the release of a Joint Statement by Messrs. A. M. Ukil, leader of the Opposition, Asaduzzaman Khan, leader of the Independent Group and 18 others members of the East Pakistan Legislative Assembly, in the course of which they expressed concern over the unquiet situation prevailing in the Dacca University. Regretting vandalism in

the campus they demanded immediate action against persons responsible. Citing similar incidents of rowdiness in the University for the last two years which culminated in the beating of a senior teacher the Press release held that by closing the University again and again the authorities were trying to divert the attention of the people from the real culprits. The signatories to the statement doubted the intention of the authorities to bring them to book. They maintained that the authority's silence over the activities of the rowdy elements manifested that it was giving indulgence to them.

The October 1968 lawlessness, as reported by the Pakistan Observer for the first time on the 17th October, and then on subsequent days received a fairly full coverage on the 22nd October when the closing down of the University sine die was announced. According to these reports it began on Tuesday, the 15th October, at 10 p. m. in Room No. 116 of Salimullah Muslim Hall when a 'Knifing' incident occurred and in which five persons received 'stabbing' wounds, all of them belonging to National Students Federation. This stabbing incident has now ended in a grim tragedy with the death at 1.15 p. m. on Tuesday, the 22nd October, at Dacca Medical College Hospital of Sayidur Rahman, the most prominent victim of the five injured on the 15th, and one who was expelled for three years in February, 1967, on account of the part he played in the arson and other disturbances that then took place at the Fazlul Huq Hall. Technically being in the midst of his period of expulsion he was not a student but he was the Office Secretary of the NSF. "Tuesday last, October, 15th, three students were beaten up at Sharif's Canteen located within the University Library compound at noon..... On Friday a student of the Arts College who had gone to Sharif's canteen to take tea was assaulted by a group of armed hooligans. His skull and left arm were fractured. On Friday members of the students organisation, National Students Federation, interrupted the proceedings of a seminar on "development of Universities in East Pakistan" being held at the Teacher Student Centre to demand immediate action against those responsible for the S. M. Hall incident and rescindment of Sayidur Rahman's expulsion order The interruption came when the Vice-Chancellor of the Dacca University Dr. M. O. Ghani was delivering his Presidential speech. Two NSF leaders* who spoke from the rostrum off the seminar to "They were

President of NSF, Saifullah Chowdhury and Jamir Ali, General Secretary: In their speeches they, among other things, demanded blood for blood. (Pak Observer, 19.10.68)

voice their demands had also warned the University authorities of grave consequences unless immediate action was taken " Pak Observer, October 22, 1968. The same paper in the same issue in its preceding paragraphs reported "A group of miscreants went on a rampage two days after these incidents. On Friday last a group of such miscreants went from room to room at the Mohsin Hall and allegedly either destroyed or carried away property belonging to the students. Among the alleged stolen goods are books, clothes, watches, transistor radios, record players and some cash. An exodus of students from the Halls began immediately after these incidents. I met some students who had left the Halls with just the set of clothes they were wearing and had not dared to enter the halls to get their belongings."

Let us now turn to what two prominent MNA's said in a statement issued to the Press on Sunday, the 20th October (and published in the Pak Observer on the 21st. They severely condemned the rampage in the Dacca University campus and demanded immediate appointment of a Commission headed by a High Court Judge to inquire into the causes of failure of the Dacca University administration to stop such violence. In course of the statement they said "..... These incidents are in no way isolated events but have now become a regular feature in the University and College life. This has vitiated the whole academic atmosphere and destroyed the fabric of what was left in the name of education in the province." Dr. Aleem Al-Razee and Mr. Mukhlesuzzaman are these two MNA's. This may be contrasted with what the Govt. and the Vice-Chancellor said in their statements published respectively on the 23rd and 24th October. The Government said that law and order in the University must be maintained at all costs and hooligans responsible for vitiating the academic atmosphere would be brought to book. It appealed to the press, public, and guardians and students to help restore normalcy. The Vice Chancellor also made the same appeal to all students, their parents and guardians to help restore normal working in the University. Among other things he said "That the incident resulting in death should at all have occurred within the precincts of the University would, I am sure, be deeply regretted and condemned by all." He observed further "It (the University) has no machinery, no coercive

apparatus by means of which it can enforce law and order in the sense in which these terms are understood in the world outside, should groups of students or outsiders decide to resort to open violence and hooliganism."

In the context of the recurring floods of crimes and criminal acts that are occurring at Dacca University for years now the Government's assurance to maintain law and order there at all costs is classically naive to say the least. the Vice-Chancellor's injured innocence and unarmed, defenceless helplessness in the upheaval over which he has been presiding are reminiscent of conditions that led to the induction of the revolutionary regime in 1958.

But I must needs remind myself that I am writing a "Preface" to my memoirs which deal with educational conditions and my own service to education for a period of forty two years ending on the 30th June, 1964. Over the years I had periodic agony but throughout I had sustained ecstasy from learning and teaching, from adhering to ideals and fostering and promoting ideals, from restraining people under my charge from evil and inspiring them on to truth and beauty and self-realisation. Against sharp reactions, defeat and discomfiture, working in bashes and hutments during the Second World War when all the buildings of Chittagong College had been taken over by the Military or in the midst of dirt and discomfort in the old Arts buildings and structures of Dacca University or when pitted against a boorish General Secretary, a sneakishly wicked Vice-President, insolent office-bearers of the Salimullah Muslim Hall, and above all the then dictator of the National Students Federation, I had reconciliation, solace, happiness from the rich response I received from each generation of students, each team of my colleagues. We all felt we were doing educational work which, however, has now been replaced by the magnificent facade of the palace of Lucifera concealing corrupt but painted things at the back. We are face to face with a CRISIS that must be ended soon with safer and cleaner conditions, with sounder educational principles and practices that have seeds of natural growth and development, with less interested and less political motivation, with men of character and wisdom at all levels.

40, Dinanath Sen Road,
Dacca,
26th October, 1968

Abu Hena

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CHAPTER I

RAJSHAHI COLLEGE, RAJSHAHI

July, 1922, to June, 1926.

How

In two months from the publication of my M. A. Examination results of Calcutta University for 1921, I was offered the post of a Lecturer in English at Rajshahi College where I was to join after the summer vacation of 1922. Although I was not initiated then into the mysteries of Government Educational Services of different categories and status I was aware well enough that my job was at the bottom rung with dreary prospects of a climb higher up. Parenthetically I may state here that I have never been a climber. The ambition of being a Muslim lecturer in a subject other than Arabic and Persian which were the only fields in which they were competent to plough possessed me and I communicated my acceptance to the DPI despite a certain amount of eerie apprehension gnawing at my heart.

I had never been to Rajshahi before; I was a perfect stranger to the place and its people, but my intimate friend and contemporary in the same subject at Presidency College, Calcutta, Mr. Abdul Bari, who, later, built up a lucrative practice as a successful lawyer at Berhampur (Murshidabad) and then drifted into politics only to die a premature death, had a close link with Rajshahi. He was good enough to post me in relevant information about its communication and about some people he knew and whom I could contact on arrival for accommodation and assistance. The most convenient route was from Calcutta to Lalgola Ghat by railway train and thence by a steamer down the Padma to Rajshahi Sudder Ghat. The other route was from Sealdah to Nator by train and thence a twenty eight mile road journey by hackney-carriage or some such vehicle one could procure.

On the 15th July I boarded the evening train at Sealdah for Lalgola Ghat where I got early next morning and feasted my eyes on the panoramic view of nature spread out before me. The 1922 monsoon, eventually

leading to the disastrous North Bengal floods at the end of September that year in which Sir P. C. Roy did a hero's job in organising relief and about which Dr. Bentley, Director of Public Health, Bengal, put the entire blame on Railway embankments without effective systems of drainage, had a record of heavy rainfall. I saw endless sheets of water around framed with green borders and when I boarded the steamer the swollen Padma was in a swirling state; its other bank was beyond ken. The trip down the current to Rajshahi was smooth minus the dangerous whirlpool-ridden curve at Patibona. In a little over two hours we were sailing down and along the northern bank of the Padma close to the high protective embankment to the town of Rajshahi. Parallel to the embankment ran a little red-brick road along which stood south-facing bungalows, mostly of District Officials. The setting and situation made them look pretty. A helpful, co-passenger at my elbow did the commentary. He said "this that you see is of the SP, the next of the Civil Surgeon; this one is the Circuit House, that imposing structure next is of the District Magistrate; here is the Chummary, there the residences of the Executive Engineer and the Jail Superintendent; what follows is the General Post Office". "But what are these, the sagging wall and chasm beyond, the squalid hutments?" I inquired. The reply was "they are abandoned and eroded areas-the first line of defence against the floods having given way. But look, here is the Shah Maqdoom Darga and attached mosque and beyond is the vast College Sporting Field edged by the two-storied Physics Laboratory and the one-storeyed Chemistry Laboratory. Next comes the **Burra Kuthi**", - an old manorial castle as it were, built right out of the river. At the moment of writing forty two years later, **Burra Kuthi**, I am told, is the residence of the Vice-Chancellor of Rajshahi University. For several years now he is our friend, Momtazuddin **Ahmed**, a career educationist of Pakistan. I was humming to myself "Oh! dream of joy is this indeed The light-house top I see?" Is this the hill? Is this the kirk? Is this mine own countree?" To resume, we were soon at the Steamer Ghat. When I landed the enchantment faded; I found myself in the Station Yard, a muddy, congested area, packed with miscellaneous crowd and an assemblage of transport vehicles which were of two sharply contrasted categories: (1) a small number of **hackney** carriages, four-wheeled drawn by two horses as in other parts of Bengal in those days (2) an overwhelming number of two-wheeled,

iron-tired, vehicles drawn by one pony between two shafts. A flat wood board propped up on the axle with a dirty rag spread on it provided four passenger seats, two in front and two in the rear sitting back-to-back the local name being "Tum Tum". It is, however, something which corresponds to Bihari Ekka with this difference that it has no roof over it and so no posts for a roof. It requires considerable acrobatic skill to maintain your "seat-hold" on it against fractured skull and bone. My stuff which consisted of a steel-trunk of clothing, one bed-roll, one coloured-canvas bag of books and another gunny bag of cooking utensils had been zealously and quickly carried by a porter to one of these strange vehicles which I had never seen before, and dumped there. I felt scandalized and had my luggage transferred to a hackney carriage. This revolting sense didn't persist long and my initial violent reaction resolved itself soon enough in reconciliation. I proceeded straight to the College Campus where I found shelter in the room of the Superintendent of the Mahammedan Hostel-the word 'Mahammedan' was still in use. I had a day's margin at my disposal. Rajshahi College reopened after the long summer vacation on the following day, 17th July, when I entered upon my career as a College teacher in Government Education Service in Which I had an uninterrupted run of 31 years and three months.

Barring the commodious Chemistry Laboratory situated in the middle-east border of the campus and the Physics Laboratory some distance away to the south the College functioned in a small area in two or three structures of which the main building, two-storied, right in front of the main gate, although small, was architecturally attractive and constituted the centre of all administrative and academic activity. The administration occupied two of the best rooms in the first floor; the Principal's was decently furnished; the Head Clerk's (I am using this word deliberately) was cluttered up like a godown with files and ledgers. Teaching work was done in three rooms upstairs and in two downstairs. The Library which was fairly rich had a gasping life in two rooms only. Just to the south of the main building was a swimming-pool; its embankments on three sides were designed for gardens but there was a wilderness instead. Beyond the swimming-pool there were two structures in half of which the Mahammedan Hostel functioned; in the other half small classes were held. The campus proper had stragglers of buildings and population; the main building was skirted on the east by the Collegiate School and on

the west by the Madrassah building, another architecturally nice erection, and on the south-west farther away by the massive Fuller Hostel Building where lived the Muslim students of the Collegiate School. In between the latter and the Physics Building, east and west, and between the Mahomedan Hostel and River front, north and south, lay stretched the vast open space where athletics and sports were held and where many of the members of the teaching staff had their evening walks and discussions during seasons unsuitable for jaunts on the Padma Embankment. Those were days of morning and evening walks so uncommon today. But I am speaking of the unplanned and erratic growth of structures all about. Beyond the north-west corner of the Madrassah Building was situated the Rani Hemanta Kumar Hostel for Hindu students and beyond it and across the Nator Road the commodious Common Room of the College Students; it was used as an Assembly Hall as well. And just across the road in front of the main gate of the College stood Raja P.N. Roy Hostel for the Hindu students. I consider these particulars relevant to the understanding of the history of the place in the coming years. To the west of the Madrassah Building and demarcated only by a drainage Nullah a whole locality covering several acres of land inhabited by poor Muslims was recently acquired by the Government for the expansion of residential accommodation of the students of Rajshahi College and when I arrived I found the place bustling with construction activity. Six two-storied buildings of which 5 were in symmetrical order and constituted one single unit with a spacious field in the middle, and one an isolated straggler with an inartistic compound were going up rapidly. All were practically fit for occupation in July, 1923. Each was designed for 50 students; five of them were earmarked for the Hindu students and the remaining straggling one for the Muslims. The residential quarters of the Superintendent of the five were tucked away in a convenient corner; those for the Muslim Superintendent were planted in the middle of the yard in front and exposed to the view of the first floor occupants.

The vast sprawling area of Rajshahi district comprising Naogaon and Natore Sub-Divisions was famous for its many Hindu Zamindars, Houses of Rajahs and the Maharaja of Nator and also equally famous for its poverty-stricken, downtrodden illiterate Muslims who constituted not less than 80% of the population. When Rajshahi College had

its beginning in the 1870'S, there were endowments for the College from the Houses of Dighapatia and Putia as witnessed in the existence of the Rani Hemanta Kumari and Raja P. N. Roy Hostels and also in that of the Students' Common Room Building all of which have been referred to above. But these marked off the boundary of their gifts. The spring behind them welled up specifically and dried up soon afterwards. The Government of Bengal had the entire financial responsibility all through and all money for the running of the institution and for its development and expansion came from the Public Exchequer. And yet the legend of the incalculable gift and endowment of the houses of the landlords of the district passed from mouth to mouth when I joined. It was sedulously fostered and propagated to the extent that the six hostel buildings under construction and the one big Arts Building soon to be erected were also their gifts. It was no wonder then that the Dighapatia family representatives were having the dominant voice in the Governing Body of the College, which with the consent of the British Government was the defacto ruling body till the resurgence of the Muslim community was discernible in the horizon. This Governing Body had a grouse that I was appointed directly by the Government. Till recently even Bengal Education Service posts, not to speak of those of Lecturers, appointments were made on the recommendation of the same body which supported many appointments without advertisements of people not possessing minimum requirements.

Rajshahi College was the closest preserve of our big brothers. 37 members of the teaching staff out of 40/41 were from among them. The residue of three belonged to the combined department of Arabic and Persian. Its roll strength was 950 or more when I joined. But of these 125 or so were Muslim students. Although at least 100 of them were frantically anxious for hostel accommodation, only one two-storied building out of six having accommodation for 50 was earmarked for them. This bit of information will be a key to the solution of the problem that emerged in 1937 when there was an outburst; some of the Muslim students sought shelter (or shall I say became squatters?) in the adjacent hostel building which was originally meant for the Hindu students but which was totally vacant for want of such students; this was treated as an invasion on the proprietary rights of others; the intruders were thrown out by force; they went on hunger-strike; an ugly situation developed

and the first Provincial Autonomy Government of Bengal under the Chief Ministership of Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq intervened effectively to stop the highhandedness. Let it be borne in mind that this happened at a time when the number of Muslim students seeking residential accommodation was ever on the increase whereas those of the sister community on the wane to the extent that at least two two-storied buildings out of their five were empty but still kept under lock and key. But as already hinted this is an anticipation of events that occurred fifteen years later.

Reverting to my own subject I recall memories of the administration and the teaching staff of the College. Roy Bahadur Kumudini Kanta Banerjee was continuing as the Principal of the College for several years. He was then on his third extension after superannuation. When I met him I found him a man of small stature in depleted strength. He had one artificial eye which followed an injury he had received long ago in the Physics Laboratory of the College as Professor of the subject. He spoke quietly, briefly in English and he was smoking all the while a cheap brand of cigarettes known as "Howagharri". Living as he did in his own two-storied house, off the Students' Common Room and just in front of the gate of the six new hostels referred to above, he had no fixed hours of attendance in the Principal's room. He would attend at odd and uncertain hours and very often he would walk into the Head Clerk's office, sit down there and go on signing papers that required his signature. The present beautiful, two-storied bungalow of the Principal at the far end of the playing field and having the Padma in its front didn't exist then. It was constructed after 1926 and before the month of May, 1930, when I returned to Rajshahi College as Professor for my second tenure. But Kumudini Babu could always be seen sitting on a bench, morning and afternoon, on the Verandah of his house and receiving visitors for brief talks. He owned several other houses in the town and the story went round that he was one of the zaminders of the place. He ran the College unobtrusively and without the least interference with the teaching staff or the student community. His was the quintessence of laissez faire. When teachers had a grievance he said he would look into it. When students brought up a complaint he gave the same undertaking. But there the matter rested until the parties would tire and pursue it no more. No wonder, then, that the prevailing atmosphere was one of neglect and drift, lack of officialism and lack of discipline too. He

concentrated his thoughts and efforts on the expansion of the College in buildings as well as in academic studies. He was dreaming dreams of raising Rajshahi College to Post-Graduate level and shortly before his death a year and a half later his last delirious words were "Dwarik, bring me the Post-Graduate files". Dwarik Babu, the ancient Head Clerk of the College, the de facto ruler of the period, enjoyed his confidence. Mr. Bijoy Gopal Mukherjee was then the Vice-Principal of the College. He was the Head of the Department of English. In the Post-Graduate Classes of Calcutta University he was one of my teachers. At that time the Vice-Principal didn't have a room of his own. His administrative duties were apparently nil. He would sit along with others in the Staff Room. He was quiet to the utmost degree, and a perennial smile hung upon his lips. He looked a father, every inch of him. Later he became the Principal of Krishnagar College. A number of senior colleagues, past middle age, mostly Heads of Departments, filled the stage of the Staff Room. All the U. K. published serious journals were placed on the round, costly mahogany table, for one week immediately on their receipt and then they were transferred to the College Library. The senior Professors would read them intently in silence. Professors Santosh Kumar Chatterjee and Rampada Majumdar of History and English respectively were always grave; Roycharan Biswas and Upendra Roy of Mathematics were sweet and sober. I felt a certain amount of awe in their presence. But soon enough the scene changed: others of different temperament came in; turbulence, shouts replaced the earlier stolidity. The Chief protagonists of the dramatic alteration were some of the following. Professor Abdul Hakim of Arabic and Persian, Professor Jyotish Chatterjee of History, Professor Kanshiknath Bhattacharyya of Economics. Each of these was unique in his own way. Hakim Saheb had been on the staff since 1915. He had burst upon the scene that year like a meteor, with his radiant youth, his outstanding skill as a football, hockey and tennis player. But by 1922 when I arrived his glamour had considerably faded on account of his many eccentricities, his laziness, his unpunctuality in meeting his classes, his unauthorised absence from duties. Jyotish Babu was an intellectual irritant who would give a jolt to conventional and complacent conceptions, and Kanshik Babu with his huge body, unshaven cheeks and unclean outfit would cast to the winds all social decencies. Soon Professors would get embroiled in many controversial issues of the day and shout and roar heedless of the

existence of others in the surroundings. The teachers of the Physics and Chemistry departments would keep to their own places in their respective Labs. But the Head of the department of Physics, Babu Bamacharan Bhattacharyya, had the unacademic reputation of being one who would spend money lavishly over the choicest foodstuffs (pinching a lot from his clothing which was always meagre) and care most for resting his body. Every morning he would go to Saheb Bazar (the most famous marketing centre of Rajshahi) Personally and buy the best Padma 'Rahu' fish, the most luscious mango and after having satisfied his gourmet tastes would proceed to his departmental room where he had a pillow of his own and which came very handy to him the moment he would feel sleepy. This last fascinating feature of his character induced me to pay a cautious visit once and I had the rare, good luck of having a glimpse of his restful body lying full stretch on his big table. It would be silly of me to link physics with a carefree mind and relaxed body but 28 years later at M. C. College, Sylhet, my Vice-Principal, Babu Debendralal Das, who was Head of the Department of Physics as well, was found to have his own 'hookah' at which he would leisurely puff on his arrival at the College-his hours of work being always in the afternoon. Another impressive figure on the staff was Babu Haridas Mukherjee, Senior Professor of Chemistry. Of stout body but short stature, having a bald pate and round face Haridas Babu was dynamic in energy, assertive in his ways and patronizing in his attitude towards younger teachers. Later, in the thirties and during a period of political unrest and his Superintendentship of the new Hindu Hostels, a canard was sent round by interested people that he had trampled under foot a student picketer at the Hostel gate. The same evening when he was returning to his quarters from the Staff Club after a game of cards, his bald pate came in for a clubbing with hockey sticks. He sought a transfer to Presidency College, Calcutta, where he died an early death and in harness.

Rajshahi town like other river bank towns lay extended west to east having a length of four miles from the District Courts to Tikiapara; its breadth was negligibly disproportionate. Its main thoroughfare was the Nator Road from which branched out numero us winding lanes into the Central Marketing Place already alluded to and into its many Mahallas such as Hetamkhan, Masterpara, Ghoramara, Sagarpara etc. They had open stinking drains on both sides; they were unspeakably dusty in

summer and equally muddy in the monsoon months. The town's pride of transport was furnished by an endless fleet of disreputable ekkas. the idea of public buses and motor vehicles was still unthought of. Rajshahi Municipality then had no water or electric supply. The climate of the place has been alternately fiercely hot and rigorously cold; it was then the land of typhoid and dysentery. Rajshahi had nothing to boast of other than its College Campus, the Central Jail and the River front. But food supply was plenty and cheap although our Colleagues from Dacca would not agree. Milk, pure ghee, clean palm and date 'gurh', mangoes and oranges (according to the season), vegetables, fish and fowl were available in abundance and at attractively low prices. What pity the food supply position now in 1964 has undergone a radical change for the atrocious worst. Neither pure ghee nor good rice, neither delicious curd nor appetising 'Sandesh' nor any of the other varieties just enumerated is within reach of the bulk of the people on account of the current prohibitive prices.

The word "people" reminds me of the native inhabitants of Rajshahi town as well as of those of the interior I got to know in course of the twelve years I spent there in three stages. Domestic servants, men and women, the grocer, the baker, the auntie supplying curd and ghee, the tailor, most of the vendors of Saheb Bazar, the midwife, the Ekkawallah were all a lovable class; they are even now an endearing memory. They were all found to be simple, god fearing, open and frank, trust worthy. It may be argued that their primitive existence in poverty and illiteracy made them so. But are there not millions of hungry, ill-clad, ignorant people all over the sub-continent even to-day? Such people of the neighbouring districts of Malda, Murshidabad, Pabna, for instance, told a different story. In all the localities of the town excepting in one (which had notoriety) people could sleep with unshut and unlocked doors at night.

Their employers and patrons, their masters and destiny -makers (of course I am not thinking of the Government officials) were the Zaminders, the lawyers, the money-lenders, the doctors, the big business men. These were the rulers in the town. By and large they were aggressively assertive; they would interfere in all public affairs, particularly in the affairs of Rajshahi College. In outlook they were obsessed by politics

of the Congress; in conduct by Hindu casteism and orthodoxy. Their attitude to the Muslims was one of contempt or hostility. They wouldn't find being benevolent to the latter just so long as they would find them what they actually were, slaves. But all signs of vitality and self-respect from them would be crushed with serried ruthlessness the usual prescription and practice being those of beating and plucking the beard. It is a matter of shame that the turbulent Hindu students would lend themselves to be instruments of such flagellation or sacrilege on the human person. This is not a fabrication; the incident of the pulling out of the beard of Tufani, an Ekka driver achieved contemporary notoriety. The inarticulate Muslim masses nursed silent but sullen resentment over it. "Boycott the law courts, the educational institutions and Government services" mandate of 1920-21 was not visible anywhere in Rajshahi in 1922 but the "non-violently" violent mentality swayed not only the lawyers but also the students. There was an undercurrent of disillusionment among the Congress-khelafat Muslims whose thoughts leaned towards having a better and more self-respecting existence. Haji Lal Mohammad Mia, a self-made man of some substance among the local Muslims didn't have any Western education. Naturally he was free from the hypocritically patriotic pretensions of that class. He became a congressite and led his followers who were all poor along the Congress track. But soon enough he turned away and represented the change dimly perceptible in the outlook of his co-religionists for a better future. The professed and officially recognised leader of Rajshahi at that time, however, was Khan Bahadur Emaduddin Ahmed, B. L., who held the field without any rival. He was a successful lawyer but he toed the official line. He championed compromise in all matters of Hindu-Muslim disputes and controversies. His counterpart in the sister community was Roy Bahadur Surendranath Bhaya, Public Prosecutor, for years together He was far more shrewd and never went against the desires, expressed or unexpressed of his own community. The most seasoned, sober, reputed lawyer of extensive civil practice was Babu Sudarshan Chakravarty. A younger compatriot was Mr. Deven Das given to shouting and table-thumping. Of a different calibre altogether was Akshay Kumar Moitra, author of the famous book "Sirajoddowla". An intellectual who had raised himself to an aristocratic level he was not only an author but also a successful lawyer and virtually the founder

of Rajshahi Varendra Research Society which is an undying memorial to him and which continues to be a famous Museum and Research Centre in East Pakistan. Although I was the youngest teacher on the staff of Rajshahi College, fresh from my University I sought an opportunity to call at his residence one day to have a glimpse of that great man. The interview was brief, that of a pigmy with a giant. Of dark complexion, having strong brown and bone and whiskers (my memory may let me down here) he had a statuesque image of stolidity and pertinacity which I shall never forget. Later during my second tenure at Rajshahi I became a neighbour and close friend of his illustrious younger brother, Aswini Kumar Maitra. These lines have a topical bearing; less than a week ago (to-day is 13th July, 1964) I saw an obituary in the Pakistan Observer about the death of the widow of the late Mr. Azizul Huq, I. P. the elder brother of Mr. Hamidul Huq Chowdhury, Advocate of Dacca and a former Minister of East Pakistan as well as of the Central Government of Pakistan. It was during the academic session 1922-1923 that Mr. Azizul Huq, then Addl. Superintendent of Police, Rajshahi, was suspended on allegations of false entries in his T. A. Bills and had to face a Judicial Enquiry before which he was defended by Mr. Akshay Kumar Moitra whose cross-examination of the then District Magistrate of Rajshahi, (Sir Robert died at the age of 81 on 24th October, 1964.), Mr. R. N. Reid (later Sir Robert Neil Reid and Governor of Assam and of Bengal too for a short time, felled this important Prosecution Witness to the ground, and led to the honourable acquittal and re-instatement of Mr. Azizul Huq whom I had occasion to meet personally along with a D. S. P. friend of mine before this deplorable episode. Mr. Azizul Huq appeared to me to be stiff, slightly stuck-up and strict. He was the victim of malice prepense of European I. P. Probationers at the nearby Sarda Police Training College. Mr. Reid went on leave immediately. But speaking of the prominent people of Rajshahi then how can I omit the name of the grand old man, S. J. Kishorimohan Choudhury who with his simplicity and naivete, his over-flowing humanity was a universal President in all functions. I am, however, straying unpardonably from my proper path. What I desire to stress in these paragraphs is the position of the poor Muslims of Rajshahi and their leaders vis-a-vis the financially strong, politically dominant, intellectually gifted Hindus of the place in the twenties of the century.

During the academic session, 1922-23, I had, naturally enough, an inconspicuous place but the remote-control-methodless-method of the administrative system of Roy Bahadur Kumudini Kanta Banerjee, compelled me to find out a place for running a 'Muslim Students' attached Mess. He was aware even then of the need of provision for the accommodation of the Muslim students of the College. Being a bachelor I couldn't say 'no' to his request. Off the Rajshahi Central Jail a two-storied residential building with an outhouse and a compound within and without, of the Dighapatia Estate was rented where I occupied one room as Superintendent, and 17 to 20 students the other rooms. For my work in the college at the initial stage of a teacher's career I had to burn midnight oil; for keeping these 20 students in a state of cleanliness, order and nutrition I had to use all my spare time and ingenuity. Luckily I had a cook to look after my creature comforts. I was on probation in the hard school of reality. My charge was a miscellaneous lot—a district-wise treatment and a treatment based on Intermediate or Degree class in the College were called for. The Malda group both at residence as well as in the classes was generally boorish. It had special food habits. The other groups had a sneering look at the Malda group and had divergent appeties. Having had a certain amount of precocity and conceit about my own competence I handled them firmly without yielding to bad manners and morals. But the students under my charge always had my sympathy and affection, keen solicitude for their welfare in all their problems.

An attached Mess to a Government establishment had a sessionlong financial sanction from July to 31st March. On this last date we had to wind up. For those days of April, 1923 when the College was still open before the long summer vacation of about 2 months and a half I sought shelter again in the Superintendent of the College Hostel's Room. The accommodation in the College Mahomedan Hostel was 25 maximum. When the Summer Recess was about to begin; I just met the Principal to say good-bye. Casually and in a remote fashion he asked me "Are you a candidate for the post of the Superintendent of the new Muslim Hostel?" From personal experience I learnt that this job was thankless and therefore with many apologies I stated I was not. As was his custom he didn't pursue. I imagined the question had received its disposal. Besides it was taken for granted in relevant circle that this appointment

would go by legitimate inheritance to the present Superintendent of the College Hostel, who was looking forward to the same and to the possession of the residential quarters in the heart of the college premises, soon to be constructed.

That Superintendent was Maulavi Haider Ali, Second Teacher (lecturer), in the Department of Arabic & Persian the first being Professor Abdul Hakim who has been glanced at earlier in these notes. A pattern that was fast being stabilised in Government Colleges excepting in Presidency College, Calcutta and Sibpur Engineering College, and excepting in certain subjects elsewhere was that a department was to have one Professor and two Lecturers. This pattern was carefully woven into the Staff texture of Islamic College, Calcutta, when it was started in July, 1926. Of the few Muslims who were prominent in Rajshahi then Maulavi Haider Ali was one. He was tall in stature, strong in body, middle-aged, had a flowing beard and a proportionately flowing Achkan for his wear. In the corporate activities of this big institution he seldom if ever, played any part. In his classes he did conscientious work. His forte was strict adherence to religious practices, ceremonies, dogmas and rituals. He hailed from Malda district but had settled down in Rajshahi. He was a relative of Khan Bahadur Emaduddin Ahmed who, too, was a Malda man grafted permanently on the soil of Rajshahi. What the Khan Bahadur was in politics and public activities, Haider Ali Saheb was in religion and orthodox practices.

At the commencement of the academic session 1923-24 Principal Banerjee asked me once again if I was a candidate for the New Hostel Superintendentship. He didn't appear to have remembered his earlier inquiry and again kept silent over my unwillingness. During the next two or three days many Muslim students eager to have accommodation in the new place saw me about admission although I protested against having anything to do with it; then followed one or two with written applications for seats. Being upset I saw the principal who laconically said: "You are the Superintendent with effect from today" and reminded me that he had the right of requisitioning my services, I continuing as a bachelor. Since there was no escape, I inspected the place; only the two-storied building stood there but the adjuncts, namely, the kitchen the dining-room, the latrines, the bathing-place were just not there. The

question of furniture didn't arise. Each inmate was to provide for himself. I was to improvise cooking and feeding arrangements; bathing was not a problem at all; the College swimming pool was there, quite close and the river was not far off for a dip. The range of latrines at the far end of the College campus East intended for day scholars could be used by all concerned (including myself) as a temporary measure pending the construction of the required structures. I had no alternative other than the acceptance of the challenge. There were huts of poor people just behind the boundary of my Hostel and when I approached the owners, three huts in one unit having a courtyard were available on rent for immediate use—the requirements of the Muslim students eliciting their ready sympathy. These were cleaned up; one structure was converted into a Kitchen, the other two into eating places. "Deghchies" and utensils, plates and cups etc. mats to squat upon and to eat were immediately bought from Saheb Bazar. Youth and energy offered quick response and prompt service. I occupied one room at one corner on the first floor and my cooking was done in the Coolie shed below of the building contractor's men. College New Muslim Hostel burst into life and activity in these strange, provincial conditions and 45/46 students on the rolls later increased to 52, filled its utmost capacity. But for me to walk a quarter mile, 'lota' in hand, for the use of a latrine proved too much and we had to improvise the placement of a commode in a fenced off portion under the staircase. But this invited trouble from the resident students. In three months or so, however, the adjuncts were completed by the PWD authorities and in another three months the residential family quarters of the Superintendent. The pioneering work of this new little colony brought forth the best in us and bore fruitful results in the coming years. By January, 1924, I suppose, I shifted to my quarters where I set apart one room as my office in which I maintained all accounts and books according to the relevant Hostel rules in the Bengal Education Code. No Assistant Superintendent, no clerk, was permissible under these rules for a collection of 50 students. My friend, Banikanta Banerjee, being in charge of 250 Hindu students in the other five blocks, had better assistance and emoluments. These rules conceded to me Rs. 30/- as Superintendent's allowance but we were assured that this sum would count towards pension on retirement. What a rich and alluring prospect!

During this session two Muslim students from Darjeeling got themselves admitted into the first year Intermediate Classes one of whom had residential accommodation in Maulavi Haider Ali's hostel (which continued to function), the other in mine. The former was an Anglicised youngster; the latter whose name was Hassib was an image of sweetness and simplicity. I gathered from him accounts of that queen of hill stations exercising her fascination over visitors from all over the world. He reinforced the visionary gleam I had already had from my eldest brother. The desire of a visit at the beginning of the ensuing summer holiday took a firm root in my mind.

Meanwhile political events in the province were not moving through expected grooves—the hopes and aspirations being that of "SWARAJ inside of one year" (from Mr. Gandhi's speech in the Special Calcutta Congress of 1920 to which I listened by personal attendance). The non-cooperation campaign in Calcutta wore a many-coloured splendour with Mr. C. R. Das's cessation of practice at the Calcutta Bar. This campaign sought to paralyse British Government which, however, through the machinery of DYARCHY inaugurated by the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms transferred power to the Indians in nation-building activities. I have already spoken of a dim-described shift in the Muslim attitude towards negation. This became a Writing on the Wall when Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq accepted and assumed the portfolio of Education in 1924. This historical defiance on his part received far greater confrontation from C. R. Das than Soekarno's confrontation to Tengku Abdur Rahman now in 1964. In the Legislative Council Mr. Huq was thrown out with the help of the majority of Muslim members. But when the British Raj made attempts to keep him on through questionable constitutional tactics C. R. Das, the eminent lawyer, had a Writ of Mandamus issued by the Calcutta High Court and crushed the whole thing. I learnt the meaning and significance of this Writ for the first time in my life although in the complexities of present-day life, their issuance is galore to-day. On account of his involvement in other complications in personal and public affairs Mr. Huq was forced into the wilderness for several years to come.

At the beginning of the summer vacation, it was, I suppose, 18th April, 1924, I went up to Darjeeling via Natore and Siliguri. From Siliguri the

only public transport then available was the toy train of Darjeeling Himalayan Railway treated at that time as a marvel of engineering skill. A journey from Calcutta to Siliguri by Darjeeling Mail, however, was the shortest, speediest and most comfortable for visitors from the difference parts of India as well as from foreign lands. The position after the partition has changed radically. On account of travel restrictions between India and Pakistan, very few Pakistanis plan their holidays up at Darjeeling and as far as Indians are concerned, they have to move by a circuitous, neverending railway line past Bolpur, Rampurhat to Sakrigali Ghat (this route has now been replaced by a shorter route near Farraka dam), then to cross the Ganges over to Manihari Ghat by a ferry boat and then again to travel by another slow moving train to Siliguri—unless one has means enough to fly from Calcutta to Bagdogora. For me during my first visit the Siliguri Railway Refreshment Room was an unforgettable experience at breakfast time. The "pride of hall and bower" had gathered together after a wash and change for the coming cool conditions, for a substantial feed before lunch. The spirit of joy and vivacity on the eve of an adventure was seen on the face of men, women and children who addressed themselves quickly and dexterously to the meal before them. Soon enough I was in one out of several fragments into which the corresponding hill section train had been broken—each split section creeping up like a serpent. You can see the one that is ahead and the one that is behind. By the time we got to Tindharia we were in maze of hills all round, one rising above the other in green-clad tea plantation tiers— the broad cart road skirting and winding in and out all through. Kaleidoscopic pictures swam into ken; my head became giddy; my eyes weary with endless views and vistas in the skyscape above and landscape below. Next moment, however, the giddiness was expelled by sheer force of will and the eyes went on feasting again. When we had been approaching Kurseong, midway up, the first cool hill breeze penetrated into the body; as we went further up we had to put on warm clothing. It was not long, however, before I had a dreadful experience; we were caught in a blinding thundershower of hail and lightning and downpour sweeping through the windowless, small bare cages of the compartment. A shiver ran down my spine causing anxiety about further experiences to follow. The pleasure of climbing to the height of Ghoom and that of descending therefrom by a thousand feet to the railway station of Darjeeling was cancelled by the bleak weather

conditions that prevailed. On alighting from the train sometime past fourteen hours I walked straight to Anjuman Musafir Khana being helped by my porter. There I sought shelter for the remaining part of the day and the night following. Conditions in this charitable institution, food bought for price, bed and floor, bath and lavatory, all repelled me to the utmost and early next morning I walked down to the Lowis Jubilee Sanatorium, a fall of another five hundred feet from the Darjeeling Railway Station. The headlong descent notwithstanding, I found the Sanatorium about which I had heard so much from my eldest brother an excellent settlement of several buildings with gardens laid out all over. A far more pleasant discovery followed when I met the Physician-Superintendent of the place, Dr. S. K. Pal. His dignified bearing and suave manners were themselves a sort of healing ministrations. His administration was efficient and the team under him worked with clock-like regularity. Some Rajshahi people were also found on his staff and this was an additional advantage to me. The change from the mean and squalid set-up of the Anjuman to clean, attractive, beautiful site and surroundings of the L. J. Sanatorium had a compelling charm about it and I booked instantaneously a second class room for a week on 'advance' payment. I had my morning tea as well after which I went back to the Anjuman to bring down with the least possible delay my luggage. But my week-long sojourn there was spoiled by an attack of malarial fever which confined me to bed for four days at the end of which I was too weak to move up and down and enjoy sight-seeing and other pleasures that Darjeeling offers. The rickshaw ride there was a costly proposition then but I didn't mind the expenses and for a couple of days I utilized it in going round including a visit to Mr. Fazlul Huq's house (when I heard that he was holidaying at Darjeeling) where I met many an officer of the Education Department conferring with Mr. Huq how to circumvent the rejection of the Education budget in the Legislative Council. I paid a visit to Hassib's Confectionery at Lloyds Road below the Mall. Hassib, my pupil at Rajshahi Collage, who had provided the immediate stimulus of this trip, loaded me with gifts of cake, jam, jelly and biscuits on the eve of my hurried departure which was in response to peremptory orders from home. Although the occasion was marred by illness and cut short abruptly, its undying memory lingered and I paid two more visits before 1944. To these I propose to refer in due course.

I returned home via Rajshahi and spent a happy week in the company of my father, brothers and sisters after which I proceeded to Khandagosh, a considerable village, in the interior of Burdwan district, across the Damodar river and on the border of Bankura. One had to perform a nightlong bullock-cart journey over the desert-like sands and then the marshes of the Damodar terrain in summer before one could get to a road system leading to Khandagosh. These carts used to move in a caravan and throughout the night I heard the shouts of cartmen urging and mostly whipping the draught animals to pull through sandpits and bogs of the region. By 10 or 11 in the forenoon of next day I reached my destination in a dishevelled and famished state. But at journey's end when my wife received me with the ardour of her youthful simplicity the strain vanished in a jiffy. Earlier my marriage had taken place in the first week of March and before we got to know each other we had to separate immediately after the ceremony. My father-in-law was posted then at Kandagosh; he was a Sub-Registrar. My wife's people belonged to Dacca district but the two families had been knit together by friendship for years and my father-in-law had long been stationed in the Birbhum-Murshidabad-Burdwan Zone. When the partition of Bengal took place and I became a Pakistani I was exultant that my father had a prophetic soul, in getting me married into a Dacca family so that my better half was cent percent Pakistani and that I was the son-in-law of East Pakistan since 1924. But wife's people as everyone knows are an ungrateful lot and here at Dacca in 1964 my wife's numerous relations, fairly well-to-do and go-ahead would seldom accord to me the same warmth as they would do to others to the manner born. To revert to Khandagosh: it had only one historic association; it was the home and birth place of late Sir Rashbehari Ghosh and his younger brother (through another mother) Mr. Justice B. B. Ghosh. The house we occupied was adjacent to theirs having a fairly large compound of assorted structures, and having a private feminine sector and an outer, public sector for men. I would drop in into the latter on occasions and breathe in an atmosphere of typically ancient Hindu orthodoxy and traditions. Things there as well as in the village were primitive and somnolent. My solitary afternoon wanderings over rice-fields, north and south, couldn't sustain a long continuance there; I returned home after a brief stay.

At the end of the long recess I returned to Rajshahi along with my wife, and mother-in-law whose help and services were badly needed, my wife

being much too young and completely untrained in "home economics". The academic session, 1924-25, had some importance for me personally but far greater for the College as will be clear anon. As a member of the teaching staff I was learning and I thought, growing too. The initial impressions of 'profound erudition' and unquestioned popularity of many older colleagues started wearing thinner and thinner. Soon I was one of a younger group of alert men, clearheaded, self-respecting, critical of cringing, cant and humbug. I took my share and pulled my weight in extra-curricular activities of the students. In my hostel as well as in the Hindu hostels under my friend, Banikanta, the disposal of slops from the Kitchens, bathing places, utensil-scouring platforms, fluid excreta from urinals, excessive water flowing from taps constituted a formidable problem. The immense hostel area had been, built up without any system of drainage, surface or underground. The PWD Engineers thought that they had done marvel of a job by attaching a small cesspool to each kitchen and to each urinal and that the Municipality would cart away the contents of these cesspools as well as those of the latrines. We had to compel the conservancy branch of the Municipality to pay as much attention as they possibly could to the removal of filth and with the Principal's help we succeeded in having some conservancy carts and part-time sweepers of our own. The Principal moved Mr. E. F. Oaten, the then DPI, Bengal, (Let it be noted here that he was the same man who was "Oatenized" at Presidency College, Calcutta. When he was Professor of History there, in the teens of the century by Subhas Chandra Bose and his friends) who came up on an inspection and being satisfied provided temporary relief to an otherwise permanent defect in planning and construction. I had a Vigilance Committee constituted with Mess Managers and Mess Committee members and went round personally every morning and afternoon to see to conditions being kept clean. I carried with me a deep personal disgust towards Hostel Superintendents who would avidly swallow their extra remuneration and attached privileges of residence and establishment personnel but funk their duties of supervision altogether. In fact I took upon such shirking as "Be-Imani", Infidelity to one's professed faith. I carried this wound in my mind from my days in the Calcutta University Law College Mess at No. 2, Mirzapur street, just to the south of College Square which was a fairly well-known Post-graduate Mess in our times. Here lived on the top floor in airy rooms a

venerable looking Maulana-Superintendent who was spotlessly clean in his own dress, habits and ways but who never made the slightest exertion in supervising the kitchen, the dining room and the latrines of the inmates. The dining room was always filthy; the latrines had leaking overhead tanks from which to flush. For the best part of two years I had to use my umbrella within the latrine. But did the Authority listen to our grievances? In all administrative positions from those days till recently at Dacca University, the same zeal for keeping washing places and drains in a sanitary condition has burnt undimmed within me. Not only I saw to the maintenance of cleanliness in the kitchen, the dining hall etc. but through sleepless devotion and efforts I succeeded in persuading resident students to keep their books and belongings in their own rooms in tidy shape. Speaking of the importance of this session in the annuals of Rajshahi College, I may state outright that Roy Bahadur K. Banerjee, Principal for several years and its builder met his death. He had been in failing health over the months and when he was worsening Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, who after independence proved to be the most capable Chief Minister of West Bengal, was called in from Calcutta. After a day's close observation he gave his decision for the removal of the patient to the city for proper treatment. When a bus was drawn up in front of Roy Bahadur's house for his road journey to Nator enroute to Calcutta we the teachers and students of the College, gathered round the vehicle to have a look which alas! turned out to be our last look and the beginning of his last journey to eternal rest. I forget the month but, it was, I think, on the eve of the Puja Vacation of 1924. The inarticulate sorrow and the solemn gloom of the leave-taking is indelibly printed in my heart. Soon after his arrival in Calcutta he breathed his last after a spell of delirium in course of which he was reported to have called for his Post-Graduate files to which I have alluded before. His funeral took place in Calcutta. Incidentally it may be stated that his family had to pay a thousand rupees as Dr. Roy's fees. In the administration and running of the College, Kumudini Babu's death was followed by disastrous effects for a number of years to come. Some of these which concerned me as well till the 30th June, 1926, will be noticed in due course. In January, 1925, I had a spell of illness, which was followed not by a rally to normal strength but a chronic state of slight temperature and impaired digestion. Having been advised rest and change I went on two months'

leave (February and March, the first and last of such length during the entire period of my Government service) the major part of which I spent in Simultala, a popular health resort in Bihar within easy reach of my own native place in Birbhum, West Bengal. I stowed away the thermometer to stop temperature-recording and since I had a competent cook with me, I would wander and roam about the vast open spaces all around in the company of my wife and one of my nieces. Here was a rocky undulating terrain of bare hillocks or piles of stones rising steep and erect and of several ridges on which stood picturesque bungalows among which that of Sir Surendra Banerjee commanded panoramic views and the group that was Sir R. N. Mukerjee's although slightly ensconced, had architectural grandeur with a splendored wealth of red roses in the gardens laid out. The proverbially famous wells, known as those of Bhutnath Babu were close by; the drinking water these provided had legendary virtues of digestion. We used the same, and every two or three days I would go to the Railway Station of Sumultala where stood a Weighing Machine to take my weight from. Not an ounce of flesh was added to my lean, spare constitution in course of a six week sojourn. But the climate was undoubtedly bracing and my morbidity and hypochondriasis were soon replaced by cheerful sprightliness. We returned home via Kiul Junction and by the Bhagalpur Loop line. At Jamalpur, Munghyr, we made a brief halt in the house of my sister whose husband was a railway employee who showed us round the railway colony and workshop worth visiting. A hill range of rugged rocks skirts the Railway colony and one evening when we started climbing we heard, at least we fancied as much, the roar of a tiger; we screamed and scurried back in a panic. A short distance away at the end of a branch line off Jamalpur stands the district town of Munghyr where lived my relative Mr. Abdur Rahim (of Murshidabad district), Superintendent of Post Offices and also one of my Calcutta Carmichael Hostel contemporaries, Mirza Zahoor Beg. My sister's husband and I had a day off at Munghyr town where it was easy to meet Mr. Abdur Rahim in the Fort premises from which we had a fascinating view of a bend of the Ganges. But a re-union, however short, with Mirza Saheb, was effected after an assiduous search. He was incredulous that such a meeting could come through in his Bihar home and shed tears of joy. I recall that Munghyr was in shambles in the Bihar earthquake of 1934. Way back home from

Jamalpur we passed through the Agricultural Research Institute & Farm of Pusa of the Government of India, transferred to New Delhi after the Bihar earthquake of 1934. Our train went through the tunnel cut amid the Jamalpur Hill Range. This was my first experience of a railway tunnel; a few more came my way in 1944 when I was proceeding to Mhow in Central India. On the 1st April (or was it 2nd?), 1925, I resumed my duties at Rajshahi. Since we had only two weeks to go before the summer holiday I had left my wife at home to rejoin her at the end of the short working interval.

But before I move forward to the next academic session a survey of conditions in the College after the death of its illustrious Principal is necessary. It has an importance in higher education for all times and not merely limited to the years under examination. According to normal convention, when a Principal dies or retires the succession passes on to the second in command on a temporary basis till a substantive arrangement is made and announced. In the present case he was Vice-Principal Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya (later Roy Bahadur and a pucca Principal of Hooghly Mohsin College) who himself had succeeded the former Vice-Principal, Mr. Bijoy Gopal Mukerjee transferred earlier to Presidency College. Mr. Bhattacharyya's six-month regime that followed the death of the Roy Bahadur gave a spell of sweet academic life. In Bengal the territory under Calcutta University which was practically the whole of the Province minus the five mile residential unit of the recently started Dacca University knew Krishna Babu as an eminent Professor of Philosophy whose intellectual depth and clear elucidation of abstruse problems lured to his feet even teachers of Philosophy for lessons to take. The Post-Graduate Philosophy classes in Calcutta University became poorer by his transfer to Rajshahi. He was short in stature, slight in build and of dark complexion but always had a clean 'dhoti' and a clean shirt on. His habitual taciturnity and no touch of a Pharisee; on the contrary he had a charming smile for all those who would speak to him. Quiet and unassuming he slipped into his administrative mantle noiselessly. The Principal's personal orderly, a turbaned fellow of considerable importance was nowhere to be seen. As before he would still spend a lot of his time in the Staff Room from which he would disappear unnoticed as his official duties required his presence in his own room. A scholar and a gentleman both. A man of

intergrity, of equipoise, of firmness. He was an educationist cap-a-pie and to the marrow of his bone. The respect he stimulated in the College as a whole was, even so, blended with love, when he stood up in the Assembly Hall and addressed the College in mourning on the death of Kumudini Babu, words fell like Hybla drops from his lips, measured in structure, chaste in English style. Those were days when the most capable scholars in History, Philosophy, Economics were masters of English prose as well unlike our modern products in these subjects, unpardonably poor in expression. His obituary on the late Principal in the next issue of the Rajshahi College Magazine was rich in ores, terse in presentation. Whenever I went up to him for a discussion of my Hostel problems, I received a patient hearing and wise counsel. My Hostel files sent up for decisions came back quickly with straight forward orders having their basis on justice and fairplay. During his brief spell everybody was free from a show of bureaucratic power or pompousness, free from bullyin and highhandedness. A rule by the King's party was alien to his character and temperament. These, however, were round the corner and appeared in full strength at the tuning of the academic session. Meanwhile there were gossip and speculation about the appointment of a pucca head. I was too young to appreciate the truth or otherwise of the many reports that were collected from the Writers' Buildings, Calcutta, and circulated locally. One of them became persistent that Mr. S. N. Maitra, IES, Professor of Physics, Sibpur Engineering College was soon coming as our Chief. Senior colleagues on the staff who had correct assessment gave out that Mr. Bhattacharyya wouldn't agree to continue as Vice-Principal under Mr. S. N. Maitra. In fact Krishna Babu, they said, had already applied for a transfer. Now it so happened that before I had gone on leave for two months at the end of January 1925, Mr. Maitra come over to Rajshahi on a flying visit to make a reconnaissance. His professed object was to look about and fix up a suitable house for his residence. The leader of the Rajshahi College Students' Union, one Hiren (I forget his surname) told me the same afternoon, that being sought out by Mr. Maitra he had accompanied the latter in his residential investigation in course of which Hiren had gathered the nature of his requirements about his future house, his likes and dislikes. Mr. Maitra had humorously characterised himself as 'amphibious' by which he meant that half of him would be Indian and the other half European. His house should be suitable for receiving his

European guests and that it should have a Tennis lawn attached so that his daughter and his friends could have a game at pleasure. At the moment I half-believed Hiren's version but later experience confirmed that it was all correct. Mr. Maitra's secondary object was to meet Krishna Babu personally and to persuade him to stay on at Rajshahi as Vice-Principal. This became clear to us when on the following day he (Krishna Babu) told us the circumstances in which Mr. Maitra met him late last evening at his residence although he had been trying to avoid Mr. Maitra by extending his evening outing to an abnormal degree. When eventually Krishna Babu returned home which was just a simple, unfurnished, typically rural house in Non-U surroundings and in which he was living alone without his family, he found Mr. Maitra waiting patiently by the side of a Kerosene lamp. "What offence have I given you, Mr. Bhattacharyya, that you propose to puit Rajshahi?" asked Mr. Maitra when the two met. But there was no change in the former's decision. So that was that. Mr. Maitra had made a humble beginning in the Physics Laboratory of Presidency College and obviously through his adroitness in amphibious' operations rose meterorically to a substantive position in the Indian Education Service. Obviously too many traits of his career were well-known to Krishna Babu and to other senior Professors. Sibpur Engineering College with its well-laid-out and well-preserved campus, its many buildings and staff quarters (residential) on attractive sites on the north of the Hooghly was a citadel of built-in and graded hierarchy of officers from the Subordinate Educational Service at the bottom to IES at the top. Here the atmosphere was one of rigid formality and diversified snobbishness. Being a technical and professional institution, the trainees were in the grip of the staff. Its administration was radically different from that of Government Arts Colleges. Mr. Maitra breathed, moved; had his being in that atmosphere. Besides, the DPI, Mr. Oaten, was chumming with him in his residential quarters and selected him for his new position. So when Mr. Maitra came over to Rajshahi he had the support of the DPI on his back and the traditions of Sibpir Engineering College soaked into him. Wise men did see into the shape of coming events; inexperienced people bad to learn from direct evidence. Their application in his day-to-day administration at Rajshahi College (and later at Dacca Intermediate College produced violent repercussions and led to disastrous consequences on the academic life of Rajshahi College which had received the tribute of a

University in miniature in the report of the Sadler Commission.

But it will be unfair to omit a reference to his gifts and graces as an individual member of society. He was a lover of music and poetry, an elegant conversationalist, a charming host. While on a visit to my hostel one evening he gave readings of Shelley's select poems which in his retirement, he rendered into Bengali verses. It is no wonder that Poet Nazrul Islam had dedicated one of his volumes to Mr. Maitra. If in administrative affairs he unfortunately brought the traditions of B. E. College, Sibpur, into social life he brought the cultural heritage of the Brahma Samaj to which he belonged- a creed the leading exponents of which from Ram Mohon Roy to Rabindranath had transformed the custom-ridden Hindu society of Bengal into one of enlightenment, of progress, of resurgent vitality. Did some of the liberal traits of his family life and outlook bring him into sharp conflict with the orthodox Hindu public of Rajshahi, who it was reported, didn't spare an open aspersion on his wife in a public meeting held after I had left Rajshahi on the 30th June, 1926? I didn't know; it was not possible for me either. All my life I have been an alien to mean intrigues, to currents and cross-currents in the streams of social or administrative life. In February, 1925, on my arrival at my native place on two month's medical leave (and shortly before I went out to Simultala) I paid a day's visit to Santiniketan (only 36 miles off from my home) on the occasion of Maghotsab (a festive celebration in the Bengali month of Magh). That was long, long before what Santiniketan has become now, a Government of India Statutory Organization of immense proportions and many dimensions in a set-up of all-round development. Then it was what was (perhaps) dear to the heart of the poet a seat on ancient Indian pattern in rural areas of dedicated life of learning, free but quiet inquiry, devoted research, above all of contemplation into the mysteries of the universe flung out before the human eye. Then it had no constitution, written or unwritten, no affiliation to a Board or University, just a sylvan settlement, an abode of peace, serenity and quiet pursuit of wisdom, remarkably free from brick and mortar, cement and concrete. Tall, shady trees stood everywhere beneath which sat small assemblies of learners listening to elderly mentors and guides. The places under the trees and the spaces round about were dotted with mud-built houses (the mud of Birbhum should correspond to rock-paste or lumps of gravel) with thatch tops,

These were the rule; pucca constructions were an exception. As I went round I saw nice-looking ladies popping out of hutments or moving about freely like Sakuntala and her friends. But most of the structures were wired and had electric connexions. Bills on boards were in Sanskrit. Inscriptions in Sanskrit also filled the eye. Men and women, boys and girls, had bare feet; they were all unsandalled. But they were speaking English mostly. There was a peculiar blend of the ancient and the modern, simplicity and sophistication, the natural and the artificial. When I introduced myself as a young teacher I received a ready welcome; I had a clean, wholesome, appetising noonday meal at the Guest House; I attended the Evening Prayer in the Prayer Hall and later the fair held in the northern precincts. One of the festive items provided in the fair was a Santhali dance; the women participating had bodies of rounded perfection and flower-decked hair-do's. When I left late in the evening I was musing to myself santiniketan was no utopia, no New Atlantis or Erewhon but the poet's dream realised fully in life and what a poet the sweetest, the sagest, and of the deepest spiritual vision.

But I have wandered far from Rajshahi of 1925-26. Towards the end of June, 1925, I had to take my wife for domestic reasons to Gaibandha (Rangpur) where my father-in-law was posted. On the very day we left Rampurhat for Calcutta en route to Gaibandha my father above three score years and ten, was laid up with high temperature which was the beginning of the six month long illness leading to the end in January, 1926. We had a brief stopover in Calcutta in course of which I had an interview with Sir Abdur Rahim, Executive Councillor-in-charge of Education, at Writers' Buildings, my ambition being the payment of respect to this great Bengali Muslim. Little did I know then that I would have closer relations with him after a year and a half. We made another short halt at Bogra town where my wife's elder brother was stationed as S. P. Perhaps my father-in-law's posting at nearby Gaibandha was managed by him. Having left my wife at the last place I went back to Rajshahi to work in the new dispensation under Mr. Maitra who had a new Vice-Principal. Mr. Maitra's desire of having a decent house with a compound of its own remained unfulfilled. Instead he had to be content with a one-storied house deep in the heart of the district town at Ghoramara near the Public Library. Later he succeeded in renting Kumudini Babu's own house just across the road in front of the new

Hostels. The house was commodious but the looked for adjuncts were not there. His Vice-principal having had no such residential expectations suffered no disappointment. Besides he was a Bengal Education Service (BES) man who, in British days, was a 'Babu' (a Muslim in the same service was a Maulavi) but the Principal was a "Mr" being a member of the Indian Education Service.

Mr. Maitra was tall and robust, had well-defined features though dark in complexion. He had an aquiline nose over which stood his bald headfront giving his face statuesque appearance. He wore European clothes and had either a pipe or a big cigar in his mouth matching suitably his clean-shaven cheeks. He looked a Burra Saheb which role he was pleased to play. The Principal's room brightened up; his orderly now was in form; the calling bell rang to bossy requirements.

His Vice-Principal was Babu Aswini Kumar Mukerjee who had just been relieved of his important position as District Inspector of Schools at Malda. For years he had been a Professor of History at Dacca College but when that premier institution was disbanded in 1921 on account of the inauguration of the residential University of Dacca, there was no place for him on the staff the University. He became a District Inspector of Schools which, it appeared from his frequent talks, he didn't dislike, and which initiated him into the sweetnesses of ruling over Sub-Inspectors, Pandits, Maulavies and miscellaneous staff. Having had a new orientation in outlook and in the exercise of powers he felt unconcealed chagrin in the atmosphere of the our Staff Room where a knee-crooking bow or salam was simply non-existent. He now became a Professor of English, a subject with which he had no touch after he had taken his M. A. degree in English. Aswini Babu was taller than Mr. Maitra, had comparatively fairer complexion, wrinkled face and sneering look. He wore a coat (buttoned up to the chin) on trousers but he had a hat on his head during his movements. He didn't. expose his mind on his sleeve, which was close, unlike that of Mr. Maitra who was open and who gave himself away by the stream of words flowing from his mouth.

At the initial stage of his administration in the academic session 1925-26, Mr. Maitra had a normal going despite the factors sketched above. The pull of Sibpur Engineering College and the call of participation in Calcutta University deliberations took him frequently to the city, and

when routine duties at the College proved wearying he would seek an occasional respite at his residence. These kept him atop conditions which were the concerns of departmental heads or officers-in-charge of different branches of corporate activities; interference in their conduct or in unimportant details was not visible. He had placed Aswini Babu in charge of the Students' Union where the latter would take the Principal's place. He was remote from his Vice-Principal in administrative duties. In fact the two would seldom meet. I have vivid memories of an episode (I consider significant) that took place one day during this early period on the dais of the Assembly Hall shortly after Mr. Maitra had made a speech. Aswini Babu drew 'loser and said "Sir' your speech has been eloquent in excellent English, and musical in tone, I have never heard etc...." Aswini Babu was unabashed in his flattery but he did score his point. Mr. Maitra was overwhelmed-I had better use the word 'debauched' with the praise; from that day on perceptibly and definitely he passed into the clutches of the designing Brahmin who came to have an ever-growing share in the day to day administration. Drafting of volumes of correspondence, framing schedules of exams, submission of marks and returns by teachers, consideration of examination results and so on gradually became his responsibility. An IES Vice-Principal like Mr. B. G. Mookerjee didn't have a room of his own; the question of such a provision for a 'Babu' Vice-Principal didn't arise. But how could he do the numerous duties so kindly allotted to him without a place? Soon a table was placed just behind the chair of the Principal in the latter's room where loyally and faithfully and of course silently Aswini Babu shouldered the brunt of his Chief's burden. He became the personal secretary or PA to Mr. Maitra to whom it was his duty to report all deviations from the official path. And it now became the duty of the Principal to take action against irregularities. Gradually the latter lost his height and detachment and became submerged. The intellectually gifted section of Senior Professors became annoyed, to be sure, but they were bred to maintain tactful silence whereas talented young teachers became vocal against unhealthy trends. There were jokes and comments which were interpreted as defiance of constituted authority. Having been scrupulously jealous of my self-respect I was never guilty of any irregularity in the execution of my duties and there fore I was not affected in any way. But I felt amused with a touch of Contempt in my

soul over the spreading tentacles of Aswini Babu. Whenever Mr. Maitra would be away in Calcutta, the Vice-Principal would move from his hind position into the front and among other things would transmit his 'salam' through the Principal's orderly to me as one of the Hostel Superintendents for a discussion or an inquiry about an unimportant hostel affair. But I would soon ignore it in the midst of my strenuous teaching duties, participation in debates and literary activities, prompt response to the hostellers' demands on the Superintendent's attention. Speaking of debates I now recall one such memorable event of the period. Hiren, the student leader already mentioned, approached me and asked if I could move a proposition in the ensuing debate—the proposition being 'India is fit for self-Government'. I agreed but soon learnt with dismay that Professor Rampada Majumdar of acknowledged reputation in the Department of English would lead the opposition. But there was no backing out. I was steeped in the traditions of the Congress and khilafat movements. I had my own dreams of independence. Besides I was saturated in the revolutionary poetry of Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelly. Burke's speeches on Taxation & Conciliation were in my heart and memory. I collected my thoughts, couched them in rhetorical style and expressed them in an impetuous speech exactly on time which was a quarter hour in moving the resolution. Aswini Babu was in the chair. The magic of the subject matter, my poetic fervour and perhaps my youth too, were in my favour while they were my opponent's handicaps! Another thing was clear—he came unprepared. I had an easy win. I may be pardoned for the vanity of insertion of this puerile personal episode.

I believe I have succeeded in setting forth clearly in a graph the altered behaviour of the administration from the days of Kumudini Babu to those of Mr. Maitra and through the days of Krishna Babu. Details of how academic concord was vitiated by personal idiosyncrasies and malign motivation are coming. Of idiosyncrasy first. Those were days when the Durbar Day (in commemoration of Delhi Durbar of 1911) was celebrated on the 12th December each year with sports-meet and a feed. In the schools such a celebration was a reality but in the Colleges it was a fiction and just a closed holiday. Mr. Maitra plumped for a grand occasion of athletic activities and also of entertainment on the 12th December, 1925. He didn't have a perceptive assessment of the nationalist movement sweeping over the country since 1920. He was an All-

India Service high official under the British Raj and would listen to no arguments against his projected gala function. Arrangements for the holding of the sports were made in the spacious campus (just behind my residential quarters) of the New Hostels. Fences and fixtures, poles and pillars, tracks and enclosures grew space but the two nights preceding the Durbar Day things turned away—the first night revealed paintings by fire and night-soil of posts and bamboo structures, the second not only sabotage but also arson to the Kutcha garage with Car within of the Principal. The sports were abandoned to be sure but the disgrace and humiliation of this act of major bungling remained. It was doubtful, however, whether lessons were learnt. Many other muddles followed.

I have already spoken of the esoteric and exoteric import of 'MR' & 'BABU' in the various services under the British. In a Provincial town and in non-U Indian circles it was not adequately grasped. The reported offender in a recent case was the Headmaster of the contiguous Collegiate School, whose stupidity in addressing the Principal as "Suren Babu" in a letter was visited with the issue of a summons and then with a stiff verbal reprimand. The silly Headmaster on going back to his school was reported to have mentioned it before his teaching staff from whom it must have leaked out to the school students who, in their turn, got a good scope for their pranks. Whenever the Principal would walk past their school to the Laboratories as he and others had to do, some of the urchins would hoot out "Suren Babu" from behind and then flee. The same cry was imitated one day by some of the students of his own class in the Chemical Laboratory as he was about to enter into it. He condemned their bad manners in a homily, asked them to be repentant and to own up with moral courage. By going out of the room for a couple of minutes he gave the offending students an opportunity for confession when he should come back. But actually when he returned he was greeted with the scraping of feet in the back tier of the gallery. Such incidents couldn't be laughed away as comic interludes; they led to unhealthy conditions. The tone of academic life, its purpose and pursuit went out of gear. The public of Rajshahi felt uneasy; the staff became discomposed; the students were in a twitter; authority felt called upon to take adequate action against sabotage (already alluded) and subversive tendencies. But were the students alone responsible for defiance? No, teachers must have a hand in them. Aswini Babu had been nursing a grievance against the younger group of teachers (mostly lecturers).

who were habitually disrespectful towards him. The malign motivation, pinpointed earlier, came chiefly from him. He kept a sharp eye on irregularities if any, from heretics and reported the same to the chief. After the Durbar Day debacle administrative stiffness got abroad. Babu Bireswar Bose, Lecturer in Bengali, Came under special surveillance, and the group in which he was popular was watched generally. Now Bireswar Babu was a Calcutta man born and bred. He was an M. A. in English too. While yet a student he had married but his newly-wed wife had a tragic death. He remained loyal to her memory and never married afterwards. He was idealistic, honest, spirited. He hardly practised "tact" in his behaviour and must have given offence not only to the Principal and his deputy but also to the head of his department who was secretive and orthodox in sharp contrast with the liberal outlook and forthright conduct of Bireswar Babu. Slackness in invigilation duties, late submission of marks, defiance, leaving the station without previous permission etc. constituted items in the charge sheet later framed against him after he had been suspended first by the Principal. I was not aware when and how these had been piling against him and how often there were exchanges between him and the authorities distinctly named in the foregoing sentences. But my relations with him were those of intimacy and esteem-esteem on account of his seniority in age and service and of this integrity. This drastic action of suspension on Bireswar Babu was taken immediately after the Saraswati Puja three-day holiday in February, 1926, during which we (five teachers including Bireswar Babu plus two students) went out on a visit to the historic Ruins of Gaur and Adina mosque in the district of Malda. This was sponsored by a student of the 2nd year Intermediate classes, Purna Choudhuri, who belonged to a Zamindar family of Dinajpur but had relations in Zamindar family of Malda. We were assured that we would have comfortable accommodation and food at Malda town where from we could have a look at both the areas separated from each other by considerable distance. We made hurried personal arrangements at the shortest notice. Bireswar Babu had Practically been dragged from his house. He handed over a note (to some one he knew) intimating that he was leaving the station. This never reached the Principal's Office and constituted a major offence leading to his suspension. To sanity, however, it was purely technical in as much a Bireswar Babu had no responsibility other than that of a teacher. It was a holiday excursion and of educational significance. The tour included

a steamer journey, a railway journey and considerable foot-slogging. Those were not days of fast-moving transport and easy communication. Nevertheless we had an enjoyable time of sight-seeing, of relics of the mediæval past, of the magnificent architecture in the ruins of the Adina mosque in particular, and of many other structures in the 14-mile area of Gaur. The colossal kitchens with huge cooking utensils, big stud stables of the Muslim Kings of Bengal opened up before our mind vistas of delicious cuisine and splendid riding. Purna Choudhuri's relations at Malda were all attention to us. We were back at the station on time with half an hour's margin for resumption of our duties at 10-30 A. M. In fact when Bireswar Babu arrived at the College for his 10-30 class he was shown an order to the effect "I am suspending you etc.". This was very confusing; in a dazed state of mind he went to his first period class. But he was stopped from meeting his other classes. By another peremptory order which stated that the holding of his first period class was another act of defiance. This suspension by the Principal of a Lecturer had the effect of a bomb-shell; we were all in gloom and terror. Who was the appointing authority of a Lecturer, the DPI or the Principal? How could the Controlling Officer pass the order of suspension? Soon Mr. Maitra managed to secure the DPI's approval to his unauthorised and illegal order. Everyone in the College felt upset. There was a reign of terror as it were. Bireswar Babu had to undergo the protracted strain of a departmental inquiry at the end of which he was honourably acquitted and reinstated. That happy result was announced long afterwards; at any rate long after I had left Rajshahi on the 30th June, 1926.

Mr. Maitra became busy with attempts for substantiating the charges against Bireswar Babu before the Departmental Inquiry. Among his supporters was Maulavi Haider Ali whom I have already introduced at some length. He made a written statement about the remissness in invigilation duty on one occasion of Bireswar Babu. The Professor of Sanskrit supported another allegation. Similarly there were some others to support other charges against the latter. This sort of evidence was manoeuvred.

I had a taste of such manoeuvring. One day I was asked to meet Mr. Maitra at his residence which was within hailing distance of mine. He had information that I was a friend of the "recalcitrant" group. When I saw him I was received with courtesy and Kindness. Soon diplomatic

questions followed. Do I know Babu Charusoshi Chatterjee? What sort of man is he? Do I know Mr. Chakravarty? What sort of man is he? Yes, yes, I know them; they are good men and true. But when he was persistent and insistent in his interrogations, I blurted out a cross question "Am I spy on the staff"? This demolished him: he let me off very annoyed. Within a couple of days I received an urgent summons from Khan Bahadur Emaduddin Ahmed, the undisputed Muslim leader of the town. I don't remember now nor did I care to know then whether he was a member of the Rajshahi College Governing Body. But I had a shrewd suspicion that his request for a visit from me had some link with the general disturbance in the College. When I saw the Khan Bahadur he didn't conceal that he was speaking on behalf of Mr. Maitra who had reported that I was a talented youngman with bright prospects in future but that unfortunately I was getting mixed up with the politics of a refractory group of teachers of whom Bireswar Babu was the leader. It should be my endeavour I was told to work for a good 'confidential report' from the Principal. Confidential reports from bosses in Government service make or mar an officer. These are convenient weapons of highhandedness used by a vindictive head. This subtle hint in the heels of my interview with the Principal transmitted through political channels was exasperating. But since the Khan Bahadur was not to blame I exercised restraint and made it perfectly clear to him that mean, hidden, underhand tactics were unknown to me. It was, however, perfectly true that Bireswar Babu and some others were my personal friends. We had social get-togethers and that these would continue despite misunderstanding by some and bullying by others. There was no further chase after me.

During this stormy period as I was having my walk one morning on the embankment I met my former teacher, Dr. Harendra Coomer Mukerjee (morning walk was a life-long habit with him too) later to become a famous Governor of West Bengal after partition. At that time he was Inspector of Colleges, Calcutta University; He had just arrived on inspection of Rajshahi College and was staying in the Dak Bangalow where the barest amenities were not available. Although an intimation was duly sent to the Principal, there was no sign of any elementary courtesy from him. I offered to take him on to my house for his morning

* He ceased to be President on 12th May, 1967

tea but he said he had an Associate Inspector (it is still the custom to have an ad hoc colleague on occasions) with him and mentioned the name of Dr. Radha Krishnan, now the President of the Republic of India.* It wouldn't look nice if he should selfishly have his tea with us leaving out his friend. Would they, in that case, have rice and curry with me at noon? What would he eat? Dr. Mukherjee said "Don't worry. You and I, Hena, will have fish curry and curd and sandesh and everything available. But he (Dr. Radha Krishnan) will have one table spoonful of soft rice, some vegetable and curd and sweets. I ran home in a flurry only to be dashed in my high hopes of entertainment. By a very unfortunate coincidence not only my cook but also a maid assistant were absent that day. My wife who had seldom, if ever, done any cooking had a baby to look after (they were brought to Rajshahi on the 2nd January, 1926). But we must make the best of a difficult plight. And so she did with the help of a small boy-servant. But the soft rice she cooked turned out to be softest lumps. Fish and vegetables were better. And curd and sweets and bananas were there in plenty. At lunch time the guests walked to my house from the College. There was no difficulty about the small eater in Radha Krishnan. There was no difficulty from Dr. Mukerjee either, he being entirely unconventional and simple in his habits. In fact teacher and pupil did the fullest justice; it didn't matter that rice was dough; they were swallowed the easier for that. But think of the was of the British Raj and their swollen functionaries. Dr. Radha Krishnan and Dr. Mookerjee couldn't expect accommodation in the Circuit House; they were also unimportant to the IES Principal. Dr. Mukerjee's pupil as Inspector of Colleges of Dacca University from 1953 to 1956 had always had accommodation in the Circuit House wherever there was one. But this does not imply that with Independence the race of Maitras & Aswini Mookerjees has disappeared from Pakistan or India. Here in East Pakistan in higher education we have many Muslim counterparts to them, professedly educationists but actually flamboyant opportunists and careerists. Mr. Maitra had some cultural gifts but some of our eminent scholars and administrators are quite immune from vestiges of good breeding and nurture. Blatant self-seekers or despicable flunkys they stick at nothing to get to the top. Academic advancement under decent conditions and in a climate of tranquility doesn't bother them in the least. They make definite contributions to disruption and disorder in their own fields.

Let me get back for a moment to December, 1925. As soon as the Christmas recess began I was at home and the bedside of my father in chronic suffering over the past six months. Above 72 he didn't like the medical check-up I arranged on my arrival. To his own favourite personal physician he put the question "Do you know of any remedy against death?" and declined to swallow repulsive concoctions. Unmistakably he was looking for the best that was yet to be. Towards the end of the holiday I had to get back to Rajshahi. My father had a sudden end on 26th January, 1926, my mother having predeceased him by 17 years when I was an infant. When I received the telegram of his death the burial was already over and I abandoned the idea of immediately going home which was now without its presiding deity. He was a pucca and pious Muslim of liberal ideas and progressive outlook. Although he was an outstanding Persian scholar he was proficient in Bengali and Maths and what was still more striking a lover of music. For his English lessons he had to use a pony and ride a distance of two/three miles to meet the lonely Englishman, Charles (something) living in the area. There being no High English School at Rampurhat, he had to join the Government Zilla School at Suri (headquarters town of Birbhum). Shortly after he had appeared at the Entrance Examination (later Matriculation) my grandfather died and my father having had to take charge of the small property left behind could pursue his studies no more. He spent his whole life in looking after that property and in rearing his family. Being remarkably free from greed in any form and never living beyond his means he was proud about two things: (i) never having borrowed, (ii) never having sued in law courts any of his tenants. Humane to the utmost degree, he was a stranger to hatred, violence, rancour. He is very much alive within me.

A retrospective glance over the first four years of my official life projects into my view a number of images of students who were closely known to me. Akkas Ali had just been promoted to the 4th year B. A. class when I joined. Bright, young, sweet he was loved by everybody. Having taken his B. A. Pass degree he proceeded straight to law in which he did very well. Recruited immediately afterwards as a Munsiff he rose to be a District & Sessions Judge from which position he retired recently and is living now at Dacca in his own house in Dhanmondi Residential Area. *Mahtabuddin Sarkar, then of the 3rd year B. A. Class, graduated with Honours in Philosophy, competed in the B. C. S. (Executive),

proved a redoubtable Assistant Secretary, Education Department, Writers' Buildings, Calcutta, for several years under Mr. A. K. Fazlul Haq; and later rose to be a pucca District Magistrate. After superannuation he was re-employed as Additional Commissioner, Dacca Division. He is a man of considerable means and owns several houses in Dacca in one of which he is living now with his family and continues to be a striking character in social life. In 1923-24 M. A. Jalil joined Rajshahi College B. A. Classes after having passed his I. A. Examination in the 1st Division from Charnichael College, Rangpur. I found him good-looking and well-bred and took him in as an inmate of my Hostel. I have vivid memories of how he was laid up with a virulent attack of dysentery which defied medical treatment (and medical treatment of dysentery in those days like that of enteric and many other fell diseases was more or less primitive) for quite a long time and of how I got his room vacated by other students and how I used to visit him everyday and to cheer him up. Abdul Jalil joined the Bengal Secretariat as an Upper Division Assistant and rose to be the Deputy Secretary of the Communications Department and after partition Secretary for sometime at Eden Buildings, Dacca. Most people have no idea of the personal touch kept up by me with a large number of my former pupils. Jalil retired a few years ago and is now living a very comfortable life at Dacca. In July, 1963, exactly a year ago I was at Jessore Cantonment at my son's place. My son mentioned this to his colleague, young Capt. Jalil, and said that his father was one of my pupils. Young Jalil stoutly repudiated such a possibility but when he called and saw me he was disarmed. In 1922-23 I got to know personally a pair of students in the Second Year Classes. One was Sourin Majumdar, another Abdur Aziz. The former was small and slender, the latter strong and stout though short in stature. Exactly in three years Sourin Majumdar stood first in English Honours, a feat never before performed by any student from any Mufassil College under Calcutta University. Believe it or not he had never been to Calcutta before. He rose to be a Professor of English in Bengal Educational Service at Hooghly Mohsin College but what a pity his "mind was overthrown"-there was insanity in the family. Abdur Aziz, however, who had an easier and freer English style left Rajshahi for Calcutta after his I. A. Examination where he must have yielded to metropolitan temptations and couldn't give a good account of himself at the B. A. Examination. But when he joined the Rajshahi bar later he

* He died in April, 1967.

leapt into prominence quickly; his legal skills led to his direct recruitment as District & Sessions Judge. When I met him last during the period from 1954 to 1956, he was the Registrar of Dacca High Court. I am told he has resigned and joined the High Court as an Advocate. Habibuddin Ahmed, Zinnur Ahmed Choudhury and Abdus Samad Choudhury may be grouped together as eminent experts of gynaecology and of ear, nose and throat. Each one is an FRCS, No. 1 rose to be the Principal of Dacca Medical College, No. 2 Director of Health Services, East Pakistan, NO.3 is in Karachi and for all I know proposes to settle down in West Pakistan. All three were brilliant students of the I. Sc. Classes of Rajshahi College before they had moved on to Calcutta Medical College for their M. B. degrees and all the three were resident members of my Hostel and in intimate contact with me. Last in this list for the 1922-26 period is Syed Anisul Haq, now Post Master General of East Pakistan.* I knew him for a short period only but I found him brisk and smart and he became a member of my family as it were. It was he who saw me off at Natore Railway Station on the night of 30th June, 1926 when I was journeying to Calcutta to join Islam College on its inauguration on the 2nd July.

The muddled state of affairs at Rajshahi College since Bireswar Babu's suspension continued. I had to attend the Fateha ceremony of my father in the first week of March at my native place. I was not allowed to have the benefit of a week's casual leave. So I had to content myself with five days' earned leave. This was a sort of pointer to other teachers. At home I was witness to sordid state of affairs. Brother quarrelled with brother; brothers and a sister were ranged against a brother who was in situ and in seisin of ancestral property. The former must have their share. Mourning or grief or reverence for the deceased was nowhere to be seen or felt. My reactions were sharp and acute and at a particular moment I burst out into loud lamentation.

During these months the eyes of Muslim Bengal were riveted upon the opening of Islamic College at Calcutta early in July. Arrangements were afoot for the recruitment of the teaching staff; appointments were advertised. All my friends felt sure I would have a place there as Professor in the Bengal Educational Service and I did apply for such a position. Towards mid-June I received a D. O. letter from the ADPI conveying Govt. decision of my transfer to Islamic College as Lecturer

* He has since retired.

and I was asked to get ready for joining on the 1st July. The dream of the Muslim community to have a Government College exclusively their own was about to be realised and there was a wave of enthusiasm everywhere.

I hurried down to Calcutta from my home (it was summer vacation then) and met the ADPI and told him that I was a candidate for the post of a Professor and not that of a lecturer. He said that there was only one such post which would go to an Englishman and that Government wanted me to be there; they were anxious to have as many Muslim teachers as should be available. I said I was Hostel Superintendent at Rajshahi with comfortable residential quarters. He said he would see to it that I had an increment of Rs. 50/- by way of compensation. Little did I know what had been going on behind the scene over the recruitment of staff personnel and how extraordinary steps not fitting in with 'service' rules and regulations were being taken. In stupid ignorance of such goings on I left Calcutta to make the required arrangements for a move to Calcutta at the end of June. The stupidity welled out of my incapacity to figure out the improvement or otherwise in my future status in educational hierarchy and the financial aspects of Calcutta living—a stupidity and an incapacity that have been my lifelong companions. To me the establishment of Islamia College was a dream come true. I must be there and play my part in Muslim renaissance. It looked like a fairyland of conquering heroes and knights. A vision of this El Dorado lured me on. It represented the Celtic paradise of the Anglo-Saxon poem **Phoenix**, in which there would be nothing but vitality and evolutionary progress. Life without such an urge is no life but static and cold; defeat, disappointment, frustration have given me sleepless nights of agony over the years but never caused any deviation from the dream track. Every morning has ushered in freshness, resilience, a re-inforced stimulus to do the day's duties by giving of my best to the student community in particular. So on to Islamia College, Calcutta.

CHAPTER II

ISLAMIA COLLEGE, CALCUTTA

1926 to 1930

With four years of assiduously acquired teaching experience in the Intermediate & B. A. Pass & Honours English classes in one of the biggest Government Colleges in the Province (Rajshahi College was only second in importance to Presidency) both in smooth conditions and rough, with four years of administrative experience in hostel management, with experience of diverse manners and colourful personalities, I arrived at Calcutta on the morning of 1st July, 1926, which was a Sunday and therefore the visionary treasure-chest was to be opened on the following forenoon. I was entitled to a joining time of at least eight days but my zeal-or shall I say an excessive dose of it?-precluded the idea of any such luxury on the eve of a "momentous event", to use a hardridden cliché, in the annals of Muslim Bengal. Exactly as I did four years earlier I carried with me a small load of books and simple clothing. I had my cook for a companion. From Sealdah we went straight to Calcutta Hotel on the north of Mirzapur Park which became Sradhananda Park later. Here under liberal Hindu management I had my residence and food for a week.

Next morning I was in the enchanted land. In contrast with the farflung (though unplanned) campus of Rajshahi College, Islamia had just been built up and equipped on a small plot of land (bought during Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq's still-born ministry of 1924) at 6, Wellesley Street in the heart of Muslim Calcutta on the south. Here stood an unimpressive two-storied building having two wings to a central middle and a small courtyard. The ground floor of the northern wing constituted the Physics & Chemistry Laboratories, designed only for I. Sc. requirements in these two subjects whereas Rajshahi had elaborate provision for B.Sc. Honours teaching. Never before the partition the B.Sc. Pass syllabus was introduced at Islamia. Though the building did not cut a figure to a viewer from outside, the rooms within were commodious and

comfortable and very decently furnished with neat equipment very much unlike ugly and deplorable conditions at Rajshahi and also at Dacca University Arts Buildings where I continued till 30th of June, 1964. From 1926 to 1947 the maintenance of the place had been uniformly clean. The Assembly Hall at the back of the central front was a heart-warming spot having a magnificent vaulted ceiling, a large, strong-built timber platform for dais and a first floor gallery for those who would love to have a lofty perch and Pisgah view of the audience beneath. The Library, well-lighted and well-ventilated, containing steel shelves all about, and the stained glass window-panes in decorative posture provided another attractive feature. The Prayer Room was another landmark. The Office room, the Principal's Room, the Class rooms were all on a par with the outstanding places just noticed. On the Arts side it had provision for Commerce as well at the Intermediate level and for Honours at the Degree stage in the major subjects. The whole place was meant for only 400 day scholars. To begin with we were only 25 teachers out of whom seven only were Professors, 18 others Lecturers. I have already referred to this growing pattern in staff personnel in the Govt. Colleges excepting Presidency.

On the opening day only some teachers were available; others would soon be coming. Admissions were made only to the 1st Year Intermediate classes and the 3rd Year B. A. Classes at the initial stage so that they were due for University Examinations in 1928. Most of the students attended on the first day-Mr. Stapleton, the DPI arrived in time, collected the Principal Mr. Harley, Mr. J. W. Holme, part-time Professor of English, and me and marched into Room No. 21 where the students had assembled, addressed them briefly and set the machinery in motion. They marched out leaving me behind to do the ground work in the introduction of the English syllabus. Ardent and fluent as I was I gave an exposition of the raison d'etre of Islamia College to meet the challenge of the sister community against the setting up of a denominational institution. Quite a lot of my audience hailed from the interior, for instance, from Comilla, Mymensingh & Chittagong. One or two among them appeared to be, from the discussion that followed, critical of my arguments but when I summed up they scoffed no more but stayed on as genuine converts.

The first Principal of Islamia was Mr. Alexander Hamilton Harley,

(humorously styled by his friends Abdul Halim Harley) IES, who continued in the same position for over a dozen years i.e., till he retired. Earlier for over another twelve years he had been the Principal of Calcutta Madrassah, a successor to that reputed Oriental Scholar, Sir E. Dennison Ross. Mr. Harley entered upon his 'service' career at Calcutta Madrassah and finished off at Islamia. He was a Scotsman and in a later speech to which I shall refer in due course he said he belonged to the right part of Scotland i.e. Edinburgh. No one in Calcutta had any idea of his academic distinction before he got a berth in the IES. But he was accepted as an Arabic Scholar although we saw him reading Arabic texts frequently in his room with the assistance of our friend and colleague Maulavi Abdul Quader, Professor of Arabic. He proposed to me that he should have some English classes and after some discussion I suggested the Calcutta University Bible Selections (for years these selections, one for Intermediate Students and another for B. A. Pass students were included in the English syllabus) might be profitably taught by him. He agreed and hinted that once he knew the Hebrew text of the Bible later he took up Short English Stories as well. His appointment at Islamia at the initial stage was in addition to his own duties at the Madrassah—the widespread feeling in Muslim Calcutta being that he would not be suitable in the context of his record at the Madrassah. There was demand for an Englishman of outstanding reputation. But he had a sturdy patron in Mr. E. F. Oaten, then DPI, who was chumming with Mr. Harley in the latter's famous residence situated just across the road on the north of the Madrassah campus. My readers may recall here that Mr. S. N. Maitra had the same patron in regard to his appointment as principal of Rajshahi College on the death of Roy Bahadru Kurnadin Kanta Banerjee. Well, since no other competent Englishman was available readily there was no harm to a temporary administration under Mr. Harley. So that was that—the thin end of the wedge which was driven to a pucca base ere long and Mr. Harley was relieved of his responsibilities at the Madrassah to be our permanent chief and with him he brought the residential house as well although it was the time-honoured official quarters of the Principal of Calcutta Madrassah. Soon the house had a shining brass plate at the gate with the inscription in bold characters "ISLAMIA HOUSE" although Shamsul Ulema, Mr. Kamauluddin Ahmed, IES, Mr. Harley's successor at the Madrassah made a row about the house only to have a discomfiture. He had to be content with a house

allowance of Rs. 300/- a month. In all fairness it must be stated here that his long regime at Islamia had never been marked by any bungling leading to dislocation, a point which is thrown into bold relief by a comparison with that of Mr. S. N. Maitra. Mr. Harley was cool and cautious, tactful and prudent, amiable in disposition, pusillanimous in his encounter with the realities of life. He would smell danger at a distance and with the strong support of his Head clerk who would force upon all and sundry his own title 'Syed Saheb', and the wise council of Maulavi Abdul Quader and some such loyal teacher-supporters diplomatically disposed of all apprehended troubles. As Principal of Calcutta Madrassah, he had two different branches of studies to govern; first, the orthodox Islamic studies in Arabic language chiefly of Quoran, Hadith, Fiqh, law, logic, customs and conventions; second the High English School, known as the Anglo-Persian Department, each branch under the immediate supervision of a sub-chief, the Head Maulavi and the Headmaster respectively. I knew the latter personally, Maulavi Md. Yusuff, a bearded, strong-bodied Punjabi, who had been a sort of permanent fixture in Muslim Calcutta, not only as Headmaster but also as Superintendent of Baker Hostel, the most famous Govt. Hostel for Muslim students of Calcutta Colleges. In my undergraduate days I was myself a resident there. He had an affectionate and dutiful son's fidelity to Mr. Harley. He ran the A.P. Department and also Baker Hostel to his boss's complete satisfaction. As far as the Islamic Studies Section was concerned, the Maulavies were remarkable for their 'Itayet' or obedience, particularly to a European head. One can visualise their bowing veneration and kowtowing posture. Mr. Harley had a smooth time with both branches. To his fresh field he brought experience and traditions of the Madrassah governance; his expectations of staff conduct at Islamia had the same foundation. But the pity was that he was absolutely innocent of the work, the syllabuses, the academic atmosphere of a first grade Govt. College imparting instruction upto the Degree Honours standard under terms and conditions of the Calcutta University. At the initial stage, therefore, he had some clashes and conflict with some of us. But soon he tried to assimilate and integrate himself into the new system and in a large measure did succeed although he never grew out of school-life tone and trends. I am afraid he never had in Scotland or England the broad-based scholarship and the large cultural horizon of University education.

I have already indicated the staff strength of the College. At the inauguration the Professors of Physics & Chemistry, both Hindus, were brought on transfer from other Govt. Colleges, on account of their experience. They were Babu Narayandas Banerjee & Dr. Satyaranjan Das Gupta. Narayan Babu was an indefatigable worker in framing the time-table, preparing examination schedules, attending to various routine duties of academic nature. He had a perennial smile on his lips and was universally popular—a pillar of strength to Mr. Hatley in College administration. I am told he is still living. Dr. Das Gupta who died prematurely and in harness was tall and strong, quiet and taciturn. From him spread perfume and fragrance, and trustworthiness. During the academic season 1926-27 there was another Hindu gentleman, Dr. Bhanubhusan Das Gupta, Professor of Economics, who was mostly owlish and who disappeared in course of the year but exactly when nobody knew. Years afterwards I met his wife at Darjeeling. Even then he was somewhere else and not in her company. But she made ecstatic references to her recent acquaintance at Darjeeling with Dr. Itrat Hussain Zuberi and his young and accomplished Muslim wife. It may be recalled here that Dr. Zuberi of U. P. joined as Professor of English, Islamia College in July, 1938, and had a meteoric career before and after independence & eventually became the first vice-Chancellor of the newly established University at Rajshahi under Mr. Nurul Amin's Chief Ministership in East Bengal. But I am anticipating too much and far too ahead of later history. Dr. Bhanubhusan Das Gupta was succeeded by Babu Sudhansu Guhathakurta. The post of the Professor of English was kept vacant till 1934 as no native whether Hindu or Muslim was suitable enough for it. Against the vacancy a part-time arrangement was made in securing six-period-a-week services of Mr. J. W. Holme, then Principal of La Martinere for Boys located at the bottom of Loudon Street. Earlier he had been a renowned Professor of English in the IES for several years at Presidency College, Calcutta, and my teacher for four years at the Degree Honours and Post Graduate levels, during which he knew me intimately. It was he who resigned his IES job on the ground that the prospects of the All-India Educational Service were not sufficiently attractive and accepted the Principalship of La Martinere where he had a lovely, two-storied bungalow for his residence. Here was a Triton among minnows; he was persuaded (for a nominal monthly

allowance of Rs. 300/-) to give the benefit of his much esteemed scholarship to Islamia students. His automobile would draw up before the College gate, say for an hour, every day when he would stride into the Staff Room first for collecting the Attendance Register and then into the Library to look up one or two Reference Volumes and finally into his class where he would read and interpret texts in his soft, sibilant, typically English voice. What a contrast to the raucous, ear-splitting, loud American colloquy rampant in Pakistan to-day. Whether Islamia students would understand him at all (he would never descend into mediocre level) was a different matter but his short visits had an aroma about them and would bring dignity to the staff. Messrs Abdul Quader, Ataul Hakim, Kazemuddin Ahmed, Md. Zahurul Islam and (after a year) Syed Muzafferuddin Nadvi were Professors of Arabic, Maths, Philosophy, History and Persian respectively. We were told Abdul Quader who belonged to Bihar Educational Service had fifteen years' experience. He hailed from Bhagalpur, was short, thin and spare physically, had beard on his cheeks and chin, long eyebrows and a coat on his body with open collars but no tie. He was a Quadiani (a heretical Muslim sect) with a shrewd look but secretive ways. The story went that the Education Minister of Bihar had a riddance of his unpopular creed by his transfer to Calcutta where no one knew that he was a Quadiani. He was, however, an efficient teacher and pleasant to talk to. He was Mr. Harley's confidant. The remaining four in the foregoing list have all been my personal friends who are all alive to-day and in Dacca. Ataul Hakim who later secured a Calcutta Ph.D. was a popular figure; looked simple, and harmless. He had six years (may be more, I am not sure) teaching experience in Govt. Colleges before he was appointed Professor at Islamia. Unlike his colleagues he had the knack and capacity of building houses; he owned some in Calcutta during the coming years. A man of Chittagong he must have acquired sufficiently in advance of the partition a good plot of land in Jamal Khan, Chittagong, where he constructed shortly after 1947 a group of buildings which brought him a good round sum as income from rent. Now he is a substantial landlord in Dacca and going strong. Mr. Zahurul Islam, 1st Class M. A. in History of Dacca University, who had nominal experience as a Junior teacher at Dacca got straight into Bengal Educational Service as Professor of History. In 1946 he was appointed Principal, Dacca Intermediate

College and in 1950 succeeded me at Chittagong College. On retirement from Govt. service after a brief spell at the Bengali Academy here he had been Inspector of Colleges at Rajshahi University wherefrom he rose to be the President of the Board of Secondary and Intermediate Education, East Pakistan (there was only one Board then in place of the several that have since come into existence) for more than one term. He is now a Supernumerary teacher in the Deptt. of History, Dacca University. *Mr. Kazemuddin Ahmed had a good Second Class M. A. Degree in Philosophy from Calcutta University, a few years' teaching experience before his appointment as Professor of Philosophy and managed to have an initial pay of Rs. 300/- a month, fifty rupees more than the starting salary in the BES scale. Similarly Muzafferuddin Nadvi had a direct appointment in BES. None of these gentlemen had to compete with Hindu rivals or to pass through the Departmental Board or the Statutory Board (the then organization corresponding to the Public Service Commission since 1937) for their substantive appointment, but in each stage of my lift in Govt. service I had to compete with others from different parts of India (as a result of the post being advertised) and get through the Departmental Board, the Statutory Board and later through the Public Service Commission on different occasions. I did not mind; nor did break down after palpably iniquitous deals. But the invidious distinction made on the inauguration of Islamia College in a number of cases cannot be forgotten, humanly speaking. Then as now or till recently to be correct, I had a contempt for all adventitious aid. My soul recoiled (and my body did not suffer movements to that end) from manoeuvring and jockeying for positions, from making Tadbir (canvassing?) for preferment, from bargaining for questionable transactions, from securing avuncular assistance in the public services—efforts and tendencies predominantly prevalent in every sphere of life today leading to corrupt practices in each and vitiating the entire atmosphere of appointment to public service.

But I am in the midst of a reviews of the staff position at Islamia in the first four years of its existence. To make a reference to some of the 18 lecturers of the time let me have a new paragraph. Of the three in the Department of English (excluding myself) the name of Mr. Altaf Husain, sworn in as Central Minister of Industries on 29th March, 1965,

* He has retired since.

the famous Editor of the Dawn for years together, leaps into the mind at once. In 1918-19 he was my junior contemporary (by a year only) at Baker Hostel, Calcutta, during our B. A. studies. Living as we did in contiguous rooms he would humourously describe himself as my "neighbour-in-law". He took his B.A. Pass degree from City College, Calcutta, in regular course, I believe, after which he joined the English M. A. Classes at Dacca University set up in 1921 and belonged to the first bunch of M. A.'s from that University and was placed in First Class. May be for two years he had the temporary job of an Asstt. Lecturer there before he became a lecturer in English at Islamia. He managed to have Rs. 250/- to start with, although the Lecturers' scale in a Govt. College was Rs. 150/- to 450/-. He bargained successfully for this higher initial salary and he had the required skill and support. At the end of the academic session 1926-27, that is to say, in about ten months, he left for Chittagong Islamic Intermediate College where he joined a newly created cadreless post of a Lecturer in English on a fixed pay of Rs. 250/- a month-the expectation being that this post would soon be incorporated in the Bengal Educational Service with the designation of a Professor. For seven years at a stretch he continued there against the same non-descript job and on the same fixed terms. Later I told him that he could not contract himself out of the incidence of the Lecturers' scale and he must have got the usual increments after a proper representation. During his first ten-month tenure at Islamia College I observed that he would take up no teaching work other than a play of Shakespeare and the selected syllabus from Palgrave's Golden Treasury, Bk IV. I further observed that in looking over Terminal Examination English scripts he would confine himself to these portions only and leave the other portions to be examined by his colleagues. Perhaps this was the convention at Dacca University or more probably he wouldn't exert going through other books included in the hundredmark paper. But in his sartorial outfit and general deportment he was smart, a U-person, every inch of him; alternately sweet and overbearing, blunt and obsequious. And the germination of the seeds of journalism within him gave no indication yet. A fairly widespread feeling existed that teaching was not his true metier. At a farewell meeting held in the Assembly Hall on the eve of his departure for Chittagong (at the end of the session) A. B. Z. Hasan, a prominent and talented student of the College stood up and

among other things remarked that Mr. Altaf Husain was the most smartly dressed gentleman if not a successful teacher etc. Mr Harley and our colleagues felt hurt over this uncalled for and improper insult and it was pointed out to me that being a teacher of the English Department I had a moral obligation to defend him. And I had to respond. There should be no unnecessary alarm among the teachers, I said; in heaven too there was a rebellion, and a rift in the lute was a common experience in life, and I meted out a Platonic curse in Shelley's language :

Thou noteless blot on a remembered name!

But be thyself, and know thyself to be!

At the End of the meeting Altaf whispered into my ears "You were magnificent". My thesis was that being one of the pioneer-teachers at our dream-College Altaf Hussain's will be a remembered name. Ah! woe is me! where is Islamia College now? In the new Indian Union first it became Calcutta Central College and now it is Maulana Azad's secular memorial whereas in theocratic Pakistan a purely Govt. College has the "Murarichad" addition to it. Jagannath, Madhusudan, Madanmohan, Brajajal and similar titles in East Pakistan flash across the mind. But I am tarrying long over the name of one lecturer of the period. Another most interesting figure was Mian Mohammad Zahooreddin, M. A. (Alig) in Philosophy; he had just passed out of his alma mater and was a gracious gift from the same historically famous Vice-Chancellor of Aligarh from whom Dr. Itrat Husain Zuberi later was. Mian Md. Zahuruddin had a bulky body, a chubby face confirming that he was very young in age, and a voluble tongue mostly pleasing to the authorities but boring and senseless to some of us. His tuneful talk annexed Mr. Harley for ever within five minutes of his first interview with the latter who soon afterwards ran up to the Staff Room to say that at Aligarh University the teachers were available all over the day. On his transition from the Calcutta Madrassah he couldn't adjust himself to the idea that College teachers had no hours or registers of arrival and departure. Here was Zahooreddin to controvert the prevailing convention in Bengal. The Main Sahab's many gifts annexed as well Nawab Bahadur Nawab Ali Choudhury, Executive Councillor, Govt. of Bengal and President, Islamia College Governing Body. Simultaneously he captured the imagination of the Muslim public of Calcutta. In his Intermediate Logic classes, however, he was found out to be 'un-

logical' and the students of these classes became 'illogical' in their conduct but soon they and others were won over by his selfless endeavours to relieve their pecuniary hardship in the prosecution of their studies at Calcutta. It was he who organised the Islamia College Duty Fund, recruited student-volunteers to collect donations and subscriptions not only from the rich merchants of Colootollah area in Calcutta but also from the interior of the Province during College vacations; the harvest would be distributed among needy students in the shape of stipends and lump sum grants. In recognition of his commendable self-sacrifice, the authorities appointed him Superintendent of a new hostel for Islamia boys in the rented group of buildings known as Seal Mansion at College Street just opposite the Calcutta Medical College Outpatients' Section. Later the same place was used as the residence of the Muslim students of the Medical College. In his appointment as Lecturer he had his reward as well; he was given a starting pay of Rs. 250/- in place of Rs. 150/- for his Bengali colleagues. The Main Sabeb would call for some more references which I propose to make in due course. Let me pass on now to another honoured name, the late lamented Khan Bhabadur Raza Ali Wahshat, Lecturer in Urdu. He was past middle age when he joined Islamia on being relieved of his job at the Imperial Library, Calcutta. But he was a Urdu Poet of acknowledged fame and distinction. Tall & strong, quiet and sober, he had an impressive personality and yet he wore a perennial smile of childlike simplicity on his lips. His English handwriting was attractive, rounded, bold, clear, very legible and he had correct intonation and accents in his English conversation but he was habitually reticent. Somehow or other I became one of his intimate young friends. On one or two occasions he broke his reticence to say before other colleagues that Mr. Hena was the only speaker in the Assembly Hall worth listening to and that he was a 'glutton for work'. This last was his own language. Another Lecturer who made himself universally popular was Mr. Monon (of Malabar Coast), an efficient teacher of Intermediate Commerce. Modest and urbane he integrated himself completely into Islamia life. Kamal Krishna Ghosh, Taher Jamil, Quazi Akram Hussain of the Deptt. of English, Charushashi Baby & Mr. A. Baqui, Bibbuti Babu of Maths. were some of our dear friends at that time. Taher Jamil became the Principal of Rajshahi College after Independence but

unluckily enough he died a premature death in harness. I do not mean any disrespect to the others whose names are not included in this list.

I was heedless of my official status in the fresh field; I didn't work out the budgetary aspects of my life in Calcutta. I Have already said so. On joining Islamia when I had direct evidence of appointments made and terms given in flagrant breach of Govt. service rules and regulations, my optimistic faith in their just operation and application suffered a rude shock but my ambition was to play my part in making Islamia College a worthy institution of academic pursuit plus practical training in social service. I conceived that it should be a personnel-pool from which would be drawn competent young men not only to fill position in liberal professions but also to take up social uplift work among the down-trodden Muslim masses of the province. In every field our Hindu brothers and sisters were rendering national and social word. Why can't we conduct ourselves in a comparable manner? At its start and with a head innocent of University ways, academic and extra-academic traditions were simply non-existent Islamia College. The teachers, a mixed bag, were happy-go-lucky at their best, thoughtless at their worst. Immediately I set about introducing, if I could, an intellectual atmosphere as at Rajshahi ar Presidency. With the Principal's help readily given I secured a big, spacious room at the East-end of the first floor of the southern wing (there being an attached lavatory to it) for the teachers and the corresponding room exactly opposite on the northern wing for the students as their Common Room for reading and for playing indoor games. I sought the charge of running the Student's Common Room and I got it. I arrnged for the immediate subscription of the all important periodicals and magazines and newspapers. I made frequent visits to it and tried to stimulate their interest in general knowledge and information. Similarly I arranged for the placement of serious journals, Indian & foreign, on the Staff Room tables. As months rolled by I felt the necessity for the provission of tea and light refreshment during working hours and one day I made a formal proposal for the establishment of a staff Club on subscription basis. The majority backed up the proposal of a three-rupee admission charge and a three-rupee monthly subscription in addition to the payment of prices for the things consumed. Dr. Sarya Ranjan Das Gupta was watching quietly. At the end of the parleys he asked me when it would be possible to start the club. I said as soon

as I would collect funds for buying utensils & crockery & provision. He offered an on-the-spot cash loan which was gratefully accepted and with which I ran to the nearby Chandney Market and New Market, bought all the requirements there and returned in less than two hours along with a coolie on whose head there was the huge basket of the purchases made. It was then about five in the afternoon. But tea and light refreshment were placed on the table in less than half an hour. I felt proud and Dr. Das Gupta & all others present happy over the prompt execution. My ambition, I may repeat, was to lay the foundation of traditions among the staff as well as among the students. We were on the move. A constitution for the Students' Union was drawn up; each branch of activity was placed under a teacher but each had a student secretary besides the Student Vice-President and General Secretary for over-all organisation and conduct. This Constitution was modelled on the convention and practice of Aligarh and Dacca University. Our teachers coming out of these two places drafted and drew up the charter and put it through. It was designed to ensure students' freedom and initiative in organising and conducting their corporate activities. Mr Harley consistently held to his view that academic work on Saturdays should be nominal and that weekly debates and extra-academic meets or functions held and finished by 1 p. m. on Saturdays so that students and teachers might have a halfday off. He had the time-table framed accordingly. A tradition in dress was also introduced simultaneously. All students were to attend with a black **Sherwani** and white trousers on. That was the Islamia College uniform, that was. At the initial stage (or shall I say for a number of years) this 'Uniform' tradition worked fairly satisfactorily. Whether later it was honoured more in the breach than observance is another matter. We had our weekly gatherings from 11.30 a. m. to 1 p. m. Occasionally esteemed guests were brought in for a talk or discussion or even for participation in debates and parliamentaries.

One Saturday forenoon in January, 1927, it was my turn to give a talk to the Union meeting. I chose for my theme "The Ideals before Islamia College". The latest miracle performed by Civil Aviation, and it was one of the earliest in India, was the flight to Calcutta by Sir Samuel and Lady Maud Hoare. In my opening remarks I made a reference to this historic and triumphant achievement of science (flights now are so common and huddum that they stir no thrill at all) and said that human relations and

human uplift (in those days development of underdeveloped countries, birth of Welfare States and rendering of social justice for the masses in sharp contrast with millions of crores of rupees being spent in India and Pakistan to-day out of loans from the World Bank & IMF and out of an unnumbered number of 'AIDS' from friendly and even from unfriendly countries were unknown had far greater appeal for me than the phantasmagoria of science (many of science's unending succession of breathtaking feats were yet dim and phantasmal). Life, I continued, in an academy of scholastic pursuits must shed its ivory-tower character and must be related to and linked up with the bard realities of community existence so that the destiny of man in general and the Muslims in particular made a better showing. Referring to the feats performed over the Christmas Week and New Year's Day in the two classic Calcutta Races, Viceroy's Cup and King-Emperor George V Cup, by the two pedigree ponies, Quincey and Cap-a-pie I called upon Islamia youngmen to prove human Quinceys and Cap-a-pies in the race of life. I made a further reference to one of the latest speeches of Sir Abdur Rahim who had just taken over the leadership of Muslim Bengal in which he had made a moving appeal for physical fitness, intellectual excellence and moral stamina from our youth. These social services were the ideals of Islamic College, I pointed out. A wave of fervour and enthusiasm surged over the faces of my youthful audience. At my rate that was my personal vanity.

May I interpose here a paragraph about my private life, since my arrival in Calcutta on the 1st July, 1926? A week's stay at Calcutta Hotel showed how inconvenient it was, financially and otherwise, to continue there. I knocked about in search of residential accommodation in the Wellesley locality and within my limited means but my efforts proved vain and fruitless. In sheer desperation I accepted the offer of a room only without other badly needed adjuncts from a poor Christian Gentleman of Gardner Lane, half a mile off from Islamia. I bought a camp-bed to sleep on and my cook slept on the floor in the same room. He was allowed to cook at one corner of a small attached varandah with a portable oven. But the sharing of a common latrine with other tenants of the Christian lessor (that was perhaps the only source of income of my landlord) was a hellish experience. One evening as I was passing through the dark gateway of the house I was bitten from behind by a pet

pup of one of the tenants. It was a silent, sounless act of hostility from the little fellow and a bloody act as well. In the course of my diurnal wanderings I had noticed the existence of a doctor's clinic in the neighbourhood, to which I ran, and luckily and readily received anti-septic treatment and bandaging. When Mr. Harley heard about it next morning he remarked that pups were lovable in temperate European climates but in the tropics they were dangerous. He exclaimed "Health first, everything else afterwards, Mr. Hena" and shoved me to Lt. Col. Fox in charge of Tropical Diseases at Medical College. The now famous Tropical School of Medicine, Calcutta, was undreamt of at that time, just a skeleton body existed. Dr. Fox's recipe against my enemy, Mr. Dog, was 'if the animal is well and alive for 21 days to come' I needn't have the anti-rabic injections. The little fellow did thrive well beyond 21 days in the plenitude of his master's care and affection but my own dogged care was to flee the place and seek shelter elsewhere. And news from home to the effect that my little child who was born a healthy baby had been seriously ill led to doubling and redoubling of my efforts for a small, self-containde, separate place. These landed me in a rear half-house (the other half being in front) at Taltolla Lane within easy reach of my College. Its entrance was through a blind alley, dirty and dingy at the head of which stood a squalid bakery in a shack with a smoking chimney and a musical inmate who, whenever he was free from his kneading, moulding-into-shape and 'firing' opertions, would clutch his creaking harmonium and play upon it noisily and sing interminably-a two year horror for my wife and myself. Two incredibly small rooms, a kitchen, a washing place in the ground floor and two corresponding rooms upstairs with a little open space and also a latrine constituted the half-house of which I became a tenant soon. It had just been white-washed and rapainted and when I met the hard-boiled Hindu owner he fixed his unalterable rent at Rs. 60/- a month. Unhesitatingly I closed, and ran home to fetch my wife and child. I was grieved unspeakably at the poorest state of my daughter's health; she was a skin and bone with multiple boils on her head; she was drifting towards 'infantile liver'; her sweet smile, fainting and fading, and her outstretched arms towards me saved me from imminent collapse. During the train journey from Rampurhat to Howrah fellow-passengers were moved at the sight of me making hopeless attempts to save a sinking little star. Her struggle for a major part of two years and our own including the treatment of the

most renowned Homeopath Calcutta has ever had, Dr. Younani, resulted in God's infinite mercy in the sparing of the life of our first-born who grew up and in regular course passed her B. A., B. T., earned a lot of money as a trained teacher in Govt. Schools in East and West Pakistan and is now a wholtime housewife with two little sons in her family. *After having lived for two years at Taltola Lane with slum hutments on three sides we were lucky enough to shift to a bright suite of first floor rooms in a new house just built at Park Circus, one of the earlist development areas under the Calcutta Improvement Trust. It was one of the earliest buildings as well-the owner being late Mr. Sayedur Rahman of Burdwan, then Senior Munsif, later District and Sessions Judge. His eldest son, Mr. Abdul Wahab, a well-known journalist, and his second son, an Attorney, are now living at Dacca. His Calcutta house was close to that of late Mr. J. C. Gupta, Barrister-at-Law; the latter's son I believe is the well-known leftist politician of India, Mr. Bhupesh Gupta. At Taltolla Lane I was very lonely and devoid of social joys. Here at Park Circus I had two intimate friends in Professor Kazemuddin Ahmed of Islamia College and Mr. Rafiqur Rahman, Manager, The Mussalman, the only Muslim Newspaper in Calcutta at that time. The editor of the paper, Mr. Mujubar Rahman, an elderly gentleman and brother of Rafiqur Rahman, treated us exactly as his younger brothers and together we spent a happy social life. He was a bachelor, very tidy in his habits, methodical in his ways, a willing host and generous entertainer. Being and ardent disciple of the late Mr. Abder Rasul, who was one of the earliest and at the same time most famous Calcutta Barrister-at-Law (hailing from East Bengal) and who was a Congressite and a sturdy freedom-fighter and who was in fact the founder of the Mussalman, Mr. Mujubar Rahman was a politician of the Congress School and consistently and continuously held fast to that creed. He wore Khaddar and although he was not unwilling to pay his part in the altered turn that Muslim politics had taken, he didn't have any respect for the leading practitioners of the same. He questioned their intergrity and professed sel-sacrifice. One more glance at Mr. Abdur Rasul will be pertinent. He and Mr. Jitendralal Banerjee another stormy petrel of the period had to quit Calcutta University Law College (they were lecturers there) for their bad polotics and at the instance of Lord Hardinge, the then Viceroy

* A daughter has been added since.

of India, We were told. This happened when we were College students. On occasions when Mr. Mujubar Rahman was sick or otherwise occupied I had to write some editorials, and this did on non-controversial and non-political topics. As a pioneer in Muslim journalism and as one who had a clean conduct of sacrifice, the history of the newspapers and periodicals in East Pakistan should yield a place of honour to him. RIP.

In my talk to Islamia College Union in January, 1926, I made a reference to a recent speech of Sir Abdur Rahim. In my earlier account of my Rajshahi College life I hinted how I had a brief interview with him at the Bengal Secretariat in the summer of 1925. I have also noted the then slowly emerging shift in Muslim politics away from the Non-Cooperation Movement of nationalistic politics with particular reference to the still-born Ministry of Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq in 1924 and my interview with the latter at Darjeeling in the summer of the same year. He had since been in the wilderness. Sir Abdur Rahim now, that is to say, towards the end of 1926, came into political limelight and was acclaimed as the undisputed leader of Muslim Bengal. On the morrow of his retirement from executive Councillorship he made a dash to Aligarh where he delivered his famous, or infamous from the Hindu standpoint, public speech in which he said among other things that a Turk or a Tartar across the road was a better friend to an Indian Muslim than his Hindu neighbour next door. But sir A. Rahim had played, even as a High court Judge, a valiant part in the Islington Commission Report on Pay & Services. But that patriotic role of his, absolutely non-communal, was washed away by his present outrageous communalism. Besides, he had another sin against him. As a member of the Executive Council, Bengal, he had succeeded in getting fixed a good percentage of appointments for the Muslims in future recruitment to the Civil Services in the province. He had just founded the Bengal Muslim Party, the manifesto of which included an attractive programme for an all-round improvement of the Muslim community. Simultaneously a daily bearing the title, The Muslim Standard, was started as an organ of expression of the party. One evening early in 1927 Mr. Abdul kasem called at my place in the dingy alley of Taltolla Lane and requested me to help him in his editorial duties of The Muslim Standard. He was an intimate friend of my eldest brother and well-wisher of the family as a whole. He was not

only in the forefront of public life in Bengal but an all-India figure. For years Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq and he held the stage. He was a disciple of Surendranath Banerjee and a former Sub-Editor of Banerjee's paper, The Bengali, His only son, Mr. Abdul Hashem, who played a prominent part in the Muslim League politics of post-provincial- autonomy period, and a staunch supporter of Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy is now the Director of the Islamic Academy at Dacca. At Mr. Abul Kasem's request I shared a daily portion of the editorial duties of Mr. Abul kasem within the framework of my spare time in the coming months Some of my articles attracted the attention of Sir Abdur Rahim leading to a fairly close contact with him at his residence at 6. Loudon Street-the place becoming a landmark in Calcutta life on account of its association with that great man. I vividly remember the gloom that covered his face on the day the news of the dastardly Police shooting at **kulkati** (Barisal) in which a number of poor Muslims had been killed outright under Mr. E. N. Blandy ICS, District Magistrate, later Chief Secretary and later still Chairman, Public Service Commission, reached Calcutta. Equally vividly I remember the circumstances in which Sir Abdur Rahim being called upon by the Governor to form a Ministry failed to have any Hindu colleague to work with him and had to report his failure. The boycott of the maker of the Aligarh speech was total But next when Mr. Byomkesh Chakravarty, an old but eminent Barrister-at -Law in the Calcutta High court was called upon to form a Ministry two Muslim colleagues for Mr. Chakravarty were readily available. They were Mr. A. K. Ghuznavi of Mymensingh and Nawab Farouqui of Comilla. Mr. Chakravarty who was selected in place of Sir A. Rahim had an igominious fall on account of his Son-in-Law and other relations being involved in the notorious Banga Luxmi Cotton Mills case leading to their long imprisonment. The fate of the Bengal Muslim Party under Sir A. Rahim, however, was sealed; the Muslim standard disappeared too. It had a brief spell of promising life leaving a trail of sad reflections in the memory. At any given time whether then or now long after independence Muslim public life is babitually characterised by lack of cohesion, lack of a unity of purpose and common action. The same story of self-seeking and self-aggrandisement having no remote connexion with the zeal for the uplift of the masses is being repeated year after year. Despite screening of a good few thousand of public servants in Pakistan

after 1958 and despite the present activation of Sadacher Samities in India, rampant corruption is reported to be widespread in both the countries when food, shelter and other barest necessities of life are passing beyond the reach of the teeming millions.

But the common man in this sort of economy and in this sort of social order is struggling on against shattering odds,

Still nursing the unconquerable hope
Still clutching the inviolable shade

for a better dispensation and juster conditions of life. For the last forty two years of my life I have stuck on to my educational job unwaveringly and undeflected either by the insidious charm that climbing brings with it in the shape of higher and higher pay and added amenities or by "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" and

The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes.

I have stood by the students and with the students lovingly, diligently, conscientiously in their tutorial classes as well as in their general. Though very young then I did exactly the same thing at Islamia College. For my general lectures I made plodding preparation at home and in the library; for my tutorials I fixed up in advance the task to be given, and I examined the scripts with scrupulous care. During the summer vacation of 1927, I received a letter at Rampurhat from Mr. Harley writing from Ghoom atop Darjeeling asking me to send him a draft of Welcome Address to be presented, on behalf of Islamia College Union to Sir Stanley Jackson, Governor of Bengal, who would be at our College after the vacation to perform its formal inauguration. Mr. Harley gave no 'writing' points. I complied forthwith. He made some verbal alterations at places; the draft otherwise intact was approved. One of the points I made was that Islamia College students would stand by ordered existence and discipline on account of which its corporate activities should receive a larger grant than the meagre amount provided in the College budget. This point caught on. At Mr. Harley's desire and with the approval of the Union office-bearers I had to read the Welcome Address in the solemn function that was held on the scheduled day. It was my own composition and therefore I did the reading with spontaneous ease

and in clear enunciation. Sir Stanley in his reply promised a larger grant to the Union and announced a personal donation. The Union glided on a smoother keel.

In continuation of the summer vacation of 1928 Mr. Holme went on leave for three months and a half. The officiating turn should have come to me automatically but Mr. Harley nominated an Anglo-Indian of questionable credentials for a teaching job and having only an Honours Degree in English of Calcutta University and sought the approval of the Governing body which, however, saw through Mr. Harley's crafty design and rejected the proposal. I acted in Mr. Holme's place as Professor during the period. On his return from England Mr. Holme gave me a ring from LaMartiniere and asked "Am I still on the staff of Islamia?" in his soft, sibilant accents. In fact he would made the same inquiry at the end of every long vacation. Pressure from Mr. Harley was responsible for Mr. Holme's continuance till 1934-an arrangement which he personally disliked on account of his wholetime preoccupations at his own institution and on account of its manifest injustice to the Islamia Department of English. On resuming his duties he wrote out on one occasion "Mr. Hena acted during my absence as Head of the English Deptt, with entire success". Mr. Harley's meanness and secretive methods to have perfect security in his administration became patent in 1934 when permanent arrangements in Mr. Holme's place were made. I shall have occasion to refer to some of these in due course.

During this period of four years of my life at Islamia, the College Union bestowed Life-Membership, first, on Nawab Musharraf Hossain who, on Mr. Fazlul Huq's support, became an Education Minister (1928-29) and second, on Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq during 1929-30. Both the occasions were marked by decent ceremonies. As teacher in charge of the Union activities the Conferment of Life Membership drafts on both occasions were made by me. And I had not only to get up a suitable, ceremonial show for both but also to speak in justification. In the foundation of Mr. Huq's Proja Party almost concurrent with Sir Abdur Rahim's Bengal Muslim Party (to the latter the former became a sort of competitive rival) and in its running the Nawab Sabeb, a Tea Magnate of Jalpaiguri, gave sound financial backing. Let it be borne in mind that the same Proja Party to Mr. Fazlul Huq brought him to the helm of

affairs in 1937 by sweeping the polls and by the infliction of a crushing defeat on Sir Nazimuddin in the battle royal at Patuakhali Constituency. On account of his personal difficulties following financial embarrassments, the acceptance of office by Mr. Huq in 1928-29 was out of the question. Mr. Musharaf Hossain's suitability for the position of the Education Minister was under derisive comments: the way in which he acquitted himself brought about titters in social circles. I had no information whatsoever of the circumstances (or of the persons responsible) leading to his invitation to become the first Life Member of the Islamia College Union. But when called upon I drafted the Conferment Scroll in flowing, sonorous language and when the time came for me to speak I said "that he was not a mountain of flesh nor a monument of grandeur but one who was possessed of child-like simplicity and naivety etc.". But on the second occasion I gave my strong, moral support. Mr. Huq in effect and substance, was the founder of Islamia which was his cherished dream. He should have been the first Life Member. In official circles Nawab Ali Chowdhury, Ghuznavi, Farouqui, Nazimuddin were adored but never Mr. Huq. His politics, his unconventional ways of life, his hold and spell over the masses, his bubbling vivacity and bursting dynamism, his many gifts and many reverses were beyond the understanding and appreciation of pettifogging mandarins. Mr. Harley was lukewarm, many staff members raised their eyebrows. I wrote out a terse but compact little address and in my short speech I said "let us render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's. Addressing Mr. Huq I said "Mr. Fazlul Huq, with all thy faults we love thee still". In his reply he made a pointed reference to the fact that he had no son and that there were no regrets about this since the Islamia boys were all his sons and would continue to be so. In saying so he wept and many among his audience shed tears of their own. Years afterwards he had a son born to him out of his Meerut wife. He is now in the B. A. classes of Dacca College.

This is the place where I could make a relevant reference to some of the distinguished guests who addressed the Union during the period from 1928 to 1930. Of these Dr. W. S. Urquhart, Principal, Scottish Church College, (his death was reported in The Statesman, 20 July, 1964, in his village home at Torphins, Aberdeenshire, at the age of 87) and Vice-Chancellor, Calcutta University for a term of three years with effect

from 1928, was one. A well-known educationist he was Mr. Harley's friend and countryman, that is to say, a native of Scotland. In introducing Dr. Urquhart, our principal remarked humourously that he belonged to the right part of Scotland, viz Edinburgh, whereas Dr. Urquhart to the wrong part, viz, Aberdeen, and paid warm tributes to his work as Principal of Scottish Church College. The theme of Dr. Urquhart's talk was "Sincerity in Life". As a teacher of Philosophy he made a learned and philosophical exposition of the subject. Speaking in abstract terms he elucidated at some length how human conduct should be governed by a synthesis of honest profession and sincere practice and indicated how a cleavage between the two led to many evils and social discord. The demand for rights and privileges, power and position, employment and emoluments should bear a scrupulous proportion to fitness and efficiency and finally summed up:

First deserve and then desire.

My first reaction was that most of the students didn't understand the import of this learned discourse. My second reaction was that his address was a veiled denunciation of communalism. Let it be remembered in this connexion that all 'communalism' in this view before Pakistan came into existence proceeded from the Muslims alone and not an iota of this from the Hindus. The Muslim members of the teaching staff fully shared my second reaction as they made it clear at the end of the meeting. Ex-officio I had to move 'the Vote of thanks' resolution. First I supplied Mr. Harley's omission and pointed out that Dr. Urquhart was our most honoured guest as the Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University and not as the Principal of a particular College and then I sought the permission of the chair to make a simple analysis of the scholarly dissertation to which we had just been treated on the ground that perhaps it was a "caviare to the general" and I did give a clear outline. I agreed that the motto of every self-respecting young man should be the development of his potentialities in order to make him an efficient citizen. The Islamia College, I continued, was established not to turn out communal-minded graduates but just to equip its students with full training for a decent career in which he could compete on equal terms with other qualified rivals. They required an atmosphere of love, sympathy and inspiration for such training and development. Under the domination of other conditions the Muslim students felt small and

looked small and didn't have the urge to forge ahead. But who is deserving, who is efficient and who is not are questions of controversy, and their solution and interpretation very often lie with entrenched interests and built-in preserves. It would be a gracious act on the part of Dr. Urquhart if he would kindly illustrate his thesis with concrete cases. So far as the teachers of Islamia College were concerned, they had taken up with devotion the work of turning out worthy citizens and they were not cantankerous politicians. Thanks to Dr. Urquhart that he came. All the while Mr. Harley glowered and the moment I had finished offered his friend the privilege of a reply but the latter declined. In contrast with the angry look of the Chairman I had warm embraces from my colleagues. In the post-meeting High Tea upstairs I sat next to Dr. Urquhart who was courteous and didn't appear to have any rancour. In the joint visit of Poet Nazrul Islam and Roy Bahader Dinesh Chandra Sen, D. Litt (Hon.) Bengali litterateur, we had a signal honour. The latter then in his advanced age was the image of wisdom and humility while the latter of swelling vitality. Dinesh Sen sketched in a few words the course of Bengali literature. The poet first declined to give a talk-speech-making not being his vocation, recited one of his poems but eventually made a short speech. He spoke of the tremendous energy he possessed and said that if the same energy did not have a channel of poetic expression he would have been a highway robber. Who could ever dream then that his impetuous, rebellious life-force would be paralysed in static muteness in 15 years or so. He is my contemporary in age. He was good enough to drop in occasionally at No. 2, Mirzapur Street (University Law College Mess referred to already in another connexion) in the twenties (he was a young poet then) and sing us a song. My contacts with him since then were many and I cherished the ambition once of writing a book on Nazrul Islam, the Poet, but this was strangled by the load of full-time duties I carried in my professional career. In 1943 when Central Govt. Gazetted appointment as Sortg Publicity Organiser was created in the Publicity Deptt. of Bengal I was anxious to have him appointed to the post but alas! his mind was fast losing its hold and I had to abandon my idea. During my second tenure of seven years at Rajshahi College my delight was to drill the Muslim students in his songs and poems and in getting some of them to write literary essays on his poetry. One such essay was read out in a function

in 1933 when Sir Nazimuddin was on a visit. It elicited praise from everyone present. But true to this going off at a tangent. In Mr. Villiers, President of the European Chamber of Commerce (?) we had another distinguished guest. He gave a talk on Aeronautics, a very unusual subject then which brought enlightenment to us, lay people. We had a youngman once on the card, Dr. M. Q. Khuda, just returned from England after having taken his D. Sc. degree from London, the first Muslim of the Province to have this distinction. Full of years and honours he is now the Director of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Eastern Region, Dacca. *In 1937 he acted as the Principal of Islamia College for 3/4 months. Some of his relations on the Students-rolls of the College during the period under survey were eager to have him at a Union meeting and we too were anxious to offer our greetings to the young scientist. He gave a talk on "the Education System in Bengal" in course of which he made sweeping attacks on the teachers. He appeared to be much too presumptuous and overbearing. In my remarks at the conclusion of his speech I had to point out that instead of discussing the strength or weakness of the educational system in operation ~~them~~ he had unjustifiably attacked the teaching personnel from top to bottom. In fact I hit back with severity but not with malice. My subsequent contacts with him will receive their treatment in their relevant order, Debates, addresses by guests, talks from teachers etc., were capped by an enjoyable 'parliamentary' organised with some care. I drafted a Taxation Bill in which were inserted some humorous items, such as a levy on bicycles and another on bachelors so that there might be sturdy opposition attacks, particularly from student cycle-users who were many and from bachelor-teachers. Our young colleague, Mr. Taher Jamil (named earlier), secured the participation of a bright and eloquent Englishman who was well-versed in parliamentary practice and procedure (I forget his name, sorry) and who conducted the deliberations of this mock session with skill and adroitness. Students and teachers had much to learn from the nice little legislative drama enacted.

Sports and athletics in Calcutta Colleges have always been circumscribed and severely limited on account of a lack of playing fields. We suffered from the same paucity and Islamia College didn't have such a

* He has retired since.

field till some years later. When it acquired one, its site and situation were not attractive being situated at an east-end slum area. Some biweekly sharings were arranged by Mr. Harley in the Calcutta Maidan for football plays. Tennis had better scope in his own house-lawn and in the two attached to Baker Hostel where there was a fairly good scope for small-area games. But Islamis College students gave a very good account of themselves in their own platoon of the University Training Corps under their History teacher Mr. Abdul Munim Chowdhury who had an impressive, Shapely figure and sportsmanlike habits and temperament. Lt. Chowdhury's islamia platoon proved very smart, made neat turn-outs in military drills and exercises and became an object of envy to other long-established Calcutta Colleges. Writing 35/36 years afterwards I can still see his image in uniform and armour and that of his platoon. The most enthusiastic and successful cadet of the early years was Sayeedul Huq. His tall stature and strong pysique made him an outstanding member. Past his middle age now and to all intents and purposes in financial difficulties I see him occasionally riding a bicycle in the main road of Dacca in old city. Chowdhury has been a lifelong friend although there have many gaps in contacts. He took my place as Inspector of Colleges, Dacca University in 1957.

At the end of the academic session 1928-29 and in synchronisation with the summer vacation to which he added a short leave Mr. Harley planned a holiday at home. Some of us considered it would be nice to see him off at Howrah Railway station where we gathered on the day of his deparutre. There Mr. Salahuddin Khuda Baksh, scion of the family of Khuda Bakhsh, the founder of the famous Khuda Bakhsh Library at Patna joined us. As a practising Barrister-at-Law in the Calcutta Police Courts he had considerable reputation; as a scholar of oriental Studies and Islamic History his contributions to these branches were many (Mr. Harley cultivated his friendly acquaintacne in these studies); as a Lecturer in the Calcutta University Law College he exercised a fascinating spell on generations of Law students; his European wife and he were lavish hosts at their Royck Street house; on one occasion he snatched from my hands Collin's Odyssey, a thin little volume of Odyssey appreciation and had an eager look at several pages. His presence lent charm to the company. But Mr. Harley was found much too busy to

exchange courtesies with us. He was constantly flitting between his redoubtable Head Clerk, the self-styled and self-important Syed Sahed (noticed earlier) and his railway compartment. Confidential talks between the two became so frequent as to compel others' attention. After what appeared to be a final confiding there were yet some more and at the guard's last whistling and the train's motion he had to jump into his room. For me this scene of water-tight security arrangements during his absence had an indelible impression. Professor Abdul Quader, his trusted lieutenant became Officer-in-Charge of the College during the vacation and Mr. Halme acted as principal (undoubtedly part-time) during the few weeks after re-opening that Mr. Harley was away. Abdul Quader's 'charge-holding' period soon made itself felt. The Principal, liveried orderly, an impressive person, appeared at my residence twice with peremptory notes from the 'Charge' Officer and summoning me to immediate invigilation duties at the Islamia College Examination Centre where students of other Colleges (not our own) were taking their University Examinations. The usual custom was that the Chief of a particular College would conduct it with the assistance of invigilators either sent by the University or recruited ad-hoc for the purpose on remunerative basis for each session, morning and afternoon. Unlike Mr. Harley's own practice in the preceding years Mr. Quader blazed a new trail. He issued fiats to those who were spending the vacation at the station each to be Officer-in-Charge of one examination room. This was a contradiction in terms since one Centre could work under the responsibility of one officer only. Having had experience of the 'vanity' trick of Majtra's lieutenant, Aswini Mookerjee, at Rajshahi College, I did the invigilation duties, under protest, for one day only and said that I wouldn't do them on the second day as I had engagements booked earlier. This set the little mind aflame leading to a formal (and I am sure lachrymal) complaint to Mr. Holme at College's reassembling when I had a summons for interview with the latter, at which Mr. Holme looked serious at the beginning but laughed at the end having heard about the 'bossing' innovation of Abdul Quader. During the brief, six-week or so, spell of a 'giant' scholar and seasoned administrator, there was a swift transformation. pampered students, easy-going teachers, Knavish clerks and menials looked about themselves to be of proper shape. Administrative decision and action were prompt and a decent academic at-

phere prevailed to replace school-like fuss and shifty trends.

I was witness to another unforgettable scene. On one occasion as I entered Mr. Harley's room, I found the big, burly body of M. M. Zahooruddin hugging pathetically and frantically the slighter frame of the Principal. I withdrew quickly and after a scrutiny gathered that serious irregularities in the financial transactions of Zahooruddin's Hostel at Seal Mansion had been discovered leading to his surrender for mercy from the chief. The inflated Aligarhean balloon showed a bad puncture but not beyond repair. His prostration and Mr. Harley's diplomacy successfully repaired the rent. His Duty Fund, however, got on quite well, it appeared. Towards the end of the academic session 1929-30 and 2/3 days before my going back to Rajshahi College, a function of greetings to two substantial donors of the Duty Fund was held in the Assembly Hall. They were Messrs Shirazi and Khalilee, rich Calcutta merchants. The greetings followed announcement of donations on the spot (I forget the size). I attended on invitation and noticed that Mr. Bottomley, ADPI for Muslim Education (later DPI) was sitting quietly among others on the dais. Clever Mr. Zahooruddin got me to associate with tribute-giving and in complying I explained the significance of "Khalil", a friend, in Islamic traditions and of "Shiraz" in the Persian poetry of Hafez and of the Part that Quraz-i-Hasana (honourable loan or donation) plays in the Quoran and made apt quotations from Persian and Arabic texts; the guests were exceedingly pleased, and some of my colleagues felt I had sprung a surprise on them since never before in Union Meetings I had given any indication of some familiarity on my part with Persian and Arabic. But my purpose here is to allude to another experience I had the same evening in a posh restaurant in the Chowringhee area. I was having a snack all alone when a company of at least six teachers of Islamia were led into it by Zohooruddin. All were in high and happy spirits and would be having their dinner at the place. Eagerly they clustered round me and wanted to drag me at once to their table. With apologies I stayed back, finished my snack, paid my bill and then joined them just for a few minutes when preparations for service to them were afoot. I still wonder how the donation-giving and charity-receiving function of the day could be followed at night by a luxurious feed and feasting and wherefrom flowed the expenses.

The first University examinations for Islamia boys were held in 1928. That year and the two following, the record of our students and been substantially creditable; the percentage of success was high and although no top place was secured in Honours Course in subjects other than Arabic and Persian, many good Second Class positions were achieved. At the B. A. Pass and Intermediate levels performance was notable. Blueprints of academic and extra academic structures were constantly before us to build on and we strove hard for strong and decent architecture to go up on the designs. I did have however serious misgivings in my mind about the shape of things to come. These proceeded from the dominant trends and tendencies in the Staff Room where the number of senior teachers was limited to say, five, (barring those of Physics and Chemistry) while that of the inexperienced with questionable academic attainments was many. A tone of intellectual devotion, of seriousness of purpose, or the presence of dignified bearing or an atmosphere of studies was nowhere to be seen. The few seniors, not in age or experience but only in status excepting Abdul Quader were mostly flippant; the numerically stronger juniors had nothing to give or to take. After four years of the College's life one expected better from the teachers. However Mr. Harley had a safe and secure place to rule; many of his colleagues comfortable billets and easy jobs which wouldn't have been available to them elsewhere.

Of the prominent Islamia students of those four years it is my proud privilege to make a different narration here. They had justified the establishment of their alma-mater by the record of their work in life exactly as I did through my arguments on the inauguration day. At the end of their academic career they went out into the world in pursuit of their chosen vocations in which they made a mark in pre-Pakistan days and in which (barring just a few on account of premature death) they have been shining now in Pakistan supplying the needed personnel in different spheres of the new State. I envisaged the emergence of competent young men from Islamia into Muslim Bengal for its awakening and progress from a state of soul-killing degradation. In a broad and general measure they have fulfilled my expectations. Herein lies the realisation of a dedicated teacher's life and not in accumulated bank balance or ownership of 'real' buildings and luxurious automobiles. To state with me had in the B. A. Classes, Tafazzul Ali, Taslimuddin

Ahmed, Sultanul Islam, Habibullah Bahar, Ahmed Saghir Chowdhury, Afsaruddin Ahmed, A. B. Z. Hasan and others; in the Intermediate classes, Mohammad Ali of Bogra, his brother Ahmad Ali, Abdul Moyeed of Burdwan, Abdul Wasque, Syed Azizul Huq (Nanna Mian), Wahiduzzaman, A. Q. Ansari, Maulana Abdül Baqui (Fakhrul Mohaddesin), A. R. Fatmi, Shamsul Huda of Birbhum, A. M. M. Mahiuddin of Chakhar, Barisal, Akranuddin Israrul Huq, Nurul Huq, S. N. H. Rizvi, A. F. M. Khalilur Rahman, Gholam Ghaus, Mohammad Ibrahim, M. Huq and others. Tofazzal Ali, Taskinuddin Ahmrad, Ahmad Saghir Chowdhury and Afsaruddin took up a lawyer's career. Ali was the first Vice-President of our Union. He looked slightly stuck-up and self-assured but had a fluent tongue and proved very efficient. He had been at the Calcutta High Court bar till partition after which he became a Minister of East Pakistan for several years. Then he did diplomatic jobs in foreign countries and now he is a senior and successful advocate of the Dacca High Court. After 1950 as I was moving about one day in the Dacca district Law Courts I met Taskinuddin after a long time and discovered that he was then the Public Prosecutor of Dacca. Our contact since then has been closer and more frequent. It is no wonder that as one of the attractive speakers of Islamia College Union he should eventually be a seasoned lawyer. Sultanul Islam continues to be a popular teacher of Political Science at Rajshahi College. Ahmad Saghir and Afsaruddin belonged to Chittagong. The former became a prominent citizen in the public life of the place but died a premature death sometime between 1944 and 1950; the latter is continuing as a lawyer there. A. B. Z. Hasan, son of Shamsul Ulema, Mr. Kamaluddin Ahmed, IES, who was uncharitable to Altaf Hussain in the latter's farewell function at the close of 1926-27 session, was a talented student, head and shoulder above his contemporaries. His tall, handsome figure, his brilliance in conversation (he speaks English with a rattle in his tongue), his incisive wit in drawing character-sketches, his classic immunity from cant and humbug, lend a glamorous charm to his personality. It is no wonder that such a man doesn't fit into hypocrisy-ridden official spheres. He has filled many roles but continues to be a prominent citizen of Pakistan having settled down in Chittagong. To correct an omission in the order of names let me turn to Habibullah Bahar. He had a literary bias from his College days, had close ties with the monthly Bengali magazine,

SAOGAT, which had its habitation in the neighbourhood of Islamia College. In my tutorial classes his essays showed a fecundity of ideas with proportionate lengths in expression. After graduation he took to literary work in Bengali and proved an accomplished feature writer in newspapers. Then he turned to politics and became an efficient Minister of East Pakistan. His mind like that of Poet Nazrul Islam lies overthrown and he is living a mute and isolated life in his Dacca house. *It is a pleasant experience to have had his eldest son as our pupil at Dacca University.

Mohammad Ali's recent but premature death in harness and in the midst of an eventful public career and leaving a gap in it never to be filled by an equal, calls for an elegiac reference from me. I first met him in the First Year Arts English Classes of Islamia College early in 1926-27 session. Being placed in First Division he passed his I. A. Examination in 1928 and then joined the B. A. Honours English classes at Presidency College wherefrom he did his graduation. His touch with me had its origin in a sharp scolding from me one morning when Abdul Moyeed, son of Late Khan Bahader Abdul Momen, Retired Commissioner, Chittagong Division, and he were sitting in a back bench and not behaving themselves. This episode he always mentioned in good humour to his Islamia friends whenever they met together whether in Calcutta or Dacca or elsewhere. In course of the same session we came closer in the tutorial classes and developed personal relations. His work in these classes showed an easy, colloquial, sometimes slangy style and received approbation from me. This inspired him to be regular in attendance and careful in his composition. Then we went our own different ways but again we had another short spell of collaboration at the Bengal secretariat in 1943 when he was the Chief Parliamentary Secretary with the Nazimuddin Ministry and I was doing my Public Relations job. Once only I wrote a personal letter to him from Chittagong. He was then the Health Minister of Bengal and I requested him to help one of the brilliant students of Chittagong College, afflicted with phthisis, in the matter of admission into the Jadabpur T. B. Clinic near Calcutta. He gave my letter top consideration and arranged for the immediate admission of the young man. Such an admission would be impossible without his help. During the period from 1950-1953 when he has died since.

he was Pakistan's Ambassador in USA, my son-in-law was doing a course of higher studies at Washington. Mohammad Ali's generous and affectionate heart led him to treat my son-in-law as a member of his own family in which he would never miss an invitation. This speaks of the man within him. His work as Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, Diplomat will be recorded in Pakistan's history and with particular reference to his achievements in the Bandung Conference. A short while before his death he was at Dacca and on the eve of his departure for West Pakistan he gave an impromptu talk over the Dacca Radio, he called it 'off the cuff' and I had occasion to listen to it. I felt proud over the ease and facility with which he made his delivery in enunciating clearly Government's work in those months. I mourn his death and mourn the loss Pakistan has sustained in his death.

I recall here with poignant grief and sad reflection the premature death of one of our former distinguished pupils, A. F. M. Khalilur Rahman who graduated from Islamia with Honours in History and in course of his post-Graduate studies at Calcutta University he left for London University where he not only took a good Honours degree in his subject but also a Doctorate (Ph. D) having worked assiduously for five years. My direct contact with him began in the tutorial classes, ripened into intimacy on his return from England when he spent six weeks with me at Rajshahi in doing a temporary lectureship in history. Soon afterwards his outstanding academic credentials and personal charm received a ready recognition at the hands of the Govt. of Bengal by his appointment as Professor of History in the Bengal Educational Service at Presidency College, Calcutta. He was perhaps the first Muslim to break through the formidable fortifications of that citadel to have a secure lodgment in a subject other than Arabic, Persian and Urdu. For years together after the establishment of Islamia, Presidency College continued to attract many capable and clever Muslim students. Dr. Khalilur Rahman, therefore, had a unique opportunity of service there as a teacher but in less than ten years he was lured into what appeared to him a far more glamorous job at the Bengal Secretariat in the newly started Organisation and Methods Division under Dr. W. A. Jendins. This was followed by the attractions of overseas service in which he moved from place to place, had a house, may be built or bought, at Paris and in course of a few years died an early death. He was fitted out for a lifelong and

badly needed educationist's career but he chose otherwise to our grievous loss. Sad reflections rush in on my mind when making this obituary. Recalling my own student days at Calcutta Presidency College I see before me a number of Professors who looked like permanent actors on the teachers' stage in unfading costume without betraying the slightest symptoms of their private and personal lives off from the footlights. Manmohan Ghose, born and brought up in England, educated at St. Paul's and at Oxford, brother of Aurobindo Ghose, one who was a stranger to Bengali, and himself an English Poet (a collection of his songs and lyrics was published later with an introduction from Binyon) could easily secure a fat-salaried job in any other sphere of life. But true to his scholar's genius and despite the Britisher's planned neglect of such an Indian in the matter of pay and status in Educational Services and despite his domestic affliction in the chronic illness of his wife, he spent his whole life in dedicated devotion to higher education in Bengal-his only reward being his immortal reputation. He was the greatest teacher of English during those days. We would take three steps at a time in moving up the stairs to his class when the bell rang for his class to meet. No other teacher of English did attain to a comparable level with him. Similarly there were many other Hindu teachers there selfless, ambitionless, greedless in the unswerving loyalty of their pursuit, for instance, Profulla Chandra Roy (later Sir P. C. Roy), Dr. Aditya Mookerjee, and Prafulla Chandra Chosh. In Calcutta non-Govt. College (I am not including here those of Scottish Church and St. Xavier's Colleges in Calcutta) too, such examples were many. To cite some I may refer to Heramba Chandra Maitra, Rajanikanta Guha of City College, J. R. Banerjee of Vidyasagar College. When I began in 1922 I was the only representative of my community in English in a Govt. College. At the moment of writing in the year 1964 a whole University (Dacca) of Arts and Science, Commerce and Education is being run by Muslim teachers and administrators. Having solid foundation of eleven years' of direct experience in administration and teaching at Dacca University I am of the honest opinion that selfless devotion is chiefly absent whereas egotism, opportunism careering climbing, shifting from position to position are glaring. Let Pakistan and her vaunted ideology beware of such unacademic trends. I do not imply that educationists shouldn't aspire after adequate pay, high status and necessary amenities.

of life. Far from it. On the other hand I had been a champion for these and I have a departmentalised existence only, isolated from other spheres of activity. What I mean is that when a choice is made on the basis of required qualifications and acceptable terms, a teacher's whole-hearted devotion should go into his work; his constant endeavours should be directed to the maintaining of continuity in his educational work by the avoidance of interruption that follows from globe-trotting at ridiculously frequent intervals or from the restless pursuit of perquisites from many by-lanes of his locality.

A pertinent notice may here be taken of the educational work that is being uninterruptedly done, for a dozen years within my purview, by Principal Ahmed at Saadat College, Karatia, in the district of Mynensingh. He is an alumnus of Calcutta Islamia College; his place of work is a village which I inspected twice during the period from 1953 to 1956. On both occasions the College was found to be in what looked like insuperable financial difficulties. On both occasions I had to make 61-mile long bus trips under tragi-comic transport conditions to Tangail first and then a 6-to-8-mile Ekka trip. I am sure all financial difficulties are over now, since money is following like monsoon water into educational institutions after the recommendations of the Education Commission formed under the Martial Law regime and during Plan periods. Communication with Karatia has become easy now with the opening up of a direct route from Dacca, just a motor trip of 4/5 hours. But Tofail Ahmed has stuck to his post through strains and despite tempting offers of Principalship from many other non-Govt. colleges of the Province including that of the big Ananda Mohon College at Mymensingh town itself. He was inspired by me not to abandon the helm he held in troubled waters. My inspection reports contained unstinted admiration of the College and the Principal. The College has impressive buildings and equipment and campus in exquisitely beautiful rural setting and surroundings. Tofail specialised in Economics, writes articles and essays in Bengali, cultivates music and does his administrative duties unassumingly and with winning modesty. It is no wonder that he should be adored.

Of the students in the limelight during 1926 to 1930 Abdul Waseque was outstanding. He joined in 1926 and finished his academic career in

1930 having taken an Honours degree in History. His record in this matter was just average but that in corporate life was ubiquitous and unrivalled. He raised himself to indisputable leadership by his loudly vocal championing of the students' right, privileges and grievances and by his fearless assertiveness—all these smacking of politics non-existent then among Muslim students in contrast with political obsession among the Hindu students. Waseque passed his Matric from Calcutta Madrassah where he caused some trouble to Mr. Harley. Here at Islamia his manners appeared to be rough and rude, his ways heretical or eccentric. Mr. Harley and the majority of teachers who had no experience of the defiant and recalcitrant behaviour of Hindu students nursed grievances against him and also meditated punishment. They had no appreciation of Waseque's sincerity at the bottom of his idiosyncrasies. On one such occasion I had a confidential talk with the Principal and persuaded him to refrain from his contemplated expulsion from Baker Hostel. After his graduation, however, Waseque drifted, step by step, into the student politics of the Province for years to come and blasted his own career. Now he is an MNA in Pakistan. Dacca is his home district.

With love and affection I am recounting the story of former Islamia College students at some length. Here at Dacca on the High Court bench sits one such. He is Mr. Justice Baquer, Barrister-at-Law. When he had been a lecturer in law in the University Law Classes we met frequently; during evening walks in the Dacca Race Course we also met frequently. Our greetings were exactly like those of teacher and pupil as in the days of yore. What a comfort for me that his high perch has not made him a high-brow.

In the Dacca High Court bar sits another such, Syed Azizul Huq (Nanna Mian). To think of him is to think of Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq as well—the two had been so closely knit in Calcutta as well as in Dacca. Nanna Mian holds no political office now. But his suavity and his equipoise endear him to his followers and his foes alike—How happy I feel that during the last two years his daughter had been a pupil of mine in the English Honours classes of Dacca University.

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1. He went out soon afterwards.
 2. He has retired since.
 3. He is now the Vice-Chancellor of Rajshahi University.

In the centre flourisher yet another in the person of Wahiduzzaman the Commerce Minister. Earlier he had been a cool-headed flourishing businessman. His tact and diploamacy, skill and experience in negotiating profitable deals are his assets now ¹.

In the Civil Service Abdul Quader Ansari holds a key position in the East Pakistan Secretariat as home Secretary with the Status of a Joint Secretary at the Centre. His work in that position was so successful previously that he was brought back from Chittagong where he was acting as the Commissioner of the Division. He graduated with Honours in English from Islamia College where he was very close to me. Having passed his Matric from a village school in Burdwan (West Bengal) he had joined the Intermedeate classes of Islamia. I have vivid recollections of his first meeting with me. He appeared before a Scholarship and Stipend Awarding Sub-committee of which I was a member. A small boy then his eyes were strikingly bright and his replies to our questions were given in straightforward spoken language. Our close touch as teacher and pupil was renewed and reinforced in the fifties when he was posted at Sylhet as ADM. Akramuddin, now a Commissioner in East Pakistan,² was a capable member of the English Honours School at Islamia and, so were Esrarul Huq and Nurul Huq; the last two cannot be traced now. Of Maulana Abdul Baqui I shall have occasion to speak later. But S. N. H. Rizvi who graduated with Honours in History and competed in the Bengal Civil Service (Executive) had been a District Magistrate in several districts of East Pakistan in recent times. He is now the Secretary of a Dapartment.

The present DPI of East Pakistan, Mr. Mohammad Shamsul Huq³ was one of our Economics Honours graduates. Immediately after his M. A. degree in Economics he became a Lecturer in his subject at Islamia. He had realization that it would be difficult for him to go higher up in the teaching branch and therefore, he took leave and joined David Hare Training College wherefrom he secured his BT being placed in first Class. Very soon he became a District Inspector of Schools in the BES and rose step by step to his present position. He was also Educational Attache to the Washington Embassy for a term. On the eve of his return therefrom he wrote to me as Provost S. M. Hall for the arrangement of the admission into Dacca University of Khalid Shams, his son who, on admission, became the pupil of his father's teacher. We feel proud taht

he has just secured the topmost position in the C. S. S. Examination.

Among the Business Firms of Dacca, Spencer & Co. holds an important place. It has now as its head one of our Islamia students, Syed Ehsan kabir. His younger brother, Enayet, also of the same College during the period under survey is now a big officer in the Income-Tax Department where another former Islamia pupil, Choudhury Imamuddin is an Assistant Commissioner. A. M. M. Mohiuddin who is a member of the GAR, Pakistan and is now Deputy Secretary in the Planning Division, East Pakistan had been one of our most prominent students.

Gholam Ghaus, Mohammad Ibrahim, M. Huq passed I. Sc. from Islamia College during my time. The first took his B.Sc. degree from Wales and joined the Bengal Forest Service and rose to be the Chief Conservator of Forests by dint of sheer merit. The second, an M. R. C. P. of London, is a physician of international reputation. For years now he has been Professor of Medicine in Dacca Medical College and an outstanding asset to East Pakistan. Dr. Ibrahim has since moved to Karachi on a higher assignment. As a man he is largehearted and generous and always helpful. In 1962 when during about of serious illness I was a Cabin patient in the Surgical Ward, he didn't hesitate to call daily and inquire about the state of my health. He would lay aside his overwhelming preoccupation and find sometime to render his medical help to me when ever I stand badly in need of the same. Huq after having taken his M. B. degree from Calcutta Collidge, joined the Army Medical Corps, rose to be Lt. Col. and had to take over charge of the Dacca Medical College as Administrator at the begining of the Martial Law regime in 1958 in which capacity he continued till recently. He was good enough to come and see me in my Cabin during the illness just alluded to. He owned me up as his teacher of English before other doctors and nurses and alerted them openly to be all attention to me.

How sweet of him to do so!

As I begin writing these notes after a day's interval two other names leap to mind. Tafazzal Hussain and A. R. Fatmi. Tafazzal Hussain has the rank of a District Magistrate in what is known as a 'listed' post but is working now as the Chairman of the Dacca Municipality, a terrific and thankless job. * But he has a terrific personality equal to the formidable nature, of his varied duties. Fatmi is in education. He has built up on a weak financial foundation and poor equipment one of the biggest non-government colleges in the city having University affiliation to the B. A., B. Sc., B. Com. standard. Its staff and equipment are not inferior to its rival, the Jagannath College. It is immaterial that he had to face some

student unrest in his institution last year. It is interesting that his son, young Fatmi, was a pupil of mine during the last academic session in the first Year English Honours classes of Dacca University.

I have given, in the foregoing paragraphs, a catalogue of the alumni of Islamia in course of which I have spoken of close touch or contact. These bonds have never been physical or material or for personal ends excepting in the case of Dr. Mohammad Ibrahim whose help I have sought on some occasions during my ailments in course of the last two years and which I have received free. In fact my relations have been remote and impersonal in all other cases. It is likely that the long list will prove tiring; further it may detract from the value of this humble document. My heart has its beat in unison with the fate and fortune of my former pupils.

In concluding this chapter and in transit back to Rajshahi I had better refer to the circumstances which led to the move. May be in January or February, 1930, I heard that the post of a Professor of English in the Bengal Educational Service was about to fall vacant at Rajshahi College. I made some efforts for a recognition of my suitability for the post. I met Mr. Harley and asked for his support. He pointed out that I was for too inarticulate and inactive about a lift. He, however, agreed to discuss the case with the DPI. He held this discussion and told me that the latter would propose my name to the Government. Three months elapsed but there was no sign of the expected order. Meanwhile when I saw Mr. Harley a second time, I was told that a red herring had been drawn across the line on account of moves from other parties. From inquiries made I gathered that a competitive race was on, which was heading towards a finish between Altaf Hussain and myself. I scratched my head over the question of respective seniority and efficiency. He had not only been my junior by four years but also a fugitive from the onerous duties of a general degree College to an apology of duties in a Madrassah where the number of English learning students might be 6 and 6 in the First and Second year Islamic Intermediate Classes. But I was aware of the length and strength of his *Tadbir* (manoeuvring) and I replased in to my "inactivity". At the end of April, however, news filtered through about my good luck and in quick succession, the Government order of appointment followed.

At the moment of parting early in May, 1930, unforgettable scenes of warmth were enacted by the students. How far Mr. Harley's strong support was sincere may be seen later.

Let me now get back to Rajshahi for a second term of seven years.

CHAPTER III

BACK AT RAJSHAHI COLLEGE

1930 to 1937

With a richer experience of another four years in the metropolis a greater zest for work ahead and better stats in educational hierarchy. My relief at Islamia and assumption of duties at Rajshahi took place in the first week of May and synchronised with the commencement of summer vacation at each. After a formal take-over at Rajshahi I scoured about for a residential house within easy reach of the College and fixed up finally (for want of a better) a small two-storied uninhabited building with another structure within and a sagging compound wall. Late Roy Bahadur Kumudini Kanta Banerjee was the owner of the place. I approached his son, Jatin Babu, and his son-in-law Charu Babu (Both being former friends), advanced money for repairs and requested them to make it fit for habitation before the 15th June when I proposed to return with my family. They were good enough to agree and also proved true to their word. We too did keep to our schedule in arrival, a fortnight in advance of the new academic session. Besides my daughter we had a son as well, who was born meanwhile.

The first outstanding feature of change during the four-year interval was in the matter of communication. In contrast with the difficulties of accessibility of the earlier years Rajshahi now had a direct line with Calcutta by the construction of a branch railway line from Ishurdi to Amra Past Rajshahi. Travelling by Assam-Bengal Mail from Sealdah if one made a break at Ishurdi to transfer to a connecting local, one could get at Rajshahi in six hours, or alternatively through a night's direct journey. We had a smooth and easy transit together with our simple furniture and accompanying household goods.

Rajshahi town, its civic amenities (or rather lack of them), its people or their leaders had undergone no alteration since. The dust and the heat, the open drains, the lack of municipal water supply, the kerosene age (superseded by electricity), dysentery and enteric, the ubiquitous

'Ekka', continued in full strength and vigour. Rice and cereals, fish, fowl and mutton, milk and ghee, sweets and curd, vegetables etc. were, however, incredibly cheap.

But the College itself had a transformation in some directions which were striking. Soon after my departure Mr. Maitra, the redoubtable ES Principal had to leave in discomfiture having had to move down a step in the official ladder for Dacca Intermediate College. Almost the same fate befell Aswini Babu, his deputy or more correctly his Personal Assistant. Mr. Maitra's successor was Mr. T. T. Williams, IES, Professor of Economics at Dacca College for years before its disbandment on the inauguration of Dacca University. His services were required for the reorganization of the Income-Tax Department in 1919 and he had been there since as an Assistant Commissioner. He was brought back to Rajshahi College to restore peace and order. He did more. On rejoining I found buildings and equipment in tidy shape, the whole campus properly looked after. A garden around the swimming pool replacing the wilderness of earlier years and having criss-cross pathways, flowerbeds, and also some benches to sit upon and a grassy open space for social get-togethers had sprung up and been flourishing. Four MALIS could always be seen there tending the plants, creepers, seedlings and flowers under Basanta Babu, Lecturer in Logic. The massive New Arts Building which had come into existence before I left and which couldn't be used for lack of furniture had decent, new benches and teachers' platforms. Immediately to its south and on the northern border of the College Playing field, four Tennis lawns (for students) stood with a few tiers of permanent seats attached for beholders. And away to the South-West stood the Principal's lovely two-storied bungalow having a commanding view of the river in front. The garden that Mr. Williams had grown round about his house was idyllic in charm and fascination. It appeared to me that these attractive features had been there for a good long time. In the administrative portion of the main building, just opposite to the Principal's Room, The Vice-Principal's Room had been fitted up and furnished whereas the office was moved to the contiguous and commodious room formerly used for lectures. Mr. Williams had a caretaker's post created and filled up by a very competent, though slightly cheeky, fellow, Sardar Abdul Khaleque, who actually became a SARDAR over all menials and drilled and paraded them into daylong

duty by the morning mobilisation. Twenty years later I had one such Caretaker at M. C. College, Sylhet and despite my tenacious nagging with the Dacca University Executive Council I didn't have one during my time at the Salimullah Muslim Hall from 1956-1958. In his office Mr. Williams had a very competent Accountant, appointed on transfer from Calcutta. He was Nuruddin. He also had two other Assistants appointed from among the Graduates of Rajshahi College. They were Deyanatullah and Parvez Ali. I remember their names since both of them were my pupils during my first term. With shorts and shirt-sleeves on and a stick in hand the Principal could be seen frequently moving about for personal supervision. He was on the verge of retirement, past middle age but tall and erect, immune from ostentation or show of power but yet an overshadowing presence.

The second in command was Dr. Prabhudutta Shahstri, IES, Professor of Philosophy at Presidency College excluding a short spell of Vice-principalship now and Principalship later from 1933 to 1935. He will fill many pages of these notes when we move on to 1933 and forge past 1935. On this occasion he was in short exile as it were (in terms of his own contemptuous references) and lived all the while in the Rajshahi Circuit House. Two incidents were talked about him. No. 1: when office files were taken to him he would remark "He (the Principal) will draw all the Allowances and I shall do all the drudgery."No. 2: He left the Circuit House without paying the rent for the period of his occupation. His place as vice-Principal was filled by Roy Bahadur Hemchandra of the Bengal Educational Service.

Changes in the Teaching Staff personnel were many but I would content myself by glancing at some. Professor Abdul Hakim had left simultaneously with me at the end of June, 1926. His place was filled by Maulavi Haider Ali who was noticed at some length in the coverage given to my first tenure. Maulavi S. Sharafuddin was appointed in the resultant lectureship vacancy and became the Superintendent of the New Muslim Hostel after my departure. Professor Santosh Chatterjee of History and Professor Rampada Majumdar whose place I took now were no more. The most notable change in English in the intervening period was the arrival of Babu Girija Sankar Bhattacharyya who will receive a fuller treatment anon. Santosh Babu was replaced by D. N. Sen, brother of Principal R. N. Sen of Krishnagar College, Raicharan

Babu and open Babu of Maths. By Harilal Chowdhury and Karunamoy Khastagir; the latter after a year and half by Professor Omdatul Islam. My friends Charushasi Babu and Bireswar Babu had already left on transfer. A new group of young lecturers, Nabani Chanda, Saroj Sanyal, Sourin Majumdar, Balai Kunda (to mention some) was an attractive addition. The tone of intellectual seriousness, the loud voice of heated discussion in the staff Room of the earlier years were superseded by a sober, sedate, silent atmosphere. Professor D. N. Sen, Professor of English was always elegant, and Girija Babu seniormost member of our department was altogether different in his ways, talkative to be sure if not fussy and hysterical at times.

In the matter of residential arrangements of the Muslim students an unfortunate and unhealthy exchange had been effected during my four-year absence. The New Muslim Hostel of the College together with the residential quarters of the Superintendent had been handed over to the Collegiate School in place of the Fuller Hostel (of the School students) transferred to College Muslim students on the plea that the former was too small for the College and the latter was too big for the school, with the result that school students and their teacher Superintendent had been planted in the Heart of the Hostel campus and our Muslim students cut off from the same. The Fuller Hostel looked grand and massive from outside but inside it had dark, ill-ventilated, ill-planned, runaway pigeonholes. It had no Dining hall and attached Kitchen, no family quarters for the Superintendent. At some distance away it had a range of tin-shed latrines with water-supply, without any pretension to privacy. In a condemned, dilapidated structure at inconvenient distance but contiguous to the College Gymnasium, Its cooking and feeding arrangements were made. Maulavi Abdul Sobhan, an Assistant Teacher then, who had the knack of making himself egregious in many circles, a Malda man, one who had surely been in Khan Bahadur Emaduddin's favour, was mainly responsible for this exchange, I was told. Maulavi S. Sharafuddin, College Hostel Superintendent meekly acquiesced. Subhan Saheb had his eye on the latter's comfortable residential quarters which passed into his possession and enjoyment. Sharafuddin lived far away from his hostel and couldn't possibly have taken the same care of his students if he had lived on the premises. Guidance of the students

along correct channels went by default. Professor Abdul Hakim during his own time kept a sharp eye on the Muslim students of the College and didn't permit them to go astray. He had the requisite talent and personality. During my earlier term I had been unremitting in my attention to them. On my return, however, I noticed a remarkable change. Their leader, Malek and Abbas, were found to be restless busybodies with confused political and social notions. They would butt into all college and Hostel affairs and act impatiently. I had to use all my patience, tact and firmness in dealing with them and in winning their confidence to some tangible extent. The Muslim students so long meek and polite were drifting by imperceptible degrees into political obsession. Of course they couldn't define to which particular school, Congress or League or Proja, they belonged but the atmosphere was there and they were coming into their own. This was a portent which I couldn't ignore. Whether the administration in the College or those in charge of corporate activities took note of this or didn't will be clear soon. The Hindu students of Rajshahi College were 800 in number; their student leaders were steeped in Hindu nationalism and Congress politics exactly as their public leaders were. In the opening months of the academic session, 1930 to 1931, there was the six week strike in the College over Gandhi-British Raj clash to which I have alluded already. The shadow of the Chittagong Armoury Raid case of 1930 had still been in farflung projection. The simultaneously held conference of Muslim leaders from all over India at Chittagong had their spell over the Muslim mind. The Hindu students were assertive in their rights and privileges but they didn't care, in their overwhelming majority, to have a peep into the mind of their Muslim contemporaries into its working or towards the direction to which the wind of changes would lead them. But I started writing about the exchange of College and School Hostels and the unfortunate and unhealthy consequences it had brought about. The digressive details on student manners and morals in general wouldn't, on scrutiny, be as irrelevant as they might appear from the standpoint of pedantic, paragraph-making. The unhealthy arrangements were soon reversed, however.

Reader, please concede a topical insertion here although it may mar like an interpolation the continuity of my story. To-day is the tenth of August, 1964, and August is the cruellest month (unlike Eliot's April) in East

Pakistan in general and Dacca old town in particular. Our locality, Gandaria, like many other localities of the Municipality, is in the grip of inundation. This is the fourth visitation within my experience during the last eleven years, the other three having afflicted us in 1954, 1955, 1962. I stirred out yesterday, as everybody else is doing, without shoes and socks and waded through submerged portions on to dry land. The backyard and the front, the bathrooms and service latrines are under water. Think of the surrounding stink and filth, of the availability of clean water for multifarious domestic needs, of sanitation and of imperative movements outdoor. In most of the villages, however, you have running streams about but in congested Municipal area the problems are insufferable and terrific. The sweepers (or the residue of them left) enjoy a holiday and we their undone, floating work. In international affairs the month of August has been fateful since 1914-1918 world war. The August of 1964 has been making similar rumblings, first in the Gulf of Tonkin off North Vietnam, where the pinpricks given by a torpedo or two to a USA Destroyer or two has led President Lyndon Johnson to make a clean sweep of the enemy torpedoes, their bases and shore installations; second in Cyprus, the latest position being the strafing of Greek-Cypriot Military targets by Turkish jet Planes. The Turkish Desdemonas and their relations must be avenged on Greek Othelloes and Iagos. USA violence in Tonkin has been met by Pakistani violence on USIS at Dacca where yesterday there was an intellectuals' rally and demonstrative procession of which a lovely photograph with two attractive women leading and well-dressed men following has been published in this morning's Pakistan Observer. Resilient intellectuals deserve a salute. In the history of Pakistan in the major phases of its life, any intellectual smacking of a distant smell of communism had to pay for his association with disruption and subversion but now his is a rewarding link and activity. In the Pakistan Observer is being publicised everybody N. D. F's denunciation of "Ayub-shahi" totalitarianism. A writeup of the same Government's China entente in the same paper is not inconsistent. But did we ever have before or are we going to have now a squad of intellectuals to visit is in our flood afflicted calamity with a view to providing relief? But is not relief the responsibility of Government alone?

Forgive me, reader, for this tragi-comic interlude. From changes within the Rajshahi College that I observed on my return to it in 1930 I seek to refer to one or two outside the College. Muslim public life here registered the foundation of a new activity which attracted my attention soon after my arrival. Walking along the Nator Road in my own locality, known as "Rotiwallah para" (baker's area) I noticed a Reading Room functioning; a number of people were reading newspapers in the evening. I got in, in the manner of the Addisonian Spectator, with a Khaddar Payjama (trousers) and a Khaddar shirt on (I had some such made to order on the eve of my transfer from Calcutta to be in the Congress-Khilafat Sartorial fashion of the time), sat down, turned over a page or two of a newspaper quietly and then very much unlike my character counterpart in the Spectator entered upon a casual talk with my neighbour who gave me an incidental account of its beginning and aspiring growth. Did I notice or not a one-storied building in the neighbourhood just opposite to the Varendra Research Society and across the Nator Road, where the Muslim Institute (of which the Reading Room was a part) of Rajshahi recently established would function? I didn't notice, kept quiet discreetly, parted and then walked down to the spot for verification. Yes, a building stood there, roof and all, but unplastered within and without, its entrances and exists unfurnished with doors-altogether an ugly contrast to the aristocratic buildings and beautiful gardens of the Varendra Research Society opposite. With strong mental reactions I followed up and ascertained relevant particulars. Its first and present President was Mr. A. R. Malik, a Punjabi gentleman posted here as Deputy Director of Agriculture in the Bengal Higher Agricultural Service corresponding to Bengal Senior Educational Service. Eight to twelve thousand rupees was collected in the form of donations and subscriptions, the total sum being already spent over the constructive of the Existing half-done building. One of the chief raisers of funds was Mr. Obaidus Subhan, Munsiff, just transferred leaving a statement behind. The prospects of completion of the work were dreary. It was designed to be a centre of culture and learning for the Muslim Public of Rajshahi on the lines of the Flourishing Public Library of the Hindus of the place, situated in the heart of the town. Its programme included the erection of a first floor for the accommodation of guests and also acquisition of the contiguous plot of

land. But as things stood at a stagnant stage at present even the Reading Room couldn't be transferred from its present habitation in the abandoned Kutchery House of the Rais Saheb of Bagha. To rectify a mistake and an omission I made in the account given about the Muslim public of Rajshahi in course of my first tenure I seek this opportunity of making brief jottings about the Bagha Rais family imbedded in the historic past. Bagha, a rural area, close to Sardah of Police Training college fame during the British Raj as well as now, though it duly came under the archaeological jurisdiction of Lord Curzon's Preservation of Ancient Monuments Act, is in total ruins, an immense mass of rank vegetation and wilderness-I have never been there but I fail to understand why the Pakistan Archaeological Department cannot undertake clearing and excavation jobs although they talk and write so much about Mohenjo Daro and other Long-completed achievements of undivided India. The Rais Saheb of that family was living at Rajshahi just in front of or near about the places I occupied during my first and second tenure. His premises covered an extensive plot of land with simple structures within. An old man with a stooping gait but of ancient breed and having some equipage too, Rais Saheb lived a completely isolated life having nothing to do with public affairs excepting attendance at ceremonial British Durbars. He slept late, woke up late, had late breakfast, lunch and dinner. His daily and unfailing jaunt on the Padma embankment began when we had finished our evening walks. But that was a sight to see. He would shuffle along with long strides with a long staff in hand and a jogging attendant carrying a big umbrella behind. The Kutchery house was his and his eldest son, then a young man and anxious to get into social circles placed it at the disposal of pioneers of the Muslim Institute. At its static state I was shocked but my ambition to have it grow and develop into a light-house as it were in the encircling gloom of Muslim life became aflame and I used my spare time whenever I had some for its conversion into life and shape. A contact with its President Mr. A. R. Malik and his co-workers followed. The co-workers were mostly members of the ministerial service and occupied humble stations in life, there being hardly any rich man among the Muslims of the town. The memory of Mr. Malik, however, is indelibly incised. He didn't have the physical stature of his countrymen nor their 'looking down' upon smaller Bengalis-altogether a simple, softspoken, kindly

person. He gave me an unvarnished tale of his own life and career. He began as a Postal Clerk, got into the first World War Postal Service in which he had his work in the Middle East, won the confidence of his bosses and simultaneously higher status and emoluments, made savings for a dreamt-of academic training in U. K. where he managed to have a posting towards the concluding phases of the War in course of which a Uniformed War Service had as he was he received warm welcome everywhere and at War's end got into the Edinburgh University where not being contented with a B. A. degree succeeded in having M. A. as well and now he was Deputy Director of Agriculture in Bengal—a wondrous story of fruitful adventure. Our relations became intimate spreading over three years, if not more. He lived in simple decency; he was a frugal host and didn't expect lavishness as a guest. Addressing an assembly of Muslim Institute workers immediately afterwards I said that its incomplete building with its unplastered bricks and yawning apertures (in place of doors) was a standing disgrace, a blot on the brow of the community (I used the poet's phrase, (uuJa Tui) which must be wiped out. We worked together, collected funds, removed the deficiencies just recounted, and had it furnished with almirahs and books, tables and chairs for indoor games and for social intercourses. Professor Omadatul Islam who joined Rajshahi College in a year and a half's time rendered valuable and continuous service in its improvement. Another timely helper was my personal friend, Syed Abdul Majid, posted at Rajshahi in 1931 as Officer-in-Charge of Census operations with a big staff under him. He and his staff made substantial contributions in cash and kind. Only recently he retired as Director of Land Records, East Pakistan, and is now living in Tejgaon, Dacca, in ease and affluence. The Muslim Institute was transformed into a radiating centre of cultural activities and had many distinguished visitors during the period of my seven-year-long second tenure—the names of Nazimuddin, Sir Azizul Huq, Sir Jadunath Sarkar leaping into my mind at the moment of writing. The number of Muslim Officers to be posted at Rajshahi increased steadily as the years rolled by; they found a meeting ground here. Incidentally I remember the names of Mr. Shfiqur Rahman, chief Engineer and Communications Secretary here and the Retired High Court Judge Mr. Abdul Jabber, who is now Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan; they were then Assistant Engineer and Munsiff

respectively. In a memorable passage in the **Advancement of learning Bacon** has observed how higher education was intended for the glory of God and the service of mankind. I am not making a vain claim here but in my long professional career I have consistently endeavoured to relate life in educational institutions to that in the society around, its problems and requirements; in other words to link up the abstract with the concrete, theory with fact so that there may be cross fertilisation of both, so happily discussed by Sir Richard Livingstone in one of his two classic booklets on education.

Another organisation outside the College, not altogether new but just resuscitated from its dormant torpor was the Rajshahi Muslim Students' Association owing its origin to Professor Gholam Yazdani who was Professor Abdul Hakim's predecessor in the Department of Arabic and Persian at the College. It included the Muslim students of all institutions of the town, of the College, the High Schools and the High Madrassah, designed to bind them together for mutual help and cooperation in the pursuit of their studies and general progress. In the hands of Professor Abdul Hakim it made a promising beginning but faded away before blossoming and fruitfulness. Its revival exercised a compelling spell upon me and drew me on to its direction and conduct till 1937. I am sorry I have made a mistake in not stating earlier that membership of the Muslim Institute was not open to the students of any category. This Association, however, was a purely student body open to the teachers as well. When I state that its monthly subscription was only one anna per head it will have a ludicrous effect upon that present generation give to think in terms of hundreds. But all the same, eight hundred members, fetched Rs. 50/- a month without any incidental expense and annually we gave Rs. 600/- away in stipends or lump sum grants on the eve of examinations. Secondly we held debates and discussions, annual Milad and Sports in which the Muslim students had scope for developing their extra-curricular talents which they couldn't do when left to election competition by general bodies in their own institutions. Of course this didn't apply to the Madrassah students. The Rajshahi Muslim Students' Association soon became an effective organ of self-reliance and sturdy growth. In connexion with a slight reference I made to Poet Nazrul Islam I observed how I drilled the leading members of the Association into recital and singing of the poet's verses and songs.

Out Annual Milad held either in the College campus or that of the High Madrassah drew admiring audience from all communities of the place and distinguished guests from outside including Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, Sir Nazimuddin, Mr. A. H. Ispahani, Professor Zubair Siddiqui of Calcutta University.

Echoes of my association, casual or periodic, with another provincewide student organisation reverberate in the memory. It was the All Bengal Muslim Students' Association. Its inauguration in 1916 (three years before Mr. Gandhi's advent on the All-India political scene) in Calcutta and at the Calcutta University Institute by Sir P. C. Lyons, the then Zaberast Executive Councillor of Bengal swims into my vision. As a College boy of Intermediate classes I attended the inaugural function. Mr. Abdul Karim (father of Professor Abdul Hakim) a wellknown Inspector of Schools of the time and author of a little book, History of India, which we read in the lower lasses of a High School, Presided over the session. Mr. Nurul Huq Choudhury, M. A., B. L., of Chittagong who after a varied career in law and business became a short-time Central Munister in Pakistan, was the most active worker in the holding of the meeting. In his inaugural speech sir P. C. Lyons said among other things "United we stand, divided we fall" His other remarks escape but this one is still ringing in my ears. Seventeen years after Independence we still need the hammering of the same sententions maxim into our soul because all talk of Islamic brotherhood is a sham. This All-Bengal organisation used to wake up and sleep alternately-its sleeping spell was longer than its waking moments. As a student of the Post-Graduate Classes in 1919 to 1921 I acted as one of its Assistant Secretaries and roped in the presence of Messrs Fazlul Huq and Shahid Suhrawardy among that of many others with its venue mostly in the Calcutta Muslim Institute. Speaking of the period under review I received an insistent request for attendance at another spectacular function held in the Senate Hall, Calcutta University, in the autumn of 1931, I believe,-Abdul Wasque and his friends were the organisers. I responded and had also to make a speech in course of which I gave statistics, quoting from Education Directorate's latest Quinquennial Report, of Muslim students going in for Primary Education and gradually thinning away by the period they were to qualify for secondary Education. The terrific wastage involved was actually pointed out by me. The ineffective part

that was being played by Muslim students in their career at the secondary and higher education and in scientific and technical level in contrast with the brilliant performance of their brothers of the sister community was also pointed out. I went on to say "the Khddar-clad Hindu student was full of pluck and grit; he did expose himself to the sun and the rain whereas the average Muslim student was of a shy and retiring disposition". On the ground of engagement elsewhere on Chairman after another vacated and at one stage I had to preside when Subhas Chandra Bose was inducted to address. On request he kept clear of politics (in his speech taken as a whole) and dwelt on student progress. Even so I made relevant comments. Next morning the Amrita Bazar patrika and other national dailies exploited to the full my remarks outlined above lifting them out of their context. My tribute was sincere and based upon personal experience as a teacher; in no sense it could be pejorative to the Muslim; It was designed to serve as a stimulus to him. My friend, professor Zahurul Islam has told me time and again, that the displayed portion of my speech had caused a flutter in official dovecots in the Bengal Secretariat where action against me was contemplated. He accepts with diffidence my statement that no such indication was ever available for me. Here in this place I find a little scope for self-revelation as a teacher. Barring my five-year work at Islamia I have had students of all communities in my classes (men and women) from Rajshahi to Chittagong, from Chittagong to Sylhet, from Sylhet to Dacca University from 1922 to 1947 and thereafter to 30th June, 1964 and my love of them all and humble service for each in my tutorial classes has been indivisible and not even during the ignoble period of P. D. Shastri's high-handedness in Union affairs at Rajshahi College in 1935 a whisper to the contrary was heard.

On broad-based scrutiny and an over-all assessment the foregoing paragraphs about the Rajshahi Muslim institute and the muslim Students' Association will, I Hope, be found relevant.

Life and work in the College from 1930 to 1937 falls into two clearcut divisions and a short sequel of a year and a half (a) 1930 to 1933 under T. T. Williams, B. M. sen and Jenkins, (b) 1933 to 1935 under P. D. Shastri. The residue under J. M. Bose.

Our work with Williams was short-lived and of three to four months

duration. By October, 1930, he left for U. K. on leave preparatory to retirement. In between there was a six-week dislocation during which we carried on with in attendance. Boys and girls from the town were detailed for picketing and forced closure. On one occasion some girls entered into my class and pulled me down from the teacher's platform while they coaxed and cajoled at the same time; on another when I was in the midst of my work in an Honours Class I found some of my students making diverting glances at the door behind me. Looking back I was amused at sight of 2/3 picketers sitting on the threshold and enjoying a portable meal. At the end of the period I was wise enough not to jump across. Prof. Haridas Mookerjee had to pay for his tactlessness. In the overshadowing personality of Mr. Williams and in the respect he commanded there was not much scope for noisy demonstrations. But the canard went soon enough that he had touched the body of a girl picket. This became responsible for not organising a decent send-off to him by the general bldg of students who owed so much to him. He had brought a leaven with him and in the course of about four years transformed the scene out of chaotic and rank elements. During this brief spell he and I became fond of one another; I was welcome at his bungalow (in which he was living alone) in the afternoon and we had interesting discussions on varied topics. I felt, even as I feel now, how a seasoned old man, wise, tolerant, kindly and farseeing like him was needed at the helm of affairs in higher education so that major disasters caused by administrative maladroitness could be averted. Political exploitation of students is a different proposition. Let not the educationists themselves be wolves in sheep's clothing. Mr. Williams himself took the initiative of entering upon postal correspondence with me by writing first a six-page letter to me sometime after his return to England. He wrote to me from his Welwyn Garden City home where his wife and he were very fit and comfortable. He said his manual work in his own garden contributed to his physical strength. On the eve of his departure I asked him whether he would have any regret over anything. His prompt reply was that judging from Indian habits (and he gave concrete examples from the case of some of his Indian colleagues) He had considerable misgiving about the fate of his garden at the hands of his successor. He would have nothing but regrets if it shouldn't thrive. I have already mentioned the name of Basanta Babu in connexion with the

marvellous growth of the College Garden. for months, if not years, Mr. Williams wrote to Basanta Babu in details about the care to be taken in respect of both.

His successor Mr. Bhupatimohon Sen, I. E. S., Professor of Mathes. at Presidency College, Calcutta, did receive the warmest welcome from the public as well as the College. A Wrangler and Smith's prize-man at Cambridge, his credentials themselves created an aura about him wherever he might be. But he was born at Rajshahi where he had received his early education as well, being the son of Babu Rajmohon Sen, a famous Professor of Mathes. at Rajshahi College for a long, long time. Older people (like kishorimohon Choudhury) competed with each other in calling him by his pet name and in heaping caresses upon him as if he were still a child. He had association with another famous man of Bengal of legendary reputation as a Physician in the person of Sir Nilratan Sarcar who was Mr. Sen's father-in-law. Sir Nilratan's daughters were famous for their educational attainments, personal charms and accomplishments. When Mrs. Sen arrived and got into touch with teachers and students in social intercourses and literary functions, particularly in giving guidance to students in the organisation of attractive features in the ensuing cold weather celebration of the Annual Social Gathering of Rajshahi College, there was universal joy everywhere. Mr. Sen like his successors, Dr. Jenkins and Mr. J. M. Bose, would join teachers and students in playing Tennis on the College lawns. Tall and strongbuilt, of fair complexion and a rich dower of wavy hair, sober and grave he was a man of few words. He kept regular hours at his official desk; his disposal of files was quick; he didn't encourage visitors at his bungalow. It became soon clear that he would have no College Malis and menials at his residence, no College furniture or stationery, an image of integrity. What a lurid contrast to our big bosses and VIPs of independent Pakistan, and for all I know of independent India as well in the context of the current drive against corruption there. Official cars, cushions and carpets, official equipage, official stationery and service stamps in personal affairs at their residences are lawful and necessary perquisites. In celebrating the New Year's Day (1st January, 1964) the Provost of a famous Hall of Dacca University had a costly greetings card printed and despatched officially to friends and students

* A new Art Buildings has since been constructed.

although 1st January is neither observed as a holiday here nor there is any celebration over it. Even 'Happy New Year' greetings have been abandoned. In equally lurid contrast we have class rooms and furniture in the Arts Buildings* of Dacca University in a scandalous state some of the fans never work, some of the benches are ever in a broken condition; teachers' chairs in many rooms do not simply exist; dust accumulates upon dust leading to a superfaetation of dirt. These are nobody's business; the Dean concerned and responsible by the code, is always present in high Teas and choice dinners but never in his own territory to have a glance over prevailing conditions. This is not a pleaking for primitive conditions but for an unsleeping awareness on the part of administration, particularly in education, of their duties and responsibilities and for determined efforts in their execution. In Bhupatimohon Sen we had not only a scholar and gentleman but also a conscientious worker who was always available to lead and guide. But unluckily for Rajshahi College his regime was too short to strike deep roots in tradition and stability. His advent had the adumbration of some continuity but he vanished like a dream. Before the academic session, 1930-31, was out he was summoned away at a twelve-hour notice to take over as Principal, Presidency College, where he continued till his retirement. In the hurriedly improvised farewell meeting the same afternoon I said that the "little pirdie" of the old men of Rajshahi had flown to its "Pride of place" before it had settled down on the warm 'nest' composed for him. When Suhash Neogi, one of our girl students, sang sweetly "তুমি সত্যি কি যাবে চলিয়া" (is it true you are leaving?) there was a tense moment when mind's chord grew taut as it were.

Whether it is a big College or a University thirty five years ago or today, its smooth sailing depends upon the Chief's capacity of bypassing the shoals and reefs that lie hidden in the voyage ahead. These subterranean enemies lurk in the watery beds of the extra academic and Union activities and in the organisation of ceremonial functions. S. N. Maitra's Durbar Day fancy craft capsized by hitting against such a rock. What happened to Prabhu Datta Shastri's taller and more showy Union ship we shall soon see. In recent times many a Convocation has been wrecked in the high seas of academic life in which the success in general administration is inextricably tied up with that in the spheres just outlined. If the chief doesn't have wise, trusted, farseeing lieutenants in

them, if he doesn't realise his own responsibility in the final analysis, he mars his own career and what is still more disastrous ruins the future of the region he was called upon to govern. During Maitra's time there was no Union properly constituted; only a skeleton of it existed. When I returned in 1930, an oversize growth of it was very much visible; this enfant terrible was under the pervasive care of Babu Girija Sankar Bhattacharyya, Head of the Department of English, now. An indication of the background together with its intangible simmerings in the Muslim mind will help fuller understanding. In the earlier period the annual celebration of the Saraswati Puja by the Hindu students with massive support from the Hindu public was a militant performance, not merely, of drums and cymbals at worship but also of a march out with images in a wild, tumultuous aggressive street procession. A searchlight tattoo would be innocuous and mild by comparison. Personally I sought shelter during the two-day celebration in the house of a relation in the town. Citizens of other faiths had no existence on the occasion. But their reactions were there and led ultimately (never during time) to the counterblast of showy, moisy cow sacrifices in the immediate neighbourhood of the College during the Bakrid. The College Union with a comprehensive programme of corporate activities had Saraswati Puja as one of its items. The celebration of the Annual Social Gathering was its biggest event now. It was an elected body (the Executive as well as the deliberative) to which no Muslim student was ever elected. Some adjustment to insistent Muslim demands was made by co-option on occasions. I have not only referred to the behaviour of the leading Muslim students striking me on my return to Rajshahi but also to the shift in their outlook for a fuller life.

But I am discussing how Bhupatimohon Sen handled Union activities during his short half-a-year regime. I have already pointed out how the activities were under the superintendship of Girija Babu, a unique character that has a permanent habitation in my memory. His designation was Lecturer in the Bengal Educational Service, a "Life Per" in the same. This being his unsheddable title, and his juniors, Deben Babu and myself, being 'Professors' he always signed as "Head of the Department of English", a convention unknown in Rajshahi, Chittagong and Islamia. In his calles he gave swift reading of his texts but the College Union was his forte. He was a passionate peruser of Police Court reports in the

newspapers from which he gathered his deep conviction that Muslims were rogues to kidnap Hindu women. An orthodox Brahmin he was an uncompromisingly bitter critic of Sarat Chatterjee's novels which, according to him, were sapping the foundation of Hindu society. It was no wonder that he should have a hold over the Hindu students in general. Soon after the arrival of Bhupatimohon Sen, the season for the celebration of the Annual Social Gathering with its elaborate schedule of play-staging, literary and cultural competitions, lectures from distinguished visitors and guests from Calcutta was upon us. Muslim students were eager also to have a Muslim visitor from Calcutta on the occasion. But as things stood they had no encouragement and sympathy from the leading office-bearers who were dead set against communal consideration in any form. Girija Babu professed he had no say in the democratic decisions of the Union Cabinet although it was he who ruled the roost. Although Mr. Sen was altogether new to the then existing trends and although he was mostly under the advice of Girija Babu Union affairs, he proved sympathetic and accommodating to the modest requests of the Muslim students. He started consulting me about these and had frank opinions from me. He rose above his Chief Adviser and made some simple concessions asked for. Mr. Sen's mathematical precision and broad vision established him firmly on the administrative pedestal. Girija Babu was shrewd enough to conform to the boss's wishes. Invitations to some Calcutta Muslims were sent out but there was disappointment among the Muslim Students. I was again sent for. Could I go down to Calcutta and secure the services of one? I was given 2/3 names to choose from. When none of these was available in course of my errand I met Dr. Qudrat-i-Khuda (still unemployed) in his Bhowanipur residence and requested him to accept our Union's invitation. He was good enough to agree and accompany me. On return to the station when he was introduced to Principal Sen, the latter put some searching questions (but in courteous terms) in Chemistry to Dr. Qudrat who having answered them clearly Mr. Sen was satisfied and impressed. In the invitees' discussion forum Dr. Qudrat-i-Khuda gave a nice little scientific discourse which apparently pleased everybody. But I was hurt to hear later that in Girija Babu's coterie there were hostile comments about my having gone out of the selected list. However, the year's Annual Social Gathering proved an all-round success, an achieve-

ment for Principal Sen and his tact and sympathy.

After Mr. Sen's departure and before the advent of Dr. W. A. Jenkins early in 1932, a long interregnum of stop-gap officiating arrangement took place. Hem Babu (Roy Babadur), Vice-Principal (and teacher of Philosophy) acted as Principal for about eight months. Experienced and seasoned and on the verge of retirement the Roy Bahadur proved himself popular in every respect; the college had an orderly run.

Dr. W. A. Jenkins began his career in the IES in 1919 as a Professor of Physics, had a meteoric and outstanding passage (he superseded even Mr. K. Zachariah) in the educational field, became the permanent DPI, and later Director of Organisation and Methods at the Bengal Secretariat. He retired at the partition of the Province but came back to Dacca (East Pakistan) as Vice-Chancellor of the University in 1953 for a term of three years. From February or March, 1932 to February, 1933 he worked as the Principal of Rajshahi College, an unusually good luck for the institution. His dutifulness, sober and serious demeanour, quick grasp of things, prompt decisions, masterly summing-up at the end of deliberations, his eloquence, his sportmanship (in his early years he was a first class football player, now a first class tennis player having a game with teachers students, officers and lawyers), his 'quality' hospitality in which he made, separate arrangements for the orthodox guests, his enjoyment of entertainment at teachers' houses made him a perfect boss. In the searchlight of his personality, slimy little creatures crept underneath. But he would honour official conventions and forms, never thought of overthrowing the decisions of his predecessors, desired that things should move through proper channels (routing duties to be disposed of by the Vice-Principal and sectional heads). In the Union activities he would normally depend upon Girija Babu. When the Government call for staff retrenchment of the Retrenchment Committee formed in 1930 or earlier, I don't exactly remember, he scrutinized the work load of every teacher, summoned the whole lot to a meeting in his room and announced a scheme formulated by him of extra academic tutorial classes at the residence of teachers for a batch of 20 per head. A personal touch with each student of the group in respect of his domestic and financial problems, his health and residence, his ability or otherwise to keep pace with his work in the classes in the range and tone

of his general information etc. was to be established in these extra-territorial intercourses splitting the 20 into convenient knots. Let this scheme be accepted and worked by the teachers so that he might stand four square to the storm of retrenchment that was blowing and spare them altogether from any axing. We accepted and worked it conscientiously during his regime. For me it was a welcome opportunity of having personal relations with my own allotment. We had to maintain notes (for the submission of periodical reports) of the nature of the work we were doing. In the award of stipends and scholarships, at the time of promotion from one class to the next higher and of sending up for final University Examinations, the recommendations of the extra-academic tutor were invariably honoured to help students through. In recent times such an experiment has been introduced at Dacca University with the provision of a monthly sumptuary allowance of Rs. 10/- per teacher who in openly laughing it away as a ridiculous effort. Dr. Jenkins, shortly after his assumption of office, had to face a serious complication over the representation of Muslim students on the Union Cabinet. They fretted under the system of co-option in this respect and asked for the Principal's nomination of a few capable students in place of the Cabinet's co-option according to its own choice which proved unsatisfactory from their standpoint. The proposed nomination proved unwelcome to the brothers of the sister community who apposed it tooth and nail. The latter failed to understand (as they loudly asserted) the necessity of separate representation community-wise: the College was the College of the whole body of students (not of Hindus or Muslims or Christians) and the elected representatives were the accredited leaders of the entire corporation. A quota, however small, of nominated Muslims was a reflection on the confidence in the elected. This was unacceptable in principle and practice and from the standpoint of efficiency. (Dr. Urquhart's championship of efficiency in the Islamic Union meeting leapt and leaps still to my mind. Dr. Urquhart is being much discussed at Calcutta now; there is a proposal that Cornwallis Square be named after him.) Dr. Jenkins called a full meeting of the Union office-bearers, elected representatives and Section Officers over the nomination dispute. We listened to high-flown and indignant political protests from the Hindu students the substance of which has just been outlined. Girja Babu was silent; the question of other teachers

speaking didn't arise. The learned speeches gave me creeps I stood up and said that the question was not one of confidence or otherwise, of communal quota per weightage but just a recognition of the aspiration of a substantial number of their brothers to stand shoulder to shoulder with other office-bearers and pull their weight by practical training in self-governing organs of University life. If co-option creates mistrust in their mind, they have trust in the discretion of their Principal. The last cancels the first. Let these brothers be interested in the Union Work. Dr. Jenkins summed up the arguments, pro & con, in the clearest terms and supported 'nomination' with a sharp pointer to the fact that sooner or later the country would have to have an understanding of the stirrings in the Muslim mind all over the country and in the interest of the country. He concluded on a firm note by saying: "I give you a week's time for sober and clearer thinking. Come and meet me next week exactly this day, this time and tell me whether you accept or reject nomination. Your rejection will be followed by suspension of the Union". All trooped in noiselessly on the scheduled hour a week afterwards and conveyed acceptance. The Chief's firmness had the effect of smoothing away rough edges. I learnt my own lessons in academic administration without being conscious then that I would have to play the Principal's role for several years in the future. Another disposal of an individual case comes to mind incidentally. In the Honours Physic classes there was a capably young man, Aftabuddin Ahmed, In his occasional visits to the Practical Classes (Physics being his own subject) Dr. Jenkins himself had seen the work of Aftabuddin and expressed his commendation. Aftabuddin after a chequered and irregular career got admitted into the B. Sc. Honours classes. His ways were rough and must have offended fellow students and some young teachers. His incomparably superior work in his subject might have aroused mean jealousy as well. A little conspiracy was formed against him and a petition with accusations against his character was submitted to the Principal pressing for his expulsion. Being distressed by the serious turn given to his case Aftabuddin approached me and explained the circumstances involving him in ugly imputations. He convinced me about his perfect innocence. I sought an opportunity to explain Aftab's side to Dr. Jenkins who just listened to me without saying anything. He then watched Aftab's conduct and work in the theoretical and practical classes for a number

of days at the end of which the complaint went into cold storage. The so-called accused added a feather to the College having secured first Class Honours in B. Sc. Physics Examination of Calcutta University. He had a fairly long run as Lecturer and offg. Professor in Govt. Colleges but eventually resigned from Chittagong College and joined Jagannath College, Dacca as Senior Professor of Physics. His reputation as teacher was high wherever he served. It is a pity he died in harness the other day; he had been a resident of my locality in Dacca.

The name of Jagannath College throws up, by a remote association of ideas, to the surface another deep-delved example of Dr. Jenkins' independence in thought and action. By the time he had arrived at Rajshahi early in 1932 he had to fill up a Philosophy lectureship vacancy. Mr. Sayidur Rahman, the present Principal of Jagannath College, just fresh from Dacca University, was one of the candidates among many others. A Hindu youngman having some teaching experience at Sanskrit College in addition to stout boasting took his nomination for granted whereas Sayidur Rahman was a dark horse in the race. In the meeting of the Governing Body called to decide upon its choice Dr. Jenkins referred to the double first of Rahman (Honours & M. A.) and to his special study of Islamic Philosophy and stressed that even if other things were equal this last should prove the decisive factor since there was none available to take up Islamic Philosophy studies which were likely to be offered in the coming years. He got the governing Body to agree to the sole nomination of Sayidur Rahman who has continued to be in Government service ever since. In February, 1933, Sir Nazimuddin, Education Minister took Dr. Jenkins away to Calcutta as Special Officer in the Education Directorate. Sir Nazimuddin was on a visit to Rajshahi in response to our importunate request for addressing the Annual Milad of the Muslim Students' Association. He was pleased with the literary performances of the Muslim students, particularly with the essay on Nazrull Islam, the Poet, which elicited praise from him. I touched upon this in the course of my account of the activities of the Rajshahi Muslim Students' Association. The transfer of Dr. Jenkins had just leaked out and during my speech when I said that we had a serious grievance against the 'Honourable Minister' He raised his eyebrow, looked towards me in disapproval but when I completed the sentence by referring to the transfer of Dr. Jenkins (who was himself

seated on the dais) Sir Nazimuddin sat back in smiling silence. Soon enough the time came for Rajshahi College to bid goodbye to Dr. Jenkins in a farewell function in the Assembly Hall. Bhupatimohon Sen's farewell was surcharged with emotions; this one with thoughtful acknowledgements of the many outstanding services Jenkins had rendered. In his reply he said how overwhelmed he felt; he deeply regretted that he had agreed to his move to Calcutta.

The autumn of 1931 and the early spring of 1932 stand out like high poles on the field of our domestic and personal lives. Both had their beginnings in sickness but each ended differently—the first leading to a holiday upcountry, the second was interwoven with a crisis and had a tragic denouement. The climate of Rajshahi is generally a strong enemy to contend with. During the 1930 monsoon I had a virulent attack of dysentery. Beyond emetic injections no other remedy in those days was available and the after effects would be protracted. This severe bout initiated me into a long course of training in physical fitness. Drinking of boiled water which I began then has still been an invariable habit. By a process of trial and error I have stuck to food I can digest and avoided the opposite.

I have striven hard for a balanced diet and though a weakling from childhood with fragile bones and hardly any brawn over them I have succeeded in maintaining physical efficiency enough to go through strenuous duties over the years. One of my pet theories vis-a-vis student unrest is that Government should subsidise food supply in residential halls and hostels to dispense with an ever-increasing incidence of malnutrition. Let the hungry young men (and women too) have substantial and nourishing meals in their residences and I believe their morbid and perverted outlook will be largely translated into cheerful sanity. But unfortunately the students cannot financially afford them while the fleshpots of Egypt are going the rounds in U-Circl. In the corresponding season of 1931 my wife fell a victim to multiple ailments depleting her strength alarmingly. Actually it was a case of post-maternity devitalization practically unknown today in solvent families with the marvels of modern medical science plus protein and vitamin foods. My daughter and daughter-in-law make a speedy rally after delivery looking fitter and handsomer subsequently. At the sight of my wife's poor

state of health my friend, Syed Abdul Majid, gave a sharp rebuke and said "Get out, you fool, for a change and take your mother-in-law along with you for the requisite ministrations". We were on the threshold of a six-week autumn recess and we did go out with our daughter and son and a baby in arms and also two sturdy servants. We collected my wife's mother in Calcutta and journeyed straight to Chunar, a health resort in U. P., 438 miles off from Calcutta and within hailing distance of Allahabad and Benaras. We didn't care for earlier arrangements about a house or friends to help; it was a little adventure into the unknown with just a railway time-table for guidance. We travelled up from Howrah by the famous Toofan Mail leaving at 4.00 p. m. At 4 in the morning we reached Mughalserai (a well-known railway junction) where we were to change into a slower train since Toofan Mail had no stoppage at Chunar. As the mail slowed down and crept into Mughalserai I looked out and saw a faery land studded with electric lights for miles around. We alighted and walked into the spacious and comfortable Waiting Room to spend the interval of four hours for transfer to the next train. Soon enough night's darkness was yielding to Aurora's light and charm which expelled the strain of a thirty-six hour continuous alertness and movement. I had a refreshing bath at the end of which I found to my thrill that the little ones were up too and playfull; my wife had a beaming smile on her otherwise pale face. After breakfast when we boarded our train luck smiled upon us too: The Naib-Tahsildar of Chunar (an important person there) was in our compartment; he gave us particulars of the place and where we should go and how we could secure an house. For a temporary halt we should go to the Dargah first where we would find pilgrims' shelter and thereafter I must go to the Chunar Settlement down-town where I might have no difficulty in securing a residential bungalow. On joy! My leap into the dark was not so gloomy after all. Chunar was a run of 38 miles only from Mughalserai (as far as I remember) and we got at the Station in a little over two hours. A chain of hills with wild vegetation on and plains with foodcrops in filled the surrounding scene. Shikaries had a good game of deer shooting on the hills. At the railway station we used "tongas" for ourselves, ekkas for servants and baggage (these ekkas were not less ugly than their compatriots of Rajshahi) and proceeded straight to the Dargah which wore a deserted and uninviting look-the season being not one of

pilgrimage. The pilgrim shelters were huts and hovels full of dust and dirt and without privacy; my enthusiasm received a jolt to be sure but was not killed outright. We had far more important work ahead, improvising a meal and securing a house. Fire-wood and foodstuffs were brought from the bazar and cooking was arranged. by 2 p. m. or slightly later we had a relishing feed with cooperative efforts thrown in. Then, I hurried down to the 'Settlement' means a colony of Anglo-Indian settlers on retirement from railway employment; its office corresponds to a sort of suburban municipality. In the Head Clerk of that office, Munshi Habibullah, I got a willing helper who showed me round a number of pretty cottages; and of the vacant two I liked one with fruit trees in front and at the back, and next door to Mr. Spain's. The latter was a retired Station Master and a lonely, old widower who had the care and disposal of the cottage I selected. Habibullah's introduction that I was a Professor from Bengal led not only to the securing of the house for six weeks on moderate terms but also to intimacy for the period. That I had moved up lock, stock and barrel and with two hefty servants impressed Mr. Spain about my financial sufficiency. Habibullah was a frequent visitor who once entertained my family at dinner in his house. It was he who took me out on short trips to Benaras and Allahabad-altogether a good soul of the ancient breed. At dusk the same day I returned to the Musafirkhana only to shift my family to the hired house in the early evening. We had two bed-rooms with a lounge in between and the required adjuncts. We had to use service commodes for cleaning which sweepers were readily available. Our little holiday enterprise had thus a lucky beginning and also the looked for results of improvement in my wife's health. She was on her feet in course of a week and then we had our daily jaunts (all members walking together and I carrying the baby on my shoulders) along the Ganges and upto the Chunar Fort-the river flowing by caused poetic stirrings, the fort occupying the entire top of a single hill (the fort sprouting forth from the river bed as it were) with a commanding view of Benaras in the distant horizon across the river sroused historical memories of the clash between Maharaja Chait Singh and Warren Hastings.

Chunar, a small town, stands on rocky eminence around the fort hill. Like such other places it is congested, the small houses occupying positions on undulating lanes and roads many of which slope down to

the planes either towards the marketplace and the lower lines (another name of the 'Settlement') or towards the railway station and beyond into surrounding foot-hills and villages. Middle and poorer classes of people are its inhabitants. Shop-keepers, vendors, tonga and ekka drivers are generally rude to health-seeking visitors from Bengal and extortionate in their transactions with the latter who having linguistic handicaps in speaking Urdu tamely submit to cheeky behaviour and bargaining. The Bengali Babus (contemptuously called so) hired houses on the fringes of the town proper and generally avoided the lower lines. Administratively it is a revenue-collecting Tehsil; climatically conducive to health; its supply of foodstuffs is limited to simple things (one has got to adjust to small fish, unvaried vegetable and mutton, small quantities of milk and ghee from the countryside); historically it owes all its importance to the fort. The name derives from limestone paste or Simply limestone which is present in abundance in the soil. Limestone aids digestion. Drinking water has to be drawn up from deep-dug wells. We had to buy a hundred cubit long and correspondingly strong rope for hauling water; the palm of my able-bodied servants would ache if not scratch and bleed in the operation. But the water very much unlike that of East Pakistan is sweet to drink and causes no bowels disorder. You may come across many a centenarian in you everyday experience. The Chunar Fort is an outstanding landmark. Within its encircling wall is situated the Borstal School with its staff and juvenile delinquents who are kept fully occupied on working days with weaving, carpentry, tailoring and handicrafts. The place is worth visiting and its system has much to learn from. The surrounding wall has a wide flat top on to which visitors mount and walk about easily without any fear of a fall feasting their eyes on a panoramic view of landscape and hillscape and skyscape.

Our outings brought us into acquaintance with many other visitors constituting a sort of fraternity of sojourners. We had a pleasant time far from the noise and smoke of city life.

My friend, Munshi Habibullah, was good enough to take me to Benaras on a week-end visit. Although the place was within hailing distance of Chunar there was no direct route; nobody made a river trip for which public transport was not available. By railway we had to make a detour

to the Mughalserai Junction which connects with the Dehra Dum railway line. At Benaras old city Habibullah arranged for our board and accommodation at a friend's place the owner of which was an old Zamindar having an aristocratic standard of living. He and his son occupied the first floor of a two-storied building with a small quadrangle beneath. It was his out-house (known as Dahliz in Urdu or Baithak Khana in Bengali) his family living in an adjacent but altogether separate building, the father and son had their cooking establishment as well in this out-house where there were dining rooms and bed-rooms and a lounge for each. We had quiet service and comfortable stay here for two days in course of which I made it a point to go round and see as much of the place and people as was practicable. The old city is famous for its famous Biswanath temple in which Emperor Aurangzeb attempted to plant a mosque the relics of which are visible, its long curving river-front, its tall buildings in the narrowest of winding lanes its silk textiles with costly gold and silver interlacings and decorative patterns, its brass metal pots, plates, pitchers and 'hookas', its unnumbered number of Hindu pilgrims, both floating and permanent. I waded through the maze lanes hunning with business activity to the river front which was a native Riviera as it were. Along the water-edge hundreds of men, women and children jostle together for a dip in the holy water of the Ganges, which they do have at all hours of the day and the evening. On the river itself there is another city of boats with tourists on board for a musical picnic. Here I saw with my own eyes what Bengali fiction and miscellaneous writing are replete with a world in miniature of holiday-makers. I climbed up the steps of the contiguous Biswanath Temple to have a brief glance but had to leave in a few minutes on account of the suffocation caused by milling crowds. Being keen on paying a visit, however hurried, to the renowned Hindu University of Benaras I hired a tonga and after having covered a fairly long distance got into the immensely laid out township of the University and while still on the moving vehicle put question after question to the driver who gave answers in his own way about buildings, structures, workshops, power-houses, bungalows and gardens. The Engineering College I vividly remember, but all other places within the campus are dim in their outlines. Nevertheless my consciousness is radiant with the sense of achievement of the founders, the planners and the executors of a

residential University. I had a glimpse of Pandit Madan Mohan Malviyya, the originator of the whole scheme, on several occasions in Calcutta. In particular I remember the magnificent speech he delivered in flow with English at the Calcutta Special Session of the National Congress held in 1920 in which Mr. Gandhi moved his Non-Cooperation Resolution which was opposed by Panditji. Nobody was in a mood to listen to the voice of opposition but nobody dared to ignore his splendidly eloquent and argumentative tongue. His political, religious and social outlook are a different matter. I bought a brass-metal 'hookah' and a nice Ja-i-Namaz (Prayer Carpet) from Benaras and I used them both till they were worn out.

The following week-end Habibullah and I were at Allahabad which is on the direct line to Delhi via Chunar and which is 500 miles off from Calcutta and just 60 miles or so from Chunar. The railway station buildings are massive but old and musty. I found them the same when in 1954 I travelled past it. Habibullah Saheb put me up this time in a relation's house in the old town, a rambling old structure with hardly sufficient floor space for the family as a whole. The host and his people were lower middle class and lived economically. But I had a warm reception and reasonably sufficient comforts. I met an impressive inmate occupying a small, ill-lighted, ill-ventilated room in the ground floor—a smart young undergraduate of Allahabad University who had at least two well-cut suits for his wear suspended on hangers in his room. When he would go out he would attract my attention to his sartorial turnout since in Bengal such a sight was unusual among undergraduates in those days. I was first taken out on a visit to a well preserved, immense woodland park of tall and shady trees having a perennial appeal for lovers of sylvan scenes. Here I didn't look for Sir Satyrane or Una surrounded by fauns and satyrs. But here was enacted some little time earlier a drama of chivalrous battle between a fugitive freedom fighter (brought to bay) and the police. The intrepid fellow (it is foolish of me to forget his name) climbed a tree (his scars and marks of the encounter were shown to me), secured a strong perch and fired unerring bullets at the police and killed some of them before he fell. Nature and man were blended together in this woodland scene. We proceeded next to the Allahabad Civil Lines, a planned, residential city of parallel roads with lovely bungalows nestling in alongside of them. South of Park Street,

Calcutta, there used to be attractive roads and houses (within my experience) but to my young eyes it appeared that the Allahabad Civil Lines were unique in their layout and execution their quiet and serene milieu. The name plate at the gate of Mr. Justice Solaiman of Allahabad High Court lingers still in my memory, when I read newspaper reports of the tussle that is going on now over the powers and privileges of Allahabad High Court vis-a-vis those of the UP Legislature and pending before the Supreme Court of India. (India's Supreme Court since gave its advice and the Allahabad High Court upheld the privileges of the Legislature in punishing contemnors) My mind goes back to the Allahabad High Court buildings (situated at the west-end of the Civil Lines) which I visited in the autumn of 1931. At the opposite end (if my memory doesn't fail me) I saw "Anand Bhaban", the residential place of Pandit Motilal and Jawaharlal of historic associations. The imposing buildings, structures and campus of Allahabad University in between provided a sharp contrast to those of Calcutta University in a congested small area to the West of College Square. The broad main street of Allahabad old city with a clock tower at its bottom was not less attractive. Any way the entire area of the Civil Lines opened up before my mind vistas undreamt of and unperceived hitherto by an obscure native of Bengal. I returned to Chunar with some textile material bought in the Allahabad bazar for my children's wear.

The desire of a visit to Agra and Delhi with a jump off my Chunar base having grown stronger I made another little 'sortie' to these places in the last week of October. The reopening date of Rajshahi College being 9th November this year there was still time enough for a look at the Taj, the fort, Sikandara, Fatehpur Sikri, Nizamuddin Aulia, Humayun's tomb and the Kutub Minar. Travelling up on the main line I reached Tundla Junction (this time I was all alone) one evening and broke journey there to transfer to the Tunkla-Agra branch line train which would be available in the same hours of the morning to get to Agra by breakfast time. At the spacious Waiting Room of Tundla Railway Station I met a gentleman eager to talk to me and cultivate my acquaintance. I found him knowledgeable, almost scholarly, a very companionable fellow generous to offer tea, smoke and dinner in the Refreshment Room. He said he was much pleased to meet me and entered upon lively discussion on all manner of subjects including that of a world language and when

I mentioned esperanto (fashionably current topic) he was not found laggig behind in the range of his information. He said he was bound for Agra as well and it would be a delight to travel together. Dinner over we slept side by side each promising to the other to help waking up at 2 in the morning. After a three/four hour sound sleep when I woke up around the appropriate time, he had vanished already. At my eixsistence the Waiting Room Bearer said that the gentleman was a habitual frequenter of the place. Then it dawned upon me that he was an Intelligence Branch Sleuth who nosed nothing out of me. When streaks of the morning light gleamed upon the east, many fellow passengers, particularly women, gave shouts of joy; the dome of the Taj had swam into their Ken: the train was fast approaching Agra. I shook off my drowsiness to change and pack up. From sketches of halting places given in railway timetable, I had made up my mind to stop at the Agra Bengali Hotel which was quite close to the Fort and the Taj some distance away. On a lighting from the train I proceeded straight to the selected hotel where I found myself quite at home in the midst of courteous Bengali staff. It functioned in a one-storied bungalow with open spaces on two sides and on the two other it had its requisite adjuncts. Tongas were always available in the compound. In fact the proprietors maintaine some of their own. This I detected from expereince a little later when I discovered that the Hotel Tongas were extortinate in rates wheras if you should walk aome distance away you would have one at very moderate charge.

I walked down to the Taj; the approach road was bordered on either side by small shops; nearer the gate I saw stone-cutters. (konwn there in their beautiful Persian names, "Sang-tarashans") busy with their carving and chiselling operations. I was proceeding unemotionally, almost sceptically in regard to its acknowledged magnigicence the world over. I thought that the British were the greatest nation in the world and that their Victoria Memorial in Calcutta was one of the finest specimens of buildings and that The Taj was one such specimen, smaller and therefore, slightly superior in finish and execution. On arrival at the gate, however, when I had a glimpse, in its own perspective, of the Taj my feet reeled at what I saw right in front. I steadied myself but I was not sure whether I was awake or in a dream; here was a dream in marble come true. I gazed at the wonder revealed and then shut my eyes again stongdazed. Slowly, gentle I measured my steps up the avenue looking

at the framing plantation on both sides and the refreshing fountains and cool reservoirs of water about. Soon I was at the bottom of the marble terraces in front and the sides. The four minarets at the four corners, the two side mosques accomplish a "close-up" never to be seen anywhere between earth and sky—the stately pleasure dome of Shah Jehan and Mumtaz floating midway between earth and sky with the sacred river Jamuna running behind. Kubla Khan's pleasure-dome is an evanescent dream; the Taj a solid, substantial reality and an eternally unfading vision combined. The faultless inlaying of marble pieces, the in-setting of jewels (destroyed and disfigured alas! by barbarian hordes and vandals), trellis work, the inscriptions of the Quoranic Verses in perfect geometrical patterns from the foot to the head, the planting of the top-vault with imitative tombs on the bottom vault containing the genuine ones—all make the miracle that Taj is. The stones of Victoria Memorial with yawning chasm between them should be kicked and trampled into dust. The Taj doesn't appear to be man-made; it is invested with preternatural and divine grace. Women visitors would lay down their lives to be portions of Mumtaz to have a husband like Shah Jehan. Several centuries have passed, millions of feet have trodden of the floors leaving wearying frets but the Taj continues to have the fragrant atmosphere of a bridal chamber just fitted up with silks and satin in fine array for the couple to sing:

Raise me a dais of silk and down;
 Hang it with vair and purple dyes;
 Carve it in doves and pomegranates,
 And peacocks with a hundred eyes
 Work it in gold and silver grapes,
 In leaves and silver fleurs-de-lys
 Because the birthday of my life
 Is come, my love is come to me!

As I write my emotions are in perfervid glow exactly as they were at the end of October, 1931. I wish I could spend days and nights in the noble company of the Taj.

A visit to the Agra Fort will be a cherished privilege and memorable opportunity undertaken exclusively for viewing the Taj from several coigns of vantage that the Fort provides—from magic casements opening

on the magic castle, from the octagonal tower (Sumum Burj) that Shahjehan had built on the eastern rampart of the fort. There are other historical attractions in galore inside. When I got into the Fort through its massive gate I ignored the pestering professional guides and followed other visitors from bed chamber to bedchamber (not spacious though, only the water-supply arrangements striking) from hall to hall, from Diwani-i-Khas to Diwan-i-A'am, along corridors with stalls of ivory wares, imitative architectural pieces for display and sale. To a hurried glance, the place appeared to be limitless. Getting down I waded to the Pearl Mosque (Moti Masjid) in the Fort's contiguity. The mosque is indeed "a privy pearl withouten spot", It is long and tall in structure made of spotlessly white marble from the floor to the ceiling and beautiful arches on pillars. Its counterpart in the Red fort of Delhi is a small affair by comparison. A look at it arouses a spontaneous desire to offer prayers there but it is a preserved sanctuary not open to public prayers. A greater part of the Fort compound is also inaccessible to the public. I was not wheedled into a dark, subterranean cavity to be introduced to a legendary tunnel from the Agra Fort to the Red Fort.

Next day I was at Sikandara, the famous tomb and mausoleum of Akbar, the Great, about 10/12 miles off from Agra situated by the highway to Delhi. The gate-way and the buildings are massive and spectacular in perfect Moghul architecture with geometrical designs of decorations and Arabic inscriptions all over. I do not think that I saw anything outstanding about it except its grandeur in lay-out and execution.

Having planned a day out at Fatehpur Sikri I found that a railway journey would prove economical and convenient, about 50 miles to cover in going out and coming back. to avail of the morning train I had to have a bath earlier and not caring for hot water I had it in cold. Maybe it was the first or 2nd of November; the experience I had of a cold bath in UP at the beginning of winter gave me an indication of what it would be like when the season should get into its full stride. It was intensely cold but delightfully crisp and refreshing. On arrival at Fatehpur Sikri I was face to face with its "Buland Darwaza" or (translated) it Lofty Gate; lofty undoubtedly it was but more stupendous than anything else. A five-foot, four-inch human being was smaller than a Liliputian before

this mountain of architecture, one of the grandest achievements in masonry without any mechanical aid in the collection, hauling up or giving a shape to the enormous mass of material required. One "Buland Darwaza" is worth an empire's buildings. At any rate all the modern structures of Dhanmonda, Gulshan, Motijheel (Improvement Trust areas of Dacca put together would be a pigmy before this giant. Climbing up the steps and passing through the Gate one finds oneself in a vast some terrace flanked on the south along its entire length by an imposing building. In the midst of this immense expanse of open pavement is planted the exquisite little tomb of the saint Salim Chishti looking wistfully towards its formidable sentinel, the Gate, a contrast with the latter would make the mausoleum over the saint a midget, almost a filigree in artistic creation. Chishti was a patron saint to Akbar; his blessings gave the latter his son, Salim Badshah. As you move up and down, east and west, through palaces and audience chambers or along pathways over open spaces and endless corridors you are in a splendid city, untenanted and abandoned reminding you of Lane-Poole's graphic picture in his Medieval India. In the western ramparts you can see the then water-supply installation of huge dimensions.

At the end of a strenuous day I returned to the Agra Bengali Hotel for some rest and also preparation for moving on to Delhi via ~~Tundla~~ Railway Junction. I passed through Aligarh but didn't have the time and means to break journey and have a look at the Muslim University. Alighting at old Delhi city railway station I proceeded to the Coronation Hotel situated in the Chawk, the very heart of the ancient Metropolis and within a short distance of the Red fort and the Jam-i-Mosque. I found the coronation Hotel a fairly big place with a showy front and crowded restaurant, noisy all over with ill-furnished rooms and fussy (impertinent to a degree) service. I couldn't stick it out for more than a day. Looking about and turning the corner at the west the signboard of another smaller place "Punjabi Hindu Hotel" lured me on to the management office. Having been a student of law and relishing the significance of the qualifying adjective to the title I introduced myself as a Muslim and inquired if I were eligible for admission for 2/3 days. There was no objection and I was allotted a small but clean room, carpeted and furnished, to satisfy my modest requirements. All these places had attached restaurants and bars wherefrom the resident mem-

bers (as also outsiders) could have their food and drink. Hot curry and hot dishes had scared me out of Coronation Hotel and here I asked for foodstuff without the burning mixture. The pleasant-tongued Punjabi Manager was disarmingly frank. Yes, I could have special dishes supplied to order but even in them there would be enough 'heat' to make them appetizing. I had a short shrift over a sterile quest, contented myself with pot-luck lunches, dispensed with dinner and ate fruit and sweets instead in the evening—the fruit-stalls and sweetmeat shops were flung about the Chawk. At Delhi at the time of my visit it was not possible to tell a Hindu from a Muslim; a universal dress consisting of loose, baggy, long-cloth trousers (Payjamas), a shirt and a coat and a black round cap on the head was prevalent. There appeared to be another common habit. At sunset tables and chairs would be arranged in circles in the open courtyard attached to a restaurant where gentlemen in a uniform dress would be baving their alcoholic drinks. I visited the Fort, in fact I just ran over the accessible parts and arrived at a logically untenable conclusion that this one was more or less a replica of the Agra Fort. The Museum of bed and furnishings, of the favourite articles of use, of the Mughal Kings provided an additional attraction to me reminding me of the contrasted pictures of the ancient and the modern in Masfield:

With a cargo of ivory

Sandalwood, cedarwood and sweet white wine

With a cargo of diamonds,

Emeralds, amethyst

Topazes, and cinnamon, and gold moidores

.....

Dirty British coaster with a salt-caked smoke-stack

.....

With a cargo of Tyne coal,

Road-rails, pig-lead

Fire-wood, iron-ware, and cheap tin trays.

A fleeting glance at the gorgeous palaces and their appurtenances within and the impregnable ramparts without, at this splendour of a substantial pageant could yield no more than what a fading dream ever can. The Jam-i-Mosque in the vicinity of the Fort was another stupendous affair. Only a personal visit can ensure an imperfect perception of

its huge dimensions. Walking away from the mosque and around one small sector of the city walls I became acutely conscious of their crumbling, decaying state and the surrounding slums—a peaceful co-existence of wealth and indigence, of capital and labour.

Emerging from the closed circle of ceaseless civic activities I boarded a bus to get me to the Kutub Minar area, 14 miles off as far as I remember. The public transport drove past the Kutub Minar and stopped at the terminus a mile farther away. I had to walk back and to make a short cut over uneven grounds and jungly undergrowths. But its compound was clean with an inviting DAK BUNGALOW on a sideline. The Kutub is a huge massive structure, its column rising to 338 ft. in height. The ochterlony monument in Calcutta is a thin, puny fellow by its side; the same is dark within; its threadlike stairs are risky to climb and make you giddy. But the Kutub's stairs are broad; the flight up is well-lighted; you can rest and breathe awhile at several landing balconies. With luck and pluck cooperating I mounted to the top which was found to be a flat surface. I gathered it had a top to match its immense proportions but nature made it topless. To be sure I am not thinking of the current "topless" among feminine dress-models. My uphill labour had an ample reward at climb's end when I had an unrestricted view of miles upon miles of the entire countryside around—an unforgettable experience.

On my way back I got off at a bus station wherefrom I could visit Hazrat Nezamuddin Aulia's Dargah and Humayun's tomb. In Indo-Pak sub-continent there has not been a greater Saint and Sufi than the former. His profound scholarship and spiritual perfection continue to be legendary. The sanctuary occupies a small area with ponds and pools thrown in. On their surface I found a greenish mantle of scum. A ceaseless stream of pilgrims was meandering about with gurgling noise. That peace and serenity, prayerful meditation and devotional demeanour which I looked for didn't simply exist. I left with unsatisfied yearning. I had to do considerable footslogging before I got at Humayun's tomb standing in a fairly big compound. I found it uncared for; it wore a deserted look. I felt gloomy and depressed. I felt that there were only graves and tombs for miles around where formerly the Mughal emperors held their Courts and Councils, declared wars, annexed territories established peace and order, built palaces and castles, promoted the cultivation of fine arts.

And now their ghosts were invisibly visible all over the place. What changes and contrasts man is subjected to! A sense of the mutability of human fortune overwhelmed me. I blended my weary steps homeward or rather hotelward.

On the following morning I hired a tonga and gave directions for showing me round some important parts of New Delhi the still developing planned metropolis and architecture of the British King Emperor, successor to Akbar and Shahjehan and others. It will be foolish of me to make any attempt at describing the contrasted model and image; I didn't have a stationary look either but there they stood in a white city, neat, trim, smart. From a distance I had a view of the Legislative Assembly Buildings and the Viceregal Lodge. The dash and the vigour of making a near approach, of offering to go in and look about after crossing the barriers of guards and sentinels, liveried porters and orderleys or personal assistants and secretaries have been unknown to me the sight of a constable outside, and a peon and a clerk inside in any official establishment frightens me. The question of forming any idea of entering any such place in New Delhi doesn't arise. Here at Dacca I recoil from the thought of getting into the East Pakistan Secretariat. To write out my name, designation and the nature of my business on the visitor's memo and then to wait indefinitely and helplessly on have a terror for me. Not more than twice or thrice I have been inside the Government House. If any such place or the gardens attached exercise an attractive spell I contemplate the same in the manner of Sindbad, the porter, at the palace of Sindabad, the millionaire sea-captain. My brief ramble round this sector of New Delhi was accomplished in the same manner and spirit, the only satisfaction being that after all I had a direct, though distant look. Since there was no barrier, I walked over and about the historic Ridge of Delhi the scene of carnage during the Sepoy Mutiny (or shall I call it the first War of Indian Independence?). Returning to my hotel I felt lonely and melancholy. Of the places I visited Delhi alone appeared to be devoid of the Bengali element in the population. I took the earliest opportunity of returning to Chunar and thence to Rajshahi via Calcutta where my mother-in-law stayed behind.

My six-week holiday outside was followed by a thirteen-week peaceful pursuit of normal duty. In the middle of February, 1932, I was in

Calcutta to attend meetings of examiners at the University. In those days examiners had to attend two full sessions of deliverations and practical work with an interval of two days between the two. The seasoned and experienced Head Examiners would drill their colleagues into and attainable uniformity of standard of scrip-examination and also give a personal check-up to the weekly consignment of scripts received. Conditions now are shockingly different. Any youngster without any training or experience is competent now to be an examiner upto the Degree standard without any effective check on him. It is no wonder that there should be a muddle at all stages. This didactic vein may be excused. While I was occupied in this imperative business in Calcutta message of my son and then of my daughter being laid up with enteric fever were received from my wife. The messages being of an alarming nature I returned to Rajshahi exactly after five days bringing along with me my mother-in-law and discovered that their morning temperature stood at 103° (taken under the armpit). They just opened their eyes only to close them again when I stood at their bed-side. At 6 P.M. the same day they registered 106° and were in delirium. When I arrived in the morning I missed one of my able-bodied servants (referred to in connexion with our visit to Chunar); he was away at Saraghat near the Hardinge Bridge to bring a consignment of ice there from. No ice was available at Rajshahi. I sent an express wire to my wife's people in Calcutta for a daily despatch of a maund of ice from Sealdah, which they did, and another such wire to my brother immediately elder to me and who had considerable reputation in Homoeopathic treatment for his immediately visit and help. He too responded unhesitatingly. In a couple of days the youngest one was caught into the fell swoop of typhoid. Local doctors from the seniormost Jamini Kumar Sengupta to the young Zainil Abedin (my friend Abdul Bari's newphew) examined the patients by turns and stressed the only treatment known at that time: water in, water out: and the application of two ice-bags over the head of each. As the days of the coming three to four weeks wore out, the cases of the first two became more and more grave with additional complications; the infected bowels issued frequent purtrid discharges; the administration of fluid through the mouth became harder and harder; saline-giving apparatus was not available at Rajshahi. My brother and I, my wife and mother-in-law and one of the servants were at the wash-

tub and the ice-breaking and ice-filling operations. The members of the English Department made convenient adjustments in my time-table; the Hindu students of the College rebuked the leading Muslim students and challenged them either to form sick-nursing squads or leave the job to them thus shaming them into activity. They formed small groups and shared our work and our affliction. We were all on a war-footing and round-the-clock industry. Towards the end of the third week the second child (our eldest son) developed meningitis. For the first time in my life I understood the prognosis of typhoid and the implications of meningitis. His meningeal cry sent a shiver down the spine. Dr. Sengupta called my wife and myself away and asked us to offer prayers to God. Meanwhile allopathic mixtures were abandoned; the sole treatment was left to my brother's homoeopathic drugs. My son's meningitis was accompanied by a 70-hour stoppage of urine; my daughter's looseness of stomach was further aggravated; it looked the final catastrophe was upon us. I felt like stowing away the group photographs we had taken in Calcutta at the end of our Chunar holiday; I felt it wouldn't be required for the rest of our life when the children would be snatched away from us ere long. My feelings were like those (if not worse) of Vera Brittain at the moment of her separation from her children in the darkest hour of the Second World War described so graphically in her book "England's Finest Hour". But soon through God's infinite mercy life revived and "peered through the hollow eyes of death". My brother told me that my daughter and my son were showing signs of regaining their consciousness; The latter had passed urine; the youngest one despite high temperature was sitting up in bed. But towards the end of the fourth week when they regained their consciousness and started having nourishment my mother-in-law, alas, became infected. Under peremptory orders from my father-in-law and other relations and immediate arrangements made by the for her escort, she was taken to Calcutta. During the journey she had lost her consciousness; from Sealdah Station she was taken straight to Calcutta Medical College Hospital where she just after a week succumbed to death on the 1st April, 1932. Thirty two years have elapsed since then but conscience still bites why I had agreed to the shifting. She had died a martyr's death for the children of her only child, my wife, who over these years in spite of efforts made by me to draw her into some conversation has been maintaining a tight-

lipped silence. May her soul rest in peace!

When I was in the midst of this life-and-death struggle Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq came over on a visit and addressed a gathering of the Rajshahi Muslim Students' Association in course of which he gave a brief account of his activity and experience in the London Round Table conference.

References to personal and domestic life have already run to unpardonable lengths. It is time I got back to the theme proper during 1930 to 1937 which includes two broad sub-divisions and a quarter of logical sequence. The years between 1930 and 1933, that is to say, the T. T. Williams-Bhupati Sen-Roy Bahadur Hem Chandra-Jenkins administration had been marked by ordered progress in academic studies by students and teachers alike, by seriousness in their purpose; it had been marked by a smooth flow of corporate activities in an atmosphere of Hindu-Muslim amity, regular Tennis games and competitions, social get-togethers and entertainments. Work and play went hand in hand making life worth living. I remember how on one occasion during Dr. Jenkins' time Sir Jadunath Sarkar (he belonged to Rajshahi and was spending a holiday with his brother) was good enough to deliver a learned speech in Assembly Hall of our College. Personally I was clever enough to secure his services for a meeting at the Rajshahi Muslim Institute. But wait, a different dispensation was in the offing, heralding a "carnival" in the first phase but in the second a thunder-storm cutting off communications among different sections and causing disruption all around.

Dr. Jenkins had left at the end of February, 1933. At the end of April that year, that is to say, at the initial phase of the summer vacation was notified the appointment of Dr. P. D. Shastri, IES, Professor of Philosophy, Presidency College, as Principal of Rajshahi College, who took over early next session. He had far greater scholastic additions than S. N. Maitra could ever lay his claims to, his chief distinction being a doctorate of philosophy from Kiel (Germany) University. He had a far more shapely body and handsomer presence which assimilated enthusiastically some attributes of the world-shaking personality of Hitler of the period. In fact in some of his speeches in the Assembly hall he would fondly dwell on the German 'macht' and on Adolph Hitler. Son of a

famous Punjabi Sanskrit scholar he was proud of his Lahore home and of the martial Punjabi race. He was not accompanied by his wife but by a Sikh chauffeur who, it was whispered, fed at the same table with him on payment. Dr. Shastri attended his office in his car driven by the imposing, turbaned SiKh by making a detour over Municipal roads instead of walking across from his hungalow. He had no hobbies of his own: he was not a sportsman either. He had no social life: he was not a member even of the Rajshahi Station Club. He wouldn't call on any member of of the staff; he wouldn't accept any invitation at any teacher's house. He was professedly a vegetarian. But gossip would have it that he didn't abstain from chicken preparations, particularly when gifts of chickens came his way unsought. He was a sort of permanent fixture at Presidency College where as a student I saw his attractive figure moving up and down the stairs. Philosophy not being my subject of study I had no contact with him. Another attractive figure in movement there was in Mr. K. Zachariah who doesn't require any introduction at my hands. In Philosophy, however, the most respected teacher was Dr. Adityanath Mukherjee, and Mr. R. K. Dutta was most popular among the students. It was impossible for me to have known anything about his ways then but it was talked about during my time that his irregularities in the execution of his duties drew the sharp notice of Principal J. R. Barrow and that he was in trouble. Here at Rajshahi College as Vice-Principal (during Mr. T. T. Willams' time already briefly glanced at by me) his ways had alienated him from his colleagues to the extent that when his appointment as Principal to succeed Dr. Jenkins was in the air, they shook their heads in serious misgivings about the shape of things to follow. When he actually took over they would keep aloof in a spirit of non-cooperation. He was aware of adverse conditions prevailing. I kept an open mind and in my discussions with the members of the staff I stressed that it was improper to start with passion and prejudice and that cooperation and loyalty would draw the best in him and lead to fruitful results. In fact Dr. Shastri had considerable external charm in his conversation; he was courteous in his contacts with us. It was understood that he was a Master of Oriental Learning of the Panjab University. At any rate he would talk in chaste Urdu and my impression was that he had knowledge of Persian as well. S. N. Maitra was very fond of 'firing' and 'giving the sack' unknown to Dr. Shastri. Only in his later

madness he talked of "blacklisting, rustication and expulsion" of Muslim students. During the first phase of his administration he would pour out to me endless cups of affection and secured willing services in all directions but during the phases to follow I was Public Enemy No. 1 and the Muslim Students were blackguards.

I have said above that Dr. Shastri's advent was to herald a "carnival" first and a thunder storm subsequently. I am sorry the word 'Carnival' argues a lack of self-restraint on my part. What actually happened was that soon after his assumption of office he conceived, organised (and had the same execute) on a grand and gigantic scale the diamond Jubilee Celebration of Rajshahi College, its origin being in 1873 and now the year being 1933—a span of sixty years. Months of preparation preceded the final fortnightlong celebration in December. Competitions in essay-writing, speech-making, singing, athletics and sports were arranged. The staging of plays including one in English and another in Sanskrit was provided for. His target was: Let eminent persons from Calcutta and the Punjab come and have a look, preside over some of the final events and give away the prizes of the different competitions and leading events. Let Mr. Hena be in charge of publicizing the D. J. Celebration. No one is more competent than he to make personal delivery of invitation letters to Sir Nazimuddin, the Education Minister, and Sir Bijoy Prasad Sinha Roy, the local Self-Government Minister. I had to go down to Calcutta twice to finalise the visits of the two Ministers just mentioned. Sir Nazimuddin knew me too well to decline. When I met Sir Bijoy Prasad at the Writers' Buildings he looked being much amused by my volubility but the use of the last weapon in my armoury, namely, the call of higher education in the province overpowered him. Sir Nazimuddin, on arrival, became Dr. Shastri's guest in the Principal's Bungalow. Sir Bijoy being himself a Zamindar of Burdwan had Rajshahi Zamindars' houses flung open for his hospitality. They came on two different dates. Sir Nazim gave a fairly long discourse: the latter gave away the prizes with a few remarks but he had to listen to another speech of mine when I requested him on behalf of the sportsmen teachers formally to open our newly laid Tennis Lawn just in front of the Physics Laboratory Building. From the Punjab came Prof. Sondhi, the leader of a successful hockey team to the recent Olympic Games and prominent in the public gaze. The immense quadrangle of the New Hostels fitted up with shamianas, marquees,

sports, tracks and arenas, decorated with flags, festoons and electric bulbs (the College had its own electric plant—not the town of Rajshahi yet) looked like a little city of lights in the evening reminding one of a carnival in Calcutta in cold weather. Each distinguished visitor went round and must have spoken a word of appreciation. Every afternoon there were high teas and garden parties and I distinctly remember to have cut out my dinner at home on five consecutive evenings. At the end of 4 such feeds when my wife and my sister (who was on a visit) "kidded and jollied" be about the fifth evening I pretended to be angry and said "No dinner tonight either"; they had to wear silly looks. During this gala and festive celebration we had a splendid fun-academic work having been curtailed to an irreducible size. In high spirits and buoyancy I used the word "D. J" (Diamond Jubilee) in my greetings to friends and acquaintances and in an unguarded moment when once I had used the word **Tamasha** within Dr. Shastri's hearing he was much annoyed and openly resented it. But in the midst of the celebration there was a sharper clash. I have already touched upon his external polish in his dealings with us. He coaxed and cajoled me into two trips to Calcutta to fix up the visits of the Ministers and dangled before my eyes like a carrot before those of a horse the prospects of my entertainment at a banquet as it were in his bungalow. I ignored this repulsive lure and whenever he would repeat the same, I would point out to him that he should limit himself to "U" circles and omit me altogether but still he would assume an insistent tone. His search for self-seeking opportunity with the Ministers was all too patent to me. On the day that Sir Nazim's dinner was fixed up at his place he resorted to a brazen-faced trick and told me "You are spared this evening according to your request". At first I couldn't get a his "sparing" me expecting no such invitation but when he clarified by stating that it was about the dinner the same evening I lost all restraint and pricked the bubble of his hypocrisy. He swallowed it and nursed it for later vendetta. The D. J. came to a successful conclusion with a margin of 3/4 days of work before the Christmas recess beginning on the 24th December under the British regime. But there was another surprise for us. It was announced that the holiday would be extended to the 13th or 14th of January next year so that the india-MCC Cricket Tests at Calcutta in December-January could be seen and enjoyed by all. How he staggered the holiday list or just fudged it still beats me: he did

it on some more occasions to suit his own convenience for a visit to the Punjab. At any rate the framing of the College holiday list for the personal benefit of the Principal is an outrageous offence in my opinion. During my fairly long administration such an idea never occurred to me. The financial implications of this grandiose performance couldn't be disregarded by any one who had a modicum of critical faculty within him. It was openly talked about that the substantial accumulations of the Union Fund were completely drained; even the dinner to Sir Nazim at the Principal's bungalow was at Union' cost. I was not connected in any way with the Union Fund and I didn't have the remotest idea of how it was administered. But Giriji Babu was the Professor-in-Charge and he must be a consenting party to the huge expenditure incurred in the celebration of the D. J. A Govt. grant towards it in those stringent British economy days could be brushed aside as simply absurd. The College reopened in the middle of January exactly on the day on which the terrible Bihar earthquake took place. I was in the College when the main building shook from side to side. This seismic catastrophe made a shambles of Bihar; Monghyr town which I had visited earlier was a scene of rubble and debris from end to end; the far worse of Quetta was a year ahead.

When teacher duties have been my chief job (those have involved 27 years out of a total of 42) my term-time occupations have been full and strenuous with lecture preparations, tutorial script examination, paper-setting, paper-examining and all other incidental and related matter; during recess and vacation my insatiable thirst for drinks of Pierian cups, my earnestness to extend the range of my information in social, religious, political, economic, scientific movements and progress have given me still fuller and far more enjoyable time. Salvaging some sunk and wrecked papers of 1930, 1932, 1935 I have just discovered evidences of these statements. As and when opportunities are available in the course of these humble scribbings, I propose to insert a few samples. I have never butted into other people's affairs; I hate doing so. What Dr. Shastri was doing administratively I never knew. But I distinctly remember what brought him into clash with the public (Hindu in particular a without and also within the College) in the opening months of the academic session 1934-35. One day a short paragraph in a newspaper (which particular one, I forget; may be AB Patrika) with

the caption, Rajshahi College Girl Student fined Rs. 3/-, attracted my attention and looking through I found that she was Kamana Banerjee who had declined (or may be boycotted) to attend a particular class and thereby had insulted the teacher concerned. This incident was however common knowledge among the staff and piecing together bits of information they cautiously gave I found that Dr. Shastri had his young son fresh from his own University appointed as an Honorary Lecturer in his particular subject with the approval of the College Governing Body and that Kamana Banerjee along with other girls had boycotted the son's class; Dr. Shastri was furious and couldn't allow this insult and indiscipline to go unpunished. The constitutional implications of the making of an honorary lectureship by the Governing Body and in a purely Government College and the fining of a girl created an unenviable situation for Dr. Shastri. The girl's plea was that the other two friends of hers were absent and she felt considerable delicacy in attending alone a young bachelor-teacher's class. This was not acceptable. I should add that I knew this girl very well; she was a sister of my intimate friend, Banikanta Banerjee, Superintendent of the New Hindu Hostels. During my first term I saw her as a school-going girl. She was always shy; she would hardly open her lips before any one. She wouldn't talk even to me although I was just like a member of the family. The unfortunate episode being publicised Dr. Shastri must have had an uneasy time. He sent for me and in his customary humouring vein requested me to take up my pen in his defence; the Star of India should be a welcome medium of publicity. He was expansive in the information he communicated to me about what he had done over the throwing open of College doors to the girls and over his other achievements during the past year. The star of India had given publicity to my despatches about his famous Diamond Jubilee celebration. The treacherous Hindus of the place were up in arms against him etc. I am very sorry that Dr. Shastri could never size me up. However it should be kept in view how in 1935-'36 the same Star of India had driven him to a mood of desperation. His insistence on my writing in his defence was too strong for me to disoblige. I wrote out a few paragraphs on Dr. Shastri's dynamism in his administration and incidentally inscribed how the same girls for whose admission into Rajshahi college he alone was commendably helpful were now "proving a thorn in his flesh" (I

remember having used this phrase). As soon as these paragraphs were published in the Star of India, the other papers made bitter comments on the impropriety of the honorary appointment, the unjustifiability of the fine imposed and also on the penmanship of the anonymous correspondent of the Star of India who must have been a henchman of Dr. Shastri. My conscience pricked me and when I had to see him next time I washed my hands clean of further efforts in this direction. I remember another connected episode. It was a time-honoured convention at Rajshahi College for the Principal to deliver an 'inaugural' or 'commencement' address. During such a fixture in 1934-'35 Dr. Shastri instead of maintaining a dignified silence on the Kamana Banerjee episode tactlessly rambled into it only to be jeered and booed and interrogated in a purely academic and solemn function. Undoubtedly the Principal was guilty of **faux pas** but the assembled exceeded their limits to my mind. I rose in all seriousness and said I was not up for window-dressing in displaying "the shop-soiled and the shoddy"; on an occasion like the present the honour to the temple of learning should receive exclusive consideration to the elimination of all ephemeral day to day happenings in life I believe I gave a healthier turn to what was leading to a disgrace for the Principal and the teaching staff. Dr. Shastri, however, was in jitters and instead of regaining his aplomb declared suspension of the classes for the rest of the day (and mind you it was not even 12 noon then) to the amusement of the College as a whole.

Without bothering myself in the least about his administrative affairs and further developments I swung back into my own orbit and spun round with ease and vivacity. It became absolutely clear that Dr. Shastri now felt the imperative need of walking into the lounge of Girija Babu and his "family" and wooing them. The same courtship implied not only his estrangement from his earlier love in the Muslim family but a steady drift towards bellicosity to the latter as will be clear from the 1935 history. It was not a case of 'native' ambivalence but a silly instinct of retrieving his prestige. Whether the Kamana Banerjee episode had led to a partial suspension of Union activities in the the prevalent atmosphere of distrust and hostility I do not remember; I have no written trace before me. I also do not remember when Dr. Shastri actually went on leave in 1934. An entry in a tattered chit of paper shows that he did resume his duties in the month of April, 1935. this entry throws open the

door of pleasant memories of at least a six-month respite from his "martila powers" by the first officiating regime of Mr. J. M. Bose who was substantively appointed as Principal in December, 1935 to succeed Dr. Shastri. Putting two and two together I conclude that Dr. Shastri had gone on leave in continuation of the Puja holiday of 1934 so that he did resume at the end of the session and just of the eve of the summer vacation of 1935. Mr. J. M. Bose was a Bengal Senior Educational Service man towards the end of his official career. Earlier he was Professor of Maths in the Bengal Educational Service at Presidency and Sibpur Engineering Colleges. With his sweetness and sanity, his detachment from cliques and conteries and his skill in Tennis and above all his training in one of the Inns of Court in U. K. (he was a Barister at-Law) he had won oue hearts and ensured peaceful academic life for the College during the six-month stop-gap arrangement to which he was called following Shasatri's departure on leave.

One or two personal episodes will not come amiss at this stage. In August, 1932, I arranged a High Tea for those selfless, devoted students who shared our agonies and our labour in the sick-nursing of my typhoid ridden children. A tea-party at Rajshahi as also a Dinner in those days was no problem in organisation and in financing. Sweets and salted delicacies were cheap and in plentiful supply. Similarly fowles, fish, mutton, vegetables, ghee and curd, fine rice, the most important items for dinner were equally cheap. At the moment of writing (August, 1964) it would tax one's credence to accept the price of one rupee, 32 paisa for a seer of pure ghee (a slightly inferior quality for Rs. 1.25) against current Rs. 10/00 and that also not unadulterated in East Pakistan, a fowl for 32 paisa, a seer of mustard oil for the same amount, a big fish for Rs. 2/-, mutton for 37 paisa a seer. In the Tea Party to students we included sandwiches and cakes in addition to the many varieties of delicious sweets. In April, 1933, I entertained the staff as a whole at dinner its background being very intriguing. Our Hindu colleagues were 36 to 38 in number (and we were now 6, 3 from Arabic and Persian, Professor O. Islam of Maths., Mr. Sayidur Rahman of Philosophy and myself); on important and unimportant occasions they would throw a dinner at their houses and entertain us the Muslims; they would take the trouble of providing tables chairs, plates etc. for us in contrast with their simple, orthodox, squatting and feeding manner. We had no objection to their

cooked food. On one exclusively orthodox occasion (a Sradh ceremony) my intimate friend, Jitendra Nath Chakravarty, defied conventions and entertained us at dinner on such an occasion. he was affectionate enough to say that he couldn't conceive of any feasting in his house where I couldn't be invited. I deeply felt that we didn't or couldn't reciprocate-90% of them were too orthodox and conservative to eat our cooked food. Why couldn't we make separate arrangements for them? It was churlish on our part to make enjoyable trips along this one-way traffic system. In cooperation with my friends Saroj Sanyal and Banikanta Banerjee (of Physics and Chemistry respectively) I formed a little plot of orthodox arrangements. One one-storied residential house belonging to my own landlord and being contiguous to mine had just fallen vacant. It was secured for temporary use. Cook and utensils were arranged from the Hindu Hostel. Concealing these up our sleeves we issued dinner invitation cards to all our friends. In the Staff Room I declared that our Hindu colleagues must have dinner at my house failing which I would stop responding to their invitation. Most of them having had genuinely affectionate relations with me felt tense and mounting embarrassments which resolved themselves into the most agreeable solutions when Saroj Babu gave away the secret. We had a glorious time together. The acting Principal Harilal Choudhury, a quiet and innocent gentleman and every other colleague gave vocal expressions to their relish and enjoyment. Half a dozen young colleagues joined our Pilao and Korma feed.

To counter-balance these private little relaxations there were two official hurdles for me to take during the period from 1932 to 1934. The post of the Professor of English in the BES against which I was acting since 1930 was advertised for substantive recruitment. The ways of the Education Department were curious and breath-taking to put it mildly. They were given to meticulous calculation of a small percentage of recruitment by promotion and a preponderating one by direct recruitment. And by a subtle manoeuvring, the promotion cases fell to the share of Presidency College. I had glaringly discriminatory examples before me. Somnath Maitra, Subodh Sengupta, Tarapada Mookerjee all considerably junior to me got straight into BES at Presidency College (all posts in English there were at least BES) on an officiating basis and confirmed soon enough without facing rivals by advertisement and appearing before Selection Boards. After the post under review had

been advertised candidates from different provinces of India applied. A number of them were called up before the Selection Board consisting of experts from Presidency College. Such a company of candidates included one of my own friends Kshitish Chakravarty who came down from his College in Nepal, my own pupil Sourin Majumdar and also Sunit Kumar Indra both junior lecturers at Rajshahi College and a young Muslim with wavy hair from Lucknow, later lionised in Bengal and getting well-known as Syed Ahmed Ali and recruited directly to the Senior Educational Service and Posted at Presidency College, Calcutta. Let me insert her (lest I should forget that by his sheer brilliance and meretricious glamour he moved into diplomatic service. On the partition of the country his lien in the English Department of East Pakistan Senior Education Service had been maintained. The Martial Law regime of Pakistan ushered in 1958 brought about his downfall; he was screened out. The Selection Board before which we appeared gave me the first nomination, the 2nd and the 3rd choices having gone to two others. Next day the other two nominees and I had to appear before the Statutory Board (corresponding to Public Service Commission since 1937) Presided over by Mr. Sachse, the seniormost I. C. S. of the time and Member, Board for Revenue. There was an ordeal for each in the searching questions put by this seasoned administrator. This Board rejected the other two and gave their single nomination to me leading to my substantive appointment, and also confirmation with effect from January, 1932.

Another personal matter should merit a little space here. In November, 1933, I shifted with my family to "Feroza Mahal" a well-known house at Rajshahi (contiguous to the house I was occupying since 1930) an aristocratic neighbour to my former plebeian dwelling. "Firoz's Mahal" is a two-storied imposing structure with a courtyard in front and fairly big compound inside. It has a glittering facade with shining glass pieces set on its brow and coloured window-panes. Its rooms are spacious, breezy, comfortable. Its owner was the daughter of Rais Saheb of Bangha (already mentioned) and wife of another Zamindar of "Dula", Pabna. One has a direct view from here of Rais Saheb's residential area opposite. My landlady's name was aristocratically long: Syeedatun Nessa Ammatul Khatun Choudhurani. In course of the three years that I lived in this house I had the commodious ground-floor room fitted up

as a drawing-cum-dining hall with an amusing assortment of furniture. For the lounge portion I had a cheap cane-suite bought from Principal J.M. Bose, another costly such from Mr. A. R. Malik, Deputy Director of Agriculture, when he was transferred: for the feeding half a long table (long in size and in good sense) of cheap Rajshahi wood and eighteen chairs of the same quality and stuff-the equipment reminding one of Portia's inimitable description of the young Baron of England "How oddly he is suited....." But in a provincial district-town it did cut a figure. Here I held many receptions and frequent dinners entertaining Sir Azizul Huq, Dr. H. C. Mookerjee, Principal J. M. Bose, ADPI's, Mr. A. F. M. Mujibar Rahman ICS, (then District and Sessions Judge) Mr. Quazi Anwarul Huq, I. P (later Chief Secretary of East Pakistan, now Chairman Pak. Central P. S. C., a central Minister in 1965), Mr. Hafizur Rahman, then Deputy Magistrate now finance Minister of East Pakistan, (Retired in 1965), colleagues on the staff, leading public men, physicians and others. Here I held meetings of the Executive Committee of the Rajshahi Muslim Students' Association. In my otherwise strenuous day-to-day life my relaxation consisted of early morning walks along the lovely Padma embankment and a game of tennis in the afternoon when the lawn tennis season was on or alternatively evening walk. During a total period of twelve years of my Rajshahi life I had never been inside the local cinema. My second relaxation was entertaining and being entertained. One of my friends, noticing my delight in this direction very aptly remarked once "This bohemianism suits your temperament better than your digestive system".

Another personal episode having its bearing on Government Service preferment drama took place in 1934. Mr. Holme finally gave up his part-time job at Islamia College. The post (obviously in the Bengal Senior Educational Service) was advertised on a Muslim reservation basis (I have already noted the mathematical computation of recruitment percentage in the Bengal Secretariat). In 1937, however, a post of Economics in the same College exactly of the same status was filled up by Dr. P. K. Roy who in 1946 while he was Principal of Dacca intermediate College was stabbed during the communal riots and who later became the KPI of West Bengal. I applied and was called up for interview as other Muslim candidates were. When we formed a company of aspirants before the DPI's Room on the day of the meeting of the

Selection Board I found Mr. Humayun Kabir and Altaf Hussain. Mr. Altaf Hossain was sworn in as a Central Minister in March, 1965. The former had been for quite a good length of time a Central Minister in the Indian Union. His portfolio may change chameleon-like but his addition, "Professor", is constant and of unswerving fidelity to him. In Calcutta University at M. A. and B. A. Hons. levels he had a double first in English but at Oxford he had his laurels in Modern Greats. He had married a Hindu lady, also an M. A. He has even been a congressite; his wife was reported to be a leftist. On his return from Oxford sometime between 1927 and 1930 he was given a reception by the Muslim students at the Calcutta Muslim Institute when he attended the same with **Khadder dhoti and kurta** on and when in the course of his speech he was reported to have made attacks on the Muslim community and its communalism. I was not present and I didn't have any knowledge beyond a newspaper report of the function. But when I met Sir Abdur Rahim sometime after the event I found him in a mood of righteous resentment. It was immaterial, he said, that a young man was a good scholar but it mattered very much to the community that he should be in dress and outlook and alien and launch an unprovoked onslaught upon the Muslims. Humayun Kabir had the topmost priority in interviewing the Selection Board. He went in but came out after a brief spell and left the scene immediately afterwards. I gathered however that Mr. Harley had already set his heart upon him having held two private discussions with him earlier. I was innocent of all these goings-on. My time with the Board was not less than fifteen minutes in course of which I had a brush with Mr. Harley (he was on the Board) over the usefulness of Philology being included in the English Hojrours syllabus. Now it so happened that Mr. Holme being familiar with my Linguistic equipment had assigned to me the teaching of Philology at Islamia during the four years I had been there. He was also on the Board and noticed Mr. Harley's disadvantage in the discussion that followed. The DPI was also a keen observer and beckoned to me not to follow up. Altaf Hussain came out after his own bout (particularly with Mr. A. K. Chanda) and told me how by giving frank replies he had disarmed Mr. Chanda. He said he had given up his Green Shirt Movement (well-known then at Chittagong); also his cards after Mr. Chanda's departure from the Principalship of Chittagong College: he was not keeping abreast of his

subject either, since the Islamic Intermediate College Library was too poor to provide reading material from contemporary writers..... etc. He drew me aside and said with his characteristic verve "Look here, the ultimate tie will be between you and myself" when I demurred in respect of Humayun Kabir he said "He will be out, you will see". His quick grasp and quicker wit turned out to be correct eventually. His guess about a close finish with me. however, didn't materialise. Officially Board discussions and nominations are confidential/but factually they provide food for public consumption. Mr. Harley couldn't perceive what the DPI and the Education Department saw in clear outline. The Board had no hesitation in giving the first nomination to Mr. Humayun Kabir but it held serious deliberation over the second and third places and pointed to my fitness for the 2nd. Mr. Harley was unequivocal in his opposition to me and said "I cannot pull on with him". But when he was confronted with the further question "Would you have a fit and welcome person in Altaf Hussain instead?" he was embarrassed just for a while only to prefer Hussain to me: I was scaled down to the third. I remember for ever what Harley told me on the occasion of Altaf Hossain's departure at the end of 1926/27 and in reply to my complaint against his strong personal commendation of Altaf's case. he said "I want him to go, I don't want you to go, Mr. Hena". He had a seven-year riddance of him and by his strong backing up of my case in 1930 he managed to have a permanent riddance of me. I had no regrets since from the analysis given by me of his character and attainments it will be plain as a pikes-staff that his regime was bound to be one of glorified trifles, Police reports went against Humayun Kabir, his wife specifically. So he went out according to the unerring forecast of Altaf. I had gone back to Rajshahi by the next available train and thought no more about this adventure into the faeryland of Senior Service. But Altaf Husain didn't have a smooth time in his quest for double promotion; he was not yet in Bengal Educational Service. How could he skip over this rung? Sir Azizul Huq had just then taken over as Education Minister. The length and the strength of all pressure from the Calcutta elite were around and over the Munister who, while in Calcutta, used to live in the house of one such influential member. But Sir Azizul Huq yielded only to the extent of Altaf Husain being appointed as Professor of English in the Bengal Educational Service and not in the Senior Service. This became clear to us and to all

from the Calcutta Gazette notification that followed. It took Altaf Husain a fairly long time to cross this hurdle. Harder still was his confirmation because Harley wouldn't make his recommendation on the ground of Husain being occupied more in the Star of India and journalism than in the College work. A word about Humayun Kabir's teaching career will be relevant to what I have said earlier about him. He held a lectureship in Philosophy at Calcutta University only for a few years before he transferred himself finally to his political career. The question of his ever being a Professor doesn't arise.

But let me get back to 1935 which was a turning point in the history of British India in regard to the country's struggle for independence. The Round Table Conferences of 1930 to 1932 had failed. Ramsay Macdonald, England's Prime Minister, announced the formulation and introduction of a British scheme for resolving the Hindu-Muslim tangle. He carried it out by his famous Communal Award incorporated in the Government of India Act of 1935 passed by Parliament and assented to by the King the same year. This Reforms Bill with its 450 Clauses was actually introduced into the House of Commons on 25.1.1935. Separate electorates for the different communities, reservation of fixed percentages of representation for the minorities in Provinces and fairly full autonomy for them were some of the outstanding provisions of this 1935 Act. Immediately after the breakdown of the Round Table Conferences Sir Mohammad Iqbal, a delegate to these, concentrated his attention on the redistribution of territories and states in such a fashion as to lead to a big Muslim chunk in to the north-west of the country to include the Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan, the Afghani belt and Kashmir. In his view the bringing into existence of such a zone would be the only safeguard of the Muslims against the majority domination. Liaquat Ali Khan successfully wooed Mohammad Ali Jinnah back into India from his English home to revitalize the All-India Muslim League and to be the undisputed leader of the Muslim community. The Muslims of Bombay had already elected him to the Central Legislature as an Independent. On 22nd January, 1935, he was elected as the Leader of the Independent Party at New Delhi. On the 24th January Sir Abdur Rahim was elected president of the Central Legislative Assembly defeating his rival TAK Sherwani by 70 to 62 votes.

The dawn of the Self-governing India of 1937 was peeping through the 'eastern windows' and that of Pakistan and Hindustan was concealed round a ten-year corner thence. Jawaharlal Nehru was released from imprisonment in September 1935; he steadily moved forward to his own destiny.

In January, 1935, Calcutta University lost two of its distinguished Muslim teachers in the death of Sir Abdullah-Al-Mamun Suhrawardy and Kazem Shirazi. The former's erudition was the pride of Muslim Bengal; his Pan-Islamic activities carved him a niche in the Muslim world. He was a sturdy fighter in the Bengal Legislative Council where his greater contemporary Sir Abdur Rahim (also a native of his own district, Muduapur) as Executive councillor fared poorly before Sir Abdullah's eloquence. He was born in Dacca and had his early education here. A marble memorial about his birth may be seen about the stairs of Dacca Islamic Intermediate college.

The year 1935 is also memorable in the history of Rajshahi College. Particularly its second half when its Principal staged a sort of military coup with his German 'macht' and leonine strength of the Punjab. The splendour of Dr. Shastri's 'Diamond Jubilee' triumph had been eclipsed by his Achilles-like wrath over the 'shy' effrontery of Kamana Banarjee leading to his six month retreat from the scene. But he didn't return any the wiser and soberer after his discomfiture. The story may be recounted here in brief outline. Early in August, 1935, Babu Girija Sankar Bhattacharyya, was transferred to Chittagong college. His place was supplied by Dr. Srikumar Banerjee appointed to act in the newly created Senior Educational Service post as Professor of English. This corresponded to the position of the Vice-Principal, though not designated technically as such. Girija Babu with all his deficiencies as a teacher and as officer-in-Charge of the Students' Union was a prudent man and also timid. He adjusted himself to the exigencies of the situation; at any rate he wouldn't precipitate a crisis, Srikumar Babu was a different character altogether. From 1915, if not earlier, he had lived the sheltered life of a teacher at Presidency College. He had outstanding scholarship, and also a steadily built-up reputation in teaching. My use of 'sheltered life' has been carefully made. At Presidency he was not associated with active and thankless administrative duties. Second, traditions there

were generally quiet unlike those of a district town. Third, the minority elements there were too acquiescent to count. They were simply and totally ignored. He brought with him the same outlook and disposition. He came over with Senior Service consciousness; There was a transformation in his dress and outfit. In Calcutta his buttoned-up coat over his tight ankle-high trousers (all of common stuff) were inseparable from him. Now he had a lounge suite, tie and hat on along with a stick in his hand - a revelation to me. I was a pupil of his and also a native of his district, Birbhum. Dr. Shastri revived the Union, placed Dr. Banerjee in charge and among the Muslim teachers selected Professor Omdatul Islam as one of his advisers. This was done in the middle of August. Shortly after Girija Babu's departure. Within a week I heard of Hindu-Muslim tangle in the Union and attempts made to resolve them. In the course of one month, say from 22nd August to 25th September, every fresh day brought about a fresh development; the Muslim students withdrew from Union activities; the grand annual social gathering was held without the Muslim students on the 24th and 25th September, the climactic condition having taken place on the last date. I do not remember how the trouble originated but surely it was over the appointment of office-bearers, the Muslims asking for effective share, the Hindus denying it. Dr. Shastri and Dr. Banerjee supported the Hindus and put all the blame upon the intransigent Muslims. Dr. Jenkins's vision, fairness, strength of mind to hold the balance even as he actually did in the earlier period (discussed at length by me) were jettisoned by scornful, contemptuous deals to the minority. "Cooptation" of Muslim students was again restored in place of 'nomination' conceded by Dr. Jenkins. I distinctly remember how Srikumar Babu talked to me one day during the first phase of the squabble and asked me to bring them round. The manner of his request indicated sufficiently his total misreading of the situation. I pointed out to him that they were strong and assertive and just no tools in anybody's hands and got some leaders into speaking contact with him. His fairly closed mind became further irritated and he declared that he would run the Union without the Muslim students. Dr. Shastri was still more power-drunk, still more highhanded. From the time of the Motilal Nehru Report on Indian constitution to the time of the 1935 Government of India Act the Shastris and the Banerjees, the Saprus and the Jayskers, Gandhi and

Jawaharlal of the majority community had only one eye to see and one voice to speak out. It was perfectly natural for Dr. Shastri and Dr. Banerjee not to have read the Writing on the Wall in the year 1935 when the Ramsay MacDonald Communal Award was an accomplished fact. What a pity that these were educationists! Another most shocking and stupid phenomenon was the propaganda campaign in the press. From 25th August to beyond 25th September Rajshahi College Union Affairs received prominent insertions in the Amrita Bazar Patrika and the Star of India. The Union trouble was reflected far more in the newspapers than within the college where normal academic work including terminal exam was going on smoothly. Any wise administrator in Education knows what a dangerous weapon press publicity is. Any engineer will be hoist with his own petard in such a campaign. Pro-Shastri versions were coloured and varnished; the pro-student statements were factual and mostly copies of Dr. Shastri's notifications to the Muslim students threatening them with expulsions, rustriations, blacklisting, etc. whenever the Muslim students or even Prof. Omdatul Islam consulted me I would urge the cause of discipline, of constitutional protest and complete aloofness from any demonstration or violence or even the show of a strike. But things had been moving very fast; the Authority was intolerant and unsympathetic. From the 11th September to the 16th September I was occupied as a Special Juror in the Sessions Court from 10 a. m. to 5-30 p. m. Frantic efforts were being made to terrorise and bully the Muslim students into submission. Endeavours were also made to utilise two young Muslim lecturers to smash the solidarity of the students and to implicate me. I find I had invigilation duties on my release from the Sessions court I was meeting my classes right upto the 23rd September. On the 19th I received an order from the Principal nominating me as Professor-in-Charge of Lectures and Debates. This was curious in the context of my total exclusion earlier from all Union activities. The annual social gathering was held on the 24th and 25th September. Mr. Shaded Suhrawardy, elder brother of H. S. Suhrawardy was brought in from Calcutta as a distinguished guest. His address was fixed up for 25th morning session in which he, it was reported, played only a minor part whereas Dr. Shastri dominated the stage and delivered a thunderous speech breathing the fire and fury of the "lion of the Punjab"; the dithyramb of a tragic tyrant, the blustering of both Hitler

and Mussolini combined and ending up with a issue or issues of the Star of India being trampled under his foot with a heavy thud. As a "Lion of the Punjab" he recalled the history of the independence of the Punjab and his warlike race, their defiance of all and sundry including the British and poured out his eloquent invectives "tearing passion to tatters". Shaw's Butler and Bombardone in "Geveva" couldn't come within comparable distance of this hectoring hero. Everybody returned depressed. His discourtesy to the distinguished guest was keenly felt. But Dr. Shastri had given himself away completely. Soon afterwards it became widely known that Mr. Shahed Suhrewardy on his return to Calcutta saw the Education Minister and the DPI and gave his first-hand report of Shastri's furious performance. The Secretariat's passion and prejudice against the Muslim students' agitation took on an altered hue.

But Dr. Shastri had entered upon a new technique of which-hunting. On the 24th September (the first day of the Annual Gathering) he sent a long letter of accusations against me to Khan Bahadur Emaduddin Ahmad, the Muslim public leader of Rajshahi and followed it up with another such on the 26th. I was the Moll White of all mischief. But the plea of the wolf in the fable didn't deceive anybody. Mr. S. N. Maitra, IES, it will be recalled, had spoken to the Khan Bahadur about me during his own trouble. But here was another IES "Majo-General" who had committed himself to the drawing up of a charge-sheet before a member of the public. He had a preposterous volume of Civil Service Rules to consult, a new Code of Ethics from a new Aristotle to follow.

I had already made it clear that all normal academic work in the College in the form of lectures, tutorials, examinations had been going on peacefully, smoothly right up to the 23rd September, the day preceding the social gathering sessions at the end of which the Autumn vacation of the College began-the recess extending to the 8th November. No Muslim student, no member of the Muslim public attended the function. I didn't attend it either; no duties had been assigned to me. Muslim students were not to be seen within miles of the venue. There was no demonstration, no stricke. And yet before the autumn he was asking shylock-like for 'forfeiture', for the enforcement of law, and after the long recess for apology and surrender. He resorted to another trick. He saw (Mr. Atkinson, Dr. Atkinson was murdered in the New Delhi flat

in 1964), the Editor of the Star of India, in Calcutta, and ascribed that paper's Pajshahi reports to be my mendacious work. He was given a short shrift and asked to mind his own business and not that of the Editor. Mr. Atkinson never knew me nor I him.

The earlier half of 1935 had some events in my personal life which may be briefly glanced here. We had another son who is now a Medical specialist in the Army Medical corps of Pakistan and has propelled me into the writing of these notes. In May I was the recipient of a Silver Jubilee Medal and Certificate. My friend, Professor Omdatul Islam, was another such recipient. Soon after that event I was the victim of erysipelas on my upper lip threatening my life, penicillin being unknown at that time. But my friend, Dr. Mansural Rahman, the Assistant Surgeon in charge of the Civil Hospital of Rajshahi took personal care of my case and successfully treated me back to life and recovery.

Since the death of my mother-in-law in tragic circumstances in 1932, we had to spend all our holidays in Calcutta in the company of my old father-in-law, a lonely widower. As on other occasions we spent the autumn recess of 1935 mainly in Calcutta wherefrom I went home for a week along with my daughter and eldest son. During my Calcutta stay I met Mr. Bottomly, the DPI, Mr. A. k. Chanda ADPI, Khan Bahadur T. Ahmed, ADPI, ME. Most of them suggested a truce to the unseemly squabble at Rajshahi. Khan Bahadur T. Ahmed used a felicitous Arabic phrase "Solh-ul-Khair" or "compromise for general welfare" which I still remember.

I returned with my family to Rajshahi on the 8th November to resume duties on the 9th. At the re-opening of the College when I met Dr. Shastri in the company of Professor Islam, he asked for a "quiet chat" with him in his bungalow. This materialising he referred to his letter to Khan Bahadur on the eve of the Puja holiday and suggested a compromise with the collaboration of the latter and Prof. Omdatul Islam. At the joint discussion that followed Shastri agreed to the nomination of a Muslim General Secretary and 33% reservation of other offices but he must have an 'apology' for non-cooperation and "unconditional surrender". The Khan Bahadur pointed out the absurdity of his impossible demands and suggested a calling-off of the stike without bargaining since the Principal was agreeable to two major concessions. And that was the final

agreement. But we had more than a week's hard struggle to get the students to agree and to sign a call-off note. Prolonged discussions led to fierce arguments and opposition and ended inconclusively. Eventually we succeeded in securing such a paper by the 3rd week of November when Dr. Shastri was lavish in the expression of his gratefulness to all three of us. But soon he entered upon another course of tricks and suggested a Press Note, a circular in the classes, an insertion in the Star of India etc. I emphasised with all the strength in my power that further irritation should not be given. Even so he circulated in the classes that the Muslim students "Have rejoined the Union unconditionally" without announcing the concessions. There was another near-crisis which was averted by the issue of a second notice that the grievances of the Muslim students would be sympathetically considered. He called for and accepted a list of names for immediate nominations and then announced the appointment of an Assistant Editor and an Assistant General Secretary; others were to follow. In the Cabinet Meetings, however, the Hindu students again challenged the nominations to cause annoyance to the Muslims. I was ever vigilant in maintaining among them fortitude and forbearance. Within one week of the receipt of the call-off paper at Bengal Secretariat the order of transfer of Dr. Shastri to Presidency College and that of the appointment of Mr. J. M. Bose as his successor were received at Rajshahi—the particular date being 4th December, 1935. It was quite clear how the authorities knew more than we did and how they had simply been waiting for a gesture of good will and general well-being from the Muslim students. The earth of the college shaken by the thunder and lightning of 'Jupiter' regained its poise. Tyranny and unscrupulousness were dethroned; truth and honour pursued in silently suffering woes triumphed. Dr. Shastri must have received the orders on the 3rd, he having left for Calcutta the same evening. On his return on the 5th he issued the following 'notice':

On my transfer back to Calcutta in my original post I intend leaving Rajshahi by the 14th instant.

At 5 minutes past 12 noon (technically it was afternoon) on the 14th December, Dr. Shastri made over charge and proceeded straight to the railway station enroute to Calcutta. On the preceding afternoon a

students farewell meeting was Held at an hour's notice in the College Assembly Hall where we saw an unprecedented situation. Instead of Srikumar Babu taking the Chair, an outsider, Mr. D. J. Ewart, a Presbyterian missionary and Warden of Westminster Hostel (where Rajshahi College students lived) presided; Roy Bahadur Bholanath Banerjee, Superintendent of Police, Rajshahi, was prominent in the dais-another unique feature. Still another was the presence of Gostha Babu, Headmaster of a local , non-Government School. Further comments are unnecessary. On the eve of making over his charge he had cancelled the nominations of the Assistant Editor and the Assistant General Secretary (from among the Muslims) already made by him following the compromise his parathion kick to them or perhaps an apple of discord thrown before his successor. The last instalment of the press campaign in the Amrita Bazar Patrika was published on the 13th and its reply and review in the Star of India on the following day.

With the arrival of Mr. J. M. Bose on the 15th December the tempestuous seas subsided as if by a miracle performed by Prospero's magic On the 16th he found the nominated Muslim members of the Union Cabinet most reasonable and accommodating; Dr. Banerjee now discovered the same traits in them. It was the dawn of a new wisdom in him., which continued till the departure of Mr. Bose in July or August of 1937 after I had left. The moment Srikumar Babu took over from Mr. Bose as Principal his wisdom deserted him in his handling of the Muslim students who had asked for accommodation in vacant blocks of hostel buildings. It was no wonder that his all-brain and no-heart personality had its Nemesis in year and a half of Shastri's departure. Dr. Banerjee's Principala ship died soon after its birth. Mr. Bose, however, had ushered in an era of peace, progress and harmony both in academic and extra academic activities which I enjoyed for a year and a half till my transfer to Islamia College early in July, 1936 stood out as milestones of success in the life of the College.

Looking beyond the back wall of my house this first day of September, 1964, I find scenes of tranquil charm in rural setting. The floods have subsided. Between water-pools (which we call tanks) all made into a common sheet, dividing land marks have popped up. On one of these five swans are having a restful perch; at the edge of water four ugly

looking ducks providing a striking contrasts with the beauty of the shiny feathers of their superior companions have stuck their heads into the sockets of their short necks and are asleep as it we. Above them on the corrugated sheet top of a house a number of pigeons are enjoying a pause from love making with their loft lying empty close by. At the gate of my house gorgeously yellow oleanders are gently moving their bell-shaped heads. A little further away another swimming pool lies smothered and static under an all pervasive load of East Pakistan water hyacinth. But my mind is in a churn under the stirring of mose of those preoccupations which confronted me in 1935 in particular and which I went through unflinchingly. I had difficult teaching duties in all the classes including the reading of Rosebery's Pitt with the B. A students. As the year was wearing on and available term-time was short I had to meet extra Second year and Fourth year classes beyond the schedule at odd places, for instance, in the Students' Common Room, Bani Babu's house, In my own house, one two. three girls would habitually drop in for elucidation of difficult passages and critical bearings. Suhash Neogi who sang so sweetly at the farewell of B. M. Sen was a constant visitor. Another such was Mrs. Farokh, young widown of my deceased friend, Mr. Farrkh , a well-known Deputy Magistrate of the period. She could'nt proceed with Rosebery's Pitt without guidance. Miss Bholanath Banerjee, the S. P's daughter was weak in English composition; she must have her exercises corrected by me. Kamana Banerjee's old father would drag the shy girl to my house for my personal attention. All these besides carrying on negotiations with the tough leaders of the Muslim students of the one side, and Dr. Shastri (and Srikumar Babu too) on the other, had to be attended to. There was no escape either from my special portfolio of organising and conducting debates which were always held in the Assembly Hall and in the evenings between six and nine. Over the years I had done the job of training students in the development of their argumentative elocution; sometimes I dictated a speech to the chief mover and another to his counterpart the opposer. Boh would commit these to memory and express themselves with vigour and vehemence. What great fun! Shastri had to yield to pressure in nominating me to the mame responsibility while he was gnashing his teeth against the Muslim intransigence. I find I organised one such debate on the 16th November and another on the 26th 1935, while the

Union hullabaloo was being vindictively kept up. The first had for its subject "The necessity of Dictatorship in India; the second "There must be a Common Language for India". At this distant date I remember the names of two ardent fighters, Biren Choudhury and Sunil Kumar Sen. The former is thriving Advocate of Dacca High Court; of the latter I have lost all trace. In between the two dates I organised a lecture by Mr Spalding an American Engineer. Besides I could never cut myself off for any length of time from my favourite authors, book reviews and current topics, during the autumn recess I was reading **The Apple Cart; earlier, Back to Methuselah, St. Joan, Seneca and the Elizabethan Tragedy** by Fl. L. Lucas; reviews of R. J. Minney's Warren Hastings and Clive of India; Miss Mayo's second book, the face of mother India, current topics like Italy's breach or the League Covenant, of the Three Power Treaty, of the Treaty of Friendship with Abyssinia, 1928; the appointment of Dr. Frederick Levi, formerly at Leipzig University, as Hardinge Professor of Maths. at Calcutta University for a term of five years on Rs. 1000/- a month the death of P. Brihl who formerly looked like a permanent Registrar of the same University. And how could I omit a game of tennis? In November and December we had frequent guests in Messrs Kitchen & Smith (Young I. C.S's), Ferdinanz and D'Silva whom we entertained at Tea..... Let the ferment of my mind stop here to provide relief to the reader and easing of tension to the writer.

The scene too changes. The five swans, four of them with white plumage and one with a sable coat have just shaken off their somnolence and are having a brush-up with their long, red-streaked beaks for a rowing excursion. The ducks are in a playful swim, dipping in and out and splashing about. The pigeons are away obviously for collecting food which is scarce and costly to-day. A blither breeze that in on at the moment skips weakly over the dead weight of the water hyacinth in the other pond but it is moving up and down the carrier shoots of the yellow oleanders at my gate. I am here at my desk all alone and not at the gate waiting for "Maud". In our case she is a cinderella by preference as well as by the compulsive logic of domestic service and she is in the kitchen with pots and pans about and her fair face along with three oven burners in front. My mind is harking back to the Christmas Eve of 1935 when I entertained Amalenda Bose at dinner on the eve of his departure from Rajshahi College. The youngest and at the same time officiating

lecturer in English he had been with us for two years if not more. By a departmental reshuffling his officiating term had just come to an end. He was youngest and dearest too. His written notes of critical appreciations of his favourite English authors made him lovable to teachers and students alike. To meet him I had invited Sunit Kumar Indra, Lecturer in English, Just above Bose in status, and two other friends. Sunit Kumar Indra, slightly older than Bose, was another lovable character. Born and brought up at Krishnagore where his father had a struggling lawyer's career he had a first in M. A. His English accentuation and intonation were worth imitating. His domestic life deeply stirred my emotions with a mantle of pathos atop his father having died a premature death leaving behind his mother (quite young then), himself and three little sisters. His mother was an ideal lady who was rearing the family with the tenderest care, selfless devotion and utmost economy. I watched and loved, loved and watched and drew closer to the three little sisters. Shortly after I joined Islamia College in July 1937 in the Bengal Senior Educational Service I had him transferred there according to his own wish and in the reorganisation of the English Department cadre I succeeded in accomplishing there, I had him appointed as Professor of English in the Bengal Educational Service against the claims of this seniors. Amalenda Bose subsequently joined the English Department of Dacca University (his own Alma matter) and continued there for years till around the partition when he went broad to Oxford and did his D. Phil there. He came back to East Pakistan for a brief spell after which he took up a higher assignment at Aligarh. And now he is Professor and Head of the Department of English at Calcutta University. Indra went up steadily, became the Principal of Central Calcutta College (formerly Islamia, now Maulana Azad College) for a while and then substantively at Hooghly Mohsin College. Some little time ago, may be one or two years, when I saw a fairly long obituary of Indra in The Statesman the pathos of my earlier years was smashed to smithereens by this sledge-hammer blow. Sundered by history and reality I bear it all mute. Amelenda Bose is pride to me, Sunit Kumar Indra an affliction.

Turning to the students of the period a long procession of images flash across the screen of my mind, two of which fading under the veil of death those of Abdul Khaleque and Abdul Majid. The former secured High Second Class Honours in philosophy and later a corresponding

position at the M.A. level. He competed in the Bengal Civil Service (Exec.) Examination and had been a Deputy Magistrate till his early death in harness around 1954. At Rajshahi he was the leader of the sicknursing squad to my sick children in 1932. During the last phase of his life and career he was posted in the Dacca District Courts. In connexion with the possession of my Dacca house which I bought in 1952 I had to pay frequent visits to these Courts—a trying and thankless job. But Abdul Khaleque sweetened this otherwise irksome experience by his warmly affectionate welcome to his comfortable chamber and by providing help with the men under him. He was suffering from high blood pressure and had an anaemic look. How sad a gifted young man holding his own with other talented compatriots should be snatched away in the prime of life. Abdul Majid had a double First in Arabic Honours and in M. A. To my great satisfaction I found him capable in English composition as well. He took the Bengal Civil Service Competitive Examination with ease and had been a competent Deputy Magistrate. Like Abdul Khaleque he too had a premature death. With poignant grief I remember how I attended his marriage in Calcutta in to the family of one of my personal friends of Dinajpur. I attended as a member of the bridegroom's party and with the self-consciousness and importance of such a position I lost my temper over the lack of attention to us and created a scene which ended happily when my friend apologised with folded hands. But Majid is in his grave to be mourned by his father-like teacher. May the souls of both rest in peace and may Providence in His immeasurable care and wisdom see over the nourishing and cherishing of their bereaved families.!

Reflections of many other s move slowly and silently on the screen. Here are some of the English Honours classes. Syed Hammad Ali (now an Addl. District Magistrate), Kamakshya Chakravarty (may be he is now a District Judge in West Bengal he having joined up s a Munsif), Jananendra (I forget his surname), sarak kumar Pramanik, A. K. M. Wajihullah (now Principal of a Cooperative College) Erfan, Asir, Azizul Islam, young Banerjee (son of Dr. Srikumar Banerjee), young Bose (brother of Dr. Amalenda Bose), Zoadur Rahim (son of Khan Bahadur Emaduddin Ahmed), Chandrika Prosad of U. P. who on my coaching recited from Murder in the Cathedral and took part in scenes from the Apple Cart in the Annual Social Gathering of the College. in

1936: Of the Science Group Aftabuddin has already received an obituary. Four others are now in the higher echelons of Government Service in East Pakistan. Dr. Nasimuddin Sarkar, M. B., Inspector General of Prisons; Dr. A. Z. Choudhury, M. B. Civil Surgeon of Sylhet., Dr. Gholam Mannan, Ph. D. M. B. Professor of Anatomy, Dacca Medical College.², Mr. Sadeque Ahmed Choudhury, B. Sc; PPS, DIG, Police. Of the girls (other than the three mentioned) I see Malati Sarkar (niece of Sir Jadunath Sarkar) of rare charm and accomplishment, and Akhtara Begum the only Muslim girl to take up co-education then. Here is a pageant of freedom fighters: Shamsul Kibria (nephew of Professor O. Islam), Mr. Musharruff Hossain, Taleb Ali, (now Director of a Semi-Military Corps in East Pakistan), Abdul Hamid mia, S. M. Saleh (a sportsman), Abul Hossain, Reazuddin, Nasimuddin, two Mannaans (one in H. E School), Md. Kayemuddin and Ali Azam. This last should have been named first on account of his seniority in point of time and on account of his sturdy personality full of pluck and grit and yet of balanced judgement. Deliberately he is placed last in the list on account of his chivalry in addition to his other gifts. He it was who made love to Akhtara and true to his profession married her. Of those who courageously helped us in peace-making Md. Kayemuddin deserves a special mention. What is still more striking is that he has kept up a personal link with me and my family ever since. He is now a Circle officer in Adamdighi, Bogra, Of some of those Hindu students who have made their mark in public life I have been happy to meet two here at Dacca; Mr. A. K. Sen & Mr. B. K. Sengupta. I met the former between 1957 and 1959 when he was first secretary to the Indian High Commission in Dacca. We had social get-togethers in our families and I found him as sweet and respectful as if he were still my pupil. Mr. Sengupta is still the Chief Visa Officer in the same office. It is impossible to speak too highly of the love and esteem he gives me and my wife when we approach him once a year for a visa to West Bengal. Others appearing on the mental film are : Md. Mohsin of Natore, Sudhir Majumdar, General Secretary, College Union, Herambo Chakravarty (nephew of my friend Jiten Chakravarty), Fazlur Rahman (now in the East Pakistan Secretariat, Jnanendra Bhattacharyya, son of Prof. Kaushik Bhattacharyya. It is perfectly natural that this list does not include hosts

1. Has retired since

2. Has resigned

of others who were quite close of thirty years and more. This very human failing may be taken into consideration should any of them land upon these humble memoirs.

In one of the foregoing paragraphs I referred to some salvaged papers of mine pertaining to 1932-33,-35 and said I would like to give some samples from them to indicate my vital interest in varied themes and subjects. Here are some from 1932 :

Bengal Industries Association : During the last decade Bengalis have taken more and more to industries. Pioneers among these are : Chemical works, Soap factories, Tanneries, Potteries, Biscuit factories, Comb, Button and Celluloid factories, Match factories, Pen and Pencil factories.

Darby, 1932 : April the Fifth,

Dastur ,,

Miracle "

St Leger : 1932 : Firdousi-Agha Khan

Dastur ,,

New Expression

Kamerad (from Comrade): Interjection of German Soldier for Surrender.

Now-Possumus: "We cannot" i. e Inability to do, to reject doing or Permitting.

Manchester Guardian: Words Competition:

- (1) **Belverity:** Correlation of truth-beauty function (belle & veritas)
- (2) **Carbandry:** Robber wit violence conducted from motor car (Car and bandito & ry).
- (3) **Celeromania:** Lust for high speed (speediot)
- (4) **Cinema & thirties:** Painful affection of joints due to unconscious imitation of Garbo-Bankhead.
- (5) **Genevrate:** V. T. give, issue order, hold conference without enforcing fulfillment.
- (6) **Icarism Airmindedess (Gk Ikaros)**
- (7) **Midgetation :** Transport in very small car, ary: Congestion, stage of highways
- (8) **Sab :** Spend sabbath vainly trying to arrange pictures of

female garments in winning order

- (9) Stopgo : Automatic control of vehicular traffic
 (10) Swooze : (Swallow & booze) absorb large quantities of
 alcoholing the shortest possible time.

Airway System of Europe-60,000 miles.

130 cities on the continent reached by air from London

Total of world air-lines: 150,000 miles

In the world: 3,000 air station for commercial purposes

Empire air routes : 20,000 miles.

Projects : 20,000 miles more

"..... Should be contrasted with the latest
 position, A. H. "

"A Museum of sound"

Professor Wilhelme Doegen, Director of the Sound Library at the
 Russian tate Library, Berling, Imperishable record of the world voices
 to have perfect models for the students of language to enable future
 generations to be stirred by the voices of the great orators of to-day.
 3,000 records of over 260 languages of immense value to historians.

Here as a brief book review

Hitler (Routledge 7/6) by Herr Emil Lengyel: Outstanding lineaments
 of Dr. Goebels & Gottfried Fedder.

parties: Socialists, Communists, People's Front The Red Fighting front
 Catholic Defense Force. Hitler in crisp, obvious, homely.....
 Apostle of the blatant.

20th August, 1932.

Professor August OPiccard, the eminent Belgian Scientist ascended a
 height of 16,700 meters (over 10 miles) in a mammoth ballon.....
 "Zero peeck" device for perfecting long-distance telephony by British
 Post Office to dilettante echoes.....

**Here are some jottings without reference to the source from which
 they are taken.**

The vulgarisation of the press appeal to mere sensationalism, to ghoul-
 ish gloatings over horrors, to a childish passion.....

Intelligent interests, right standards, congruous hobbies.....

In a society of cultured and leisured people individual idiosyncrasies will be given freedom of expression in the pursuit of..... congruous hobbies and then there will come into existence a camaraderie of intelligent and diversified interests which will restrain the obsessions of mere individualism.

We shudder at the torture chamber and the Roman arena but is there much to choose between the barbarity of pagan and medieval justice and the modern methods of publicity?

Whatsoever things are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report, if there be any virtue any praise, think on these things.

Some from 1933

Book Reviews: Life of Gurzon by Ronaldshay. F. E. Birkenhead by his son the present Lord Birkenhead (Thornton Butter worth) Jix or Brentford by Taylor (Stanley Paul) Life of Asquith by Viscount Grey of Falloden. Lord Randolph Churchill by Winston Churchill. Joseph Chamberlain by Garvin. "Red Rages" (Chapan & Hall): Essays of Hate: Edly R. C. carr.

"Lessonf form the Varsity of life Lord Baden Powell's Auto biography.

Nautilus Library Editions of: Shackleton's Boat Journey by Worsely & The Ayesha by Co. Mucke.

Philological

Words of Eastm Origin: Bandanna, Nainsook, Jaconet Peach, Lilac, Jasmine, Orange, Lemon Suambok (from chabuk, whip, ~~hide-whip~~) Lexicon a new game the invention of David Whielaw, the novelst. Marketing, Mafficking.

Words/Phrases

Wicket, wicket keeper, keep one's wicket up, wind-jammer, shcooner ~~slop~~, ~~slop~~-basin, ~~slop~~ shop, sloppy sentiment, slops slopover, ~~batten~~ (board for Flooring) Regatta, Sang- froid, confabulate, Troll, ~~Detour~~, Squib, slat, Jury (from Lat Juro to swear), Ermine from stuff to erminc valse, Boll, Weevil, Lumber-V. T. & I. to go heavily & noisily, ~~cussedness~~, curmudgeon, Jamboree,

By Jingo, Hey Jingo, Presto, Farrago Campondology bell love Campanile, scrub (insignificant person), Cairn, Echymosis.

Miscellaneous From 1933

AROUND THE WORLD By R. H. Bruce Lockhart; IN 850 WORDS For attempt to de-babelise the world Cp Volapuk Ido Novial Universal, Esperanto; C. LK. Ogden Director of Orthological Institute, Cambridge, Prescribes 850 words to be called basic English.

Words now in English use: 50,000

Basic reduces them : 850

600 words are names of things

150 adjectives

82 Prepo, Conjunctions, essential adverbs

18 verbs known as operators

Plurals in s, Derivatives in -er, -ing, -ed

Adverb in-ly from adjectives, Degree with more & most Questions by inversion or do

English is spoken by 500 million people -Jules Verne took phines Fogg round the world in 80 days.

Calcutta Corporation Auditing Scandalous.

Outstandings have increased from a total of Rs. 1,02,593 in 1920-21 to 36 lakhs in 1932-33

Even in 1927-28 the figure stood at 8 lakhs.

Calcutta Corporation has in its service some of the notorious terrorists persons convicted of murder and dacoity. Its appointments are looked upon as prizes for revolutionary activities.

The Chief Education Officer is a high priest of Civil Disobedience. He had R. I. for 3 months for taking part in anti-government demonstration. He holds revolutionary views and courts imprisonment in furtherance of these views.....

First Station Theatre (Victoria, London)

Hundreds of men are at a loose end for an hour or so while waiting for trains or for the arrival of friends. The programme of the theatre will consist of news items, interesting films and cartoons.

A Short Extract

"I have no other wish in this world than to find light of joy and peace through Hinduism"-Gandhi.

Extracts From Hitler On His Creed

Many European States are like Pyramids standing on their points, points in Europe, base all the world over.

Our pacifists do not hesitate to eat the bread of the East although the first plough share was the sword.

No nation ever prepared better for economic conquest with the sword or later maintained it more ruthlessly than the British. Is it not the hall mark of British statecraft to make economic gains out of political strength and at once to reconvert each economic gain into political power.....

While we fought for daily bread England fought for freedom, not her own but : that of the little nations (Lloyd George)" I obtained some of those speeches. the ordinary German quill driver failed to see the psychological master-pieces in the way of influencing the public. Compare with them the futile stutterings of Bethmann Holwig.

England doesn't want Germany as a world power. France doesn't want Germany to be a power at all-a very essential difference. We are not fighting to-day for a place as a world power but we have to fight for our fatherland's existence, for our national unity and the daily bread of our children.

Representatives from Egypt and India are chattering busybodies with nothing behind them. There were Germans who were taken in by those jabbering orientals and imagined that any Indian or Egyptian student was a genuine representative of India

Experiment on Unemployment in Faridpur : After 3 years.

Raiyatwai Settlement.

Since the inauguration four batches numbering 20 completed training- the last batch on July 31st, 1932.

First two batches with 120 bighas settled in kolechuri Sasthal in Madaripur Sub-Division. The other tow batches in Gualondo Sub-Division started in 1928 and have continued to date. The first batch of Ffive Bhadrakok youths with some amount of general education were taken in Government Aricultuere Farm, Faridpur, where they had one year's training during which they were paid at Rs. 12/- per month with

no holiday and treated as common labourers. After the year they were given 15 bighas of Khas Mahal, rent-free lands and Rs. 200/- cash for a pair of bullocks and implements. Bare-bodied and bare-footed, ploughing laddering, weeding jungle-cutting, cleaning cattle-shed, transplanting paddy in mud they are living in Chars away from society to rid them of their notions of false presting and self-respect. (This sort of information was used by me in inspiring Muslim Students to shed their silly notions and to go ahead like their Hindu brothers-A Hena).

Extract

"I was staggered by the stupendous marvel of existence, by the miracle of sunlight coming through the window, by the glory and magic of God's Universe..... These things endure: life and liberty, the boundless magic of night and day..... and what comes after"..... G. K. Chesherson's **My life**.

Obituary

Mr. Hasan Imam died at his patna residence on 19th April, 1933. Born 1871, called to the Bar, 1892, Jauge, Calcutta High Court 1911-17, President, Indian National Congress. 1918. Touching references were made by Mr. Justice Wort before a Full Bench at Patna High Court to the death of Mr. Hasan Imam:

"The gap in our ranks is impossible to fill. There can be no substitute for his personality. His Knowledge of profession was unrivalled, his grasp of the principles and details made the task of the judges easier. He was a consummate advocate and a greater lawyer, and fortunate was the litigant who had the advantage of his service....."

At the Public Condolence Meeting held on 22. 4.33 at Patna Sir Courtney Terrell observed:

Hasan Imam was a master advocate, whose ability to narrate and collate facts, to explain the application of law, to move emotion by his moving voice andengagting gesture would bring him in the front rank of his profession not only in India but in other countries also..... As a judge of the Caluctta High Court he had left behind decisions which would remain. His elder brother, Sir Ali Imam, died in October, 1932. The names of Both brother were household words when I was a School student.- Abu Hena.

1933 Miscellany Contd.

- Under** 22. 11. 33 : Augustine Birell dies.
- " 10. 11. 33 : King Nadir Shah assassinated on 8. 11. 33.
- " 29. 11. 33 : Terrorist Raid on Hilli Railway station (15 armed Bengali terrorists) near Parbatipur.
- " 11. 11. 33 : Alipur Conspiracy case: Dinesh Majumdar sentenced to death.
- " 27. 9. 33 : Mrs. Kamini Roy expired.
- " 11. 9. 33 : Miss Jyotikan Dutta, 4th Year B. Sc. Student of calcutta Diocesan College charged with possesiing two six-chambered revolvers, two pistols and fifty three cartridges.
- " 2. 9. 33 : Midnapore District Magistrate, B. E. J. Burge, I. C. S. Shot dead at 5 P. M. just after he had stepped from his car on the police club Football Ground. Assassines Anath Panja & Mrigen Dutta Both shot dead on the spot. Mr. Peddi, D. M. Midnapore shot dead two years ago.
Mr. Douglas, D. M. Midnapore shot dead last year-A. Hena.
- " 5. 10. 33 : P. J. Griffiths (now Sir) I. C. S. appointed D. M. Midnapore
- Under** 23. 7. 33 : Mr. J. M. Sengupta dies t Ranchi from an epileptic stroke.
- Under** 20. 9. 33 : Annic Beasant dies. She was 85.
- Under** 8. 9. 33 : King Faisal of Iraq dies at Berne, Switzerland.
- Under** 22. 12. 33 : Poetry & Strife : Contact of Poetry with War.
(1) Rupert Brooke and Inealistic School.
(ii) Reactions of War on the betrayed nand embittered poet e. g. Siegfried Sassoon. He rises abovebitter railing.
(iii) Generalising & taking particular events as symbols of things eternal (lapse of time and softening of emotions). Mr. Herbert Read has followed this path successfully.
- Under** 26. 11. 33 : Dacca University Teaching Staff

	Hindus	Muslims
	88 (Eingtyeight)	6 (Six)
Under 22. 12. 33	: Sir Soaiman and Sir Shadill Capitation Rate. Tribunal Report published and accepted - Tribunal dealing with military expenditure in dispute between Govt. of India and British War and Air Ministries. Total gain to India : L 1417700 (cost of ten Br Infantry battalions).	
" 9. 12. 33	: Sir Arthus Quiller-Couch is 70 this week.	
" 29. 11. 33	: Slang. Slang has contributed to, enriched, strengthened and vitalized language, century after century. Features of English: (i) Flouting of authority (rules & proprieties) (ii) Influence of dialect weakened. (iii) Slang Americanised through talkies & films. -Earnest Weekly.	
" 31. 10. 33	: Letters of Ghalib edited by Mahesh prasad of Hindu Universtty, Benaras.	
" 3. 10. 33	: British University Team at Dacca "The world owes more to poets than to politicians". -Motion lost.	
" 30. 9. 33	: Ajanta Caves. Nizam and Persian Poetry : Sultanul-Ulum Baghdad and Harunar Rashid Traditions. Princely Purse given at the intance of Sir Akbar Hyderi. Reproduction of the frescoes of the walls and ceilings of Ajanta Caves: 50 Plates (eight guineas: Oxford University Press) Gholam Yazdani (formerly Professor of Arabic & Pcrsian, Rajshahi College) explains the texts: (1) The Birth of Buddha: Yazdani's lyrical language: Mahamaya's Dreams. (2) Hariti & Pancika-their delightful chil-	

dren one group of three properly behaved children, the other group of three young scamps urging on a ram to attack a second ram prodded on by two more rascals. In these Teniers or Hagarth would have revelled.

For Ajanta literature, C/o. Mukul Dey's.

My Pilgrimage to Ajanta & Bagh.

Under 5. 12. 33 : India's Rural Indebtedness : 900 crores
 Punjab :135 crores.
 Bihar & Orissa :155 crores.

In Bengal the average peasant is insolvent.
 His annual income: Rs. 84/-

Average annual expenditure : Rs. 84/- (can pay nothing in capital and expenditure).

Under 25. 4. 33 : Re: America's Going Off the Gold standard & Economic Crisis

keynes Says : Another almighty smash; the pre sident had been given power to reduce the gold content of the dollar upto 50 P. C. The waves are lapping at the feet of Firance whose turn comes last. The nations must pool their interests in production and exchange.

SELECTIONS FROM 1935 JOTTINGS

Shaw's On the Rocks

Character : Sir Bemrose Hotspot, Sir Broadfoot Basham, Sir Arthur Chavender, sir Dexter Rightside Conservative Dichard.

"Ghost from the past, from o the future brain fag acute want of mental exercise, underworked brain bone lazy brain-lazy : it is the mind that makes the body meditation parlour David is overbred: he is so fine drawn that he is good for nothing and he is not strong enough physically. Our breed needs to be crossed with the gutteror the soil once in every three or four generations. Uncle Theodore marriedd his cook in principle and his wife was my favourite aunt.

And I shall hate the man who will carry it throuh for his cruelty and the desolation he will bring on us and our like.

I caught the first two words "England Arise" Suppose England really did arise! Unemployed England, However, can do nothing but continve to sing as best it can to a percussion accompaniment of baton thwacks, Edward carpentiers ' Verses

England arise ! the long long nitght is over. faint in the east behold the dawn appear. Out of your evil dream of toil and sorrow. Arise O England for the day is here

.....
 The fellows who make the speeches can be depended on never to do anything else tub-thumpers and gasbags.....My brains are so much tripe..... I am going dottyThirty years in Parliament and ten on the Fr.Bench would drive any man dotty. I have only one set of brains and I need ten.

Shaw's Back to Methuselah

But pigeon-fanciers, dog-fanciers, gardeners, stock breeders or stud-grooms can understand circumstantial selection because it is their business to produce transformation by imposing on flowers and animals a Selection From Without.....

Darwin never got deeper beneath or higher above his facts than an ordinary man could follow him. He was conscious of having discovered a process of transformation and modification which accounted for a great deal of natural history though he demonstrated that many transformations which had been taken as functional adaptations

(the current pherase or Lamarckian evolution) either certainly or conceivably might be due to circumstantial selection he was careful not to claim that he had superseded lamarck or disproved functional adaptation. In short he was not a Darwining but an honest naturalist wourking away at his job with so little pre-occupation with theological speculation that he never quarrelled with theistic Unitarianism into which he was born an remained to the end the engagingly simple and socially easygoing soul he had been in his boyhood when his elders doubted whethe he was born and remained to the end the engagingly simple and socially easygoing soul he had been in his boyhood when his elders doubted whether he would be of much use in the world

.....
 the worst convention of the criticism of the theatre current at that time was that intellectual seriousness in out of place on the stage, that the theatre is a place of shallow amusement; in short a playwright is a person whose business it is to make unwholesome confectionery out of cheap emotions. My answer to this was to put all my intellectual goods in the shop window under the sign of **Man & superman**. By good luck and acting the comedy triumphed on the stage. Since then the sweet - shop view of the theatre had been out of countenance.

From Back to Methuselah

Cain Think of that ! all those multitudes of men fighting, fighting, killing, killing; the four rivers running with blood ! The shouts of triumph ! the howls of rage! the curses of despair, the shrieks of torment ! That will be life indeed ! life lived to the very marrow, burning, overwhelming life. Everyman who has not seen it, felt it risked it will feel a humbled fool in the precence of the man who has

Mother , the making of men is your right, your risk, your agony, your golry, your triumph

Eve : You have to twirl a stick to feel your strenght, you cannot taste life without making it bitter and boiling hot you cannot love Lua until her face is painted nor feel the natural warmth of her flesh until you stick a fur on it . You can do nothing but torment and believe nothing but a lie. Franklyn: Our programme is only that the term of human life shall

be extended to 300 years.

Savvy: Our election cry is "Back to Methuselah"

Conrad : It is now absolutely certain that the political and social problems raised by our civilization cannot be solved by mere human mushrooms who decay and die when they are just beginning to have a glimmer of the wisdom and knowledge needed for their own government The pursuit of greater power and greater knowledge Evolution is that pursuit.

From Shaw's St. Joan

She was the first French practitioner of Napoleonic realism in warfare as distinguished from the sporting, ransom -gambling chivalry of her time. She was the pioner of rational dressing for women She could coax and she could hustle her tongue having a soft side and a sharp edge. She was very capable ; a born boss

she Knew nothing of iron hands in veleve gloves: she just used her Fists. she thought political changes much easier than they are and like Mahomet in his innocence of any world but the tribal world wrote letters to kings calling on them to make millenial rearrangements . Consequently it was only in the enterprises that were really simple and compassable by swift physical force, like the coronation and the Olreans campaign that She was successful

she worked by commonsense; and where scholarship was the only clue to institutions she was in the dark and broke her shins against them, all the more rudely because of her enormous self confidence. Which made her the least cautious of human beings in civil affairs

but it clashes most discordantly both with the idolaterous romance that has grown round her, and the belittling scepticism that reacts against that romance.

Captain Robert de Badricourt storming terribly at his steward a trodden worm, scanty of flesh, Scanty of hair, who might be any age from i 18 to 55, being the sort of man whom age cannot wither because he has never bloomed.

Robert: Your have not only the honour of being my steward, but the privilege of being the worst, most incompetent, drivelling snivelling jibbering jabbering idiot of a steward in France.....

From The Apple Cart

If your may flourish your thunderbolts why may I not shoulder my popgun of a veto and strut up and down with it for a moment?.....

..... It leaves the ground before our feet in black darkness whilst it lights up every corner of the landscape behind us

This public work that never ends because we cannot finish one job without creating ten fresh ones

This durdgerly is a sweated trade What great actor would exchange his stage? What great barrister his Court? What great preacher his pulpit for the squalor of the political arena in which we have to struggle with foolish factions in parliament and ignorant voters in the con stituencies?

The working of the Press from the palace backstairs must cease..... amusing articles spiced with exclusive backstairs in formation I can spot his fist out of fifty columns.

Magnus : I stand for the great abstractions; for conscience and virtur; for the eternal against the expedient; for the evolutionary appetite against the day's gluttony.

Book Reviews (from August, 1936)

Pleasure Trove (Essays): Methuen 6/-

Anthology of Armageddon : Dennis Archer 8/6/-

Essays & Adresses on literature; Routledge : by J. G. Robertson

Lord Brougham by Garrat : McMillan : 15/-

Six Portraits by Isabella Clarke: Hutchinson : 18.

(Mrs. Oliphant, George Eliot, J. Austen J. O. Hobbes , Madame destaed K. Mansfield)

Selected Poems of T. Sturge Moore: Macumllaan : 5/-

What is American Lliterature by Carl Von Doren: Routledge: 3/6

"They Lived" by Esthornton Cook: Murray : 7/6/-

(a novel round Bronte Sisters)

Something about Words; Murray: 5/-

This Our Army of J. R. Kennedy: Hutchison: 9/6/-

(Necessary in connection with Lytton Strachey's Florence Nightingale)

What a Word by A. P. Herbert: Methuen : 6/-

Shakespeare & Home Life by Cumberland Clark:

Willias & Norgate : 10/6/-

William Pitt by Sir Charles Petrie & Florence Nightingale by D.

Lamond: Great Lives Series : Duckworth: 2/- each.

Undoubtedly these extracts will prove boring but I hope they will establish how in the midst of a full time job I was learning all the time. And let me add that the same process continues still.

During the summer vacation of 1936 I quarrelled with my landlady's son. This led to my vacating of "Firoza Mahal" and shifting to a riverside one storied house of the Raja of Dighapatia an old type structure having a **zenana** within and a 'Baithak khana' outside. The out-house had three good rooms, one of which was converted into my study the middle into dining cum sitting place and the third as bed room of my nephew and MD. Kayemuddin. The Padma was just in front say, 100 yards off. A strip of the embankment on the South West of the house had a "JHAO TREE" plantation; when the wind or breeze would pass through them, the rustling strain would make a poetic appeal. What was still more striking was the majestic swing of a congregation of bats whose daytime residence the Jhao trees provided. At night-fall they would be in noisy confabulation for sometime before they would go out on their nightlong maurauding expeditions on fields, and gardens, looting and plundering the produce and battenng at the cost of the farmers. At the back and west of our house there were several plots of lands where the farmers, would grow English Vegetables from autumn to early spring and we had tasteful cauli-flower, cabbage, brinjal and tomato direct from their patches for our consumption. By this time the kerosene age of Rajshahi Municipality was superseded by the age of electricity. I was one of the earliest to have my house wired and connected; I Made a brave show of lights at night with high power lamps. During the puja vacation my eldest brother was on a short visit and noticing the electric bill giong up high had these lamps replaced by low watt ones Flanking this house on the south east stood the residential area of Mr Aswini

kumar Maitra, younger brother of Mr. Akshoy kumar Maitra. We had good neighbourly relations among us. The most attractive feature of this bungalow for me was that I could not only have my regular morning and evening walks without the slightest effort of movement from the town but also that a moon-lit outing after dinner was easy and frequent.

The same year and I think during the long vacation when we were away from Rajshahi, the town had been afflicted by a serious visitation of small pox which claimed a heavy toll in human lives including that of Khan Bahadur Emaduddin Ahmed, the only and outstanding Muslim leader of the place. His comparatively early death was a grievous loss. He had his own weaknesses to be sure but who has not? He was the exponent of the middle course in life, of compromise and toleration. He was an orthodox Muslim and yet progressive in outlook. He had founded a girls' Madrassah the pioneer of its kind at Rajshahi Two of his sons were my pupils; two of his sons in law were my friends and contemporaries. This brought the two families closer together. Early in 1935 on the occasion of the marriage ceremony of his third daughter with the younger brother of one of my Islamia students, the Khan Bahadur got me to Superintendent all arrangements. At his death I received a sort of personal blow. I wrote out an IN MEMORIAM article which was published as the opening essay in the next issue of the Rajshahi College Magazine.

In the history of British India the Year 1937 is a turning point of the deepest significance. The Government of India Act of 1935 conceding provincial autonomy (also providing for a federal centre which never came) was put through. Elections to all constituencies were held in January. All officers were requisitioned to conduct the elections. Along with other members of the College Teaching Staff I received from the District authorities my appointment letter on the 9th January to act as Presiding Officer of Bargachi Hat, a market place under police Station. Paba involving duties from the 17th to 20th January. On the 10th we had a drilling in the regulations and the procedure to be followed. I had to leave the Station on the 17th. It took two hours by an ekka to get at the place 12 miles off from the town. There was no DAK BUNGALOW. for my accommodation I had a mud built, bamboo walled, straw thatched structure with a hole in the northern wall. I carried with me all provisions

rice, pulse vegetables, ghee & oil, chickens eggs and spices. I had my cook with me as well. On arrival at Bargachi Hat I had to supervise the construction of the polling booths and compound according to the specification given to make Voting foolproof. I had two polling officers who luckily turned out to be my former pupils. On the 18th Votes were cast for General Rural Constituency. 19th was off day; on the 20th for Mahomedan South Rural Constituency. It was intensely cold, felt acutely so in hat kutcha house. Towards the small house of the morning I heard the roaring of a tiger, and out of fear particularly caused by the wall hole, I collected my attendant Police Constable and my cook in my won room to save me from a a probable attack. Next day the President panchayat of the Union had the wall breach covered up and told me how the thick jungles surrounding the place where the habitation of tigers who would prowl in search of cattle for their meal.

The Voting hours Were from 8 A. M. to 4-30 p. M. and the subsequent packing and sealing job cost me another 3 hours on the first day and 4 hours on the second. Strenuous and trying duties.

On the of day between the two election days. a holiday was planned by Munshi Asiruddin, the president panchyyat, involving a three mille walk each way to his house at Bargachi village proper, and back mid day meals with him and a visit to **Tamli** Ruins and later to ghe Khal of "Fulyar" In walking up to Bargachi village I saw vast areas of tropical jungles with clearings where rice plants and sugarcane plantations grew. Human habitations were dotted about at fairly long distances. It is quite true that in Bengal the density of population is high but at the same time it is also correct that there are immense streches of land either grown over with rank vegetation or submerged and water logged and despite the current tall talk of developing and utilizing them they continue to be exactly as they were (or worse) centuries ago. Human beings living around have no better existence than those of animals. Towns and suburbs fester with teeming millions as industrialisation proceeds apace with billons of foreign aid. No attempt is being made to open up the interior with rural welfare plans and projects. Village community development bodies, adult education centres, the spread of basic education, the provision of health and sanitation measures are all bunkum. Hardy's primeval heaths and forests exist in his Wessex novels

only; here they challenge you in the face. In the village proper I saw many houses and cattle; the roadways and lanes in between may be properly called drains and ditches dug by nature or man of both. Munshi Asiruddin, my host, appeared to be quite solvent. His housing area was big containing an outer and an inner compound and also farming adjuncts and cattle shed. The structures were a mixture of kutchu pucca construction. Miscellaneous fittings and furniture were available in the outhouse. His family appeared to be numerous and he had also invited to lunch other important friends and relations. They took a long time in serving food which when it began coming in took the form of a long row of varied dishes pilau, korma, fish, vegetables, curd and sweet. It struck me that in many items there were double sets and out of sheer mischief I suggested that the duplication stemmed from two sources from the first wife and the second. The President beamed at my discovery and acknowledged the same with patent satisfaction. We had a huge feed prepared with care and skill and served with courtesy and warmth. On our way back we took a circuitous and different route to have a look at the Tamli Ruins. Wretched, dilapidated buildings lay smothered under trees and jungles and it was not possible to have a clear view and estimate of what I saw. It was evident however that some prosperous people had once a flourishing colony there. Returning to the market-place in the late afternoon I was urged to move forward and have a look at the Fulyar Khal or 'beel'. The former word in Bengali implies an irrigation canal or excavation or ditch, the latter a water-logged marshy region. I found it to be $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile long having the width of a small river; it looked like without any outlet. On scrutiny I felt it was the former bed of the river BARANAI which had now receded and taken on a new course flowing by the market-place.

My election work on the 20th January, 1937 proved far more trying than on the 18th I being occupied till 8.30 P. M. heavily-laden bullock carts started arriving and continued till 7.30 next morning. Hundreds of them filled the entire area and stretched along the bank of the river. Each had a heavy freight of big slabs of Gurh-the corresponding word molasses or treacle in English cannot be applied. The size of each slab will remind one of a slab of ice. Each 'Gurh' slab was rectangular, condensed 'Gurh' piece, exceedingly clean. In the morning I found the river-edge studded with big boats to carry away the Gurh. When I wanted to buy some I

received a headshaking. It was a wholesale market. Marwari and other merchants from towns had already arrived and bought up the entire quantity by wholesale bids and auction. Presently the boats will be loaded and soon they will sail away to many towns of the province according to the directions of the merchants. I had never seen before such hillocks of Gurh piled up, so clean and so attractively made. Munshi Asiruddin saw through my ardent desire to carry a sample and he privately arranged with a shop-keeper to give me one slab. Actually it weighed more than a maund. And when I brought it on the 21st afternoon, my wife and children marvelled at it. Rajshahi is famous for the growth of sugarcane. Whether the Gurh-making cottage industry continues to flourish to-day I cannot say. It is quite likely that the cane is now carried to the nearest Sugar factory and sold there and that the cottage product is well-nigh dead.

Regarding the results of 1937 election the following scribblings are available:

29th January, 1937

Position of Parties: Congress-35 (Caste Hindus-32, Scheduled-3) Muslim League-36, Proja Party-32, Independent Hindu-33, Independent Muslim-41, Europeans-25, Hindu Nationalists-3, Hindu Sabha-1.

3rd, February, 1937

Congress-54 (Caste H. 47 & Scheduled-7), Hindu Nationalist-3, Hindu Sabha-2, Independent Hindus (Caste 14-Schedule 23)-37.

Muslim League - 39

Proja - 40

Independent Muslims - 42

Europeans - 25

Anglo-Indian - 4

Independent Chistians - 2

From the Statesman-The Latest Election Results:

Muslims (2 out of 8 labour + 1 University)-123 league about 46; Proja-34, Independent Muslims-38, Krishak Samiti-5 Muslims. Caste Hindu on Congress Ticket-43.

"It is presumed at least 15 out of 30 Scheduled Caste will join the congress. The Independent Hindus about 23, of whom 10 will probably work with the Congress. Labour seats-Largely Congress & Extremists".

"The constitution can work in Bengal if the majority of the Muslims combine and coalesce with cooperating elements. If they fail to do so and the Congress succeeds in alienating a large number of Muslims and inducing them to join in its destructive policy no Ministry can be stable in Bengal."

It is well-known how the Muslims (Proja & League) combined and how they coalesced with the majority of the Scheduled Caste members and how they together formed the first Coalition Ministry (Under the New Act) under Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq. One may recall here the crushing defeat of Sir Nazimuddin at the historic Patuakhali constituency and his subsequent return following the coalition of the two big Muslim parties.

In February 1937 I had to attend meetings of the Text Book Committee and of Examiners at Calcutta in addition to full-time occupation at Rajshahi. We had relaxation as well. Abbasuddin Ahmed, the famous Muslim singer came over along with Sachin Barman and provided musical entertainment. In March we had the Annual Milad of the Muslim Students' Association, our chief guest this time being Mr. M. A. Hasan Ispahani who had leapt into prominence by his work in the Calcutta Corporation and also by his identification with the aspirations of the Muslim Students. Abdul Waseque who had succeeded in persuading him to accept our invitation himself came along. We had a glorious time with the round of entertainments arranged. Principal J. M. Bose attended all the sessions. He also entertained Mr. Ispahani at Ten in his bungalow. In the opening session we got Mr. Gupta, the Civil Surgeon to preside in the unavoidable absence of Mr. Annada Sankar Roy, then District Magistrate of Rajshahi. The Civil Surgeon was the

eldest brother of Mr. Saibal Kumar Gupta who soon took over as District & Sessions Judge. At the moment of writing the latter is the Chairman of the Dandakaranya Development Authority; he has made bitter comments against the working of DDA, resigned and asked for relief by the 30th September, 1964. We became intimate friends at Chittagong during the period from 1944 to 1950.

With the assessment of University Examination scripts and the scrutiny of test-books I had a hectic time throughout March & April. As soon as the summer recess began I took an eleven-day holiday at Darjeeling which I visited now for the second time after twelve years. Unlike the first which was marked by an unfortunate spell of illness this proved to be most enjoyable. I was in youthful maturity; the mountains became an appetite. I walked up and down; frequently I hired a Pony and rode up to Jalapahar & Katapahar, I could manage these small animals with skill; they responded with visible delight to caressing. I walked down to the Lebong Race Course and also to the campus of St. Joseph College which I found to be spotlessly clean in the midst of "the hushed silence" of English public Schools. I attended the annual flower show at Gymkhana Club as well. All the time I was brimming over with enthusiasm. From Siliguri I got up this time by a bus and was thus spared the wearying experience of a long six-hour trip by a toy train. But on arrival at Darjeeling I made an initial mistake; I was a foolish victim of advertisement about the comforts I could have at "Snow View" Hotel. Approaching the Darjeeling Railway Station when the bus was speeding along, its attractive signboard caught my eye; I got down and booked accommodation thoughtlessly soon to be disillusioned about its amenities. I had a cubicle to sleep and rest; the food provided was not worth eating. I could not continue despite my Spartan forbearance, for more than two days when I shifted to my favourite place, the Lewis Jubilee Sanatorium. There too I had another shock. The lovely place wore a deserted look; customers counted at fingers' ends; Dr. Pal, the Superintendent, had grown much too old for active duties; he was found shuffling along once in the morning with a stooping gait. Because of the paucity of customers there was only a skeleton staff and establishment. The big Liberal Section Dining Room functioned at a small end with covers laid for half a dozen boarders. There was a pall of solitude and desolation all over. But its gardens and spacious courtyards, its

rooms and furniture had their irresistible appeal for me and I didn't care for a more crowded and glittering place and stayed on for the remaining nine days. I booked Second Class; I had a double-seated room in the two-storied Timber building. My room-mate turned out to be a former acquaintance of Carmichael Hostel, Calcutta University, now a Deputy Magistrate but without a smell of that race of functionaries. He was Mr. Aatur Rahman. In the immediate neighbourhood there was another solitary boarder, Mr. Fazlur Rahman (known at Dacca as FR the limping) who had a rich companion one of the owners of a big Ayurvedic Pharmacy at Dacca. Mr. Rahman, though quite young then in years, had made himself an influential member of the Dacca University Court. He did organise and manipulate successfully a party in Dacca University politics; he was a power to contend with. Soon I had evidence of this. Dr. Ramesh Majumdar a famous former vice-chancellor of Dacca University and now a politician and historian both (in West Bengal, rather, Calcutta) was coming down everyday to L. J. S. from his posh Mount Everest Hotel. Majumdar was loud in his talks and naturally I gathered information about his high status at Dacca University. In the Dining Hall I clashed with FR and also into friendship. Subsequently he made his name in Bengal politics in the Suhrawardy Group. After partition he became a Central Minister of Pakistan in which capacity he had once visited my College (Chittagong College) but of that later on. His companion was cultured and suave and had the capacity of softening aspirates. With these companions at LJS, mealtime there was animating inspire of solitariness otherwise.

From this brief holiday I returned to the station much refreshed to have a month's quiet leisure and pleasant studies. From jottings available I find I was occupied in reading: Sons & Lovers, Tagore's Jogajog, Saratchandra's Bipradas, Pirandello's "Better Think Twice About It" (a collection of Short Stores) and Barrie's "Dear Brutus". The following jottings in my note-book about the last book may prove interesting: Mrs. Coady, Mrs. Dearth (Tall, smouldering eye of fierce desires, murky beasts lie in ambush in her mind most beautiful when she is sullen-Pistol method), The Dearth, Alice Dearth, Mrs. Purdie, soft and pleading, Mabel, Joanna Trout-Brighter Spirit, Lady Caroline Laney of the disdainful poise, lately from the enormously select school where they are taught to pronounce their R's as W's, for example "he wichly

deserves what he is about to get" Then there is an extract : " But a married lady can tell a man's age by the number of his razors. If you saw his razors-there is a little world of them-from patents of the present day back to implements so horrible you can picture him with them in his hand-scraping his way through the ages" He is all that is left of merry England.

Then there are some words and phrases : Pippin of a man; Sveldtness, sveldt, svelte (Fr. word: lightly built, espily, of female figure), bleary of eye, groggy bow

Two other extracts : The spoken word, the past life, the neglected opportunity never come back.

"The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars. But in ourselves that we are underlings"-For dear Brutus, we are to read "Dear audience"-I suppose.

Meanwhile staff changes at Rajshahi College at the beginning of the academia session, 1937-38, were visualised Mr. J. M. Bose would be retiring; Dr. Banerjee would take over as Principal, and I would act in Banerjee's place in the Senior Educational Service.

Then came newspaper reports that Mr. A. K. Fazlul Haq, the Chief Minister was contemplating both changes in the administration and teaching staff of Islamia college. He was perturbed over the state of academic life and work there; there was a progressive deterioration in examination results of the students; there were factions among student, bengali students versus Urdu-speaking and so on. Who would be Mr. Harleys successor? Mr. Altaf Hussain had staked his all for the gadi. But he had made the place too hot for him; the students had staked their all not to have him etc.

Rajshahi college being still in summer recess I went down to Calcutta on the 22nd June only to learn that order had just been signed appointing Dr. M. Q. Khuda as principal of Islamia and myself as Professor of English in Altaf Hussain's place; the latter was to take over as principal, Dacca Intermediate college.

Exactly as in 1926 when the Islamia college was started I made myself victim of illusions or rather I deluded myself into the belief that Islamia had need of me as Wordsworth thought that England had need of Milton in 1802. It looked as if the authorities had responded to the insistent

demands of Islamia students for my return and that the English Department would be permanently committed to my care. I would prove to Bengal that a Muslim Professor could attain to the reputation of the most successful English teacher at presidency or Scottish Church or St. Xavier college. This ignis fatuus lured me on; I forgot exactly as I did in 1926 how comfortable I was at Rajshahi in the matter of residential accommodation, supply of excellent and cheap foodstuff, richer and wider academic and extra academia spheres or activity and above all in the warmth and geniality of numerous friends. Making my sister's flat as a sort of pivot I spun around in Park Circus for a suite of rooms for my family-After four days' scouring I succeeded in fixing up one such in the first floor of No. 10, Congress Exhibition Road with four small rooms and two bath rooms for our use. I returned to Rajshahi on the morning of 26th June and set about the preparations for the transfer. Rajshahi college reopened on the 28th June and I worked there till the afternoon of 7th July when I was relieved. For seven days consecutively I had a round of farewell addresses and entertainment. In fact I was feted and lionised to an inconceivable extent. At the college farewell function Dr. Banerjee was good enough to say that my transfer was an irreparable loss to the English Department. On the evening of 9th July the Rajshahi Railway Station Platform became crowded with friends attending for a send-off. Let me pass on now to another short chapter at Islamia.

CHAPTER IV
ISLAMIA COLLEGE, CALCUTTA

15th July, 1937 to 5th July 1938

On the forenoon of 14th July, 1937, I assumed my duties. Dr. M. Q. Khuda the new Principal exclaimed, on meeting me, "I am dying for you". What he meant was that my arrival was awaited with great tension in his mind. Obviously he too had been fired with missionary zeal for the "Reformation" of the college sponsored by the first Chief Minister of provincial Autonomy. He too must have been deluded into the belief that he would have a free hand and sufficient time to carry out his responsible duties. I have already spoken of the hypnotic spell upon me. Perhaps in the sub-conscious regions of his mind he was nursing another kinship with me. He was a birbhum (literally, land of heroes) man as I too was and he must have thought that the two ' heroes' between them would share the glory of the envisaged conversion. They lived to see only the Irony of it all. In three months he was spirited back into his Laboratory at Presidency, and at the end of the session I Shunted off to Chittagong. In my case it was the luckiest of deployment; in 1947 when the name of Islamia was blotted out., I had firmly been in the Chief's saddle for three and half years at Chittagong College. Dr. Quadrat-i-Khuda continued concealed in his chrysalis for ten years only to emerge into the bloom of the first DPI of East Pakistan.

That Islamia college had been in an alarming state of anaemia by 1937 was a matter of history not any body's personal conceit. From Harley's administration and from the performance of his select staff nothing better could be expected. Naturally enough the college was very sick and in ebbing vitality. Its numerical strength had been depleted; the top class student sought better pastures; there were frequent changes in the staff; those teachers who were left behind or

those recruited to replenish lacked intellectual and moral fervor. The Honours Classes were in doldrums. In English 4th Year Honours Classes I found just three indifferent students; in the corresponding Third Year classes a corresponding number of corresponding caliber had just joined. In the B. A. Pass English and in the Intermediate Classes an Augean stable (of arrears work) existed. I made a probe after which I made a chart of duties for my colleagues for the session as a whole. Voluntarily I took upon myself all arrears of work in the senior Intermediate & Degree classes I held extra classes of long duration on Sundays. Having received backing at the Education Directorate and Department I succeeded in reorganising the cadre of the English Department two lecturers' posts having been upgraded into Professors; I had then filled up by Mr. Taraknath Sen and Mr. Sunilkumar Indra About the latter I have already written a long note. About the former let it be borne in mind that he has risen to be the Head of the Department of English at Presidency college. I found a steady lecturer in Mr. P. N. Ghosh on whom I could depend for conscientious execution. I had my friend, Quazi Akram Hussain, another incredibly quiet but sound scholar, brought as Lecturer, My Dream of the recuperation and rehabilitation of the English Department was translated into action in the first term of the academic session, 1937-38, and at year's end (and on the eve of my departure for Chittagong early in July next) I had the inner satisfaction of finding from the published results of I. A. & I. Sc. Examination of 1938 that our candidates had not only covered up the earlier loss in the percentage of success but gone a few steps better. Of the three 4th Year English Honours students two had dropped off long ago; the remaining one Shamsul Alam saw me at my residence on the eve of his Honours Examination just to announce that he had made up his mind to appear at the pass course to the abandonment of the Honours. I took hours persuade him to the contrary by convincing him that he was capable enough for a Second Class. Actually he had a high Second. He is one the Headmaster of a Govt. High English School in East Pakistan. of the other three in the then Third Year Honours classes, one became sufficiently inspired to take a top Second in 1939. He is one Mr. Haider who is now a First Class Officer in the

East Pakistan Secretariat.

In 1937-38 we had a fairly long first term, but autumn and Ramadan holidays being combined the recess covered the months of October & November & naturally we had just a three-week second term but the third term was long enough for substantial work.

Dr. Qudrat-i-khuda worked as Principal only for three months i. e. from July to September, October & November were holidays. At the re-opening of the college in the first week of December, Dr. Jenkins appeared on the scene and stayed on till the 16th December when I took over to fill up the gap between that day and 10th January, 1938, when Mr. K. Zachariah joined. It eludes me still why Dr. Qudrat should be made to vanish so unceremoniously, so quickly. We knew nothing' he had no occasion or opportunity to give us a hint. Strange stories went their rounds. It was said that the Chief Minister had taken all steps to have his brother in law Mr. Syed Hussain, appointed as the Principal. When we were students living in Baker Hostel (the period was 1917-19 this gentleman leapt into prominence by his appointment as Editor.

The Independent, a daily started at Alahbad by Pandit Motilal Nehru. At the end of the paper's short life, Mr. Syed Hussain disappeared into the immensity of the United States of America where by dint of his eloquence and attractive personality he had risen, it was reported, to the position of a Lecturer in Political Science in the University of California. He was brought back home to Bengal and offered the post of the Principal of Islamia College. He stayed on in Calcutta for sometime but eventually declined the offer and went back to California or some such place in U. S. A. It was whispered, however, that in India (or Bengal) he never took his B.A. degree and lest there should be troublesome reaction later on over his academic credentials he decided prudently to go back. Actually he was a guest to our Union meeting on the 4th October, 1937, obviously the last working day of the College before the combined recess already indicated. In his discourse he dwelt at some length on the malaise of the institution and administered a mild rebuke to the staff and students of the

College in regard to its torpor. Past middle age then he still looked radiantly fair with glowing cheeks; he spoke with out-of-date dramatic mannerism and in rhetorical language without much substance. But it was a fairly good performance, judged as a whole. I was called upon to propose a vote of thanks; the request was sudden and unexpected. There was no getting away. I said how we students of Baker Hostel used to read his paper, The Independent, by smuggling it into the hostel, the Superintendent being too orthodox to allow this heretical newspaper into our Reading Room and how we were familiar with his romantic career in journalism from Bombay to Allahabad. But this phrase "romantic" caused a stir among older members of the Assembly. I was, however, innocent of any oblique association. Then Mr. Husain's association with California and his mild rebuke to the audience brought up to my mind in a flash as it were the language of the much advertised California "Syrup of Figs" and in imitation I said "Mother, when your child is seedy and sick, give it a dose of the California Syrup of Figs."

"Mr. Syed Hussain has given one or two doses of the same syrup to the sick patient of Islamia..... he could have administered a catharsis instead of a mild laxative..... etc.

In between 16th December 1937 and 10th January 1938 I had to face as Acting Principal a fairly unpleasant and unacademic problem. Abdul Waseque, the student leader had organised a session of the All-India Muslim Students' Organisation in Calcutta to coincide with the Christmas Week and he had no difficulty in persuading Mr. Fazlul Hoq to throw open Islamic College for the accommodation of delegates to the Conference. I had been noticing for sometime past with considerable amusement and some concern how Waseque was a habitual companion of the Chief Minister playing the part of a boss. Provincial politics and student politics were hands in gloves. When I was informed in a subtle manner about Mr. Huq's approval I got into touch with the DPI and the Communication and Buildings authorities and made a plan for the delegates' stay with as little damage to the premises and equipment as was humanly possible for me to do. Every day I visited this College Camp and supervised its

sanitary arrangements and kept the guests off the out-of-bounds zone. I suppressed my violent reactions to the situation created and got through the ordeal with personal vigilance and care. So far as Islamia was concerned this was the first faint beginning of the institution being converted into a cockpit of political gatherings, confabulations and asylums so successfully provided by Zuberi during his administration. After Partition when proposals were made to put Chittagong College to such uses by Hij pilgrims on the eve of their embarkation I never yielded.

But I had happy moment to counterbalance the strain of the experience just described. Early in January I persuaded Mr. Huq to come and have a look at the college one afternoon. I stood him tea in the principal's Room not in the manner of Dr. Shastri but at my personal cost. He was shown round at the end of which he expressed his pleasure and on his enquiry I said I would be glad to have a replenishment to the English section of the college Library at which he announced a grant of Rs. 400/- four hundred from his Discretionary Fund and saw to it that the money reached me in one day or two. I went out and bought books in the local market and placed them in the Library. I felt very happy..

Earlier during my short administration I handled college affairs with the benefit of my experience at Rajshahi, and with my characteristic fervour. I supervised the Intermediate Test Examination according to standing rules and regulations. And I saw to it that the results of the same received serious deliberation and fairplay in the relevant staff meetings. The Annual Milad of the college was efficiently organised on the 19th December. Signs of a reawakening were unmistakable. On the 22nd December I gave a talk on "The Future of Islam in the Modern World" Which brought me greetings from the students and the staff. Meanwhile the former students of Islamia and the present had been working together to hold a Greetings function to mark my Principal ship. On the afternoon of 23rd they held this function in a big Tea Party on the First Floor varandah. They got Dr. Jenkins to attend it. In a teacher's life no reward could be superior to such a demonstration of love and affection from the students.

A few personal episodes pertaining to 1937-38 will not, I hope, come amiss.. I was one of the recipients of the Coronation Medal. In August I bought a used car which cost me Rs. 2000/- and which had been in my use till the first week of February, 1944 when I sold it off . My eldest brother, a legal practitioner, who had settled down in the town of Midnapur at the beginning of the century and who had played a father's part in my upbringing and education was a lover of cars, particularly Ford and Chevrolet and Austin. In the year under review he had his Austin to drive. He was instrumental in the buying of this car (standard 9) and in teaching me how to drive it and also how to get it repaired and overhauled according to exigencies. During the long autumn and Ramadan recess he got me out at Midnapur and gave me lessons and exercises in driving. He planned and executed an excursion in his own car from Midnapur to Contal (just across the Bay from Chittagong) and thence to Digha Ghat by road. We formed a little party consisting of his youngest wife (he had only one son of commission in the plurality of wives), two children, a hefty cleaner attendant and myself and we left one morning after breakfast. Past the south of the town ran the Cossaye river which we had to cross in a ferry boat and then began the 80-mile-long road system to get to Contal through Kharagpur and along the side of the Contal Road railway station. He knew the topography by heart as it were. First he drove straight to Kharagpur Railway Station where in the Refreshment Room he made arrangements for an early, improvised lunch so that we might not be overpowered by hunger later when we would have a long drive through vast stretches of rice-fields. His plan was to have a carefree, leisurely run to Contal which was 72 miles off from Kharagpur and which we covered in 3/4 hours. Now he passed the steering on to me only occasionally to resume to negotiate difficult conditions ahead. The rice-fields then under Aman cultivation extended from horizon to horizon as it were, all green, with golden sheaves on top in some cases. Sturdy, strong-built peasants were seen in many places. They were mostly of the Scheduled Castes and reminded me of their accredited leader Mr. B. N. Shashmal, Barrister-at-Law. He was a well known Congressman; it was he who had led the Contal people to a successful no-rent

campaign most efficiently organised. In India there was only one parallel to his accomplishment, that of Sardar Ballav Bhai Patel in his own native area. The story went that when the Contai people repeatedly defied the order to pay, a seasoned District Magistrate arrived on the spot with a posse of armed constables for supervising physical attachment of movable property; he found that the men folk were all away from their houses. As soon as the Police began their ordered operations, out came the womenfolk, each with a broomstick which was brandished with billingsgate. When the Police was about to apply force, the British D. M. considered the action improper and unchivalrous and withdrew from the scene altogether. I had seen Mr. Shasmal from a distance and heard him addressing meetings. Of deep, dark complexion he had a stocky, short stature and iron constitution; he had a loud, raucous voice; his speech had steel-like strength and rigid argumentation, Bipin Chandra Pal was fairer in complexion but had the same stentorian elocution. But I was writing about the immensity of the rice-fields; they were treeless mostly. The only trees to be seen were on the road-borders; human habitations were tucked away at the far end of one's view. We reached Contai town in the late afternoon and halted at the local Dak Bungalow which was fairly big and tenantless. Those were not days of economically sound tourist traffic. Its old Munshi caretaker gave us a hot, well-cooked dinner which we enjoyed tremendously. Around the place there were sand heaps and some little distance away the Sub-Divisional town. Quite unexpectedly I met a College friend of mine who took me to the houses of some of his friends and acquaintances so that the time unto the dinner proved quite interesting. My brother thought that the sea coast at one end of the town was not worth visiting; it was muddy and didn't ensure a full view of the sea. We had better go to Digha Ghat next morning. That was the most appropriate spot for sight-seeing and a dip. That was. As far as I remember Digha is about 16 miles off for Contai. In the first half of the trip a pucca road was being built up; the other half was still served by a kutchra one; the whole area was low lying. We had to pass through a number of villages in the second half-villages situated in the midst of palm and date and guava plantations, hamlets and houses

girt round with neat bamboo-fencings remaining one of the countryside of Chitttaong Nearer the sea there were fishermen colonies smelling of the processing of sea shrimps into dried products of commercial importance. In fact you can see cartloads of them in transport over the whole stretch. Hanging from the palm and date trees were earthenwares taking the juicy oozings. O ! for a draft of vintage raw and fresh. How irreligious of me it was to express such a thirst. It was a difficult drive particularly over a number of flimsy , bamboo culverts all of which were skillfully taken by my brother. But there was a canal which we had to cross in a ferry baot. At journey's end stood a red brick, small dak Bungalow on a mound of earth and sand, from which one did have a commanding view of the Bay which did'nt look turbulent but deep and aweinspiring. We got down to the beach with bathing kit in hand. But the coast was lonely; solitary fishermen widely separated from each other did'nt enliven the scene. On the contrary they reinforced our fear for the unknown. None of us had sufficient pluck to enter water; we gave up the idea of a bathe and walked back to the car and a feeling of security of land-lubbers. This scene was a study in contrast to that of Puri where my brother had taken me out in the month of July or August in 1920 seventeen years earlier to afford to me my first experience of the sea-front. It was mid-monsoon when rolling was deep, deafenning and continuous. My reaction as I approached the Puri beach was one of dread; I felt like kneeling down in prayers. I hummed within "Roll on thou dark, deep blue ocean, Roll". Thousands of white horses, I thought, were galloping towards us unfolding an Apocalyptic vision to me. I understood the full meaning of "breaker"; I had and adequate appreciation of the rhythm of the English verses. When I was taken into the waters by the professional 'Swimmers' I behaved in a clumsy manner. Unaided by them as my brother and I walked up he received a mighty push which flung him back to the sandy edge. Buthere was a crowd of other sea-bathers around and it was fun to dare and to have a saline soup. The same afternoon we saw Sir Abdur Rahim and his son-in-law. H. S. Suhrawardy negotiating the breakers with ease and facility. The situation at Digha Ghat was altogether different then. Now the West Bengal Govt. has transformed the

whole place into a fashionable and popular sea-resort attracting tourists from near and abroad. Similarly the Govt. of East Pakistan are developing the beach at Cox's Bazar Where I had been in 1939 and which I shall return in due course.

My visit to Contal and to the Digha Ghat in 1937 proved to be of great help to me in 1942 when as Director of Public Information, Bengal, I had to deal first with the political violence in the area following the "Quit India" Resolution of the Congress in the month of August and second with the terrific cataclysm of nature that erupted with the October cyclone and tidal wave and caused unprecedented destruction to crops, cattle and human beings. But of these let us wait till then.

From Digha Ghat we hurried back to Contal and thence to Midnapur and immediately thereafter I to Calcutta where I applied for a Driving License at the Beltala Headquarters of the Motor Vehicles Department. An Anglo-Indian Sergeant took me out on test and I was doing fairly well at it when quite unexpectedly he asked me to stop and then to 'back' into a narrow lane nearby. I did the job but rather clumsily. I was asked to practice far more regularly and intensively for another fortnight and then to appear again. Failing an examination and by an 'experienced' teacher was very galling; preparation went on with great application for success at the next trial and I got through.

On my return to Calcutta I attended three successive functions at the Government House. The first was a Darbar and Investiture Ceremony held on the afternoon of 17th November, 1937, under the Governor, H. E. Sir John Anderson. Mr. Hogg, the Chief Secretary, read out the citations of the recipients of Honours and Titles and one by one they went up and received the decorations with bowed heads from the Governor. Mr. Hogg's reading manner had a characteristic Scotch flavour; the range and variety of the performances of the winners, sketched in the citations, added to the enjoyment of those who were present on invitation. But the fasting Muslims among them (it was the month of Ramadan) had parched lips and famishing looks. By the time the Darbar closed it was past fast breaking hour and these

poor souls took out dried fruit from their pockets to quench their thirst; even the provision of drinking water did'nt exist. Undoubtedly the British were efficient administrators but the first Chief Minister of autonomous Bengal, himself a pious Muslim, saw no impropriety about it; we were law-abiding citizens with unswerving fidelity to the British throne. The second function was held on the 23rd November when we were invited to witness the departure ceremony of Sir John Anderson who was admittedly one of the most powerful Governors Bengal had ever had. We drew ourselves up in two long rows to make a passage in between. Tall and strong Sir John had a broad and awe-inspiring face. In slow pomp and pageantry he moved along an aisle of small, mute statues. The third was held on the 27th November to welcome Lord Brabourne who moved into the Govt. House through the human passage formed again.. But this occasion was less formal, less rigid than the other. Lord Brabourne was a charming little Governor with a sweet face and courteous smile and in passing he evoked audible murmurs and exclamations of wonder and admiration from those present, particularly from the ladies.

I have already given an outline of important or unimportant events during the short second term we had at college in December, 1937. The long third term from January was held under Mr. K. Zachariah, IES, who was Principal of Hooghly Mohsin College before his transfer to Islamia. He was an Oxford first in History and had been professor of the subject at Presidency College for years prior to his administrative charge at Hooghly. A native Christian of Madras presidency he had married a Bengali lady and spent his life in Bengal till his retirement in the forties when he was DPI. Of short stature, dark complexion, slim but shapely physique he was very scholarly. His command of English was enviable. In celebrating the centenary of the Hooghly Mohsin College he had written its hundred year history (a Govt. publication) which I had read as soon as it was published. He gave his ungrudging help to me in regard to the availability of standard works in English from Oxford and London publishers. Simple in his dress, severe in his mode of living, he avoided all show and ostentation. He was so quiet that he stayed on

at Hooghly in preference to Presidency College Principal ship. In figure work too he was exceptionally clever. He brought substance and solidity to his work as Principal. But what a pity he fell a victim of dirty politics and also to the shady tricks of his Cashier and of his Accountant at Islamia College. Regarding the first he was caught unawares; one fine day or shall I say one black day his College was ransacked by Police who did beat up students, roughly handled teachers while he stood by helplessly. A commission of Inquiry under Mr. Justice Tauriq Ameer Ali had held a probe and his Report should be read in this connection. Perhaps it is still a mystery how the police came in; a current allegation was against the Chief Minister. Regarding the second I still feel beaten how embezzlement could take place under the sharpest scrutiny of Mr. Zachariah. These things occurred after I had left Islamia in the first week of July, 1938. And after these episodes Mr. Zachariah left Islamia to its own inglorious future. But I was speaking of my own short time under him. He had reorganised the College time-table so as to eliminate excessive lecture work (and consequential spoon-feeding) and to concede good margin to students for their private studies and independent thinking.

On my return to Islamia College after seven years I found that it had acquired a sporting campus of its own about a mile and a half away to the east of Wellesly, just off Gorachand Road and in the contiguity of Chittaranjan Hospital, Entally. One one-storied building (for change, rest, recreation, parties etc), a small swimming pool, two tennis lawns and one big field for football (cricket, hockey) constituted this campus. Its only drawback was that it was in the hind part of Calcutta and not anywhere near the Calcutta Maidan which was the place of all places in the province. During the third term we had not only our Annual Sports in that campus but also daily games there although the number of participants was not large. We organized some cricket matches in which Mr. Zachariah participated. On one occasion I fetched Dr. Jenkins for a game of Tennis. And Kazemuddin and I and some others frequently played Tennis there. At this distance of time I still remember how Kazemuddin brought one day Mr. Zaker Hossain, I. P. to our lawn for Tennis, He was a

friend to Kazemuddin and Zahurul Islam. That was my first acquaintance with him. On partition he became the I. G. P. of East Pakistan, then Chairman of the Central public Service Commission, then Governor of East Pakistan during the Martial law regime and later a Central Minister. Another day Sir Nazimuddin was brought over to witness students' aquatic sports and give away the prizes. He was entertained at High Tea thereafter.

In January, 1938, two good teachers left, one was Mr. Abdus Samad, Lecturer in Economics and another Mr. P. N. Ghosh, Lecturer in English. The former was appointed to act as Professor of Economics at Chittagong College and I was re-united with him in six months. Earlier the popular Professor of Economics, Mr. Sudhansunath Guha Thakurta, had been transferred to make room for Mr. Abdus Sadeque whom I found to be a very interesting character. He looked like an unimpressive boy. By the strength of his Dacca University M. A. First in Economics he was a direct Muslim recruit (it means a reserved Muslim post filled up by direct recruitment from among Muslim outsiders) to the Bengal Educational Service as Professor of Economics. Mr. A. K. Chanda, then ADPI insisted that such a jewel of a Muslim should be used by a purely Muslim Institution. Let Mr. Sadeque therefore act as the Head of the Department of Economics at Islamia College. But neither the principal Mr. Marley nor the students were happy with him. He, however, had a powerful patron in Syed Munzoor Murshed, Ex Officio Asstt. Secretary of the Education Department and Private Secretary to the Chief Minister. During the period under review Mr. Sadeque (with the help of one of his Philosophy Colleagues) produced overnight a manual of Economics which reflected on his creative activity in addition to this scholarship. Mr. Abdus Samad, although a Second Class s man in Economics, was clear thinker, a lucid interpreter and a dedicated teacher. He had proved very efficient. His departure was a loss to Islamia College.

In addition to the sporting and athletic recreation we had in the cold weather of 1937-38, there was a river trip which proved most enjoyable. To offer greetings to Mr. and Mrs. Bottomly, the DPI and

his wife (the occasion was that of the former being awarded CIE), the leading educationistes of Calcutta organised a Steamer Party on Sunday the 23rd January when we were out for a whole day. As we were climbing up the steps of the chartered boat I noticed Mr. Chanda carrying a big portmanteau and Mr. K. D. Ghosh, another distinguished educationist of the time, the wardrobe of ladies. The pleasant freight of the latter was chivalrous' the camouflaged leather-case of the former, as explained by him, was a mobile bar for the exclusive use of an exclusive group of boozes, We had delightful col lunch, the menu being carefully prepared by the fastidious taste of Mr. Ghosh. The afternoon tea was a hilarious affair when form and stiffness were thrown overboard to make room for warmth and cordiality, rollicking fun and frivolity.

But play was not far removed from serious work. The first issue of the Islamia College Magazine was under way and the responsibility of editing and Publishing fell upon me. The College was started eleven years ago but its organ of expressin was yet unborn. I recalled with pride how on the 2nd July, 1926, I was the first to meet a class and therefore I undertook with joy the task of production of the first issue. A number of colleagues and students collaborated in collecting and clooating material for this three-part publication in English, Bengali and urdu. I found an indefatigable studentt worker in Amir Hussain Chowdhury who had respectable family connexion, He had just then been up in Shillong and written an article on the famous waterfalls of that hill station. I took pains to make it readable. But Amir Hossain chowdhury is no more. In the 1964 January riots at Dacca he died a martyr's death in trying to save the life of a Hindu gentleman near the Nawabpur Railway level crossing; he was stabbed by a Muslim goonda. For the get-up of the first issue of the islamia College magazine I selected good, unglazed paper and a plain green cover with the result that it turned out to be neat comparing favourably with presidency College Magazine issues. Good reading material was included together with long, editorial notes chronicling recent events in the story of the life of the College. I should have preserved a copy but in my wanderings from College to College I have never been able to retain any paper whatsoever, not

to speak of those worth treasuring.

Beyond the walls of Islamia I was once invited to the Annual Milad of Carmichael Hostel where I was booked for giving a talk on the life and Teachings of our Prophet. The orthodox preachers there recounted many legends concerning the Apostle of Islam at which the Post -Graduate members of the audience revolted against apocryphal anecdotes and asked for historical, authentic, rationally tenable material. While I was on my feet I had to point out the part that angels and fairies, myths and legends, mystic moments and ecstatic solutions, love and devotion at intuition and dreams play in our spiritual life itself and I quoted:

With the first dream that comes with the first sleep,

I run, I run, I am gathered to thy heart.

and

“People will have their miracles, their stories, their heroes and heroines, and saints and martyrs to exercise their gifts of affection, wonder and worship, and their Judases and devils to enable them to be angry and yet they feel they do well to be angry”.

I believe that the audience had been helped into a chastened mood and better spiritual perspective.

At my residence I was reading, outside the College Syllabuses, “Jean christophe” in 4-volume English translation, The Good Companions, Nicholson’s translation of “The Secrets of Self” together with the translator’s unique introduction; Eugene O’Neil’s Strange Interludes and Mourning Becomes Electra among many others. I was also in touch with book reviews:-

Adonais” (A new life of Keats) By Dorothy Hewlett;

Hearst & Blackett: 15/-

John Cornelius: Sir H. Walpole: Macmillan: 8/6/-

J. M. Barric (An appreciation): Prof. J. A. Roy: Jarrolds: 10/6/- They

Seek a Country: Francis Brett Young: Heinemann: 8/6/-The Laugh-

ing Prophet (GKC): Emile Cammerts: Methnen: 7/6/-

The Mountain Scene: Frederick Smythe: Adam & Charles Bleak:

12/6/- Jonathan Swift: Bertram Newman: Allen & Unwin: 12/6/-

European Drama (Ben Johnson Tercentenary Volume):

N. S. Wilson: Ivor Nicholson etc: 4/6/-

Everest: The Unfinished Adventure: Hodder & Stoughton 255 net.
Victorian England, Portrait of an Age: By G. M. Young: Oxford
University Press: 7/6/-

Dean Inge's Review in The Statesman
(The Victorian Cavalcade" dt. 24. 1. 37)

Sir Richard Grenville of The Revenge: By A. L. Rowse: J. Cape: 12/6/-

The academic session, 1937-38 had been marked by two deaths, one at the beginning, another and greater towards the close, of Dr. Ross Maswood and Sir Mohammad iqbal. Over the First there was a Condolence Meeting at the Calcutta Muslim Institute in August in which I participated. He was of hallowed memory and cherished academic and family traditions. His visit to Islamia College, Calcutta, earlier was also a cherished memory. Oxford, Aligarh and Calcutta and Education in general had a griveous loss to mourn. Sir Mohammad Iqbal's death on the 21st April, 1938, was just a prelude to the coming birth of Pakistan nine years hence. From the hour of his death till several years later I read over and over again some of his works, principally **Religious Reconstruction in Islam** and the **Secrets of Self** and attempted the exposition (if I was competent at all to do so) in future death anniversaries of the great philosopher-poet of Islam and the insistent sponsor of Pakistan since 1935. Let Pakistan imbibe even now a fractional portion of his spiritual fervour and Promethean fire to burn out its creeping dry-rot.

In Political life Mr. Jinnah was proceeding with unfaltering steps towards the expansion and consolidation of the Muslim League as the sole party organ of the Muslims of India as the Congress was that of the Hindus. He was not discouraged by the composite character of the Government formed in Bengal and in Assam under Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq and Sir Sadullah respectively. Nor was he deterred by the Unionist Govt. in the Punjab under Sir Sikkander Hayat Khan or by the Muslim Congressites in the North-West Frontier Province. He was determined to convert them into the Muslim League components; the Muslim masses were solidly behind him and he did succeed ere long, at any rate by 1941, when the Viceroy in constituting the National Defence Council attempted to bypass him and the

Muslim League. In Assam Saadullah had to resort to many unpleasant tactics in sustaining his Ministry; he paid occasional visits to Mr. Fazlul Huq for guidance. The latter fell out with Syed Nawsher Ali his colleague in charge of Local SelfGovt. and Public Health. This Minister belonged to the Krishak sector of his own party. In public the Chief Minister framed allegations against Mr. Ali by having his letters of accusations published in the newspapers which gave space to Nawsher Ali's rejoinders. Mr. Huq was a master of penmanship. with this he combined now the brown burraucrat's power-drunk and arrogant attitude. Nowsher Ali's replies could'nt compare with the steely edge of Mr. Huq's But the former was (as reported then) a peasant's son who had to struggle against paralysing handicaps in receiving his M. A. and Law Degrees and in emerging into popular favour and support. He was a plebeian in his ways and in his standard of life a man of classic integrity. An alien to luxury he declined to be bullied. When the squabble amounted to washing dirty linen in public, mediators from outside the province came to the scene. One such was Sir Sikander Hayat khan; another Sir Ziauddin Ahmed of Aligarh fame. Mr. Hoq organised an afternoon reception at the Calcutta Grand Hotel in April 1938 in honour of Sir Sikander. What was happening behind the scenes in more than I can say. But Nowsher Ali was unyielding and he had to discover one fine morning in June , 1938, that he had been dropped out and the ministry reconstituted overnight. Later Mr. Ali became one of the most capable Speakers of the Bengal Legislative Assembly. In his earlier career he was hated by the Hindus of Bengal as the most rank communalist but he turned out to be one of the staunchest of Congressmen. I watched with fascination and admiration his work as a Speaker; he transcended lightly the difficult hurdles thrown in his way in the Assembly and gave prompt decisions, within minutes of the impasse sometimes created in the Legislature. On Partition he stayed behind in West Bengal; it is reported he is seriously ill now.

By the time Nowsher Ali's fate was hammered out on the political anvil, a 'quit' order to me was signed in the Education Department. I was to move out to Chittagong College to make room for Dr. Itrat Hussain Zuberi. It came about in this way, The Chittagong College

Senior Service post in English had been vacant since 1935 with stop gap arrangements meanwhile. This was a "direct recruitment" Post reserved for a Muslim outsider. It was advertised by the Public Service Commission which nominated Dr. Zuberi for appointment. As I was immersed in my preoccupations with the rehabilitation of the English Department in particular I knew nothing of these developments. Even when I heard about Zuber's success in the recruitment I took it for granted that he would have to take over at Chittagong. But when Sir Ziauddin was on this 'mediation' mission between Hoq & Nowsher Ali he had held out to the former an invaluable gift to higher education in Bengal in the person of Zuberi, one of the greatest Scholars in English and that such a gift should be treasured and utilized at Calcutta Islamia College. Mr. Huq must have accepted the gift with gratitude commensurate with the generosity of the offer. As the report of this deal and my transfer to Chittagong became insistent I mentioned it to Mr. Huq one day during the summer vacation. He gave me an evasive reply and I was lulled into a sense of security. But when one of the ADPT's gave me a further warning I met Mr. Huq once again just to discover that he was remote and equivocal. In perfect consistency with my character and outlook I thought no more about this inequitable deal of a transfer in less than a year although the time honoured convention had been a minimum three year tenure even for an Executive Officer. The professed love for , an overhauling of the worn out machinery of Islamia was seen in its naked shape in the context of diplomatic and political ordering of things even in Education. Turning over scraps of notes in my possession I find that Zuberi belonged to Meerut and to the family of Sir Ziauddin; he took his M. A. Degree from St. John's College, Agra and his Ph. D. Degree in Edinburgh in 1935. I wonder if Mr. Huq's second wife who also came from Meerut should be a relation of Zuberi. I also recall to mind a review of Zuber's thesis at Edinburgh in an issue of the Times Literary Supplement years ago. Its caption was "Whether John Donne Belonged to the Anglican Church" and it was published by the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SPCK). Geiverson, an authority on Donne, observed among other things "Dr.

Zuberi appears to prove too much". Islamia College reopened after summer vacation on the 2nd July, 1938. The same day the order of Zuberi's appointment and that of my transfer were received by the College office. On the 6th afternoon he appeared on the scene and I made over charge forth with. His run at Islamia had been from 6th July, 1938, to may be, 6th July, 1947 on the eve of the Partition. Being on the Partition Council at the Bengal Secretariat he had himself appointed as the Principal of Chittagong College and myself as that of Krishnagar College-Krishnagar was in East Bengal under the notional division but eventually passed to West Bengal by the Radcliffe Award. He had sent this message to me through the then District Magistrate of Chittagong, Mr. F. A. Karim, ICS, a U. P. man and himself arrived with his family at Chittagong on the 11th July, 1947; But of these later. It may just be observed here that not only Zuberi but Mr. F. A. Karim also were screened out by the Martial Law govt. of Pakistan.

At the Staff Tea Party to me held on the 8th July, 1938, I said (among other things) that in the "Strange Interludes" of Eugene O'Neil the Professor's daughter was a problem to the Professor whereas in the present case a poor Professor's old car was a far more formidable problem; Professor was not entitled to draw the Car freight. Turning to Prof. Ataul Hakim who hailed from Chittagong I said "Chittagong is a land of "Lottyia", "Phattya", "Mattya" (a kind of sea-fish, a famous local place, and Portuguese Christians respectively) and I would love to hear an exposition of these historical elements". He became angry and protested. My purpose of leg pulling was served. I summed up by referring to the natural beauties of the place, its hills and valleys, its adjacent sea and the many creeks, its charming river, The Karnafully, the international port that it was and so on and by pointing out how my own temperament was in perfect tune with nature's Farewell function held on the 9th July I said how I had just come back in hoot haste from the office of the Accountant General of Bengal, where a month's pay in advance was collected to meet the financial implications of the transfer. I said I had the 'wherewithal' now in my pocket to proceed; at home my portable knap-sack

containing books that would be required on arrival was ready. A transfer pertained to the incidence of Govt. Service and should be accepted in that spirit. I was anxious to give of my best to Chittagong College.

In Calcutta & in West Bengal there existed a lot of prejudice against Chittagong and Chittagonians. It was thought that the place was a part of Arakan and the people were 'Mogs' and Arakanese. They had mixed blood of the portuguese, Arabs & Burmese; their language was unintelligible and their dialect not Bengali at any rate. It was a strange land with a hostile climate. I was myself a partial victim of such hate campaign. But my intimate friend Prof. Omdatul Islam (who was himself a native of Chittagong) put me in personal contact with his own elder brother and two more prominent citizens of Chittagong; they were all available in Calcutta. The first pointed out to me that Chittagong was one of the well-known spots in the world's map. The second was Maulavi Nur Ahmed, M. A. B. L. MLC, the chairman of Chittagong Municipality for a longer period than Pitt had been the Premier of England. He was good enough to call at my house (10, Congress Exhibition Road) along with his friend, Maulavi Nazir Ahmad Chowdhury, Municipal Commissioner and Contractor. They laughed at my superstitious ignorance and said that I would be most welcome. Nazir Ahmed Saheb gave a pledge that he would get me a good house for residence. I put myself in immediate correspondence with my friend Prof. S. Sharafuddin who had succeeded me as Superintendent of the New Muslim Hostel at Rajshahi in 1926. Now he was Professor of Arabic & Persian at Chittagong College. He responded lovingly and worked indefatigably in securing a suitable house for me. After making an assiduous search he finally engaged the house which lay at the disposal of Mr. Nazir Ahmed. Near the beautiful Circuit house of Chittagong (this is now a Govt. House) this one-storied house with two bed rooms, two reading rooms, a lounge between the two bed rooms, two attached bath rooms, a garage and other adjuncts was situated the particular Mohalla being known as Kazir Dewri and the road in front called "Empress Road". Chittagong College was a mile off to the East, and

the famous market-place, Reazuddin Bazar, another mile to the West. It was on the border of the beautiful Railway colony with its offices and bungalow perched on hilltops and its undulating road system skirting them and finally issuing out into the plains of Pahartolly Railway Station. When I arrived at Chittagong railway station with my family early in the morning of 13th July both Mr. Nazir Ahmed and prof. Sharafuddin were there to receive us. We were put into a lovely car and driven home to our new house. All other arrangements had been made by them. The owner of the car, Mr. Farid Ahmad Chowdhury, (later khan Bahadur) son of Haji Abdul-Ghani Sowdagar was a merchant prince and according to his desire I had to go to his house for early morning tea. A goodlooking youngman he received me personally in his decently frunished drawing-room and poured out several cups of hot, steaming tea. The initial sample of men and manners, of building and equipment and of hospitality had no resemblance with the image sedulously fostered in our mind by uncharitable West Bengal propaganda. Prof.. Sharafuddin meanwhile had provided refreshment and tea for my family. The College was open; his own residence was a mile and a half off. He hurried back but would'nt take any declining about the lunch provision he had already made; in fact he brought lunch for us all at 1. P. M. in a carriage. It is impossible to measure in linguistic terms the great help he had rendered us on this occasion. I took over charge on the 14th July, a year to a date from that of Islamia College in 1937. The same morning I took delivery of my car at Chittagong Railway Station. I find from available notes that I had to pay Rs. 117/ as its freight from Sealdah to Chittagong via Gualonda. In fact it travelled with us on board the same steamer. My little son, who had been perturbed earlier by the dismantling of our Calcutta residence and who had taken the car to have been lost, shouted for joy at the sight of the car on the deck of the Steamer we boarded at Gualondo Ghat.

Mr. Abdus Samad, Professor of Economics, transferred here six months earlier, occupied a smaller house next door.

CHAPTER V

CHITTAGONG COLLEGE, CHITTAGONG

July 1938 to 1941

Chittagong College as it stood then had a small campus of its own consisting of a big main building, a small Physics and Chemistry laboratory, one two-room building, a two-storied building consisting of several small rooms, a gymnasium and an Assembly Hall. The main building an impressive piece of ancient architecture on round columns and with verandhs on four sides had three rows of rooms, one row in the south containing two staff rooms, Principal's room, and offices, another row in the north of 3 lecture halls, the third row of three rooms for an extension of practical laboratory work and that of the office. In between the two main rows stood a long hall from end to end which was used as the library of the College. By the very nature of the construction it was dark and ill-ventilated A students' reading room within the library could'nt be conceived for lack of space. It was more or less a godown of books and not a library at all. And yet the British I. E. S. Principals of the College was nothing wrong about it. The logic of space has just necessitated the demolition of this building in 1964 The main building and the laboratory building between themselves occupied the whole length of the chief hillock of the College; the Assembly hall occupied another small mound; the two-rom building near the gate of the college was on a slope; slightly further down stood the two-storied building which originally was the Hindu Hostel, abolished after the Chittagong Armoury Raid case of 1930. A long bamboo-structure stood nearby. Mr. J. R. Barrow, Principal, Chittagong College, before his transfer to Presidency in 1917, had it constructed for airing the clothes of the Hindu Hostel inmates; he wouldn't permit the hanging out of their linen washings. At the foot of the main building cum-laboratory eminence and in its front stood the covered gymnasium; at the back of the College lay unreclaimed ditches and hollows and beyond them on the north stood the two-storied fairly commodious Muslim Hostel with the

Superintendent's family quarters attached. The configuration of land in the then College area was undulating. Its expansion within the same was difficult. I shall have occasion to refer to this aspect later. Compared with the campus of Rajshahi College it was disappointingly small. But the British IES Principals didn't bother about any expansion. They didn't bother about their own quarters; they would live in the European Club just off the Circuit House.

It taught I. A. & I. Sc. B. A. Pass & Honours excepting Philosophy which had no Honours, B. Sc Pass only. When I first joined in July 1938, It had about 700 students on the rolls and its lecture rooms were badly congested. The place was intended only for 400 students. The outstanding feature about the available courses of study was the provision of a full department of Pali affiliated upto the Honours standard of the Calcutta University. Provision also existed for Urdu—there being a fourth teacher for the subject tagged on to Arabic & Persian. Pali teaching by itself shows how there had been a substantial number of Buddhist students. The Hindu students were still the major element but the Muslims were increasing in number soon to attaining parity. The teachers were over whelmingly Hindu.

Rai Bahadur Padmini Bhusan Rudra of the Bengal senior Educational service was the Principal of the College. Earlier he had been a teacher of English at the old Dacca College and then of Dacca Intermediate College. He was a native of Dacca, and one of the lanes of Dacca still bears the name of his father, kamini Bhusan Rudra. Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq knew Rudra's family fairly well when he was Deputy Magistrate in East Bengal. On retirement from Government service, say by 1944, Padmini Babu became the Secretary of the Public Service Commission Bengal. He settled down in Calcutta where he died recently at the age of 75 or more. In 1938, he had 5/6 years more to go before superannuation. I had met him once or twice before in Calcutta in meetings of the Text Book Committee. Now coming close to him I found he was always in clean European clothes. Of medium stature, generally fit and strong, not dark in complexion, Padmini Babu were a broad smile on his clean shaven face; he was liberal in this outlook; free and frank in temperament and inoffensive and non-interfering in his ways. In official circles (that is to say, the Commissioner and the District

Magistrate) he as much liked; in fact he owed his "Roy bahadur" title to their favour at Chittagong; among the orthodox Hindu public and Hindu colleagues he was treated with distrust on account of his adaptability; among the critical section of the Muslim public and Muslim students he was also looked upon with distrust on account of his unpredictable behaviour in his administrative affairs. He received me with warmth and cordiality and left the English department completely to my care. The mental anguish I was suffering from the inequitable deal I had received at Calcutta was much allayed by his unfailing courtesy. In fact I took up my teaching duties (they were 17 periods a week) with renewed vigour and the cheerfulness that followed the Principal's confidence in my ability. At the end of one week when I had met the students of all my classes I felt I had roused their love, respect and enthusiasm and through God's exceptional kindness and my own unrelenting endeavours I retained these (and with increasing returns) not only during first term of $2\frac{1}{2}$ years as Vice-Principal but also during $6\frac{1}{2}$ years of my principalship later from 1944 to 1950. Besides Professors Abdus Samad & Sharafuddin (already mentioned) other prominent colleagues of mine were Abinash Saha of Physics, Satish Ganguli of Chemistry, Dhiren De of Maths. and Sashi bhusan Chakrabarty of Maths. M. M. Barua of Pali, Janardan Chakravarty of Bengali, Jogesh Chandra Sinha and kamal krishan Ghosh of English. we made up a happy little family dedicated to learning and teaching. I should add here that principal Rudra was occupying a nice, hill top bungalow quite close to the College on a monthly rent basis. It will not perhaps be irrelevant to mention that the owner of this bungalow now (in 1964) is Mr. Fazlul Quader Chowdhury, the Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan. Of my colleagues Janardan Babu impressed me most by his scholarship, integrity and independence. He and others of kindered nature were not in the good books of the principal who, in a very subtle and subdued manner, formed a group of his own admirers. The tenor of life in the College in 1938 was one of quiet; the teachers had a glum demeanour in the Staff Rooms and the students were sober and unobtrusive unlike the assertiveness of both the sectors at Rajshahi College. There the College with its residential halls was the exclusive centre of all activities. Here the majority of the students were day scholars attending from far

and near of the sprawling town and suburbs. at the end of the day's work they would disperse in all directions leaving the mighty heart of the College lying still. Most of the students represented middle class families; they were simple in their dress and unpretentious in their ways. Their conduct showed that they applied themselves diligently to their studies at home. Another remarkable dissimilarity with Rajshai was that the Chittagong public would seldom, if ever, spoke in their nose into College affairs; they had their business and trade and commerce to absorb them. Within a short time of my arrival I discovered with great pleasure the proficiency of the students in literary Bengali. True it is that their dialect was unintelligible; a whole sentence would be shortened into two nasalized words. But when they would write an essay or deliver a speech they would overwhelm you with their literary style steeped in their love of nature among the beauties of which they had their being. The children of the businessmen and Sowdagars (merchants) did not care for academic learning. Principal Rudra in these conditions had fairly smooth sailing.

I too had the most enjoyable experience in my classes. I bent all my energies to the preparation of my lectures and in the examination of my tutorial scripts. Each year we did not have less than 6 students in the English Honours classes and each year there were cent per cent success in the final University examination. The possession of a car was an additional advantage to me. Each afternoon I would go out with my family for shopping or sightseeing. at the initial stage we covered day after day the chief landmarks and waterfronts of the place. In the heart of the town there were the Court Hill, the Hospital Hill, the D. M.'s and the Commissioner's bungalow hills, the Telegraph Office hill; near the College shot up the Madrassah hill, the Percival hill, the BOC's group of hills and so on beyond there were so many other hills. I climbed up most of them with quick leaps to have a panoramic view of other hills and the sea beyond; the sea lay like a silver sheet; the hills and the valleys were all green. From the Court Hill I had an exquisitely beautiful view of the Karnafully river skirting the town on the east and the south and finally flowing down to the sea past the Double Moorings where big, seagoing vessels could be seen lying at anchor; others were

berthed at jetties loading or unloading. In between Chittagong and Pahartali shot up the Bali hill which was then the highest and which ensured the clearest view of the Bay of Bengal. It has been demolished since and I think that the price of height goes now to the Madrassah hill. The ascent to the last is steep; even my slim body with its climbing skill would tire at this feat. Between the hills and around them and up them the roads and pathways looked exactly as some of them anywhere now look from aboard an airplane. In the morning I would tramp along some of them, never knowing satiety about their charm. We would have a drive to Hathazari and surrounding regions; quite frequently we would go to Bayezid Bostami where women and children would be more attracted by the tortoises in the tank than by the tombs of the Dargah. Quite close lay the thick hill top jungles which had provided shelters to the gunmen of the Armoury Raid of 1930. All these furnished suitable camping places and camouflaging sites troops and equipment during the second phase of the Second World War., The hills in the Hathazari area have now been selected as the site of a residential University. Many hills in the town of Chittagong have been demolished after independence for residential and commercial purposes, and many outside have been allocated to works and factories, Commercial vandalism and money grabbing enterprises have destroyed the natural beauties of the Place. in those days there was only one road (and a bad one) upto the Double moorings. The present 10/11 mile long good road to the airport and the sea front din't exist then. From the double moorings I took a village road with many post and holes and uneven brickwork and drove undeterred to the sea-beach but on my way back damaged my petrol tank. In passing through the sea -side village I was reminded of such collections near the Digha Ghat of Contai, Midnapur, redolent of fish and fishy. Trade. The main shopping center in the town was Anderkilla where on a hill top stands the beautiful Jame Mosque just across the higher hospital hill. The shops and stores were big even then. From the eastern bottom the Court Hill ran the Station Road leading on to Pahartali. The Station Road was studded with shops and just off the railway station functioned the big Railway Cooperative Stores representing present day Departmental Stores. We bought all our provisions therefrom including bread and aerated water. in contrast with the dirty,

mean district town of Rajshah, Chittagong was metropolitan as well as cosmopolitan. I felt fresher and happier.

Three other organisations claimed our attention. They were the pravartak Sangha, the Quadam Mubarak 'Muslim Orphanage, the Helping Hand homes. Of these the first has a history of growth and expansion. Selfless, Hindu voluntary workers having banded themselves together formed it to run a school and its homes on the principles of the dignity of labour and on those of the mastery of a craft (weaving carpentry, iron tools, etc.). Agricultural work was another plank. Dairy and vegetable growing came in next. Simultaneously there was a modern electrically driven Oil (mustard) mill, When I visited it first soon after my arrival, I found a school functioning into class VII in mud-built houses on the pravartak hill tops to the north of Panchalaish police station. The students lived on the premises and did all their cleaning and cooking jobs. In the plains the oil mill and the craft works, the dairy, the vegetable patches, the banana plantation and rice fields flourish the milk and the vegetables and the bananas went in to the nourishment of the students and the inmates; they had however plenty of mustard oil for sale in the local and outside markets. They had a 'Ghee' section as well their ghee being collected from select places in Faridpur and Brahmanbaria. Any visitor would be deeply impressed by an institution as efficiently run by self-sacrificing patriots dedicated to the Prabartak creed and cause. When the 1943 famine threw up hundreds of waifs and orphans, the Prabartak of Chittagong was assigned the task of maintaining a Hindu Orphanage on behalf of the Government while a Muslim Orphanage was started at Lamar Bazar. During the concluding phases of the Second World War, Lord Wavell visited the Prabartak Sangha twice. In 1941 I helped the authorities in their upgrading of the school into Matric Standard and in securing the University affiliation. The older section of the staff still express their gratefulness to me although it was just a gesture of goodwill on my part. During the entire period of my life at Chittagong I used Prabartak oil and ghee on account of the uniformly good quality of these cooking media. I looked in vain for any organisation of this type among the Muslims of Bengal. Next I visited the Quadam Mubarak Orphanage started by Munirazzaman Islamabadi. It had also a programme of fruitful activity of the orphans although it was

run on a smaller scale of handicrafts only. Mr. Muniruzzaman was a respected and pious Muslim, a Congressman all through his career, free from money-grabbing concerns. He had the vision to be of some service to the orphans of the place. A look however at the work load of the orphans had a depressing effect on me because of the grinding toil to which they were subjected and of the poor clothing and nourishment provided. They had been given a uniform to put on; this looked like the uniform of convicts in prisons. Undoubtedly it was a Charity School and I was reminded of Blake's indignant shame:

Is this a holy thing to see
 In a rich and fruitful land,
 Babes reduced to misery
 Fed with cold and usurious hand?

"Helping Hand homes" the there charitable institute I visited had a different image, It was started at the initiative of a District Magistrate and it continued to be under official patronage. The European wives of the European officers played a part in running it and they did run it efficiently and with living care. It was a home of distressed women who were put to useful activities. The handloom fabric turned out here was nice in pattern and durable in material and quality. The inmates were decently clad and looked being well- fed. sometime later I bought window screen material from here; this had unfolding colour and stood prolonged use.

Another purely Muslim Organisation was being run by Khan Bahadur Fazlul Quader in the compound of his own house at Chandanpura. This was Islamia Ideal Home. About K. B. F. Quader and his service to the College I shall have more to say later.

Chittagong second well-known name is Islamabad which, in substance, is most appropriate being the habitat of Islam. The Muslims command an overwhelming majority and their culture is dominant. Most of the College students had lovely Arabic names, such as, Towheedul Anwar, Azhurul Quaiyum. In the town proper every one was business minded from the baker to the biscuit-manufacturer. Big business also was in their hands. They were the merchants and the contractors. The average

College student never ran after a job; his aspiration was to be a merchant. When I arrived in 1938 I found that the older generation of merchants did'nt have nor did they care for academic degrees. But their wealth and position did'nt turn their heads; they continued to be simple in their habits and regular in religious practices. There were Muslim M. B. private practitioners and a large number of Muslim lawyers The owners of big stores were Muslim and levelheaded too. The vendors in the fresh bazaar were tough and rude unlike those of Rājshahi. But the salesmen, managers and owners of big shops had Islamic courtesy and sweetness about them . In the countryside the peasants and landless labourers were impecunious but their ways too were Islamic. The gulf between the have's and have-not's at Chittagong is yawning but adherence to Islam levels all distinction here. The rich and the poor, the master and the servant feed together in the same table unlike the Muslims of West Bengal where there is a sort of caste distinction between the noble and the commoner. Chittagong's people are passionate lovers of their own soil. This love hinds together the Hindu, the Muslim, the Buddhist and the Christian. Communal intolerance was unknown. Life in unundivided Bengal, even in the district towns of North and East Bengal was dominated by the Hindu businessmen and the Hindu intelligentsia. Chittagong was the only exception. The average Muslim had no occasion to suffer from inferiority complex. This realisation made me happy and when my brothers would express their eagerness to have me back in Calcutta or West Bengal I would protest and say I was very happy in the general atmosphere of Chittagong which was a land of darghas (Shrines of saints) as well. Chittagong, I found, was also a land of Khan Bahadurs. Let me name here only some of them: Khan Bahadur Fazlul Quader, K. B. Jalaluddin Ahmed, KB Abdus Sattar , KB Amanat Ali, his son Barrister Anwarul Azim , KB Mina Khan Sawdagar, KB Dobash of Firingi Bazar, KB syed Maqbul Hussain, many of them receiving the title on the ground of public service, many more on account of their magnificent donations to the public cause the important point being a call from the Divisional Commissioner for such gifts. Every merchant would attend a meeting at the Commissioner's place with his Chique Book in his pocket and sign a substantial sum on invitation. The collection of a lakh or lakh and a half

in a single sitting was an easy affair. On the eve of the General Election of 1946 Sir Nazimuddin was on a fund-collecting visit (on behalf of the Muslim League) and he told me on the morrow of his arrival how he had the pleasantest surprise of his of life in securing a lakh yesterday. Within a few weeks of my arrival I became intimate with all the Khan Bahadurs just mentioned, and two others who were very wealthy but no title-holders: Messrs Rafiuddin Siddiqui & Islam Khan. The name of the former's father was Reazuddin who goes into the title of the famous market place of Chittagong "Reazuddin Bazar". Rafiuddin Siddiqui is a millionaire who was the pillar of the Muslim League at Chittagong. He was young when I arrived and would then as now address me as "Sir". His son was one of our pupils at the College. On his being called to the English bar he joined the Chittagong Courts where he is now the President of the Bar Association. Two of his sons-in-law were also my pupil. Mr. Islam Khan is a household name at Chittagong on account of his flourishing business, his simplicity, his religious fervor. He and I are life-long friends. About six months ago while on a visit to Dacca when he heard that I was ill in bed he hurried to my house and cheered me up. Similarly Mr. Anwarul Azim., M. A. (Cantab), Barrister-at-Law, who breathed his last early in the year 1965, had been another life-long friend. I first met him at Rajshahi before 1926 when I was a Lecturer in English. He was my guest for a day in the Superintendent's Quarters there while he was on tour on an electioneering campaign on behalf of his father, Khan Bahadur Amanat Ali, a successful lawyer of Chittagong. He had a History Tripos at Cambridge. I found him one of the most cultured men I have ever come across. He had an educationist's scholarship and temperament but he elected he a public leader in which capacity he never shone well. From what I have been inditing in these lines let not the impression be formed I became attached to wealthy men at Chittagong. It was a pleasure to meet them and that was all. It has been a creed with me to cultivate the acquaintance of all my neighbours, the grocer, the milkman, the water carrier, the relations of my domestic establishment. At Kazir Dewri house where I first stayed on my arrival Chittagong. I got into personal relationship with my neighbors who responded with equal degrees of affection and still they bear the same attitude. During my early morning walks in the rural areas of Chittagong

I formed friendship with many stall-holders.

I first arrived at Chittagong in the middle of the monsoon and the rainfall there was a revelation to me. It rained incessantly for 21 days as a stretch almost on a paralled level with the rainfall of 40 days and 40 nights in the Old Testament when the windows of the sky were flung open. Returning from the College one afternoon I found the floor of my bedroom soaked; I was cross with my wife and servants thinking that the deposit of water after the floor washing had been carelessly left unswept. They were bewildered. On closer exam it was found that the ground floor had gone to its utmost capacity of absorption and now there was not only a deposit of water on the floor but little stremes of moisture were moving up the walls. Chittagong's annual average of rainfall in 130 whereas that of Cox's Bazar 150. At Sylhet it is 200. The Chittagong urban terrain being undulating the natural system of drainage is equally interesting; rainwater flows down the big drains with a rush and velocity that very little accumulates to submerge the surrounding localities. Rainy season there is soft and soothing and despite occasional drenching very few fall sick. In fact the sticky months of May and October are dreadful there from the climatic standpoint. in the succeeding November and December I was spell bound by Chittagong's deep, blue skies. Days durint the winter are warm and do nto call for heave woollens. The climate is generally salubrious. During my first term of 2 F(1,2) years, and of 6F(1,2) years in the second we never had any cyclone or tornado or tidal wave to cause any devastation as these calamitous visitations of nature are doing during the last three years. Only in 1948 a destructive tornado caused widespread damage to Cox's Bazar.

During the academic session, 1938-39, Ramadan, the month long fasting of the Muslims fell in October-November. In those days educational institutions were not closed during fasting and duties went on according to normal schedule. There was something mystic about the atmosphere of Chittagong; I felt an irresistible urge for fasting and I did fast from end to end to end. Prof. Abdus Samad, my next door neighbour, fell in too but for an occasional break. Returning home in the afternoon from the day's College duties I felt as if I were a feather

floating in the breeze (the question of a strong wind didn't arise); the empty stomach didn't yield to any nap, and as the day wore on to its end all symptoms of hunger started disappearing gradually; only thirst remained after the break of the fasting. Still more difficult was the problem of the bowels not moving for 2/3 days together. Having had a poor digestive system all my life I would content myself with a toast and a bowl of tea in the small hours of the morning on the eve of the fasting hour (the feed being known among Muslims as Sehri). No educated man can be unconcerned about having no evacuation for fortyeight hours and more. In these circumstances I would have a glass of saline at three in the morning for my bowels to move. Necessarily I had to cut out my toast that morning and restrict myself to tea alone. I didn't mind thinning away in body (although I have always been irreducibly thin) to become a living soul. I was in spiritual fervour and anxious to share communion with other fasting Muslims. The last Friday of the month of Ramadan had a special significance. Congregational prayers on that Friday are known as Jumuatul Vida or Farewell prayers to the holy month. I took care to attend these in the famous Jame Mosque of Chittagong at Anderkilla and took along with me my three little sons. Some other gentlemen had done the same. When the time for the prayers came and we stood up to form rows there was howling from fasting, bearded Muslims all around to get the children expelled otherwise prayers would not be acceptable to God. The demand was vehement and preemptory and led to the removal of the children from the scene. My cup of communion was turned upside down at the brutal manner in which the job was executed. It was however, a shock which I got over in a week when I addressed myself to preparation for what I considered to be the noblest end, viz, attendance at Eid Prayers and I joined the congregation in the open space of Hards Park (the name must have been changed now) where I witnessed another shocking scene and episode. The organisers had arranged for a microphone for the use of the Imam during prayers and afterwards for the sermon. Even non-Muslims are aware of the moving resonance (when properly intoned and articulated) of the verses of the Quoran and a microphone alone can convey their sonority to a vast assembly. But there was a rumpus over the use of this scientific aid to auditory organs with the result that it was

eliminated altogether and we enjoyed the prayers and the sermon in deep contemplation. Yes, unheard melodies are sweeter still. In 1939 I offered my Eid prayers in the Qudam Mubarak mosque; near the Orphanage already described. It was a quiet place with a small gathering. In 1940 living close to parade Square (Chittagong College Playing fields) I did attend the congregation there in the fierce, humid heat of October. On this occasion the Imam's concluding Munajat extended over half an hour in addition to the time taken by the prayers and the sermon. My physical strength having been depleted already by the month long fasting (I had'nt yet, abandoned the practice) I was laid up next day with a serious attack of fever, cold and cough. Dr. Ali Ahmed the then teacher of Medicine at Chittagong Medical school found affection in my lungs and advised complete rest besides a course of drugs and mixtures. In all fairness I should add here that Eid Prayers in the Calcutta Maidan in those days were not less unsatisfactory in organisation and arrangements. On one such occasion there I found the body of a dead dog lying quite close to the place where I stood up for prayers.

In the middle of asting month in 1938, to be precise on the 10th November, kamal Ataturk, passed away, The news of his death was published at Chittagong in the local Bengali paper, Panchajanya. On the November, Since 1919 he had been a hero on the stage of international life. He it was who had unsettled at Lusanne the post-war European settlement. It was he who had driven out the Greek forces from Smyrna and secured Turkish independence. The abolition of the Turkish Caliphate and the Sultanate leading to the foundation of the Republic of Turkey stands out as his historic achievement. In educated circles all over the Muslim World he was loved and adored. On the 12th November the Muslim students of Chittagong College approached Principal Rudra for a commemoration function and closure of the institution. In a fit of indiscretion, lack of foresight and sympathy he had rejected their request. When I arrived at the College gate at about 11 a. m. for the day's work I found two to three hundred Muslim students wild with excitement and indignation; they were about to walk out. I barred their way, listened with a shock to the grim news of Ataturk's

death and also to the latest development with the principal and requested them to walk back quietly to the Assemble Hall where I assured them, a Condolence Meeting would presently be arranged; they must have misunderstood the Principal. This worked as if the Fire Brigade had successfully put out angry and spreading flames. Principal Rudra was standing in the corridor just outside his room and saw with his own eyes how an ugly situation had been averted. The College gong was sounded tellingly to summon students to an immediate meeting which began at 11-30 a. m. and continued till 2-15 p. m. It was a unique experience. Student after student rose and gave a connected account of life and achievements of Mustafa Kamal both in English & Bengali; their speeches were knowledgeable and free from sentimental or emotional gush. I was myself a bundle of emotions then and I paid a tribute to the unflappable trend of their delivery. A full holiday known as "Kamal Day" was observed on the 18th November.

The elder of the pair of noble brothers who had passed into legend and song of the freedom fight in India since 1915, Moulana Shaikat Ali, died on the 27 November. The report of his death was published on the 29th at Chittagong. The greater, though younger brother Moulana Mohammad Ali had predeceased him during the Round Table Conference in London. Two stars now disappeared from the sky of Indian political life. As a mark of honour to the memory of Mr. Shaikat Ali Chittagong College lectures were suspended at 11-20 a. m. on the 1st December. On the 2nd December the Muslim students of Chittagong held a Condolence meeting at the Muslim Hall situated then at the back of the Hospital hill in Anderkilla. In a few years this building was demolished to make room for the construction of the Jameson Maternity Hospital. The vacancy caused by his death in the Central Legislative Assembly was filled up a month after by Sir Syed Raza Ali.

In the first week of December Sir Brajendranath Seal whose birth centenary has just been celebrated in Calcutta died. He was one of the brightest luminaries in the firmament of intellectual life in India, Bengal, in particular, suffered another irreparable loss in his death. Our College was closed at 12 noon on the 5th December, 1938, to commemorate his death.

Information about the Chief Minister, Mr. A. K. Fazlul Hoq's visit Chittagong in January, 1939, was received in the 3rd week of the preceding month. A reception committee was formed in the College. On the 25th December, 1938, Mr. Altaf Hossain, while on a visit to Chittagong, gave me a look up. Whether his trip had some connexion with the Chief Minister's itinerary next month I did'nt know. Since July, 1938 (coinciding practically with my transfer to Chittagong) he had been the Director of Public Information, Bengal, that is to say, since the establishment of the publicity Department. He had been away at Dacca Intermediate College just for a year when he had been summoned back to the Secretariat. As I was about to leave for Chittagong I was given to understand that I might have to proceed to Dacca Intermediate College instead of to Chittagong. But such a move, I gathered later, was forestalled by Mr. Altaf Hossain himself. He left behind his family in the Principal's Bungalow at Dacca and arranged for the officiating appointment of Babu Chintaharan Banerjee of the same College who would'nt ask of the occupation of the family quarters in question. This arrangement continued for one session that the end of which Mr. Hussain shifted his family. This episode will be found to have some relevance as I proceed with my account. He and I were old friends whose shadows touched one another on several occasions I improvised a dinner at the shortest notice.

Mr. A. K. Fazlul Hoq's first visit as Chief Minister to Chittagong took place in the middle of January, 1939. Preparations had been going on for weeks in advance. I had a sort of new profession, that of drafting addresses of welcome, welcome to Chittagong College to Cox's Bazar, to youth organisations. It was difficult to disoblige people. Mr. Rudra in requesting me to make a draft for the College produced a file of similar addresses for my models which I politely refused to have. When I gave him one next day he said that it must go the printing press exactly as it stood without any alteration even in punctuation marks. Khan Bahadur Jalaluddin Ahmed, one of the most important public men of Chittagong, later to become Minister of Local Self-Government and Public Health, was himself a native of Cox's Bazar. He had already developed close relations with me. Naturally I had to work hard in satisfying the many points he gave me for incorporation in the draft for

Cox's Bazar, Ahmad Saghir Chowdhury (already mentioned among Islamia College students), son-in-law of Mr. Rafiuddin Siddiqui and himself a flourishing merchant now, was the leader of an influential Youth Organisation which must have a draft from my pen. This was however, not the first time that I became a professional Munshi. At Islamia and at Rajshahi College and town I had to do the same job. Later as Principal of Chittagong College the district authorities got me to assist them in presentation of addresses to the Quaid-e-Azadi, Quaid-e-Millat, Governor Firoz Khan. Noon on the 17th January, Mr. Fazlul Huq was at Chittagong College. He did'nt agree with the contention in the address that the Assembly Hall of the College was a "hut". According to him it was quite good so far as it went. He however kept mum over the Library being a "hutch". Another building has now been constructed to accommodate the Assembly Hall and the Library. On the 18th and 19th January we attended many functions and entertainments organised in his honour..

Immediately afterwards I became the protagonist a new Act in the drama (if ever a teacher living an altogether obscure life can aspire to such a thematic treatment) of my life. On the evening of the 19th January, 1939, a wire was received from the DPI, Bengal, directing me to appear before a Selection Committee on the 23rd at Writers' Building, Calcutta. I deluded myself into the belief that this call had a bearing on the Principal ship of Dacca Intermediate College, Mr. Altaf Hossain having left in July, 1938. The railway authorities had been much publicizing then the new 'overland' route from Chittagong to Calcutta (and also from Sylhet to Calcutta) over the Meghna Bridge at Bhairab Bazar and via Mymensingh, Jagannathganj-Sirajganj Ghat. Being lured by its attractions I took this route on the 21st morning. All day long I observed places and countryside about the overland journey; comma, Akhaura, Bhairab Bazar, Kishoreganj, Mymensingh, etc. If the Jerking in the train was bone-shaking, [late breaking, hugging of body with body, the luscious oranges of Chhatak available at railway stations sweetened the palate and soul. The ferry boat over the river between Jagannathganj & Sirajganj was the railway company's and therefore it might be treated as a sort of landbridge. I reached Calcutta on the 22nd morning and the Secretariat on the day following when I

discovered that I was to stand a test along with seven other venerable men and true or my continuance in the Bengal Senior Educational service. I had a substantive appointment in the Bengal Educational service but these seven gentlemen were all senior to me in that service. Only one of them was a muslim Six others being Hindus including babu Chinta Haran Banejee who name I have mentioned earlier. With his Chogha & 'Chapkan' and his beard he looked more like a member of the chorus in a Jatra party (a sort of miracle play) than a Professor of English. The Selection Board included Mr. Robertson, Chairman of the Public Service Commission. I did not mind being tested but in 1934 Mr. Altaf Hussain secured the 2nd nomination and I the third for Senior Service. He had sufficient backing to have a double promotion the question of hoaryheaded senior Hindus did not arise then. I came in directly in 1938 without any competition from Hindus or Muslims; these did not matter then. A few months afterwards Dr. Momtazuddin had a direct lift as Principal, Dacca intermediate College from a lectureship at Dacca University. Rules and regulations were unimportant in his case. He broke all precedents. A direct recruitment to Principalship was advertised (never made before and never made since) by the DPI and he got it. It was remoured that applications from other candidates eligible for direct recruitment were thrown into the wastepaper basket. It was further remoured that Mr. Fazlul Huq's son-in-law who as then S. D. O. of Munshiganj supported the son-in-law (Dr. Mumtaz) of an influential public leader of Munshiganj A little later Syed Amed Ali, author of a novel, "Twilight in Delhi" came in by direct recruitment. I returned to Chittagong at the end of the interview. On the 18th February the DPI, Dr. Jenkins Ex-Officio Chairman of the Departmental Selection Board, arrived at Chittagong. He asked me up for an interview next day. He told me when I met him that all the other seven candidates had been rejected and asked for my opinion about going to London University just for a session on study leave and taking a diploma in English Phonetics. I told him frankly I was willing provided he could give me the passage. He said "That can be arranged" and that the proposal of study leave and passage and other arrangements would be made by his office directly and communicated to me in due course. A formal copy of these proposals was received by me

on the 8th March. In addition to the Study Leave the grant of \$44/- as passage was recommended. During the next six months I made all arrangements, one by one according to formal instructions from the DPI, for proceeding to U. K. with effect from the first week of September. Having decided to leave my family behind at Chittagong I shifted to a smaller house on the 31st March in Rahmatganj in Khan Bahadur A. Sttar's premises. Applications to the High Commissioner in London to the relevant section of London University, to the Passport authorities, to the A. G. B etc. followed in order. fairly prompt replies were received from them. Only one obstacle came our way, the Finance Department (exactly as I apprehended) did not approve the sanction of passage. But Dr. Jenkins was not a man to be thwarted. He sanctioned a loan of Rs 1100/- to me from the Mohsin fund to bypass the hurdle. My passage was booked through the Chittagong office of Messrs Mackinon, Mackenzie Co on Board the liner, "Carthage", sailing in the middle of September from Bombay, The scheduled date of my relief at Chittagong College being the 3rd September. I was feted and lionised from the 23rd August to the 3rd September in a round of entertainments. On the 31st August when I was at the Chittagong Branch of the Imperial Bank of India for transferring money to London, the Accountant advised me to had up the transaction for a day or two because of the possibility of the immediate outbreak of War in Europe. On the 1st September a radio message was received about Poland being attacked from three sides and on the 3rd Great Britain declared War against Germany. Principal Raudra Having sent a wire to DPI was told not to relieve me. All arrangements were thus cancelled; the visit to England became submerged in dreams.

Meanwhile barring short but imperative pauses I had been fully occupied with my multifarious duties, lectures and tutorials, setting of questions for College Terminal Examinations, marking their scripts, the doing of invigilation duties at the University I. A. I. Sc., & B. A. B. Sc., Examinations held in February and March, and those at the College Annual Examination held in April. The Summer Vacation of the College began on the 27th April and ended on the 22nd June. Half of this recess was spent in examining 273 B. A. English scripts of Calcutta University. It should be noted here that although I was holding the

position of the Vice-Principal I was not assigned any administrative duties not even the duty of conducting examinations, neither local nor University. In other Colleges these are conducted by the Vice-Principal or by two/three senior teachers.

The world of letters suffered an irreparable loss at the end of January, 1939 by the death of W. B. Yeast, the administration of the Province of Bengal by the death in harness in February of Lord Brabourne, whose arrival at Government House, Calcutta, in 1937, I have already described. As mark of respect to his memory the College was closed on the 24th February; a condolence meeting was held on the following day.

From the month of March right up to the end of the first week of July Chittagong College became the subject of scandalous comments and whisperings. Principal Rudra's two sons, Mani Rudra and Bani Rudra had taken the I. Sc. Examination from Chittagong College. Their scripts in Physics, Chemistry & Mathematics were faultless; they would secure the topmost positions in the examination. Serious suspicions were entertained and the matter went up to the Government for investigation etc. At the Calcutta University Buildings everybody discussed the disgrace involved; at Chittagong we were button holed and jeered at. I have already stated how I had no part to play in the conduct of the examinations. Like other teachers I did invigilation duties. Only on one occasion at the end of the day's work as I peeped into the principal's Room I found that some collected scripts of the afternoon paper were being read by one of the teachers while he was sitting in his chair. This was objectionable; immediately after collection the scripts should be packed and sealed. Actually the DPI held an investigation; he had summoned from Chittagong to Writers' Buildings teachers of the subjects in which Bani & Mani had appeared and made confidential inquiries. When the results were published later the two boys had top positions. Their results at Matric Examination were just average. Principal Rudra went on 17 days' leave on continuation of the Summer Vacation and I was appointed to act in the leave vacancy. I was grieved at the loss of prestige of the Principal of a First Grade Government College. In the coming university Examinations the custody of the Question papers was transferred from the Principal to the Treasury

Officer. Withing the College the conduct of examinations henceforward was assigned to me. It will be relevant to note here that two Muslim students of outstanding merit had appeared at the I. S. Examination along with Bani & Moni. They were Md. Firdous khat and Abdul Quader Choudhury who came high in 1st Division but were nowhere near the first three places. The former secured 1st class in M. Sc. Physics and the latter in M. S. Chemistry. Firdous khat is now the Chairman of the Board of Secondary & Intermediate Examination at Dacca* while Abdul Quader is a professor of Chemistry at the University of Engineering, Dacca. Bani & Moni did not give a correspondingly successful account of themselves in their lovely career.

During the academic session 1939-40 I had a work load of 19 periods a week. Having lived a life of d continuous strain over the months, particularly since January, 1939, I felt like having a holiday during the autumn recess, October-November. I fixed up a fortnight's programme at Shillong which was easily accessible from Chittagong-a night's journey by train to Sylhet and then a half day's by bus therefrom. I booked in advance accommodation-end board in Hotel peachinids situated in the uplands of Laitum kherrah near the present Don Bosco Institute of Technology. On my arrival at Sylhet railway station in the morning I had barely time enough for toast and tea to transfer myself to the corresponding Shillong bus. Earlier in the dawn as train was moving along the Kulara-Sylhet branch line I was first small hills overgrown with tea plants and then vast sheets of water looking like an inland sea in the midst of which were set hamlets buried under bamboos and other wild vegetation. From one such bush suddenly popped out a human being to give me complete realization of the truth how we, human beings, are an indivisible part of Nature around us despite our conceit and ego of being an image of God & possessing divine powers. Proceeding along the plains on this side of Sylhet and the other I had a clear conception of what Surma Valley is like. From the Sylhet Railway station which is situated on this side of the Surma River one has to cross the grand keane bridge to get to the Bunder Bazar, the central market place of the town. I found the main road in the town riddled with potholes and the houses on it small and uninviting. At the town bus

*He has since risen to the position of the DPI, East Pakistan.

station there had been a tedious wait before it started. Within the town the bus passed in zigzag course through human habitations and the through the bushy jungles of Sibganj Mahalla to emerge it to the south of a beautiful colony of buildings on hilltops and also in the plains. I could take the south facing two-storied main bulding on considerable eminence in a single view and on eager inquiry I was told that tese were the M. C. College buildings and campus., The bus sped by. there was not then the remotest idea in the remotest corner of my mind that eleven years hence (i. e. in 1950) I would have to take over charge of this College as Principal. The trip to Shillong covered 36 miles on the plains and 52 on the hills. The road on the plains was maintained in excellent condition; it was very alluring for a drive in one's won car. Jarul trees frame it to a view of the distant khasi and jaintia Hills. As one traverses. say 25 to 30 miles one sees silver streams trickling down the hill-sides and after another six miles one is inthe Dowki Bazar at the foot of the hills. Dowki Bazar is now in India demarcated from Tamabil. the border of Pakistan, by a few bamboos of partition. Now one has to go through the barriers of custom had travel documents and to change transport. But in 1939 I went straingt up unimpeded by any restriction. Going up form Dowki Bazar as one covers a small hill section one sees one of the most picturesque scenes. one can ever see, a columnless single span of a bridge over the Dowki river the bridge links up two steep hills on the two sides of the river the seetest stream that ever flows over visible stones, pebbles and boulders and between two awesome sentinels of rocks. Crossing the bridge as the bus goes up it has to take dangerous bends through granite rocks flanked by betelnut plantations of the lower parts and wile vegetation in the upper. I was sitting by the driver who was negotiating the perilous bends with utmost skill a moment's carelessness would lead to wholesale disaster. Even so the drive had a challenging effect on a motorist. I unlike the Darjeeling Hill Cart Toad this one was vey narrow permitting one way traffic at a time. The cars and other forms of transport from Dowki and from Shillong ends had a meeting point on the uplands of Paniursula idway betwen them, where there was sufficient space for parking and crossing. In fact Paniursula stands on a vast tableland wherefrom one way traffic control is operated. The place is treeless; a coal-field a little distance away from the Paniursula

transport station has been struck and is being exploited in recent times. Here early in November heaps of oranges (sweet) are available on incredibly cheap prices. They are carried up by the Khasis from lower levels and the planes. I found a nice looking restaurant at Paniursula. But when I tasted a bit of food I found it abominable, and the concoction sold for tea turned the stomach. I noticed a remarkable feature about the movements of the hill people who would walk up and down invariably along the edge of the road and never on any part of the road itself a comforting contrast to jay-walking in our crowded towns. All over the uplands wheat and rice crops were seen growing in abundance. Beyond Paniursula lay sections of the road which by their narrow layout on considerable height and naked and unprotected sides looked extremely dangerous and frightful. One such section is called The Devil's Neck. May the devil's neck be seized relentlessly by St. Juliana to yield up its wicked designs. The long fifty-two mile drive up and down without the magic of the Ghoom-Darjeeling scene has a monotony that makes you drowsy. By noon we were approaching the Shillong area where suburban buildings and structures looked drab slightly redeemed by marigold plantations about. I didn't hide their turrets and roofs. Getting into the town I saw goodwens of grain, cereal, hay and husks on both sides of the road ugly in sight, offensive in smell. When we reached Burraybazar locality the position improved slightly with small variety shops and photo print stalls about. We then went down to the bottom of Police Bazar where the Bus Station lay. It was past one o'clock then but the availability of god taxis just for the asking (and unlike such facilities at Darjeeling) proved very pleasant. I had one for 75 paise only to the Peachlands at the top end of Shillong town and I got there exactly at 1:20 P.M. to receive a cheering welcome from the landlady, Mrs. Ruby Cloy, who said that they had just finished their lunch but mine was ready. The altitude of the central part of Shillong is around 5000 ft; of "Peachlands" (or Laitumkhera) a few hundred feet more, Shillong is just pleasantly cool. Even Kurseong on about the same height is cold and there occasionally one had a keen wind cutting into the bone. At noon when the sun is up Shillong is almost hot; you do have a little perspiration but the moment you sit under a pinegrove shade you are refreshed; then only you became fully aware of the fact that you are in the Kingdom of

pinetrees with the cones lying about your feet. A whole nation of pinetrees gives you their lovely company.

"Peachlands" was a small residential hotel for a dozen people with a Tennis Hard Court attached. It was quiet, decent and clean. Linen & hangings were changed twice a week. Four plentiful, well cooked meals were provided for an overall weekly charge of Rs. 50/- only inconceivably cheap in relation to what I had to pay in another hotel in 1950. Mrs Ruby Cloy the proprietress, was an old lady, a devout Roman Catholic who was up at 4-30 A. M. attended morning prayers at 6 and kept herself busy all day long in personally supervising all details including cooking. At lunch we had rice, "dhal" and "kashundi" chutney as well. The last was her own preparation. The afternoon cake was also of her own making and there was no objection to 2nd or 3rd helping. She would give us her own company at breakfast, lunch & dinner. She had her worries to; one or two daughters with their children had to be helped with cash and kind. But her constant anxiety proceeded from her husband who was more or less a drone; she could ignore his parasitic life but not his indifference to her. She was as devoted to him as he was apathetic. She found a sympathetic listener in me and took me into confidence to say that she stood his occasional drinks and weekly racing. Mrs. Cloy looked old but her hubby, thought past middle age, was strong and fit. He would not join company at breakfast. At other principal meals he would just taste some important items and push them away to indicate that they were not worth eating. This caused her agony. It was however, a part of his strategy to get cash out of her to satisfy his hobbies. He told me he was an Engineer who had been in service in West Bengal and particularly the Digha Ghat DAK BUNGALOW, was his own work (I have already touched upon that place). I carried my Tennis racket and shoes with me so that I had a game or two in the afternoon for which we had to pay extra. On arrival I became friendly with a couple, Mr. & Mrs. Edwards who were up at Shillong from Jamalpur (Ry. Headquarters in Munghyr, Bihar mentioned in my opening chapter), the reason of their preference for this remote corner being that Dehra Dun or Nainital, nearer home, would be full of old acquaintances including bosses, who would talk shop and not permit an atmosphere of "Away from it All". They were an elderly pair having children receiving

education if U. K. We three would spend the long hours between breakfast and lunch in roaming carefree over places we loved to see. We got down to the famous hydro-electric plant of Shillong located at the bottom of two steep hills. Mr. Edwards was a hardhitting tennisist who would laugh at my weak wrist for a corresponding delivery. At the end of the first week Peachlands had another boarder who happened to be one of my old friends. He was Mr. Birendra Binode Roy, an Assistant Editor of The statesman - a year's senior contemporary to me at Presidency College, Calcutta. He had a double first in English (honours & M. A.); did teaching for a short time to switch on permanently to journalism. His advent was an unexpected stroke of good luck, and he and I would have long evening walks in course of which we would intone old popular Bengali songs in solitary moonlily areas. Twice we visited the Burra Bazaar Marketing Place where prize-winning English vegetables, fish, meat textile material and many other varieties of commodities were available in abundance on the two HAT days of a week. The vendors were all khasi women, old and young, who would enjoy a joke from customers. Birendra was a lifelong bachelor and away from my College there was no inhibition of me to be a little gallant. So we went flirting about and making odd purchases. The khasi women had all very decent clothing skirt and flowing upper garments with their pretty faces exposed. But alas! Birendra Binode is no more. He was cut short in the prime of his life. Exhibitionism which is so much in mode now was unknown to the khasi girls. They looked very clean as well. Their men in the bazaar Place appeared to be drones but they too had clean trousers and coats on. One automatically recalls the Nepalese men and women of Darjeeling & Kalimpong a race of impecunious and ill clad people repulsive to sight and sense. In 1939 the Khaisis however looked being about poverty although the Bengali Hindus were ruling the roost in Shillong then; these had whole localities for comfortable living. But the khaisis were up and coming too. they had doctors, lawyers technicians among them and were utilizing the benefits of missionary educational institutions of the place. It must be acknowledged freely how the progress of the people of Shillong, their culture and training are indissolubly linked up with these educational centres from the lowest to the Degree stage. After independence the Assamese as a whole,

including the people of Khasi and jaintia Hills have been asserting their rights and privileges in a militant fashion. The expulsion of Bengali Hindus is a logical corollary of regionalism. In course of my stay at Peachlands I joined small groups of tourists to go out in taxis and have a look at popular spots the Peak of Shillong was one such and the Water Falls others. The peak has the highest height ; even so it is less than 6,000 ft!; my emotions were not stirred when I went up there. Of the water falls the two names I remember are those of the Crinoline (corresponding to one vast side of the hooped petticoat of Addison's times) and the Elephants. We did plan an outing to Cherrapunji which is a good few miles off from Shillong along the abandoned old road to Sylhet below and which has the highest record of rainfall in the world. We had 'nt gone far out when our transport had a breakdown and we had to walk back to the centre of the town. The lake (of Shillong) is situated in the heart of the town behind the Legislature and secretariat Buildings and within hailing distance of the Government House. It is quite nice but to people who have been other lakes in other places, it is just a common sight. A few years ago, halfway between 1964 and 1967, a valuable ring or a piece of jewellery had been dropped there by a member of the Governor's family, which caused an excitement in Assam and in the Indian Union. The loss being inconsolable, the lake was drained dry; hundreds of fish were vivisected but to no purpose.

At the time of my first visit an Islamic Organisation (the accurate name escapes me) had a vital existence in the centre of the town Besides having an Institute of culture this organisation was running a Rest House for Muslim Visitors having provision for accommodation and food Mr. Faiz Noor, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Ali Ahmad, Executive Engineer, C & W Deptt. and Khan Bahadur Aatur Rahman, ADP ME of Assam were some of the prominent patrons of the place. I met them during my visit and found them exceedingly nice. The first named was very fair, hoary headed, sober and sweet; the second though past middle age was strong and gravelly; the third warm and enthusiastic. The first two as far as I remember, were up-country Muslims who had settled down in Shillong; the third was a native of the manner born, who began his career as an educationist at Rajshahi College as Lecturer in English and naturally he embraced me in high

spirits. Our sturdy old friend, Mizanur Rahman, lover of Iqbal and Nazrul Islam, in particular, who was a distinguished S D O of Feni (noakhali) then was up at shillong too. I suppose he was stopping at the Rest House. He brought me closer to there gentleman just mentioned. I have a shrewd feeling (but I may be entirely wrong) that the present Finance Minister of Assam, Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad, is a relation of Mr. Ali Ahmad I met. Sir Saadullah, the Chief Minister was present at Shillong. One of these friends proposed a visit but I declined. I shy away from a man when he is in power because of his loss of human touch in that situation. I knew Sir Saadullah closely in 1920-21 when I was living at No. 2 Mirzapur Street, Calcutta, which was then a university Law College Mess. He had just made up his mind to join the Calcutta High Court as an Advocate. At the initial stage of his practice at Calcutta he lived just like as student in our Mess and then we found him sweet and sober His intimacy with my deceased friend Mr. Abdul Bari, M. A. B. L. (noticed earlier) was greater than with me. Mizanur Rahman had brought up another colleague from other plains, Mr. Hamid Ali, I. C. S. then District Magistrate of Noakhali. Mr. Hamid Ali later became Finance Secretary, Chief Secretary, Officiating Governor in East Pakistan. Mizan's literary enthusiasm followed over the hills of Shillong. Through the cooperation of Mr. Aaur Rahman and others a meeting on War & Peace was organised at the end of October in the Assam Club, in which Mizan read a long paper with Mr. Hamid Ali in the chair I had also to make a short speech in course of which I glanced at the terrific personality of Herr Hitler and the devoted service he was receiving from some of his colleagues. on the eve of the meeting we experienced incessant rain for 24 hours when we were completely confined indoors and weather conditions became bleak. But although Shillong was close to Cherapunji, the total amount of annual rainfall there in just around 100."

My two week holiday at this hill station proved quite enjoyable and I returned refreshed to my work at Chittagong. But I had to face anxiety at home; my wife was ill the redeeming feature being the medical assistance we received from Dr. Miss Paul who was a sort of institution at Chittagong on account of the dedicated spirit in which she did her professional duties among the women of the place. Undoubtedly she was

attached to the Women's Ward at Chittagong Hospital but in her spare time she served the public on moderate charges and considerable self sacrifice.

Under her treatment my wife improved slowly and steadily and Miss Paul advised a change. In the middle of December when the Test Examination of Intermediate students was over and the tempo of other duties permitted some slackening principal Rudra conceded a week's leave to be prefixed to the Christmas recess so that I proceeded with my family to Cox's Bazar for a two-week stay. My friend, Khan Bahadur Jalaluddin Ahmed proved very helpful in this respect. His brother, Mr. Kabiruddin Ahmed Choudhury, a leading lawyer of Cox's Bazar fixed up a place for us near the sea beach and provided all other comforts. On our arrival at the place in the evening we were spared cooking for dinner which was kept ready for us Mr. Choudhury. It included among other items pomfret fry and curry, delicacies which we had never tasted before. Another source of help was the family of a very clever and competent student of our College, Md. Abdul Halim, who later secured high Second Class Honours in English. We left Chittagong at 7-30 A. M. On the 17th December on our 1st sea voyage or rather a coastal one. just for while say for less than one hour, we were far off the coast; otherwise we sailed through what looked long in advance. In those days there were no other means of communication. On the trip back it became a cargo-boat of PAN (betel nut leaf) leaving very little space for passengers who were huddled together between stacks of bundles of this leaf grown in abundance in Cox's Bazar. At Present people can fly or use excellent road transport from Chittagong. Even airconditioned micro-buses are available for a direct journey and the distance is less than 100 miles by road; it is the old Arakan Road suitably developed. Our steamer-journey was tiring; it had no catering arrangements; it took seven hours or more to get off from the boat. On the coast no mooring was possible. Therefore at the mouth of a creek encircling Cox's Bazar on two sides the passengers have to go down the steep ladder to board available Shampans or flat bottomed, flimsy Chittagong boats and cover 2 or 3 miles over the creek to get to Cox's Bazar Ghat. The creek trip was smooth but getting down to the Shampans which were heaving up and down in the waves of the sea were a problem; at

any rate it caused fright to me although my people were laughing, stupidly and thoughtlessly in my estimation. We had to disembark at quarter past for in the afternoon and we reached Cox's Bazar Ghat shortly after sundown. In travelling to Cox's Bazar we had to pass by kutubdia & Maheshkhali islands. There is a light-house tower at kutubdia; there are hills on maheshkhali which had rich, prosperous Hindu Zamindars then; their calcutta friends would have a spree there. The Qutubdia island had been partially submerged by the fury of recent tidal waves which caused a havoc to men and crops.

Cox's Bazar is a Sub-Divisional town. It will be more correct to call the central place a cirtyu little village with winding lanes. That area of it which contains the Cort Buildings and leacs on to the sea beach is spacious and picturesque. The Arakan Hill range spreads along the Whole length of the bay to the east and contains a number of temples on the bill tops which may vary in height from 1000 ft. to 2000 ft. having prickly jungles and which shelter many wild elephants to carry on ~~depredations~~ on the rice fields below betel-leaf plantations about; they constitute the wealth of the place. In the upland jungles the Shikari does have games of wild fowls. Or student Abdul Halim who had accompanied us to Cox's Bazar took us a long way on the road to Ramu; he would branch into hilly jungles and shoot some of these fowls good to eat. From the Court Buildings as we walked towards the sea we saw a cluster of cottages one of which we occupied. They were bamboo and timber structures with corrugated sheet roofs and were comfortable more or less. These were rented out to holiday makers from the mainland. I am told a splendid Rest House having modern comforts and full ctering arrangements had been built in this area now. As we got to the sea we saw a vast sheet of tame water with no rolling breakers. The coast in endless; one can walk down to Teknaf to the border of Akyab. Big boats ply along it. The bay is generally shallow here as it is by the side of Chittagong but it becomes furious during the monsoon. The puri beach was properly looked after but her we it was otherwise. Prickly shrubs and brush wood dot the shore. One of the sandfiles lodged itself on the back of one of my ears and caused intensee pain which abated only when the pernicious little vermin had been extracted. Although the sea here is shallow I could'nt wade sufficiently long in warer to have a good dip,

I have been so timid. My wife was far more plucky; she would wade far into the water and enjoy her dip while her recklessness, as it appeared to me, would cause secret anxiety to her loving but timorous mate. On occasions I would create a ludicrous situation by carrying a lota or water-mug with me for filling and for pouring the contents on my head. The natives of the place including the intelligentsia would seldom, if ever, pay a visit to the beach. They would raise their eyebrows at the holiday makers and wonder why they should undergo the trouble and expense of a trip from Chittagong. Every morning I would go to the market place in the village to buy fish, fowl and other daily necessities. The supply of sea fish there was limited in quantity. It was more or less confined to three varieties promfret, "dantoonia" (or a species having prominent teeth), and 'lottyia' (soft, jelly-like fishy substance), Here as well as at Chittagong town the natives would use dried fish rather than fresh ones. Around the bazar we saw colonies or sourns of 'Maug's' natives of Arakan having primitive ways of living. Their men were dirty drones, the women poor and ill clad but busy with handicrafts and looms for weaving silk lungeis which many visitors would buy for attractive wear. Some of the men 'Mauge' turned out to be good cooks.

During our stay we met to friends in particular. One was Mr. Salimullas (he adds 'Fahmi' to his name now), Deputy Magistrate, stationed there, Since then he went up gradually to the top-mot rung of the official ladder by being the Secretary of a Department of the Central Government of Pakistan. Now he is the Chairman of the autonomous agricultural Development Corporation at Dacca. A very interesting name; Urdu & Persian poet, one who takes a prominent part in 'Moshaira' parties (verse-reciting), warm, genial, garrulous, almost frivolous but there is a bonhomie in him which wins him numerous friends. He hailed from Tollyganj, Calcutta the particular house (he is owner of a number of houses) in which he is living now bears the name of Tollyganj House; his letter-head has the same monogram. The other was Mr. Gholam ghaus, posted then at Cox's Bazar as Sub-divisional Forest Officer-a distinguished former Science student of Islamia & Presidency Colleges at Calcutta. at the time he scintillated smartness. He rose to be the Conservator of Forests in East Pakistan. A year and a half ago I met him at Chowringhee, Calcutta, and also at the Residential permit

Offices at the South of the Dillenborough Race Courses. He told me, "I am now in Liberia, sir and I am a very rich man; I am going back to the place after a holiday via London and Spain (or may be Portugal, I don't exactly remember). Gholam Ghaus was very affectionate to his teachers. During our stay at Cox's bazar he would frequently entertain us at dinner and also bring us from his tours consignments of fish and fowl His bungalow stood right on the beach, its porch opening on shallow seas, but he would assure me that they would be 'perilous' during the monsoon.

Two of my Chittagong friends were there simultaneously, Professor Mohim Barua and Mr. Fazlur Rahman, Inspector of Schools, Chittagong Division. Both were unique in their own ways. The former's illiterate wife and a grown-up daughter receiving English education were living in London in his own house and he would soon join them on leave preparatory to retirement. He thought that during the war England would be safer to live in than India or any eastern country. Such ideas and sentiments used to create laughter in the Staff Room at Chittagong College but he did stick to his convictions and instead of bringing back his family joined it in London by undertaking a long, circuitous, risky voyage. At Cox's Bazar when he would meet me he would cut many jokes about Principal's Rudra's sons. Mr. Fazlur Rahman was tall, looked fit and strong; he had an arresting personality. At Chittagong his invariable companion was a big pup on leash. He claimed to be M. A. (Calcutta) B Sc., London School of Economics, a Rhodes Scholar in the USA. for all I knew he was of Calcutta, born and bred but had married Mr. Shafi Dawood's daughter of Bihar. He was urdu-speaking. He began his career as a Sub-Divisional Inspector of Schools, rose to be ADPI for Muslim education before the partition, ADPI general after the Partition and thereafter the DPI of east Pakistan but he died in harness in 1951 or sometime later from angina pectoris (an ailment from which he had long been suffering but which he concealed even from me intimate friend of his). In everything he did there was a characteristic flavor either of secrecy or frankness, of shouting or cooing, of laughter or cringing an extremely cautious and paucilious gentleman whose scholarship was questioned by many in the Directorate. He was childless but would never admit that the girl in his company and family

was an adopted one. At Cox's Bazar he was living with his wife in the Inspection Bungalow his wife would always wear Burque' (Islamic overall & veil) while out on walk by the sea; at home she would observe the strictest Purdah. We travelled back to Chittagong on the 1st January, 1940, by the same boat. At lunch time I found him reckless; he staggered and fell down the stairs from the Upper Deck and wounded himself in many parts of the body. Earlier our young friend, Abdul Halim, had taken us out on Shampan trips over the surrounding creeks which looked like still silver sheets of water (but of the tides) in picturesque settings. He carried his gurn with him for shooting and other aquatic games. On the eve of our return he organised a big dinner party in his family house near the Cox's Bazar landing ghat. My wife for whose health the outing had been primarily undertaken made a remarkable rally. The climate of the place, however, did not suit me and some of the little ones; it was damp and malarious.

Back at Chittagong on the 1st January 1940 I had a year of unrelenting activity ahead of me. The first four months I spent at Satter Manzil, Rahmtganj and I then shifted to a bigger house at the south east end of Parade Square (or College Playing field). In February Ray Bahadur Rudra went on leave again so that I had to run the University Examination of the season. I had sturdy, loyal, ungrudging help and service from Professor Harauddin in conducting them. I had to represent Chittagong College at the Calcutta University Convocation held early in March in the University Science College campus at Upper Circular Road, Calcutta. My going abroad having been cancelled by the outbreak of the War I paid back the sum of Rs. 1100/- lent to me from the Mohsin Fund. Before I proceed further I should like to give short account of my relations with Khan Bahadur Abdur Satter and his family. In his compound he had not only his big two-storied residential building but two smaller two storied family quarters (one on either side of the gate to the premises) which he rented out on moderate charge. Since 1st April, 1939 I had been occupying the south facing cottage on the right side of the gate, and the corresponding one (north-facing, on the left) were under the occupation of Mr. Enayet Pir, Munsiff then, but now District & Sessions Judge of Faridpur. On the south of his own building there was a range of garages while on the north another set of two one

storied family quarters existed. Past middle age, the khan Bahadur was in stooping gait. As Public Prosecutor he had earned a fortune during the conduct of the Chittagong Armoury Raid cases in particular. He owned vast landed property in and around his own village in the interior. His stooping gait was no barrier to his quick movements; in fact he would move up to the first floor of his house by the spiral staircase rather than by the roader and easier to climb one. It caused only one difficulty and that was in the posturing a Muslim has to make in saying his prayers. He would say his prayers mostly in the Jam-i-Mosque to which he would have a seat carried for his sitting posture and another support for his bowing down partially. His eyes had a penetrating shine about them; his argumentative power was shrewd and clear. His religious ardour at the time I met his was almost fanatical. He said it was his mission to convert the westernised Muslim Youth into religious practice. All the same time he ran a small private bank of his advance of credit to private parties on hypothecation of jewellery and property. Mrs. Sattar her unmarried daughter, Anwara & Jamalus Sattar their youngest son brought my family into intimate relationship with theirs Jamal was one of our pupils. He is now a succesful business man and an MPA. On the north of Satter Manzil stood on high grounds the imposing building (of bungalow pattern) of the late Mr. J. M. Sengupta, an All -engal political leader next in importance to Mr. C. R. Das. His wife, Mrs. Nellie Sengupta, was living in a smaller house in the vicinity and had rented the main building out to Capt. (now Major or perhaps higher) AFM Mohsin Ali, Deputy Magistrate, every interesting figure of the time. In dress and manners in habits and standard of life he would outdo an Englishman. He had done work in connexion with recruitment to Defence Services which brought him military rank. During the period under review he would throw Cocktail parties in his house. But unluckily for him the then District Magistrate., Mr. Walker (during my time at the Secretary) had no appreciation for his many talents. Mr. Mohsin Ali retired long ago into less then 122 years form now. But still he is going strong at Dacca, still playing his golf, till smoking his pipe, still hobnobbing with people in the Government House. A little distance away to the south of Satter Manzil stood the Jatra Mohon Sen Hall; jatra Mohon being the father of "Deshapriya", which was the venue of all

political meeting and some literary and cultural gatherings. Around the Hall was a colony of Hindu lawyers, doctors and officials who should provide material for sociological studies of the period. From this area you have to go up north to the foot of the two little hills, one of which now holds the bungalow of Mr. F. Q. Choudhury, the other that of the Executive Engineer, C & B Department and then down to the Chittagong College campus, altogether less than a mile from Rahmatganj. Before you get to the College gate, you see an exquisite little white building of a mosque on the left halfway up the Madrassah hill and on the right Kazem Ali H. E. School buildings along the road level. At the righthand corner of the College compus begins a small lane sloping down first and then rising up to a levelled eminence where stand the buildings of Khan Bahadur Syed Moqbul Hussain a distinguished lawyer politician of those days. He was a eloquent advocate and a legislative colleague of Sir Abdur Rahim. He had a red-brick, two-storied house built at considerable expense just beyond the southern boundary of the College. He and I would meet frequently during early morning walks when I used to find him unsparing in his criticism of Principal Rada. By his son's marriage with Khan Bahadur Abdus Satter's daughter he should have belonged to a common clan but I have an impression that he maintained a sort of diplomatic non-alignment.

Let us move on along the College Road towards the wali Khan Mosque. The moment you cross the northern boundary of the College you find the Parade Square which includes sufficient space not only for two full size football fields but also plenty of additional grounds for exploitation for other purposes such as holiday fairs, congregational prayers, display of fire-works, encampment of troops and trucks, etc. On the northern ribbon of Parade square stood a number of Bungalows., the chief being Brojo Mohon kutir and the Anchorage. these two provided my residence, one after the other, during the period from February 1944 to August 1950. The owner of the Anchorage was Mr. J. K. Ghosal, Barrister at Law and also Government Pleader for years. In 1939 I formed lifelong friendship with him. His family belonged to Dacca but his father was a prosperous business man of Chittagong having settled down there permanently. Mr. Ghosal was brought up at Chittagong and on being called to the bar at one of the Inns of Court in U. K. he joined

the Chittagong Bar where he continued till a short while before his death which occurred in Calcutta. He was one of the most cultured men I have ever come across. Of middle height height, fair complexion, aquiline nose, strong-built physique Mr. Ghosal would cut a figure in any society. As a conversationalist, he was charming; as a friend loyal and steadfast, as a lawyer eminent, as an individual in private life that was unique in keeping to his own values and planned habits. Shortly after his return from England while he was still very young his life had died leaving behind just two daughters but Mr. Ghosal remained a life long widower. Such an example of restraint and fidelity to love is rare among the Muslims. At the south-eastern corner of Parade Square just beyond the road corner his father's original house was situated. It had been in a dilapidated condition. Ghosal had it rebuilt and renovated and gave it a Historic name "Step Aside" recalling the house at Darjeeling where C. R. Das had died. He had practical skill and constructive capacity. He had the knack of getting houses built economically but making them decent and comfortable. The main structure of "Step Aside" he didn't demolish but had an upper story of two well-lighted and well-ventilated, rooms added with an space in between. In the ground floor he had a wing made to consist of a dining room and a kitchen. The main building had a long verandah in front along the road, but shut off by a high screen wall and another high verandah inside. These two added to the amenities of the house. There was an attached garage. I liked the place; it was contiguous to me College which was an additional advantage. I got Mr. Ghosal to rent it out to me and I shifted to this house from Satter Manzil at the end of April, 1940.

Here at this house I spent all my leisure in term time and during vacation in private studies outside College syllabi, the most absorbing being those in English phonetics. Devotedly, painstakingly I went from cover to cover through Daniel Jones' Principles of English Phonetics. After initial plodding and strain I discovered how Jones had reduced to scientific precision the use of the vocal organs in pronouncing the English vowels, diphthongs, the consonants, the phonemes with picture illustrations of the lip and tongue positions in all cases. I learnt the international phonetic script and practised all the exercises given in converting plain English text into phonetic symbols and script with

accurate accentuation marks. The charts of chief sounds of Consonants with their sub-divisions in plosive, lateral, rolled, fricative etc. under velar and alveolar, palatal and glottal etc. and those of vowels under front, central, back against close, half-close, open, half-open etc. were a revelation; the sound symbols uncommon to English pronunciation proved difficult to acquire and practise. But I passed on with pleasure to the rhythmic intonation of sentences illustrated in musical notations. When I felt the strain of this bob I turned to "Riceyman steps", the delightful world of Violet & Henrym, Elsie & Joe, Dr. Raste and Percy's Hotel. I don't know why but Bennett's Riceyman steps proved more enjoyable to me than the Clayhanger for Anna of the five towns. When this novel sated me. I turned for serious stuff, to **Ends and Means**. The 'phony' war of 1939 was now entering upon "genuine" phases; war preparations in India were afoot; the war supply organisation was reorganised; a new organisation of the production of munitions under Sir Guthrie Russell was set up. Shipbuilding potentialities were being assessed; those for the air called for the subsidising of a number of pupils for air training. The Governor of Bengal gave indication of the formation of another battalion of territorial infantry and of contingents of civic guards. The importance of National Defence loans and savings, of raising funds for war purposes and war charities was stressed. At Chitagon the Divisional Commissioner held a War Conference. Training in Air Raid precautions began. Roosevelt sounded a warning in these words:

Foreign propagandists, whether conscientious disorganisers or unwilling dupes, seem to believe that if they tell us often enough that democracy is worn out and that we are decadent, we will begin to believe it ourselves and immediately and obediently proceed to decay". The Axis now gave a look of reinforced concrete. In these circumstances Churchill's warnings collected in the volume "Step by Step" had a compelling interest for me. Japan as an Axis power drew me on to a close and careful study of Gunther's "Inside Asia" which I read from cover to cover. What a compendious volume of information about China & Japan, India & Persia in particular. On his observations on Japan I have the following bits of notes before me.:

The country is 55% industrial, 45% agricultural; prices are very low

..... Its war expenses are \$ 9,00,000/- a day The army is the Staten in Japan. The Japanese Premier gets \$ 541-10s a year A University professor gets 175 to 280 yens per month. Tokyo has spaciousness, modernity, dignity neon lights The Japanese girls don't bright kimonos and flash colourfully through the great gardens Food is simple but ample Everything is spot-lessly clean.

Of persia Considered vertically it is a crust of rock., like was sealing a bottle of paste on top of some of the richest oil deposits in the world; Gungher says 15 million living on a plateau, hree times as big as France Teheran most beautiful Reza Shah became king in 1925 he had enlisted in the Cossack Division lifted himself into history by his own boot-straps. North - Russian influence; South British The Shah works enormously hard, makes his Cabinet work day and night. He is the largest landowner he never entertains; owns hotels has courage, vitality and vision brought the breath of new life to a decaying country a patriot completely unselfish Reas Shah's chief d'oeuvre is the railway, 1000 miles from the North east to south West, Caspian to Persian Gulf, its cost being \$ 30,000,000/- from Bandar Shah to Bandar Shahpur

Of Gandhi the following sentence occurs in my note book: His colossal spiritual integrity on the one hand; his earthly command of politics on the other this is the Gandhi gambit". But I agso remember having read "Mr. Gandhi is your father, a saint and a Tammany Hall leader all rolled into one".

Sitting in the comfortable Vrandah of "Step Aside" with books and newspapers around I spent the hot months of 1940 reading with awe, excitement and personal agony the furios careering of Hitler's terrifo chariot over the lands of Europe in unison with the stupendous armaments of Russia grabbing those coming within her sphere. The only ray of hope was provided by the coming into power of Churchill. But even this was put out by the capture of Paris. Nevertheless the evacuation of The British Expeditionary Force From Dunkirk under Churchill's historic leadership was an extraordinary feat. Autuman and

the first two months of winter, however spelled the greatest disaster to England by the German air raids and the use of incendiary bombs. When the wave upon wave of aerial attacks laid London low in October I shuddered within to contemplate what my own fate would have been if my visit had materialised the year before ; my gratitude to God that I was spared the holocaust of Hitler, the maniac, was immeasurable.

During the period under review we had a visit by Mr. Satis Ghosh, then Inspector of Colleges, Calcutta University. But the Associate Inspector this time was Dr. Radhakrishna himself. He gave us an illuminating discourse on the system of University Education and pointed out the atrocity that was being 'perpetrated' (I am using his very words) on the 'Youth' of the nation 'fresh from the mint of nature' and son on. In my speech of thanks I referred to the 'golden vice of Apollo' which had a potent influence in shaping into harmony the discordant elements of University Education holding as he did the 'key' position not only in Calcutta University but also at Benares (where he was also then the pro Vice-Chancellor) and I demurred to the 'atrocity' he had mentioned. But I confessed that my voice was only that of Neptune. He knew me at Rajshahi, at Islamia College, Calcutta, and appeared to take my criticism in sportsman like spirit. Besides I had the good luck of giving him and my friend, Satish Ghosh, a lift to the College and thence to the pravartak Sangha. We had another couple of visitors from Bombay in Dr. Fauzdar and Mr. Shiredn Fauzdar who were of the BAHAI faith. They gave an exposition of the 'sweetness' of the Bahai faith and were frankly and avowedly propagandists in their presentation. This happened just when I was free from an attack of fever and bronchitis at the end of Ramadan in 1940 and after an exposure to terrific heat and humidity in the Eid prayers at Parade Square. In my speech of thanks to the two pleasant visitors I was reminiscent of my recent religious zeal and its aftermath; also of the graph of the behaviour of Islam and Hinduism in Bengal and expressed the desire of being spared from the complication factors of another religion.

Earlier there had been some notable changes in the teaching staff. Mr. A. W. Mahmood (the famous BACHCHOO MIAN of dacca & Chittagong) having taken his B. Litt from Oxford joined as professor

of History. He chummed with Mr. Abdus Samad Professor of History. He chummed with Mr. Abdus Samad, Professor of Economics. The latter looked being a perennial bachelor but he broke away from that creed only late in life. Mr. Jonardan Chakravarty, Lecturer in Bengali having been transferred to Presidency College, Calcutta, Mr. Mansoorudein took his place. Mr. Habibur Rahman was recruited as Lecturer in Economics and A. F. M. Muzaffar Ahmad in English. Mr. Ali Imam took over as professor of Physics. Mr. Mahmood, No. 1, in this list, was A1 in everything in learning as well as in sport in serious pursuit as well as in society. He was young and radiant, unorthodox and romantic. On his way to U. K. he met a Hindu lady and lost no time in marrying her. On his return he quarrelled with her with commensurate speed. In Tennis and football he was an unfailing winner; in cards (so I was told) his skill was superb so that his lites in pursuit of this hobby at Chittagong Institute brought him an enormous booty. His morning hours were not his but he would run to his 10-30- class in time; it did'nt matter that on occasions his breakfast had to follow him. To know him was to love him. My habits being radically different he could'nt realise at least then that I had nothing but warmth for him. It is quite likely that some mischievous person had instilled into his mind an element of prejudice against me. No. 2. Moammad mansooruddin, was one of my pupils and also an inmate of my hostel at Rajshahi during my first term ended on 30th June, 1926. For years he had been a School teacher before his present appointment as lecturer in Bengali. He had nothing in common with Mr. Mahmood but he thought he was an equal to him in academic association and in relaxation. He had chronic troubles with his classes and Principal Rudra in his shrewdness brought these to my notice so that I might administer the correctives. Further I observed with considerable discompsure how he was trying wit combats and raillery contests with Mr. Mahmood and it did nt take long for these competitions to degenerate into an exchange of physical blows. One afternoon as I was reading in the College Library just at the back of AStaff Room No. 2 I heard the noise of drubbing, the raining or blow upon blow in Mahmood and mansooruddin locked in a scuffle. Soon after they were disengaged, Mansooruddin went into the Orincipal's Room and made a loud shriek and complaint. This episode was undoubtedly disgraceful and involved serious complications. I was sent for and

when I called I found Rudra's face buried in his hands. When he recovered his 'sense' he told me he was still too dazed to comprehend the situation and beseeched me to bring about a solution. Mansooruddin literally ran away to his house which was exactly in front of my house., "Step Aside" just across the road. Mahmood had already apologised to him but he did'nt heed. He followed me to my house' as we got there we heard lamentation from Mansooruddin's house; as we got there we heard lamentation form Mansooruddin's house. Physically Mansooruddin was weak and slim; he had beard and whiskers and a famishing look. Mahmood was all blood and brawn. But Mansooruddin had exceeded the limit of decency handmade scurrilous remarks on Mr. Mahmood. When the former was forced to come over to my Drawing Room, the latter caught hold of his feet, once, twice, thrice and begged unqualified apology. With characteristic sportsmanship and forthright conduct Mahmood threw himself on the mercy of the of fended. I was firm and Mansooruddin had to close the incident for good. It may be added here that he became my problem at M. C. College. Sylhet. Nevertheless he has a measure of literary fame at his credit by his compilation of folklore and folksong. Mahmood opted for West Bengal, became ADPI ME there. I hear he is now Regisgrtar, Sibpur Engineering College. Nos. 3 & 4 Habibur Rahman & Mazaffar Ahmad were both young recruits; the former had a second in Economics, the latter a first in English, at Dacca University. Both were natives of Chittagong, the father of the first rose to be the District Sub Registrar, of the Second was a pious Muslim Pleader of Chittagong town. Habibur Rahman was tall, slim, hungry looking queer in his dress and manners Muzaffer, dark and slight, had well-defined features and decent dress on. He is now Principal of a Government College in East Pakistan and still looks youngish. Since the former played diverse roles within the College and outside during the entire period of my Pricncipalship from 1944 to 1950 I may have occasion to treat him at some length in my story of those years. But Ali Imam has left an indelibly sweet and sorrowful memory behind. When he joined as Professor of Physics he was fresh from the University of Dacca with the best Physics degree of His year. Though dark in complexion, his features were attractive and his body most shapely. His clean clothes matched his handsome presence. He was the son of a famous Headmaster of a Non-Govern-

ment H. E. School of Comilla and had married a young lady who had already a Calcutta University Honours Degree in Philosophy. His most promising career as teacher and Hostel Superintendent was marred after a few months by a serious attack of rheumatism which, and in the course of a couple of years or so (I was then away from Chittagong) led to his premature death in harness. Truly and literally he was an inheritor of unfulfilled renown. His wife Mrs. Akhter Imam (along with her three daughters) struggled to carve out a distinguished place for her. First she took an M. A. degree in Philosophy and became a lecturer in the subject in a Government College. Then She proceeded. A. in London University and on return got the coveted job of the Provost of the Women's Hall at Dacca University with the status of a Reader in Philosophy. Now in 1964 she is once more in U. K. doing her Ph. D. Two of her daughters have received higher education and been married to husbands of distinguished careers. She continues to be a widow and is the owner of two houses at Dacca Through sheer forgetfulness I have been guilty of omitting the name of another colleague who made the deepest impression in my mind in respect of his other worldliness and complete dedication learning and scholarship. He was Mr. Hill, Lecturer in Arabic & Persian and brother in law of Prof. Sharaffuddin. He was so quiet that we din't take any notice of him. On one occasion when he took part in a debate in the Assembly hall ia was struck by the marshaling on his arguments in correct English, horsing of studies and his incisive though humorous retorts. Soon I cultivated his acquaintance he was living in a humble house in squalid surroundings, with many children. But I had another agreeable surprise; he had a prbivate linary of his own including latest books in Islamic studies these books being directly imported by him. Having had a living interest in these I would turn to him for help and guidance which he gracefully gave with a child-like smile on his face. On another occasion he led the prayers (in the absence of the Imam) in the White Mosque contiguous to the College and once more was overwhelmed with his clear and resonant recitation from the Verses of the Quoran. We parted early in 1941 never to meet again. On his transfer to Rajshahi College where he settled down for the remaining part of his life he produced a remarkable thesis which won him an easy Ph. D. But he died an early death and perhaps before his retirement was

due.

Speaking of many members of the embers of the teaching staff it will not be irrelevant to make some general observations on how Principal Rudra exploited some of them and how their own peculiar motivations threw them into kindred groups. The majority of the senior Hindu colleagues would maintain a dignified detachment from unscholarly intrigues. A small group of talented young Muslims would be jealous of reputation based upon hard work and clean conduct. Single-minded devotion to educational work they did neither conceive nor practice; integrity of character was unknown to them. In a seat of learning they were "little politicians" eager for preferment, eager also for worship and compliance from the student. The former would make them acquiescent to Rudra; the latter would lead them to incur grudge against students who were non-conformists to their church and heretical in their behaviour. Then there was another group of unthinking, inefficient Hindu and Muslim teachers who would be on the leash of the boss. Principal Rudra would subtly and successfully use them for his own support and for antagonism to those who had strength of scholarship and character. That an administrator in education should rise above mean, dirty, selfish tricks so rampant in the walks of life never crossed the mind of Rudra; nor does it ever strike other kindred men in such positions. I saw with amusement mostly but also sometimes with violent reactions the sordid response of small men to the petty tricks of the man in power. There was no hesitation to sell one's birthright for a mess of pottage. My reconciliation always followed my silent prayers to God to the straight path and I had His grace while they had their guerdon. My conviction, however, abides with me that just so long as professed educationists do not set up a code of ethical and intellectual conduct before them to strive after, just so long unrest and indiscipline among the students will persist these being fed and nourished by the teachers own department.

I have already said how the English Honours bunches of 1939 and 1940 had cent per cent success in Second class one being placed in near-first. There was one weak link in the 1940 group but he too through unremitting endeavours got through; it will not be nice of me to mention his name. In the first group Syed Ahmadul Haq had an easy second; he

competed in debates at home and abroad; in the second Hriday a small and slim little fellow missed marginally a first. The later had a perceptive mind and I shall never forget his impatience with the tactlessness of Desdemona in *Othello*. At the intermediate stage we had A. K. M. Ahsan, very impressive physically, equally impressive in intellectual performance. But to many teachers he was a "non-conformist" and incurred their grudge. On account of a prank he practiced in one of his College tests, they wanted to have blood out of him. Later he had a first in English in his Dacca university M. A. Examination, became a successful colleague of mine till he competed in the first CSP Examination of Pakistan. He has now the rank of a Divisional Commissioner plus that of Joint Secretary in the Central Government. At the Intermediate level we had two other distinguished pupils, one after the other. They were A. K. M. Azizul Huq and Shafi-ul-Azam. The former while still a student of the 1st Year Intermediate Class sprang a great surprise on the College as a whole by his delivery of a speech in the Assembly Hall. He spoke for quite a long time in correct, flowing English style, and held the audience by his clear enunciation. He had a double First in English at Honours & Post Graduate levels at Dacca University. He had risen since to be one of the Directors of the EPIDC, a most winning personality in all circles. He has married a daughter of the late Sir Azizul Huq of West Bengal. She is a first Class M. A. in English and a lecturer in the English Department of Dacca University. Shafiul Azam having passed his Intermediate Examination from Chittagong College joined the English Honours Classes at Dacca and had a double First. After a period of successful teaching he stood first in the first CSS Examination. He is now Addl. Chief Secretary of East Pakistan.

In the Political life of the Muslims of India the year 1940 stands out as a hill-top post for surveying their Pakistani homeland in the horizon of 1947. In the first quarter of the year the now famous Lahore Resolution was passed yielding undisputed leadership to the Quaid-i-Azam to march his 'nation' to the promised land and millennium. In the encircling waste land of war, of Hindu hostility, of British proneness to Indian nationalism, of famine and pestilence, of riots and massacre there was no faltering in his movement; he was the pillar of cloud by day and column of fire at night to accomplish the trek to the Holy land of

deliverance and security.

Early in the year 1941 official destiny issued another writ to me to proceed to Rajshahi College as Vice-Principal. The Principalship of Rajshahi College having fallen vacant, Dr. Sneharmony Datta, Professor of Physics, Presidency College, Calcutta, holding the top-most position in the Bengal senior Educational Service) (earlier he had also officiated in the Indian Educational Service successfully pressed his claim to this administrative post. But he had no experience in this direction. Besides the problems of that College were always formidable and uncertain; they had been responsible for the death of many reputations from S. N. Maitra to Srikumar Banerjee. When the appointment of Dr. Datta was finalised, he met the DPI, Mr. Bottomley, and asked for my transfer to assist him in his difficult assignment. The DPI agreed, passed the required order and sent a message to me that I should proceed immediately; there was no escape for me. Besides I had my own principles and convictions about the incidence of transfer in Civil Service. I hated then, as I hate even now, the common practice of not accepting an official shuffling in good grace but resorting to all manner of pressure (particularly by MLAs) to get it cancelled. As indicated in the clearest terms in the preceding chapters and as it will be illustrated later, my method has been to pack up and make a move with indispensable tools in my personal luggage. Chittagong had given me comparatively serene academic atmosphere; its hills and valleys, streams and tidal rivulets, inlets and creeks, its salubrious climate and cosmopolitan outlook, its dominantly Islamic Culture had made me a part of the place; above all the love that the College and the town lavished on me had written itself inde. Liby into my wife's tissue. In my valediction to the College gathered in the Assembly Hall I successfully drained out the brimming reservoir of emotions by pointing out that I was suffering from a "transfereential coma" from which I regained occasional consciousness to buy and use hessian and gunny sacking for packing furniture and chattel. Then turning round to the teachers of Economics I said "After all the sale of jute on unproductive prices in not insoluble; turn it into hessian for packing, and eventually the jute growers of East Pakistan will profit". I am sure I did'nt breathe Laputa speculations. Professor Abdus Samad made a Prediction that the reputation I was

leaving behind was likely to bring me back to Chittagong just as it happened in the cases of Rajshahi and Islamia. In a dinner party thrown by Mr. A. T. M. A. Hai, our colleague in Arabic & Urdu he recited a poem of his own composition in course of which the following verse occurred:

Greetings to you that you go back to Rajshahi once and again.

After a stay of two and half years at Chittagong but altogether after an absence of three and half years I went back to Rajshahi early in February, 1941. On our steamer journey from Chandpur to Gualondo (and shortly after we had moved out of Chandpur at 4 O'clock in the morning) we were overtaken by the densest of February fogs in the riverine areas of East Pakistan; the boat became immobile for six hours, a period during which we should have got at Gualondo Ghat. We missed corresponding railway connexions at Gualondo and at Poradah junctions with the result that instead of reaching Rajshahi the same evening in good time for dinner we found ourselves there next morning. At the Rajshahi end this time Professor Sirajul Islam of the Department of Arabic & Persian and husband of my niece had taken infinite pains in fixing up our residential accommodation and all other arrangements in food and milk and water supply. We were so grateful. There was only one regret that the overnight dinner had gone awry. But the richest compensation stood there; we reoccupied "Firoza Mahal" our beloved house for years. Strangely, almost grotesquely I remembered:

he, unobserved,

Home to his mother's house private returned.

My place at Chittagong College was taken by Babu Somnath Maitra of Presidency College. This being his first officiating appointment in the Bengal Senior Educational Service he had hurried down to Chittagong on receipt of the formal orders to relieve me and he arrived at the College in his own limousine driven by a liveried chauffeur. I had my first glimpse of him at that time. He was a Calcutta aristocrat and looked not a moidre less so - tall, strong, having a shinningly ruddy pate and near-European colourlessness. Rudra and his clan received him with unconcealed thrill, perhaps with some trepidation as well over the

new arrival's patrician associations. I didn't know much about him. Later I gathered that the romance had worn off much too soon; his work in the classes was confined to reading of the texts. He held a Second Class M. A. Degree in English, of the Calcutta University but he had spent quite a long time in England. Was it not immaterial that he didn't have any degree therefrom? This was established firmly sometime in 1942 when the Selection Board for Senior Service appointments gave him the first nomination in preference to other nominees senior to him in the Bengal Educational Service There was a Statutory bar to second Class men being appointed to the Senior Service. But does not the exception prove the rule—the word 'prove' bearing popular sense? Somnath Babu served a short probationary period at Chittagong only to have the same status at Presidency at its end. The following lines from *The Statesman* in its City Edition issue of the 30th September, 1964, will provide relevant material and also support my observations:

Prof. Somnath Maitra died at his Calcutta residence on Monday the 28th September, 1964, at his Calcutta residence at the age of 70. Born in 1894 he belonged to a family of educators—his father and two brothers being College Professors. His elder brother, the later Professor Sisir Kumar Maitra, was well-known Professor of Philosophy at Banaras Hindu University. He was a prominent figure in Calcutta cultural circles, a frequent contributor to Bengali literary magazines. He rendered poems and short stories of Tagore in English and gave readings of some over the All-India Radio.

The extract is remarkable for its omissions about his scholarship and credentials and about the history of his Government service.

CHAPTER VI

RAJSHAHI COLLEGE, RAJSHAHI

February, 1941 to February, 1942

I was at Rajshahi College once more - this being my third term, and as it turned out later, of just for a year, I have given sufficient coverage already to Rajshahi to merit any further and lengthier notice. Dr. S. Datta, the new Principal and instrument of this transfer of mine calls for a note at the initial stage. During the period 1926 to 1930 I had met him at Presidency College in connection with the work of the All-Bengal Government College Teachers' Association of which he was a prominent member and office-bearer. He was short in stature, stocky in build and slightly stuck-up in his ways (at least that was my first impression). But he was smart and business-like in his discussions. He was very likeable. His ambition brought him to Rajshahi. Here I found him buoyant, smiling, forthright, hospitable. He had cast off, through the efflux of time, his earlier uppishness. Mrs. Dutta and he had taken good care to bring from Calcutta decent furniture, furnishings and crockery for the Principal's bungalow. It appeared to me that by his business acumen and profitable investments he had acquired a lot of wealth. He had already had a costly house built at Hindu stan Park in the Lake Area of Calcutta. Mrs. Datta was the sister of Mr. Jyoti Basu, the present Communist Leader of West Bengal. Dr. Datta was a lover of cards and did have games in the evening at the Staff Club. Soon after his arrival at Rajshahi he was feted and lionised by the Hindu Zamindars of Rajshahi district. Communal Hindus also made attempts to colour his outlook. According to Rajshahi college conventions routine office duties and drudgery had to be attended to by the Vice-Principal, and after the day's strenuous duties as Head of the Department of English I was tied to the office desk so that I had to abandon my close association with the work of the Muslim Institute and the Muslim Students' Association. February is a testing time for the Principal of Rajshahi College. This is the month of

the celebration of the Saraswati Puja when the Hindu students and the Hindu public collaborate to give the goddess of learning a militant adoration. I found to my consternation that Dr. Datta had been slipping into the narrow mentality of his co-religionists over the installation and worship of Saraswati within the College premises—the thin end of the wedge being driven into his mind that if this was done some distance away from the New hostel Compound there wouldnt be any trouble. And he lent a willing ear and started looking about for a convenient spot. Despite my cautioning him against the proposed move he took the matter up at a meeting of the Governing Body for their approval but there too I forestalled a decision and got them to leave the matter to the discretion of the Principal and the Vice-Principal. Now I had to all my persuasive power, tact and firmness to save him from the trap which had been laid for him by his so-called friends. The inclusion of the College premises for the worship would lead to grave communal troubles in the context of the then mood of the Muslim Students and the public; that community in the year 1941 had no resembling features with those of twenty years earlier. I told him what I had gathered on my return after 3 years that during my absence the Muslim Students had performed cow sacrifice very close to the hostel area and they were likely to repeat the same this time inside. Dr. Datta betrayed signs of annoyance at what he considered my own communalism and then I had to remind him that I was speaking not as a Muslim but as his trusted colleague whom he had selected and brought over and that conscientiously I could not let him down, my experience of Rajshahi College affairs being rich, varied and agonising. He saw reason; his irritation yielded to the voice of wisdom; he gave definite orders for installing the goddess just across the Nator Road in a very convenient plot situated in the middle of the houses of esteemed Hindu citizens. The celebration passed off in happiness and cordiality not only then but also the following year. The bond of love and confidence between the two became stronger. In his mental attitude and in his way of life he was palpably different from those of his average CO-religionist. He would share the good things of life with many of his colleagues and enjoy treats at their places. In response to my invitation when he came to my house, Firoza Mahal, for the first time he opened his mind to say I was 'living in a palace'.

During the earlier period of 1930 to 1937 the English Department had capable and competent staff. But now things were in sorry state; duds had stepped into their shoes; English Honours Students were no better. There was hardly any scope for a swift overhaul. All I could do was to give a shake-up to indifferent misfits and shoulder a heavier load myself. Life otherwise had a smooth and uneventful flow. Dr. Datta and his close friends had their full enjoyment in cards while I had my own relaxation in books. One of the most enjoyable books that I have ever read came my way in paper-back Ethel Mannin's *Confessions & Impressions*.

At home I had considerable anxiety. A little son of mine who was exceedingly sweet and plump at birth developed a serious attack of bronchitis and was hovering between life and death. Dr. Mansur-Al-Rahman who had saved my life in the summer of 1935 from erysipelas was luckily available this time too. In the absence on the yet undiscovered wonder drugs and penicillin, he kept the lungs of the baby warm under biphlogiston for weeks on end; he didn't simply allow him to die. The case, however, became chronic and it took at least two years for the child to be out of danger. Once more I had a taste of the terrors of Rajshahi climate.

Sometime in 1941 and under irresistible pressure I had to accept an invitation from the Muslim Students of Carmichael College, Rangpur, for attending their Annual Milad as Chief Guest. I could spare only a Sunday to them and therefore I had to board the Assam-Bengal Mail at Nator the preceding afternoon and get to Parbatipur Junction where I had to transfer myself to the corresponding Meter Gauge Railway Train which runs to Lalmonirhat and beyond, past Rangpur where I arrived sometime after 10 P. M. By way of preparation I had been reading books on the life of the Prophet of Islam, Gibbs's *Whither Islam* and Leopold Asad's *Islam at the Crossroads*; I had covered only half of the last on the eve of my departure but it gripped me so much that I became absorbed in reading it the moment I entrained at Nator and finished it by the time I reached Rangpur with a ten minute interval for a quick dinner at Parbatipur Railway Refreshment Room which was run then decently and efficiently. I had made earlier arrangements for stopping at the Rangpur Dak Bungalow in preference to any private house and I found

it comfortable containing as it did a number of furnished rooms (with attached bath rooms); it was far more commodious than any other Dak Bungalow at district headquarters. Mr. S. A. Mohsin who was one of my pupils at Calcutta Islamia (also distantly related to me) and who is now No. 1 Sports Organiser in East Pakistan (frequently on a visit to foreign lands on relevant tours) organised a big breakfast next morning in his house at Rangpur town, where I met everybody who is anybody there including my contemporary in Calcutta, Mr. Azizul Islam, M. A. B. L. Lunch & dinner had been organised in the Muslim Hostel Superintendent's quarters inside the College. But the Principal and the teaching staff had arranged for another pre-lunch snack at the College. Mr. Dewa Prasad Ghosh, a Mathematical Scholar of outstanding reputation, then Principal was one of my friends. Along with his colleagues he gave me a nice time. I went round and had a look. Its immense and magnificent campus with buildings and structures thrown in at considerable distance from each other was a revelation unto me. I thought it was a far more suitable site for a University than that of Rajshahi College. After all this last one, even during the inspection of Sadler Commission, was a small one on a small area. Kumudini Kanta Banerjee by extension of the Arts Section and of residential arrangements gave it a planned look. Even so the question of accommodation of the chief, not to speak of the staff, was not considered. The British Government gave Presidency College, Calcutta one or two massive buildings on a small area and that was all. And how about Calcutta University itself? A Senate House and the tall Darbhanga building with a strip of a passage in between constituted the headquarters on the biggest University in India with the largest territorial area from Allahabad to Shillong, from Calcutta to Patna. John Bull was content at Chittagong with one one-storied godown of a building and an apology of a Laboratory structure. But Carmichael College came into my view on a voyage of discovery as it were. I found it to be a planned city' with vast breathing spaces. At one end stood the Principal's bungalow and half a dozen, if not more of teachers family quarters. In the centre were situated the lecture halls, the laboratories and the Assembly Building having architectural beauty of its own. The hostels (Hindu & Muslim) stood around. The planning, projecting, building and developing-all came from Mr. J. N. Gupta, I C. S. Commissioner, Rajshahi Division, He collected the finances too from near and far, from the rich as well as from the middle class. The hostels, as they stood

then, looked small and congested but they were more than sufficient for the initial requirements. Higher education stands permanently indebted to Mr. Gupta for the great work he has left behind. Recently the Government of East Pakistan has provincialised it - a correct step to be sure. But they should develop, expand and staff it according to the ever growing demands of the people. My fixture was for the afternoon when the College as a whole including the families of the teachers (who were 90% Hindus) attended. Leading gentlemen from the town which was a long way off attended too on invitation. In introducing me Principal Devaprasad Ghosh introduced the Prophet of Islam as well. It was a short speech but it indicated a scholarly trend and good delivery in English. Since I had made a good preparation (which was further stimulated by a glance at **Islam At the Cross Roads**) I gave an outline of the main events of the prophet's life first and then of the religion and philosophy which Mohammad practised and propagated. I said Islam like Christianity believes that man has been created in the image of God but unlike Christianity it rejects the original sin, and ultimate redemption through another's sacrifice. Man here is the architect of his own destiny which is made or marred by him. It is within his power to ennoble himself or to degrade him into a brute (I quoted the relevant verse from the Quoran). In Islam individual responsibility is absolute in character. The sins on the parents do not visit the children nor their virtues will come to the progeny's aid and viceversa; they have to stand on their personal merits alone. They have to worship God who is one and indivisible, eternal & infinite, loving and affectionate, benevolent and merciful, ever working out His Beneficent Purpose, all-seeing, all-knowing, scrupulously holding the scales of justice even for reward and punishment. He is not evolving Himself by a process of trial and error. His essence is Pure & Perfect. He is not blind and inscrutable. Hardy would have us believe that He is a viewless, voiceless turner of the Wheel. But we Muslims have an unalterable faith in His Eternity & Immutability Providence..... and so on. I felt happy and grateful at the patient hearing I received. I was told that Humayun Kabir, at present Minister in Indian Union, had been their Chief Guest in the preceding year. The Muslim students of the College had earlier sent me a Money Order of Rs. 20/- to meet my train-fare. When I concluded I had to allude

politely to my role for an educationist and not that of a hireling and to refund the money. My reward lay in their affectionate call. The eldest son of my niece, a student of Class X of Rajshahi College then, followed me to Rangpur where he had arrived the morning after. He was eager to listen to my speech. We travelled back the same night to be well in time for our next day's work. It gives me great pleasure to record that this young learner has risen to be Professor and Head of the Department of Botany at Sind University, Hyderabad. Debaprasad Ghosh continued to be at the helm of affairs till the partition when he left for India where he has not found any educational work to take up. Instead, he has become a politician and the head of the Jan Sangh political party, a rabidly communal organisation. He had been touring the country up and down preaching hatred against Pakistan. He thinks India is pursuing a 'weak' policy towards Pakistan and demands an exchange of population between West Bengal & East Pakistan.

Since I owned a Car this time I paid a visit one weekend (along with my family) to Sardah Police Training College, 12/13 miles off from Rajshahi town and situated on the northern bank of the Ganges. On the approach to the College site lies the village, Sardah, having a shopping centre which caters to the needs of the constables under training and of the families of the Instructors. Bordering the houses of the Instructors who live in a congested locality in small standardised C & W structures, there is a big swimming pool with punts about for rowing purposes and also with lotus plants on water surface. It has fields on the east of the tank with shooting ranges and mounds beyond. These lend a rural charm to the scene. Crossing these areas we got at the broad belt of the river where there are the Parade Ground, the Barracks of Constables and Sub-Inspectors, bungalows of Subedars the chummary of higher officers under training. At the far end on the west stands the bungalow of the Principal. The British made it a comfortable place for the young (mostly European) I. P. S. The river in front and the surrounding fields and villages ensure a fascinating view. We found it quiet, almost sleepy on the Sunday of our visit. As was my wont I didn't bother about seeing any functionary. On our way back through the Instructors' zone we were, however, "Waylaid", by one of them and taken in. Other instructors

(mostly of the rank of an Inspector of Police) trooped in, cultivated acquaintance, grew friendly and arranged for refreshment. My wife and children moved from house to house on cordial calls, the prevailing atmosphere being one of Islamic culture and ancient heritage, free from the sophisticated, snobbish ways of the PSP's and CSP's. There was much pressure on us to stay on for lunch and afternoon tea. We were too considerate to be tedious guests and so we left after a brief spell of spontaneous greetings.

Rajshahi was connected with Nator by an excellent road, a drive of 28 miles. We passed through Nator Railway station on many occasions but we had never been to the Naator Sub-Divisional town before. One weekend we had a drive to the place which looked like a considerable village without any distinctive feature of its own. But its market-place was famous for sweets and curd and also for tasteful fish. We bought some and on our way back branched off a mile or two to have a look at Putia where stood the palace of the Maharani of the place- an imposing structure with an immense area for its compound. Dighapatia, Putia, Dubalhati Zamindars of Rajshahi had the entire Muslim population of the district under their thumb. They were serfs bound to the soil to subservise the luxury and high living of the overlords who held the slaves in grinding poverty and darkness. Let us hope that conditions are better now that they are in Pakistan which has abolished the Zamindari system. But are they? Industrial development we are told, has expanded employment and raised the prices of food crops. So the peasants are comfortable!

The death of Rabindranath Tagore in August, 1941, led to weeklong in memoriam' functions in the College. Tagore studies received an intensive spurt among the teachers and the students; essays and symposia were held with befitting decorum under the personal supervision of Dr. Datta.

Political life in Bengal in 1941 was marked by sensational developments. Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy, had appointed the Muslim Chief Ministers of the Punjab, Bengal, Assam as members of the National Defence Council behind the back of Mr. Jinnah who, as the undisputed leader of the Muslim nation of India, took serious exception to this move

of the viceroy and called upon the Chief Ministers to resign. Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq declined to resign; there was an exchange of angry and unedifying letters between Mr. Huq and Mr. Jinnah ending with the expulsion of the former from the League. This correspondence is now in record of the political history of the period. There was a dramatic irony in the expulsion of Mr. Huq who in March, 1940 had introduced the Pakistan Resolution at Lahore and who had been since 1906 a pillar of massive strength to the Muslim League with magic influence over the Muslims of the sub-continent. There was a deplorable split in his Cabinet Khawaja Nazimuddin, Shahid Suhrawardy and others of his League colleagues tendered their resignation; Mr. Huq formed a new Cabinet without them and with non-congress caste Hindus and Members of the Scheduled Castes. We read about this ugly squabble with agony in our mind in the context of the coming show down with the Congress. Division among the Muslims who proclaim from house-tops their fraternity and solidarity has ever been the bane of the Muslims of India and later of Pakistan too. In legislature then as now there were and are splinter groups competing for personal power and positions, for the fishers and loaves of office, for the love of ruling the roost to their own advantage. No decent citizen having a bit of critical acumen and patriotism can have any faith in their professions and bonafides. In retrospect one can see many godheads having feet of clay, many deities rising and falling phenomenally and catastrophically. And yet how many have a record of national welfare and national service at their credit? An unbiased assessment of Mr. Huq's record with that of his opponents of 1941 and of later times may rehabilitate sanity in historical perception. Hindu India then had as it has now, splinter groups too, its self-seekers and opportunists. But by and large the number of their self-sacrificing and patriotic servants was overwhelming. In the Indian Union now corruption and self-aggrandisement are rampant. Even so their leaders become leaders by a record of self-less service and of outstanding intellectual merit. Jealousy and envy, hatred and intolerance are looked upon as among deadly sins in our religion but in actual conduct these are the only virtues we practise; We call the Hindus idolaters but idols it should be remembered are innocuous images. We Muslims, worship men in power to serve our own ends and

then kick them off into the Lethe. Love and admiration, elementary recognition of merit, a sense of gratefulness to our friends and benefactors are unknown in Bengal and East Pakistan. We are tit-men who cannot stand intellectual grandeur and therefore, combine to demolish it at sight. We preach Islamic ideology but practise the worst variety of Western commercialism, capitalistic greed, materialistic ways of living. Conscientious scruples and fear of God are in our foaming lips but intrigues and manipulation are in our heart and blood. So it has been in the past, so will it be in the future. Vanity of vanities I watched the Bengal squabble of 1941 with agony vis-a-vis the welfare of the Muslim community in the years to come but my work being in humbler pedagogic sphere I didn't have the slightest interest in it. There has not been the slight alteration since in my conduct and attitude towards life. I clutched at the whole-hearted execution on my own duties to live a clean life and to have an honourable end.

Like every educated man of the period I was far more interested in the course that the Second World War was taking in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and the South East Asia. The raping and ravishment of Europe from end to end by the monstrous lust of Hitler were spilling over to the Mediterranean, to Benghazi, & Tobruk, Libya & Somaliland, Eritrea and Abyssinia, Syria & Lebanon. Tojo's Japan in the Far East was aflame with the passion of over-running places from Pearl Harbour to Manila, from Manila to Hongkong, from Hongkong to Rangoon. The axis would close in from the West, and from the East in Bacchanalian orgy and conjunction. Germany revealed herself in her true colours to her ally, Russia, which retreated before her dragon teeth from city to city. London was burning its Westminster Abbey, Houses of Parliament, the British Museum were in ruins at which even Mr. Gandhi already on the war path against the British Government in India was shocked out of his equanimity. Portsmouth, Birmingham, Coventry and so many other towns in U. K. came in under holocaust. Although at Rajshahi we were far off from both the war fronts we were always in a tense state listening into broadcasts or reading newspapers for fuller details. The first two months of 1942 deepened the gloom still further by the rumblings of War nearer home on the east. Just as the invulner-

ability of the Maginot line proved a hollow myth earlier, before the German onrush, so the everboosted Naval Base of Singapore melted into thin air before the Japanese prowess. One could imitate Pitt and say "Roll up the map of Burma now".

Addressing a meeting of the Muslim students of Rajshahi College about this time, I said the life of the prophet furnished on a miniature scale a parallel to the War now being waged. The Meccans in their greed and in their quest for plunder, and revelling in their brute power were out to destroy peace and truth, faith and righteousness. But the prophet of Islam evacuated to Abyssinia the early batches of the faithful including one of his daughters, made good his escape from Mecca though given a hot chase by the relentless enemy. After evacuation, after migration to Medina, he was given no rest. He had to accept the challenge of the Meccans and fight them back. He had even to resort to signing a diplomatic treaty—the Treaty of Hudaibiyya; he it was who gave the Victory Sign after that treaty as Churchill was doing now..... and so on. I felt that the fainting fit of my audience was replaced by reinforced morale. Dr. Datta was present and listening too.

He and I were pulling on nicely and pulling together zealously and fervently; others of U-Circles at Rajshahi for instance, the District & Sessions Judge; (who later rose to be a High Court Judge), the District Magistrate Mr. A. Z. Khan, the S. P. Mr. A. H. M. Ismail (author of sex books), Raja Protiva Nath Roy of Dighapati a (whose death has just been reported) drew closer socially and we had sport and game together. As I have already observed entertainment was one of my hobbies but in their case it was status-based.

On the evening of 13th January, 1942, Dr. Datta received a wire from the DPI, Bengal, to the effect that I must see the Chief Minister at Calcutta on the morning of the 14th. He showed it to me, advanced money from his own pocket so that I could avail myself of the evening train in 2/3 hours' time. Next morning I saw the Chief Minister as directed. As was his wont he was in a company of his friends and admirers before whom he said that he wanted me to be the Director of Public Information (that was the designation then). Altaf Hussain was holding the post since its creation in July, 1938. My answer was that if

I had any choice I would beg to be excused. Mr. Huq was visibly annoyed but those present asked him to ignore my plea, I returned to Rajshahi on the 15th. There was complete silence from the Calcutta end for a month and a half exactly as there was complete indifference from my side. On the 26th of February I received a letter from the ADPI about my proposed deputation to the Publicity Department. On the 1st March I received a direct D. O. from the Chief Secretary about my appointment. On the 3rd March Dr. Datta was asked by the DPI to relieve me immediately and to send me on to Calcutta. I was relieved the following afternoon. In the course of five days letter followed letter, wire chased wire to carry me, in a swoop as it were, to Calcutta. And exactly a year earlier I was brought over to Rajshahi to stand by Dr. Datta. I was very portable, Dr. Zuberi recruited for Chittagong College was a 'heavy-weight' champion and could not be lifted. Syed Ahmed Ali selected for the same purpose sometime later had, on his dictation, had the post transferred to Presidency College, Calcutta. Literally and figuratively I was a father-weight. Tel viewed the Worm and asked "Art thou a Worm? Image of weakness, art thou but a worm? And Thel discovered the truth that God cherished the worm with milk and oil. But Blake was an insane visionary whereas the Powers that Be are sane, sound strong.

The Japanese forces were marching up Malaya and Burma unresisted and unchecked, crossing river after river, annexing terrain after terrain, Calcutta was scare-torn, panic--afflicted. Half the civil population had made a voluntary evacuation for places upcountry and for provincial towns in the interior. Some had come over to Rajshahi as well. Wherever they went they interior. Some had come over to Rajshahi as well. Wherever they went they found things (foodstuffs and consumer's goods) "damncheap" to use their own words and they came to be known jocularly as "Damn Cheap Babus".

The new school session beginning in January had just entered upon the phase of serious work. To disrupt the studies of my children once more and to move them to an area which most of the families had abandoned were considered indiscreet. I decided to leave them behind at Rajshahi till the end of the session in December. Whether it was a wise step or otherwise was realised later in full measure.

My colleagues on the staff, the College, the Muslim Institute and the

Muslim Hostels gave me a very nice time on the 4th, 5th and 6th March. On the evening of 6th I left Rajshahi for Calcutta where I stopped with a relation of mine for a week before I shifted to a rented house. My brother who had nursed my three children back to life in 1932 proceeded to Rajshahi, on request, and took over temporary charge of my family which shifted to a smaller house ere long. So, on to the new assignment.

BENGAL SECRETARIAT WRITERS' BUILDINGS, CALCUTTA

March 1942 to October, 1943

7th March, 1942: On this Saturday morning I reported myself, as ordered, to Mr. Bottomley, director of Public Instruction, who wrote out a brief note on a buff sheet and shoved me on immediately to the Chief Secretary, Mr. J. R. Blair. From a glance at the note it became clear how manoeuvring had still been going on for selecting another man for the position of the Director of Public Information. Earlier in the morning I was some evidence and symptoms of the same. I heard besides that Mr. Altaf Hussain had been moving heaven and earth for the last two months and more not to be dislodged. He had an entrenched holding under the Chief Secretary. My conscience was clear as a civil servant who was brought over under peremptory orders and not having the slightest link with any jockeying for position or with any camarilla. I said to myself "Let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung". The Chief secretary who had written a personal letter to me although we had never met before kept me waiting quite a long time before he saw me. When we met he was angry and rude, intolerant and authoritative; in his opinion I could not do the job. I was pained and shocked but I maintained **Mens Aequi in Arduis** before which he softened a bit and then said "I suggest a taking over period" I disagreed on the basis of my long administrative and organisational record. He wrote out an order (briefly but truthfully recording the nature of the discussion I had with him) to the effect that I was to take over charge on Monday morning, the 9th March. I met Altaf Hussain who was quite courteous and who volunteered to give me a lift to the Secretariat on that day if I were living somewhere near his house at Park Circus. Actually my place was quite close to his. He gave me a lift and spent practically the whole day in explaining the scope and nature of my duties and responsibilities. He showed me round the Civil Defence Information Office, Off Lalbazar Police Headquarters, and also the Aurora Studio which was far off in the

northern outskirts of the city, where Government publicity films and shorts were made. He also entertained me at lunch at Firpo's, the posh restaurant around Dalhousie Square at that time and in the vicinity of the Great Eastern Hotel. I thought nothing became him like the leaving it. But, Oo the Shakespearean ring!. Just wait for the sting which was in the tail-end of his programme. Earlier he got me to agree to his recommendation of promoting Ekkari Bose, Head Assistant to the status of the Assistant Director of Public Information (Administrative) because the incumbent Abdul Wadud a sub-Deputy Collector was leaving in a day. The next man in the office was Aftabuddin Mia whom I got promoted to the Head Assistant's job, The change-over was rounded off by direct discussion with the Chief Secretary over what Altaf Hussain considered an immediate problem. Incidentally it should be noted that he (Chief Secretary) was the Secretary of the Publicity Department (then 25 General Administration) and the D. P. Information was the Ex-Officio Deputy Secretary directly under him. The problem in question was the 'stabling' (Hussain's, language) of the then moving Exhibition train at Rajbari Railway Station. Rajbari is a sub divisional town in the district of Faridpur, a railway junction which connects Gualondo Ghat Steamer Station (the key riverport to East Pakistan) on the one hand and Faridpur town on the other. The Exhibition Train holding in it various exhibits from scientific and mechanical gadgets to manufactured goods must not be berthed by a borrow-pit according to strict instructions of the Railway authorities but here lay the rub; there was a borrow-pit near the berthing site at Rajbari. Altaf suggested that his successor proceed to the place on the following day and supervise arrangements personally. He wrote out a note and got it endorsed by the Chief Secretary. Already fatigued by the hectic round of duties of the day and in the wake of the strain and tension of the previous week (and not having settled down yet) this was a sort of a parthian kick. Late in the afternoon next day I had to run to Sealdah Railway Station to take delivery of my car awaiting emptying of the van. Luckily there was a little petrol left so that I could start and drive it. Simultaneously I made reservation by the Dacca Mail for my trip to Rajbari. I thrust the car into a friend's premises, had a hurried pot-luck dinner and went back to Sealdah to catch the train.

Early on the morning of 11th March I was at Rajbari where the Sub-

Divisional Officer, Mr. Naziruddin was of immense help. To be sure there was a long ditch near the railway station but there was sufficient clearance for the train to be berthed with a road-head at the top-the road leading to the proposed exhibition ground. For exhibits to be taken off the train and for their transport there was no difficulty. But the spacious ground near the Rajbari Dak Bungalow was in a poor state, full of cavities containing mud and water. These called for filling and the surrounding terrain for levelling . An army on coolies under the supervision of the Sub-Divisional C & W staff was put to work on the Exhibition Ground. The berthing site and the approach road required some repairs which were made. I used my discretion in making a number of alterations and readjustments to the specification of the railway authorities. There was just a day's margin which I utilised to the full in making satisfactory arrangements with the close co-operation of the S. D. O. and his staff. He was good enough to make arrangements for my food. I dictated a fairly full letter to the Chief Secretary about action taken which, when he received it next day, brought from him a wire of approval. At the end of the first day's work I remembered that my brother-in-law was the Superintendent of Police at Faridpur (in 1925 he was S.P. of Bogra). from Rajbari Railway station I gave him a ring just to receive an insistent request to spend the night at Faridpur with his family. A late afternoon local train was available and I responded with great pleasure. I had another experience at the Rajbari Railway Station; a trainful of Burma refugees was passing by via Gualonda Ghat; they were fleeing from the bombing of Rangoon by the Japanese. Among volunteers Looking at them I noticed Lal Mian, now Abdullah Zahiruddin, (He died at Cox's Bazar in April, 1967) brother of Mohon Mian of Faridpur; both were well-known in Bengal politics and later in Pakistan, Lal Mian was then a khadder-clad Congressite; now he is a Central Minister in Pakistan. I faced some of the refugees and talked to them by putting searching questions about their personal experience of air raids but I was unconvinced about their direct hardship. My own impression was that they were fleeing from scare & panic . But the fact remains that the first trek over difficult terrain and land routes from Burma had just begun which was soon to lead to the starting of the Burma Evacuees' Organization of huge dimensions by the British Government. Mr. S. K. Ghosh, ICS., then

Secretary of the Communications Department at Bengal Secretariat, was appointed as the Head of the Organisation with unlimited powers of drawing and spending money. He was an acquaintance of mine. Other prominent men associated with the work were Rezaï karim brothers of Dacca. Rezaï karim was also one of my friends. All these got involved in embezzlement cases-the length and proportions of the misappropriation did tax credulity. S. K. Ghosh had to suffer imprisonment, hardship, humiliation according as he deserved but Mr. Rezaï Karim escaped on account of the partition.

Next morning (12th March, 1942) I returned to Rajbari along with a battalion of officials and non-officials of the place (including the District Magistrate, Mr. Abdus Sobhan Mahmud, and my brother-in-law). The Exhibits were in full display, accompanied by vociferous commentaries; it was a gala day for everybody; elaborate lunch arrangements for the officials and some guests had been made. For me it proved to be a day of rest and relaxation. At the Faridopur Station Club the previous evening I met a radiant youngman, W. A. Shaikh, I. C.S. in charge of Settlement and Cadastral Survey Operations. Strong, handsome, unconventional, well-read, critical, this Punjabi youth won my heart. We moved together, ate together had a post-lunch siesta together in the Dak Bungalow. In the Congress Rebellion of 1942 he had to handle a difficult situation as S. D. O. of Tamluk sub-Division in the district of Midnapur. We maintained contact till after the partition when he rose to be the Commissioner of Excise in East Pakistan.

On return to Calcutta the following morning I got to grips with my duties. These could be conveniently divided into two periods (i) March 1942 to March, 1943 -the main absorption being in war work April 1943 to October, 1943 in the Famine of the period. The work of the Director as a whole consisted of: (i) Editing The Bengal Weekly in English and its counterpart Banglar Katha (বাংলার কথা) in Bengali (ii) communication of State information to the press by close contact and by the issue of press communiques and notes (iii) Giving suitable publicity coverage to the tours of the Governor, the Chief Minister and his colleagues (iv) Attending sessions of the Legislature (v) Channeling of State advertisements, to the newspapers (vi) Handling of War publicity: co-ordinating the activities of various war publicity organisations such as Public

Relations (a non-official body set up ad-hoc under Mr. Geoffery Tyson), Civil Defence (a small body even then under the D.P. Information) growing, expanding with proliferating branches and ever-increasing ARP personnel placed sometime later under Mr. S. Drucquer, I.C. S. of the National War Front under Mr. A. B. Chatterjee, I.C.S., countering of German and Japanese War propaganda with the help of monitored broadcasts (an exclusive responsibility of mine): Running of the committee on Information having representatives from the bodies just mentioned and under the Chairmanship of the Chief Secretary. (vii) Preservation and safe maintenance of films (viii) Maintenance of Stores of Projectors, linked machinery, and equipment (ix) Provision and maintenance of National Welfare Units all over the Province of Benal, mostly one such unit in every district the exceptions being a Combination of two contiguous districts. A national Welfare Unit in those days implied a Publicity Van for showing films and for distributing free medicine-the Staff pattern being: a trained officer-in-charge (non-gazetted), an operator, a Medical Officer, a Peon and a driver. West Bengal had mostly mechanised transport & Van, East Bengal country boats carrying machinery and equipment. In many cases the Vans were bullock-drawn. These Vans, their transport, their staff, their servicing and replacement created chronic administrative problems-some of the ridiculous being when a bull lost an eye or got crippled, when the second of the pair died or when one become too old to be useful (x) the organising of Government Press Conferences (xi) Active participation in the work of the Film Censor Board with the Commissioner of Police as its Chairman-the responsibility of the D. P. Information in this respect was very great (xii) Keeping a sharp look out on subversive leaflets.

The policing of the Press was done by the Home Deptt. watch-dog.s, Mr. Porter, the Home Secretary, had the control. His assistant was Mr. B. G. Rao, I. C. S. but the D. P. Information could helpfully work as a sort of liaison.

The staff of the Publicity Department then consisted of only two officers under the Director: ADPI (Administrative), ADPI (Publicity). A fairly big office under the head Assistant existed. There were only two Stenographers. The ADPI's had the lowest gazetted status. The staff of

the National-Welfare Units has already been indicated. The Store-keeper in charge of lakhs of rupees worth of equipment and machinery was a lower division assistant with an initial pay of Rs. 40/- a month. No Graduate would stick to this job and I initiated a proposal for grading the post. Mr. Blair and Mr. Walker, the Finance Secretary became perturbed and after serious discussion between them agreed to the enhancement of the initial pay by Rs. 4/- (four) only in the same grade; a higher scale was ruled out. That was the close-fisted British way - Polonius-manner " Neither a borrower nor a lender be". This small organisation covered the publicity work of the whole Province of Bengal. A contrast with the personnel and establishment of publicity Deptt. of West Bengal and of East Pakistan at present will be very interesting. In East Pakistan the Director is a Joint Secretary ; he has many Deputy Directors and Assistant Directors, a District Publicity Officer of Gazetted status, staff correspondents of the same status. Altaf and I had none such. He had strength and influence enough of by passing the Chief Secretary and the Finance Secretary and securing a 'special' scale of pay for himself alone. I had to be content with a special allowance of Rs. 250/- in addition to my grade pay in Education. A contrast with the work handled then would be still more interesting. In East Pakistan it is a mound of banalities with an infant and throttled press and an acquiescent public. Our work was with a 'problem' province of rebellion, starvation, pestilence and death stalking the land, a turbulent India, a cosmopolitan city and a World War.

The Publicity office occupied a segment of the Secretariat "Rotunda" at the Westend of the first floor. The D.P.I. had a longish strip; the ADPI.s a quarter of the same; both had 'direct hits' from the sun-god and the war-god when bombing occurred. At present the whole of the 'Rotunda' has been converted I am told into a luxurious Conference Hall. The Office Assistants sat in a congested room adjoining, where one had to squeeze through their desks.

Ekkari Bose just promoted to be ADPI (Administration) had risen from the bottom but he was efficient to the tips of his fingers in all manner of Secretariat work-His only drawback being his iron rule over the office staff. He was a daily passenger from Uttarpara 10 or 11 miles off from Howrah Railway Station-the earliest to attend, and latest to leave office.

He slipped into trousers and tie (on his promotion) which he would don and doff on his arrival and departure. Hiren Ghosh was the second Assistant Director incharge of Publicity. His job was to collect publicity material from the various departments of the Secretarial and also to see to the printing of the two weeklies at the Bengal Government Press located in Alipore. I found a queer colleague in him talkative but impressive on first acquaintance. I thought his experience under Altaf Hussain was a good enough guarantee of a measure of efficiency in the two assignments he had. But soon enough I had a shocking experience to the contrary. He would bristle with gossip and give just his physical attendance to the B. G Press for the printing of the two papers. Under the strain of the change-over and the trip to Rajbari I could not supervise the first issues of the Bengal Weekly and the Banglar Katha with the result that I had to hang down my head in shame at the frightful mess he had made of them. The gentleman could neither make selection of material for print nor compose two sentences correctly in English and yet he was considered a trained journalist. I was told he had his training in The Statesman but I was completely disillusioned. His link with the latter turned out to be something like this. Babu Priyanath Guha, the Weekly feature writer of the Political Notes in that Paper was Ghosh's relation and had him under his wings. They were natives of Barisal, the Premier Mr. Huq's own district. Syed manzoor Murshed, Mr. Huq's nephew and a powerful Assistant Secretary at Writer's Buildings was the patron who got him into the Publicity Department. Altaf Hussain was too intelligent to expose Ghosh or to annoy Murshed. His external smartness deceived many including the Chief Secretary. For the twenty months I had been in office I had to select material for the Bengal Weekly, correct errors and transmit them to the Press through Mr. Ghosh, the messenger. The lay-out while in actual print was chiefly done by the most helpful and efficient Deputy Superintendent of the Press, Mr. Arnot. Mr. davies, the Superintendent as a willing co-operator as well. I cultivated personal relations with them both.

A glance at the breakdown of the duties of the D. P. Information will indicate how formidable they were. It was some relief that the expanding Civil Defence Branch was separated under Mr. Drucquer with Mr. Santosh kumar Basu, Local Self-Government & Public Health Minister at the helm-Civil Defence Coordination being added to his portfolio.

Even so the occupation was full time. It was a pleasure to be in touch with the Associated Press and the United Press and equally so with The Statesman and **Amritabazar Patrika** staff correspondents. Correspondents from the Azad, Jugantar, Anandabazar Patrika (Bengali dailies) were rare. Late in the evening urgent material for publication was sent (or sometimes carried by me to the APP); the only thing that mattered in a such a case was a compact presentation. Many Ministries with their arrogant European, ICS Secretaries would not appreciate that the Press people were not their servants; they would issue long-winded verbiage for publication next morning only to fret over non-appearance and to cherish a grievance against me. One such Secretary was Mr. Holland of the bullying type. His Minister, Mr. Basu, saw reason and would be always guided by my advice. He would wait for hours for his own draft to be looked over by me. In local self-Government and Public Health and the public relations job here was tough and stupendous. Communiqués necessarily were to be brief, relevant, as little controversial as possible. The Home Department under the Chief Secretary and Mr. Porter closely guarded their secrets; they were simply uncommunicative. Sharp and adverse criticisms in publication as well as in Press Conferences would flow down their duck-backs without any corresponding quack-quacking. The Chief Minister, Mr. Fazlul Huq, never interfered (although he had both Home & Publicity Portfolios) with the work of my department during the 13 months I had been under him. He was too big and too great to ask for his personal publicity unlike many another small man. Only twice he gave me articles on "Efficiency" for publication in the Bengal Weekly. Mr. Blair gave me the benefit of perusal of the Confidential Fortnightly Review of the political, economic, social condition in the Province and of the similar exchange between the Central Government Ministry of Information and the Secretary of State for India. All "talking and writing" points on War from the former were immediately sent by him to me and a selection of these was inserted in The Bengal Weekly and its counterpart. From the Fortnightly Review I had a full grip over the internal situation in Bengal and could combat speculation and guess and rumours through the Press agencies and correspondents. The Department of Agriculture made a heavy demand on publicity service in the making of films and posters, dissemination of propaganda about the "Grow More Food".

campaign, the distribution of seeds and seedlings, the availability of fertilizers and composts, the best way of irrigating or draining food crop fields and also by the periodical insertion of prices of bulls and cows. This last was sometimes responsible for getting me curious and ridiculous rings from European housewives. The Agriculture Minister, Khan Bahadur Hashem Ali Khan, was never in the picture. It was Mr. K. L. Hill, ICS, the Secretary of the Department, and the key men of the Agriculture Directorate who sought my constant cooperation and guidance. Mr. Hill's confidence in my work was complete in the designing of posters. I had a very competent young fellow of Park Circus to do such jobs or me not only for agriculture but also for the Home & Publicity Departments. For my own part I received valuable help from the Publicity Officers of the East Indian and Bengal-Nagpur Railways (of those days). The Ministries of Finance, Communications and Judiciary never bothered me. The first and the third, Syameprasad Mokerjee & Pramathanath Banerjee were distinguished University men who had nothing but esteem and cordiality for an educationist of some reputation such as I was. There were no Parliamentary Secretaries, no Whips to goad or to flog.

The Committee on Information started by the Chief Secretary shortly after my assumption of office was the pivot round which circled all publicity and propaganda stuff for the week. This Committee under the Chairmanship of Mr. Blair and myself as Secretary met once a week (generally of Tuesday forenoon) to discuss and deliberate over all current problems (including those in the monitored broadcasts) and to chart a course of action. Its other members were: Mr Geoffrey Tyson, Editor of **The Capital** and President of Non-Official Public Relations, Mr. Durcquer, Special Officer, Civil Defence, Mr. A. B. Chatterjee of the National War Front. Within minutes of the finalisation of the weekly job I submitted a draft to Mr. Blair who would look over and approve it shortly after lunch so that copies were issued in the afternoon to proper quarters for action. Mr. Blair did not only examine the draft with meticulous care but make corrections with pedagogic fastidiousness. The minutes were preserved; they provided interesting reading. I wonder if the West Bengal Government has continued with this valuable institution. I have already noticed in some detail the initial

reception I had from the Chief Secretary. In the context of subsequent relations it became clear to me how his mind had been poisoned with passion and prejudice over my appointment. In one week he toned down to love and confide and I settled down to respect, learn and comply. Earlier he was the Commissioner of Dacca Division where his memory is still cherished as a godfearing, conscientious civil servant of outstanding caliber. I shall have occasion later to refer to him for the present I shall be content with the observation that he shook Wartime Bengal Secretariat out of its laziness, smugness, perfunctoriness and other vices into a place of emergency activity. His prompt action against those who deserted their posts on the eve of and during Japanese air raids (from December, 1942) ensured a riddance of scrimshankers. The next important man on the Information Committee, Mr. Geoffrey Tyson, past his middle age then, was a sort of permanent fixture in Calcutta's official and non-official life, in commercial and moneyed circles. He had a finger in many a pie. He was tall but not showy sartorially, had an aristocratic tone and twist in his tongue, shrewd observations and comments to make very seasoned and diplomatic in his ways. At a time when there was no airconditioned room in the Writers' Buildings, he enjoyed one in the offices of **The Capital**. A wide-spread belief existed that his relations with the Governor of Bengal, Sir John Herbert, were close and compact; naturally enough he was a power to contend with among the top functionaries. At any rate Mr. Blair gave close attention to his opinion in the Committee. But more of him later. Drucquer was one of those men who left a peculiar impact on my mind not easy to define. Niaz Mohammad Khan, I. C. S. built up a legendary reputation in Bengal from his work as Sub-Divisional officer of Brahmanbaria, Mymensingh, now in East Pakistan. Drucquer thought from his own experience there in the same capacity that he would be a rival to Khan in a similar structure. He would often propose film making on the Brahmanbaria scene. He had Cambridge University credentials but his villainous, execrable scrawls on paper (I mean his hand writing) would lead me to scratch my head in scepticism. He was a bachelor who entertained in his Calcutta suite of rooms the famous foot-ball playing Brahmanbaria boy Shah Jehan he had collected therefrom. Drucquer could be seen shuffling along over the Dalhousie square area popping in and out of all important offices. Blair called him in endearing terms.

and between himself and the Finance Secretary., Mr. Walker, gave him all the money he required for his everexpanding and colossal Civil Defence and ARP Organisation in which he made an un-numbered number of appointments which came very handy to the Azad for pouring out an endless stream of venom on the "Shayama-Huq" Ministry for months on end on the ground that the recruitment was made from among the Hindus by an over whelming percentage with Mr. Huq's support. Civil Defence Co-ordination Department issued Press Notes to the contrary but the Azad simply ignored them. Mr. Fazlul Huq had absolutely nothing to do with these petty, purely temporary jobs and yet the Muslims of the Province fed by the Goebbelsian propaganda of the Azad treated him as human monster out for destroying them. Once or twice when Mr. Huq asked me whether the insidious campaign would hit him I told him frankly that it would bring an end to his career and eventually it was one of the factors that finished him. But Drucquer was going strong all the same. I must add however in all fairness that his daily wireless ARP broadcasts had wonderfully clear reception; his voice was soft and measured, his accents sibilant and sweet. These persuaded every household to provide for shelters and slit trenches, first aid equipment and small stores of food-stuffs for emergencies. But alas! Drucquer simply vanished ere long from the land of the living. We were told laconically that he had been on a reconnaissance flight of the 1942 cyclone-and-tidal-wave affected area of Midnapore and that he had died in the plane crash. It was impossible to ascertain anything beyond this cryptic announcement.

The remaining member of the Information Committee, Mr. A. B. Chatterjee was an elusive personality. As leader of the National War Front his duties were undefined and naturally enough his movements and activities were in a nebulous sphere. He attended our meetings all right but never appeared to be serious.

Tyson's Public Relations Organisation had a whole-time Secretary in Dr. Parimal kumar Roy, Professor of Economics in the Senior Educational Service at Islamia College, whose services were placed at its disposal. Representing commercial interests Mr. N. C. Laharry was there as a member. He was an image of affluence and arrogance and gave his views on the requirement of his class in the matter of the

boosting up of their morale. He was an influential Rotarian. Lately he rose to the top-most position in the eastern circle of Rotary International; he was at Dacca in that capacity. A few months ago I saw his obituary in The Statesman which indicated how his death came about when he was full of years (not less than 70) and honours. Mr. Dossani one of the wealthiest of men in Calcutta then and very popular in social circles was another member. His habitual silence, simplicity and humility were winning to the utmost degree. Somehow or other he had an appreciation of the work I did in connexion with the activities of this Committee and formed friendship with me. It will not be irrelevant to point out here that the first air-conditioned and decent Cinema House, "Gulistan", at Dacca was his work; it is run by members of his family. The Calcutta Corporation was represented by its Education Officer who was a khadderclad Congressman of considerable grit and self-sacrifice. He brought substantial information to the Organisation in regard to public needs during air raids. Provincial Government was represented by Drucquer and myself. Sand and sandbags, availability of telephone spares in emergencies, the protection of human life and property at the time of bombing, the disposal of casualties for medical treatment and otherwise and such other services were organised by the Public Relations Body which was started long before the vast ARP organisation was brought into being by the Government under Drucquer. Anyway non-official work had its own value in strengthening the people's morale.

Altaf Hussain was too strewd and too clever to spare much time to the two departmental publications; with his characteristic, slapdash technique he selected material for a boost-up of the Ministers and also that for war publicity. For illustration he would depend mostly upon the American Life. But he supervised the lay-out so that there might not be any glaring defect. The editorial columns were filled with articles which wore an ambiguous look. After my experience of the first issue of the Bengal Weekly since I took over, I became very careful, made an eclectic choice from heaps of war publicity material available not only from the Government of India and other War fronts but also from foreign periodicals. The whole of Sunday I would spend in selecting of photograph from The Illustrated London News, The Sketch & life for enlargement and for blockmaking and for insertion in appropriate places in The Bengal Weekly. The tours of the Governor and the Chief

Minister were invariably accompanied by my photographers. In those days the World Press Correspondents were not available in Bengal. As just stated for good prints the block-making branch of The Statesman made me excellent blocks. The Azad's denigrating notes and comments against the Chief Minister had devastating knock-outs from the photographs published in the Bengal Weekly of enthusiastic ovations given to him by the people during his tours. I received congratulations from many quarters to say that the Bengal Weekly had become an Illustrated Weekly under my editing. For the Bengali version there was a fairly capable hand in the office in Maulavi Shamsur Rahman. He was a typical shirker, careless and lazy with the result that the Banglar Katha bristled with inaccuracies and its material completely out of date even judged as a weekly. He had to be constantly goaded for catching up with the English counterpart and for avoiding mistakes. At the initial stage I followed in the foot-steps of my predecessor in not writing any editorial article. But my conscience grew uneasy. Why cannot a Government paper have its editorial views was the big question mark with me. And I decided upon writing one each week. Since there was no direction, not even the faintest suggestion from the Government as a whole including my own chief, Mr. Blair, I was taking incalculable risk. The slightest indiscretion of my part would raise the hornets' nests of the powerful Calcutta Press and also involve the Government in unwarranted embarrassments. I was a student of Law and I thought it would be possible for me at least to steer clear of legal controversial topics for discussion and presentation of views. At the initial stage I gave a boost to small Allied victories in distant theaters of War or to heroic performances and scarifies of the Defence Services, later to domestic problems and difficulties. Late in the afternoon when I had a quiet hour I would be in the company of my Stenographer, Abdul Monaf, an obliging little fellow, and produce a weekly lead. It may be noted I have not had a scrap of paper before me to remind me of the subjects I handled. And yet I can recall some though I am writing after twenty two years. I was profoundly touched as a humanbeing at the tragic death in August, 1942 of the young Duke of Kent particularly in relation to the bereavement of his idyllic little family and I wrote out an elegiac editorial article which, I fancied, was worth preserving. After the resignation of Syamaprasad Mookerjee I made my observations of

Leadership. when the Japanese bombed Calcutta on five consecutive nights in December, 1942, I dwelt upon the horrors of Moonlit Nights. During the famine of 1943 I had much to say on Government and Social Service. My former pupils working in the outlying parts of the province took a loving interest in these and paid voluntary tributes. A young Calcutta Graduate given to make talks on the Calcutta radio collected material from my Moonlit Nights and called personally one day to express his indebtedness. **The Bengal Weekly** thus came to have one of the prominent features of journalism. When some of these on infrequent occasions elicited comments from the Press the Chief Secretary was pleased and remarked that I could put more pep in them. I helped moulavi Shamsur Rahman in reproducing them substantially correctly in **the Banglar Katha**. This is the proper place where I must make an acknowledgement of an attractive weekly feature of **The Bengal Weekly** when it came under my care. It was "Our War Commentary" by "Realist:". The services of the writer were secured by Altaf Hussain & Tyson. This journalistic contribution came in manuscript and was placed on my table for approval liliputian hand but legible; its arrival was unfailingly regular. I looked over and was struck with the cogent presentation of his case and yet I thought I would have some errors to correct, some amendments to make so that I had my pen ready for making some improvement. Week after week I failed, it was written in flawless English in addition to its charm of presentation. Soon I discovered the author was Nirod Choudhuri who is now the most famous author of "The Autobiography of an unknown Indian", a book that received, with its publication, the highest appreciation from the highest critical circles in U. K.

Rangon fell on the day I took over charge and I have already noted the impact of the resistless march of the Japanese on Eastern India. Two other events had a near coincidence with it one of vital importance to the Huq Ministry domestically, the other of historical moment to the Indian sub-continent politically; the Budget Session of the Bengal Legislature, the arrival of the Cripps Mission for conceding Dominion Status or Equality of Partnership in the Commonwealth etc.

Of the Bengal Budget session first. The formation of Fazlul Huq's second ministry minus the Muslim League stalwarts had bitter reactions

among them; they were determined to discredit and destroy it but their number in the Legislature, unaided by other parties, amounted to nothing. The non-cooperating Congress was in the Opposition; the non-committal European section (an influential one) was glum. In the course of my attendance at the session I had my first-hand experience of the behaviour of the Bengal legislative Assembly. The Congress leader, Mr. Kiran Sankar Roy, was dignified in his personal bearing; his arguments, when he spoke, were marshalled with coherent strength and compactness; his ranks, however, were wild, noisy, vituperative-noisiest and most irrepressible of the lot being my own friend and contemporary Dr. Nalinakshysa Sanyal. In interrogation he had the highest record; in the firing of verbal salvos he was unbeatable; his acrobatics were ungainly to put it mildly. The Muslim League had a sort of professional mouthpiece in Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqui whose political and diplomatic experience of Islamic lores and lands had a farflung empire spreading over the three continents of Europe, Africa & Asia. He was a free lance journalist and the Editor of the Morning News (which did not yet have a habitation or a press of its own). A native of Delhi he was the hero of the Urdu speaking people of Calcutta. His English speech had the characteristic intonation of the same section; his voice was loud and harsh. Past his sixty then he was yet a bachelor, irascible & petulant to a degree. Barring H. S. Suhrawardy he alone could deliver the Muslim League goods in the deliberations. His delivery, however, had been marred by his erratic tangents, farcical mannerism and abusive outbursts leading to ridiculous situations. After independence he became the Governor of East Pakistan for a short spell. Khwaja Nazimuddin seldom broke his silence or transcended his innocence. Abul Hasan Ispahani (whose name I have already mentioned in connexion with his visit to Rajshahi in the company of Abdul Waseque) could jump and shout and call Fazlul Huq names but was incapable of making a speech. During the session under review Suhrawardy was irregular in his attendance. But when he attended and when he spoke the House listened to him in pindrop silence. He was the best parliamentarian of the time. On the Govt. side the brunt of the debate fell on Mr. Huq whose poise and presentaion were inimitable. But he too did lose his balance now and then especially in giving retorts to Suhrawardy when a pandemonium prevailed and all decorum was

cast to the winds. Of the European section no one could speak more clearly, more winningly than my former teacher at Presidency College, Mr. W. C. Wordsworth, Asstt. Editor of the Statesman. The Budget Session wore on to the expected end of a clear majority for Mr. Huq and his Cabinet despite the desperate tactics of the Nazimuddin Group. In this Budget one lakh of rupees had been provided for the promotion of Communal Harmony -another stick for the Opposition to beat Mr. Huq with. Let me make a categorical statement here at once that he did 'nt draw upon this provision, by a poor little coin when the financial year was out in March, 1943. His majority continued till he had to go out at the end of the same month the same year.

The offer of Dominion Status that Sir Staford Cripps brought towards the end of March 1942, created a sensation all it was rejected. The impact of the failure led to an unenviable situation at a moment when the Japanese were knocking at the gate. With the Congress the vital problem, of defending their own country against the enemy by joining hands with the British War effort did'nt weigh. On the contrary they looked for an impending deliverance from an alien rule by another alien invasion and conquest. In two months from the collapse of the Cripps Mission they embarked upon a programme of activity which could paralyse the functioning of the Government of India and thus pave the path of the enemy for a smooth walk-over. Mr. Gandhi who had earlier shed sentimental tears over the German bombing of the Buckingham Palace and the Houses of Parliament asked for India being declared an 'Open' country and the British to 'Quit' India' campaign. The Congress stalwarts fell in for a state of rebellion and created countrywide lawlessness and sabotage. The rebels took upon themselves the sacred duty of running parallel governments which in the district by Midnapur in Bengal proved a formidable rival to the British one with its stronghold in Contai. In connexion with my holiday trip to Digha Ghat I have described the scene and the locality. The contiguous area of Tamluk Sub-Division was another stronghold. A network of strongly entrenched posts in both places worked efficiently. Police stations including personnel were sacked and burnt; a region of terror prevailed from the official stand-point but otherwise the rebels evoked public admiration for their 'heroic' deeds. Psychologically the people took it for granted that the German victory in Europe and of the Japanese in Asia

were axiomatic truths and that the Allied resistance was soon to end in defeat and humiliation. In Calcutta itself tram cars were burnt for days on end. Undoubtedly the British had to resort to repressive measures. The subversive activities of the Congressites at a time when the Allies were locked in a death grapple with the enemy and India threatened with imminent invasion furnished lurid comments on their conduct. Yet the British did not prove vindictive at War's end; on the contrary they ceded more than what they proposed through Cripps; they granted the 'complete independence' demanded by Gandhi in the thirties. Since the temporary infiltration of the Chinese into NEFA in 1962 (they withdrew unilaterally within an inconceivably short time) that Sovereign State of India has been cherishing a deadly rancour against the sister sovereign State of Pakistan since the latter did not fall in with India against china. Non-alignment and co-existence are the professed principles about which India is so proud and eloquent. Pakistan treated the Chinese 1962 shortlived incursion as a borderdispute and so it has been since. What did Pakistan do? Did she ask India to throw open their country to the Chinese? Did they attack India? Did they launch into campaign of subversion from outside? The Congress, it should not be forgotten, were scanning the horizon for Subhas Chandra Bose (then in the employ of the Japanese) to march into India and liberate it. India treated the annexation of Hyderabad as a small Police action and recently the full scale armed conquest of the Portuguese territory in India as a patriotic act of elimination of small enemy pockets. The history of the world will not find a prallel to the indefensible conduct of Gandhiji and his followers in the wake of departure of Sir Stafford Cripps in 1942. During the time I had been D. P. Information, the Press correspondents who were in touch with me, particularly Kedar Babu of The Statesman looked upon me as a lunatic on account of my unshakeable faith in the Allied Victory. They were equally firm about the victory of the Axis and therefore the mentality of the Congress was absolutely clearly reflected in their hostility to the British war effort.

In October, 1942, a terrific cyclone with a tidal wave in it heels swept over the coastal areas of Midnapur district penetrating deep into the interior and destroying everything before its elemental fury and leaving death and devastation behind. It was not possible to assess with any

accuracy the toll of human lives it took. There was wholesale destruction of crops and cattle; the area inundated and submerged was too vast to be opened up immediately for communication and the reaching of supplies; the disposal of bodies and carcasses within a reasonable time was an impossibility with men and transport available at the district headquarters situated far inland. Boats and boatmen did not exist at Midnapur town: Vehicular transport or the little of it that existed then was rendered immobile by the inundation. The mobilisation of men, material, food supplies & medicines took some time to be organised by the district and provincial administration. The whole area destroyed was stinking with the smell of the killed. It was a wholesale destruction profoundly tragic in its proportions. Nature, red in tooth & claw, wiped out the 'parallel' government of the Congress in Midnapur where the head of the District Magistrate, Niaz Mohammad Khan, was demanded on a charger; he was accused of making a cruel statement about the provision of immediate relief the herculean nature of the tremendous job not being taken into consideration. Syamaprasad Mokerjee, Finance Minister, would not listen to any argument and resigned.

Meanwhile the panicky condition of the people over the impending Japanese invasion and the landing of troops on the eastern coast of Bengal spread to the Govt. and the Military Command. The Japanese forces had no worry about their own food supplies. Each individual soldier with a gun in hand and small quantity of rice in his pocket was unbelievably mobile. It was the conviction of the Govt. That he along with hosts of fighter colleagues would run over East Bengal and seize for consumption all food stocks of the area. The prosecution of the war was the exclusive responsibility of the British Rulers, Civil & Military. The infiltration of the Japanese would be effected, it was taken for granted, through the seizure and use of the country boats of East Bengal and then by the appropriation and consumption of their rice. Therefore the command came: Withdraw the boats and other transport to safer areas (in actual practice the boats were burnt), Seize and transfer the rice stocks to safer areas. This high policy went under the name of Rice Denial Policy. Millions of boats were burnt; colossal stores of rice were seized from Barisal, Noakhali, Chittagong and other places and transferred to Calcutta and then shipped abroad. This work was done by the

merchant princes of Calcutta under the approved orders of the Governor of Bengal, Sir John Herbert, towards the close of the year 1942. The rice denial policy and the complete removal of all forms of transport were first enunciated by the Governor in April, 1942, in a speech at the Bengal Legislative Assembly. In September he confirmed it at a Joint Session of the Upper & Lower House and said that orders had already been issued for the execution of the policy. The Bengal Ministry had no hand whatsoever in the adoption and execution of this policy. It was of the highest civil & military command of the British. In Bengal it was put through by the Governor, his British advisers with the help of trustworthy merchants and dependable Bengali friends and associates. It was carried out with dexterous speed, particularly during a spell of absence of Mr. Fazlul Huq in New Delhi where he had to be at regular intervals in connexion with the work of the National Defence Council. The execution of the rice removal policy led to the registration of rise in rice price in steady & gradual degrees at the initial stage, then phenomenally and eventually to the disappearance of rice from the Province culminating in the Famine of 1943. I distinctly remember how in the middle of December, 1942, I bought two maunds of rice in the open market for my domestic consumption at the rate of Rs. 15/- a maund; earlier it was being sold in Calcutta at Rs. 8/- and Rs. 8. 50 a maund. On his return from New Delhi about this time the Chief Minister expressed his alarm and concern over the rice deal then in progress in Calcutta. His close associates informed him in whispers how big business and rice contractors, particularly those to whom the palace was easily accessible, were having an incredibly lucrative time. A Barisal man himself Mr. Huq became fully aware how his own district, the granary of Bengal, had already been denuded of its immeasurably rich stock of rice. He also sensed the coming scarcity. He ordered a Conference of Rice Dealers at the Bengal Secretariat on the 20th December, 1942. I attended it in the course of my normal duties. Most of the big and wholesale dealers who attended the Conference were uncommunicative at the session; their replies to Mr. Huq's anxious and frantic queries were not at all forthright. Only one of them, Ashu Babu (Bhattacharyya or Chitterjee, I forget), was goaded into a frank confession. He said since there was open buying and exploitation for profits he, like many other, had bought some and sold for profits. He totally denice 'hoarding' and challenge

Mr. Huq to pay a personal visit to the shipping berths and see for himself how vessels were being loaded and rice exported to the Middle East war Theatre. After this the Conference ended abruptly. The same evening the first Japanese air raid on Calcutta took place (Alert at 10-15 p. m. All clear at midnight). Dum dum., Watgunge & Budge Budge areas were attacked. Next night towards the small hours there was the second attack affecting Watgunge in particular. The third attack came on the third consecutive night; on this occasion there was indiscriminate bombing of the civilian population of Howrah, Hatibagan Market, Jorabagan in particular, causing consternation among them. After an interval of one night the fourth air raid occurred on the evening of the 24th December (All clear at midnight); in this the important Dalhousie Square area and the heart of the city, namely, Bowbazar area were indiscriminately bombed. Many houses were damaged on the outside only; one or two big craters were caused; casualties were nominal. The fifth and the final bombing took place on the morning of 28th December 3-30 a. m. to 4-15 to be precise. In the wake of the exodus that took place early in the year, now began the exodus of Calcutta as a whole. Rich people paid fabulous prices for transport; the poor were on their feet for twenty-four hours (from morning to next morning)- all moving towards the Howrah & Sealdah Railway Station with the result that they were at a dead end long before they could get at these. The next alternative was the road journey by the Grand Trunk Road from Howrah and the Barackpur Road from the eastern sector. Buses & trucks had the fancy price they demanded. A nation was on the march as it were. Many civil servants deserted their posts for an indefinite period; many came back after leaving their families at home. Among others our famous educationist friend, Itrat Hussain Zuberi, then Principal of Islamia College, Calcutta, sealed his College for an indefinite period and fled upcountry. Mr. Blair laid down a formula for action against the deserters according to the nature of their offence, ranging from suspension, leave without pay etc. to outright dismissal. The action clearly outlined in the relevant order was taken against all found guilty irrespective of status or personality. Dr. Zuberi's offence came clearly under dismissal. His plea was that he had informed the President of the Governing Body and then left although he was within two miles of the Bengal Secretariat with the DPI available there and with a phone at his disposal. The Chief

Minister, Mr. Fazlul Huq was reported to have acquitted Dr. Zuberi with a sixteen-page note in the latter's defence. There was an irony of fate in my domestic life. My family had been left in Rajshahi since I took over early in March. As soon as the Annual Examination of my school-going children was over my wife wound up her establishment there and arrived at Calcutta on the 13th Day of December. The bombing began of the 20th. On my return from the Secretariat after the day's work I would find my family pale with panic and I had to listen to fantastic rumours about how the Japanese would 'nt spare even lanes & alleys (of Calcutta) which would be riddled with bombs & bullets. Did the Japanese send confidential information to my servants and neighbours? They couldn't meet my interrogation. When from the 29th December the Japanese air raids ceased altogether they became scarefree. Another rumour was afloat that the Chief Minister himself was panicky and would flee. but Mr. Huq was a problem to ARP authorities, to his kith & kin and also to his friends. He would move about freely in his car even when the air raid alert was on.

Let me move back by a few months to refer to an intriguing development in the work of the Publicity Deptt. One fine morning I was told that with a view to the work of the department being made dynamic two Honorary Publicity Advisers had been associated for years with Calcutta Journalism working with one newspaper to day, with another tomorrow, running a weekly now and trying another after sometime. When I came into office he was editor of **The Whip**, a weekly. Soon I discovered that my department was giving him a monthly subsidy of Rs. 3,000/- three thousand only (of course from Discretionary Funds) and he was sending three thousand free copies to people in the Province whose names were furnished by my office. The nature and contents of this weekly may be easily guessed. It was Govt. publicity work. He enjoyed the confidence of the Calcutta Govt. House and also of headquarters at New Delhi and moved frequently between the two. In dress & deportment he was a combination of the fop and the snob, had a costly suit on with a tie to match (though the tie was generally of loud colour and design) and an overbearing manner with the Madrassi rolled r's. He was not a knight for nothing So his price was Rs. 3,000/- a month. These two were "palace" appointments. Earlier Mr. Blair had shown to me a long note on the work of the Publicity Deptt. Which was obviously a

'defence' sent to the Government House and which clearly indicated in retrospect the advent of the two advisers. It was considered necessary that they should have an office, a phone and a Chaprassi. I managed a wooden cubicle for them on the first floor southern verandah, where the requisite furniture, and additional phone connexion and an attendant were provided from my budget and establishment. Sir Srinivas could be seen there only rarely, Mr. Tyson at least once a week if not more. The former had no advice to give, the latter gave his in the weekly meeting of the Committee on Information. So what price was given to Mr. Tyson ?

Nothing, because it was an honorary appointment. But then just an honorarium from my Discretionary Fund, a euphemism for Secret Service, of Rs. 2,500/- a month was paid to Mr. Tyson. On account of my occupation as a teacher I was a stranger to these backstair transactions and naturally I grew wiser but not more respectful to people who fattened at the cost of the Publicity Deptt. Another fine day the orderly of the Deptt. placed at the disposal of the Hony. Advisers popped in to say that Mr. Tyson had given me his 'Salam' which meant that I was sent for. This was a novel experience for me. Neither the Ministers nor the Chief Secretary ever resorted to this crudely rude practice and I drove the minion out. Then Tyson gave me a ring only to be reminded of his cheek. He changed his technique and asked "am i to understand that I cannot have your co-operation, Mr. Hena?" My answer was forthright to point out that his diplomatic gloss and misinterpretation couldn't wash away his impropriety after which he mustn't look for me in his room. Late in the evening when I was free I walked into the Chief Secretary's Room and informed him about this episode. On the following day sometime before lunch one of my ADPI's ran in to say that I was being arranged by the two honourable gentlemen before the Chief Minister and that the Chief Secretary had just got into the scene of the trial. I sent a prompt note to the Chief Secretary asking for an opportunity to defend myself: he wrote back to say I need not to worry. What the Chief Secretary did was to say that if the two gentlemen had any requirement they should tell him as the Secretary of the Deptt. and not interfere with my duties. He said he knew about the episode and that the D. P. information would go back to his department if there was a bungling of this type. The trial ended abruptly and I had a dinner

invitation at the Chief Minister's house that evening. Mr. Tyson profited by this experience. On the occasion of the visit of a Turkish Delegation to Calcutta, Mr. Fazlul Huq organised a big Tea Party at the Grand Hotel. Towards the close of the function Sir Srinivas walked up to me and asked me to keep my office open so that he could get some typing work done. It was late in the afternoon past office hours and I requested him to get the same done the following day. He went off rubbing in his point without seeing reason. When he was sickeningly trying I had to point out that neither my office nor I myself would be ordered about. Mr. Tyson was observing from a distance and vanished the moment he had an inkling of the upshot. A small group of men of the Chief Minister's Establishment clustered around and enjoyed the subbing he had himself occasioned and received. He furnished a sharp contrast to Mr. Tyson who was learned, of mature journalistic experience, a seasoned politician and one who did considerable war publicity work. In 1942 his book, **India Arms for Victory**, was published. Sir Srinivas was a "square" at his best and a humbug at his worst.

Did Mr. Fazlul Huq make any use of the Discretionary Funds at the disposal of the Director? Yes, his permanent instruction to me was the payment of a monthly sum of Rs. 300/- to the poet, Nazrul Islam, who was then in difficulty and who soon afterwards lost his mental balance gradually to lose his speech and sense altogether. India and Pakistan grieve to day over his mental alienation and compete with each other in offering help and homage to the poet who is eking out a wretchedly lingering life. But Mr. Fazlul Huq's prevision of the coming calamity to this great poet and the earliest of generous gesture he made stand to the Chief Minister's eternal credit. Second, Mr. Huq would give occasional help to a struggling assistant of his. That was all. And even in these petty matters he would inquire first whether there was any money to spare.

Another foresight and corresponding action to support his wisdom and generosity was the appointment, at the very inception of the Publicity Department, of Mr. Abbasuddin Ahmad, as its Gramophone Expert. This illustrious musician of Muslim Bengal in particular, immortalised the songs of Nazrul Islam with his sweet voice and mellifluous tongue. A little over one year ago he died at Dacca full of honours though not of years. But it was Mr. Fazlul Huq who gave stability & security to his

otherwise uncertain career in his youth. It is easy for a Minister to get a musician to accompany him in his tours and to secure public plaudits for him as well as for the singer. And all Ministers in Bengal exploited Mr. Abbasuddin Ahmad in their tours. But it was Mr. Huq who secured a foothold in Government Service for the musician who rose to be Additional Song Publicity Organiser in Bengal and the Chief of the section in East Pakistan. My association with him had been long and intimate. He took with him to my bungalow at M. C. College, Sylhet, his wife, his second son and his only daughter (both school going then). Any husband should be proud to have such a sweet, inspiring partner in life, any child to have such an affectionate mother. Our house vibrated with the songs that the boy and the girl sang and at once I perceived the greatness that the latter would achieve in future. Abbasi, the boy & Firdousi, the girl later became my pupils in the English classes of Dacca University. She did tutorial work with me as well. She showed a perfect command of English. Such scholarship in addition to her unique musical skill is rarely to be met with.

One of the duties of the D. P. Information was to deliver an annual Extension Lecture on Publicity and Propagandas at the Co-operative Training Institute at Naogaon, Rajshahi, Here the Inspectors of Co-operative Societies received their training. In July, 1942 and at the corresponding period in 1943 I had to go to Naogaon and give a talk on the subject. The trainees had vague notions about what publicity is or what propagganda is designed to achieve. On each occasion I gave a full exposition of the organised nature of this State activity and the launching of a planned campaigns or drive on a selected titem. The media of the spoken word in physical contact or over the wireless, of the written word in newspapers, journals pamphlets & posters of communication through pictures & illustration, of advertisements with concrete illustrations in films and cinemas etc. were explained and of the application of these to cooperative farming., marketin with the credit provided by Co-operative Banking. Government publicity should be a mirror of public efforts in progresive and ameliorative work, in crisis brought about by nature or armed hostilities and not a vehicle of falsehood, distortion, exaggeration or vituperation. The method pursued by the British was radically different from that of the Germans. During famine the provision of food supplies, during cyclone of food, shelter and medicine was

the correct index and criterion of publicity. Tall talk, verbose dissertations would be poor substitutes. On both occasions I invited the trainees to remember in substance what Hamlet said to the players in regard to acting. Their concern should be to apply Hamlet's ideal to publicity. The following should be borne in mind:-

Speak the speech trippingly on the tongue but if you mouth it I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand but use all gently..... be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor; suit the action to the word, the word to the action..... whose end, both at the first and now was and is to hold, as it were, the mirror upto nature.

On the First occasion I met Mr. Akhtar Hamid Khan, ICS there in his capacity as S. D. O Naogaon; on the second Mr. H. Banerjee, ICS., as the successor. Mr. Khan soon after resigned, became an educationist and now he holds a key position in Rural Development. I have lost all trace of Mr. Banerjee whom I found to be a gentle youth of the sweetest nurture most of which he owed, I thought, to his mother, a lady of high intellectual & spiritual calibre. On the first occasion my family then living at Rajshahi town thought I would make a detour in returning to Calcutta and give them a look-up but they were disappointed; my pedagogic conscience stood in the way exactly as it did in the matter of draing their travelling allowance. Within three or four months of my joining as Director my wife and childen gave me a look-up at my Calcutta residence in small batches and since they did not come over for living with me I did not feel justified in drawing their travelling allowance. I paid an occasional visit to them at my own expense just to spend the week-end with the Chief Secretary's permission.

Before I close this outline of my life and work in the year 1942 it should be relevant to state that on the 29th April, 1942 that is to say, within one month and twenty days of my assumption of office at the Bengal Secretariat, I had to appear before an Education department Selection Board to stand another test for a substantive appointment in the Bengal Senior Educational Service. It may be recalled that the out-break of the war in 1939 prevented my going abroad for a year's training, a step that was taken in the wake of the Selection Board deliberation made earlier by the rejection of all other Senior candidates. The vis major of the war

having led to the cancellation of the programme my approval for a permanent job should have been automatic and equitable. But no; this barest act of justice was not available for one who had no powerful backing at the top and who could not manoeuvre or resort to tactics I hated. And yet as occasion demanded I was considered fit enough to supply the deficiencies of a Rudra or work as pillar to Snehamooy Datta or replace Altaf Hussain. I did not lose my head that I was working as a Deputy Secretary but walked straight up to the corridor in front of the Director of Public Instruction's Room and took my weat along with the Department. Mr. E. N. Blaudy represented the Public Service Commission as its Chairman on the Selection Board. I stood the test and was included among the approved candidates. But the most outstanding feature of the selection was that Somnath Maitra whom I have described already at some length was given the topmost position in the list of approval. There was a statutory bar to a Second Class man being promoted to the Senior service this didn't matter. When incumbents of the same service are promoted to a higher service they are conceded their own position since otherwise there would be a glaring violation of public policy this fundamental principle did not weigh either. Nevertheless the approval I got on this occasion led to my substantive berth in B. S. E. S. (later East Pakistan Senior E. S.)

1943 marked a turning point in the history of the Second World War. Its deep, deafening roar and rumbling echoed and reverberated in Russo-German theatre in the defence of Leningrad and Stalingrad and in North Africa, in Sicily & Italy and at least in one signal allied victory in the Solomon Islands in the Pacific Hitler's Festung Europa showed cracks and clefts. Rommel's invincibility became a hollow myth before the strategy of Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery (dear Monty) in North Africa. Tunis & Bizerta were not only cleared of the enemy but became the prison house of lakhs of German soldiers. Hitler's Central Fort starbed crashing under Allied bombing. In India Field Marshal Earl Wavell moved from the Commander-in-Chief's house to the Viceregal Lodge. In Bengal the scare of imminent Japanese invasion was superseded by the creeping horror of Famin. In the opening months Mr. Fazlul Huq still held his sway. But the Governor, Sir John Herbert, had the whiphand of him. The 'rice-denial' loot had a merry-go-round; in the

scandal that prevailed it was difficult to determine the share and size of the plunderers' Loot. The names of many in the competitive grab including those of the highest in rank and status were noised abroad. The Chief Minister made earnest efforts to beat the onslaught of the scarcity of food supplies and the consequential spiralling of prices. His enemies, the erstwhile colleagues of his first ministry, became desperately active in bringing about his downfall with the support, it was alleged, of the Governor. The budget session of the Bengal Legislature in March, 1943, in such a crisis still ran a normal course with a comfortable majority for Mr. Huq and as the budget was about to be passed at the fag-end of the month a dramatic announcement of his resignation was made by him one day in the Legislative Assembly in reply to a question put to him by a member of his party. It was stated by the member that there was a rumour afloat that he had resigned. Was there any basis? He affirmed it and said that the Governor had sent for him the preceding night, demanded his resignation and that he had complied. There was no further elucidation; the house broke up abruptly in sheer confusion; Mr. Huq's second Ministry came to a sudden end. The Governor's Rule was imposed; the Budget was certified. The general expectation in the context of war and famine was that the authoritarian regime thus introduced had come to stay for some time. But in less than one month (in three weeks as far as I remember) it was lifted. Khwaja Nzaimuddin was called upon to form a Ministry and this he did with H. S. Suhrawardy, Khwaja Shahabuddin (his brother), Khan Bahadur Jalaluddin Ahmed of Chittagong, Syed Moazzamuddin Hossain of Comilla, Maulavi Tamizuddin Ahmed (later Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan at the moment of his death in 1963).

Among his caste Hindu colleagues were Tulshi Charan Goswami, Tarak Mukherjee (a Zamindar of a suburban area of Calcutta) and Barada Pain (an Advocate of Howrah). Pulin Behari Mullick (brother of Mukunda Behari Mullick, a Minister in the first Cabinet of Huq) represented the Scheduled Castes. Civil Supplies went to Suhrawardy, L. S. G & P. H to Jalaluddin, Education to Tamizuddin, Publicity to Mullick etc. It was a Muslim League Ministry with which Caste Hindus & Scheduled Castes coalesced. The Party strength & organisation were fully represented by the appointment of new office-bearers in the shape

of the Chief Whip (Fazlur Rahman later Minister in Bengal, E. P. & Pakistan), the Chief Parliamentary Secretary (Mohammad Ali of Bogra later Prime Minister of Pakistan for sometime) and a host of Parliamentary Secretaries of other departments. Like the Ministers they were installed in their offices at the Secretariat with their own rooms, telephones, chaprassies etc. In all parliamentary affairs they had their access to secretariat records and their sway over Civil Servants. Not only they asserted their rights & privileges in legislative sphere but also spread their tentacles over the day-to day administration. The Chief Whip, Mr. F. Rahman, became egregious in this type of interference. The number of similar functionaries under Mr. Fazlul Huq was small so small that nobody ever felt their existence. They didn't have any habitation at the Writers' Buildings. On assumption of office the Ministers were given rights to official and residential furniture according to their own choice, car allowances, fountain pens of their own liking etc. etc. My Minister Pulinbehari Mullick's first demand on assumption of office pertained to the appointment of his four orderlies (candidates were drawn up in an array before him prior to their selection), then the buying of his residential furniture according to the specification he soon prepared and produced. He didn't care to make any inquiries about the scope of the Publicity Department's care to make any inquiries about the scope of the Publicity Department's activities. His insistent and immediate demand was the publication of the photographs of all the Ministers with their life-sketches in the Bengal Weekly and its Bengali counterpart and in the next instalment of the Parliamentary colleagues. He was young and good-looking; there was no difficulty about his photogenic face & its block. Jalaluddin Ahmed was too orthodox to be photographed. Another gentleman despite his beard had a fair complexion and a round face; the official photograph of his & its block came quite well in The Bengal Weekly but he was dissatisfied. He brought his own photograph from his residence for another block & another insertion. The job of Publicising the figure of an individual Minister became the most important item of State publicity which took on an additional dimension. I collected who-is-who material personally and transmitted it to the B. G. Press. No member of the outgoing Huq Ministry ever made such a demand. A word about the Caste Hindu Ministers of the incoming Cabinet should'n't come amiss. Mr. Tulsi

Charan Goswami was a zamindar of West Bengal (Suburban areas), who had already exhausted his estate, property, wealth and means with his wanton, luxurious living. Besides he was a boozier of established reputation. He had to pay dearly (in litigation) for his escapade with a married daughter of Lord Sinha (the first Baron of Raipur, Birbhum). It was said that his appointment a Minister in the Nazimuddin Cabinet saved him from utter destitution but the halo of an Oxford degree in his youth & of parliamentary gift in the corresponding period and his purple blood still shone about him. Dr. Nalinakshya Sanyal drew on one occasion the attention of the Speaker in the Legislative Assembly to the drunken condition of the Minister sitting in the House. The Second Caste Hindu Minister was Mr. Taraknath Mukherjee, another zamindar (of Uttarpara, a few miles off from Calcutta) but in affluent circumstances. He had all the Ministers, Parliamentary colleagues, Civil servants this house for a Sunday entertainment—the Chief Guest being Khawaja Nazimuddin. There was a nominal public function as well in the local Municipality where the Chief Minister had to make a speech. As angling was one of the hobbies of the latter elaborate arrangements were made in the tank situated in the immense compound of the Zamindar's house. It was a sight for gods to see how flunkies, one after another, walked tiptoe to where Khawaja Nazimuddin was sitting with the angling rod in his hand, and whispered something into his ears. Lavish entertainment in a huge lunch and also in occasional snacks marked the occasion. Tulsi Charan Goswami was in drowsy state at lunch table where his immediate and intimate friends pulled his legs by making him insist on having strange dishes which were not simply available. Mr. Mukherjee was always sweet, always hospitable. Everyday he would bring with him to the Secretariat an enormous tiffin box full of salted items and sweets which went round free to ministers and officials. He had a grievance against me that I was one of the rare partakers of his home made delicacies. But an apparently rude episode came our way one day when he was holding a Press Conference. At tea-break two Europeans of the Friends Unit refused to eat anything, protested audibly against the feed at a time when hundreds were dying in the streets of Calcutta from starvation, and walked out. Mr. Mukherjee's gifts for leadership as a Minister were unknown and invisible but he was a perfect gentleman. Mr. Baroda Pain, the third Caste Hindu Colleague

was a close, secretive fellow, not above scandal in his personal life. But he was capable and competent in his work. Contrast these with the Caste Hindu colleagues of Mr. Fazlul Huq. Syamaprasad Mookerjee, despite his Hindu Mahasabha slant in outlook was an outstanding educationist in the country. If Fazlul Huq was a disciple in law of his father, Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, he too was an obedient disciple of Mr. Huq. In Parliamentary gifts he appeared to be only second to Mr. Shahid Suhrawardy. Dr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee was a distinguished Professor of Law, Principal, Calcutta University Law College and later Vice-Chancellor of the University. Santosh Kumar Basu was admittedly one of the eminent lawyers of the High Court. After Partition he was the first Indian Deputy High Commissioner in Dacca.

The advent of Nazimuddin Ministry was followed by provincewide hunger and starvation which engulfed Calcutta in particular by a ceaseless flow of food seekers into the city. At all hours of the day and night one had to listen to piteous cries for food. Earth and sky were filled with the wail "Dear mother, dear housewife, give us some rice to eat" Many house-holders had no appetite to eat their food when their ears were assailed by such lamentations, loud and low. At the Sealdah end and at Howrah end a gruesome scene could be witnessed of men, women and children prostrate with hunger and disease, of bodies dead and decomposed. They were called "sick destitutes" by the state Publicity. Mr. Shahid Suhrawardy took on the wellnigh impossible job of Civil Supplies at a moment when scarcity of stocks was real, acute, widespread. He thundered against hoarders and profiteers, his slogan being "Thou shalt not grind the faces of the poor". Another slogan of his was "Eat Bajra meal" (Bajra was an indigestible powder of a questionable variety of cereal). A skeleton Civil Supply Unit existed under the Huq Ministry; it was expanded by the same under Mr. Pinnell I. C. S. who failed to tackle the earlier comparatively smaller problem. Mr. Suhrawardy now expanded it into a huge organisation; gruel kitchens and Destitute Homes were started but these could publicity do when there were no supplies? We on the Information Committee decided against sermonising and shamming, and for displaying supplies whenever these were available and the nature of the quantities that had arrived. In the editorials of the Bengal Weekly I tried to strengthen the morale of the public by condemning panic buying although this was not my respon-

sibility. Along with Asghar Ali Shah, I. C. S. who succeeded Drucquer I went round and inspected the grued kitchens. I took under my special care some of the Destitute Homes in the South Calcutta area, supervised their photograhs published in The Bengal Weekly. This I did out of humanitarian consideration. At a meeting of the Information Committeee the Chief Secretary asked one of us to wait upon Mr. Suhrawardy (he was having his office elsewhere at the new Civil Supply Headquarters) and collect sttatistics about food arrivals. None was willing. Mr. A. B. Chatterjee was forthright in his excuse. 'Mr. Blair did not pursue it any further. Mr. Tyson, on another occaion, came into my room in a distressful mood, flung away his general reserve and said it was getting difficult for him to carry on under Mr. Suhrawardy who would correct his draft more than once before he would approve publication. The correction of a draft from Mr. Tyson whose penmanship was admittedly high argues a degree of conceit which is hardly forgivable. I had more to learn at my own cost. On another occasion as I was emerging from the Legislative Assembly I ran into Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqui (already characterised at some length) who was accompanied by his nephew Mr. S. K. Dehlavi (prominent now not only in pakistan but also in India in connexion with his late work in the External Affairs Ministry of Pakistan) and who quite unexpectedly started shouting at me to observe 'Do your duties properly". I was too upset to grasp but when I did I said "Don't talk nonsense; the Civil Supply publicity is Tyson's charge now, not mine". He did not know, apologised at once and followed it up in a note in the Morning News. But soon enough I had a direct hit. One Sunday morning Mr. Suhrawardy, it was reported in the newspapers, would be addressing a public meeting in the Park Circus Market. The place being near my house I attended and also took notes of his speech, which I wanted to utilize in The Bengal Weekly. At a big lunch at the Calcutta Club given by Mr. Dossani the same day he beckoned to me and inquired if I could go to his house after lunch and dictate a note of his speech to his stenographer. I agreed and complied. Meanwhile he was in a company of MLA colleagues. When the typing was done, he made some corrections which did not appear to me to be happy. But I gathered later that he had given out among his friends that my draft was poor. To say the least he was mean and unscrupulous. He was an attractive talker, a far better speaker. But when he wrote he was

flamboyant and verbose and also loose in structure and sequence. His flamboyance in style was in perfect consonance with his flamboyant conduct. It is now recorded in history how his boosted-up work in the Civil Supply Department for combating famine collapsed ignominiously; lakhs of people died; the streets of Calcutta were littered over with bodies undisposed and given to stinking. It was Lord Wavell who, by his wisdom and his milk of human kindness, arranged for supplies from abroad and gradually saved the Province from starvation deaths. Rice was not denied to the Japanese but to the people of Bengal by Sir John Herbert and the capitalist rice-dealing friends of Mr. Suhrawardy and his group. The name of Hasan Ispahani who was a close friend of the Governor as well, leaps to the mind. But of this more anon.

The advent of the Nazimuddin Ministry was followed on the other hand by a happier turn in the course of the war. "Dear Monty's master strategy in North Africa, particularly in the routing of Rommel and the capture of Tunis created a thrill in our country. Montgomery's profile got silhouetted against the sky. The morale of the armed forces and the civilian population received a vitalizing tonic. In Bengal the Government and the Eastern Command organised a Victory celebration with pomp and pageantry. First Lt. General Irwin, Chief of the Eastern Command held a grand reception. Then followed the pageant in the streets of Calcutta with elaborate seating arrangements at street corners. We brought out a Special Supplement of the Bengal Weekly to mark the occasion. Mr. Porter in offering his greetings to me on this publication said, "You have created something out of nothing". We now entered upon the preparation of a worthy reception at the Grand Hotel to which were invited not only the Defence Services personnel and the civilians of all groups and strata but also the members of all Diplomatic Missions. Mr. Blair put me in entire charge of organising the function which called for the utmost alertness in the selection of venue, menu, furnishings, decorations and above all of the invitees. I did my very best. But on the eve of the function I received a peremptory call from the Chief Minister, Khwaja Nazimuddin and was asked to explain why the invitations went out in the name of the publicity Minister instead of on his behalf. I sensed the wirpulling behind it; some of his influential colleagues and the group of Parliamentary office-bearers were a lame. I pointed out how it was the exclusive responsibility of the Publicity Department and

how in the fitness of things the Minister of the Department should play the host. The Khwaja Sahib unlike his usual self became still more stiff and discourteous and demanded "Under whose authority did you do so?" The Chief Secretary's was the simple reply he received. I asked him to hold his patience for a moment, went back to my room and collected the relevant file which was placed before him. By another stroke of good luck I had preserved therein the draft of the invitation which bore marks of correction as well as Mr. Blair's signature and date. When he had a look he did not breathe a further syllable. On the scheduled date and hour my assignment in addition to all other arrangements was to see to the last guest being received by me personally and I kept my post. My Minister did not like this; he wanted me to be at his elbow. At the end of the function the Chief Secretary formed a knot of people associated and gracefully acknowledged that the "Bundobast" was perfect. Slightly earlier a Conference was held at the Light-house Cinema Hall (off the New Market, Calcutta) at 7-30 in the morning when the Governor, Sir John Herbert addressed it. On arrival Khwaja Nazimuddin whispered to me "What an unearthly hour and yet how large the gathering". He was a late riser and it was a job for him to attend at 7-30. But another remarkable incident occurred in my presence on the occasion. The Chief Secretary and I were receiving the guest as they dropped in. The moment the Governor arrived he pushed me to the front and walked back into the Hall. For sometime past I heard that the Governor and the Chief Secretary had fallen out. I got now conclusive evidence of the discord; the two were not on speaking terms. Mr. Blair soon applied for leave preparatory to retirement.

But there was no flagging in his work and naturally in the work of all the important departments in the Secretariat where he was the earliest to arrive and about the last to leave. He would scrutinize papers with a microscope as it were and pinpoint discrepancies and anomalies and hasty recommendations of officers below him. At the initial stage of my work once or twice I made careless noting only to regret them later and I became cautious ever afterwards. He gave a lead to all other officers in the matter of doing night duties once a month at the Secretariat during the war emergency the hours being 8 p. m. to 6 a. m. He was the first to do them himself and continued doing so till he left in autumn 1943.

When my Minister Pulinbehari Mullick's first requirements in furniture and the recruitment of liveried attendants were satisfied, when the Bengal Weekly made a suitable display of the photographs and life-sketches of the New Cabinet he got down to the work of the Department and also to examine the ratio of appointments from among the members of the Scheduled Caste he himself being one and his eldest brother Mr. Mukundabehari Mullick, formerly of the first Huq Ministry, being another sturdy champion. Pulin Babu was among the younger of four brothers; of the other two not included here one was a Sub-Judge and the other an I. C. S. as far as I remember. It was a go-ahead family. Before his elevation he was practising Lawyer (MA, BL) in the Calcutta Police Courts and he resumed the same in 1945 when he went out. He is there still. As we got to know each other I found that he took his M. A. in Economics from Presidency College two years after I did: a College link was thus established. The work link was soon formed by his absolute confidence in me to the extent that he would mostly sign without reading the papers before him. His personal pressure was too heavy to resist intimacy on my part. He would love to go out in my company for feeding or shopping or a stroll. In dress and demeanour he was very much unlike his eldest brother who was plain and loud-mouthed. Pulin Babu was decent in his ways. But he was much too young for the politics of the group which inducted him into office. He soon started receiving personal letters from Mr. Altaf Hussain who was then at New Delhi working as an Assistant Press Adviser and feeling very uncomfortable. He wanted to revert to his own position at the Secretariat wherefrom it was alleged, he had been unjustly ousted by Mr. Fazlul Huq. He even claimed fellowship at Faridpur school with the Minister who with the frankness of an amateur politician would pass on the contents of these letters to me. Altaf Hussain's claim to be a contemporary of Pulinbehari Mullick at Faridpur School was a chronological anachronism which should be ignored however in the present context. His cause was the cause of Nazimuddin, Suhrawardy, Shahabuddin and the whole group. They thought that it was their duty and obligation to bring him back—he had served them so well and they exerted their pressure on the Minister. They did not appear to be aware how on the day the Nazimuddin Ministry had been sworn in I met Mr. Blair and made it clear to him that I was prepared to go back

to my department as soon as he would give me an indication to that end. Mr. Blair sked me not to worry till he should let me know. From what was evident later it could be concluded without the slightest doubt that their approach to the solution of the problem was not through the Chief Secretary but through the Publicity Minister who had been subjected to increasing shock tactics. The latter was first coaxed and then coerced. He decline to be seduced by lollipops; he resisted unwarranted accusations. When he was summoned to meet Khwaja Nazimuddin and explain, he appeared with prepared briefs. Meanwhile another lurid drama was enacted by the sudden and serious illness of Sir John Herbert, the Governor. It was something grave necessitating his removal from the Govt. House and the induction into office of the then Governor of Bihar. Sir John died swoon afterwards in Calcutta. My Minister and I were to have our lunch with him at Govt. House on the day he was taken ill. All engagements were cancelled in the morning leaving an indelible mark in my memory. Rumour was rife that Lady Herbert in her flight from Calcutta to London of the day preceding was detained at Cairo being in possession of valuable jewellery and that Sir John had swallowed poison Just to escape the scandal. The spectre of famine, it was commented, did not spare the highest in the Province. The widespread belief was that it was Sir John who had caused the famine in Bengal and that Nature's inexorable revenge made him equal with the dust of Bengal. The new Governor asked Mr. Blair to alter his decision and stay on in the Province but the latter did not agree He left Bengal sometime before the autumn of 1943. On the eve of his departure he made the following noting in my file.

Mr. Hena may be confirmed or I would suggest a three year tenure. Mr. A. DeC. Williams took Mr. Blair's place at the Secretariat on the eve of the autumn recess during which the Publicity Minister went out on tour to Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Siliguri & Kurseong and I had to accompany him. Simultaneously his brother Mukunda Behari Mullick, then Chairman of the Coal Board, proceeded to Darjeeling and returned along with us. It appeared that the Chief Minister, Khwaja Nazimuddin, was aware of the tour programme of the Publicity Minister. He sent for me and requested me to do what he considered a job of great public importance during my spare time in course of the Minister's tour. This

job was to arrange for an appropriate write-up to the valuable services that were being rendered by Messrs. Ispahani & Co. in famine relief. A volume of typed sheets was there enumerating these services. But these required a coherent and cogent presentation before they could be put out for public consumption and the Chief Minister believed that I could turn the enormous mass of undigested material into a finished product. He added that he had already spoken to my Minister about this job being entrusted to me and that there would be no objection from that quarter. It may be recalled that the Rice Deal of 1942 had involved, among others, the firm of Ispahani & Co. The public was also given to understand that the same firm had made a donation of one lakh rupees towards famine relief. But at that moment the tongue of scandal was loud and irrepressible and it was felt that something must be done to rehabilitate its damaged reputation. The publicity Minister's ten-day (or may be slightly longer) tour to Darjeeling, Kalimpong etc. was undoubtedly pleasant and interesting from certain point of view. A cold spell after the grilling heat of the dog days of August, and the stuffy, oppressive month of September, the blazing furnace of the major portion of October, was by itself most welcome. Far more comforting was the immunity of the whole area from Siliguri to Kalimpong from starvation, disease and death caused by the horrible famine in the plains. Ear and soul escaped the piteous cries of the hungry and pathetic moanings of the dying. At Darjeeling and Kurseong there was no trace of vital shortages. At Siliguri & Kalimpong only symptoms of toil and struggle were seen. Meeting people in authority and the leading representatives of the people in these places and having a discussion with them about their problems by the Minister (and incidentally by me as well) were other attractive features. From Darjeeling the Minister chose the narrow road by the tea plantations to go down in a jeep to the Peesta plains and then to climb up to Kalimpong. The winding descent by the woodlands, which revealed at the same time the pictorial, colourful bungalows of the planters (they were all Europeans then in the area covered) provided sights and scenes of an Arcadia touched up partially by the hand of civilisation. The meeting of two streams, each retaining its own identity, in the Teesta Vally reminded of certain verses in the Quoran. The Kalimpong Circuit House convinced me why Rabindranath loved Kalimpong more than many other places; its silence and solemn solitude invited a prolonged

stay of rest, study and contemplation. But the dust and squalor of the wool trade in the town proper revolted me. I recovered from this only when I climbed up to the Kalimpong Homes and went round; the soul of Dr. Graham and the shadow of Tagore projected themselves over the entire scene. We returned to Darjeeling via Siliguri- the train journey from Tista Mukh Ghaat being risky and full of discomfort. The personal qualities of Mr. Pulin Behari Mullick made the tour most enjoyable. He was lavish in entertainment and also very humane and generous in his dealings with the orderlies and attendants. At Darjeeling we stopped at the Lewis Jubilee Sanatorium where his eldest brother, Mukunda Behari Mullick, would keep a vigilant eye upon him and resent his irregularities in the evenings. He made it a point to go out in the afternoon in my company, have tea in the Swiss Confectionery the humdrum atmosphere at the Sanatorium and still more the food served there. His brother was his opposite in temperament and character and concluded that I was spoiling the Minister. All this while however the incubus of the "job of public importance" which was entrusted to me by the Chief Minister sat heavy on me and I had to attend to it whenever I was free from other occupations. There was a heap of amorphous material to handle; to winnow the chaff from the grain in the Commerce granary of Ispahani & Co. was indeed a job for me; eliminating rubbish, selecting pebbles and finally the dictating of a structural body cancelled all other enjoyment of the tour. Early in November (perhaps it was the 1st of the month) we returned to Calcutta. On the following morning when I was in my office I found an order sheet of the Chief Minister on my table to the effect that he had recalled Mr. Altaf Hussain from New Delhi and that I was to make over charge to him on his arrival. On the following morning Altaf Hussain reported himself at the Secretariat before my arrival. Khwaja Nazimuddin had passed the requisite orders during my absence unilaterally, without giving the slightest hint (the idea of consulting not striking at all) to the Chief Secretary who was also the Secretary of the Publicity Department. He did not feel the necessity of sending for my papers before he passed the orders. As soon as I had a look at the order on the 2nd November I met the Chief Secretary and requested him to grant me three months' leave to which he readily agreed and pointed out that under the rules the Education Department's consent was also necessary. I move on to Mr. H. Graham's (Education Secretary's) Room

just to receive the required assent. The new Chief Secretary, Mr. A. DeC Williams, knew me only slightly on the eve of our autumn tour. Even so when I saw him about my leave he was visibly moved and said "I am not responsible in any way about this order; I knew nothing about it" I assured him that I had no suspicion about his involvement and that my interview was entirely connected with my request for leave. Similarly the Education Secretary went out of his way to enter his protest against the victimisation of Civil servants on the basis of political change in administration. To neither I mentioned the recommendation of Mr. Blair about my case. On the 3rd November in making over charge to Altaf Hussain I did not mention it to him either. Only Ekkari Boee and the Office knew about Mr. Blair's recommendation. I did not care to ascertain their reactions to the submission or otherwise of the file to the Governor. I knew too well that a complication would arise whatever might happen eventually a minimum tenure of 3 three years could not be withheld in the circumstances that had arisen. My conviction was (and it has known no change since) that the same political manoeuvres which had led to the passing of the present order would come into worse display if I should press my claim for a three year tenure against the wishes of the Ministry; I had made up my mind sufficiently earlier. And naturally I felt amused when during the preceding months M. Pulin Behari Mullick was fighting against my removal. From the Education Secretary's Room as I was walking of the 2nd November towards the DPI's Room I met Dr. Jenkins on the corridor where he accosted me and remarked in a forthright manner, "I hear you are coming back to the Education Department. Why didn't you tell me before? I want to send you immediately to Chittagong College as its Principal". I was put out to be sure but urged that I didn't know about the reversion until the same morning and that I badly needed some rest after the strenuous time I had during the last twenty months. He took me into his room and had a discussion about the length of my leave and his offer of posting. He felt however that I was uncomfortable at the idea of proceeding to Chittagong which was now a risky war theatre and said "you think it over and come and tell me after two months where you should like to be posted".

Without the slightest fuss I made over charge to Altaf Hussain and went out of the Secretariat light-hearted and with the inner consciousness of having done my duties diligently and conscientiously and having never

been mixed up with politics. Khwaja Shahabuddin who had been expecting prostration on my part and sneakish attempts for another assignment under his brother's ministry was disillusioned. So was his brother too. Some of my former Pupils who had been their colleagues then helped them to form a saner and more correct estimate of my conduct. Looking back I have a nostalgic feeling about the confidence I enjoyed of Messrs Blair, Porter, Walker, A dec Williams- all men of integrity and of character and of the friendship of Mr. B. N. Chakravarty in particular. The latter was then Deputy of the Finance Department. His subsequent rise to an eminent position in the UNO and in international affairs is well-known.

I spent the three-month leave period (from November, 1943 to the 1st week of February, 1944) in Calcutta, my normal time-table being early morning stroll around the immense Circus park, daily visits after breakfast to the market to buy fish, meat, vegetable and other requirements, a quiet time till late afternoon, a long jaunt in the evening either in the Maidan or the Lake area. Personal marketing was imperative in the context of the prevailing high prices and scarcity of foodstuff. As weeks rolled by physical rest was supplanted by worries over my posting at the end of the leave. Dr. Syehamoy Datta, Principal, Rajshahi College, had seen the D. P.I. and asked for my return to Rajshahi. He was given to understand that the choice lay with me. There was no opening at Presidency. Islamia College under Zuberi was not an educational institution but a political cockpit. With characteristic elasticity the learned Edinburgh Doctor had ingratiated himself with Suhrawardy-Nazim group completely severing his earlier allegiance to A. K. Fazlul Huq. It was rumoured that he was sharing the Principal's bungalow with Mr. Abul Hashem, the then well-known Secretary

Of the Muslim League. Since his discomfiture in Islamia Mr. Zachariah had mostly been on leave from his seat at Hooghly Mohsin College and when I met Dr Jenkins next time I inquired if I could have Mr. Zachariah's place only to gather that he had just returned and resumed. I was now faced with one of the most terrible mental conflicts I have ever had. I loved Chittagong but it was now a purely garrison town and a nonfamily zone subjected to frequent air raids and liable to Japanese invasion. Everybody who was anybody at Chittagong had migrated to

Calcutta. The civilian parts of the town were deserted. No rice was available; other foodstuffs after military requirements were satisfied were either non-existent or sold at prohibitive prices. The College buildings were under military occupation; it had disintegrated into a nominal existence functioning in private lodgings and structures. To go to Chittagong or not to go was now a maddening question. Where should I leave my family? Would it be financially practicable to maintain a double establishment? Going alone if I were to be a Japanese POW what would happen to my family? I asked for further time from Dr. Jenkins who in the course of another discussion pointed out to me that there was no legal bar to any civilian living at Chittagong with his family at his own risk. I spent all my time now brooding and fretting. Had I any right to expose my wife and children to the many risks of a theatre of war? Standing or sitting or when in my bed I started reciting all the verses of the Quoran I had committed to memory in my youth. Slowly I regained my equipoise and decided to take the rough with the smooth and to proceed to Chittagong with my family. Despite Churchill's definite ignoring of the defence of the East till he had successfully tackled the West, I had my faith in the ultimate victory of the Allies. In the middle of January I conveyed my consent to the D. P. I. I also saw the Chief Secretary and asked for his favour in writing a line to the District Magistrate of Chittagong for a residential house for me all houses having been requisitioned by the armed forces. He assured me he would. But those were not the days when Government officers entered upon a progressive realisation of all the good things in life in the shape of houses, free transport etc. A beginning in this direction was made by Richard Casey, the permanent successor of Sir John. Earlier a Bav. servant would be served with an order to proceed and the rest was his concern. With this ingrained attitude in my mind I wrote to all my friends at Chittagong including the Head Clerk of the College to find some sort of accommodation, good, bad, indifferant, for my family on arrival. None succeeded. In vain I looked for a message of hope which came only at the last moment towards the end of the first week of February from Prof. Srajal Islam, my niece's husband, now posted at Chittagong College. Through overwhelming personal pressure he had succeeded in securing a suite of rooms in the dilapidated first floor of a Hindu gentleman at Dewanbazar. From my experience at the Secretariat

I concluded that it would be impossible for me to have petrol and spare car parts at Chittagong and therefore in haste of the moment and under the impact of the business acumen of a son of my landlady I sold off my car cheap. The rogue made a net profit of Rs. 600/- by transferring it to another man the same afternoon although he had pleaded in the morning that he was buying it for his personal use. My folly became still more glaring when on arrival at Chittagong I discovered how welcome to all circles I was and how the question of nonavailability of petrol would not have arisen at all in my case. but I have been a foolish educationist all my life. During the twenty months I had been in the publicity Department, I had hardly any need of my books which were stowed away in packing cases. At the end of some weeks of my leave when I turned to them I collapsed under a sudden shock; many of them were damaged but an overwhelmingly large number had simply disappeared. No calamity could have been greater but in human life one has to sustain oneself under the severest misfortune; I had to straighten up my bent back and go ahead. The fact remains however that I have never been able to replenish my humble stock. This is till a saddening memory. I had now barely five six days to wind up. The rail ways had also been under military control. It was a job securing a goods wagon for the transfer of my furniture and household goods wagon for the transfer of my furniture and household good which constituted an enormous quantity consisting of 69 packages. The goods booking section at Sealdah railway section raised their eyebrows but since the required Permit from EBR Headquarters was there they had to accept but they collected a tip in a politely subtle manner. Then there was the question of clothing my family which had been in tatters on account of the scarcity of textile material during the preceding months. I scrupulously avoided buying even 'utility' consumer goods when the famine was stalking the land. But on the eve of booking my furniture I was guilty of a misdemeanour. New rice was available in the Bowbazar open market at Rs. 19 a maund; I bought two maunds and 25 seers from there and found for it a secure place in the empty space of a huge packing case of books, with books beneath and books atop to camouflage; reports from Chittagong about rice supply there were alarming. How far it was a crime or a sin or both should be assessed from what follows. A skeleton civil supply office had just been started there. On our arrival at Chittagong on the production

a Ration Permit we got a small quantity of what was called rice and a lot of Suhrawardy brand of BAJRA; one seer of the so-called rice after an hour's gleaning from dust and stone yielded a pao of grains; in the course of two weeks I had three attacks of diarrhoea from the eating of BAJRA bread. Our daughter who was our first born was now in the First Year Intermediate Classes of Lady Brabourne College. In the war emergency Chittagong College had banned the admission of girls for whom there was no other provision there. Arrangements were therefore made for her in the Lady Brabourne College Hostel. Our eldest son the next child, was now a grown-up schoolboy who trudged along the roads of Eastern Calcutta in my company to sell off the junk that had accumulated in the house over the peacetime years (twenty one) of my service. The glass framed photographs made a heap which under wartime ethics, called for destruction but the glass on their top fetched some price when two colie loads were hawked by my son and myself in the photoframing shops. Other odd articles required on the eve of the journey to Chittagong were bought and carried home by us proudly in the absence of all adventitious aid in the persons of office peons and orderlies. But the entire Quit-Calcutta business was too tangled to manage skilfully by the two of us. Things to dispose of time at our disposal with the result that we had to leave behind a number of articles at the moment of our departure. We rorked upto midnight of 11th February, 1944, so that we might leave residence at 4-30 next morning to avail ourselves of the 6.35 Chittagong Mail at Sealdah Railway Station; the hackney carriages were available on stipulated time, 4 a. m. but the cartmen engaged were fast asleep; in that raw February morning I ran to their stabling place and shouted them up into waking. It was still dark when we got to the railway station where the booking of luggaages and seeing to these being placed aboard involved breathless running to and fro. This activity had to be synchronised with shouthing to my wife and eight children and also to an equal number of porters on the platform to move on into the reserved compartment. At long last when I thought we were securely "bestowed" I discovered a number of counted articles missing; there was only a minute to spare; I ran for my life to the luggage weighing spot where two drowsy (if not drunken) porters had become a part of their charge in inertia; yet another race back had to be accomplished with my heart throbbing audibly. It was the early morning of 12th February, 1944, when we left for

Chittagong to continue there till August, 1950, Most of the bogies of the Chittagong bound mail train were reserved for troops who were all Commonwealth other ranks. At Gualondo Gha when we transferred ourselves to the corresponding steamer every inch of floor space on the deck and around the 1st and 2nd classes passed into their occupation. They squatted with legs spread forward or reclined against their kit. Getting into the cabins or out was a job. We became frightened lest we should be molested or subjected to indignities or that our stuff damaged or stolen. But the six seven hour river trip to Chandpur down the Padma proved a unique experience to the contrary. Practically every Tommy had a book in his clasp to read; none jeered or booed or talked loudly; we received courteous treatment throughout; we were soon at ease. The transshipment at Chandpur was smooth and we had also a comfortable night of rest and sleep aboard the train from Chandpur to Chittagong where we arrived early next morning at 5-30 when it was still dark. Transport from the railway station or from one part of the town to another was unobtainable or even when available simply meant prohibitive charge. We had, however, many friends to solve the problem for us. Soon we found ourselves in our Dewanbazar rooms engaged for us. The ground floor was under the occupation of a Hindu lawyer. The first floor of the front structure shook from side to side under footsteps but three small rooms in the rear were on a strong building; cooing arrangements had to be improvised on the roof. The sanitary lavatory at one corner of the first floor was the most insanitary thing one can ever come across. In fact after use by one or two people it became a hellish heap of filth; plumbing equipment was primitive, flushing system did not exist—a harrowing experience, particularly after feeds of BAJRA bread. The owner of the house, Harish Babu, Homoeopath, having recently died the family was in financial straits and rented the place to fetch some money. It was situated at the top portion of Dewanbazar Road wherefrom has branched out the Ghatfarhat Lane which was well-known because of the location of Khan Bahadur Jalaluddin Ahmed's house. He was just then Minister of L. S. G. & PH under Khwaja Nazimuddin. He did not agree to renting it out to us but soon enough did so to the Excise Department, obviously for a higher price. His orthodoxy did not stand in his way in this strange transaction. It was only a short distance away from the four-point road junction just in front of the Chittagong Municipal Office Building. Emerging from

this point the road went down northward via Dewanbazar and Chandanpura to the South East Corner of Parade Square off which was situated Mr. Ghosal's "Step Aside" where I was living till February, 1941. It was a narrow, dusty, badly constructed, district town road which had now taken on an all-important character from it being a highway for military traffic. Round the clock all manner of military vehicles from the jeep to the tall American food vans rattled on it to the dismay, discomfort and inconvenience of the resident civilians, or passers-by who, enveloped in dust, had to creep along its edge. From filth inside to dust outside was the tenour of my life at the initial phase from which I was rescued after 18 days by Mr. M. M. Stuart, then District Magistrate, whom I saw in a day or two of my arrival. He acknowledged at once the receipt of the Chief Secretary's personal letter for helping me about my residence, took out his jeep and giving me a lift first inspected the rooms I was occupying and then drove round both the localities of Dewanbazar and Chandanpura to fix up a place for me. It was a futile search a suitable house was not available. On the 29th February, 1944, Mr. Stuart sent me an urgent message to see Major Marsden who was in charge of the Military requisitioning of houses and estates. I say the tall, strong-built Major next day when without wasting a word he placed me in his jeep and drove straight to Parade Square north where were situated two houses side by side, the one of Mr. Ghosal with the marble name-plate "ANCHORAGE", the other of Sucharn Babu, Pleader, bearing "BROJOMOHON KUTIR", Both were under military requisition. Pointing to the former the Major said that he could release it immediately in my favour. He made it possible from my family to occupy "Anchorage" on the afternoon of 2nd March, 1944. In describing the first tenure of my office at Chittagong College I have touched on this topic. "Anchorage" was (it still exists) a simple but very tastefully planned and built cottage with a small garden in front and having two spacious rooms in the main building and two other rooms in the wings with sloping corrugated sheet roofs atop and a neat little veranadah attached to the east wing. From each room one has a lovely view of the immense square in the south which constituted the playing fields of Chittagong College but which now under military control was converted into "ARAKAN CAR PARK". From the rotten and murky other place we were thus pulled out and moored onto a secure, cosy anchorage.

CHAPTER VIII

CHITTAGONG COLLEGE, CHITTAGONG

February, 1944 to August, 1950

At 10-30 on the forenoon of 14th February, 1944, I took over charge of Chittagong College having returned to the place after three years. When I left in February, 1941 Chittagong including the College was for all practical purposes in normal shape despite the rumblings of war in the west as well as in the east. But now it was a theatre of war with the armed forces and their military equipment all over the place from the edge of the Bay of Bengal in the west to the bridge over the Karnafully at Kalu Ghat. All hill-sides especially, and open spaces in between were dotted with encampments of troops and camouflaged tanks, guns and arms. An overwhelming number of private houses were in their possession. The vast tracts of land at Patenga (Chittagong Airport area) and beyond constituted troop townships of bamboo hutments with the airport and airstrip at the west end close to the sea. "Super fortresses" (the latest and the best type of large aeroplanes then) and "Dakotas" rumbled across the sky at all hours of the day transporting soldiers, arms, ammunitions and supplies. The frequent Japanese air raids over the town and military objectives in 1942 and 1943 were getting infrequent; the scare of bombing had lessened, at any rate among the officers of the Defence forces; their lights shone in brilliance when the sirens rang and we covered in the slit trenches. All their movements in a ceaseless flow were towards Arakan, the Burma border. I took over charge of a College that was dead and furnished forth a Waste Land. Its buildings were under military possession; its roll strength had dwindled to a little over one hundred against the normal 700 to 800 hundred; many teachers were frequently absent. Of the students who were on the rolls a quarter cared to put in their appearance. The College hours were from dawn to forenoon. The body of the College, a shrivelled skeleton, lay half-buried in the outer compound of the premises of Khan Bahadur Fazlul Quadir at Chandanpura in the concealed contiguity of its own habitation. One has to enter into this compound from the Chandanpura Road

through the privately owned Palm Avenue of the Khan Bahadur. In an otherwise drab area that was the only soothing sight. At the end of the avenue and just outside the walled harem stood a small, mean, jerry building, one storied, consisting of two rooms, may be 8' - 12' each, and a corresponding verandah out side on which sat the teachers alongside a long table. One of these room was the Principal's the other of his office and clerical staff. To the right of the avenue as one enters there was alongish space of crumbling mud walls and a slum beyond; to the left stood another longish space with a building on consisting of 4/5 rooms in which could be seated one teacher and about 10 students each. At the west end of this building stood a huge, big kutchra structure in ruins. During the critical phase of the war in 1943 when Chittagong College was about to be closed down by Government or alternatively shifted to Brahmanbaria or some such place the Khan Bahadur led the opposition against removal and offered this area for the functioning of the College. The Education Minister, Mr. Tamizuddin Khan the D. P. I. Mr. Bottomley and later his successor Dr. Jenkins came over on a visiting inspection and yielded to the public demand of not liquidating the institution. They also made financial provision for the construction of some 'bashas' (bamboo hutments), complete renovation of the ruined kutchra structure, the hiring of an adjacent building for housing the library. For providing shelter during air raids they had slit trenches made. Another great achievement stood at their credit; they made a coup de grace in cooperation with the civil & military authorities and succeeded in isolating the Laboratories of the College and making them accessible to the science students and staff through an existing lane from the Chandanpura Road. These laboratories being located at the Chandanpure end of the College premises made such an arrangement possible; they were separated from the other parts by the erection of lofty barbed wire fencings- sort of deadly Berlin Wall. Even so the disintegration being complete and the morale having been totally shattered it was a dead inheritance for me. A large number of young teachers held temporary appointments; the fear of losing their jobs on the abolition of the College prevented them from desertion. At the moment of my assumption of office I found them huddled together on the verandah of the office buildings with afflicted looks of hopelessness and helplessness. Dr. Jenking, however, thought that I would be equal

to reconstruct and to rehabilitate house and inmate and to put them to a working order. First I reintroduced normal working hours and when the siren wailed I personally led the available students and staff into the slit trenches. This pricked the scare bubble. Next I turned my attention to the adjacent library building which was quite big, two-storied and commodious but it was old-fashioned; the ground floor rooms having had no windows were dark and ill-ventilated; many valuable books were getting irretrievably damaged. I was insistent on having openings made on the windowless walls to let in light and air. The owners, a Podder family of close-fisted banians, opposed my move before the Land Acquisition Deputy Collector, one Kulada Babu, who turned down my proposal. When I complained against Kulada Babu to Mr. Stuart, the latter supported the former but yielded to my request for personal inspection which opened his eyes to the enormity of killing books through official bumbling and conceded my point. I had the required windows made. Also on the first floor I had two rooms set apart and furnished for reading by the students and the staff. Very frequently I would use myself the teachers' reading room. This revived the interest of others in the Library. Another related feature may be mentioned here without circumlocution. The British and Common wealth troops and officers were fond of reading books; several book stalls with miscellaneous and upto-date reading material had sprung into existence around Laldighi. When they and the College came into touch there was a request for lending books to them. Unhesitatingly I agreed on the production of their identity cards. Undoubtedly I was taking a risk from the Government standpoint but there was no occasion whatsoever for regretting a loan of books. Another small move towards resuscitation was the introduction of small area games. Teachers living about Chandanpura and Dewan Bazar played badminton in front of my office; students in similar position utilised the little space around in playing volley ball.

But the construction of additional structures, the reconstruction of the ruined kutchra house and its renovation, getting them wired to provide electric lights and fans proved difficult. The available contractors were fully occupied with the profitable job of making bashas for the armed forces and of road-making. The fabulous bamboo wealth and timber wealth of Chittagong were being used for their purposes. Compared

with their requirements and their prices., ours were small and for moderate terms which no contractor was willing to accept. A pious Muslim gentleman of the locality was persuaded by me to oblige for education's sake. His name was Munshi Mohammad Ali, if my memory does not betray me. He had means and men at his disposal for the procurement of timber and bamboo. The Government specification for the construction and renovation ran into details about the timber posts, pillars and supporting frame and about double TARZA roofings and floor mattings. I explained these to the Contractor who responded conscientiously. Since I required badly additional class rooms, the reconstruction of the huge, big, ruined kutchahouse was taken up first. Its high roof required strong timber posts and supporting frame. Double Tarza roofing and flooring called for a forest of bamboo's and splitting them. Unhasting, unrelenting Mohammad Ali completed this stupendous job in two months so that we did use the place before the College dispersed for the Summer Vacation on the 3rd May, 1944. It contained three rooms, one of which was big enough for a hundred students, the other two for 30 and 20 respectively. They had removable bamboo partition walls in between, which when taken out provided a big Assemble Hall for the holding of meetings and corporate functions. On the long northern strip of the Palm Avenue was constructed another structure chiefly to accommodate the members of the teaching staff during the working hours. At the east end of this structure I had a room set apart for the students' Common Room and to the west another smaller room for girls when they would be permitted to join. I saw to it being completed just on the eve of the College's reopening on the 20th June. In fact it was ready for use on the 19th when I had handwritten labels, Professors' Room, Students' Common Room, stuck on door heads. I could never forget their earlier afflicted looks but as they returned to work after the summer recess they could hardly believe their eyes; their delight was boundless. Brick and mortar were not indispensable for man's happiness. Henceforward we used the Professors' Room for staff Council meetings and for dinners and teas on occasions of entertainment. simultaneously we had another one-room bamboo structure on the corner of the Southern strip to the Palm Avenue close to the longish existing building of 4-5 rooms already described. As will be abundantly clear later I developed intimate relations with the military authorities in

addition to those with the Civilian. I managed to have electric fans (fourteen in number) from the Garrison Engineer as soon as I got the whole place wired. In less than six months we had a clean little compact campus with electric amenities and the Palm Avenue passage repaired for vehicular entrance and exit.

January to April period was known in those days as 'slack' season in common parlance, the Intermediate and Degree Examination candidates being free from attendance. Other classes on my arrival were either small or non-existent (especially Honours). I met the English Classes twice or thrice a week. Many fugitives however trickled in during this period. at the commencement of the new academic session, 1944-1945, students joined all classes in strength but since available accommodation was limited I had to restrict admissions making some allowance for the intermediate Classes as I did arrange for the holding of some classes in the Science gallery in our original buildings. now increased my own classes to six periods a week although administrative duties imposed some strain on me. The students' Union was revived to get them interested in their own activities. The weekly meetings section came into vital operation as officers, civil & military, started attending on invitation and addressing the College. But during the period from February to 3rd May we had only one or two functions; the first one was held on the 20th March to bid farewell to Mr. Azizur Rahman Mallick (now Dr Mallick), a young lecturer in History under orders of transfer to Rajshahi College. I got to know him then just for five weeks but he appeared to be smart, impressively so, It is interesting to note that during the last twenty years he has risen step by step to an eminent position at the University of Rajshahi where he is now the Head of Department of History and also Dean of the Faculty of Arts.* Dr. Momtazuddin Ahmed as Principal of Rajshahi College took him under his protecting wings and later as Vice-Chancellor of Rajshahi University gave him the opportunity and recognition he deserved. When I met him a few years ago at Dacca University he however could not recognise me. The second function was held on the 2nd May on the eve of the summer vacation of the College in the shape of the Annual Social Gathering-which was designed and executed to resotre an atmosphere of normalcy

to the severely jolted conditions of life in 1943 in particular.

On the departure of Rai Padmini Bhusan Rudra in 1942 Khan Saheb Abdur Rab Choudhury was acting as the Principal. From him I took over charge and he reverted to his acting appointment as vice-Principal. Babu Devkumar Datta, Professor of Sanskrit, was working as Khan Saheb's chief adviser in administrative duties, it was alleged. Maulavi Md. Waliullah was now the Professor of Arabic. I met him for the first time. Physically strong and robust he was middle-aged, energetic and intrepid. Unlike other teachers of Arabic & Persian, he was a sportsman and eager to build up corporate activities. He was living close by and was an unfailing helper of half a dozen young teachers resident next door in a jerry building in bachelors' quarters. Prominent among these were Messes Abdus Subhan Khan Choudhury, Abdul Jabber and Raihan Shariff. Khan Choudhury is now a Deputy Director of Public Instruction the second Registrar of the Engineering University, the last on the Provincial Planning Board, each being posted at Dacca. Mr. Raihan Shariff has since gone higher up (7. 3. 68) Babu Nripendra mohon Shaha had succeeded the late Mr. Ali Imam as Professor of Physics and Babu Ranendra Kumar Das, Lecturer in Chemistry was acting as professor of Chemistry. A. Q. Choudhury, our former distinguished pupil occupied the lecture's post. Babu Shashimohon Chakravarty was continuing as Professor of Mathematics and he had a very young lecturer and his departmental colleague in Mr. Kushari. Babu Upendra chandra Biswas was now the only lecturer in Bengali. Like Nripen Babu he was member of the Scheduled Castes, and belonged to the Gopalganj Sub-Division of Faridpur. In the Department of English Mr. Abdul Wadud, formerly District Inspector of Schools, was occupying the post of Professor of English in the BES; Messrs J. C. Sinha Tofail Ahmed and A. F Muzaffer Ahmed were continuing as Lectures. Mr. D. C. Catterjee had joined the College as Professor of Philosophy and Haridas Babu as Lecturer. Mr. Habibur Rahman whose name I mentioned in my review of my first tenure at Chittagong College was continuing as Lecturer in Economics.

My relations with the members of the teaching staff were personal and cordial and I was lucky to have wholehearted and willing cooperation from them in the work of breathing life into what looked like a valley

of skills. But one unfortunate episode which sticks to my memory took place on the eve of the summer vacation of 1944, the protagonist being Babu Upendra Chandra Biswas, Lecturer in Bengali. His record showed that he had habitually been on long and short leave during the earlier months. I agreed to another leave on my arrival but when he approached me for yet another away from the station I did not approve. He lost his temper, abused me to my face and made personal attacks over my recent casual leave. Next day he submitted an application addressed to the DPI complaining against my attitude and recording incorrect statements and the same personal attacks. In forwarding this application I added my own version and explanation in the course of which blatant inaccuracies were corrected and the enormity of his personal attack exposed. With the previous written approval of the DPI I had just availed myself of three days' casual leave to go down to Calcutta and fetch my daughter from Lady Brabourne College Hostel where she was living since my transfer to Chittagong. These three days covered Friday to Sunday Friday being a public holiday. Her College would be closed on Saturday. In my application for 3 days' casual leave I had pointed out how my absence would cause the least dislocation. Upon Babu's petition against me resulted in a 'reprimand' being recorded in his Service Book. I was sorry. But later I discovered that he was an eccentric and a hypochondriac. In a short-while he tendered his resignation and accepted Principalship of Sreekrishan College, Ramdia, Faridpur, where too he quarrelled with the Governing Body which dispensed with his services after long. He died a premature death. His nephew, Tarun Biswas then a student of the B. A. Classes was one of my devoted and affectionate pupils.

Mr. Mohinimohon Kusari just fresh from the Calcutta University where he had a First Class degree in Mathematics was a conceited little young man, talented but garrulous and butted into administrative affairs for which he sometimes came into sharp conflict with me. But his wife, another distinguished graduate they were my neighbours residentially had considerable skill in music. She rubbed off the edge of our official relations to get into intimacy. Later still the husband competed in the I. A. S. and must be occupying now a high executive position in India. Let him not be confused with his elder brother who was then a Deputy Magistrate in undivided Bengal.

A separate paragraph to Habibur Rahman, Lecturer in Economics, will be relevant to my story. During my first term at Chittagong College he was for sometime my neighbour at "Sattar Manzil", Rahmatganj. My observations of his mode of living at that time showed that he along with his family was secular in outlook and a little too modern. Neither purdah nor other religious inhibitions bothered them. Most of their friends were Hindus including music teachers. He and his wife were practising instrumental and vocal music, particularly his wife and his brother Lutfur Rahman. Incidentally it may be noted that Mrs. Habibur Rahman is the sister of Bulbul Choudhury, the famous but deceased artist. Now in 1944 and subsequent years they were living in Roomghata Lane., off Dewanbazar. Habibur Rahman made efforts in bringing me into close, social touch with the whole family and succeeded in doing so within the limits of my temperament and the framework of my timetable which has been regular, a wee bit rigidly so, all my life. I would be frequently asked up for dinner and tea at their place and I took care to reciprocate these in my house. Mr. H. Rahman was now the leader of the Notional War Front in Chittagong town under Mr. Stuart whose acquaintance he cultivated sedulously. On the very day that Mr. Stuart was driving me around Chandanpura in search of a house for me he asked for my opinion about the attainments of the young gentleman and about his success as a teacher. My candid estimate agreed with his own. He added however "he sees me once too often". He was busying himself a little too much with NWF activities. Obviously he was seeking the limelight by hobnobbing with the District Executive. He wanted me to be in his grip. I announced a personal award of silver medals to Bulbul & Jubilee his sisters and third to a Hindu girl, Dipti by name. I presented these medals on the 11th November, 1944.

Before I left the Bengal Secretariat a side activity of the War Front got going in the form of promoting fraternity between the civilian population and the Services. To this end East & West Fraternity Clubs were set up in important towns and cities. at Chittagong such a Club was functioning effectively, principally through the tenacious endeavors of Lt. Pelham of Labour Party affiliation. A weekly meeting with discussions was held in the Municipal Hall where talks were organised from Europeans and Indians alternately. A European resident in India on a native topic. Khan Saheb Abdur Rab Choudhury, my predecessor was

a regular member of this Club. **Dr. Pelham** would not spare me. In June, 1944, I attended a talk by Dr. (Mrs.) Gibbins on her twelve-year experience as a doctor in the families of Muslims in what is now known as West Pakistan. The burthen of her discourse was the incidence of maternity and infant mortality in Muslim families in West Pakistan following from religious orthodoxy, the Purdah system and so on. She was a clever but courteous speaker who delivered a subtle but elaborate attack on the attitude of Muslim gentlemen towards the medical treatment of their womenfolk. In the discussion that followed I mentioned my study of the novel, **South Riding**, and of its appreciation in particular in Vera Brittain's **Testament of Friendship** and drew the attention of the audience to the relevant situation in the same direction if the countryside of England. There one half of the country does not know the other half. Poverty and disease run rampant in one, progress and awareness in the other. Drunken mothers in industrial or mining areas in England strangle to death many babies in bed. On the 16th June I entertained Dr. Gibbins at tea. My own part at the East & West Club was first played on the 28th June when I gave a talk on "Harmony in Indian life". My contention was that the Central or Provincial Government in the country was indifferent to the welfare of the teeming million who were grovelling in squalor and glutting the devouring grave from starvation and disease. Meanwhile within the country self-appointed leaders of various communities were out in strength with demands for complete independence and nation building projects and organisations. Actually they were out for self aggrandisement by politically exploiting the masses and by arousing religious and communal passion. The stark fact remained that each adult had to win his or her bread by the sweat of the brow. The recent famine was a ghastly evidence of the soulless conduct of the Government and of the leaders and capitalists. Should people bind themselves together irrespective of creed and faith in accord and harmony and exert themselves for civic and rural development, there would be gradual and steady amelioration of their condition. In the ultimate analysis they would have to do the job and not others. One of my former students occupying an executive job stood up and shout arrows of interrogation whether such and such a political leader was self-seeker. I had to point out that he was committing the fallacy of distribution and causing unwarranted embarrassment.

Writing as I do after 20 years the substance of my remarks takes on a permanent significance in the context of the scarcity of foodstuffs in Independent India and of prohibitive prices beyond the reach of the common man in Sovereign Pakistan; verily the rich are getting richer, the poor poorer. The east and West Club stimulated wide reading on different subjects. On the 9th August, 1944, Mr. McInerny, ICS., Additional district Magistrate, gave a talk on **The Ramayan** illustrating the same with English translations of some of the original texts. Young McInerny was a Welshman. Tall and handsome he sported a beard and looked like a clergyman; indeed he proved in years to come a devout Christian with missionary activities at his credit. When the Hindu-Muslim riots were sparked off at Noakhali in 1946 he was District Magistrate there and gave evidence of his fairness in apportioning blame. On the Partition of the country he opted first for India and then for Pakistan and was accepted by neither. Then he went to the USA where he received the formal training of a Clergyman, returned to Pakistan and worked among the Hindu fishermen of Barisal. Then he became the Principal of Brojomohon College Barisal, from which position he had to go out sometime during the period from 1953 to 1956 when I was Inspector of College, Dacca University, on account of his maladroit handling of student in discipline and his hobnobbing with Babu Saral Kumar Dutta. Having lost his pre eminent position in the non-Government College of East Pakistan he passed into obscurity. Some little time ago I read in The Statesman about the death of E. F. McInerny, a Clergyman, at Hazaribagh, India. I believe his is the same man. For years he was a close friend of mine. From him I borrowed and read at Chittagong Pandered Moon's **Strangers in India** and its sequel "The Future of India". The next talk under the auspices of the East-West Fraternity was given by Lt. Col. Roberts on Lloyd George on the 1st November, 1944 at which I presided.

Within the College our corporate activities got off to a vigorous start in July, 1944. On the 3rd of the month Mr. Shamd Suhrawardy, then Civil Supplies Minister and Khan Bahadur Jalaluddin Ahmed, his colleague with PH & LSG portfolio were on a visit. An Address of Welcome was presented to them by the Students' Union and later the staff entertained them at tea. The former gave a talk. It appeared to me he was off colour in contents and delivery both. Obviously he came unprepared and did

not have the slightest idea that war time Chittagong College could put in a decent standard of intellectually high (and also emotionally appropriate) reception. On the 14th July Lt. Pelham who strengthened morale all over the place gave an inspiring talk to the students. On the 8th September. Ft. Lt. Boyes did the same. In November (10th to be precise) Lt. Col. Roberts addressed the union. On a graduated scale the Lectures and Debates section was progressing. On the 5th December Capt. Corbet delivered a speech on "Openings in the Royal Indian Navy and IAF" student exodus from Chittagong was superseded by an increasing influx; the withered leaves of the immediate past were quickening a new birth. Capt. Ghosh and Capt. Dasgupta were on a visit to the College to boost morale. During the second half of 1944 there was a number of changes in the teaching staff, each evoking organisational energies and human sympathies of the Union in the form of farewell function and entertainments. Babu Deb Kumar Dutta, Professor of Sanskrit, Haridas Babu Lecturer in Logic. Mvi., Abdul Jabber, Lecturer in Mathematics, Khan Sahib Abdur Rab Choudhury, vice-Principal, were transferred. The latter had to go because of the transfer of the Senior Service post to Presidency College to accommodate Mr. Ahmed Ali there. Recruited for the same post at Chittagong College he was too big to come over to Chittagong the post had to travel to Calcutta for his personal convenience, an arrangement which continued till the partition when there was reversion of both the job and the displaced incumbent. On the eve of the autumn recess, a social gathering was organised on a grand scale. Competitions in literary and athletic activities having preceded, prizes were awarded to the winners. Mr. Stuart presided & Mr. Stuart gave away the prizes. On the eve of the Christmas recess the union had a new feather added to its cap by winning the final of the Volley Ball competitions between the College Team and the Military Team. This was a resounding victory worth recording in the athletic annals of the College during a national emergency.

Turning to miscellaneous entries in my diary for 1944 I find one of vital importance to Government servants. This was the sanction of 15% Dearness Allowance to them in Chittagong Division. The order was received by me on the 22nd October, 1944. The story of the insufferably high cost of living which began then has still an evolutionary course and nobody knows if ever it should end. But the original sanction in 1944

provided immense relief to us. If we had means to buy eatable foodstuffs at Chittagong then we did not have the corresponding means of buying firewood to cook them with; the contractors had both the capacities.. Another interesting entry pertains to the holding of two Eid Re-Unions in the Muslim hall. The first was held on 21st September which appeared to be of the leading citizens including Government officers, the 2nd on the 23rd which when concluded proved to be factional and political. I like many others had no idea of the manoeuvrings behind the latter. Naturally I attended both. At the 2nd function Mr. Fazlul Quader Choudhury, Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan dominated the scene.* He delivered an objectionable political speech having no relevance to the character of the religious and social aspects of the function. Mr. Altafur Rahman Khan, then one of the Sudder Sub-Divisional Officers and I had to stand up and dissociate ourselves from his views and remarks. Political activities remaining suspended during the emergency gave first signs of reviving. Another entry pertains to the death of Sir, P. C. Roy in the middle of June, 1944. This event marked the end of a definite era of intellectual and scientific achievements in the life of Bengal. Yet another entry pertains to the course of the War in South-East Asia by the sudden disappearance from his post of Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh Mallory in November, 1944, reported in The Statesman, dated, 19th November. In July he had been appointed to the position to succeed Sir Pierce and the 29th July issue of the Illustrated London News had made a display of his picture. There was a gloom in circles concerned by this tragic event.

But my preoccupations with the revival of the College notwithstanding, I was using all my leisure in private studies. I was a constant and eager student of the Times Literary Supplement, The Spectator, Illustrated London News, The Geographical Magazine- My ambition being to keep abreast of literary and general topics. I read the latest issues, learnt as much as I could with the help of reference apparatus when required and passed them on with marginal notes to the Staff Room so that I could share my joy with those of my colleagues who had similar predilections. From standard reviews and notices of the latest books I made a list for supplies to the College Library. The Spectator with its serious and

* He is no more the Speaker A.H. 7.3.68.

learned articles on the current topics of the week stimulated my intellectual curiosity and reinforced my stamina (or the little that I had of it) and introduced me to the fascinating domain of Harold Nicolson's thoughts and expression. I would turn first to the Marginal Comment page and plod through so that new stars could swim into my ken. "Friday Mornings" when compiled was an asset to any library. Since the Second World War was running its awesome course I would first turn to Menander's Mirror in The Times Literary Supplement, which was soon published by Methuen under the title 'Reflections in a Mirror' by Charles Morgan whose admirer I became in the years to come, Arthur Bryant in the illustrated London News drew my regular attention. "New Poetry" in The Spectator in its issue, dated, 6th October, 1944, led me to note the advent of:

Green Song & other songs by Edith Sitwell

Five Rivers " Norman Nicholson

A Lost Season " Roy Fuller

The Sun My Monument " Laura Lee.

Earlier in the 15th April issue of The Times Literary Supplement was published the latest poem of Richard Church under the title "Omens of Spring". The 17th June issue contained reviews of: England: An Anthology with an introduction by Harold Nicolson (for the English Association) Laurence Binyon's "The Burning of Leaves and other Poems. Francis Brett-Young's The Island, C. Day Lewis's A New Anthology of Modern Verse (from 1920-1940), Sir Algernon Methuen's Anthology of Modern Verse". Wavell's "Other Men's Flowers" provided fascinating studies, In the 24th June issue of the TLS I was introduced to George Gordon's Shakespearean Comedy & Other studies. Relevant to Shakespeare studies were William Shakespeare's Petty School and William Shakespeare's Small Latin! Lesse greeke by T. W. Baldwin (both USA publications) and G. Wilson Knight's The olive and the Sword. A lumped-up Book list from my 1944 diary, given below will indicate the character and range of my absorption. Many books in the same were bought for the Library and avidly read by me.

Verdict on India

Everybody's Political What's is What?

Sophoclean Tragedy (Bowra)

India in outline by Lady Hartog

How are they at Home by J. B. Priestley

The Framework of the future by L. S. Amery

Poetry & Contemplation by G. R. Hamilton (CUP)

The Poet's Defence " J. Brouowski

G. K. Chesterton " Miss Maisie Ward.

E. M. Forster " Lionel Trilling.

Cricket Country " Edmund Blunden

Ten Years in Japan " Joseph C. Grew (Hamond, Hamond)

The Truth about the Munich Crisis by Viscount Maugham

The Rise & Fall of the Luftwaffe by Hauptmann Hermann

Three Against Rommel: By Alex Clifford: Harrap (John Long)

Over to Tunis: By Howard Marshall: Eyre & Spottiswood.

The Case for Examinations by J. L. Brereton

Education for a World Adrift by Sir R. Livingstone Camb. U. Press

The Future in Education " " "

The American Thesaurus of Slang by Lester V Berry &

Melvin Van Den Bark

Constable: 40S.

Battle Hymn of China by Agnes Smedley: Gollanaez

The Road to Serfdrom by Prof. F. A. Hayek

Nietzsche Centenary

In my dairy the follwing jottings occur under "The road to Serfdrom".
 "Socialism, compulsory planning etc. Leads to rigid totalitarinan sys-
 tem. The developmen of free personality in a moral and practical
 necessity The classic formulae of normal opposition will be suspended"
 (Harold Laski).

"A usefuf antidote to Prof. Hayek's depressing antidote is the book
 which Mr. Harold Mcmillan published in 1938, entiled, **The Middle
 Way**, who examines in some 400 pages the problem whether it would
 be possible to reconcile the apparent contradiction between man's desire
 for higher economic standards which can be achieved by greater social
 discipline and his desire for greater individual liberty which would be

curtailed by that discipline a synthesis between the capitalist and socialist schools of thought"- (Harold Nicolson in *Marginal Comment*, in the *Spectator*, dated 7.7. 1944).

Under " Nietzsche Centenary" the following jottings are available:

Born 1844, Influence Tolstoy & Ibsen

1. Attack on the average man's custom-ridden herd mentality, 2. Glorification of the superb individual, 3. Apostle of self-realisation, 4. Positive morality: say yes' to life. 10 vols in English, Edited by Oscar Levy.

Nietzsche: (a) Aphorism (b) His own vocabulary War and warrior do not mean the same thing to Nietzsche as to us. War means intellectual activity, the interplay of cosmic forces. He opposes war to soldiering. Saints of knowledge. Warriors of knowledge-" Good European. The Blonde Beast".

Here are some samples of philological bearing: Japanesque, Loofale (pod of luffa; argyptica used as flesh-brush from Arabic lufah, the plant) Lunge, N & V; cosset-perhaps OE cot sacta, cot-setter i. e. animal brought up in the house-pet lamb, v. t. to pet and pamper; lumbering logomachy (vide Gk Chesterton's Shaw, p 168)-logos,-makhia, fighting, fighting or controversy about words: vemicular (vermis, worm, like a worm inform and movements; of worm-eaten appearance, cp Vermicular appendix.

JEEP: Times Lit Supplement 6. 5. 44 General Purposes Vehicle.

JEEP: Times Lit Supplement, 13. 5. 44: "Not in the Dictionary".

The derivation of jeep from G. P. (General Purposes) is dangerous half truth. The famous original jeep appeared for the first time about 1936 or '37 in the comic strip about Pop-Eye, the sailor-man published in England in the *Daily Mirror*. The jeep was a little (live) caterpillar fitted with caterpillar tracks which could go anywhere. So when the little G. P. Vehicle came along a name already held in affection was waiting for it Garwood (TLS, 13. 5. 44).

Having a sensitive mind I do have sharp reactions to the ways of men, their diverse manners, puzzling motivations behind human conduct; I

get highly strung and spend restless nights. During the period under review I had experience of some waywardness from colleagues, a lot of trouble from office staff, many domestic stresses and strains. But then as now reconciliation came from faith in man's utter littleness, from the consequential lesson of learning to live in harmony with man and God, from the deathless ambition of executing my duties honestly and conscientiously, from the noble company of books. Free from the many pettinesses and meannesses of the Bengal Secretariat I regained serenity in being absorbed in learning.

On to 1945 now the year which ended the Second World War after six years by inflicting a crushing defeat on Germany and Japan and bringing about Allied victory both in the West and the East in the months of May and August respectively. The Gloom caused by the death of president Roosevelt in April was soon despelled by the dawn of new life. It is also true that the aftermath of Hiroshima vis-a-vis the use of atom bombs has been having a macabre projection into the future. But the fate that befell Hitler and Tojo's successor should be reassuring features to peaceloving humanity. Twenty years later on this 20th day of January 1965 the world is greeting with Ossa-high heaps of the sweetest flowers the superb leadership of Winston Churchill who on the 5th day of his stroke is toughly fighting still against the ravages of time while millions of people are watching and praying with bated breath. His critical condition is adding a new significance to his glorious feats in the year 1945. (He slipped peacefully from a twilight of come to death shortly after 8 a. m. (E. P. T. 2 p. m.) on 24. 1. 1965 at the age of 90 year, one month and 24 days. A state funeral to take place on 30. 1. 65.)

Throughout 1944, during the second half of the year, especially, we at Chittagong had been subjected to terrific anxiety and tension when Imphal, the capital of Manipur had been besieged, when Kohima had been occupied and when Dimapur, the nearest railway station on the Assam-Bengal railway, the dividing point of Bengal and Assam had been threatened; we were about to be cut off from the rest of Bengal. Supplies including drinking water were flown from Chittagong to Imphal; the difficult terrain between Imphal and Dimapur had been most efficiently guarded against further Japanese incursion. Wavell and Auchinleck by their sleepless vigilance and supervision did put spunk.

into our feckless spirits and gradually the blustering but phoney invasion threat receded into ignominious retreat. Further before the 15th of January, 1945, Chittagong celebrated Allied Victory at Akhyab and on the eve of the Victory in Europe in the month of May, the allied troops were back in Rangoon.

Our work in 1945 within the College and outside had a sort of unbroken tempo, and after the termination of the war we were looking forward to early rehabilitation; in fact I got busy planning and exerting myself for the same.

Academic work in the form of lectures, tutorials, terminal exams, annual and final test was maintained in unslackening continuity which is the vital principle of all educational progress. Extra academic activities should be so designed and organised as to serve the purpose of practical work in the laboratories. They should never be allowed to swamp the acquisition of basic knowledge by individual student efforts and simultaneous teacher guidance, by knowledgeable interpretation and illumination. I hate the preponderance (as is the case in many of our educational institutions at present) of the latter at the cost of the former. All power and skill follow from solid, substantial, hard intellectual exercises, sciolism from the merry-go-rounds of cheap, recreational pursuits. My educational administration has been unpopular to that extent among amateurish student and staff. Nevertheless I welcome enthusiastically and fervently stimulating experiences and habits in the halls and the playing fields. During the period under review I never missed my own classes. One the eve of exams when we have to race against time over the prescribed syllabus, I did not spare myself in meeting extra classes to which students had flocked in strength-a very rewarding experience for the teacher.

In the corporate branch in 1945 we had talks and addresses from flying offices, S. K. Bakshi, Squadron Leader Tidmarsh (His talk was on English Public Schools), Prof. D. C. Chatterjee (Budhist Logic-An Introduction). Principal K. D. Ghosh and Flight Lt. Sarkar. Tagore Death Anniversary was organised on an elaborate scale. To this function Mr. Saibal Kumar Gupta, I. C. S., District & Sessions Judge then, (later Chairman, Calcutta Improvement Trust and recently Chairman, Dandakarany Development Authority) and Mr.s. Gupta gave

stout support. We had also a moving farewell function when Prof. Abdus Sobhan Khan Choudhury had to leave in the month of October to be succeeded by Prof. Rabinda Chatterjee. Early in the year Mr. Habibur Rahman, our colleague in Economics, (already introduced at some length) secured a cheque of Rs. 300/- from Mr. Mahbub Ahmed Choudhury, younger brother of Khan Bahadur Farid Ahmed Choudhury, for the starting of musical branch to the College Union.

Outside the College the East and West and West Fraternity, which had a close liaison with our staff and students, was functioning regularly. There in 1945, talks were given by the Squadron Leader Tidmarsh, Prof. D. C. Chatterjee (on Sanskrit Literature), Capt. Smith (on Distribution), Capt. Baber (on Army Education) and by myself on two occasions my subjects being The Future of Indian Education and Social Conditions in Bengal.

I kept up my life long habits of long morning and evening walks. The attractive areas of Picturesque Chittagong being under military occupation were out of bounds for the civilian. I took to winding by-lanes off Wali Khan Mosque to get to Prabartak Sangha Hills and to Sholo shahar railway station in the north for my morning jaunts and to the rice fields east of Chawkbazar in the evening. Another temperamental hobby was the holding of dinner parties at home. These were very frequent and brought about stimulating contact especially of defence services personnel. They were decent and knowledgeable and lovers of books and also free from the snobbishness of Civilian bureaucrats. There was hardly a week at my place which went off without such a fixture. I had guests of manageable size. Capt. Beg, Education Officer, Capt. Bashir Ahmed Qureshi (now a Lt. Col.) Captains Inayetullah and Mohiuddin and Lt. Ahmed Ali Choudhury, all of Army Medical Corps, Major Shafquat (now of a very high rank in Pakistan Foreign service and lately stationed at New Delhi as Pakistan's Deputy High Commissioner) Flying Officer Najib Khan (of the ICS) were my guests to name only some. Among the civilians Mr. McInerny Professors Habibur Rahman and Ashabuddin Ahmed, Dr. Ahmed Kabir (my most intimate friend even now) Khan Bahadur Fazlul Quadir, Mr. Rafiqul Haq (then a bright young Civil Engineer who later rose to be Superintending Engineer after training abroad), Mrs. Habibur Rahman, Mrs. Ahmed

Kabir, Mrs. Rafiqul Huq were included. We did not have, however, mixed parties in those days. In January, 1945, Dr. Syed Muazzam Hussain, D. Phil (Oxon), then Head of the Department of Islamic Studies, Dacca University & Provost S. M. Hall, later Vice-Chancellor was at Chittagong on a fund-collecting mission for the S. M. Hall duty Fund. He was accompanied by our beloved young friend A. K. M. Azizul Huq. They were entertained at lunch at my house. Practically all of them excluding the two Dacca guests entertained me at their own places in return the military personnel in their own residential **bashas** which were scattered all over the place from patenga to Kalu Ghat Bridge (over the Karnaphully) Sector where Flying Officer Najib Khan was stationed. The latter's Bungalow in a corner of the lofty embankment around the bridge provided a unique panorama in a moon-lit night. These are some of the unforgettable events I still cherish.

Turning to miscellaneous entries in the first half of 1945 I find the one recording the death of Philip Guedella at the age of 55 only, in February, most touching. Having a first class at Oxford in Modern Greats and History he proved a notable historical essayist. Of Jewish blood and faith he "picked out the salient personality and significant event" and wrote on Wellington, Palmerson and Churchill. Earlier in the Times Literary Supplement, dated 23rd December, 1944, I had occasion to read a review of these. Another entry under the 18th February proves interesting at this distance of time: "Total loss in respect of food stocks since 1943 amounts 22F(1,2) crores; total cost of war, famine, rehabilitation 61 crores; deficit 8 crores; total debt 19 crores". The next entry under 12th April pertains to the death of President Roosevelt on that day. The celebration of V-Day in Europe comes under 9th May; that at Chittagong under 14th May, Under 31st May is recorded the departure of Mr. Stuart on long leave. For a year and a half he proved to be a presiding deity and a ministering angel rolled into one Unconventional and dynamic to the last degree he was seldom off his jeep. At the initial phase of his administration at Chittagong he was reported to have remarked that a war mule was far more valuable than a host of fleeing Chittagonians. This brought him keen indignation and widespread censure. But he had lived down all such flimsy allegations to be eventually regarded as one of the saviours of the place. An entry under 22nd May refers to "The True Glory" - named so from the prayer

of Drake, first full length film of Allied Military campaign in NW Europe with a side glance at the finest film of the British Army, namely, **The Way Ahead**- Entries of words, such as, Enfilade, Jactitation, Screed (used by Galsworthy), RADAR (Radio Direction & Range) have philological interest.

The summer vacation of Chittagong College began on the 6th May and ended on the 2nd July. At its re-opening it became a live institution; when new admissions were completed, it pulsed with a full throb. Earlier I had secured the DPI's permission to throw it open to girls so my daughter was one of them at the B. A. First Year level during the academic session, 1945-46; I was spared the worry and expenses of her continuance at Lady Brabourne College, Calcutta.

The second half of 1945 was marked by two notable events so far as I was concerned, the first being of public importance, the second of personal touch.

The first to a conducted tour of three educationists of East Bengal to Tatanagar & Mhow, organised by the Military authorities. Out tour was the 2nd of the series, the first being from Calcutta. At Tatanagar functioned the Services Selection Board; at Mhow, Central India then, was situated the famous british-run Officers' Training School of Cadets. The idea behind the organisation of such tours was to give the heads of institutions and leading educationists firsthand experience of the fairness of selection of educated youth to commissioned ranks and the standard of training given and maintained there was considerable misconception among the public about the relevant recruitment and later substantive absorption after training. The military authorities of the time, it was alleged, were particularly unfair to the recruitment of Bengali youth. Two others besides myself made up this visiting group; they were Dr. Mumtazuddin Ahmed, then Principal, Dacca Intermediate College, and Mr. Abdus Samad, Secretary, Dacca Board of Secondary & Intermediate Education. The tour covered the period from 10th July to 24th July, 1945. According to schedule we made up the team at Gualondo Ghat on the evening of 10th July in sweltering heat without fans in our wartime compartment at that railway station. Despite reservation it was crowded too and we had to strip ourselves to the waist to become "topless" males. On the following afternoon the BNR

Bombay Mail from Howrah by which we were to travel to Tatanagar could not provide reservation for us with the result that we were in mixed company but during the journey we met some of the candidates going there to take the test for selection- a sprightly group. We reached Tatanagar Railway Station at 10 p. m. when it was too late for dinner at the Selection Board Headquarters. We were famishing; the railway-station refreshment rooms were also short of provision and service. But we coaxed a snack for Rs. 8/- for all three. We had a separate room for each at the Selection Board area far off from the railway station but in picturesque surrounding of hillocks with green foliage atop. In going to bed we received serious warnings against scorpion bites, if not of venomous vipers as well. Utmost caution was to be observed in getting out of beds, using slippers or other were where these enemies would be lurking.

On the 12th and 13th July we were fully occupied with the varied nature of the tests held, the fool-proof character of assessment made by different examiners and judges. On the eve of tests detailed instructions and explanation were given to the candidates who constituted an assembly of not less than 30 people. The tests were physical, intellectual and above all psychological- the last being held in camera from which we were excluded. The physical portion included mechanical tests as well. Regarding the second the main items were intelligent tests in writing, word association, mapreading, picture-studying, self-description, Physical tests were tough and terrific with insuperable hurdles to take, dangerout terrains and obstacles to negotiate, groups of subordinates to lead in adverse circumstances (leadership being given the highest importance)-a sort of hitching the wagon to the star. During these two days and also later we were exceedingly nicely looked after and briefed and shown the results of assessment just to ascertain if our estimate of the performance by the canddates agreed with theirs; in most cases it did to be sure. On the morning of the 12th, Major Mumford took charge of us was to it that we had refreshing bath and substantial breakfast and then conducted us to Col. Gordon, the chief of the Selection Board, who after introduction, gave full briefing of the entire work and procedure, Staff Philips, Capt. Abson, Flight Lt. Khan, Major Chai were wome of the other participants. They worked like the most busy been from dawn to dusk and were also stimulating companions at

meals in the Officers' Mess where the Colonel also joined us occasionally. Col. Gordon, it was clear, was adored and held in affection too. Cool, softspoken, clear in explaining, he had an invisible grandeur of sobriety and sanity about him; this compelled our admiration and confidence. After twenty years I remember to-day how being stricken by a nasty, nasal catarrh he was sitting away from fans going overhead. As far as I remember half a dozen candidates got through and were selected. Of these 2 or 3 were from Bengal, many of the latter collapsed under the physical strain.

According to our request made previously arrangements had been made to show us round the Tata Iron & Steel Works on the 14th July which being Saturday afforded a three-hour visit from 9-30 a. m. to 12-30 p. m. In the context of the mammoth character of these stupendous works such a brief view was ridiculous. But we retained a taxi for going round and having a hurried glance. In going through a fragment of the electrically operated factory and machinery I perceived nothing but terror in the manufacturing processes from stone to steel. A million bogies of what looked like small railway trains whirred; and rattled over the head while fire-breathing dragons hissed around; the red serpents of molten iron zig-zagged over an enormous space; jets of water spouting from pipestands were the only saving graces. This was my first experience of a modern factory in operation and I became convinced how Tata's was of the biggest and greatest such in the world. The Office building and equipment matched the magnitude of the works; they were clean and quiet to perfection. The taxi hire for a visit inside amounted to Rs. 22/-. Outside we walked about parts of the town. These I visualise to-day as scenes of carnage in the Hindu-Muslim riots during the opening months of 1964 and I am inclined to echo Joan's final words "O God that madest this beautiful earth, when will it be ready to receive Thy Saints? How long, O Lord, how long?"

We were scheduled to embark upon our next hop to Mhow late the same evening but because of unforeseen difficulties we were held up till Sunday afternoon. Our sojourn at Tatanagar had been enlivened by the presence of a large number of members of the Women's Voluntary Service. Those among them who were elderly had matron-like dignity in movements and speech while the younger ones were sweet and

inspiring. Flight Lt. Khan's friend was the loveliest. She was a parsi girl. Incidentally I remember how the main building of Chittagong College was being utilised as the home of WVS but there they were not in a secluded harem but secured with iron curtains.

At 5-30 P. M. on the 15th July, 1945, we were accommodated in a Military Special Train going to Bhuswal Junction near Bombay where we reached after a speedy journey of 36 hours, that is say, at midnight following the 16th July. This special proved very convenient and comfortable; it stopped only at meal-times. Early in the morning of 16th we were at Bilaspur, had breakfast at Raipur, lunch at Gondia, tea at Nagpur and dinner at Shegaon. The two storied railway station at Nagpur had spacious refreshment rooms upstairs wherefrom I could have a commanding view of the sprawling town. Detraining from the Military Special at Bhuswal at midnight we had a five six hour wait to catch an ordinary railway train back to khandwa wherefrom branched out the Bombay Baroda and Central India (BB&CI) railway line. Bhuswal to khandwa was only a short distance covered before breakfast. Here we were at a dead end as it were the first train to Mhow would be available at 1-30 P. m. We loafed about after breakfast, then lunched, then got aboard the train at 1-30 P. M. We had a six hour journey to Mhow, which from the standpoint of sight-seeing spelled unsurpassed beauty in viewing the Nerbada river, the surrounding hills, in the passage through four tunnels and in having a look at a waterfall all these occurring between Kalakund and Patalpani railway stations. Around eight on the evening of 17th July we reached Mhow where we were received at the railway station by Capt. J. E. Rogers who took us to the nearby military cantonment with the immensely laid out campus and structures of the Officers' Training School. Mhow stands on a vast tableland, 2000 ft. above sea level and has a temperate and genial climate a few miles off stood the native State of Indore. We were at Mhow for three days, from 18th to 20 th July. On the first day we had a strenuous programme to go through From 10 a. m. to 1-15 p. m. we attended Lectures by the British Team of Signals Instructors on a visit to the place. They combined theoretical lessons with practical works which latter they did themselves and called upon many cadets to handle the weapons. I have ever been a votary of this technique in teaching and learning. Naturally I felt keenly interested. Even in literary lecture work

I use maps and draw figures on the board. We had a three and half-hour afternoon programme from 2-30 to include visits to the Information Bureau, the Library, and interviews and discussions with Brigadier H. Shuker (Head of the whole establishment). Lt. Col. Wilcox, Second in Command, A. D. Falconer, Education Officer. We found the Information Bureau neat, upto-date, orderly and business like the Library very richly stocked and efficiently run. Brig. Shuker, on interview, turned out to be an unforgettable character. He was in full possession of the details of the working of this huge organisation with the latest information of what was happening in course of the day and where. His room was stuffed with charts, maps, time-table, lists of absentees, of sicknesses and so on. He told us that the cadets under training on that day stood at 651; the total number of cadets so far sent out after training during the period was above six thousand. Lt. Col. Wilcox was suave and cultured; the Education Officer was very companionable. We saw more of the Brigadier on the following day. With his distinctive brand of a cane in his hand he was seen moving up and down, to and fro with a word for everybody who came his way. Past his middle age he was enthusiastic and mercurial in temperament, valuable in speech, mobile in his ways, a shade convivial in society. His administrative technique was direct and forthright. He furnished a study in contrast to Col. Gordon of the Tatanagar Selection board, the latter being unflappable, mostly stationary, reticent and also remote in his control. There was much to learn from both. On the second day (19th July) our engagements extended from 8 a. m. to 1-15 p. m to include a personal inspection of the cadets in physical exercises from 8 a. m. to 9. their saloon and canteen, a visit to the Military Stores & Provision run by approved contractors and attendance at Urdu classes. The physical exercises appeared to us to be cruelly exhausting but exhilarating diversion soon followed. A number of the cadets entered into a very spacious hair-cutting saloon where they had a lordly service (the saloon was dazzlingly furnished); the entire group then had their bath and change, and breakfast in a neatly equipped canteen. At S. M. Hall, Dacca University, the students compelled the setting apart of a little space during my time to be used as a one-seat hair cutting cubicle and the less said about their canteen the better and yet this is the pride of place in the Dacca University. Our educational authorities have not the imagination, nor even the desire (the question of

the provision of funds for these does not arise) to provide such amenities to the students so that they might get the best out of them. The politicians in their representative capacities in the legislature and the Cabinet are having on an ever growing scale all the good things of life, even those among them who have beards on and profess to be orthodox and strictly Islamic in their ways. It is no wonder that occasionally the students abandon their loyalty to them and pay them back in their own coin. Being free on the afternoon of the 19th July we went out to Indore on a four-hour trip. There we drove round the outskirts seeing palaces and castles of princes and of the Maharajah, which were mostly vacant in the habitual absence of their lords and also College in working order. In the town proper we saw a number of glittering buildings with tawdry furnishings with the usual congestion and crowd. In the market place many shops were closed that afternoon; obviously it was the case of a half-day closure. Even so, textile material not being available at Chittagong without a 'permit' I bought a pair of saris, a pair of bed sheets and materials for shirts and mattresses. Two features of the place struck me most. No. 1, free education of boys and girls and corresponding lavish provision at College level; they were seen moving out of their institutions in large numbers in the afternoon at the end of the day's work. No. 2: Women, though in flowing saris with drawn-down veils and loads of ornaments, were free in their movements; they did not have social inhibitions. Returning to Mhow in the evening we had just time enough for a wash and change for an elaborately organised dinner with the D. Company under Capt. B. p. Sinha, its Commanding Officer-residential and messing arrangements being 'Company-wise'. The earlier batch of educationists had been entertained at dinner by another Company according to the suggestion of the Brigadier. The dinner was a noisy, crowded affair, free, unconventional, with peals of laughter reverberating in the dining hall. Our official visit concluded with this entertainment. Next morning Major Dunbar who had a winning smile had us under his charge. The preceding day's visit to the Stores was repeated. It was a seductive place with ample stocks of all manner of consumer good from tooth paste to Paris scent, from Kia-Ora to Scotch Whisky, from a woollen vest to luscious suitings, summer and winter. Prices for furnishing people of war-torn, famine-afflicted Bengal were inconceivably cheap. A lot of buying was made by Dr. Mumtazuddin, a lesser

quantity by Mr. Abdus Samad, the least by myself the other two being short of funds I acted as the creditor contrary to Polonius's wise advice. I took care to move about a number of bookstalls that existed in the township and bought some including the latest volume of Ethel Mannin, Bread or Roses (may be the title is slightly misplaced by me). We left Mhow at 11 p. m. Friday, the 20th July to avail ourselves of No. 7 Calcutta Mail at Khandwa next morning. There was a last minute hitch at the Officers' Mess at Mhow when we were presented with bills for payment of our three day feeds there. My colleagues were cautious about the financial implications of the conducted tour; they had brought with them relevant papers containing terms of free entertainment at the establishment at both places, Tatanagar & Mhow. The Tatanagar Mess people were aware of these conditions; those at Mhow should have known better but they were mean enough to pretend ignorance. They went through the papers scrutinizingly and after deliberative lobbying accepted the unknown terms reluctantly and without grace.

To remove a very human earlier omission I may insert here Brig. Shuker's estimate of the Cadets from Bengal. We had our own unwarranted misapprehension about their performance during training and when we expressed the same he dissipated at once our misgivings. He said that the Bengal Cadets like those of Madras were the best in all round achievement and leadership.

The Calcutta Mail which we boarded at Khandwa next morning had vestibuled Upper Class Compartments and an airconditioned dining saloon. It was routed through EIR of British days and via Allahabad, Maghulserai, Dhanbad. It took 33 hours to get to Howrah where we reached at 3-30 p. m. on the 22nd July. The compartment were undoubtedly packed to their utmost capacity. But I was clever enough to spend the those day and evening of the 19th in the Dining Car. At mealtimes I did the eating; otherwise I was reading Reservation for Chittagong from Calcutta was available for 24th morning so that I returned to my station on the morning of 25th July. The stopover in Calcutta was spent in a hotel in the course of which I saw Mr. K. Zachariah who was now the DPI, Bengal.

Abdus Samad, Mumtazuddin and I had been in close company for about thirteen days. This was my first acquaintance with them, Dacca not

being in my official line so far. To-day I am painfully aware of the comparatively early death (and in harness too) of Abdus samad-this sad event occurring some little time after the partition. On the eve of independence and in the course on my first visit to Dacca in connexion with an educational conference I met him for a short while once again, when he entertained Dr. Mumtazuddin and myself at dinner in his house. He was still the Secretary of the Board; actually his substantive appointment was that of a Lecturer in a Government College; he was on deputation to the Board. I found Mr. Abdus Samad quiet, unpretentious and true to his obligation; these indicated his good traits as a man. On the 6th August, 1945, I received a money order of Rs. 57/- and odd annas in payment of the loan he had taken from me at Mhow. Let him enjoy eternal rest after life's fitful fever of which he had a complicating measure on the eve of his death. My first contact with Mumtazuddin (we have had so many later), an exponent of Bradley's philosophy, showed him to be a pleasant companion with little concern for suitable moments of privacy free from artificiality, very naive in his ways. Dark in complexion, storkish in build, upto- date in dress, he appeared to be frank and homely., slightly slow and sluggish in movements. His morning toilet preparations were elaborate; his feed at all meals was enormous; he was an easy mixer with those who would entertain him without the corresponding instincts of reciprocating. In sharing financial expenditure or meeting such obligations he was slow but amenable to pressure. It appeared to me he had had schooling CH, Z and allied phonetical vibrations came amiss. His humour was provincial; the range of general studies and information was not impressive. Despite his professed simplicity he was acute so far as his own interests were concerned; He was conscious that he held a substantive berth in the Bengal Senior Educational Service and jumped to his feet to give a post-prandial talk at the "D" Company's entertainment at Mhow although from end to end of the trip he left the lead to me of handling all difficult problems and situations altogether a shrewd but quaint personality.

On the 23rd July when I was at the Education Directorate at the Bengal Secretariat I had a fishy smell of manoeuvrings in Calcutta to dislodge me from my position at Chittagong College. Let it be remembered that an offer in writing of its Principalship had been circulated by the then DPI among all the members of the Senior Educational Service, when I

hesitated and took time for the consideration of Dr. Jenkins straightforward proposition. None accepted them excepting Subodh Sengupta who expressed willingness after I had finally agreed. And Subodh Sengupta did never angle afterwards for an administrative job. The Japanese War had not yet ended ; the College was yet far off from rehabilitation but still a bright streak was apparent in the horizon to selfishly observant people. I narrated the full story to Mr. Zachariah who maintained an inexplicable silence. I took the train to Chittagong next morning. A similar attempt was made once again when Mr. A. K. Chanda was the DPI after Mr. Zachariah.

Back at Chittagong at the fag end of July after a tour of discovery we were now at the threshold of the victory in the east and within hailing distance of stirring changes in the political life of the sub-continent. On the 6th August the World's first atom bomb was dropped on the Japanese army base. Its explosion was two hundred times more powerful than the RAF ten ton bomb. Hiroshima with three lakh inhabitants was destroyed. The names of Dr. J. D. Cockcroft of Cambridge University, Sir. G. P. Thomson, Professor of Physics, Imperial College of Science and Lord Rutherford who had played their part in the making of the atomic bomb were in everybody's lips. On the 10th & 11th August the collapse of Japan monopolised all news and talk- the formal surrender occurring on the 15th and victory rejoicings spreading over to the 20th August. Earlier at the end of June Wavell made his proposals for constitutional changes. These were considered at a Conference on the 25th June . Within two months early elections to the Central & Provincial legislatures were announced, and the Viceroy invited to England for consultation. The post war political era began.

Our social contacts widened in September to include Mr. Saibal Kumar Gupta, District Judge, and his wife, Mr. Benzimar, Controller of Civil Supplies and his wife. Mr. M. O. Carter was now the Divisional Commissioner with his headquarters at Chittagong instead of at Comilla during the war. He was the President of the Governing Body of Chittagong College; we had met earlier at the Bengal Secretariat. I had discussion with him about the loss of College Hostel furniture and about the unstable ways of the College Cashier.

On the 1st October, an event took place which had far-reaching conse-

quences on the College administration later. This was the arrival of Mr. Rabindra Chatterjee to displace Mr. Abdus Subhan Khan Choudhury, Officiating Professor of Economics. Having been selected by the Bengal Public service Commission Chatterjee joined as Professor on substantive basis. This terminated the officiating arrangement which was most satisfactory. Khan Choudhury was a successful teacher, an amiable friend to the students and the staff. Everyone including myself was deeply moved but we were helpless against appointments made under statutory rules and regulations; laymen did not understand this aspect of the shuffling. On the eve of his departure Khan Choudhury received for four consecutive days a round of farewell entertainments. I shall have occasion to refer to its consequences later in due course.

The College this time combined autumn and victory celebration which was ceremonially held on the 9th October. With forethought I arranged to have Col. Lang, the Commanding Officer of Chittagong Cantonment as President of the function. Obviously he was pleased with participation in the neatly executed items. He had also first hand, direct experience of the improvised character of the working of the College and the inconveniences to which we had been subjected. I utilised his visit in plying him later for an early return of our buildings.

The global war having now come to an end, the Chittagong Military Authorities announced the formation of a Land Commission and the submission of claims by the public within a narrow margin of time. When I took over charge of the College early in 1944 I was shocked to discover that not stick of furniture of the Commodious College Muslim Hosted (described at some length by me in the course of my first term's work) was available. From the people responsible for the period I received vague and stupid explanation; they were an inert group. The total disappearance of the furniture was a source of constant worry to me. How should I show my face to the students at war's end when the time for re-occupation would come by? This question would rob me of rest and sleep. The Government undoubtedly would have to supply but that would cost an unconsciously long time and energy. But meanwhile the students would have to work and sleep and feed on floors. In October 1945 as soon as the Land Commission came into being, I decided in earlier consultation with the Divisional Commissioner to prefer our

claims. The Office staff, former Hostel superintendents and those in charge of requisitioned hostel buildings would either not cooperate with me or were incompetent to prepare an estimate of the loss. Asking for tenders from Cabinet-makers for Govt. Jobs was another tedious, hidebound process and there was no time. I had the nature of the room, office, Common Room & Dining room fittings by heart. I multiplied one student's furniture provision by 65 (that was the population strength) and got the total quantity; in the same way I arrived at Common Room and Dining Hall requirements. By sheer guess of ruling prices I worked out reasonable prices of almirahs and tables & benches and prepared the total estimates. In typing them out the Office Assistant retained the total but omitted one item of Rs. 500/- so that my estimates of Rs. 4,889/- suffered a corresponding diminution. From October, 1945 to April 1946 I carried on an unflinching struggle about this. At the initial stage twice I saw Capt. Cumpsty, Land Commission District Officer, who was holding his Claims Office in our own Hostel Buildings and who, rudely enough went to the length of saying "This is a large claim" Instantaneously he received the boomerang of the retort "Is this a large or a small place"? I did score an initial victory the final one came in the shape of a cheque I did score and initial victory the final one came in the shape of a cheque for Rs 4,389/- from Capt. Byrne on the 10th April, 1946, which was credited to the Education Deptt of the Govt. Of Bengal, which in their turn made an allotment for us in the Local Treasury. Within days of reoccupation the supplies were available for the students. In life we look for comforts as a matter of course and seldom stop to inquire into the sordid of the endeavours that go into their provision. I take pride even to day in what I did about the lost furniture irrespective of whether recognition followed or not; surely the idea of acknowledgement did occur to none. In March & April of the same year desperate attempts were being made at the Bengal Secretariat to dislodge me from my position at Chittagong. To the earlier manoeuvrings I have already referred.

I took another forethought in regard to the provision of funds in the College budget for the financial year, 1st April, 1945 to 31st March, 1946, for the shifting back to our original buildings, should that fortunate eventuality take place at all. In the preparation of these estimates I received immense help, as also in many other administrative affairs,

from my friend and colleague, Babu Brajendakumar Sur, of the Department of Physics, who opted for West Bengal, on the partition of the Province. We worked out the cost of shifting back; it stood at about rupees five thousand. On approval by the department it was available at Chittagong Treasury for disbursement before the 31st March, 1946. On the 13th December, 1945, when Col. Lang told me during my interview with him that a release could not be expected before that date I sat back in despair.

The second notable event of 1945 was a purely personal one. My thoughts having travelled back to my own people in West Bengal, my brothers & sisters, brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, nephews and nieces, to my own hearth and home I took a holiday out there from 2nd November to 18th November covering the second half of Chittagong College Autumn Vacation. Having collected my niece at Calcutta I first went to Midnapur and met my eldest brother and his family. He was now in failing health and in old age. Even so he went out along with me and called on friends and neighbours just to announce with a certain amount of pride how his youngest brother was on a visit. I spent three days in his company, returned to Calcutta met my (4th) elder brother and his family at Howrah and permitted myself two days of relaxation in their company before I shoved on to Rampurhat and the adjacent native village where I spent full seven days in meeting my widow sister at Rampurhat and the many sons and daughters of my (3rd) elder brother who had been in charge of our home and property since my father's death in January, 1926. His wife who was the epitome of home life was no more. She died after a short but swift illness on the 22nd of September, 1945. Since then my mind had been harking back to my native place. From the interior, that is, from the Kandi Sub-Division of Murshidabad district came over two other sisters of mine to meet me. The entire period had been emotionally surcharged, at the end of which I performed the Id-ul-Azha ceremony there and resumed my return trip to Chittagong where I arrived on the morning of 19th November.

Meanwhile other signs, symptoms, political activities pertaining to a gradual return to normal conditions on the sub-continent were visible. The Re-settlement Meeting on the forenoon of 24th November at Mr. Carter's Bungalow coincided with a partial strike (the first of its kind

since the 2nd phase of the World War) at my College and was followed by a complete one. Discontent was brewing over the fate and fortune of Subhas Bose's Indian National Army; the trial of some of them at that time precipitated the strike Sir Nazimuddin having had his troubles with Shahid Suhrawardy was on a visit to Chittagong. His advent created conflicting reactions in political circles. New elections were in the offing. It is interesting to recall how he was accompanied by Ial Mia, Who is now a Central Minister in Pakistan with a name nobody knew then. His present name is Al-Haj Abdallah Zahiruddin. Within the College my erratic colleague, Upendra Biswas (already noticed and not yet resigned) caused confusion and embarrassment by using the slogan 'Jai Hind' in one of his classes on the 30th November. An application in writing from the students of the class against him followed. The leaders of College Union met me in a deputation. Mr. Habibur Rahman, Lecturer in Economics and till lately Leader of the National War Front was leading the agitation. His NWF occupation having gone and his prominent position in the Executive Sector of the local Administration having suffered an eclipse with the departure of Mr. Stuart he had new pastures in student politics. Along with an out-sider he visited the residence of Muslim Students (in requisitioned buildings) at night; this drew protest from Prof. Waliullah & Prof. H. L. Sengupta. He made a plausible explanation. Upen Babu in his own explanation made the case worse and was reported against the eventual result being another warning to him by the DPI.

The academic session for the Senior students at Intermediate and Degree levels was about to close. Many of my colleagues and I concentrated on additional classes. The visit of my friend K. D. Ghose and Flight Lieutenant Sarkar took place in December at a moment when the agitation over Upen Babu's bungling was dying down.

1945 ended bathetically so far as I was concerned. At 9. p. m. on the 31st December I received a telegram of greetings to announce the award of 'khan Saheb' on me. This was absolutely unexpected and never striven for. At my request my colleagues refrained from felicitations on the advent and celebration of the New Year. The district authorities disowned having played any part. The citation, however, when the formal award took place contained a reference to my having "Saved

Chittagong College from an uncertain fate" established the earlier information that the award had been made on the recommendation of the Education Directorate. Very few of my friends then knew about it; nobody does to-day. My short name with its obscure record in familiar among many from this mean measure came from the work that lay ahead.

Here is a selection from books and publications to which I was introduced in 1945:

1. A critical history of Eng. Poetry, By Herbert Grierson & J. C. Smith: Chatto & Windus : 21s.
 2. Rhetoric & English Composition, by herbert Grierson: Oliver & Boyd: 6s
 3. Robert Bridges, by Edward Thompson: Ox Un. Press: 7.6.
 4. Full Employment in a free society A report by William Beveridge Allen & Unwin: 12s 6d.
 5. Baden-Powell: A Biography: By E. E. Reynolds: Ox University Press: 12s 6.d.
 6. Per Ardua (from RAF motto, Per Ardua ad Astra): The Rise of British Air Power, 1911 to '39 By Hiliary St. George Saunders, Illustrated: Ox. Univ. Press: 15s.
 7. Memoirs & Opinion: An Unfinished Autobiography by "Q", Edited with an Introduction by S. C. Roberts: Cam Univ. Press, 6s.
 8. Sir Max Beerbohm: Biographical Notes: By AE Gallatin: Harvard Univ. Press: 42s.
 9. New Chum (biography: John Masefield): Heinemann: 9/6.
 10. Der Fuehrer: Hitler's Rise to Power: By Konard Heiden: Gollancz 0 10/6.
- Translated by Ralph Manheim.
11. Virginia Woolf: Her Art as a Novelist: By joan Benett: Camb. Univ. Press: 6s.
 12. -do- : By David Daiches: Nicholson &

Watson: 7s. 6d.

13. Time Must Have a Stop: Aldous Huxley: Chatto & Windus, 9s. 6d.
14. FM Wavell: Maj-Gen. R. J. Collins: Hodder & Stoughton.
15. Essays by Divers Hands, New Series, Vol. XXI, Edited by Walter de Lamare: Ox. Univ. Press 8/6.
16. Essays & Studies by Members of the Eng. Association, Vol. XXX, 1944, Ox. Charendon 7/6.
17. The Year's Work in Eng. Studies, Vol, XXIII, 1942; Edited for Eng Association by FS' Boas: Ox Univ. Press, 10/6.
18. English Poetry in the later 19th Century : Ifor Evans : Methuen 11/6.
19. Shakespeare's Political Character: By John Palmer.
20. For The Time Being: W H Auden: Faber & Faber: 8/6.
 First part: The Sea & the Mirror, a dramatic extension of The Tempest; Second " For the Time being: Christmas Oratorio).
21. Three Comedies (Good Night, Children, The Golden Fleece: How Are They at Home): Heinemann 8/6. y J. B. Priestley.
22. Mind at the End of its Tether: H G Wells: Heinemann 8/6.
23. Three Men in New Suits: J B Priestley: Heinemann 8/6.

1946

The Year 1946 turned out be the last but one Act of the day to day administration of the British Drama in India the short concluding portion occurring by August, 1947. The scenes of the Fourth Act followed each other in close sequence beginning with elections to the legislature in March and ending up with the December meet of the leaders in London It was a unique prelude to the transfer of power to the two sovereign states of pakistan & India and to the fertlisations of both to serve as Goschens not only to the British people but also to their allies, the Americans and the Russians in particular. The Fitting epilogue of what looks like an eternal paradise of enjoyment by them above the

earthy eath has been having a merry run. Between them the two countries are having a surfeit of minority problems. The global war from 1939 to 1945 led to the plunging of the sub-continent in civil war and bloodshed from 1946 till long after the Partition and extending from Bengal to Punjab via Bihar & UP and yet the Interim Government run first by Nehru & his compatriots and later shared and run in co-operation (or non-cooperation?) by Liaquat Ali Khan and his colleagues had been in the saddle from September onwards. What a year it was and with what impact upon the teeming millions of the people!

From July 1922 to August 1946 this story is likely to reveal a similar pattern; I cannot possibly say if it will unfold a different design for the later phases. All I can say is that my motto has throughout been the acceptance of life's challenge in my humble sphere of educational work with an inner urge to fight and go over in the same purposeful direction without any personal axe to grind.

At Chittagong we had a ceremonial beginning in the form of the Divisional Commissioner's Durbar on the 7th January, 1946. The little elation it aroused was dashed the same evening by some atrocities that were perpetrated by troops on innocent people living in Panchlaish, the northern outskirts of the town. A number of houses had been burnt down by the troops. Widespread excitement among the public and the students followed; hartals and strikes accompanied them. Canards of shabby treatment by Mr. McInerny, then District Magistrate, were circulated with the result that he lost their confidence and had to quit soon afterwards although he had organised meanwhile effective relief and reconstruction. In February we had Mr. F. A. Karim, I. C. S. as our District Magistrate who continued in that capacity till long after the partition. Student unrest and indiscipline having been a frequent occurrence the Commissioner convened a Conference of Heads of Educational Institutions in the same month and I that of guardians in March in the College premises. The latter proved helpful and ensured a quiet time for the rest of the year. Incidentally it may be noted that all High English Schools in the town including the Government Collegiate School had been closed during the worst phases of the War with the solitary exception of the Muslim H. E. School which was functioning

in a hired building just beyond the ditch at the eastern boundary. This too was in a moribund state and we had serious problems of sending our boys to it. At the end of the Japanese War in 1945 most of them were reopened in requisitioned houses. Two other changes in officialdom during the period were notable. Mr. Pranab kumar Sen, I. P. (Now Commissioner of Police, Calcutta, since the January 1964 riots in Calcutta) took over as Additional Superintendent of Police, and Mr. Torab Ali, I. C. S. (now Addl Chief secretary, East Pakistn) as Addl. District Magistrate.

My disappointment over what Col. Lang told me in December of the preceding year in regard to the release of College buildings before 31st March did not last long; I made fresh diplomatic moves in the opening months of 1946 and having received all-round sympathy from Civil and Military authorities won my way through, my insistent theme being that my budget provision ofr the transfer would lapse by 31st March. On the 15th February a Joint inspection by the Lands & Herring Section of the Military on the one hand and by myself and officers of the Civil Buildings and Electrical Departments on the other was held; delapidations were noted, blue-prints for repairs and reconstruction drawn up, disposal of military articles and leftovers of their installations and equipment in the one storied two-room Arts buildings and the nearby two-storied building was arranged. With incredible promptitude this disposal was carried out by contractors and the work of repairs and reconstruction undertaken. The main building of the College was found in a clean state of maintenance and since women of the WVC were in residence there the walls had not only colour washings but also attractive decorations on them. According to my desire they were left untouched. On the 4th March the Civil Executive Engineer and I held another inspection and were satisfied that work had been proceeding apace. On the 15th March I got Capt. Grewal to sign a certificate of possession. This coincided with the period of pollings for the legislature. I spared 50% of my staff to go out and do the elections job and retained the other half to help shifting to our own premises. I sat down and drew up a plan of shifting to cover the period from 17th March to 22nd March officers in convenient batches were posted at both ends the despatching and the receiving to supervise and check-up the departure and arrival of all furniture and books. We were back in our own place on the afternoon

of 22nd March, 1946, when I found myself sitting in the principal's Room and using the telephone. I felt I had done a good job with the loyal cooperation of my Colleagues. This was the earliest release by the military. I now turned to the reconstruction of the Assembly Hall, the rebuilding of hutments at its foot, to the completion of repairs to the two-room Arts Buildings which had undergone enormous excavations in its floors and damage in its walls for tele-communication installations. My constant supervision and direction yielded good results; the Assembly Hall after repairs and rewiring became strong and altogether new; the hutments were used for small tutorial groups. The military authorities had decent brick and cement pathways made between different buildings and the broad passage from the main gate of the College to the main building constructed attractively. One fine morning I discovered that the contractors to whom the military authorities had sold their leftovers were digging up the bricks of the broad passage claiming them under terms of the sale. I was furious; I created a scene among the contractors' men, brought the contractors and the relevant authorities to the scene and effectively stopped this vandalism. This was another little achievement.

Khwaja Nazimuddin had wilted earlier under the overbearing tactics of Shahid Suhrawardy although he had gone round and collected funds for the Muslim League campaigning. Within my own knowledge (he told me himself while of a visit to Chittagong) he collected one lakh and twenty five thousand at Chittagong. He had elected to drop out altogether from the elections. But A. K. Fazlul Huq was returned from two constituencies despite his eclipse from public life since the end of March, 1943. Shahid Suhrawardy after the 1946 elections formed his ministry with 8 ministers, one Chief Whip and 12 Parliamentary Secretaries. Soon after our rehabilitation this new ministry was installed.

On the 10th April, 1946, the Claims Commission gave us the compensation we had asked for over the loss of the Hostel furniture.

Another relevant shifting in course of the year may be mentioned here. I shifted from Mr. Ghosal's house to the adjacent house, **Brojomohon Kutir**, on the 15th September, 1946, on agreed terms with the landlord, **Babu Sucharn Bhusan Sen, Pleader**. This was a bigger house with an

immense open space on the West although it was not skilfully planned like Mr. Ghosal's. Mr. Ghosal was thus rehabilitated in his own house to his great relief. Sucharu Babu's house stands there no more. I gather Mr. U. N. Siddiqui, a leading advocate of Chittagong bought the house and the attached grounds on which he has constructed a mansion of many suites to bring him a substantial income. I have however a nostalgic feeling for the ancient old fashioned place with its slightly run-away structures but with many jackfruit, coconut, lichi, raintrees to provide shade, fruit, sport to the members of my family. The owner, a youngman, never took the legal profession seriously but was full of communism. He had inherited the house and could not maintain it Naturally he had to sell it. I wish I had money enough to buy the house and settle down there. Sucharu Babu and I developed friendship despite conflicting ideologies. I loved his frankness, his other worldiness.

Speaking of friendship I am reminded of several other cases of deep personal care and service I did receive during this period. In January February I was victim of a painful boil in a delicate region of the body; It grew in size and inflammatory character. I started running temperature as well. The Civil Surgeon Lt. Col. Drummond, Dr. T. Ghosh, Teacher of Surgery of Chittagong Medical School and Dr. Ahmed Kabir, Pathologist, took care of me. The last two proved to be most affectionate brothers and gave ungrudging help. Thiazamide tablets (other sulpha drugs had not come into use yet) in any number were swallowed to obviate surgical operation but the temperature chart indicated a suspiciously undulating character. Dr Ahmed kabir promptly examined my blood and also urine; the blood examination report Showed M. T. rings positive malignant tertia. Quinine fought the last, Thiazamide tablets led to the bursting of the boil without the surgeon's knife. But the human warmth and loyalty that came from Dr. Ghosh and Dr. Kabir are unforgettable treasures in my mind.

Early in March I attended the Calcutta University Convocation for presenting our Graduates; in mid-April Text Book Committee meetings and those of the Board of Examiners, in the first week of may the Conference of Principals convened by the Vice-Chancellor. The third occasion coincided with the deepest personal bereavement. As I was about to leave Chittagong for the Conference of Principals a telegram

was handed in to inform that my eldest brother was laid up with apoplexy at Midnapore. Early in the morning of the first day of the Conference he breathed his last so that when I reached the place late in the evening the burial had already taken place. Since the death of my father twenty years earlier, no greater calamity had befallen us. He had brought me up with the tenderest care and gave me graduated lessons in Arabic from the Matriculation stage to the Degree level with the result that the language of the Quran came easy to me.

Speaking of script examination work I may mention that I did this job under the Calcutta University from 1923 to 1947 starting at the bottom rung of Matriculation and being promoted rung by rung to the Degree level. I began with Dr. H. C. Mookerjee as Head Examiner. We had gone through a regular course of training in script valuation and in attaining to a certain standard of uniformity under the vigilant eye and regular instructions from the Chairman of the Board of Examiners. After the examination of the first consignment we had to await instructions from him before we could proceed to the subsequent one. Depressing reflections follow from experience of the same work under the Dacca University since Independence. Here the experience amounts in fine to this that no training in the job is required. Work at the top may be undertaken by a tyro without any previous experience in it and there is practically no room left for the Chairman to guide and correct. At Honours and Post-Graduate levels there are checks and balances in the forms of assessment by External Examiners.

The College having been closed early in May for about two months on account of summer vacation, routine academic work was suspended. But May & June, July & August and all the remaining months of the year were dominated by historic political events and their disgraceful repercussions. Full dress dramatic enactments with "blood and thunder" horrors on the stage in direct view and participation of the Indian audience proceeded from the failure of the Cabinet Mission in early May to effect agreement among the parties and from the publication of their Indian Union Plan later. This was done on May the 17th, 1946. The following entries in my diary are likely to prove interesting despite their still-born character.

Table of Representation to Constitution Making Body
(One representative for one million people)

SECTION-A

Province	General	Muslim	Total
Madras	45	4	49
Bombay	19	2	21
U.P.	47	4	55
Bihar	31	5	36
C.P.	16	1	17
Orissa	<u>9</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>9</u>
	167	20	187

SECTION-B

Province	General	Muslim	Sikh	Total
Punjab	8	16	4	28
NWFP	-	3	-	3
Sind	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>4</u>
	9	22	4	35

SECTION-C

Province	General	Muslim	Total
Bengal	27	33	60
Assam	<u>7</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>10</u>
	34	36	70

Total for British India - 292

Maximum for Indian States - 93

385

Add to A1 representing Delhi

1	-do-	Ajmer-Merwara
1	-do-	Coorg

(iv) A preliminary meeting of the Constitution Making Body: to determine general order of business; to elect a Chairman and other Officers and an Advisory Committee. Thereafter the provincial representatives will divide up into three sections, A, B & C as above.

(v) These Section shall proceed to settle the provincial constitutions for the provinces included in each section and shall also decide wheter any group Constitution shall be set up for those provinces and if so with what Provincial subjects the Group should deal. Provinces shall have the power to opt out of the Groups in accordance with the provisions of Sub-Clause (VIII) below.

(vi) The representatives of the Sections and the Indian states shall reassemble for the purpose of unsettling the Union Constitution.

(vii) In the Indian Constituent Assembly resolution varying the provisions of Para 15 or raising any major communal issue shall require a majority of representatives present and voting of each.

(viii) As soon as the new constitutional arrangements have come into operation it shall be open to any province to elect to come out of any group in which it has been placed. Such a decision shall be taken by the new legislature of the province after the first general election under the new constitution.

Para 15 of the Cabinet Mission's India Plan.

1. Union of India-British India and the States with Foreign Affairs Defence & Communications with powers to raise finances for these subjects.
2. The Union to have an Executive and a Legislature from British Indian and States representatives
3. All subjects other than the Union subjects and all residuary powers should vest in the Provinces.
4. The States will retain all subjects and powers other than those ceded to the Union.
5. Provinces to be free to form groups with Executives & Legislatures and each group could determine the provincial subjects to be taken in common.

6: The Constitution of the Union and of the Groups should contain a provision whereby any province could, by a majority vote of its Legislature Assemble call for a reconsideration of the terms of the constitution after an initial period of ten years and thereafter at ten-yearly intervals.

Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah had the vision and the judgment to perceive that short of Partition (or in other words his demanded Pakistan) this was the best of a bad bargain for him and his League and that the plan was worth trying by all parties in the interest of the country as whole. On the 6th June he got the Muslim League Council to accept the plan. They accepted the arrangements proposed for the Interim Government as well. The declared composition of the Interim Government till the inauguration of the new constitution was a parity of representation for the League and the Congress (5-5 representatives for each) plus 1 Sikh and 1 of the Scheduled castes. Mr. Jinnah's acceptance of both represented his finest moment as a citizen of India. His approach was forthright; his decision quick and rational, but the groupings under the Cabinet Mission Plan (especially those of Sections B & C) and the Congress- League party of representation of the Interim Government caused the wildest flutter and the most devious thought processes in the Congress dovescotes. They smelt danger in the first and iniaquity in the latter. They sought continual clarification of Para 15 in regard to the provision of withdrawal from grouping. Why such a withdrawal should take place at the end of ten years and not at the initial stage racked their brains. Next they could not accept parity with the League on the Interim Govt. and demanded higher percentage. And why should the League have the exclusive privilege of nominating the Muslim members and not the congress too, which includes Muslims. They went on arguing and dodging, clamouring & bargaining the grouping must be made void, the parity rejected. While eventually they accepted the Constitution Making Proposals (and they did so avowedly to wreck) they did not agree to the offer on the interim Govt. Seeing they saw not, hearing the heard not-God having sealed their hearts and plugged their ears to the vital, virile movement of the entire body of Muslims on the sub-continent. I distinctly remember what Mr. Gandhi said on the morrow of the publication of the India Plan. He was at

Noakhali, moving from village to village seeking to heal the scars of the communal riots that had taken place there earlier. His advice to Baradoloï, then Chief Minister of Assam rang clear through the air "Even if the Congress accepts the groupings, Assam should raise the standard of revolt and break away". Right or wrong I do not care but I hold to the belief that Pakistan was not a dismemberment by the Muslims but a creation of the Hindus. Mr. Jinnah held himself in poise while all these hucksterings and sophistry were going on., while Lord Wavell (or shall I say Attlee's Government) was trimming the sail according to the Congress wind blowing, before he made his tiger spring to cancel acceptance of both after seven weeks and to move with unfaltering steps "on to the bound of the waste, on to the City of God". But the trek ahead was long and deadly; his hid for 'direct action' had its confrontation in the direct action of the Congress and Pandit Nehru, their decision taken on the 8th August being the formation of the Interim Govt. by themselves alone and to the total exclusion of the Muslim League. This decision throws a lurid light on JawaherLal's wisdom and statesmanship, on his vaulting ambition and his humane character, on his much publicised secularly modern outlook. It is impossible for me not to recall here what happened in the smalles of human spheres to Rajshahi College in 1935. Dr Shastri and Dr. Sri Kumar Banerjee did not care to read the Writing on the Wall and hastened to form and run the College Union without the Muslim students. But Nehru was a creative artist, an author of high caliber, a champion on the people of India, an intrepid warrior against tyranny, a Prometheus-like victor over Jove-like usurper While he formed the Interim Government on 2nd September, 1946, the Calcutta riots of the preceding fortnight left him untouched. Naturally Jinnah's journey on to Pakistan (equally as that of Nehru to Hindustan) lay through a path strewn over with the uprooted with the dead and the dying, through corridors of bloodstained filth with he upper air polluted with the poison of the explosion. "Clear the earth, clean the sky..... wash the stone, wash the bone, wash them wash them" must be ringing still in many ears while contemplation hies back to the period. Quaid-i-Azam had to fight Moses-like many Pharaohs to pull his people out of 'Egypt' and lead them on into the promised land.

I am sorry I have anticipated much too much. June 3rd, 1947, was still a year ahead. Chittagong College reopened after summer vacation on

the 1st July, 1946. The rehabilitation of the College had given me a sense of elation; when it filled and brimmed over with eager, new entrants at the beginning of the new session, I took up in right earnest projects of expansion, especially of the existing small laboratories, of additional lecture halls, of the Library, I got available space in front of the main building and in the rear examined by Mr. Nunn, the Superintending Engineer, who obligingly came over from Calcutta. He was absolutely opposed to any construction in front but supported the erection of buildings at the back. But the whole available space there was an area of hollows, ditches and pools-the entry to the same being barred by a shop and a deserted Hindu temple. Filling is not problem now whether in Pakistan or India with Development Funds bursting at the seams. But in those days with the stingy Britons holding the purse, the enormous cost of filling would lead to the defeat of Mr. Nunn's proposals. "Let me have a direct and personal discussion with the DPI" thought I and I looked forward to a suitable opportunity for the same. In addition to the normal academic work in July we had a musical function attended by Mr. Jasimuddin Ahmed, the poet and Song Publicity Organiser, Mr. Abbasuddin Ahmed, Addl. Song Publicity Organiser and noted musician, and also a talk by Capt. Kharbanda on physical Education which was followed by a very interesting demonstration. 17th August (16th was declared as a holiday by the Government on account of Direct Action would be suitable for a discussion of my expansion projects with the DPI Whose permission I sought in the first week. This was available will in time for me to start for Calcutta on the evening of 15th August with the fateful 16th August right in front of me. The June and July political parleys and moves had been so exasperatingly wordy and of the character of such a ding-dong race that I could not perceive, stupidly to be sure, the horrible implications of the Direct Action day in Calcutta. A call for it was available at Chittagong just a few days earlier. And the 8th August Congress decision to from the Interim Government without the Muslim League was hardly understood in the Mufassil. At the DPI's end also a fairly clear appraisal of what was to happen of that day was not available when the permission was given to me to proceed. In sheer ignorance and out of pedagogic silliness I spent the night of 15th August and half the following day in railway train and steamer journeys in a listless fashion. In the early

afternoon of 16th when I boarded the train at Goualondo I had my first shock; a number of school boys got into my compartment and began a course of acrobatics accompanied by vocal music. A gentle protest from me elicited the bluntest retort I have ever had. "This is a day of days for us and we are going to enjoy it with an abandon", they said. I sat 'mum' being frightened by their lawless insolence for two hours. When the train reached kushtia a Railway Official intervened and got my room cleared of these little rogues. The rest of the journey had a smooth run. But the first disquieting news of widespread disturbances in Calcutta reached my ears on the platform of Chuadanga Railway Station where two or three railway employees were discussing these in a **Sotto Voce**. They said that many of the Up trains from Calcutta had not so far arrived. The train however speeded down unhindered. At Ranaghat there were noisy scenes and panicky movements. Two of my former Hindu students met me and expressed their concern over my downward course. Interrogated they said that they had slipped through converging demonstrations from their Harrison road mess early in the morning and had just reached Ranaghat by the first available local train. I thought that they were too panicky to be trusted. The question of breaking journey there and trying to go back did not occur at all. At 9-45 P. M. (may be about 10 to 15 minutes behind schedule) I was at Sealdah railway station which looked like a vast camp of war refugees.

Men, women and children were huddled together in every inch of available space. Many had spread their bed-rolls to squat or recline. A coolie was available to take off my stuff and as he said to deposit it anywhere on the platform I should direct him to but not beyond the gate. As we were squeezing through dense crowds a Sikh gentleman reclining against his pillow on the floor inquired where I meant to proceed and significantly added I had better had my accommodation by his side. Seeing signs of irritation on my face he remarked "Brother, where would you be going? Half of Calcutta is burning now". I was still sceptic and wended my way towards the gates which were all closed excepting one at the west end corner near the Railway Refreshment Rooms. Even I went to the length of attempting persuasion with the coolie to accompany me walking to Park Circus. The vast assemblage in the railway station, I thought was just the outcome of scare. Having asked the coolie to spare a few minutes I went out to the outer platforms and

found not only Sorabjee's Refreshment Rooms under heavy lock and key but also the stalls bolted and barred. The place was heavily guarded by Armed Police who warned me against moving about but yielded to my request for visiting the platforms of the North Station where I learnt the lesson of my life; bodies of people already killed and dead and of some groaning under fatal injuries were lying about. Most of these were of huge proportions under flimsy clothings leaving no doubt about their hooligan character. Turning back from the gruesome scene as I cast my glance towards the Harrison Road I saw a number of houses burning; I ran back to the platform in horror. The Waiting Rooms were packed to suffocation. After waling up and down several times I selected a small space near a Weighing Machine and sheltered myself there in sheer exhaustion and despair. At about midnight I saw to my utter amazement Major Mookerjee, Controller of Railway Civil Supplies at Chittagong, walking past my niche. Recently we had social contact with him. I stood up and accosted him and gathered that he along with his family had been stuck up in their own Saloon; he was going upstairs to meet a friend of his. There stood the Rest Rooms primarily for Railway officials but also for civilians when vacant. He took me along with him and made arrangements with his friend for me to spend the night there. It was a spacious room with a single bed and I was lucky enough to be admitted. But the gentleman was good enough to agree to my condition of having my bed spread on the floor. The question of food or drink did not arise. Early in the morning I moved pussy-foot to the window on the south and Peered through for signs of life in the great city which bestirs normally at 4 or 5; it was dead. Besides the sky was overcast with a steady drizzle falling. No clanging on rails of early morning tram cars no hooting of horns of corresponding public transport. Ominous portents these were. In brooding silence and with faltering steps when I got down to the platform after 7 a. m. I found piteous scenes of children crying for food and drink, of parents running frantically in search of these which were simply non-existent. A train, almost empty, was berthed along the platform but with no signs of a move out After sometime I thought I had a known face to see by the window of a first class compartment. I located it as that of the brother of my friend, Mr. Narul Huq Choudhury, Advocate, Calcutta High Court. They were natives of Chittagong. The brother was a businessman of Chittagong

and knew me imperfectly. In the course of this narrative I have already introduced Mr. Nural Huq Choudhury. I thrust myself on his brother, pestered him with many questions and extorted the confession that he had reached the Railway Station in his brother's car at 4-30 a. m. But the whole of Calcutta including Park Circus was in a state of Civil War and bloodshed, he said, and it would not be possible or advisable for me to get to Park Circus. His was on an unavoidable business necessity and the hour he had selected was least dangerous "But your brother's car is here, is not it? And it is returning home to be sure. Please come out and introduce me to your car driver", said I. He could resist no further and complied. But the driver would not agree. It was the Chittagong Mail which was berthed along the platform. Some time later, but how long afterwards I cannot say, it did proceed on the 17th August. For five succeeding days it did not. At 10 a. m. Mr. Huq's driver was hustled by me to carry me. Issuing out into the Circular Road I found shops and houses burnt and razed to the ground; they looked as if incendiary bombs had been dropped overnight; the road was littered over with bricks and rubble; street corners crowded with vociferous people; no imminent danger was visible; I was getting self-complacent. At we were approaching the Circular Road - Corporation Street Crossing (off Mowal Ali and off Entally Market) a wild group armed with lathis was approaching the same corner in a wild frenzy "Speed, for our lives, driver, 'speed' said I. Deafening shouts and a bid for this car confronted us. Through god's grace we escaped by the skin of our teeth. We reached destination, 30, Dilkusha street at 10-30 a. m. The whole area was in a bustle; the famous film star Chhabi Biswas's house at the corner was heavily guarded by armed Police. I went straight into my niece's suite of rooms where with all doors and windows hermetically sealed we cowered for the rest of the day and night. There was some rice in the house; a neighbour spared a quantity of dhal to appease hunger. That was all. deafening noise from audible distance greeted our ears but we were determined to stay put. On the 18th morning I summoned courage enough to proceed to the Park Circus Maidan but when stories of murder, arson, loot started pouring in, I beat my retreat home to stir out no more. Meanwhile a son of my niece, a young fellow made frequent sallies forth only to return and confirm accounts received earlier. Our fare for the 18th was no better rather it was leaner still. On the 19th morning

killings in our neighbourhood were not talked about; only groups of chatter-boes with lathis in their hands were wandering about. I got out and walked cautiously to the Park Circus Market. It crossing Ameer Ali Avenue I saw several bodies lying dead and on the eastern border of the market two bodies of Sikh fully dressed, turban and all, sprawling across the road. I sped away, had a chicken, some mutton, washing soap to buy with which I hurried back. Chhabi Babu had meanwhile been carried to safety but his house had been broken open by goondas who were frequently looting valuable movable property from inside it What a shame! For the last three days we did not receive any newspaper. On the 20th August I got a copy of the statesman in which leading article No. I was "Disgrace Abounding", No 2 "The Calcutta Scene" The paper gave an estimate of dead to be 2000 to 3000. The leading articles mentioned were admittedly of a classic character and much appreciated in all circles. Since we could move about unmolested in the area I first called upon Khan Bahadur Badiur Rahman, ADPI and accompanied him to Lady Brabourne College where we found 3000 Muslim refugees from danger zones rescued and accommodated; women and children had been brought with clothings that were on their person; hange was not possible; another replica of the scene I saw on the Sealdah Station platforms was before me. But feeding arrangements by voluntary Relief Organisations were being made. There I met casually the DPI, Khan Bahadur Asa, and miss Grose, Principal Lady Brabourne College was enough to drive me home for the rest of the day . On the morning of 21st August it was possible for me to have a copy of The Statesmean of date and to find out that Government would provide truck at important street corners to transport Government servants to the Secretariat. I availed myself of one such truck (there were many others too) near the Park Circus tram Depot and arrived at Writers Buildings at 11-45 a. m. I had interviews with the DPI and Mr. Hessing the ADPI for a few minutes to be sure but these pertained only to the atrocities going on By 12-30 the big place was empty; people had left or were leaving in tterror. I met . Mr. Walker, then Chief Secretary in the lift; he too was in shattered nerves but he was good enough to inquire if I was safe. No transport to return was available; the streets were deserted. I was absolutely stranded and felt helpless over going back to Park Circus. Prrovidential relief came when I saw Mr. A. B. Ganguli , ICS, speeding to his car and

starting it; I ran and shouted; he was a close friend and former colleague; he gave me a lift but declined to go anywhere near Park Circus since the people there according to him, were the most fanatical and were contemplating an invasion of Bhawanipur. In the midst of tragic woe I laughed aloud and told him that at Park Circus the apprehension was exactly the opposite; they were expecting an imminent invasion from Bhawanipur and were shouting "Allah-O-Akbar" through the nights. Mr. Ganguli was kind enough to drive me to the vicinity of Mullick Bazar and then he turned South and I did the remaining part foot slogging. During the outward trip to the Secretariat I found and all the cabinet makers shops (the owners were Hindus) on Wellesley street damaged, the furniture taken out and scattered; there were also bodies lying about in putrid condition; the whole area was stinking. The leading article in The Statesman of date was under the caption "Problem Province" - a caption which has now passed into popular parlance. On the 22nd August the Statesman's estimate of the dead stood at four thousand, of total casualties at fifteen thousand; it came out with two leading articles, "call to Action", " Immediate Tasks". The redeeming feature of the day was the appearance of tran cars in the streets . In the forenoon it was possible for me to go to the Secretariat aboard one of these but in the absence of office staff the DPI and the ADPI whom I saw could not hold the proposed discussions. In the afternoon I went to Sealdah Railway Station and booked for the following morning. Chittagong had mean while been completely cut off. Wild rumors were afloat; my family had written me off; the District Magistrate tried but failed to contact Writers' Buildings for some news about my safety The Chittagong Express started for the first time since 17th August on the 23rd morning at 7-30 Earlier I had taken the precaution of arranging transport for me to the railway station. The train was crowded with passengers who were in jitters Into my compartment came at least three well-known Chittagong Muslim gentlemen; it appeared later that at least two did not hold First class tickets. All of them were in high spirits and spun out yarns of vendetta that the Muslim hooligans in their areas had wreaked. they were exultant in their graphic narration. At my silent and morose posture they were surprised but failed to draw me into their unabashed gloating. When I reached Chittagong Railway Station at 6-10 on the morning of 24th August I could see from a distance my eldest

son shaking in bewilderment and scanning the faces of passengers in the front part. I was in one of the rear coaches. There is a one-line entry in my diary in addition to that of arrival at 6-10 and being given a lift by my beloved pupil, Jamalul Sattar- Here it is:

"Resumed duties at the College which sat all day". At Chittagong the Muslim League Branch functioned in strength unlike its counterparts in other district headquarters. Besides there were some stout and outstanding Muslim League champions including Mr. A. K. Fazlul Quader Choudhury. But nothing untoward happened.

And what was the meaning of this Direct Action and what was its programme at League Headquarters? Or in the Punjab or in Sind or at New Delhi or Bombay? Being a silly, poor, unpolitical pedagogue I knew not, understood not its import then. Nor do I do it even now. Since Lord Wavell and the British Cabinet had broken its pledged word to the League, since they were vacillating and also leaning in particular to the Congress, the League as perfectly justified in withdrawing its acceptance of both parts of the offer. And direct action would, in that context, appear to be defiance with violence if necessary) of all British Government moves, activities, offers, constitutional and administrative changes. To the layman it would also imply demonstrations everywhere of the League's dissatisfaction and rejection. Did it however mean that at Calcutta at any rate the Muslim should inaugurate Pakistan on that date and with the aid of the Muslim Chief Minister there (who was Home Minister as well) should eliminate altogether its opponents? Who organised the launching out? Did the party do the job? Or did the party's representatives on the administration of the Province do so and gave the lead? What part did the Chief Minister play in setting into motion the items in the day's programme which, I was told, began early in the morning in all parts of the city irrespective of the disposition and character of the residents? Was it merely the planting of flags everywhere peacefully? Or did the command go out to do the job directly' i. e. with violence to those who should oppose it? Would not violence lead to counter-violence? Would not lawlessness be met by lawlessness, beating up by brick-battling, the forcing of doors stopped by the pouring of hot water and molten pitch? Did the Muslim or the Hindu constitute the majority in Calcutta? Was it the proposal to beat to defeat the majority

population with Home & police Department personnel and arms? If the Hindus had made a build up of similar strength in their own houses and holdings would it not constitute private right of defence? Did some of these questions strike the chief Minister of the Province, whose sacred duty it was to protect the life and property of its people? Would Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq have conducted himself the way that Mr. Shahid Suhrawardy was alleged to have done on the occasion? But Suhrawardy was a champion of the League with unswerving loyalty whereas Huq was unsteady and rebellious. He was talented and brilliant- a fighter of invincible guts wheresse the other weak and vacillating. In such a case the possession of wisdom in statecraft or of human and humane traits is immaterial.. As things stood however there was a massacre of the innocents, slaughter of the faithful and the pagan together; women were violated and then killed; their wombs ripped up to smash god's little images within simply because they belonged to the opposite creed or faith. The rickshaw-puller, the tailor, the milkman, the washerman, the shoe shine boy, the sweeper, the road-side vendor, the private tutor etc. came in either for brutal stabbing or for being battered to death. Loot and plunder, fire and destruction were the order of the day. Little Orgoglios were abroad; the huge ones were in their brazen castles actively planning domination and empires. In such cases the pedestrian is always the first victim, the car-owner very rarely,. The god-like leaders lie beside their nectar in Olympian heights and hurl down bolts to cause death and devastation if the plains.

I have confined myself mostly to the areas I frequented. The Hindu localities, it had been recorded, were infinitely more thorough and ruthless.

I returned to Chittagong just on the eve of the Id-ul- Fitr Holidays which covered the period from Sunday, 25th August to Sunday, 1st September, 1946. September the 2nd was another fateful day the day on which Pandit Nehru's Interim Government was inducted into office. As a precautionary measure against untoward incidents, lectures were suspended for that day as well. But a black flag was hoisted on the main building at 12-30 p. m. when we were busy disbursing the salaries of the Establishment and non-gazetted staff. Undoubtedly it was hauled down soon afterwards. We had barely a month's term-time before the autumn

vaction including Id-ul-Azha as well. The aftermath of Calcutta riots at Chittagong was not to be seen anywhere in the district. On my return I just hear that around Badda Hat 2/3 miles off from the town three or four stabbings had taken place. Now there was no incident. There was however, anxiety every where and peace Committees were being formed, locality by locality. I was elected President of the Chawkbazar locality. I was, from my experience of Calcutta Riots, the worst of sufferer from mental tension. Work at the College was going on normally and peacefully. On the 4th September we held a Condolence meeting over the death of Pramatha Choudhury, the famous Bengali author. on the 19th September wit the receipt at 12-30 p. m. of the news of the death of Sir Hasan Suhrawardy, formerly Vice-Chancellor, Calcutta University, we suspended lectures and held another Condolence meeting in which a second condolence resolution was adopted on the death of Sir James Jeans, the famous scientist. The convention in the College in those days was to hold a Social Gathering on the eve of the autumn recess. I was entirely opposed to any such celebration this time and I had expressed my views accordingly. On the 21st September a joint deputation of Muslim and Hindu students approached me and insistently asked for a short function to mark the end of the first term. They pointed out that the town was peaceful; the College students were free from all communalism; work in the College was going on peacefully; the responsibility of organising the function was theirs and there should be no earthly reason to withhold permission. Half-willingly half-unwillingly I yielded subject to discussion with the staff, particularly with the Sectional Heads of the Union. They too in their turn supported the proposal. And after all it would be a short, one-session affair; there was no harm. Let it be held on the afternoon of 27th, the last but one working day before the recess. On the 26th September a meeting of the organisers (both students and teachers) was held in my room between 12-10 p. m and 1 p. m. when arrangements for the next day's function were finalised. I cherished a secret concern in my heart and when they left I wrote out a Confidential letter to Mr. Bemrose, Superintendent of Police, asking for an armed picket close to the College, campus would be aware of its position. Strictly in accordance with my request this armed picket called at dusk on 27.9.64 and occupied the position I had pointed out. My engagements on the 26th

September kept me fully occupied till 11 p. m. There were three functions from the afternoon. No. 1 pertained to a social get-together of the Muslim central Relief Committee with which a number of our students and teachers had worked in the interior in flood affected areas; No. 2 to the inauguration by me Anderkilla of a Literary society at 7-30 p. m.; No. 3 to a dinner party from 9 p. m. at Professor Mofassaludding's house. At No. Dr. Sanaullah, Barrister-at-Law., Dr. A karim, Officer-in-Charge of V. D. Clinic and Dr. Azam, Director of Industries, delivered speeches. Since there was no time for a wash and change, I proceeded straight from this meeting to the dinner engagement. The programme of work for the 27th September was that the College would sit at 7-30 morning for academic work and break up at 10; it would reassemble in the afternoon for the autumn 'social' which would be celebrated from 4-15 p. m. to 7-50 p. m. with half an hour's interval from 6-30 p. m. I observed Babu Jagadish Chandra Mitra, Professor of Sanskrit, talking in a group. He was very young, a bachelor, had a uniformly high academic career and was a direct recruit to the Bengal Educational Service on the recommendation of the Public Service Commission. He succeeded Babu Deb kumar Datta whose name I have already mentioned. He was also working hard at his thesis for Ph. D. He wore high power lenses and his manuscript with many overwritings and smudged alphabet indicated his defective eyesight. I knew my colleagues individually and intimately; his handwriting was very familiar to me. He was extremely simple in his dress and wore a shirt on a dhoti, both of which were generally shabby. Our function had a very smooth and successful run. To the minute of the clock it came to an end at 7-50 p. m. My family and I, and about 50 volunteers stayed back for a while; there was a sense of immense relief and great pleasure among us that everything had gone off so nicely. The students (and their number would not be less than 500) and most of the Professors had dispersed. While the Lecturers and Establishment personnel were receiving their salaries I availed myself of the opportunity to show my wife and children round the main building and then as we were about to leave, a small boy came running and said in Chittagong dialect "Somebody has inflicted a knife wound on your professor". He was gasping. It was quarter past eight then five minutes less than half an hour since the dispersal of the meeting. He had been sent on this tragic errand from

Haji Abdul Gani's bakery which was situated only a short distance away to the south on the College Road involving five minutes time. The messenger having directly run into me and I having no difficulty in understanding him raised an alarm for my people to run and find out. They came back with the least possible delay with Jagadish Babu in their arms (one of the students who brought him was my own eldest son) I met him with frantic inquiries to which he replied in clear language that he had been stabbed (and he pointed to his liver region) in the lane between the Goods Bungalo foothill and DAR-UL ULUM; a man came down the Executive Engineer's hill, caught hold of him stabbed him and then disappeared into darkness. He ran back to the main road and to the bakery where he laid himself down in the empty and unfurnished wooden bed in the verandah. I ran back to the telephone in my room and made frantic calls to the Hospital, the DM, the SP, the Addl. SP and particularly for the Ambulance. An unoccupied taxi was passing by; it called for the asking, took Jagadish Babu and some volunteers in and sped away to the Hospital. I thought it was an unexpected stroke of good fortune that the taxi was available then and there and that with prompt attention at the Hospital there would be no danger to Jagadish Babu's life. Meanwhile there was terror in our camp; the stabbings at Chittagong had just been let loose, we thought. News of fresh stabbings in Calcutta were being received since the 23rd September and this case feared was the beginning of many more coming. Mr. Pranab Kumar Sen, Addl S. P. rang back to say he was despatching police to stroll up and down the College Road and that my students and staff and my family too could go back home without any fear and that he was coming to the spot personally. At 9-30 p. m. all of them formed groups and left (my family too). But I was continuously on the phone; Dr. Bhowmik, Jagadish Babu was on the operation table and receiving all care and treatment. Mr. Sen himself called at 10 p. m. after visiting the Hospital and being satisfied that everything was in order at the Hospital end and that the town was absolutely peaceful. I told him how the armed picket which was posted near Kazem Ali High School had left without giving any information to me; presumably they did so even before 7-50 p. m. when the function had ended. He gave me a lift to my residence. Let it be borne in mind that I had no car since I left Calcutta early in 1944 and that my residence which was 10 to 12 minutes walk from the College was

without any phone connexion. From 10-15 p. m. onwards I had been in agony; I had no means of communication with the Hospital. At 6-15 next morning (28th September, 1946) as I was sitting in my verandah with my face buried in my hands, a Hindu student called and reported that Jagadish Babu had succumbed to his injuries at 2-30 a. m. King Lear's Howl howl' was in my soul; it persisted within for months on end. Twenty year later to day my grief continues to be keener than the knife that killed Jagadish Babu on the promise of the fruit. Still the same questions harry me. Why did I permit the holding of the function? Why was he the first to leave alone and to branch off into that dark unfrequented lane., fring tening even during day time? It might be a short cut to his residence but actually it did cut short his life. As 28th was the last working day we considered it would be convenient to everybody to have a morning session from 7-10 a. m. Soon we gathered but only under the deepest gloom of a family calamity that was inconsolable; we gathered in the Assembly Hall, condemned the brutal killing and passed condolence resolution. I was unshaven, unwashed, in unclean clothes, in a bewildered state of mind, Unstintedly I advanced funds from the College Union for a solemn funeral and then wolked up and down in convenient batches to the Hospital hill-at least a mile if not more from the College buildings. There a vast concourse was soon formed a tense moment for everybody. I felt it was not wise to have it so. A little excitement might have sparke off another conflagration. The release of the body way effected after considerable formalities and then we proceed to the cremation grounds, another 1F(1,2) miles off, to consign it to buttered but burnin firwok, dust to dust, ashes to ashes. It was graceful of Mr. F. A. Karim , the District Magistrate to have attended the cremation. I returned to the College at 12 noon, home at 1 p. m. to lie prostrate till next morning with splitting headache. But I was in my office at 9 a. m. next morning. One hour later the Officer in charge of Kotwali P. S. and an A. S. I. called, collected my statement, saw the articles recoverd from the body of the deceased at Hospital the preceding day (a wrist watch and a fountain pen) and then proceeded to his residence at Roomghata for local investigation. I accompanied them. His was a katcha upper store room the flimsiest furnishings. There hang one or two shirts, one or two duties; a tumblerfull of water on a side table, some books and papers, which

included his unfinished thesis in manuscript. The ground floor rooms were under the occupation of Jyotsna Baswan an unmarried girl of our 1st year Intermediate classes and her parents. The latter had left for their village home as soon as they heard about the death of Jagadish Babu without coming to attend even the cremation. A mess of students of Medical School close by. The inmates available there were unhelpfully uncommunicative. But reports of friendship between Jagadish Babu and Jyotsna came to my ears. I distinctly remembered then how the former had brought the latter to my room at the time of her admission; soon I fished out the Admission form and found it was filled in by him and signed by the girl. I ascertained further that he was also coaching her and that recently he had received threatening letters (anonymous), which he discussed with some of his colleagues. I brought all these to the notice of the District Magistrate and the S. P. The latter was a strange, apathetic Briton. His conviction that it was a communal killing made him impervious to my suggestion of love and jealousy and I was stupefied at his callousness towards the holding of a thorough probe. The combing of the area wherefrom the assassin had descended was not undertaken. But let me make it absolutely clear that no such stabbing preceded the event. None followed it. I sent a full statement of the circumstances of the case to the DPI; there was no reply, not even a message of condolence for the bereaved family. Jagadish Babu's elder brother, Babu Harendra P. Mitra of Nivedita Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta, arrived at Chittagong on the morning of 4th October and saw me. He told me how the surviving father was a retired Constable and impecunious and how the young man had worked his way up from poverty. But Mr. Bemrose, the S. P. would not see him; he was asked to contact the investigating S. I. of Police and take delivery of the deceased's belongings. We made arrangements for Harendra Babu's board and lodging during his short stay. A promising young life (perhaps with love unfulfilled) thus came to a sad end. Time and human resilience lead us to endure many shocks. Well in advance of the reopening date of the College on the 11th November, 1946, I penned a message to the students and staff to bear up, to practise love and fraternity, assuring them at the same time of my own love and affection, fairness and impartiality in the execution of all duties that lay ahead. I had it printed and circulated. This message struck responsive chords in

everybody including parents and guardians and brought about the desired result.

Meanwhile the world outside was swayed from end to end by strange, mixed, characteristically human emotions over the verdict of the Nuremberg Trial published in Calcutta on the 2nd October. Goering & Ribbentrop, Keitel & Rosenberg, Frank & Frick and five others were given capital punishment; Hess, Funk & Raeder life sentence; four others imprisonment varying from 10 to 20 years; Von Papen, Schacht & Fritzsche discharged. This process of annihilating enemies and opponents in peace as well as in war is still going on in full swing; there is no recoiling from brutalised human conduct.

Within the country the scene of carnage moved from Bengal to Bihar where the Muslims were slaughtered in thousands. Mr. Gandhi transferred to Bihar his healing mission.

The times were out of joint; patchwork arrangements and compromises in these conditions were inevitable. The direct Action of the Muslim League was followed by assumption of office by Pandit Nehru and his Interim Govt. formed on the 2nd September. This thrown open to five representatives of the Muslim League in a month and a half's time. They were Messrs Liaquat Ali Khan, Ghazanfor Ali Khan, I. I. Chundrigar, A. R. Nishtar & Jogendra Chandra Mandal. The lay people heaved a sigh of relief that there was a reconciliation between the Congress and the League and looked for peace and accord in future but as things turned out later they were never to be attained.

How unstable human life is was grievously exemplified nearer home on the 29th November at 10-45 a. m. when Miss Gulchaman Ara, M. A. Headmistress, Gulezar Begum H. E. School, was killed in a cab accident while the shaft of the phaeton which was carrying her to school was broken and the carriage plunged into a nearby tank on the Dewanbazar Road; death was practically instantaneous; she died on her way to the hospital. In Jagadish Babu's case it was the assassin's knife that finished him; here a broken shaft and the overturning of the transport destroyed "the flower that adorned a garden" (the meaning of her name). Young and fresh from the University (one of the earliest of graduates from Lady Brabourne College, Calcutta, she was persuaded to take over the

responsibility of running the resuscitated Girls' High School in the premises of Khan Bahadur Fazlul Quader, where we were working till the month of March. It was the latter's work and achievement. As President of the Managing Committee I was very close to the School and to Gulchaman Ara. Her brothers were our students; her father a respected citizen. Muslim Chittagong was plunged in gloom; it could hardly afford to lose a young woman of her attainments. We held a Condolence meeting and attended the burial ceremony.

The rest of the year (November & December, 1946) had a normal run of academic, extra-academic and civic activities. The district authorities laid emphasis on the work of Peace Committees most of which I attended. Mr. F. A. Karim, District Magistrate, was an intriguing personality. Unlike his ICS tribe he would always wear his flowing **sherwani** and a linen **kistinama** Cap. Instead of holding a house warming party on arrival he organised a **Milad Mahfil** in the DM's hilltop bungalow invitations to which were for all and sundry; his attendance at the **Jaam-i-Mosque** on Fridays was regular. He made himself universally popular as a close follower of Islam. He took a keen interest in politics well. On the 21st November, 1946 he gave a long talk to the students of Chittagong College on **The Present situation**. He took one and half hours to do it. But he had his mannerisms in speaking. Often he would resort to Bengali and crude witticisms. Obviously he would extend his influence to the College. On the 27th he presided at the Chittagong College Shield Competition and gave away the prizes to the winners, the Medical School Team. On the 15th of December he organised a discussion in his own bungalow on **The Causes of the Downfall of the Muslims**. I attended the discussion for about two hours and found he was keen on the reawakening of the Muslims. The Muslim National Guards Organisation was thriving under his inspiration. There was a grand rally of this early in December. Prof. Habibur Rahman, after a temporary eclipse, got on very well with Mr. Karim. It was Mr. Karim who presided at the Annual Sports Meet of the College on the 20th December. Mr. M. O. Carter, the Commissioner was to have presided but a serious food-poisoning attack of Mr. Carter the same morning kept him away.

Within the College papers were read and discussion held; there were a

retirement and a transfer. Jagadish Babu's successor, Babu Kalicharan Mitra Shastri joined on the 23rd November, on transfer from Hooghly Mohsin College.

In civic life (outside the College) there was a formal and ceremonial function on the 18th December when the foundation of the now famous Jameson Maternity & Red Cross Clinic was laid by Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, the Chief minister of the Province. It was an elaborate function when addressees of welcome on behalf of the Municipality, District Board, Muslim Chamber of Commerce, Indian Merchants' Association, were presented, and several speeches made by public leaders. Mr. and Mrs Carter attended and Mr. F. A. Karim guided the proceedings.

With all the events sketched above 1946 was a very strenuous year for me. I could not do substantial private studies of my own. It appears, however, that I was reading Shaw's **Everybody's Political What's what** from cover to cover. I propose to close with one extract from my diary.

"Socialism is not charity nor loving kindness, nor sympathy with the poor, nor popular philanthropy with its something-for-nothing mendicinity but the economist's hatred of waste and disorder, the aesthete's hatred of ugliness and dirt, the lawyer's hatred of injustice, the doctor's hatred of disease, the saint's hatred of the seven deadly sins: in sort a combination of the most intense hatreds against institutions which give economists a strong pecuniary interest in wasteful anarchic capitalism, artists in venality and pornography, lawyers in injustice, doctors in disease, saints in catering for the seven deadly sins or flattering them instead of denouncing them."

1947

The February declaration of the British Government under Mr. Attlee (now Lord) to grant complete independence to India, not later than June, 1948, the simultaneous appointment of Lord Mountbatten as Viceroy, the latter's arrival in March, his discussions with the leaders, his formulation of The Plan, the finalisation of the same early in June, the division of the country into Pakistan and India by the 15th August, 1947, the attendant conditions and happenings, the consequential changes and events, belong to history. For me personally the details set

forth by Alan Campbell-Johnson in his **Mission with Mounbatten** have a perennial interest. Among recent books, **Divide & Quit**, by Penderel Moon has an unvarnished narrative of human appeal Mine is a limited job of indicating the impact that the mighty upheaval had on Chittagong College and myself at its helm of affairs. The first four months of 1947-and curiously enough nothing untoward thereafter were a testing time. Political groupings and alignments in the town of Chhittagong in the closing months of 1946 were just in a simmering state; their image in clear outline was not yet available. The older generation of leaders at Cttagong, including Mr. Rafiuddin Siddiqui, were conservative, sober, unfanatical; they cared more for their commercial interests than for obstreperous demonstration and war-like preparation. I have already spoken of a grand rally of National Guards in the College Sporting fields held in the month of December, 1946. The National Guards formation and reinforcement., their activities came to the forefront in 1947. Ambitious young politicians, brainy and pawky, were behind this movement. But they required the support of College students. In December many leaders approached me to complain that there were divisions among the Muslim students and that I should use my influence in closing them. They had been looking for recruits to their own camps. I have already indicated the growing intimacy between the Distrit Magistrate and our lecturer Mr. Habibur Rahman. My constant touch and intimacy with the College students however were an irksome barrier to the restlessness of the latter and the shrewdness of the former. But I did not know; I had no urge other than that of holding them together in terms of affection and integrity . But soon I was made to learn better. The transfer of Professor Mufassaluddin Ahmed back to Krishnagar College (wherefrom he had come earlier) early in January, 1947, the turning down by be of the proposal of a 2nd day's dislocation in College work in addition to the first day's elaborate farewell function gave Habibur Rahman a handle to exploit it against me. Meanwhile the Hindu students of the First Year Classes had submitted to me a petition against Habibur Rahman for his unwarranted attacks on them. It was evident that he was making himself a leader of the Muslim students and staff and he stood to gain by communal discord in the College. On the 9th January, the Muslim students of the same class submitted a counter petition. The same evening H. Rahman called at my residence at 7-30

p. m. and spent two hours talking wildly about an impending strike in the College against my ways. On the following morning (10th January, 1947) while I was about to leave for College at 10 O'clock, a Muslim gentleman, young, well-built, decent, came along in a hackney-carriage and told me confidentially that he had seen last night at 10 at Habibur Rahman's house a collection of Muslim students being incited by Habibur Rahman to stage a demonstration over my ill-treatment of Muslim professors. He gave me a warning that there would be flaghoisting, demonstration, a strike, the presentation of grievances etc. and then he left. Actually there was such a demonstration at the College at 11-30 a. m. when a slogan shouting group of students entered into the College. I agreed to their demand of meeting them in the Assembly Hall and listening to their grievances. The College as a whole gathered there when their leader mounted the platform and began to read an indictment skilfully written. The first item was that I had professor abdu Subhan Khan Choudhury demoted from Professorship and transferred elsewhere simply because he had given me offence on one occasion; the second item was that I had insulted professor Mofassaluddin Ahmed on the eve of his departure; the third item was that I had abused the leading student, Kamaluddin Khan, on the same occasion; and so on. The impeachment being over I stood up and said that the first item was the blackest lie a man could ever conceive; I gave brief resume of the circumstances of his transfer on the 1st October, 1945 and pointed out how Professor Choudhury had to revert to the post of a Lecturer on the recommendation of the Public Service Commission and that he was as much loved by me as by others in the College. The second item was a pure fabrication in view of the fact that I had taken the leading part in giving Professor Ahmed an appropriate send-off. He was guilty of discourtesy to me personally in having accepted my invitation at tea on the 8th afternoon and finally not turning up. kamaluddin khan's request for a 2nd day's dislocation of work was turned down on academic ground alone-the question of abuse did not arise at all. I added that I might have to set my face in future against all unreasonable requests. These proceedings took one hour and a quarter and at 12-45 p. m. the students and the staff went back to their normal work. Habibur Rahman failed in his first attempt in driving a wedge between me and the students; he bided for the second. For my part I had my lesson in

practice of the lingo-like character of the charge-sheet drawn up. On the 13th January his father called at my residence and appealed to me to excuse his son's shortcomings. Later in my office he saw me himself and talked on all possible and impossible topics. On the 15th January at noon while I was in my office I received a Confidential letter from the S. P. against the activities of Habibur Rahman and calling for my comments on them. Since he was restless and suspicious he had gathered the information of the S. P. having written to me. He lost no time in seeing me the same evening at my residence; he talked wildly and said he was coming straight from the District Magistrate his manifest object being to terrorise me. On the 16th a leader of the Muslim students of the 1st year Civic Classes who had filed a counter petition against the Hindu students saw me and asked for a withdrawal of the same. I sent a reply to the S. P. on the 18th. This had no personal animus or vindictiveness against him. But for three months and more i. e. till the end of April he hardly gave the College or myself any rest. He was continually having a double game, exciting Muslim students against the College administration on the one hand, and running to me on the other hand just to explain his own deference or to hustle me. But with the entire picture vividly portrayed in my mind and the numerous entries recorded in my diary it is clear that I maintained a uniform calm throughout.

Mid-January, 1947, coincided with the departure of Mr. M. O. Carter and the arrival of Mr. H. Tufnell-Barrett. CIE, ICS, as Divisional Commissioner. Mr. Omdatul Islam, my friend and Colleague at Rajshahi College, and Mr. Kamaluddin took over as Professors of Mathematics and History respectively. There were some other changes in the staff later. In the third week of February, 1947, Mr. P. K. Sen, additional S. P. left. Four months earlier following the assassination of our Colleague, Jagadish Chandra Mitra, I had made out a strong case for a residential phone connection; this was accorded an equally strong approval by the DPI and sent upto the Government for acceptance together with a copy to me of the DPI's recommendation. In the emergency through which we were passing I had a telephone installed at my house on the 7th February. During the short interval between 10th January (when I faced an arrangement) and first March which sparked off communal trouble in the College we held the Test Exams of Intermediate & Degree candidates, considered the results and sent up

those eligible for the final examinations. The question of reviving the Chittagong College Magazine after wartime suspension was given proper consideration. Outside the College working hours I had my Tennis and numerous social functions to attend to. Through the initiative and patronage of Mr. Karim, the District Magistrate, Fatiha Doazdahm (or Id-i-Milad-un-Nabi) was celebrated on a grand scale on the 4th February at Hands Pavilion. There was a huge assemblage of Maulanas with 3 sessions: forenoon, afternoon and evening. In the afternoon session the Chief Guest was Maulana Sib-ghatwalla and in the evening Maulana Jaafer Ahmed Thanavi, both of Lucknow. Mr. Karim being a UP man had succeeded in securing their services. The Chittagong College Muslim Hostel Mahfil-i-Milad was held on the 14th February when Mr. Karim presided from 3-30 to 6-30 p. m. From 24th February reports reached me (the most important of them came from Professor Habibur Rahman himself) that the College or the Muslim Hostel would be the venue of the formation and reinforcement of National Guards. Of course a corresponding public campaign would also be launched at Laldighi. The Muslim students were in high spirits and under inspiration from leaders in defiant attitude. I apprehended trouble in the Hostel and met Mr. Tufnell-Barrett, te Commissioner and Ex-Officio President of the Governing Body of the College, and kept him informed about political excitement in the College and the hostel. On the 28th February such a National Guards Campaigning meeting was held in the Muslim Hostel in the afternoon. As a public leader Mr. Fazlul Quader Choudhury also participated. In course of the progress of the meeting the leaders fell out and it was reported that knives by rival groups were brought out and displayed. This dashed the spirit of the peaceful section of the students assembled. They came to me and regretted that they had bypassed the College authorities. I had taken care to keep the DM informed. Let it be noted at once that only after 3 days, that is to say on the 4th March, serious disturbances accompanied by violence were committed in broad daylight in the town of Chittagong by the National Guards.

On the 1st March, 1947, while the classes were going on in full swing in between a period and a period a Muslim student had pulled from behind the Sari of a Hindu girl in the northern verandah of the main building. At 3-15 p. m. I received a written petition from the Hindu girls

of the First Year Intermediate Classes against insult and humiliation inflicted upon one of them in particular. The girl was **Gauri** and the boy was Gholam Khalique. A meeting of the College Union was fixed for 4 p. m. the same day when Professor Nripendra Mohon Shaa, of Physics was scheduled to read a paper on (বিশ্বের বিস্তার), **Bishwer Bistar** (or Expansion of the World). When Professor Saha, many colleagues and I were proceeding to the Assemble Hall noticed many Hindu and Muslim students discussing in the Hall "Certain incidents". We went in; the students gathered; I made an introductory speech on the Ideals of Education and the value of Discipline; Prof. Saha then read his paper; this was followed by a discussion. The meeting terminated at 5-30 p. m. From the trend of the talk that preceded the meeting it appeared to me that the leading student would make an amicable settlement of the "Sari-pulling" incident. Second March being a Sunday I made personal efforts on the 3rd to do the same. But I was distressed to find that this simple incident had taken a communal turn. One party denied altogether the occurrence of any such incident while the other asserted it with all the strength it possessed. In the context of the flame of communalism that was burning all over the country and in the context of the January demonstration within the College and what was going on in the town I had no difficulty in perceiving that the denial would lead to 'prestige' issue whereas the complaint based on a "straw" involved 'honour' and its protection. I felt it would be wise to be cautious in my handling of this apparently trifling thing. A purely domestic affair of internal discipline might assume public importance in the prevailing circumstances. On the afternoon of 3rd March I constituted a Committee of Inquiry consisting of the two Staff representatives on the Governing Body and another teacher (as far as I remember) to hold a proper investigation and submit a report with their findings. On the 4th forenoon while I was working in my office a printed leaflet (red) flinging mud on girls was shown to me. I passed it on to the Inquiry Committee, fixed up an immediate interview with Mr. Tufnell-Barrett, met him at 12-30 p. m. and discussed the incident with him and informed him about the inquiry I had instituted. He approved it and said that the report of the committee should be placed before a meeting of the Governing Body for necessary action. Fatiha Yaz-daham & Dol Jatra holidays, University I. A. And-I. Se. Exams. from 12th to 19th March followed. The report of the Inquiry

Committee with the finding that Gholam Khaleque had actually pulled from behind the "Sari" of Gouri being available, the President of the Governing Body fixed up a meeting on 22nd March at 11 a. m. It was a short meeting which took only forty minutes for its deliberation and decision. Its decision was that Gholam Khaleque should express his regret; this need not take the form of an apology in writing ; a word of regret before the Principal and in the presence of Gouri would meet the requirement of the case; failing this the boy was to leave the College with an ordinary transfer certificate. As the meeting of the G. Body was about to close a group of Hindu students collected in front of my room where the meeting was going on and reported that a Muslim League flag was hoisted in Room No. B and therefore they had come out. After the departure of the President and Members of the G. Body I went into Room No. B and arranged for the flag being hauled down. But this led to excitement among the leading Muslim students. Profs. H. L. Sengupta & Abul Fazole pacified them. Let it be borne in mind that 23rd March, the day to follow, was going to be observed as "Pakistan Day" when there was another rally of National Guards in the College Playing Fields. Meanwhile, on the 13th and 14th March to be precise, there were serious riots in the Punjab; communal riots in the Punjab; communal riots in Calcutta began afresh on the 27th March and continued till the first week of April. In my diary, under the date 4th April the following jottings from the leading article in **The Statesman**, dated 3rd April, occur, its caption being "Anxious Days".

"Serious and widespread disorder of Many kinds make an uncomfortable background to the political talks in Delhi (Mountbatten-Gandhi), Major carnage in the Punjab, turbulent NWFP, riots in Delhi and other towns in UP, Police muting in Bighar, riots in Ranchi, in Calcutta since 26th March, tram strike in Calcutta for ten weeks, Port strike, industrial unrest, agrarian trouble, Assam line system. Mountbatten to govern or get out". Obviously I made the Jottings because I was passing through Anxious Days myself. Following the decision of the Governing Body I made consistent and continual efforts to get Gholam Khaleque just to say "I am sorry", on the 27th March he saw me twice for apologizing but the girl was absent and the chance slipped out. The firebrands of the League threatened his life. A Muslim to apologize to a Hindu! That would never be. On the 28th March Mazharul Islam., Abu Bakr

Siddique, Khorshed Alam, Rezaul Karim and several other students saw me just to inform how they had held a meeting, appointed a Committee of Action and drawn up resolution. They went on arguing and discussing for one hour. I entreated them not to resort to a combined and communal action over an individual incident of youthful lapse. Next day there was first a combined pressure on the girls for withdrawal of their complaint, second., a submission to me of copies of their resolution. Meanwhile there were local troubles (in which College students were also invoved) at Raozan and Hathbazari. On the 10th April they addressed an application to the President of the Governing Body and routed it through me. They exceeded all limit now and I had waited much too long to give effect to the mildest of disciplinary measures. On the 12th April I suspended Gholam Khaleque from attendance, 13th was a Sunday; 14th & 15th were holidays on account of Chaitra Sankranti and Bengali New Year Day. On the 16th between 11-30 a. m. and 1-50 p. m. there was a rebellion of Muslim students in the College. Being advised by the DM lecture were suspended on the 17th and 18th, so that he might carry on negotiations with the 'rebels'. At 2-25 a. m. on the 18th April stones and a soda water bottle were hurled on the roof of the first floor of my house; its frightful noise asakened us . On the 19th morning the DM gave me a ring to say that the strike would be called off with effect from the forenoon; the Muslim League Secretary said the same thing . When I arrived at 10-40 a. m. I found that the Hindu students were allowed to enter into the College compound unmolested. But soon afterwards a group of 20 Muslim students came in with League flags unfurled, shouting slogans and circling round the main building they marched out. At 12 noon they came back in full strength and frenzied temper and created pan demonium. The D. M. when informed told me he was despatching immediately police force to beat them up. "Have I asked you to do so? Have you not been shilly shallying with your peace endeavours"? Went back the interrogation against his manifest exploitation of the situation. I had already made up my mind and now in Summer Vacation extending from the 20th April to 6th June. This year the B. A. B. Sc. Honours and Pass Exams. Were to begin on the 9th June instep of in the first week of April, his arrangement, therefore, was in consonance with our work schedule. I had the holiday list modified by the Governing Body. I sent now reports

to the DPI of all that had happened meanwhile. His approval was promptly available, He added I was a shade too indulgent. I did not send any report against any teacher . Although I Knew every single student leader by name and fairly personally I did not cherish the remotest idea of punishing any. Victimisation and "prescription" have not been items in the line of my administrative life . Who had bought the soda water bottle and wherefrom and who had hurled these missiles my house were accurately ascertained by my many friends but I took no notice. I never sent for the boy who was responsible. But on the 15th May Mr. Wajihullah, then Controller of Trains at Chittagong, brought his cousin, Moazzam Hussain Choudhury, Roll No 243 of the First Year Classes, who was the culprit, to my residence. The youngster caught hold of my feet and apologized . While the summer vacation was continuing and the College was under a professor in Charge, Gholam khaleque had called and taken out his transfer certificaes. But Professor Habibur Rahman would still give me no rest; he would call off and on and talk interminably and wildly. He called on the 24th April to say that the DM was putting the blame on him for the disorder in the College; again on the 27th April to say that the Muslim students were going to sue me in the Civil Court against my suspension of Gholam Khaleque which was ultra vires and that he proposed to issue a leaflet along with some Muslim members of the staff repudiating their complicity the manica could not conceive that I had implicated none. He went down to Calcutta during the summer vacation, met the Education Minister and spoke about my report against him only to learn that there were noe. During the period from 1953 to 1956 when I was at Netrakona as Inspector of College, Dacca University, I came upon the book "While Memory Survives" by Lt. General Sir Francis Taker at the Netrokona Club and while turning over the pages I had a glance at the particular pace which describes this episode. I had an agreeable surprise; my conviction was that the author had gathered his material from Mr. Tufnell-barent because the General and I had no occasion to meet or even to correspond with.

On the 22nd March, 1947, the very day on which the Governing Body of Chittagong College gave its decision of Gouri-Gholam Khaleaque case Sir Azizul Huq, former Education Minister, Bengal, Vice - Chancellor, Calcutta University, Member, Viceroy's Executive Coun-

cil, died at his Calcutta residence . The news of his death having been received at Chittagong on Monday, the 25th March, lectures were suspended in the forenoon as a mark of respect to his memory. On the 25th afternoon we held a Condolence meeting in the Assembly Hall, which was largely attended and in which feeling references were made to his illustrious services to the country in many fields. One of his daughters is now a Lecturer in English at Dacca University.

Exactly a week after the closing down of the College for the other the summer recess a sudden calamity, absolutely unexpected, before us. At 2 p. m. on the 26th April, Professor Waliullah, Head of the Department of Arabic & Persian, died at his residence at Chandanpura from a brief illness. At the closing of the College he was preparing to leave for his village home in Chandpur Sub-Division. Three or four days before his death he had developed fever and placed himself under the treatment of a doctor of the locality but without any benefit. Two days earlier he had sent a man to my house to ascertain the name of my family physician, This was at once communicated to him. Through ill-luck this doctor was not called in and there was bungling in his treatment . His temperature shot up; there was internal haemorrhage; he collapsed and succumbed. When he was dying a message came to me. I ran to his house in the terrific April sun and got there at 2-10 p. m. only to be a helpless witness of a tragic scene of utter woe. There were bitter, deep, loud wailing from half a dozen young children and the stricken widow. A swift and sudden blow before appropriate medical treatment could be arranged laid them low; the College sustained the loss of a competent teacher and I an esteemed colleague of independent spirit but helpful disposition. He was in his full manhood and plenitude of human faculties. On enquiry I gathered that it was a case of malignant malaria which being neglected at the initial stage killed the patient outright by internal haemorrhage. or fifteen minutes I was too overwhelmed to stir but the proposal of his wife to take the body to Chandpur stung me into activity . I opposed it tooth and nail; in this fiery furnace of the last week of April the body would decompose and many members of the family would run grave risks of sunstroke. I raised an alarm which brouth many helpful neighbours and Professors to the scene; I proposed burial in the grounds attached to the picturesque hil-top mosque in front of Kazem Ali H. E. School and just a few yards off from our College

gate. In this I received universal support. Soon I fixed up a place in consultation with the owners of the grounds. While busy in making these arrangements I noticed an unpardonable demeanour of a group of "Maulabis" who had gathered there but who despite my piteous appeal would not sit down to recite verses from the Quoran—a recital which is an indispensable part of our funeral ceremonies. Soon I was shocked to understand that they meant "business" and would have 'terms' settled first. I made an unequivocal declaration that I would be responsible for meeting all expenses of the funeral and burial ceremonies. This accelerated the pace of the latter. I supervised all arrangements and then ran to a formal and ceremonial function at the Circuit House from 6-30 p. m. to 8-30 p. m. when I was an active participant. Meanwhile my wife was with Mrs. Waliullah. Verily we belong to God to whom we have to return.

A personal bereavement was in the offing. On the 19th May I received the news of the death of one of my elder sisters who became a widow in 1942. She did not leave any issue behind, her only son having been burnt to death in 1915. On the death of my mother she had bestowed all her care and tenderness on me and later on my arrival at Rampurhat I found that she had executed a deed of Wakf of her property and made me the "Motwalli". Earlier she wrote long letters to me with particular references to the marriage of my daughter an event in which she was eager to participate but alas! that was not to be "Life is a watch or a vision between a sleep and a sleep". She died from a brief illness; it was a case of sunstroke, the same I had apprehended about the proposed movement of Professor Waliullah's body and family to Chandpur at the end of April. I left Chittagong for Calcutta, Murshidabad and home the same evening and returned on the morning of the 7th June, the day on which the College reopened after the summer vacation. During my outward journey I found Calcutta still tense in the aftermath of the recent riots. I met my elder brother (next to the eldest who died at Midnapur in 1946) at Kandi, Murshidabad, collected him and proceeded to Rampurhat where we celebrated the Fatiha ceremony of my sister in keeping with the traditions of our family and also arranged for the supervision of her house, furniture and property. On the evening of 3rd June, 1947, I left for Calcutta after I had heard in the afternoon of the Plan of the division of the country into India and Pakistan. The same Plan was confirmed

on the following day. When I met the DPI in the forenoon of the 4th June he was my friend, Dr. Snehomoy Datta-I understood that the division was imminent but the financial allocations for some projects of development in my College were not likely to be affected. This was my last visit to the place of my birth as an Indian citizen. In May, 1953, I visited it as a pakistani citizen on the eve of the death of another elder brother (the third in the list) the second one of Kandi (Murshidabad) having died within three months of the partition, when it was not possible for me to undertake a journey.

At the reopening of the College on the 7th June, we mourned the death of Professor Waliullah by suspending lectures and holding a Condolence meeting. From the 9th June to 28th June we had to conduct the University B. A. B. Sc. Pass & Honours Examinations. We also held our own Intermediate & Degree Classes Annual Examinations from 23rd June to 30th June. In the small hours of 18th June a burglary was committed in the Junior Physics Laboratory. While valuable articles were being removed, police constables on beat apprehended four burglars along with the articles; we were very lucky; we escaped with a slight loss the entire credit going to the Police of duty.

The Bengal Boundary Commission was announced on the 1st July; that for the Punjab on the 2nd July. After a three-day recess when the College reopened on the 7th July, I copied out from The Statesman the form of choice to be filled in by Government servants of Bengal in regard to their future service in East or West Bengal, had it typed out signed for East Bengal and despatched it to Calcutta. I was the earliest to take the decision and naturally it caused a good deal of sensation in the Staff Room. The continuity of academic work was not allowed to be interrupted in any way. The College Union Budget for 1947-48 was finalised on the 8th July; the Annual Examination results on the following day so that work in the Intermediate & Degree senior classes (we used to call them 2nd year and 4th year classes) began immediately afterwards and despite the upheaval caused by the partition, our new first year and 3rd year classes were formed early in September and started functioning by the middle of the month. Prof. Sayeedur Rahman who was working then as a Special officer in the Secretariat arrived on the 15th July to examine the possibility of starting the Directorate of

Education of East Bengal at Chittagong and left on the 16th evening. A meeting of Principals of College in East Bengal and the Vice-Chancellor of Dacca University was held in Calcutta from the 21st July to 23rd July. Dr. M. Q. Khuda attended too. He became the first DPI, East Bengal, I attended this among others. It was convened to organise educational arrangements for the East Bengal College under the Dacca University. The Education Minister had no definite proposals to make. Dr. M. Hasan, Vice-Chancellor of Dacca University, Had no constructive suggestions to make either. I was amazed to find that he in the absence of the Education Minister desired the Asstt. Secretary of the Education Department, a young Deputy Magistrate to preside. For three days there were loose, desultory talks ending with the decision that we had better meet again at Dacca on the 28th July and give a shape to our thoughts and recommendations over the problems that would arise from the separation of schools and College from West Bengal or rather the Calcutta University. Accordingly we met again at Dacca (this was my first visit to the place) and held discussions at the Vice-Chancellor's House on the 28th and 29th July. The system of education at Dacca University was different from that at Calcutta. Here the University was unitary and residential (at least by a sort of fiction because day scholars were known as "Attached" to one of the Halls which had only limited accommodation and the number of such students was on the increase); its jurisdiction was limited to 5 miles. Educational institutions even at Narayanganj were outside the Jurisdiction of the Dacca University or Dacca Board. The residential University at Dacca taught a three year Honours syllabus (post-Intermediate) plus one year of Post Graduate studies; it had also a two-year Post Graduate course for Degree Pass students. Within the Fixed radius there were only two Intermediate Colleges, Dacca and Jagannath. The Dacca Board conducted their examinations and the School final one. All other educational institutions in the Province of Bengal from the Degree Honours level to the Matriculation were under the Calcutta University which had a two-year Honours course plus full two-year Post-Graduate studies at the University itself. The syllabuses from the Matriculation to M.A. M.Sc, M.Com level at Calcutta were different from those at Dacca Board and Dacca University. The Problem, Therefore, was one of adjustment from Rangpur to Khulna, from Sylhet to Bogra,, from Chittagong to

Rajshahi. The Dacca University must take over the I. A. I Sc., & I. Com and B. A., B. Sc., B. Com exams. ut they did not want to have their Unitary character affected;; they never yielded to any compromise also far at their three-year Honours and one year M. A. M. Sc. & M. Com were concerned . What they agreed to do at the initial stage was to conduct the Intermediate and Degree Pass examintions according to the Calcutta University syllabus. This temporary arrangement was not very difficult to do by an amending ordinance . But at the Dacca meeting at the end of July I was distressed to find that the Vice-Chancellor Dr. M. Hasan was a man who had no patience or coolness to approach the problems befvore us. On the contrary he was restless, irritable and intolerant. There were some exchanges with me and in the reorganisa-tion that took place (and it took an unconscionably long time) he was mean and vindicative enough to exclude me from all deliberative and executive bodies. But he could never size me up; he did not understand how my whole life was dedicated to the continuity of academic work and not governed by any consideration of adventitious status or posi-tion. I worked slowly and steadily in bringing about a uniformity of syllabs at the Intermediate and Degree levels designed to improve the standard of education at these stages. There was only one paper in English at the Intermediate level but none at the degree level. Subse-quently (after sereral years) I succeeded in bringing it to a par with three papers at the Degree stage and two at the Intermediate.

I returned to Chittagong on the 31st July. Political independence and life under new dispensation were just two weeks away. We were close upon the Ramadan & Id-ul-Fitr holiday which began presently. I was deeply immersed in planning for a smooth transition but those Muslims who were at the helm of educational division at Calcutta were planning otherwise. in Education Directorate would have its centre at Chittagong I started receiving earnest requests not only for its habitation but also from the ADPI ADPIME for their residential quarters. My influence with the district and divisional authorities and also with the Chittagong Public was taken for granted. I bestirred myself with success But at about 9 on the evening of 7th August, the DM. Mr. F. A. Karim, gave me a ring to say that I was transferred and that Zuberi was coming in my place. He had just returned from Calcutta where he had been on a short trip. He was so enthusiastic in the communication that he went to the

length of asking me when I was "Packing up." (his actual language) Naturally I inquired to which place I was transferred. He fumbled. Actually he did not know. He then said "Presumably to Sylhet". I was then blunt, constitutionally and legally so. I said he had no authority over me as District Magistrate but if he was authorised by H. M. Education or the education Secretary to convey any informaton he would be competent to do so. He said he had no authority from the Government but had met Zuberi in Calcutta and gathered the information from him; he was informing me as a friend. He got the retort that such a friend deserved; his friendship did not extend to finding out where I was posted. At 10-30 p. m. he gave me another ring to say that he had meanwhile given a trunkcall to Zuberi in Calcutta and ascertained that I was to move to Krishnagar. Now I told him how improper it was on his part to inquire when I was "packing up" since I was not occupyin any official quarters. On the 8th I received a telegram from Govt. about the transfer. It should be noted that Zuberi was working in the Education Deptt. (in addition to his duties as Principal, Islamia College, Calcutta) on the partion Committee; he knew very well that krishnagar being placed in Pakistan in "notional" division would not be a safe place for him; let Abu Hena run the risk; he manoeuvred himself into the safer berth at Chittagong . But I stuck to my own principle of accepting a transfer as the incidence of Government Service and I took up in earnest winding up arrangements on the 9th so that when Zuberi actually called at my houe on the 11th along with his wife (I was in my office) he hfound my drawing room furniture under gunny packing. He was the earliest to leave calcutta; the new order was to come into operation after 4 days. He halted at the Dak Bungalow, near the railway station, called at my place practically everyday, took me out for shopping and seeking my help in other ways. Two such incidents of help-seeking stick in the memory. NO. 1: his youngest child was sick; could I send my family physician immediately? I gave an SOS to Dr. A. Karim, Teacher of Physiology, Chittagong Med-School to undertake the job for my sake; he was good enough to do it. When I met Dr. Karim next day I gathered that the question of paying his fees did not arise; there was no offer of even the trasport cost he had gone to the Dak Bungalow in a hired phaeton. Another SOS came to me from Dr. Zuberi himself; he was short of money; he sent to me a cheque of Rs 200/- on Calcutta Loyd's

for subsequent collection but for immediate payment from my own purse. I could not oblige. Since the very moment of his arrival till his departure long afterwards., he publicly propounded his 'theory' of another University at Chittagong; in Calcutta he was keen on having a Muslim University; on taking over charge at M. C. College, Sylhet he dreamed of one at Sylhet but his recurring dream came true years afterwards at Rajshahi when Mr. Nurul Amin, Chief Minister of East Bengal till 1954 saw to its fulfilment.

Dr. M. Q. Khuda, the first DPI of East Pakistan, called at my house at 4 p.m. on the 15th August. He had arrived from Calcutta the same morning but his intimate friend, one Mr. Abu Hossain, who was accompanying him met a gruesome death between Chandpur and Chittagong. The train being frightfully crowded his friend had along with many others had a perch on the roof of a compartment; he slipped having been hit by the branch of a tree and fell down to be crushed by the wheels; his body had to be extricated with difficulty. This was a harrowing experience. On arrival at Chittagong railway station he had to make arrangements for the burial of the deceased. The local people were very helpful. He called at my place about securing a suitable house for him. I suggested the Percival bungalow which was quite close. He was fasting. Nevertheless he desired to have a look. This bungalow occupied a small hill-top, not very high we walked up and went round. It was a fiercely hot August day. With the strain of the journey, the ordeal of the accidental death of his lifelong friend and above all the starvation from fasting he felt exhausted, I persuaded him to lie down on the grass. His eldest son was also with him. When he recovered some strength, he went about with him in examining buildings for his directorate and also for his residence. Soon enough a decent, new two-storied house at the foot of the Commissioner's hill was secured for his residence. Earlier I had fixed up such houses for the ADPI, Khan Bahadur Badiur Rahman and the ADPIME Khan Bahadur Fazlur Rahman, Formerly Inspector of schools, Chittagong Division.

Meanwhile the formal inauguration of Pakistan in the east wing had been celebrated in the College playing fields just in front of my house. Early in the morning of the day of celebration, the flag-hoisting ceremony was performed by me at the College in an assemblage of

available teachers and students. In doing so I recited the verses of the Quran "O God, Lord of the Universe thou bestowest a kingdom on whom soever thou likest, thou snatchist away a kingdom from whomsoever thou likest....." I added in Bengali that through God's grace we had recovered our long lost kingdom and let us pray to him and strive for upholding and cherishing it.

The Radcliffe award took way Krishnagar & Berhampore. My transfer fell through. I was ordered to stay on at Chittagong and Zuberi to proceed to M. C. College, Sylhet. He would not move; he required money. The Directorate had to provide funds. These orders were passed before the 22nd August; Chittagong College reopened after I'd recess on the 24th August. The buildings acquired for the Directorate were situated in between Chandanpura and Dewan Bazar; they were ready for occupation and functioning sometime before the 27th August on which day a flag-hoisting ceremony was held there.

Now let me have a word about the impact of the partition on the staff, teaching and otherwise, of Chittagong College. A number of Hindu teachers, namely those of Physics & Chemistry, Sanskrit and philosophy, Economics, Political Science opted out and left. An efficient cashier left too. But none of the skilled bearers of the laboratories none among miscellaneous Hindu Class IV employees went out. A Cashier was available. A competent Muslim Accountant having just retired, I was badly in need of a successor. Soon I found an optee cashier from West Bengal whom we gradually trained up. Dr. Abdul Huq, P. H. D. (London) proved a better successor to the Hindu Professor of Physics who opted out; similarly Mr. Muhmoodur Rahman Choudhury, my former pupil, and Lecturer in Chemistry, Presidency College, who joined as Professor of Chemistry proved quite capable. He went later to Cambridge, took his D. phil. He is now Director of Standards in Pakistan. In Pali we had no difficulty. Chitta Babu, Lecturer in Sanskrit stayed on. Mr. S. M. Bhattacharyya a native of Dacca district, officiating Lecturer in Sanskrit in a West Bengal College, came to Chittagong on option. He had already submitted his Ph. D. thesis, got his doctorate presently and was selected by the PSC of East Bengal for Professorship. He became a direct recruit to East Bengal Educational Service as Professor of Sanskrit. Mr. Habibur Rahman became offici-

ating professor of Economics. A young Muslim gentleman was recruited as Lecturer in Political Science. Messrs Abul Fazle, and Motahar Hussain (who later died a premature death and who was a Bengali poet) ran the Bengali deptt. as before. In English we were full strength. The seniormost and popular lecturer in English, Babu Jogesh Chandra Sinha, treated opting out as madness, stayed on till his retirement when the Muslim students gave him a farewell which was memorable. On retirement he became Principal of Chittagong Night College. He is alive and very much respected at Chittagong town. The Vice-Principal's post in the Senior Service that had travelled to Presidency College to suit Ahmad Alis convenience made a return trip and we got back our friend, Khan Saheb Abdur Rab Choudhury, as our Vice-Principal; Hafez Mohammad Abdul Hai, Professor of Arabic at Presidency College joined as our professor in the vacancy caused by the death of Professor Waliullah; my own former pupil, Gholam Sarwar, as Lecturer in Persian; Mr. Mufassaluddin Ahmed, Professor of Philosophy, who had left early in January for Krishnagar made a return trip. These details have a relevance to the educational situation in post-partition East Bengal. Sickening, senseless references are made even now in many speeches and writings from people who should have known better to the effect that the large scale exodus of Hindu teachers from this province created an educational void not yet filled up. Never for a moment I felt such a void in unning Chittagong & M. C. Colleges, till 15th October, 1953, and subsequently in my work at Dacca University for about eleven years, If there has been deterioration in our education in East Pakistan, it has not been caused by the migration under reference. In most of the subjects candidates have been available most of the time. And now they are in abundance with foreign degrees and credentials. In the past there were good, bad indifferent teachers. Then as now young recruits were mixed up with experienced ones. Perhaps devotion and dedication were more prominent than now. But life then was simpler and less complex, A million factors, political, economic, social, emanating from foreign aid and development works, the monopoly of the good things of life by interests other than academic have been responsible for the lowering of educational standards here as well as in the neighbouring country. Improvement depends mainly on a juster order, on fairer re-arrangements of life, of superior breeds and eugenics. But godless races

and competitions purely for materialistic piles have been killing the noble urges of human personalities. Why should there be shedding of crocodile tears?

The district of Chittagong had been subjected to calamitous floods in September, 1947. Widespread distress and devastation had been caused. Several relief agencies came into operation. Of these the East Pakistan Flood Relief Committee under the leadership of Mr. Fazle Akbar who succeeded Mr. Saibul Gupta as District & Sessions Judge after independence and who is now a Judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, made substantial collections and rendered large scale relief. His lead robed in not only the public of the town but also all educational institutions including Chittagong College. I had to join in with my colleagues and teachers. We made large collections in each and kind and had to participate in work on deliberative and executive committees. We provided volunteers who spent all their spare time in doing humanitarian service. This work involved practically the whole of September. Students and teachers (even the principal not excepted) came under the romantic spell of a beautiful young European lady, Mrs. Muirhead, of the Red Cross Organisation. She was everywhere, on the roads and streets, in the College and the hostels, in drawing rooms and clubs; free and easy, disarmingly so, with all. Some of the student leaders thought that she was in love with them according to the glances each received. While she was in my drawing room to sip a cup of tea I thought she was in love with me too. The drudgery of street collections or visits to the interior was lit up by her radiant presence. When the pressure of relief work slackened by 24th September we had a number of literary and athletic activities; some debates and many football matches including a Charity match my Dacca XI Vs. Chittagong XI on the 28th September when Mr. Tufnell-Banet presided, and the Chittagong Shield Tournament, the final game of which was played on the 30th September but ended in a draw dragging it on to the 16th October for a decisive result.

By agreement with the two Governments of West and East Bengal we conducted I A. I. Sc Supplementary Exam. on the 6th October. On the 10th Dr. Md. Q. Khuda visited our College. He was presented with a Welcome Address by the Union; the staff entertained him at high tea.

We had a month's autumn recess from the 17th October to 16th November. The floods of September were followed by a terrible cyclone on the 23rd October when its fury caught in its grip Cox's Bazar where a steamer capsized and killed one of our students. Trees had flames on them; houses were razed to the ground; crops were destroyed. It rained for 24 hours at Chittagong town. Khan Bahadur Abdus Satter who had already been described by me at some length in course of coverage of my first tenure breathed his last the same day. He was buried on the following day.

The first week of November was marked by the transfer of the District Magistrate. Mr. F. A. Karim. to the Secretariat and Dacca as Education Secretary. There was an outcry among the public leaders against him; it was alleged that he had alienated their respect in many transactions of a questionable character and that they got him transferred. If so, it was an ignominious end for an officer who on arrival was hailed as a pucca Muslim and defender of the faith, who had set himself up as a stout champion of the Muslim League and also as a promoter of Muslim renaissance. What he did or did not do in his administrative sphere was not so much our concern. I have already noted, however, how he used to poke in his nose into my affairs. What was of vital importance and deep concern to education in particular and to the life of the people of the Province in general was the propaganda he initiated and conducted in placing the Bengali script by Arabic script the plea being a unification and integration of the people of the two wings of Pakistan. He found a tool in one Maulavi Zulfiquer, teacher of Arabic (or Persian) at the local J. M. Sen School. I had met him on several occasions—a simple, poverty stricken, innocent gentleman. He had brought out some books in Arabic script. In the Madrassaha Bengali as such was not taught with the result that many students going through lower and contents of Bengali books); they were exclusively confined to the Quoran, Fiqh, Hadith, Islamic lore and legends. I do not think that before he had been taken under the strong, protecting wings of Mr. Karim to carry on the latter's propaganda, he had the remotest idea of altering the character of Bengali literature and language and vis-a-vis their relations to the script in which it is written. It will be reasonable to assume that his early efforts were directed towards the reading of Bengali in Arabic script by those Maulavis who had no acquaintance with Bengali script. Mr. Karim was

a champion of urdu being the national language of Pakistan. Shrewd and subtle as he was he wanted to cut at the roots of Bengali by altering the script first. He used to point out how Muslim Bengali was different from Hindu Bengali and how the former would be acquired better by the Muslim script. His campaigning for the Arabic script begun at Chittagong gathered fresh momentum at Dacca where he took over as Secretary, Education Deptt., in November, 1947. How much Government money went into the province-wide propaganda he launched should be examined now, if not already done. His brochure "The Script Question" lying in heaps in his Eden Buildings Room had a free distribution and circulation. Who bore the cost of the printing and get up? How far his campaigning contributed to the Urdu-Bengali controversy in the country and led to the subsequent bitterness and boldshed should also be undertaken, preferably by the Bengali Academy or Bengali Development Board of East Pakistan. Mr. Karim was transferred to the Eden Buildings after a stay of about one year and nine months. His successor Chittagong was Mr. Nasiruddin who had risen to the 'listed post' of at District Magistrate from the position of a Deputy Magistrate.

On the re-opening of the College on the 17th November after autumn recess we grieved formally though in all sincerity the death from the capsizing of the Cox's Bazar Steamer in the 23rd October Cyclone of our 1st Year science student. Azizur Rahman who was a brilliant student; he had secured "distinction" (80% marks) in four subjects at the Matriculation Exam. It was an immeasurable loss not only to his family but also to the College.

Capt. Jaferi, Officer Commanding, HMPS OUDH, along with a team of his officers visited the College on the 20th November. He gave a talk to the students from 4 p. m. to 5-40 p. m. He arranged for our visit to his vessel on the following day. Both proved to be most animating.

Dr. Abdul Haq, professor of Physics, of our College addressed the Union on "X-Rays & their Practical Application" on the 4th December. On the 9th December, 1947, sir Frederick Bourne, the first Governor of East Pakistan after independence was our distinguished visitor and guest from 10-45 a. m. to 11-20 a. m. Earlier Mr. Tufnell-Barrett and the Members of the Governing Body had gathered to receive him. I showed him round with unconcealed buoyancy since I found in him a scholar

and a gentleman combined. In fact having met him thrice in course of the same day we became kindred in spirit. As President of the Managing Committee of Gul zar Begum High English School I had to show him round there too. In the Visitor's Books of both the institutions he paid generous tributes to my work in each. Day to day routine work in the month of December became very much enlivened by social contacts and also by stimulating discussions and activities in the College Union. On the 19th December Prof. Mufassaluddin Ahmed gave a discourse on some aspects of Applied and Experimental Psychology from 4 P. M. to 5-30 p. m. and on the 20th afternoon he gave a demonstration of hypnotism. He had been very skilful in this branch. On the same day we roped in Mr. Abdul Hady Talukdar, then Academic Registrar of Dacca University. He was on a 'business' visit to Chittagong' we availed of the occasion to entertain him at tea.

Meanwhile I was working on a scheme of expanding our Science subjects to Biology, the non-existence of which was a serious handicap to I. Sc. Students intent on Medical studies. My efforts in this direction will receive fuller treatment in due course. There was another unpardonable lack of amenities in the attached hostels which were without electric fittings and connexion. I was determined to have this amenity provided.

Beyond the walls of the College I had a number of other activities. For a good while now I was the elected President of the Chittagong Institute, and organisation corresponding to the European Club built up by Mr. Ghosal among others. I was an active member of a Play Reading Group which included Mr. Iff, Additional District Magistrate Mrs. Muirhead, Mr. Bivar and some others.

Chittagong observed on a grand scale the 72nd birth day of Quaid-i-Azam on the 26th December. There was a public function at Laldighi under the Chairmanship of the District Magistrate. The Directorate of storage under Col. McDougall got me to be their Chief Speaker on the life of the Quaid. Their enthusiasm was infectious and I was in my form on the occasion.

I had weathered the storm of communal passions in the first half of 1947 and in the second piloted the College through transitional obstacles on

to safe moorings. I do not think I had much leisure for private studies of my own during this period.

1948

1948 was another year of crowded life lived to the very marrow of our bones with events and problems within the College and without. Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah was with us at Chittagong on the 25th March. On the preceding day (24th march) while he addressed the Dacca University Convocation he saw the beginning of the language controversy in Pakistan. Within six months (that is to say, on the 11th September) he breathed his last to leave the country fatherless. Khwaja Nazimuddin took his place as Governor-General. Liaquat Ali Khan, continuing as Prime Minister, visited Chittagong on the 25th November. Shortly Before Quaid-i-Azam's death, the present President of Pakistan, Field Marshal Mohammad Aun Khan, then G. O. C. I, Eastern Command was on an educational mission to Chittagong, being accompanied by Mr. Zakir Hussain, then Inspector General of Police, East Bengal, later to become Governor of East Pakistan under the Martial Law regime of the Field Marshall in 1958. The Mission was that of the foundation of a Public School in Chittagong. Within one month of the Quaid's visit in March Mr. Gholam Mohammad, then finance Minister of Pakistan, Later Governor-General, was at Chittagong too. He was accompanied by Mr. Sri Prokash, India's High Commissioner in Pakistan. Mr. Khuro, Chief Minister of Sind was dismissed in April. The State Bank of Pakistan was inaugurated on the 1st Week of July. Quaid-i-Azam's death was quickly followed by the fall of Hyderabad effected by Nehru's small "Police Action"-the Reakars and kasem Rizvi having melted into thin air. But in the opening month of the year the apostle of non-violence, Mr. Gandhi, leaning on the shoulders of young girls and while walking into his Prayer Meeting, was shot dead. The Palestine Mandate came to an end but Count Bernadotte, another apostle of peace met Mr. Gandhi's fate. Israel, the Jewish state, had its birth. Within the College the chief problems were those of adaptation and adjustment to the requirements of the Dacca University and those of the Government. Could the former two-year Honours Course be fitted into the statutes of Dacca University? if not what were the conditions in staff and equipment we would have to fulfil to levelling ourselves upto the three-year

standard? The list of holidays must have a Pakistani reorientation. Fridays were the weekly holidays in all educational institutions in place of Sundays which would be working days. The first weekly holiday on Fridays took place on the 6th February, 1948. The month of Ramazan (although it had a revolving course in tune with the revolving moon) must be observed as vacation; it was immaterial if summer vacation should undergo a radical alteration and termtime e severely jolted. It was considered expedient however to retain some Puja recess under the euphemistic label of "Autuma". In actual practice we would have to close down and reopen at short intervals. In 1948 we had summer vacation in the month of May, Ramazan vacation from 9th July to 20th August, Autumn from 1st October to 31st October; cold weather recess from 24th December 1. But I did not flag in my determination to start Biology in the session, 1948-49 and I did succeed. A fuller account of this will follow. We had a number of changes in the teaching staff. Muslim girls joined the College in increasing numbers. My residential phone was removed under the orders of the Government of East Bengal the Govt. of Undivided Bengal not having disposed of the file before 14th August, 1947. The Directorate of Education shifted to Dacca in course of the year.

Mr. Abdul Hady Talukdar, the Academic Registrar of Dacca University, who had been at my College in December 1947, got me on his return to Dacca appointed as a Member of Committee of Courses in English so that in the new year I frequently attended its meetings and successfully represented the requirements of affiliated Colleges in syllabus, paper-setting, moderating and examining work. Miss A. G. Stock was Professor and Head of the Department of English then at Dacca University (later she filled the same position at Calcutta). Soon she attached importance to my experience and views, embodied them in minutes and got them through the Academic Council. She also gave me responsible duties to handle in examination work. In the context of the changed circumstances I turned my attention in January to the drawing up of a new constitution for the College Union; I had a drafting sub-Committee formed and in course of the next six months the job was completed and approved by the general body of students. This constitution worked smoothly till I left Chittagong College in August, 1950. Our distinguished pupil, Rezaul Karim (later he took a first in English

at Dacca University), who is now the Principal of City College, Chittagong, got me to preside over the prize giving function at south Raozan H. E. School. The place was reached in a two-and-a quarter hour launch trip up the river Karnaphully about midway between Chittagong and Rangamati. On the 25th January Rezaul Karim and his father, Mr. Ali Ahmed Choudhury, a rich merchant, escorted me to South-Raozan H. E. School with picturesque views on both sides of the river to see. Going up it was situated on the left bank on a fairly steep eminence; on the other bank on a lofty hilltop was situated the Chiringa forest Deptt. Dak Bungalow. The Karnaphully was a highway of commerce; you see innumerable clusters of bamboo and timber, floats of jute and straw, "Shampans" (flat-bottomed tiny boats) carrying passengers down the river to Chittagong—a nation agog with activity. We arrived at about 12 noon. had a sumptuous lunch and then the function which began at 3 p. m. and ended at 8-30 p. m. It was an exhilarating experience. Simple, unsophisticated students competed with each other in putting up a brave show of recitation, speeches, songs (the last being mostly "pop"). Another unique experience was the successful account that the Baruah (Buddhist) students gave of themselves in their scholastic and corporate work. Rezaul Karim belonged to the place and delivered a nice little speech in correct English I spoke in Bengali; had a light banter on 'pop' songs and then made a fervent appeal for combining book knowledge with practical field work in Grow More Food, sugarcane and molasses operations, carpentry, tailoring etc. Having heard a lot about the unparalleled charm of Chiringa and the countryside I had arrangement made earlier for spending the night at Chiringa Dak Bungalow. At the end of the function I crossed the river in a punt and climbed the steep way up to the cosy, neat timber building. It was a moonlit night unfolding a view of adjacent hills and the vilages of vegetation below—an experience that compared favourably with that at Kalimpong Circuit House. Cold weather did not permit sitting out but the silence and solemnity of the situation stole into my soul to give me a soothing slumber from which I awoke in the early hours of the morning when I perceived shouts of boatmen below loading or propelling their vessels. I sailed down at 8-30 a. m. and was in my office at 11-12 for the next one day and a half I was fully occupied in tabulating the results of the Intermediate Test Examination and declaring the lists of eligible candidates. Instead of

meeting the Staff Council unprepared and contributing to noise and confusion there it was my invariable custom to scrutinize and categorise the results with great patience and with the help of those colleagues who were in charge of conducting the exams. I got at least three lists ready according to merit leaving no scope for Tadbir or for a grouse against unfairness. The candidates were thereby spared humiliation, the teachers and myself pestering. I stuck to this habit till my retirement. On the 27th January a big farewell function was held to bid goodbye to Mr. A. F. M. Muzaffar Ahamed, Senior Lecturer in English, transferred on promotion to M. C. College, Sylhet. On the 31st January all offices were closed as a mark of respect to the memory of Mr. Gandhi who was shot dead. On the first February it became known that the assassin was Nathuram Venayake Godse, a Marathi of 36 years of age. Recently Wolpert has dramatised this diabolical murder in his novel "Nine Hours to Rama".

Over the requisitioning of School buildings by the all-powerful District Magistrate, Mr. Nasiruddin, there was a good deal of discontent among the students and the public the latest institution to suffer was Muslim High School. On the 4th February the Education Minister Mr. Abdul Hamid arrived at Chittagong to look into the grievances. But the students of all institutions including Chittagong College, spearheaded a violent demonstration. The District Magistrate and the Education Minister were surrounded and molested; the former's garden in his hill-top bungalow was badly damaged. The strength and the tempo of the relevant requisitioning became weak and slow thereafter.

Work at the College, at Education Directorate at Chittagong, at Dacca University, social engagements, athletic fixtures had however an unbroken tempo. On the 17th February, Mr. Kazi Anwarul Huq, I. P. Superintendent of Police, Chittagong, met me at my residence and asked for the participation of College students in the Navy Week Sports he was organising in honour of the visit of Rear-Admiral Jefford, Flag Officer Commanding, Pakistan Navy. A young officer of quiet and scholarly disposition I had known him from before and I liked him. I never took into my consideration that he was the nephew (sister's son) of the District Magistrate, Mr. Nasiruddin. I got the athletes of my College to agree to the proposed participation. With their representa-

tives I served on the Organising Committee for the Sports to be held on the 6th March on the Collegiate School Ground. The admiral was also scheduled to visit our College on the same day at 11 a. m. He did visit on time and in the absence of the Commissioner I received him and his team and conducted them to the Assembly Hall where he addressed the students. He was a stout, stocky, short statured Navy Chief in resplendent uniform, high and mighty in his demeanour. Without the traditional courtesy of his Service, he jumped on to the dais and gave a short talk in clear accents and confident tone and marched out with his equipage. This was however, the beginning of our young men's attraction to the Navy. The sports were fixed for the afternoon. The Superintendent of Police had secured our cooperation but ignored issuing invitations to my teaching staff who resented the slight. By 1 p. m. I secured the delivery to them of the invitations but they kept away. Their impression was that the District authorities (who were unpopular then) would not accord the College the honourable treatment they deserved. Those who stood committed as competitors or as Professors-in-College and I attended from 4-45 p. m. to sunset. Unsportsmanlike deals and decisions were soon manifest; the executive officers were found to be rude to our students. When the attention of the District Magistrate was drawn to such a state of affairs he was rude to our Professor, Mr. M. R. Choudhury Mohsin (I forget his designation, whether Lt. Or Capt), son of Shamsul Ulema. Mr. Kamaluddin Ahmed, I. E. S. Retired, was violent in his deals. The S. P. Mr. Huq who had coaxed me into the competition completely changed his assumed hue of humility and became rude. Our students lost patience towards the end and created a shouting demonstration. The District Magistrate left un-noticed. Now there was a war on between myself and my students constituting one camp and the S. P. and his Police force another and this was about to lead to unfortunate physical fighting. I asked my army to record a protest and then to follow me. We marched out walking. The students had no refreshment, nor I and the Collegues who were helping. We walked to Restaurant off Laldighi where I stood them tea and refreshment. Further comments are not called for, I believe.

Earlier, on the 20th February to be precise, there was a grand social event in the marriage of one of the daughters of Dr. Nazif Ahmed, Chief Medical Officer, East Bengal Railway. I attended it with my daughter

and miss Atiya Zahuruddin one of our students. Two other daughters, Razia & Habiba, of Dr. Ahmed were attending our Degree Honours classes. In the post-independence period we had become intimate friends. This note has a relevance to the expansion of my College into the provision for Biology in the framing and working of which Dr. Ahmed was of inestimable help to the College. When everything was complete he took up the teaching (and also Practical work) of Zoology. His son Rashid Ahmed belonged to the first batch of biology students. He is now a successful doctor in West Pakistan. Dr. Nazir Ahmed died an early death while in harness. Razia and Habiba both took their Honours degree from Chittagong College. But alas! Razia had an early death too. Habiba after considerable dislocation in her studies joined my M. A. English classes three/four years ago. And the daughter who was married in February in 1948 is now in Jessore, the wife of a Major. Early in November 1964, I met them both in Jessore Cantonment at the house of my son.

Preparations for according a fitting reception to the Quaid started on the 5th March. A purse was also to be presented to him. I still recall how as many as twenty two welcome addresses were submitted to the D. M. for approval and how I had to play some part in cutting down their size and number. Chittagong organised a right royal reception. From the Patenga Airport to the heart of Chittagong town the whole area of 14/15 miles was gala in splendid form. Hundreds and thousands of people turned out to have a glimpse of the father of the nation. A about 10 on the morning of 25th march, 1948, the Governor-General' plane landed. When he came out and stood at the top of the stairs his immaculately white sherwani draping his slim body first attracted our attention. He lifted up his hand to a bowing head in acknowledging the cheers and the salute of his people. The same gesture he continued to make while he cast a look at the milling crowd around. Tears rolled down my cheeks; for the first time in seven months after the event I saw Pakistan and its visible embodiment. Earlier being immersed in routine I had no emotional perception. Of this I had a flood now. His humility was saintlike; the coldness and arrogance ascribed to him by interested circle was simply non-existent. From 1-15 p. m. to about 8 p. m. I was in his contiguity at the Circuit House. At lunch he had changed into lounge suit and when the brother and sister (Fatima Jinnah) stepped

downstairs for the Dining Hall, it was again another unforgettable sight. He ate slowly, very sparingly; his smoke was correspondingly very sparing. After lunch he withdrew into the lounge at the other side of the staircase and sent for, one by one, officers holding key positions for brief discussions. Now I saw one solitary instance of his commanding esture with his finger. He was having a talk with one of the Directors of a particular branch when another officer got into the room and was moving towards the Quaid-i-Azam. The moving finger moved for the gentleman to retreat and he had to beat a retreat with backward steps. At the Tea Party at Chittagogn club the same afternoon the Quaid was more or less easy of access and informal. While he was moving in a Sector of the gatherig a number of student lenders drew close, and talked to him of their problems. His reply once twice, thrice, was "Give me three years' time". He was graciously gentle. I was within hearing but I considered it would be presumptuous on my part to bother him with a direct approach. His addres to Gazetted officers at the Circuit House followed at 7-20 p. m. In contrast with his clear conversation at the club party, here his voice failed him He talked almost in whispers and despite our straining efforts we failed to follow him. Obviously he was exhausted. But at the public meeting on the 26th March held at the Police grounds in the afternoon he was in his inimitable form; his perfect accents in Englishman's English came clear and crisp and held the audience spell-bound. And what are audience and what a setting! The setting was that an amphitheatre; the slopes around the level grounds were filled with a million people tier upon tier. he reading of the Welcome Address (a poor performance by Mr. Abul Kasem khan-the qualifying comment is taken from my diary without any slight to Mr. Khan) was followed by the presentation by the District Magistrate, Mr. Nasiruddin of a purse of rupees two lakhs and twenty five thousand. Quaid-i-Azam was mush pleased with the efficient arrangements made, the most respectful, reverent and warm reception given and the substantial purse offered! His speech in reply was most appropriate to the hour and the occasion. This can be read in any collection of his speeches. I was proud over the faultless microphone arrangements made by Hyder Saheb who as the most skilful of Public Address Equipment operators in the Publicity Department of Undivided Bengal. Undoubtedly he had opted for East Bengal. I returned home at 7-15 p. m. Nobody could

dream then that this was Mr. Jinnah's last visit to Chittagong or for the matter of that to the East Wing

In less than a month Messrs Ghulam Muhammad and Sriprakash were on a visit. I was present when the former was shown round the Prabartak Sangha Organisation. In course of the discussion that followed with the head of the organisation Mr. Ghulam Mohammad put some searching questions answers to which were not easy. I was much impressed. The District Magistrate entertained them at Tea and Mr. Abul Kasem Khan at Dinner, both being held at Chittagong club. I attended both, the first from 5-30 p. m. The post-prandial speeches were many. The host, some others among the local Muslims and Mr. Ghulam Mohammad were not at all impressive in their delivery and substance. Late in the evening when others had finished Mr. Sriprakash was on his feet. Past middle age, stoutish in body, simple in clothing with trousers and a buttoned-up coat on he did not look the personality he was. Soon enough he made it felt. He began in conversational style with a ready smile on his lips, attained to fluency with an easy command over English language and then drifted into politics in course of which he made subtle inroads upon communal happenings and went to the length of observing that the Muslims had 'lost their heads' in communal carnage. At any rate I lost mine (equanimity if not head) under this unjustifiable attack. I interrupted him and asked whether the Hindus had not lost their heads too. This caused a severe jolt; all our Muslims friends felt scandalised and desired me to sit down. This hush-hush attitude reviled me further. I explained my position with apt quotations from his unfair remarks. Mr. Ghulam Mohammad volunteered to explain on behalf of his companion and did put a gloss upon them. I was unconvinced. But Mr. Sriprakash was seasoned and wise; he stood up and said that he did not mean that the Hindus were innocent either; he was sorry if his remarks had conveyed that impression.

We celebrated on the 22nd April the Iqbal Day within the College from 3-30 p. m. to 6-15 p. m. essays on Iqbal the poet, Iqbal the Philosopher, recitations, learned speeches featuring in the function.

In less than a week from the Iqbal Day celebration Pakistan, in both wings, had a political sensation over the dismissal of the redoubtable Mr. Khuro, Chief Minister of Sind.

Earlier at the end of March following the departure of Quaid-i-Azam the College as well as the town of Chittagong held condolence meetings at the death of eminent Pali Scholar, Dr. D. M. Barus, both having many Buddhists as students and citizens. Another change took place in the teaching staff by the transfer of Khan Saheb Abdur Rab Choudhury, our Vice-Principal, to act as Principal of M. C. College, Sylhet. He left Chittagong on the 31st March. It happened in this way. Dr Itrat Hussain Zuberi was compelled to take over charge of M. C. College towards the end of August or the beginning of September, 1947. He did not find much scope for an exhibition of his talents at Chittagong during his stop over although Chittagong was metropolitan in its commercial bearing. But Sylhet was absolutely jungly and isolated. His idea of a Sylhet University did not find any currency; he was stuck up in a blind alley as it were. He sought, and was granted, leave to go abroad. Dr. Qudrat-ikhuda was keen on sending me to Sylhet. Another dislocation on the eve of my retirement in 1953 would affect the studies of my sons. This was my line of approach to the problem before me. I was asked to suggest a suitable man. I said the Khan Saheb was sober, quiet, experienced, he had officiated as Principal of Chittagong College before I took over, on top of all he was a native of Sylhet district. Willy-nilly the DPI agreed and I escaped, but only temporarily.

Over the acquisition of lands nearby and the construction of additional buildings for College work and residential accommodation we were awfully congested - I did not have sufficient support from the DPI. In fact I had a clash with him over his queer ideas. Naturally I concentrated all my attention on the provision and introduction of Biology. I had a budgetary provision for the same during the financial year 1st April 1947 to 31st March, 1948. Because of Partition this was held up. But I got it carried over to 1948-49 a sum of rupees forty thousand. My approved scheme consisted of (I) the construction of a second floor to the two-storied building at the south-west corner of the premises as an offset to the acquisition of the whole of the ground floor and one big lecture room in the first for the Biology department the cost of the construction being estimated at rupees twenty thousand (ii) Laboratory fittings and equipment: to cost the balance of twenty thousand (ten thousand of these earmarked for microscopes.) From the first I had to seek prompt cooperation from the Executive Engineer the difficulty

being the supply of water and gas from the main Science laboratory a good distance away from the intended Biology Building. I was in a quandary over the Laboratory fittings. No firm in East Pakistan existed; all earlier Laboratory fittings whether at the College or at the Hospital & Medical School had been done by Calcutta firms. There was, however, no bar yet to get the work done by a Calcutta firm; only certain items of equipment and fittings were contraband. And only one firm, HOSPO, of Bowbazar, Calcutta, agreed to take it up; Bengal Chemical and Pharmaceutical Works and other big concerns declined. The Manager of HOSPO, one Mr. Abraham, arrived at Chittagong on the 25th September; terms for fittings and furniture were finalised on the following day, The whole of October (from the 1st to 31st) being included in the Autumn vacation the work of the Laboratory was taken up and completed during the period, Mr. Abraham being allowed to live in one of the rooms of the College. He made his own arrangements about his food. The West Wing long room was converted into Practical Work Laboratory, the central middle into stores and Staff Room, the east wing into Botanical Museum. Basing and most of the other fittings were brought from Calcutta. For wood work Mr. Abraham made his own drawings and used local carpenters and masons. The supply of microscopes looked like an insuperable difficulty. They were not yet available after the war. The solution came with the inestimable help received first from the Deputy Chief Controller of Imports and Exports at Chittagong, Mr. Iftekharulls, second, from Mr. A. K. Khan who alone had credit with the USA exporters. Microscopes were not in his line of business. Besides he hated the bureaucratic delays in payment. When I assured him that funds were at my disposal and that payment would be made from the local Treasury against my signature he yielded. These arrangements for the supply of 11 microscopes were finalised on the 22nd September; they were delivered to me at the reopening of the College on the 1st November -air transport having been arranged. When the laboratory and equipment were ready I ran against another difficulty; the big windows of the rooms were without iron gratings which, according to the facile plea of the buildings branch, were not simply available. I Stormed, held out threats against the loss of valuable equipment and succeeded in hustling them into prompt compliance. With regard to the construction of the top floor the Executive Engineer

gave his willing and constant cooperation. The first batch of Biology students say 20, selected from among the best went into work in the academic session, 1949-50 Dr. Nazir Ahmed took up the teaching of Zoology; he also occasionally brought along with him one of his qualified relatives for helping him in practical work. But there was none to do the Botany portion. At least two Hindu gentlemen accepted, one after the other, the appointment of a lecturer in Botany but backed out eventually. The second gentleman, Mr. K. L. Mukherjee., of Santi Niketan, bargained for a higher initial start but when he got it he did not honour his own word. In a desperate mood I approached the DPI who was hesitating in regard to the appointment of a Muslim young man from West Bengal since the latter did not have Honours at the Degree level. He was Mr. Allah Rakha, now S senior Lecturer at Dacca College. He was appointed on a temporary basis and although he worked with success he was kept hanging for years before he was absorbed substantively. The fact that no Master's degree holder with a corresponding Honours degree was just not available then was not taken into consideration. I vividly recall how hard I worked and sometimes against the obtuseness of the DPI and his insinuation against the selection of a Calcutta firm (and he knew very well that no firm existed in East Bengal) in inaugurating the Department of Biology at Chittagong College. It is natural that I do cherish some satisfaction in the success I achieved. Whether there had been any recognition of this within Chittagong College is a different matter.

Let me revert to some other notable events in the earlier months. June and the 1st week of July were spent in conducting Intermediate and annual examinations which should have been held in March and April. Dr. Abdul Huq, Professor of Physics was transferred on the 6th July, his vacancy having been filled up by another capable man, Mr. Md. Firdous Khan who is now Chairman of the Dacca Board of Secondary and Intermediate Examinations. He had since taken over as DPI, E. P. During the Ramazan holiday the College buildings were requisitioned for accommodating Haj Pilgrims. This was done against my stiff opposition with the approval of the Govt. When they left an Augean stable had to be cleaned up. The last week of August and the first thirteen days of September were occupied by the holding of Dacca University Degree and Honours Degree examinations. The Vice-

chancellor of Dacca University (Dr. M. Hasan) and the DPI visited our College on the 6th September. On the 9th September, the G. O. C. Eastern Command, Mr. Ayub Khan (now President of Pakistan) and Mr. Zaker Hussain were on a visit to Chittagong. Being invited by Mr. Solaiman Choudhury one of the leading merchants of Chittagong to a meeting and dinner at his place in the evening I attended both. Rai Bahadur Ranadaprasad Saha had offered ten lakhs for the establishment of a Public School in Chittagong. The General in his speech at the beginning suggested one such on the model of the Doon School; Mr. Zaker Hussain drifted into controversial aspects and offensive remarks. Four others followed including Messes Hafizur Rahman, now Finance Minister, East Pakistan, and Mr. Fazlul Quader Choudhury, Speaker of the National Assembly. Nothing came out of these discussions. I had a meeting of the Committee of Courses in English a Dacca University to attend on the 12th September, 1948. When I boarded the evening train at Chittagong Railway Station I met Dr. Osman Ghani for the first time in the same compartment. Then was Deputy Director of Agriculture posted at Tejgaon (now he is Vice-Chancellor, Dacca University). We kept late hours in having animated discussions on various topics because of the sheer impact of first acquaintance. On the morning of 12th September, say at 9. when the train reached Tejgaon railway station Dr. Ghani and I shook hands and parted. But in a couple of minutes he returned to convey the sad news of the death of Quaid-i-Azam the preceding night. I reeled under the staggering blow -our minds being absolutely unprepared for this sudden calamity-sudden because of the black-out of all news of the state of his health for about two months and a half. All we were told was that he was resting in Quetta. Occasionally there was news of the visit to him there of the Prime Minister of of some dignitaries and the discussions they had. Later the same morning it was given out that he had returned to Karachi, held a cabinet meeting, had his dinner and then he did. Could there have been anything more stupid? Some of the Indian newspapers were, however, giving disconcerting reports. The Ananda Bazar Patrika of Calcutta, for instance, reported earlier that the Quaid was suffering from cancer of the heart. We in Pakistan did not attach any importance to such news from hostile sources. Personally I remained inconsolable till a reasonably connected account of his prolonged illness was available from one of his attending

physicians I reached Dacca railway station at 9-45 a. m. when public transport was being forced by urchins to go off the streets. Their flippancy and funmaking in puncturing the tyres and tubes of plying vehicles was revolting. The Province, however, observed a three-day mourning. I returned to Chittagong on the 14th morning and I was prostrate. On the 15th Chittagong College held a long condolence meeting in which students and teachers vied with each other in expressing their profound grief and sorrow. On the 16th there were pro-Hoyderabad demonstrations and processions. On the 8th the fall of Hyderabad was reported. But There was a fixture for the same afternoon a joing meeting of the Muslim students of all institutions at Laldighi to pay the youth's homage of tears and tributes to the architect of Pakistan under my Chairmanship. The meeting began at 4 p. m. when the suudents gathered and occupied their seats institution by intitution; they conducted themselves with commendable discipline and solemnity till 5-30 p. m. when Mr. Fazlul Quader Choudhury arrived to create something like a commotion. He stood up to speak at 5-40 p. m. worked himself upto such a pitch of excitement that he looked like fainting off at 6-20 p. m. The fate of Hyderabad, and he linked up east Bengal in the same category had wrought such a passion in him. And otherwise peaceful and grave function degenerate into panicky condition. I considered it my duty to dispel as for as iculd this senseless fear. I said the Quaid was historically successful pilot while alive; in death he would be and unfailling beaconlight.

Presently I had anxiety at home my wife being seriously ill. She had developed alarming anaemia and was completely bed ridden when on the early morning of 29th September there was a severe earthquake and it appeared to me that the roof of the staircase would crash when we were carrying her downstairs. The new Civil Surgeon, Dr. M. Rahman, was an intimate friend of mine; the Deputy Superintendent of the Hospital a former pupil, and the teacher of surgery a relative. All of them gave such loving service that her pernicious anaemia was cured gradually in course of a month and a half.

Early in October we had a learned discoure in "Wireless Waves" From Dr. Khastagir, Calcutta University Professor of Physics. On the 20th October, Mr. Mabbub Ahmed-Choudhury, brother of Khan Bahadur

Farid Ahmed Choudhury, and Mr. Abdur Razzaque, one of our former students and a successful businessman called to announce the award of five stipends to deserving students. Both were charitable disposed and made occasional donations to stranded students.

On the 14th November Khan Bahadur Fazlul Quader, our friend and patron, the founder of Gulzar Begum H. E. School for Girls and of the Ideal Home entertained Minister Hasan Ali at lunch when I found him fit, Strong and genial. But alas On the 16th at 2 p. m. he had a seizure to which he succumbed at 9 p. m. His death was a grievous loss to everybody at Chittagong, particularly to education and to helpless women. Without his initiative and the offer of his premises Chittagong College would not have functioned at all during the war. On the 17th not only we paid appropriate tributes to his services but joined in strength his funeral ceremony. We were having a hectic time all the while. On the 15th Mr. Jogesh Chandra Sinha (noticed earlier), Seniormost Lecturer in English and one of the most respected members of the teaching staff, who had spent the entire period of his service at Chittagong College retired. The Muslim students of the College took the initiative of organising a farewell function the like of which I have seldom, if ever, seen. A fountain pen costing Rs. 56/- was presented by them. Simultaneously preparations were afoot to give a fitting reception to the Prime Minister, Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan who on his arrival at Chittagong on the 25th addressed a public meeting in which he held the audience in a fascinating grip by a clear exposition of the State Policy. On the 15th December the Chief Justice of Dacca High Court, Mr. Akram, while on a visit to Chittagong was entertained at dinner by Mr. Badiuzzaman, District & Sessions Judge; on the following day the members of the legal profession met him at tea in the Court premises. I attended both the functions. The year 1948 had a triumphant close. For the First time since the War the College Union organised a two-day Social Gathering with a varied programme on the 21st and 22nd December. The afternoon session consisted of literary and musical items; the evening of the staging of a full-dress drama; the first days entertainment was open to the College, the second day's to guests and guardians. The account that the students gave of themselves was so attractive that I attended with my family from end to end on both days.

1949

1949 revolved round its orbit giving us a continuing course of duties to pursue-normal academic duties and corporate, duties visitors and guest, heavy examination duties, ex-officio duties as Principal in civil and social life, the same in the participation of policy-making deliberations at Dacca University or those in the Education Department and also of domestic duties. In 1949 Chittagong was visited by Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar, twice by Central Minister Fazlur Rahman, once again by Prime Minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, and by Mr. Abdul Quayyum Khan, Chief Minister of NWFP; the College was visited by the Peer of Mankishariff, Maulanas Inteshaamul Huq, Shabbir Ahmed Usmani (Shaikh-ul-Hind) Dr. Abdul Huq (Baba-i-Urdu), Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqui (later he become Governor of East Bengal for a short time) Mr. F. A. Karim, Education Secretary (formerly D. M.). This was the year in which the sterling was devalued and the banks were all closed for four days at the end of which Pakistan decided not to devalue its rupee. Sir Sitaram & Mr. S. K. Basu, High Commissioner and Deputy High Commissioner respectively for India in Pakistan visited the Chittagong Parbartak Sangha. At Calcutta University there was a first class scandal about the tampering of Examination results in favour of the son and daughter-in-law of the sitting Vice-Chancellor, Mr. Pramathanath Banejee; their marks were raised by 25% and more in as many as eight papers. Mr. Banerjee had to quit as a result of the findings of the Syndicate and Mr. C. G. Biswas was appointed as the Vice-Chancellor. At Chittagong the district and divisional executives had undergone a change; Mr. S. K. Dehlavi took the place of Mr. Nasiruddin retired and Mr. N. M. Khan or Tufnell-Barret appointed Secretary for Kashmir Affairs. With being the College there were changes in the teaching staff, the most notable being the retirement on the 31st May, 1949 of Mr. Omdatul Islam, Seniormost Professor, who was doing the work of the Vice Principal since the transfer of Khan saheb Abdur Rab Choudhury. Normal academic duties in our case involved the teaching of I. A. & I.Sc. B. A. & B.Sc. Pass & Honours; syllabuses (still according to the Calcutta University standard; preparing them for their University exams after testing them at Annual and per-final exams. Term-time in 1949 was 2nd January to 2nd June (the longest of its kind) 2nd August to 21st September and 5th November to 23rd December (the last two were very

short)- June & July, part of September and the whole of October being vacations (summer & Ramadan, and Autumn). In January & February we had to conduct Intermediate & Degree tests and send up candidates on consideration of their performance in these tests. Final University Exam of the former as conducted in May; the latter was postponed to August when it was actually held. These exams should have been held in February and April according to normal academic schedule. The admission to Intermediate classes were held in September instead of in early July; those to Degree classes with corresponding delay. The three termtime had frequent dislocation by the intervention of frequent short holidays. Nevertheless the instructional part of our work was kept up at a fairly high intellectual level in consultation and cooperation with Heads of Departments and having planned programmes before us.

Similarly corporate activities proceeded on schedule drawn up by the office-bearers of the Students' Union and within their budgetary framework. The general elections for the formation of the 1949 Union were held on the 25th January and the installation of its Cabinet made on the 24th February. Pending the election and inauguration of a new Union the old Cabinet continued to function. The literary, musical & dramatic parts of the 1948-49 Union had a grand celebration in December last. Their annual athletic sports were held on the 29th & 30th January the final competitions being held under the Chairmanship of Mr. Tufnell-Barrett who left in the middle of March. On the 1st February, 1949, the Union had the Peer of Mankishariff, Maulanas Ihteshamul Huq & Shabbir Ahmed Usmani as their guests. When they came into my room on the eve of the Union meeting held at 12 noon, the first and gentlest did not look like a saint at all with his youth, costly the clothes and restless movements. I remembered how his numerous disciples constituted a powerful political group rather than a religious fraternity. Instead of sitting down he jumped on to a weighing machine placed alongside the northern wall of my room. The three did not belong to the same creed, political or otherwise. But perhaps they were on a common mission under the inspiration of the West Pakistan rulers and why not of their brethren in East Bengal? The mission was to make an exhibition of the superior culture and traditions of the Punjab, NWFP etc. and for the medium of Urdu which they considered to be a magic key to the locked chest of all Islamic lore. The context of bringing over from the

U. P. (of undivided India) to Chittagong of Maulanas Thanavir and others by Mr. F. A. Karim during an earlier Yom-un-Nabi should be recalled in this connexion. They came to the College, mounted the Assembly Hall platform, talked and dispersed; they did not observe the elementary Islamic way of greetings to the head of the College or the teaching staff. Since the visit had been sponsored by the students themselves full of enthusiasm for the brotherhood of Islam we had quietly to perform our hospitable duties. None of us expressed any contrary reactions. But a relevant manifestation of the reactions of the students and the staff was soon available when they held on the 9th March a debate on the use of Arabic script in writing Bengali; there was none in the house to support its use. In another fortnight we had another set of visitors and guests not at our invitation but super-imposed upon us. On the evening of 22nd March, Mr. Dehlavi, the District Magistrate, sent a verbal message to me to attend a meeting at his bungalow at 9-30 on the following morning. At 7-30 a. m. on the 23rd March I sent to him regret in writing. I was absolutely ignorant of the nature of the meeting he was holding. At 9-25 a. m. when I arrived at the College I was told that I must give a ring to Mr. Dehlavi immediately. When I did so he requested me to arrange a meeting in the College on the 24th for Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqui & Dr. Abdul Huq to address on Palestine and Urdu and other topics of interest. At 11-30 a. m. the Principal of Islamic Intermediate College, Chittagong gave me a ring to say that he and his College were joining our meeting. I protested to Mr. Dehlavi against this strange interference. His answer was very interesting. He said the responsibility was his; he was the Commissioner now and President of the Governing Bodies of both; he had further asked the Dar-ul-Ulum people as well to attend. I do not know whether he was acting under Government authority as Commissioner then. But the fact remained that there was a short interregnum between the departure of Mr. Tufnell-Barrett on the 15th March and the arrival of Mr. Niaz Mohammad Khan as his successor. I have not got before me the date of Mr. Khan's arrival. Let it be remembered that Mr. Dehlavi was a nephew of Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqui. And we had to do our duties and meet our obligations to our visitors and guests. On the 24th forenoon the students and staff of Islamic Intermediate College and Dar-ul-Ulum gathered in the Assembly Hall along with ours. There was not sufficient accommo-

dation for all. Punctually at 11-20 a. m. Messrs Dehlavi & Siddiqui, Dr. Abdul Huq and his Secretary arrived and in two/three minutes the meeting began with recitations from the Quoran and two/three other small item indicated by the General secretary of the Union. Mr. Dehlavi did not agree to my offer of his presiding. Naturally I had to do the same. Mr. Siddiqui was an old acquaintance and friend since 1942 when I was Director of Public Information. Of Mr. Abdul Huq my notions were nebulous; I had never been a student of Urdu. I did not know whether he had been filling an official situation and assignment and whether his Secretary did the same. He was the first to speak and he spoke for 40 minutes in support of Urdu. Old and venerable, grave and sober, he made out a case for Urdu with reasonable argument. Mr. Siddiqui spoke next and for forty minutes too. He should have confined himself to Palestine and also to his experiences of the Near and Middle East about which he was well-conversant. But he drifted into hot political stuff of the day, attacked the Hindus (the audience consisted of a large number of them) and then turning to the Muslims said in Urdu among other thing " You, Mians, you will all be Hindu by your study of Bankim Chandra..... " When he sat down Mr. Dehlavi indicated that question might be put to Mr. Siddiqui. Prof. Hafez Md. A. Hai of Arabic, Professor Nazir Ahmed of History and one student did put questions pertinent to the Speaker's' offensive observations Mr. Siddiqui jumped to his feet and made further provocative remark. My summing-up followed; it was already past one o'clock. Dr. Huq's. speech did not call for any comment. I paid rich tributes to Mr. Siddiqui's career as a Muslim League champion, as a Member of the legislative Assembly of Bengal, an editor of the Morning News, and also as one of the sponsors of the Pan-Islamic Movement. His achievements should cancel out his foibles those that were evident in his speech, particularly in his attacks on the Hindus and on the Muslims of East Bengal. As Principal of the College It was my duty to point out the unjustifiability of his remarks against the members of both the communities in the institution. He had not read the novels of Bankim Chandra. I said " we read them and become better Muslims for their perusal". The Islamic culture in East Bengal was based upon firsthand acquaintance with Arabic, the Quran and Sunnah written in Arabic language, the East Pakistanis were pious in deed as well as in faith; they could afford to ignore unwarranted

attacks based on passion & prejudice. They could also afford to ignore the fact that Mr. Siddiqui was still an Indian national and so on. He stood up and expressed his own standpoint towards them. The meeting dispersed then. But before we climbed down from the platform Mr. Siddiqui accosted me with his characteristic irascibility and said "You have delivered a very mischievous speech; I could have smashed you up....." When we walked down and upto their waiting car in front of Principal's room, his blood pressure rose higher; he lost all good sense and started shouting "Dam, Silly, nonsense etc. " We did not forget our obligations as hosts. The next visitor to the College was brought in by the new Commissioner, Mr. N. M. Khan, himself on the 25th April with intimation given on the 23rd. He was Mr. F. A. Karim., now Secretary, Education Department. Their was an afternoon fixture; the staff attended in full strength; a group of about 50 students stayed on and met them at 4-50 p. m. when they arrived. Mr. Karim gave an hour-long discourse to these students and to us on " Islam as a Way of Life", Mr. Khan sat quietly by. From about 6 p.m. to about 7 p. m. they were entertained at tea by the Staff Club. In November the Union organised two meetings, one to listen to Capt. A. Karim on a recruitment campaign, the other to witness a physical feats demonstration by Mr. Abdul Hakim, Retired Principal of Dacca Islamic Intermediate College and former friend and colleague at Rajshahi College between 1922 and 1926. Mr. Hakim sprang a surprise upon me in this new role and after retirement. But he said he had practised these is only in recent yeas. His demonstration was successful; his running commentaries in English matched his bodily exercises. The next to visit our College in 1949 was the Central Minister, Mr. Fazlur Rahman, on the 12th December-a span of 8 months since I incurred the displeasure of Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqui. This visit brought hard luck to me; instead of displeasure I was threatened with 'dire consequences' by the Hon'ble Minister at the end of the visit. On the 11 th December, the day preceding his visit, the General Secretary of the College Union confided to me that some of the students were contemplating interrogation of the Minister about his many administrative bunglings. Actually he was very unpopular then in East Pakistan; the same morning (11th morning) his wife had an unruly demonstration to face from the girls of Edden College, Dacca; the report went that she was not allowed to enter that College. Their pro-Urdu

stand in particular was a sore point with the students. Knowing as I did the mentality of these political leader especially when they held ministerial portfolios I hastened to avert unfortunate incidents within the College. I held discussions with two of the leading students, Mahfuzul Huq and Md. Ishaque. and appealed to them to spare embarrassment to a Government College during the visit of the Central Education Minister. They denied any complicity with such a move and maintained a stolid silence. Later I met the S. P. (he was Mr. Kabir, now I. G. of Police in East Pakistan) and alerted him. Next day (the day of visit) I repeated the appeal to groups of students and staff to avoid demonstration. They appeared to be amenable to discipline. The train from Dacca being behind the schedule by three hours the Minister's visit to College materialised at 12-45 p. m. when a large group of the Muslim League stalwarts were in his company besides Mr. Dehlavi and other officials. Mr. Fazlur Rahman and his companions resorted to the strange, unthought of, unprecedented course of marching from lecture room to lecture room and into the Laboratory where a class was going on. He put question after question to the Science Professor teaching in the Laboratory gallery. I managed to shove him on to the Assemble Hall; he had a look at its size and arrangements and then marched to the pathway in front of the Principl's Room where the cars were parked and the officers standing. Meanwhile groups of students were moving around him. I motioned them off and away. There were no symptoms of a demonstration. I had already prepared a memorandum of our requirements and problems. When he expressed his desire to have a copy I went into my room, collected it from my table and hurried back, the whole process not taking more then twenty seconds, just to witness that Mr. Rahman was reading from a roll of papers in his hand as if the same was an address of welcome. It was now 1-11 p. m. The Minister started shouting "District Magistrate, Catch hold of that boy; Principal, what is this?... etc". and created a noisy scene. We were flabbergasted since there was no demonstration from the students who were smiling and enjoying the trick so dexterously played by one of them during my half-a-Minister and pacified him to the extent of making him board his car. He then signalled the party for departure. The Minister was still shouting imprecations at me. But meanwhile Mr. Dehlavi had spotted the culprit and pointed him out to one of the Police Officers in attendance. Our

reactions were : Why did he accept the leaflet and why did he beggng reading it at once and after all why did he not throw it away? The student responsible for the misdeed was Farmanullah Khan of the Intermediate Classes. Later he became a prominent student leader at S. M. Hall and Dacca University. I had the wrath of Achilles to face the same evening after dinner at the European club. But I prepared a report of the visit and the ivcident in the afternoon for the authorities . At about sunset when I was at another Tea Party at the Circuit House the Commissioner, Mr. N. M. Khan, told me how he had already received a complaint against me from the honouralbe Minister. Dinner being over at 9-30 p. m. Rahman initiated a quarrel with me and " threatened dire consequences" to the College and to the Principal who failed to maintain discipline. He had known me from before; in fact we clashed into friendship years ago at Drjeeling but no he was a boss, I reminded him that we were at the Club and not in our offices to be drawn into explanation or apology. Later we had an inquiry made and sent Farmanullah out of the College with a transer certificate. It is painfully awkward for me to blend here be trivial with the serious. One of our earlier visitors in the Year, Maulana Shabbir Ahmed Usmani breathed his last soon after Mr. Rahman's visit so that we along with Pakistan as a whole mourned Shaikh-ul-Islam' death on the 14th December , 1949.

From January to December I had increasing duties to do at Dacca University about readjustments of syllabi following from separation from the Calcutta University. In January as a member of a Special Committee I represented the views of affiliated Colleges in regard to Degree Course subjects and in regard to the duration ands syllabi of Honours. If subsidiary subjects were to follow the pattern of Dacca University, the affiliated colleges would have a shake-up in staff and student position. Similarly if the three year Honours course continued unmodified they would fail to introduce Honours teaching with the result that the intellectual tone and standard of these Colleges would be depressed irretrivably. The capable students would either have to drop Honours or migrate to Daccea with its severely limited residential accommodation and higher cost of living . At the Special Meeting a few minor concessions were made regarding the subsidiary of Pass Course subjects, none at al about the Honours pattern. Thers was unknown, undefined apprehension about the Dacca University syllabus and ex-

amination systems. So far the Hindu students did not leave East Bengal but now their exodus began. I am not making any comment on this phenomenon either for or against but I had and still have my own opinions different from those of the Secondary Board and Dacca University—Things continue to be in a melting pot even now in 1965 and to a worse degree at Calcutta and other Universities of the Indian Union and States. At a representative gathering of Dacca University and the heads of affiliated Colleges held on the 13th July, 1949, in the room of the Education Secretary at Eden Buildings there had been a prolonged discussion, rather an acrimonious fight. The Dacca University was represented by the Acting Vice-Chancellor Mr. Sultanuddin Ahmed Deans of Faculties and the Registrar, The Principals of Government and some of the important non-Government colleges represented the other side. The DPI, Dr. Md. Qudrat-i-Khuda was undoubtedly there. In fact he had held an earlier discussions proved to be bitter and barren. From the Long later association I had with the Dacca University from 1950 to 1964 my convictions are that wisdom, foresight, correct, bonafide guidance do not dwell there; nor do they flow from there. From the newspaper reports of what goes on at Rajshahi University it is difficult to conclude that conditions are better there. If ever there is a single factor responsible for our academic deterioration, more than others, it is the lack of wisdom and integrity at top levels. Miss Stock got me to play a growing role in the committee of Courses in English; paper-setting, moderating, script-examination, working as Head Examiner, and allied jobs came in steady stream so that during the major portion of the year I had to handle an enormous volume of examination work leaving me little time for my private studies or leisure. I did not know why or how but I was appointed soon as a member of the Faculty of Arts. Dr. Mahmud Hasan had excluded me altogether from the Dacca University. Following the battle royal at the Education Secretary's Room over Honours syllabus I was detained by the DPI at Dacca from the 14th July to 18th July to look over a draft report of the state and progress of Education in East Bengal since the partition. For Five days I worked at the Directorate and finalised it. The DPI appeared to be pleased with the synoptic introduction I wrote out. This was the first report on Education in East Bengal. The courtesy of sending me a printed copy was not observed by the Office of the DPI. This may be ignored

altogether but the fact remains that I had to make several trips to Dacca in course of the year and in the midst of my heavy normal duties at Chittagong.

Duties at Chittagong not merely within the College but also in the civic and social life of the place were many. The most notable of these was the foundation by Mr. Niaz Mohammad Khan of the Pakistan Co-operative Book Society, an institution which is a handmaid to the mistress of learning and education. At a time when Pakistan was still a little baby in swaddling clothes, Mr. Khan looked forward to provide for its schooling; the child was to grow into a knowledgeable, cultured entity for which its indispensable requirement was a properly stocked centre of books and publications. He conceived of such a library of books and executed his ideas on an ambitious scale. Himself a lover of books he was the pioneer of wide reading in our country. He collected the rich people of Chittagong, explained to them his ideas and appealed for funds with which to start. He mooted the project of a cooperative concern and threw it open for mature consideration. At subsequent deliberations the proposal for starting a Book Supply Agency received wide support but the consensus of opinion among the capitalists who had gathered was that it should be left to trade, not to a cooperative body, because cooperative concerns have been failures. Mr. Khan held the view that knowledge and its propagation was diametrically opposed to profit making and commercial interests; it was an integral part of national development, and investment to such a nation-building activity should be free from the taint of lucre; it may have to take on the risk of loss. If efficiently run there will be no loss; dividends when they will accrue must go not into the pockets of shareholders but into the expansion and diffusion of learning and he wanted them to be personally interested in the noble enterprise. Such an interest may be fostered and stimulated by co-operative efforts alone. He was therefore determined to have a registered Co-operative Society with shares valued at Rs. 25/- each. With the band of inspired workers he had under him he got his scheme translated into vital operation through the instrument "Pakistan Co-operative Book Society Ltd." From its inception I have been associated with it as one of the founder-members and I had to play an active part in its inauguration at Chittagong. When the Sylhet Branch was opened he made me (I was then Principal, M C. College, Sylhet) its

boss: From a humble beginning in a hired house the Chittagong Centre (its headquarters) it gradually grew into a big institution with a noble edifice of its own. I had my first glimpse of this in February, 1955, in the course of my tour as Inspector of Colleges. Alam, one of the sons of the late Khan Bahadur Fazlul Quader, a former pupil of Calcutta Islamia was the General Manager then. I went round with secret joy and pride and also with a keen appreciation of Mr. Khan's constructive capacity. Before I left I bought a copy of Bolithos' *Jinnah* published a little time earlier and not yet available at Dacca. In the dawn of independence this Society supplied an indispensable need. There was another need which I felt in my bones in those days, the supply of Laboratory goods and chemicals; I suggested to Mr. Khan then that the Society should include such a section but it was not possible for him to accommodate me in this direction. On the 16th October, 1949, Mr. Khan had the Central Minister Mr. Fazlur Rahman to perform the inaugural ceremony at J. M. Sen Hall, Chittagong. I do not know anything about the present state of working of the centre at Chittagong but the moribund state of the Dacca Branch at New Market is depressing. The fortunes of Mr. Khan officially for quite a good time now have been fluctuating. Obviously he cannot devote the original time and energy. But how about the reading public of East Pakistan? they would much rather indulge in cheap, time consuming heroics & pyrotechnics than inform and elevate their minds. But the Pakistan Co-operative Book Society's Printing & Publishing Press at Dacca built up with substantial grants from the Asia Foundation has been doing a fine job here. Towards the end of 1949 Mr. Khan took the initiative of organising an industrial and agricultural Exhibition at Chittagong- the first of its kind in East Bengal and also the best in achievements since. He got me to work on the Committee since its formation. When the Exhibition was opened early next year every one realised how he held Aladin's magic lamp in his hand. West Pakistan Industrial & Commercial Products, Despite transport difficulties of that period, were spread before our eyes. Speaking of my occupations and engagements outside the College I may recall how on the 8th October 1949, Mr. Dehlavi passed on to me relevant papers to draft and Address of Welcome to prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan due to visit Chittagong on the 13th October. He received my draft on the following day and considered it a finished literary piece requiring work-

a-day world's levelling down and said he would give me a lift after dinner so that we might have a quiet session in his bungalow for breaking my draft down to shorter divisions for 'clincing issues' (his language). We sat together shorter after 10 p. m. and broke up at about 3 (three) in the morning. Messrs Iqbal Shafi and abul kasem khan joined us to help and guide. We had freuent rounds of delicious coffee to cheer us. I now had firsthand evidence of the stuff of which Mr. Dehlavi was made Cool, levelheaded, unfiappable, the palaced my draft and other material before him and worked away at producing a new draft altogether, occasionally consulting me and Shafi Iqbal who was his friend and contemporary at Oxford, on verbal linguistic niceties. The Company being congenial and our part being merely advisory we did not feel any strain of deeping up such late hours. Along with others I received the Prime Minister at Patenga Airport at 10-15 a. m. on the 13th October. I attended too lunch in his honour at Chittagong Club but not the afternoon meeting. On the following morning I attended his address to a select body of Gazetted Officers at Circuit House. In the opening month of the year I attended a dinner party at the house of Mr. Ahmed Saghir Choudhury, a prosperous businessman and also a public leader one of our former distinguished pupils of Calcutta Islamia, noticed in my account of the first tenure of my life at Chittagong. Little did I know then that I would have to mourn his death and participate in his Janaza prayers in the fiirst week of September and also that I would have to write an in memoriam introduction to a biography of his. In March I had to inaugurate the All-Pakistan Psychological Association of our friend and colleague, Professor Mofussaluddin Ahmed. In the middle of the same month we had to attend "Navy Day" celebration at Pahartali at which Sir Frederick Bourne, Governor of East Bengal was present. To add further to this list of engagements would be tiresome.

In the introduction to the year 1949 I referred to domestic duties. I should have used "a domestic calamity" instead. In October 1948 I had brought along with me from Dacca a niece of mine (my 3rd elder brother's daughter); she was a school going girl of 13 / 14 years of age and motherless. She had also been in poor health frequently suffering from bouts of fever. In course of her treatment at Chittagong it was medically ascertained that here was a case of Kala Azar. When a full course of anti-kala-Azar injections was administered to her in Decem-

ber, 1948, she started rallying and by January, 1949 she became fit and cheerful. I did not speak a word about her studies in the company of her cousins (my sons). In the 2nd week of February I got her admitted into Dr. Khastagir's High English School for Girls. Before a week had elapsed she returned one afternoon from school with fever on. In three days, that is to say, on the 20th February her case took a serious turn; restlessness and delirium followed; on the 23rd there was no doubt that it was a case of meningitis. A team of physicians including the Civil Surgeon gave her their best care and treatment; she had penicillin and other injections round the clock. On the 26th she regained her consciousness and took some nourishment. Her father (my brother) arrived on the following morning and she talked with him for sometime and then started sleeping for hours on end. I became alarmed next day her condition being comatose and I was then told that "encephalic lethargy" had overtaken her. I cannot make out now as I could not then why lumbe-puncturing had not been made. On the 28th February her condition became grave; on the 1st March hopeless. At midnight when I was at her bedside she asked for some water to drink in clear accents but this was the last flicker before extinction. She died early in the morning of 2nd March. The Lily (her pet name was "Lily") withered before it had a chance to bloom. She had soft lily-like fragrance about her with her slim, well-defined features and spotlessly clean dress. The numerous children in my family clustered around, sobbed and cried bitterly and would not part with so dear a head. We buried her in the high grounds about the picturesque hill-top mosque off Chittagong college, where earlier we buried Prof. Waliullah. There she lies a part of the dust of Chittagong.

The first death anniversary of the Father of the Nation was observed on the 11th September in public function under the Chairmanship of the Divisional Commissioner. Representing education I had to speak a few words to contribute to the cairn of tributes built up on the occasion as a memorial. Similarly International Co-operation Day was observed in a public function held at J. M. Sen Hall on the 5th November with Mr. N. M. Khan presiding. The Dacca University Convocation was held on the 24th November, 1949, its rehearsal on the day preceding. I attended both. The Vice-Chancellor, Dr. S. M. Hussain took about an hour to read his long and stereotyped address; Mian Afzal Hussain, the chief guest

40 minutes for his 22-page printed speech which was well thought out whereas the Chancellor, Sir Frederick Bourne only seven to read his. At Chittagong and within the College the Human Rights Day was celebrated on the 10th December. The year 1949 had a delightful close with literary, musical and dramatic performance by students on the eve of the cold weather recess and on lines with the performances at the end of 1948.

January to August 1950

The pattern of work and play, of examinations and holidays within the College during this period ran on parallel lines (with slight variations in dates) with the corresponding period in 1949. The term-time was equally long, from 5th January to 7th June. Summer & Ramadan vacation covered 8th June to 4th August. Work at Dacca University chiefly and at Education Directorate once or twice necessitated five trips to Dacca and back by the 1st week of August. Outside the College the centre of attraction was the East Pakistan Exhibition organised on a vast scale by Mr. N. M. Khan about which I have written already. For the best part of three months in the new year this Exhibition was a city of lights on the site of the present Chittagong Stadium. Mr. Khan got the Governor General of Pakistan, Khwaja Nazimuddin, to do the opening of the 6th January. The latter paid a second visit in three days; a reception to him was organised on the 10th and on the 11th he addressed the Gazetted Officers. The Governor of East Bengal visited the Exhibition on the 1st March; on the 24th he presided over its Prize-giving function. But earlier, on the 8th March, His Imperial Majesty Reza Shah Pahlavi, Sahin Shah of Iran, was on a fleeting visit to Chittagong. For months on end preparations had been going on to accord him a royal (or imperial)? reception, Especially the Circuit House had to be transformed by the remodelling of its look inside and outside and with royal furniture and fittings (the colossal cost of renovation and furnishings became the talk of the day). The public had to occupy positions in the attached grounds from early in the morning; my family left for the place at 7 a. m. and I at 7-40. The Shah-in-Shah appeared on the south facing verandah, expressed in English his thanks taking only two minutes and then left at 9-40 a. m.; the whole process was gone through in about 15 minutes. Early in February Sardar Md. Aurangzeb visited the Govern-

ment College of Commerce at Chittagong. Following the Calcutta-Howrah shootings, killings and arson of the Muslim minority there, the corresponding reaction broke out at Dacca on the 10th February; at Chittagong on the 13th and continued for about a week; we had to postpone our Degree Exam. Test to 25th February. At Howrah my own brother, just elder to me, was attacked and assaulted with his family; they sought shelter in a Muslim's house in the interior. Only on the 24th April I heard that they were alive. On the 23rd February a team of Turkish journalists paid a visit to Chittagong. On the 12th March Mr. TIM Nurannabi Choudhury took over charge as Commissioner of Chittagong Division in addition to his duties of Dacca. Division. Shortly afterwards Mr. Dehlavi was succeeded by another District Magistrate, Mr. Ali Asghar (I suppose he is now the Chief Secretary of East Pakistan). The Latter made arrangements for a fitting reception to the new Governor of east Bengal, Malik Firoz Khan Noon, who arrived at Chittagong on the 27th May, 1950; In West Pakistan Sahebzada Mohammad Khurshid, Governor of NWFP, died on the 14th January, 1950; 16th January was declared as a public holiday in East Bengal as a mark of respect to his memory,. At Chittagong one of our friends, Mr. Khurshid Ali, who had just retired from his post, Deputy Director of Consumer Goods, died on the 20th May. His son, Muhi-ul-Islam, one of the most prominent students of our College, especially in histrionics, brought us closer together.

I propose to notice here a few internal items during the period under survey. On the 14th January we had a staff versus student cricket match. On the 19th Mr. K. S. Laurie, Manager, Burma Oil Company, Chittagong, distinguished Scientist and very popular in educational circles gave a talk to the College Union of "Refining of Petroleum". On the 4th February Mr. F. A. Karim, Education Secretary, (he had kept up his interest in Chittagong College), addressed the College Union and on the following day he presided over our annual athletics. On the 27 February Dr. Anderson of BCG campaign visited the College and administered the requisite vaccine to a number of students; on the 2nd March his team did the same to more than 300 students. On the 16th April the Installation Ceremony of the new Cabinet of the Union was held, the Officer-in-Charge of the Union on this occasion being Professor Habibur Rahman who in keeping with the traditions of such a function in the

Halls of Dacca University had introduced the convention of Office bearers to bow in and out. The defeated party at the Elections, a microscopic minority, adopted a kill-joy attitude during the ceremony and jeered at 'bowing'. I exploited the situation to the fullest advantage while I delivered my presidential speech. I said that the opposition's conduct was like that of contestants between "tweedledum; & tweedledee", banal and flippant-a time-consuming dissipation. Meanwhile they were absolutely apathetic to the life and death struggle against tuberculosis of a dear fellow-student of theirs, lying seriously ill at the Ajmer Sanatorium. I gave the name of the student, the history of the case and of all that I had been able to do so far by providing badly needed funds for his treatment. Would the assembled students make a demonstration of their human and humane qualities on the occasion by announcing their donations? They were stung into activity to the extent of promising Rs. 110/- and a paying Rs 20/- cash. On the 20th April I got the whole amount of Rs. 130/- and arranged for its transmission to the afflicted victim who, it may noted, was not only fully cured but is now the highly paid boss of a German firm at Dacca. Our Iqbal Day function this season was far more successful than ever before. This period coincided with that of elaborate preparations for giving a nice time to Admiral Jefford and Mr. Jefford. Drafting of addresses by me on these occasions turned out to be one of my professional jobs as it were. I drafted a Welcome Address and sent it RNO on the 19th, the ceremonial reception being held at the Circuit House on the 22nd April, But what is still more interesting is that their Flagship Jhelum football team played against ours on the 24th April and was defeated by four goals to nil. Mrs. Jefford was at our College on the following forenoon. Unlike her husband's formidable presence and talk on an earlier occasion (described at some length earlier) this proved to be a gracious visit. She left an abiding impression on me of the range of her information and the high level of her culture while I showed her round the library, the Laboratory and the Assembly Hall. She spent quite some time in the company of our girl students. We had another cultured guest on the 9th may in Mr. Owen Jones of the British Council. He have a talk to the College Union on the nature and scope of the activities of his organisation. An unexpectedly unique experience followed. Mrs. Nellie Sengupta, widow of the famous political leader, Mr. J. M. Sengupta, of

undivided Bengal, who did not migrate to West Bengal on partition and continued to be a member of the East Bengal Legislative Assembly wrote to me to ask if I could receive at my house Mr. P. C. Ghose, Chief Minister of West Bengal for a brief while on partition. I wrote back that he would be welcome at the College where he was available on the 11th may, Mr. Ghosh was a native of Dacca district and was well-known as a scientist and for the sacrifices he had made during the Non-Cooperation Movement. He found warmth and cordiality in the College as a whole, especially, from the students. He was visibly moved But he (and also I) had a moment of embarrassment at the time of parting when a group of students complained in affectionate terms that such a distinguished son of East Bengal should migrate to West Bengal. In the month of May University B. A. & B. Sc. and internal annual exams were held.

Serving as I did on the Reception Committee to Malik Firoz Khan Noon I had to draft the Welcome Address which was approved without any modification. The reception was held on the 27th may at the Chittagong Club where the address was read by a Local Body chief in a repulsive manner. But the Governor won everybody's heart by his sociable and genial deportment. On the 29th he gave interviews to select people; he was also entertained at dinner the same evening. In both I found the same image of dignified affability; any province could be proud of such a ruler.

I had some direct experience of the February riots in Dacca & Chittagong. On the 8th February I attended a meeting of the Faculty of Arts at Dacca University. 9th was a Friday, our weekly holiday in place of Sundays and I stayed on and went to the Eden Buildings at 9-30 a.m. where a Conference of the Chief Secretaries of both Bengals soon began. It was not possible to see officers working in the protected area. From 10 a.m. to 11-30 a.m. the Secretariat employees staged a demonstration around the Conference venue over the Calcutta killings and arson. At 11-30 they formed a procession and marched down the main street After lunch and some rest I heard that shootings and killings around Victoria Park, Dacca Had begun at 3. p.m. The situation was, however, brought under control in the late afternoon. At any rate there was, no disturbance in Raman where we moved about freely. At 8 p.m. I moved with my

luggage into Dr. Nurul Huda's quarters in the University Arts Campus to have my dinner there and thereafter to proceed to the Dacca railway station to board the Chittagong-bound mail. Dr. Huda was then the Proctor of the University. After dinner, at 9-30 p.m. when I wanted a cab I gathered that a curfew had already been clamped down and all transport had disappeared from the streets. A solitary hackney coach was hurrying home. I forced myself into it but near the railway station I was forced out; the whole place was deserted. Physically I was not strong enough to carry my suit-case and beddings on my shoulders. Three policemen came along, took pity on my plight and helped me on to the railway station wherefrom the train left at 10-35 p. m. I was lucky to escape that evening because subsequently there were violent disturbances in the trains. On the 11th & 12th February Chittagong was peaceful; we functioned normally at the College. There was a bitter and biting cold spell sweeping over the place. On the 12th as I was ready to start for College a police officer called with a verbal message for me to proceed immediately to the Police Headquarters where the Commissioner and the S. P. were going to hold a Conference against communal riots; 4/5 stabbings had taken place the previous night. I attended the Conference from 10-45 a. m. to 12-30 p. m. The substance of Mr. Niaz Mohammad Khan's talk was that the minorities must be protected; lawbreakers were to be shot at sight; Ward Committees were to be formed and set in motion. On my return to the College I addressed a meeting of the staff and the students from 1 p. m. to 1-45 p. m. and alerted them and briefed them how they should conduct themselves while the emergency was on. I got a rich response; the Muslim students and teachers did provide an umbrella to the minority community in attending College for the coming week, if not beyond; they formed wardwide groups for movements. I took leadership of my sector in Ward A and moved about carrying messages of hope and goodwill. I met many families behind closed doors and shutters during day-time. None of my College, none of my neighbours was a victim. But a terror was caused on the night of the 14th. The bamboo framework for decoration on ceremonial occasions at the gate of the College Hostel was first burnt down so that the inmates cowered in their beds; the badmashes then proceeded to the locality on the eastern side of the College compound (through which we used to pass into our Laboratory).

ries during war-time) and set fire to all the hutments a round kamal Majhi's house. Kamal Babu was a prosperous kutchahouse maker; his hutments were inhabited by poor Hindus; about one hundred of such men, women and children were rendered homeless (none was killed) by this arson. I visited the areas met the afflicted people and organised relief through the material assistance (rice and cash) of Kanailal Babu and that of the sons of my neighbour Pleader Rasik Hazari. The gas plant attached to my Laboratories narrowly escaped. I took the help of the district authorities in protecting it against future arson, if any. The situation in the town improved sufficiently to permit of relaxation in curfew hours by the 20th February.

Before I pass on to the concluding phase of my life at Chittagong I should like to record about two episodes the first one of administrative importance, the second one though it hit me directly, of national significance. Let me take up the first one first. Khan Saheb Abdur Rab Choudhury having been transferred to Sylhet at the end of March, 1948, the seniormost Professor, Mr. Omdatul Islam did the Vice-Principal's duties, I recommended that he be appointed to act as such in his own service (East Pakistan Educational Service) pending the appointment of a Senior Educational Service man in English (the post was earmarked for a Professor of English). There was no response to my recommendation. Sometime during 1949 I received a copy of DPI's recommendation to Government for the appointment of Hafez Md. A. Hai, Professor of Arabic at my College as Vice-Principal. Since this move by the DPI in regard to an appointment could not be acted upon by me before a Government order was available I locked it up among my confidential papers. Shortly before Mr. Omdatul Islam's retirement (due on 31st May, 1949) while I was at Dacca and had just finished our deliberations with the DPI, the latter asked me to stay on for a few minutes and then asked me why I was not treating Mr. Hai as Vice-Principal in the face of his recommendation. I told him that it would be altogether irregular to do so in the absence of the relevant Govt. order and that I had placed his recommendation in confidential files. He was furious and said it was none of my business to wait for Government order. I was amused over his ignorance and intemperance and said that I could not do it formally. All that I could do was to assign Vice-Principal's duties informally to Professor Abdul Hai. But even so complications were likely to follow

from people superseded. Again he repeated that this was not my concern. On my return I held a discussion with Mr. Hai about what had happened during my visit and asked him about his reactions to the irregularity of DPI's proposal. When I found that he was desperately anxious to take on the duties of the Vice-Principal I jotted down on a piece of plain paper that Hafez M. Abdul Hai would be doing these duties henceforward. Immediate representation to Government from Mr. Islam, verbal protest from Professor Mufassaluddin followed. In course of time the Govt. asked for the DPI, Dr. M. Q. Khuda's statement. He disowned all knowledge of the basis of Professor Islam's grievances. Soon I was asked to give my own statement. This I did exactly on the lines I have just described. On the 31st May Professor Islam retired. But some time afterwards, a Govt. order (also published in the Dacca Gazette) was available to the effect that Mr. Islam acted as the Vice-Principal of Chittagong College from the date of my recommendation till the date of his retirement. Further comment is superfluous. The second episode was a direct hit upon me as an individual officer. The Government of East Pakistan had appointed me substantively as Principal of Chittagong College by an order issued on the 22nd November, 1948. The Dacca Gazette in its issue, dated, 5th January, 1950, cancelled this order, showed Dr. Muhammad Q. Khuda against this post and transferred my lien to Dacca Intermediate College. When the actual order was received by me on the 14th January I found that it had a talk as well containing a venomous sting; it said that the "appointment of Mr. Hena as Principal of Dacca Intermediate College shall not have the effect of superseding the claims of Mr. Ahmed Ali" to the same post. It may be recalled that sometime before the partition the latter had been recruited for Chittagong College where he did not like to move but the post travelled to Presidency. He secured a berth in Pakistan Foreign Service and the post thus released travelled back to Chittagong; it was vacant when the order under reference was passed. Obviously he was too big to be shown against the Vice-Principal's post although it was in the Senior Educational service and although he was working against the same at Presidency College. I also remember how the same gentleman had the P. S. C's approval in 1941 but the Government of Undivided Bengal rejected him on account of his having written scurrilous attacks on the Prophet of Islam under the caption "Rangila Rasul". He was a

lucknow man and had never been to East Bengal; did not have a foreign degree either. I had now put in 27 years against his four or five. Whether it was the British rule or one of Hindu domination I was the scapegoat. In Pakistan also I came in handy for the same treatment although everybody from the Education Secretary downwards knew perfectly well that I was not a fraud. Pakistan's emblem is "balance" the scales of which are held even and in conformity with the Quoranic injunction not tipped. And Pakistan is founded and run on Islamic ideology, on the unity of good head, of truth and equity. What was meted out to me was therefore an act of evenhanded justice. Quadrat-i-Khuda had already ceased to be DPI, his path to return to the same position had thus been barred. I saw his successor, Mr. Fazlur Rahman, who was soon appointed to be DPI, his path to return to the same position had thus been barred. I saw his successor, Mr. Fazlur Rahaman, who was soon appointed substantively and confirmed as DPI; he gave me another drafting job to do but otherwise kept directly silent over the injustice done to me; I saw Mr. Nurul Amin, the Chief Minister, in the hope of receiving a hearing. Far from having any I met a number of rudenesses instead. My gall and wormwood had the leaven of an inner nectar imitating Browning I transcended the so called failure and uttered "Sing, Learning is a joy", "Have a bliss to die with however dim desried". Among Pakistani youth and monhood there are certainly many who follow a scale of values, are imbued with idealism and the spirit of dedicated service, who hate galling, with soft-soap in their hands, hold in utter contempt the formation of cliques to serve their personal ends who do not worship many gods and are true Muslims. They should disabuse their minds of illusions about equitable deals from the Government which is, at its best, a soulless machinery; at its worst an evil instrument of promoting the interests of camp followers. Dedicated youth should be the "salt" of our country and nation.

Let it be noted that the Government Notification under discussion was published on the 5th January, 1950 and that unbeaten I went through all the duties and engagements I have described in this section. On the afternoon of 30th July, 1950. I received a postcard from a colleague who was then at Dacca conveying the news of my transfer to M. C. College Sylhet In connexion with attendance at a meeting of the Faculty of Arts held on the 2nd August I reached Dacca on the 31st July when I got

confirmation of the news of transfer. Chittagong College reopened after the long vacation on the 5th August. I continued till 18th August making over charge to my friend, Mr. Zaburul Islam on the 19th afternoon. He was acting as the Principal of Dacca Intermediate College for several years.

There was a dramatic development at home. My eldest son who was now in the 3rd Year hon. Classes of Dacca University arrived on the 13th August with a proposal of immediate marriage for our daughter who had taken her B. A. degree in 1947 and B. T. in 1949. The proposal was from one who was a Lecturer in International Relations, Dacca University, but proceeding to U. K. at the end of August or slightly later on scholarship for higher studies abroad. He knew my family being a son of Chittagong and was also one of our former pupils. He asked for celebration in a week. Although I had already taken up in hand packing-up word and although I was not in a mood to face a celebration at such a juncture I saw better reason. It would be costly for the bridegroom's party to travel to Sylhet for the event. I agreed. He came over from Dacca, consulted his people and fixed up 23rd August for the ceremony. I had about Rs. 3,000/- in bank and I borrowed another three thousand rupees from my Provident Fund account to meet the expenses. We had about a week's time at our disposal. But I had an army of friends to help. The bridegroom's relation Mr. Abdur Rahman had been an intimate friend. He had been a distinguished Headmaster of the Government Muslim H. E. School, Chittagong, later an Inspector of Schools. His son, Nurul Islam, stood first in the combined I. A. & I. Sc. Exam. of Calcutta University in 1946 from my College. He is now one of the top-ranking Economists of Pakistan, his substantive lien being on the post of the Professor and Head of the Deptt. of Economics at Dacca University. Mr. Solaiman Choudhury, a leading figure in Chittagong commerce and industry, sood upon himself the responsibility of organising the marriage feast for about a thousand people. He did the marketing himself. A corps of students under the leadership of Abul Khair Siddiqui, Kamaluddin Khan, Md. Sikander, Saifuddin Siddiqui (all big people now) worked hard to make the function a success. The Chittagong rains were on for the major portion of the short time at disposal. But on the 23rd August it was all clear although conditions became insufferably clammy and sticky. These loving volunteers saw to it that my furniture

and household goods were booked to Sylhet on the 20th August. Meanwhile there was a round of farewell entertainments for me. Mr. Zahurul Islam was my personal guest since he arrived on the 18th; I made over to his on the 27th August the house in which I was living. The members of the teaching staff gave me a very nice time by holding a big dinner at Wallace's Hotel. They also gave a costly dinner set to my daughter and son-in-law on the occasion of their marriage. It is impossible to speak too highly of the many kindnesses they showed on the eve of our departure. At the College farewell meeting held on the 19th August I pointed out how my abiding love of Chittagong had God's cementing blessings in the form of the ensuing marriage of my daughter. On the 23rd August that marriage was solemnized with appropriate ceremonies; the bridegroom's party was 250 strong; 200 ladies attended. Our esteemed friend Shamsul Ulema Kamaluddin Ahmed, IES (Retd.) spent a long time in our house to give his blessings. We including our daughter left Chittagong after six years and a half on the evening of 27th August; my son-in-law and also my eldest son proceeded to Dacca the same evening. The former spent three days with us at Sylhet (from 7th to 9th September) on the eve of his departure for U. K.

CHAPTER 1X

M. C. COLLEGE, SYLHET

From the end of August, 1950 to the middle of October, 1953

Slightly past noon on 28th August, 1950, we completed our journey to the Sylhet Railway Station where we were greeted by three friends Messrs Abdus Subhan Khan Choudhury, Md. Elias and Mansooruddin, all members of the teaching staff. The first, it may be recalled, had to leave Chittagong on reversion to lecturship in the month of October, 1946, when he was succeeded by Babu Rabindra Chatterjee. His transfer then provided the first article of my impeachment early in 1947. The other two were my pupils—the last one figuring in a hand to hand fight with Mr. A. Wahab Mahmood under Principal Rudra. At Sylhet I entered upon the beginning of my end in Government service, upon a three-year run to journey's end in superannuation. Its railway station lies on the south bank of the river surma whereas the town proper on the north. The massive 'Keane' bridge across links the two parts. the Circuit House, D. C.'s bungalow, the Station Club, the Courts, the Central Market place, known as BANDAR (port) Bazar, the High English Schools (including the girls') extend from the northern bank of the river into the interior of the town. Three miles (or slightly more) farther north from the Keane Bridge lies the College campus occupying about 150 acres of land in rural surroundings and including the Thackerary tillah (the hillock) on which stands the Principal's bungalow from which one can have a panoramic view of the encircling Surma Valley and the Jainta hills beyond. During the monsoon Sylhet is a jewel set in a silver sea—a "jewel" that was won by Quaid-i-Azam's Sylhet Referendum but cut in twain by Radcliffe the most precious part of Karimganj with its wealth of rice and tea going to Assam. On the Keane Bridge you can see a million pigeons known as "Jalali" pigeons after the name of Shah Jalal, the patron saint of Sylhet, the holy warrior who fought and won the battle of the faithful against the godless tyranny of the unbelievers. His shrine and the attached mosque stand in the Amber

Khana locality of the town. The **Thackeray tillah** about which I have just written was the site of residence of the Deputy Commissioner Mr. Thackeray under East India Company, the grand father of the novelist William Makepeace Thackeray. That Deputy Commissioner made a fortune by killing elephants and tigers at Sylhet. In 1950 the place continued to be a provincial town of inconsiderable shops and houses. most of which were constructed with timber and plastered bamboo walls and having corrugated sheet tops. The residential areas despite such low structures looked pretty in clean surroundings. Hindu lawyers and doctors were the preponderating element. The influential Muslims were Choudhuries or Dewans or Majumdars claiming nobility in lineage and ancestry. Unlike their counterparts in Chittagong and Noakhali of cultural affiliation with Arabic, their strain was mostly Persian. Chittagong dialect is unintelligible; its resemblance with Bengali is questionable but that of Sylhet is recognisably Bengali with bookish drawls and rugged modes of address. Barring tea industry and canework cottage industry Sylhet was chiefly agricultural with landed proprietors and tillers as constituents. A rotation of short term rice crops provided three meals of rice a day. Fish was plentiful providing food as well as cash with its trade. The "Hauoors" (big and small lake-like water reservoirs in submerged areas) are the fisheries which supply enormous quantities of fish of many varieties; Rahu, Chital, Magur & Kawai. We were lucky enough to taste fish preparations at moderate cost during the entire period of our stay there. Customs barriers between Sylhet and Assam notwithstanding illegal export continues merrily whereas oranges and English vegetables from the other side were not allowed to have a regular flow for which both Governments were responsible. Similarly fowls and chickens were also available at reasonable prices. The two HAT days a week brought to the market-place abundant supplies of rice and a good number of chickens. Good quality loose tea-leaf could be had for less than Rs 2/- per lb. and naturally the tea-drinking habit of my family became pampered. The majority of shop-keepers and ordinary people with whom we had to deal were polite; no one was rough and rude but many looked slow, sluggish, lazy. Their short-term rice yield and the availability of fish for the seeking made them indolent. At kahar & Sons' stationery shop (well-known at Bandar bazar for its old age) the salesman had the leisureliness of opium-eaters.

The Muslim gentry and intelligentsia (barring honourable exceptions) were a queer lot; there were self-centred; had small groupings in social and political affairs and in the administration of local bodies. Each group looked clannish more or less. But if you lump them up together they had a unity of outlook towards East Bengal and its people who were aliens and Bengalis. They were not Assamese to be sure but the chosen race of Sylhet which enjoyed considerable privileges in the older and former dispensation. As natives of Surma Valley they held their own with those of the Assam Valley; they were not having an equally fair share of state advantages under the Government of East Bengal. To put it mildly they were very very parochial and also intolerant to the rest of the Province. Chittagong was an international port with a cosmopolitan population of wide outlook; its world-wide commerce and big industries involved bustling activities in a sprawling city with many suburbs; its civic amenities and social circles challenge comparison with those of many another place. My inheritance at Sylhet in these aspects of life was depressing. But the net-work of roads that existed in Sylhet in those days had no comparison elsewhere in the rest of the Province. There were motorable roads to Chhatak, Shalutikar, Maulavibazar, Habiganj, Kulaura, Srimangal, Karimganj border and to tea estates at places other than these, not to speak of the lovely roadway to Shillong.

What about my proper inheritance in my own academic field? In 1939 while speeding in a public transport direct from the Sylhet Bazar railway station to Shillong I had a momentary glimpse of the main building of M. C. College and that was all. But now on the 28th August, 1950, at about 1-30 p. m. our taxi turned north from the Shillong road into a side road on the western boundary of the College buildings and soon drove into a comparatively small gate at the foot of the Thackeray Tillah and spun round along easy gradients (excepting one sharp bend and steep ascent at the final stage) to the top of the hill where on a spacious stretch was situated the Principal's bungalow, a one-storied building looking like a stone structure, and having seven rooms (four of which were bed-rooms with attached baths, one artistically built lounge, one dining room and an office) with verandahs on all sides. The grounds on the east were quite big, those on the north and west were smaller but the southern area spread from end to end in a longish stretch with a flight

of steps at the west end to walk down to (or up from) the College campus. The eastern grounds were skirted by a row of rooms for a car, a pony carriage, a stable etc. standing on the south and east of the hill we had a commanding view of structures and grounds below. It was tiffin break when we got up; my life and daughter and accompanying sons stood under the shadow of two trees with crimson flowers around and surveyed scenes of exquisite charm. On the plains at the far end of the northern boundary edging one side of the vast swimming pool stood the Students Common where the Radio was on with noisy song and far noisier students about. We cast our loving glances while they looked up with mouths wide agape. Going in we walked from room to room with light echoes mounting from our footsteps. According to instructions given and money sent, delivery had already been taken of our furniture and household goods which lay in piles in the drawing room, and adjacent verandas. But the dining room contained visible signs of refreshments and lunch was ready on the table with a waiting attendant Mubarak, by name, one of the two orderlies of the Principal. We have still kept up touch with him, he having been uniformly nice to us. Soon came up the Head Clerk, Mr. Ahmed Ali, who very wisely had made arrangements for soft drinks and appetising lunch. There was a sufficient balance for our food from the hundred rupees I had sent from Chittagong towards freight. Two teachers followed immediately afterwards. Mr. Shamsuzzaman Choudhury Professor of Philosophy and Mr. Sirajul Islam Choudhury, lecturer in the same subject. The latter was my pupil at Islamia College, Calcutta; he was leaving for U. K. for a year's study; he called just to say good-bye; I may note here at once that he returned on the eve of the new academic session in July, 1951, to become a member of my family as it were; equally as my children became those of his. At the moment of writing he is on deputation as Principal of Rajendra College, Faridpur. He has left Faridpur since. The former was a brother-in-law of Mr. Tafazzal Ali then one of the important Ministers of East Bangal and distinguished ex-student of Calcutta Islamia. Mr. Shamsuzzaman carried a letter of introduction from Mr. Tafazzal Ali. He is now the Chairman of the Rajshahi Board of Intermediate & Secondary Education. After refreshment and lunch we rested; in the evening we walked down and had a look around. This look gave us a clear idea of the layout and the structures. The

Sylhet-Shillong road runs west to east by the southern fringe of the College campus into which you enter through the main gate and walk up north along paved roads with shrubs both sides and with the two storied main building right in front situated on a tableland as it were—a large strip of levelled grounds on an easy-to-climb eminence with grassy sides, and shrubs atop in the direct frontage. Its west-end is linked with a pathway to the edge of the eminence bordered by middle-sized trees of perfectly symmetrical growth—the tops kissing each other to provide a scene of rare botanical charm. In fact all the trees and shrubs here have botanical names in plates stuck upon them; they are all of European strain.. This avenue takes one to a flight of steps down which to go, cross the road and make a steep ascent to the Administration hill. Beyond the avenue and on the tableland stretches another expanse where stands a tennis hard court extending to the lower regions of the Principal's hill. At the rear of the main building there are grounds (with raintrees on) through which students move down to the pathway leading to their Common Room at the far end of the north-east plains or they move down to the Library Building alongside the easternfoot of the tableland. Let us return to the main gate of the College at the south and resume our walk up. On the right hand (eastern) plains stand two long parallel structures, one behind the other to house the Physics & Chemistry Laboratories. These are of brick, mortar and timber with tin roofs and hard cloth ceilings. Both are sufficiently commodious and roomy for separate Intermediate and Degree Pass & Honours Practical Laboratory work and theoretical lecture galleries. Both had uptodate equipment to merit and established reputation of Science teaching—such a large provision being non-existent then even at the corresponding laboratories of Dacca University. We get on next to the intersection of the main road which connects people with the Library, the swimming pool, the Students Common Room on the east and north and with the Girls' Common Room, Administration hill and buildings on the west and which issues out of the West gate to link up the Hostel Campus and the Playing fields. 2 to 3 furlongs away on the north west. The Library building constructed alongside the eastern base of the main building upland is one-storied with turrets on top and four side rooms on the ground floor. Its hall fitted with highly polished and ornamental teak shelves mounting to the ceiling and leaving very large space for reading

tables is the noblest possession of the College and worth visiting. It is flanked by the peripheral road running along the west bank of the swimming pool on to the students, common room on the north bank. swimming pool is about 450 yards long and 225 yards wide and adds to the enchantment of the place; the Common Room is quite large but not in keeping with the size and proportions of the institution; it can accommodate 300 to 350 students only. The Girls' Common Room lying on the eastern slopes of the Administration Hill was a solid building (though with tin roof) with a high verandah, large reading and indoor-games hall, tiffin rooms and attached baths, very decently furnished and with flushing arrangements in the lavatories. The top of the Administration Hill contains two parts, one of buildings, the other of grounds. The Building T-shaped, is far more solid than the residential bungalow of the chief, has two wings, one for the Principal and his offices, the other for the Arts section Staff, their tiffin room and lavatories and a separate room for the Vice-Principal. The other part of the hill is a long spur extending to the Sylhet-Shillong road on the south; it has sufficient space for holding open air parties. From the top of the spur you have look toward (vegetation obstructing such a view) or across the west road to a loftier hill covered with jungles and containing a Hindu temple atop. Looking through the windows of the Principal's Room one can have a direct view of his bungalow, the Tennis Court, and a portion of the main building and the street below leading to the Hostel Campus and looking through those in the Staff Room a wider view is available. Each building (excepting the Library) is southfacing to compel admiration for the planners, the architect and the builders. From the western verandah of my bungalow I could have a glimpse of the serpentine road below, the Temple hill across other hills beyond and the Hostel township some distance away. Just beyond the eastern boundary of my house flowed a little stream occasionally frequented by thirsty leopards for a drink. On the north of the students' Common lay a chain of wooded hillocks which could be pressed in, on acquisition, for residential houses of the staff, and the rice fields on the east utilized for expansion and extension of science teaching. Ours was not "a sweet city of dreaming spires" or of "towered Camelot" but one certainly of turrets, of ridges, valleys and rivulets reminiscent of Matthew Arnold's Oxfordshire. In the evening we had festal lights in the

College campus and lines of them in the Hostel one. On the evening of the 29th August I went out for a walk on the Shillong Road in the company of Professors Elias and Habibul Islam. When we were returning the electric lights were on; a distant hilltop bungalow glittering with lights overwhelmed me. Whose is that house? My bemused colleagues laughed and said it was the Principal's. As I re-entered through the main gate I was equally moved by the single star (of a light) shining on the brow of the two-storied main building. For a little over three years I drank in the beauty of the place unsated. Nature's sublime and serene charm went into my blood, bone and soul and soothed my nerves frayed by the slogan-shouting loud-speakers of Chittagong. What a rich and immortal inheritance I had at Sylhet. How noble and elevating!

At 10-30 on the forenoon of 29th August, 1950, I took over charge of Murarichand College, Sylhet, Khan Sabeab Abdur Rab Choudhury having retired on the eve of the Summer & Ramadan vacation. It was purely Government College without any endowment or benefaction or monetary grant from any quarter. Raja Girishchandra of Sylhet, a big landlord, was a hot favourite of the British regime; he had founded a High School bearing that name near the Bandar Bazar; it continues to be there as a private school in mean structures and cramped surroundings. Towards the last decade of the nineteenth century when there was a public urge for College education, Intermediate Arts classes were added, Bamboo structures for holding these classes were constructed in the nearby public park and the name of "Murarichand" a member of Raja Girishchandra's family (but already dead) was given to it; among the public it was known as "Machan" (highfloor of bamboo) College which had a chequered career struggling against paucity of Funds and eking out a wretched existence even past the middle period of Curzonbased Government of East Bengal and Assam. Public demand for a Govt. College became gradually more and more insistent; occasional subsidies and grants-in-aid were not enough to save the institution, Shortly before the Annulment of the Partition of Bengal was announced in December 1911, the Govt. of East Bengal & Assam had taken the final decision to provincialise "Murarichand" College it was already a Government College when the annulment was put through and a separate Government for Assam constituted. Nothing was inherited by the Government from the old College but the name only and this

was retained by the Britishers as a tribute of honour to the memory of a charitably disposed family of Zamindars. In celebration of the Jubilee of the College, a history of the College was written by a Professor of History in the Jubilee number and my outline is based upon that learned essay. Many issues of the Jubilee Number were available in the Principal's Room when I took over charge. I regret I did not preserve with me a copy otherwise I would have been able to give exact quotations. I distinctly remember however that the Govt. of Assam carried out since 1912 the obligations of the predecessor Government, acquired in the teeth of public opposition the present site and built upon it; its occupation by the abandonment of the town site was made only in 1925. The credit of planning and execution goes to the then governor of Assam, Cunnigham, and the DPI, Mr. Small. Visitors to this College including those from West Pakistan get confused over the name "Murarichand" under the impression that it was founded by Murarichan Babu and was being run from his princely benefactions. But Pakistan does neither change names nor pulls down statues with the speed, dexterity and meanness of India. The name of Calcutta Islamia was changed overnight into Central Calcutta College; now it bears Maulana Azad's. At least 50% of the streets and roads of Calcutta have been given new names which elude identification by earlier generations of men. This is however *Obiter dictum*. on the 30th August I inspected the laboratories. I have already referred to those of Physics and Chemistry. The Botany and Zoology laboratories occupied half of the ground floor of the main building- a very inconvenient arrangement, inconvenient to the teaching of Arts subjects, inconvenient also to the departments for their instructional and equipment purposes. At Chittagong College there was inadequate provision only for Pass Degree teaching in Physics and Chemistry. Here there were elaborate arrangements for Honours teaching in both and also Pass Degree teaching in Botany and Zoology and at the Intermediate stage each separately and a combination of both in the form of Biology. On the 31st I inspected the Hostels which had a separate campus of its own, not exactly an extension of the College campus but divided by a small area consisting of a small tank, one road to connect the Govt. cattle & Poultry Farm in the background and some rice fields. The Hostel Campus occupies an immense tract of land in the plains bordered on the north and west by hills and the plant

below. The College and the Hostels are served by this Central system of water supply with independent pumping arrangements for the Principal's bungalow and other tall buildings. The whole place is outside the Sylhet Municipality. There were only four blocks of structures (each having accommodation for 50) for the Students' residence, each having its own dining room and kitchen, its own Superintending boss—the road from the College to the far west passing along the south of the Hostel campus. Parallel to the road are situated two such blocks facing south with the residential family quarters of the Superintendents at each end. Behind these two there is a longish courtyard corresponding to the site of the two in front and then the open space is again flanked on the north by another row of two more blocks with another set of quarters for their superintendents so that these were contiguous and provided four sentinels at four corners. There is a system of roadways all over and in between. At the far east corner stands the Hostel dispensary and hospital, the latter having beds for half-a-dozen patients. At the back of the hospital and on high grounds stand the family quarters of the Compounder, Maulavi Abdur Raquib Choudhury, one who was an institution by himself on account of his experience and skill and perennial readiness to serve others smilingly. The residential blocks were not buildings but structures of timber and plastered walls, of glass doors and windows, of coarse cloth ceilings and tin roofings, of pucca plinth and floor. The grounds all about are lowlying and get submerged during the rains. The scouring platforms and kitchens attached to each block were all exposed to view; the operations going on in these of cleaning utensils, cutting fish and fowl, of cooking food with smoking firewood (no other fuel was available then at Sylhet) were hideous to sight and repulsive to sentiments but the local bosses and their wards appeared to be insensible to such reactions. The family quarters of the bosses were all buildings (except the tin roofings), well-planned, roomy, decent with electric amenities. They were so attractive that members of the teaching staff (mostly senior) made competitive bids for the position of a warden. Before independence three of these and three of the residential blocks went to the Hindus, one to the Muslims; now it was just the reverse, only one going to the former. Since the seniormost Muslim teacher Mr. Abdul Munim Choudhury had just moved to Dacca College as Principal in place of Mr. Zahurul Islam a

hostel vacancy existed; it was filled up soon by Professor Shamusuzzaman Choudhury. Therefore, these were the Superintendents: Messrs. Solman Choudhury, Professor of maths, Md. Ekhlash, Professor of Chemistry, Satyaban Dash, Lecturer in Commerce and Shamsuzzaman Choudhury, Professor of Philosophy. The Compounder lived on the spot but not the doctor who lived in rented quarters in the town $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles away. Besides he was an LMF whereas at Rajshahi College he was always an M.B.B.S. Just across the road on the south lay the vast playing fields of the College with a two pavilion at its head. But these also get submerged. The two campuses together covered an area of about 150 acres. The area of Carmichael College Rangpur is double, if not more, but M. C. College is incomparably picturesque and pretty; its equipment infinitely superior. I salute the planners and builders once again. Three years had just elapsed since the College came under the Government of East Pakistan. The student roll-strength now was 600; it should have been around 1000; only 200 were resident, the other four hundred being day scholars. Of about fifty members of the teaching staff only five (including the Principal) were resident, others living in rented quarters in the town. It should be clear how 445 people had a daily ordeal to face in attending College. Many students and some teachers had their bicycles to use (there were adequate and covered cycle stands); rickshaw cycles were also available in abundance. But Sylhet had extreme climatic conditions, extremely hot, extremely cold, frighteningly rainy-its annual rainfall being not less than 200 inches. The overwhelming majority of the attending people would be too eager to get back home after half-hearted attendance. By four in the afternoon the College would wear a deserted look; the rich facilities for corporate activities lay unutilized. The first Principal after independence during his seven-month tenure had no interest in it; the second one during his two-and-a-quarter years lived just like a Musafir all alone and paid weekly visits to Dacca in connexion with attendance at University meetings (here the Principal was ex-officio member of the Executive Council, the Academic Council and the Faculty of Arts). It was perfectly natural therefore that I should find the College somewhat a heavily loaded static vehicle to be moved by unwilling horses. The attitude of Dacca University led to the discontinuance of Honours teaching; English was an optional subject at the B. A. level; at Interme-

diate it had only one paper. When I went to my 4th Year B.A. English class I found only two students attending. There was no intellectual tone, no corporate vitality. I have already touched upon the problem of transport. But this was insignificant in relation to the most formidable problem I was confronted with on my arrival. That was the problem of urgent, immediate repairs and overhauling to all the structures in both the campuses. The main building, the Administrative building, the Principal's bungalow, the Library building (still more disconcerting) had numerous cracks and were leaking heavily. The coarse cloth ceilings of the laboratories discovered ugly rents; many windows did not have glass panes; pigeons and sparrows had comfortable accommodation to give large droppings. The paved tennis court was not only uncemented but repulsively chapped and cracked all over. All the hostel buildings were in a wretched state; the rooms in which the inmates lived-having been denuded of their glass panes were exposed to the Sylhet brand gusts of wind, rain, hail and lightning; soaked and shivering conditions were a common lot. The sports pavilion was in a dilapidated state; only relics of the stairs to the top floor existed. All the roadways within the hostels were overgrown with grass concealing potholes underneath. Cowdung decorated the grounds each class IV employee had his own cattle wealth the majority of teachers and all the Superintendents competed in the acquisition and maintenance of cows. The resulting filth was no bother; milk was the overriding consideration. The roadways within the College were in better shape, but they too badly required repairs. The long spur attached to the Administration Buildings was never used; the trees on it and the jungles on the hill sides were neglected. A handful of flower-beds at the bottom of the main building upland showed signs of life but other spaces round about and the vast expanse on the south of the College tank were naked and bare. For overall supervision the College had a competent Caretaker who had four MALIS and a number of sweepers under him. For the hostels there was no MALI. These had however a unique feature in another form, a Government paid cook for each block. A proper care of the College gardens henceforward became my responsibility; it was no problem with the men available for this job. But repairs to the whole township of buildings, structures and roadways, were the responsibility of the Communications and Works division of the Government of East

Pakistan. The conduct and behaviour of this department is well-known. I had an example of this on my arrival. In the first week of August the moment I came to know about my transfer I wrote a personal letter to the Executive Engineer, Mr. Noor Mohammad to have the Principal's bungalow whitewashed after petty repairs, if any. No action was taken. A ring to him showed that he was a bawling functionary. Personal contact revealed that he was not at all interested in the College. He contented himself with deputing one Asstt. Engineer and one Works Supervisor to attend to my requirements which were the accumulation of 25 years since the construction of the buildings. But I made it my chief concern and gave the C & W Department no rest with what success will be recorded in due course.

M. C. College was a first grade Government College (whether under Assam or East Bengal) affiliated to the Calcutta University. Its courses of studies were ampler than those of Chittagong College with provision for Honours teaching in the major Arts and Science subjects and for Commerce at Intermediate level. Its annual budget stood at four lakhs against a little over three lakhs at Chittagong. Its teaching and nonteaching staff hierarchy was different in status, scales of pay, acceleration etc. under the Govt. of Assam from those in East Bengal which had adopted undivided Bengal's structure. For the teachers the cadres were: Assam Educational Service Classes I & 11. Professors and Lecturers respectively, In the scale of Rs. 250/- to Rs. 800/- for 1, Rs. 175/- to Rs 450/- for 11. In East Bengal the position was: E. B. Senior Educational service, E. B. Educational Service (both Professors) and Lecturers (now E. B. Junior Educational Service) in the scales of Rs. 350/- to Rs. 1150/-, Rs. 250/- to Rs.800, Rs 150/- to Rs. 450/- In Assam the Posts were not fixed departmentwise but went senioritywise in a rigid manner. Promotion was automatic the next senior most man in the Class 11 service went up irrespective of the subject he taught. In East Bengal each department had a fixed number of posts and status based, for instance, English, EBES -2 posts, Lecturers-3 posts, History, EBES-1, Lecturers-2 etc. On the abolition of IES, Bengal substituted it by Senior Service but Assam had done no such thing. My acquaintance with the teaching staff of M. C. College initiated me into the mysteries

☆ He has since retired

of Assam Educational Service Classes I & 11. The optee teachers from Assam declined to be on a level with the East Bengal Education Service Personnel; since they were the top class in Assam, they would be top class in East Bengal too; their lecturers were superior to East Pakistan's lecturers; they would be governed by Assam Service rules, any deviation from which led to protests and appeals with legalistic hairsplittings. The Government did not codify and co-ordinate for integration but merely temporised and the minister of Education, Mr. Abdul Hamid, from the beginning of Pakistan to 1954, a native of Sylhet, with his characteristic local patriotism, gave his support to the Assam optees. At any rate the dispute continued unresolved when I retired on the 15th October, 1953. My acquaintance with these men on the teaching staff showed how their leaders were a troublesome and cantankerous lot without a sense of devotion to their academic and extraacademic duties. The Hindu element among them was far more subdued and quiet. The East Bengal teachers were a quiet lot. The Vice-Principal of the College, Babu Devendralal Das, who was Professor of Physics was enigmatically silent and inactive. He came late, went out early, had his "hookah" to smoke in his chamber. I have touched upon his smoking point in my coverage of Rajshahi College. Babu Satyendra Roy Choudhury Professor of Chemistry, was warm, enthusiastic and energetic. He would keep his laboratories uptodate in chemicals and instruments. Whenever he was in short supply he arranged for smuggling from Assam. His mannerisms in his teachings were amusing to his pupils who would make comical demonstrations of the same on occasions. His second in command was Mr. Md. Ekhlās who was a First Class M. Sc. of Aligarh and had a diploma in paper technology from one of the American Universities. Later I helped him on to a good berth in Karnaphully Paper Mills but unluckily he got embroiled in the riots and killings there in 1954 only to face many hardships for many years. He was another queer character. Mr. Solman Choudhury * who is now the Principal of the Collège was then Professor of Mathematics. The Professor of Arabic was a maniac and although he continues to be wild and insane is still a Professor some where. The Professor of Persian was a model of laziness and shirking. Of the two Professors of English, the Head was a shouting, demonstrative busy body, the second more interested in his ~~Shikar~~ than in intellectual pursuits. The second Professor of Philosophy was a

scheming, intriguing little gentleman more interested in Urdu, Islamic studies, Muslim League politics than in his subject. I have given some idea of some of my colleagues who were optees from Assam Service and natives of Sylhet. More or less they were hostile to teachers from East Bengal. I believe they did not have much scope for being hostile to the latter because of my uniformly fair and sympathetic treatment of them.

The discontinuance of Honours teaching, the introduction of hitherto untried and unknown syllabuses prevalent in Dacca University, the dislocation in administrative and academic work caused by the partition, the resultant slackness in efforts and pursuit had brought about palpable symptoms of deterioration in the life of the College. But the students of Sylhet class and conservative traditions away from urban and metropolitan temptations were diligent in their studies. Those living in the hostels got back to their desks after sunset; their fellow day scholars living in simple dwellings with their hardworking bread-winners in the town did the same. Occasionally visiting the hostels in the evening I found them quietly absorbed in their studies unlike the prevailing atmosphere in city hostels where hot political pre-occupations monopolise their time. Frequently walking upto Bandar Bazar for shopping, the same impression of serious home studies was gathered by me. In the present slump many of them scored commendably in the University exams, notably in Science. When I arrived I found that a muslim student, Salahuddin (he is a CSP now), had just stood First in the I. Sc. Exam. In the I. A. Exam of 951 Muhith (also a CSP now stood first. I found the majority of students fit and strong. They were eternally stolid and un-communicative. But they responded to love and sympathy, integrity and efficiency. Among day scholars there was an influential element of political predilections, Congress, left Muslim League. The area around the public park in the town and around the medical school was the breeding and fostering ground of such elements. The Muslim League being on the wane, the leftists had (or so it appeared to me) larger following.

I had better have here a casual glance at some of the prominent people of the place. Khan Saheb Modabber Hussain Choudhury, Ex-Minister, Assam, Muslim Leaguer (later an Ambassador of Pakistan abroad),

was tall, middle-aged and had well-defined features. He was assertive in his ways. Dewan Abdul Basit sworn in as a Provincial Minister on 29. 3. 65 was an M.L.A., a Parliamentary Whip or Secretary, spent most of his time at Dacca or at his village home but he was invariably present on important occasions. The same comment was applicable to Mr. Moinuddin Choudhury. Both were unassuming and pleasant to talk to. But let it not be forgotten that even among Muslim Leaguers there were local sub-groupings; perhaps the Dewans constituted a common clan. Then there was Mr. Ajmal Ali Choudhury* young, well-bred, outspoken blunt and forthright. When I met him for the first time in a Conference with the Deputy Commissioner my reaction was he was a younger version of Mr. A. K. M. Fazlul Quader Choudhury of Chittagong. But I had to modify my first impression from what I saw of him later. He was not a political careerist. Mr. M. A. Hafiz, M. A. B. L. M.L.A., Member of the Governing Body of M. C. College and nephew of Minister Abdul Hamid came next. Although a Muslim Leaguer he appeared to me to have 'leftist' tendencies. He is father of Muhith I have just mentioned. Muhith was very prominent in S. M. Hall politics during his University career. Mr. Abdullah, B.L, President of the local bar was past his middle age, and out and out Congressite. But he was sweet, cultured, wise, Khan Bahadur Abdur Rahim Choudhury B. L. Public Prosecutor, was another prominent Muslim League leader. He is the father-in-law of Mr. Tafazzal Ali (then a right hand Minister of Mr. Nurul Amin), Professor Shamsuzzaman Choudhury (already noticed) and Col. M. Huq, Administrator of Dacca Medical College, after the Martial Law regime. With the Hindu leaders I had no touch excepting with Mr. Dharanimohon Pal, Lawyer and Zamindar, who later developed intimacy with me. Mr. Majduddin Choudhury, retired Principal of M. C. College, father-in-law of the present Principal Mr. Solman Choudhury, tea-planter, was another prominent man. and Khan Bahadur Abdul hye Choudhury, Retired Commissioner of Excise, Member, Governing Body of M. C. College during my time, was another Muslim League leader. And last, though not least, was Begum Rashid, member of the National Assembly of Pakistan, till 1965 a talented wealthy, cultured lady of public spirit and service. Her eldest son, Mr. Aminur Rashid Choudhury, well-read, critical, of great social charm, continues to be in public life. Two of her sons are in Pakistan Foreign Service.

Another son and two of her daughters have been our pupils not only at M. C. College but later at Dacca University. Her husband, the late Mr. Abdur Rashid Choudhury, Mr. M. Mahmud* a distinguished Civil servant of Bengal, Member, Board of Revenue of East Bengal in 1950 and my second elder brother were fellow-students and contemporaries at Presidency College, Calcutta. I was introduced to Mr. Aminur Rashid Choudhury by Mr. Mahmud.

With this background let me now enter upon an account of my life and work at Sylhet. I set out to do away with the prevalent mood of slackness and unpunctuality within the College and introduce instead a fulltime programme of activities. I took sometime to get my colleagues to attend to serious work from ten to four and then for creative occupations after four. I was in my seat from 10 a. m. to 2 p. m. and again from 3-30 or 4 p. m. to 5-30 or 6 p. m. according to requirements. Tutorials and terminal examinations though unpopular were strictly enforced. Library and laboratory grants were not allowed to lapse and the Heads of Deptts. were obliged to pay closer attention to their supplies and requirements. When I found that a large, unspent sum was available in Physics I made prompt arrangements for buying from Messrs A. K. Khan & Co. of Chittagong a refrigerator and also one complete set of Public Address equipment for use in the Assembly Hall. This was permanently fitted up there and was put in to operation during all meetings. Lawn mowers were lying unusable in the lumber-room. It was hammered into my ears that there were no workshops at Sylhet to repair them. But I went round myself and got the upcountry owner of a workshop to do the job and I also arranged for buying and bringing new lawn-mowers from Kisan & Co. in the Punjab. In those days they turned out to be costly but I had funds within the limits of the College budget and also from headquarters for the asking. Similarly garden seeds were nowhere available, I was told. I got as many packets as I required from the Globe Nursery at Chittagong and later tended them from our own flowers. I read myself the latest periodicals (the supply of which I promptly arranged) and passed them on to the Staff Room. Many uncut pages of Library books were cut open and displayed in the big table available in front of the Librarian's seat. At least thrice a week I would be in the library to take out books or to return them. Attendance at meetings and games gradually grew larger. The hostels were made

nuclei of many activities and the Superintendents the most active organisers of academic and extraacademic items. Cows were banished from the College campus. The tennis Court was repaired, re-repaired and eventually rebuilt to attract an increasing number of teachers and students to play with us. The Station Club Veterans frequented our court and we theirs.

Between our arrival and the autumn recess the term-time at our disposal was slightly less than a month and a half with short breaks for Janmaastami and Eid-ul-Azha. In joint deliberations with the Heads of Deptts. we adopted and went through a programme of regular academic work excepting in Intermediate Commerce in which we were short of a badly needed teacher and none was available in those days. A clue to educational leanings of a young, Junior Bank officer at Dacca being available I lost no time in getting into secret touch with him. In fact I met him at Dacca on the 17th September and used all my persuasive power to seduce him from soul-killing debiting and crediting or rather counter-casting into the expansive leisure of a lecturer. He was Mr. Akhteruzzaman, quiet and cultured. He yielded and joined my College on the eve of the autumn recess. And he proved to be very competent in teaching. I also succeeded in holding periodical examinations before the autumn. It was also necessary that I should get to know my Governing Body and they should get to know me. I met the Deputy Commissioner (also the President of the G. B) Mr. S. Rahmatullah, ICS, on the 10th September and it was possible actually to have a meeting of the Governing Body on the 2nd October. The first corporate function was in the form of a welcome address to me. This was held on the 2nd September; the 2nd in a musical display on the 18th September by the 8th Punjab Regimental Band; the third was a talk given to the Union at the 9th October by Mr. Enayetullah Sarkawam, M. Sc. Tech. (Manchester) on his experiences in Western Countries. After the autumn vacation (extending from 11th October to 11th November) we had another short term-time of less than one month and a half when admissions to 1st year Intermediate Classes and 3rd year Degree Classes were completed, the Commencement Address given by the Principal, elections to the Union

☆ In 1968 he is a Central Minister in the chair of the vacancy caused by the death of Mr. Altaf Husain.

☆ He died in 1968.

held, its Cabinet installed, receptions to 'freshers' held. A debate was also organised early in December. And tennis was regularly played from the middle of November onwards. The elections to the Union this year were held according to an old constitution available in tattered manuscript but conducted in a peacefully festive atmosphere. What happened to subsequent elections will be noticed in due course. As an ex-officio member of the Dacca University Executive Committee I made two official visits to Dacca during the period from September to December—the first time in the middle of September, the second in the second week of December. I had unique experiences in both having had to go through voluminous agendas of all manner of petty, routine items and only some of deliberative importance. On the first occasion there was a single session extending from 4-15 p. m. to 8-35 p. m. and without even a cup of tea being served. On the second here were three afternoon sessions on three successive days. All were marked by noisy exchanges across the table over unimportant matters whereas important items were hurried through towards the end (when everybody was tired) with decisions prepared and planned earlier by powerful groups of external politicians including Mr. Pankoj Ghosh and Mr. Sultanuddin Ahmed. Powerful internal groups (amenable to pressure from the external) included the Vice-Chancellor, the Registrar and some Provosts and one or two Deans. The conduct of the meeting looking like madness was mad in craft only and had a method of its own. During this four-month period (from September to December, 1950) I had first hand experience of the climate of Sylhet with its particular impact on the College and Hostel Campuses. It was stuffily hot with the heat shooting into the brain, rainy with squalls shaking doors and windows, foggy with a prolonged blanket of darkness all around, biting cold cutting into the bone. Malignant malaria, flu, measles and bronchitis made their incursions into my family with our arrival and stayed on suspended or alive as medical treatment succeeded or failed. I came across a number of old friends, Mr. Syed Ahmad, Assistant Collector of Customs, Mr. Mahiuddin, Director of Consumer Goods, his brother Matinuddin, Mr. Motaherul Huq, Settlement Officer, Hafizur Rahman, Assistant Regional Controller of Food, Mohammad Mohsin, Khwaja Ahmed (the last three being former pupils) In the third week of October Hafizur Rahman took me on a visit to the nearby Lakatura Tea Gardens and then

to Khademnagar Tea Estates six miles off. The Manager of the latter, Mr. Graven, and Mrs. Craven later became intimate friends. From the 27th of October upto 5th November I was up at Shillong for a holiday. The "Peachlands" of 1939 were in ruins. I stopped instead at "Ferndale" for 3 days and then at "Pinewood" for the rest of the period, the daily charge being Rs. 16/- and Rs. 18/- respectively. The cost of living was very high now. "Ferndale" right in front of the new Secretariat Building provided all comforts but it wore a deserted look there being only 3 customers including myself. When Mr. Abul Lais returned my call he arranged for my shifting to "Pinewood" which was undoubtedly in superb surroundings, also full and gay. Mr. Lais was a native of Sylhet, a former Professor of M. C. College, rose to be DPI Assam and had settled down in Shillong after retirement. We met when he was a Professor. His wife was now Inspectress of Schools, Shillong. During my long evening jaunts I was frightened to find that the town proper was surrounded on all sides by military encampments; troops and arsenals stared me in the face; bearded and turbaned Sikh officers were dominant in the Cantonment areas. Naturally I avoided them in future. I did an enormous amount of reading and correspondence work during the daytime and went occasionally to the pictures in the evening; one of these "A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court" (technicolour) at Kelvin Cinema proved most enjoyable. At "Pinewood" I met a number of tea-planters and their wives who came up from their estates in Sylhet and Silchar. Mr J. M. Bottomley, Retired DPI, Bengal, was also seen in the Dining Hall in large groups of convivial guests. Here on the 2nd November we received the news of the death of GBS at the age of 94. Being a Shaw idolater I was deeply touched at his passing. On the re-opening of the College, to be exact on the 19th December, we held a meeting in the Students' Common Room to mourn his death. Two papers were read by two teachers but a fairly long speech delivered by Muhith (already noticed) then only an Intermediate student was most impressive; he had carried with him several plays of Shaw (Penguin series) and read extracts from them in illustration of the tributes he paid. The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Liaquat Ali Khan, was at Sylhet on the 23rd December, 1950, He addressed select Gazetted Officers in the forenoon and a public meeting in the afternoon. By the 25th December, 1950, I completed my glance at the 1949 Draft Report of Public

Instruction and sent it to the DPI from whom I had received it earlier. On the 6th December I called on the grand old man of Sylhet, Shamsul Ulama Abu Nasr Mohammad Waheed I. E. S., Retired. Still he cast a spell by his erudition and rectitude on all who came into contact with him.

In bringing to a close this section of 1950, I may observe that from the 30th August onwards I made consistent and continual efforts with the local Buildings and Roads branch authorities for undertaking repairs of the College and Hostel buildings. Khondker Fazlur Rahman, the S. D. O, placed in charge was helpful but he had just means enough to carry out only petty jobs. In the absence of larger allocations and clear directives from above he could not meet our requirements. The Executive Engineer, Mr. Nur Mohammad, continued to be supine and indifferent. I prodded the authorities at Dacca into giving attention to insufferable conditions here. On the 23rd November, 1950, a team of experts in authority came over from Dacca for direct inspection. The Superintending Engineer, Mr. Shafiqur Rahman, the Chief Engineer of public Health, the Deputy Secretary of the Communications Deptt. constituted the team. Of course they brought with them Mr. Nur Mohammad. From 11-30 a. m. to 1 p. m. I showed them round so that they could see for themselves the deplorable state of affairs and told them that I would not be held responsible if there should be rebellious strikes and demonstrations by the students for the failure of the authorities. The visiting team was convinced. Thorough repairs and overhauling were ordered. We were on the threshold of reconstruction and rehabilitation.

1951

We had an eventful life in 1951 with an increasing tempo of academic and extra-academic activities. Its texture had the warp and woof of variegated threads providing a heavy apparel to wear under strenuous conditions and causing a wide range of experience from comfort to distress. But there was no flinching from the charted path. Term-time was:

- 1) 2nd January to 14th May followed by Summer and Ramadan Vacation.
- 2) 21st July to 2nd October followed by Autumn Vacation.

3) 8th November to 22nd December.

The year opened with the transfer of Mr. Solman Choudhury, Professor of Mathematics and one of the Hostel Superintendents to the Teachers' Training College at Dacca as Vice-Principal in the Senior Educational Service; its middle was marked by that of Mr. Shamsuzzaman Choudhury as Principal of Dacca College; its end by that of Mr. Md. Ekhlash as Technical Assistant, Chandragona Paper Mill Project. Messrs Abdus Subhan Khan Choudhury, Misbahul Barr Choudhury and Sirajul Islam Choudhury took their places as Hostel Superintendents. College Tests and Annual Exams. and Intermediate University Exams. were completed by the end of the first term. In the beginning of the summer vacation (on the 19th May to be specific) I got the Education Minister to inspect my Botany-Zoology Biology Laboratories leading to the happy result of the sanction of a little over three lakhs for the construction of a two-storied Laboratory building. I got this order on the 24th October, 1951. Earlier in January the Executive Engineer and I made a final selection of the site on which to build a nice little mosque; it was the middle portion of eastern embankment of the College Swimming Pool. The work was completed early in April enabling us formally to open it and use it on the 10th April. Before September I succeeded in the establishment of two platoons of the University Officers' Training Corps at our College. On the 1st April I got Mr. Zahed Hussain, Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan to open our Commerce Museum. He spent one hour and twenty minutes with us in giving a short talk to the Union and also having soft drinks with the staff. Two months earlier the new DPI, Mr. Fazlur Rahman (successor to Dr. M. Q. Khuda) who had been Inspector of Schools, Chittagong Division, in 1939, and ADPI after partition visited the College, received an Address of Welcome from the Union, was entertained at tea by the staff and at dinner by the Principal. He was acquainted with my problems. On the 8th May while I was at Dacca in connexion with meetings he got me to draw up schemes of development not only for M. C. College but also for Chittagong College with which I was so closely associated and for so long. For the latter I gave a scheme for Rs. 35/- lakhs and for Rs. 25 lakhs for my own. I gave the topmost priority to the construction of two more residential blocks for my hostels and one Assembly Hall there. Further I suggested that the earth required for filling and levelling of the

grounds should be dug out to provide a swimming pool in between the second row of buildings and the new ones. I may state at once that these works begun in my time were completed soon after my departure to make the hostels self-sufficient in their own activities outside and beyond the College hours. My own experience of their functions being held in verandahs, especially in cold evenings made me determined to provide an Assembly Hall for them. Early in the year I got the Union to take up the work of bringing out their Magazine. On 3 separate days in the month of March I sat with the Magazine Committee and helped it to draw up a detailed programme for the collection of material and its publication. I placed Mr. Abu Sayeed Ahmed, Senior Professor of English, in charge of the English Section and Mr. Nezamuddin Ahmed, Lecturer in Bengali, of the Bengali Section. Little did I know then that they would not only let me down by their bungling but also use it as a weapon to beat me with from the month of September onwards. cultural and social, literary and athletic activities during the first term were many. On the 3rd January we had musical entertainment by Mr. Abbsuddin Ahmed, his son and daughter (this time has been glanced at in my Publicity Deptt. coverage); on the 4th there was an elaborate farewell function for Mr. Solman Choudhury; on the 10th the Sylhet Station Club came over for tennis (there was a return game at their place next month); on the 28th we had a symposium on Communal Harmony; on the 30th and 31st the Annual Sports Meet was organised and held. This function turned out to be full of confusion and noise for both of which the teacher-organisers were primarily responsible. They were undisciplined themselves and promoted the same traits in the students. The memory of such a scene at Chittagong in the Sports Meet of the Chittagong Medical School came afresh. Mr. Tufnell-Barrett, Commissioner, Chittagong Division and I sitting side by side and watching. The doctor-teachers were unruly not only in conducting the games but also during the refreshment that followed. We hung down our heads in shame. Here at my College my reactions were the same. I felt it was my duty to express my displeasure and I did so. In February Professor Abdus Subhan Khan Choudhury and his departmental colleague Mr. Gholam Rahman Khan organised a very successful stage rehearsal of the UNO in celebrating the Declaration of Human Rights Day-an arrears item from last year. Naturally in December, 1951, they repeated the

same observance. At the end of the first term there was another farewell function in honour of Professor Abdul Jalil Choudhoury transferred to Rajshahi College followed by a variety entertainment by students on the eve of the long vacation. Five days earlier as I was working in my office a thunder shower accompanied by a tornado took place shortly after noon. It was terrific experience for my family in particular. A strong, tall eucalyptus tree crashed on the roof of our bungalow shattering that part of the roof to smithereens; the kuthcha, temporary structures around the bungalow were blown down, and the corrugated sheets atop flew miles away. Similarly on the 4th August there was a frightful seismic tremor. Thunder and lighting, hail and downpour, were our common experiences in Tilagarh. Besides Mr. Zahed Hussain we had some more visitors; they were Lt. Col. Zriff and Lt. Col. Choudhury and Mr. Aftab Ahmed Khan, PFS. During the first term I had to go to Dacca four times in connexion with University and Secondary Education Board meetings at the end of one of which I paid a visit to Chittagong in response to insistent requests from my friends there and in course which I was given an exceedingly nice time.

One or two features of our links with the Sylhet town during this term may receive a little notice here. I attended a big Conference of Ulemas brought together by Mr. Majdudding and Mainuddin Choudhuries in the month of January. In February I presided over the 89th Birth Anniversary of Vivekananda held in Raja Girish Chandra High School at the special request of Mr. Dharanimohon Pal. In March I attended a meeting of guardians and educationists at Jinnah Hall, convened at the instance of the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. S. Rahmatullah. Towards the end of March I also attended a discussion at D. C.'s Bungalow on the technique of mass education in Bengali—the lead being given by the then DIG of Police, Mr. A. H. Md. Ismail, and author of many books including (যৌন ব্যাধি). A slightly longer treatment of the Guardians' meeting of the Guardians' meeting held on 8th March will not come amiss. For about a month the students of the Sylhet Medical School had been creating disturbances in the town by demonstrations and strikes over their grievances. They had been bringing out the students of schools in the town to join them. M. C. College students also joined them on two occasions. On the 25th February I brought together the leading students of my College just to avert a strike on the following day.

if possible. A mention of their names here will be relevant to my own story. They were: Helaluddin Choudhury (a CSP of outstanding calibre now), Muzammil, Reza-ul-Karim and last though not least Tara Mian. They did not yield to my counseling against the strike but took away our students on the 26th by picketing and pressure. On these occasions it has ever been my custom to face them and to discourage them from threats and obstruction. But Tara Mian was found by me to be egregiously obstructive. None in the town (not even the D. C) knew about the stand I took in counteracting student indiscipline. On the 8th March the D. C. convened a meeting to consider ways and means for creating a congenial atmosphere for the progress of education. I attended this meeting from 5-30 p. m. to 6-40 p.m. when it ended in confusion and indiscipline created by the participants themselves. Khan Bahadur Abdur Rahim Choudhury, Public Prosecutor, and Khan Saheb Modabbar Choudhury, Ex-Minister, Assam, delivered two intemperate speeches. The former made a sweeping attack on the present day generation of teachers in the context of his schoolboy experience of the earlier generation. Counter-attacks by the school-teachers present led to ugly scenes of hot exchanges. The D. C. was powerless to control. In actual result the move proved to be very unwise. People in authority are generally unaware that lecturing students into obedience apart from their remedial measures and examples of personal integrity, self-sacrifice and absolute fairness is a useless technique. Presently we will have other such experiences.

During the two-month holiday that followed the first term I had plenty of work to do in the College Office in addition to the new responsibility that came my way from the Dacca University; I was just appointed Head English in three papers at the B. A. Pass Exam. From 23rd May to 10th August, This job swallowed up all my leisure. From the 6th June onwards, right up to 20th July I had agonising experiences at home, first with what looked like fatal illnesses of three of my sons, one falling victim after another successively, and then with my own illness. They were laid up with German measles-the course of which was alarming with constant 104° temperature leading to brain complications. The first of them reached a state of collapse; the other two on a particular night appeared to be at death's door, Physical and financial strain may be ignored but I had a spiritual crisis. Dr. T. H. Beasunia, Teacher of Medicine, of Sylhet Medical School, tried successfully some of the

latest antibiotics of broad spectrum and gave us ungrudging help and service which we shall never forget. And Professors Shamsuzzaman, Abdus Subhan and Ekhlas shared our physical and mental strain and thereby kept up our spirit. As for myself I had a turbulent boil on my right temple. Its malevolent character took a fortnight to relent. Maulavi Abdur Raquib Choudhury, the Compounder, by his daily and coaxing dressing pacified it.

The College reopened (after the long vacation) on the 21st July. It synchronised with the report that our student Muhith had stood first in the I. A. Examination. We organised a function of felicitations to him on the 24th July. On the eve of the reopening I wrote out my FOREWORD for the College Magazine under print. In connexion with meetings of the Executive Council, Dacca University and of the Standing Committee in English of the Secondary Board I had been away at Dacca from the 27th July to 31st July. During this period the appointment of Mr. Shamsuzzaman Choudhury as Principal of Dacca College was maturing; the formal order was received on the 9th August. From the 1st August to 4th August we had three functions at the College including an address from the Adjutant of Ansars (Rifles Branch) and the Tree Plantation, the last being marked by enthusiasm and successful participation. On the 8th and 9th August the College and the Hostels respectively were en-fete in giving a send-off to Mr Shamsuzzaman. Presently the College Union took up preparations for the celebration of the Independence day. On the 13th August two of our students of the Intermediate classes while coming to the College in a cycle rickshaw were hit and hurt by a speeding truck at 10-20 a. m. about two furlongs away from the College main gate. I made immediate arrangements for their removal to the Hospital where one of them was admitted for treatment while the other discharged after first aid. I sent the first information report over my signature. The most interesting part of this incident is that in course of the next two years and two months of my stay (I left on 15.10.53) the police case against the truck driver made no progress mostly on account of the obstructive tactics of the defence lawyer. On the Independence Day itself we had a short but exquisitely well-organised flag-hoisting ceremony at the College after which we joined the public function in the Court compound. Our own detailed programme was a football match between the Police team and the town

team. The highhandedness of the 'biggies' during the match led to an open fight between the police and the public—a fight in which violence and lawlessness had an unparalleled run. The custodians of law and order had an ignominious mauling to the extent of having had to beat a retreat just to save their lives. Grave repercussions followed to necessitate the clamping down of a curfew from 10 a. m. on the 15th to 8. a. m. on the 16th within Municipal limits. We had to attend an emergency meeting in the D. C.'s bungalow on the 15th for concerted action. Where tact, discipline and impartiality of behaviour were called for from the authorities, haughtiness and unfairness prevailed to cause exasperation and widespread disturbances. And now they resorted to the technique of holding an emergency meeting and discussing the situation which they had created themselves. On the 17th August an innocent student of our College, Abdul Hannan of the Second Year Commerce classes, was assaulted by the Police. But for my cautious handling of the case further untoward consequences would have followed. The same evening commissioner, Mr. N. M. Khan accompanied by Mr. Rahamatullah, the D. C. called at my bungalow. We had another big Conference at the Circuit House next day and I drew the pointed attention of the DIG of Police, D. C. and S. P. to the assault on our student., Abdul Hannan. On the 19th August we went through our full Independence Day programme at the College. It consisted of aquatic sports, volley ball competitions, literary and musical entertainment and a full dress drama in the evening. From 2 p. m. to 11 p. m our schedule was on. During the indoor fixtures our Assembly Hall was packed to suffocation. the drowsy atmosphere in the College was now totally replaced by one of bursting, bubbling vitality. In my speech delivered in the afternoon I crucified the Ingering deity of Hindustan secretly worshipped by many of our constituents. Among others Brig. Omrao Khan, later Martial law Administrator, East Pakistan, Lt. Col. I. H. Choudhury, major and Mrs. Masood Karim, Capt Choudhury and Mr. Syed Ahmed were present. On the 1st September, Education Minister, Mr. Abdul Hamid, paid a formal visit to the College. He was accorded a befitting reception if course of which a Rover Salute and a meeting of the Staff and students were organised. In giving a short outline of my urgent requirements I drew the attention of the Minister to the condition of the Library Reacing Hall where ugly stools and desks heavily besmeared with ink

lay scattered for examination purposes and not small reading tables and chairs for utilizing the books; this constituted an eye-sore in the midst of an otherwise superbly equipped library hall. In January I had submitted to the DPI modest estimates for a few thousand rupees for the supply of appropriate furniture and he had agreed to provide the required funds. My subsequent inquiries at the Directorate showed that the file was moving in the relevant quarters which after all looked being mazy and labyrinthine. The Minister's reply indicated his displeasure at my forthright observations. From the 6th September to the 9th I was away to Dacca attending meetings of the University. On the 10th morning I returned to Sylhet just to discover that the College Magazine had not only been printed off but also distributed in the Second Year Science classes which included one of my sons from whom I took his copy and had a glance. We were in the middle of a week's Id-ul-Azha break and therefore, I had sufficient time to go through its contents on the following day. I was surprised at the arrangement of the different Sections, which was poor and perfunctory the question of a decent or artistic presentation did not arise at all. Then I was shocked to find that the Bengali Section was 'leftist' from end to end with open or veiled attacks on the existing policy. There being plenty of unfilled space in many of the pages, 'extracts' purported to be from Quaid-i-Azam's speeches and those from other leaders and authors were inserted as 'proverbial quotations' without any indication of the occasions or dates. These quotations included denunciations of Zamindars, Capitalists and blood-suckers, taken out of their context and from pronouncements made by the Quaid-i-Azam before independence. The final responsibility for such a publication being that of the Principal I felt I was badly let down by the teachers-in-charge. I sent for them, showed them the objectionable insertions and drew their attention to the manifest communistic trends of the bengali articles. I further pointed out how touchy the Govt. of the country at that time was in regard to anything that had a smack of 'subversion' in it. Later we held a number of Union Executive Committee meetings to consider how best to get out of the difficulty. In one of these meetings a member made a practical demonstration of effacing an objectional extract by pouring ink over it. But we did not agree to such effacing. Instead we decided to make printed insertions of dates in one or two places to indicate how some of these extracts were

taken from the Quaid's speeches made long before the birth of Pakistan. Little printed 'chits' of dates and occasions having been pasted (on the lines of corrigenda in many publications) we release the magazine copies for distribution. One designing student dishonestly took into possession that particular copy of the Magazine in which a particular extract had been defaced by ink and showed the same to interested people who presently launched a propoganda against the wicked, arbitrary, highhanded tampering of the College Magazine by the Principal. The truth about the incorporation of dates and unfettered distribution of the Magazine was completely suppressed. From the 19th of October, for some days there were prominent insertions in the Pak Observer, The Morning News and the Azad with allegations just indicated namely, the withholding of distribution of the Magazine after attempts at tampering with the contents. I took no notice of such palpable fashood. On the 10th November I received from the DPI, a copy of an interpellation made in the Legislative Assembly earlier. In reply I made a statement of correct facts. But earlier on the 29th October I saw the DPI and the Education Minister (I was at Dacca from the 26th October to 31st October in connexion with University meetings) and explained to them the insidious nature of the Magazine propaganda occasioned by the remissness of the teachers in-charge. I also came to know how a number of other teachers were also working against me although they belonged to two small groups of con-flicting ideologies in politics. They were feeling uncomfortable under my administration and they had an easy access to the Education Minister. But let me resume the thread of my narration. Shortly after the Eid-ul-Azha recess Fazlul Huq Hall football team came over from Dacca and played against our College Eleven and defeated our team by 5 to 3. On the 29th September the Chief Minister of East Pakistan, Mr. Nurul Amin, paid a visit to our College. Since he was very much behind his afternoon schedule the classes were over and the bulk of the students had left. Only the UOTC platoons (formed only recently) were doing their usual drills and some others were rowing or playing when he arrived at 5 p. m. I showed him and his Muslim League stalwarts accompanying him just one sector of the College. He made shrewd remarks about the unpractised handling of rifles by the UOTC cadets and also taht of boats by novices. I felt he would like to address the students and I ordered the

Assembly Hall to be opened immediately. By this time there was a goodly collection of students and teachers. He had an agreeable surprise to find that the Hall was ready (even with microphone arrangements) for a meeting. I took a few seconds to say that he was most welcome and that we would be glad to hear him. He spoke in English clearly and fairly fluently without importing politics and urging all-round educational progress. He was so pleased with what he saw that when approached he declared a five-day holiday on the occasion of his visit. After 3 days we went into autumn recess extending from 3rd October to 9th November. But on the 16th October during the holiday on the eve of addressing a public meeting at Rawalpindi our beloved and distinguished Prime Minister, Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan was shot dead at close range. Your neighbour's dog would not be killed with such brutality. With his princely fortune he had dedicated himself to the cause of the Muslim League, gave the stoutest support to the Quaid in his fight for Pakistan, made an eminent Finance Minister in Interim Government and after independence one of the worthiest of Prime Ministers any country in the world would be proud to have. He kicked away under his foot the wealth and property he had in India just to meet a gruesomely inhuman fate. If Pakistan had any mental association with 'Holy Land' in its conception, it became defiled and desecrated to an abominable degree. While his wife and two little sons had been eagerly expecting his return to Karachi from Pindi the same evening, it was their tragic lot to receive instead his bullet-ridden skull and corpse. And yet one had to listen after his assassination to sanctimonious nonsense and hypocritical humbug such as "This was the dispensation of God". One observation made on the occasion by somebody whose name I do not remember stirred me to my depths; it was "Sadma-i-Azim" or the greatest pain; to me it was the greatest of personal pains having no personal relationship. On the 17th October, the Radio Pakistan gave a classic coverage too this diabolical murder. Sitting by my Radio receiving-set all day long I sobbed and cried (tears flowing unchecked) altogether inconsolable. His mantle fell now upon Khawaja Nazimuddin who doffed that of the Governor-General to pass it on to Mr. Ghulam Mohammed. These are now parts of our history and beyond my own scope and sphere. On the reopening date of the College (8th November) we mourned this irreparable loss; we also performed on the 25th

November in our College mosque Fateha 'khani (Prayers for the peace of the departed soul) to mark the fortieth day of his death.

We were now close upon the annual elections to the College Union. About a year ago these were held according to an old constitution available in tattered manuscript. Since then the consensus of opinion both among the students and the staff was that a new constitution with a better classification and definition of the scope of activities and with less cumbersome methods of voting should be drawn up and put through before the next election. This job was left to a drafting committee with Mr. Abdus Subhan Khan Choudhury, Professor of Political Science at its head. The Committee completed its job before the autumn holiday. On the 1st October the draft was approved for presentation to the General body of students. Within 15 days of the reopening after autumn vacation it was placed before them in the Assembly Hall. The Professor-in-Charge of the Union, Maulavi Ishaque Ali, raised the question of his powers and privileges at the initial stage and maintained that his authority should be supreme as if he was the Speaker of a Legislative Body. He was backed up by Tara Mian and his group. He gradually became more and more wild and undisciplined and barred all progress to the adoption of the constitution. My close work with Union elections, its constitution and functioning since 1926 did not furnish me with the experience I had on this day. On the 26th November (that is to say 4 days after the first meeting) we were to have met again but on account of the emergence of two bitter factions, the meeting was postponed to 1st December when it was held again. Uprarious scenes created this time by the opposition group held up all progress this time too; the meeting was abandoned at sunset. I was convinced that the running of the Union based upon the adoption of a constitution was not their objective. At any rate they were too foolish to grasp it. Meanwhile it deteriorated into scenes of misconduct, which were bound to have their impact on the general administration and the conduct of academic work. Therefore, I made up my mind not to permit the enactment of licence in the name of Tara Mian's famous slogan "জন্মগত অধিকার" (birth right). From the 2nd December to the 16th December Tara Mian's group under the leadership of Maulavi Ishaque Ali moved about restlessly within the College and I had reasons to believe in the town. Undoubtedly I allowed them free access into my room all the while, listened to what they had to say,

tolerated unseemly utterances and postures, counselled them wisdom and compromise. On at least two occasions I brought the two groups together in my room and tried to effect a compromise. The Hindu students who did not belong to Tara's camp had their own grievances. I received their deputation and advised them patience. Saifur Rahman (he is a lecturer now), Nurul Islam, Dilawar Hussain, Lutfur Rahman and Ruhul Qaddus were the lieutenants of Tara. Let it be noted here that excepting Ruhul Qaddus none of the group was a capable student. Tara Mian was absolutely poor in his academic performance but may be on account of his poverty and family background he was totally communistic in his outlook which was a one way traffic. Since I left he went underground and has spent years in jail. I do not know whether he is out now but two years ago he was there and sent to me through a fellow prisoner (released) his respect and word that I never forfeited his confidence in my straightforward deals. Ruhul Qaddus was a First Year lad in commerce. While admitting him I noticed that he passed Matric in 1st Division and in all his insane activities I did not slacken my efforts in keeping him to his academic course. He missed 1st Division in I, Com and destiny brought him again under my care and custody at Salimullah Muslim Hall, Dacca University, During his B. Com. Honours and Post-Graduate studies. Having done both he competed in the C. S. S. Examinations and is now well-placed in life. He dons a lounge suit, looks fairer and stouter but his unsteady neurotic ways have not yet left him. Saifur Rahman still sports a forked beard but dons a fairly decent suit. I tried but failed to get them to agree to a common approach. Looking closer into the wildness of Mvi. Ishaque Ali I found that he was ranged bitterly and implacably against Professor Abdul Hai who was manifestly using the Muslim League group under the student leader, Badrul Huq. There was a blood feud between Professor Ishaque Ali and Professor A. Hai, Ekhlās and many others. It was believed that the former came from the common stock whereas the others from noble descent; he was the seniormost in AFS I whereas the others were junior to him; in dress and bearing and department he was shabby and ill-bred whereas the others were decent. Now it was a case of a show-down between Ishaque Ali and Abdul Hai. But the latter was not directly involved in the Union warfare Occasionally he peeped in and gave gratuitous advice. On one of these occasions Professor Ekhlās joined

me in my evening walk (unsolicited) and went on reminding me how I had been insulted and humiliated in the Union meeting held on 22nd November by Professor Ishaque Ali and he could not understand how I could let him go unpunished. Similarly Tara Mian's head was demanded on a charger by teachers hostile to him. I have been referring to the period from 2nd December to 16th December. Lectures and tutorials, cultural and athletic activities were going on in full swing. The different classes had elected their own leaders for carrying on the Union work pending a settlement. On the 10th December the Human Rights Day was most successfull staged. Tara Mian and Ishaque Ali adopted determined tactics in provoking me into some action against them; their rudeness to me in my room on the 11th and 16th exceeded limits. I was determined on the contrary not to make heroes of them. As Principal or as administrative head I had no right (it was my conviction and philosophy) to contribute to upheaval in my own domain by impatience, sense of offended dignity, personal passion and reprisal. The demand for inalienable right and democratic freedom in union matters was not a criminal or civic offence. On the 16th December when Tara Mian and his followers were driving conditions into a climax I met my class, presided over the farewell function of Prof. Ekhlas from 11-45 a. m. o 12-25 p. m, continued my efforts about solving the Union tangle, received a deputation of Hindu students and after 1-40 p.m. left for my bungalow to have a snack but I became indisposed with a sore throat. Lutfur Rahman held an unauthorised meeting just outside the College Main Gate and condemned the Principal. On the 17th December, despity my indisposition, I met my class and attended to all other duties in my office both in the forenoon and afternoon. Tara Mian came in and shouted. Earlier Ishaquue Ali met me, declince to hand over Union files and "ran away with a bang and a shout" (the quotation is taken from my diary). They carried on a hostile propaganda in the town and announced a strike in the College and the holding of a public meeting on the 18th to condemn the Principal about the latter's tampering with Quai-i-Azam's speeches in the College Magazine (which now woke up once again from its torpor). Work in the Collège on the 17th and also on the following day went on in full swing however, There was no strike and the public meeting was banned by the S. D. O on the strength of I. B. and other reports. I was anxious now to hold a meeting of the Governing

Body. But the Deputy commissioner had been away on tour and there ~~was no ADM~~ at the moment. My sore throat, chill and headache overpowered me on the 18th and I developed bronchitis on the 19th. According to medical advice I started swallowing mixture and M & B (760) tablets which I had to continue for a number of days to come. Instead of working in the College office I worked at the bungalow. On the 19th afternoon the D. C. on return to the station instead of holding a discussion with me about the existing state of affairs gave ring to me to convene an informal meeting of the Governing Body on the 22nd afternoon at his bungalow. This was unusual but I agreed and for a formal meeting without telling him anything about my illness or about normal conditions prevailing inside the College and the hostels. I wanted to face them and I did so. On the 22nd I had to ask for D. C.S transport; the meeting began at 4-30 p. m. when I presented my case in clear outline and asked for disciplinary action against the ring leaders. It then appeared to me that the President and many members had been sufficiently canvassed to be in favour of holding the Union elections. ~~They did not attach that much importance to the bitter factions that existed and the consequent trends of indiscipline. When they were confronted with the dilemma of the non-existence of a constitution they suggested the old one. What did they propose to do about the disturbances created by the ring leaders? What was their attitude to the action that the Principal had taken in regard to the College Magazine? Would they dislocate the studies and Test exams of the Senior Intermediate and Degree students due in January? At this stage they asked for my advice and I suggested the interval between the two Test Examinations. They adopted a single resolution to the effect that the Governing Body disapproved the activities of certain students who had caused embarrassment to the Principal, approved the action that the latter had taken in regard to the College Magazine and allowed the elections to be held in January between the two Test Exams. Since I was to carry on in a particular locality and in consonance with its atmosphere I did not pursue my own views any further. The Governing Body now perceived that I was ill and on diet and regretted the inconvenience and hardship they had caused. I told them that since I was anxious for deliberation and discussion I did not care for my personal indisposition. I rose superior to the occasion, kept my illness at bay, had the recorded proceedings~~

circulated and approved, sent copies to the Directorate and announced the dates of elections in January between the two Test examinations. All these I completed by 30th December although the College had been closed on account of cold weather recess since the 23rd December. I informed the Staff that they should cooperate in carrying out the resolution of the Governing Body in letter and spirit. On the 23rd and 24th December there was a Tennis tournament in our College between M. C. C. and S. M. Hall teams, the latter beating the former. On the 23rd the players came up to see me and wish me a quick recovery; on the 24th I myself walked down to witness their game. On the 25th I walked as far as the College Playing Fields to have a look at the Cricket match that was going on between the College and the Town Club teams although I continued to be in a weak and uncertain state of health till the end of the month. The decision of the Governing Body meanwhile led to hostile reactions in the Muslim League circles. On the 29th December one of my Professors brought this information to me. But I stood by the decision of the Governing Body although factions within the College had unerringly indicated to me that the elections were not desirable. How things went on behind the scenes from 30th December, 1951 to 10th January 1952 I did not know but at 1-40 p.m. on the 10th January I received an urgent letter from the Deputy Commissioner to stop Union Elections on account of "apprehended troubles." The elections were only two days away. I issued the required notification to the College as a whole but my reactions were indignant. The D. C. did not consult me this time either. It was further clear that he had not taken into his consideration the dignity of the decision of the Governing body. In all conscience he should have held another meeting and taken it into his confidence about his "apprehended troubles". Another far more important principle was involved, which was whether he could interfere in my internal affairs without an order of the Government. After having announced the cancellation of the elections, I lost no time in requesting him to send a copy of the relevant Government order to me. I received a laconic reply "It was an executive order". Tare Mian's group still gave out that I was instrumental in getting the district authorities to cancel the elections and occasional short reports were published in the newspapers ascribing the blame to me although I did put up on the Notice Board copies of the short communications from the D. C. I did not know what

had led to the cancellation. I maintained my lifelong detachment from parties, their workings or intrigues whatever you might call them. I had clearly perceived that the two groups of students (leftists and rightists) were not earnest about the framing of a Union Constitution;; they reflected the operation of opposed political manoeuvrings among political groups and that they would come to blows if elections were permitted. When their own academic head treated them with infinite patience and sympathy and suggested peace and toleration, the leftists did not listen to him but were bent upon denouncing him; they showed greater respect to ill-equipped local leaders who on their own turn offered votive offerings to the Deputy Commissioner who being pleased yielded thoughtlessly to the one-sided view of the local leaders. When the same D. C. exercised his executive authority they were silenced for ever. They talked no more of their 'birth right' or of the arbitrary ways of the Principal. They did not feel that they had brought about their own humiliation and that of their *Alma Mater*. By piecing together odd bits of information that came to me I felt that one or two "whips" of the Muslim League Party came over from Dacca and got the D. C. to cancel the College elections. Callow, misguided, myopic people did not merit better treatment. At Chittagong College where, I had spent ten years of my life or at Islamia College, Calcutta, I had no experience of such mean squabbles over the Union Constitution. There they accepted one drawn up by their teachers and worked it. The conduct of the Governing body here was also astounding as already indicated. The Deputy Commissioner here was the President and some ill-baked lawyers or retired officers were important members. but the fact remained that in a first grade Government College, the duties of the Governing Body were very restricted and advisory more or less. In the worst of internal crisis that I had to tackle in 1947 at Chittagong, the Divisional Commissioner as President of the Governing Body, had his boundless confidence in me and the members were absolutely non-interfering. Wisdom comes from longer and richer experience, from higher cultural and intellectual level. After this episode at Sylhet I suggested that the Commissioner of Chittagong Division should be the President or alternatively the DPI himself. The Governing Body does not have to meet more than twice a year in these First Grade Govt. Colleges. But my suggestion was not accepted.

It will be correct to say that I stood four square to the blasts that blew from different quarters and from a mixtures of motives over the Magazine and Union elections tangle. But it will be absolutely incorrect to hold from what I have written in the forgoing pages of my life at Sylhet that in the successful carrying out of the academic and extra-academic activities of the College I had the sole credit. The majority of the colleaues on the staff and the majority of the students gave me their love and esteem, support and co-operation. I believe I have given sufficient indications of the inestimable help I received from the Superintendents of the hostels which were made the nuclei of healthy life and from the resident students. It would be ungrateful on my part if I did not pay my sincere tributes to those who were not associated with the hostels. Messrs Elias, Abdul Aziz and Mohiuddin of the English Department, Abdul Matin, Muhib Ali and Khoda Baksh of Mathematics, Wahed Bakhsh and Habibur Islam of Chemistry, Dewan Mohammad Ahmed Choudhury and Abul Hashem of Physics, W. H. Wasty of Biology, Abdur Rahman and Gholam Rasul of Botany, Saad Munir of Urdu, Abdul Jalil Choudhury of History, Hyder Ali of Islamic History, Abdul Matin of History, (son of my friend Mr. Abdur Rab Choudhury) of Political Science Sirajul Islam Choudhury of Philosophy and Logic, Satyaban Das and Akhteruzzaman of Commerce were all conscientious teachers. I am omitting from this list the names of Messrs Abdus Subhan Khan Choudhury and Misbahul Barr Choudhury. Both were teachers of outstanding merit in addition to being efficient Superintendents. Mr. Elias is now the Principal of Carmichael College, Rangpur. Abdul Aziz is now Professor of English, Dacca College; Mohiyuddin an Assistant Director of Public Instruction; Abdul Jalil Choudhury* Principal of A. M. College, Mymensingh Mohiuddin, Dewan Mohammad Ahmed Choudhury, Saad Munir, Abdul Matin Choudhury were prominent workers in the literary and athletic activities. Mr. Fitrat Hussain Vasty of Urdu Deptt. also provided charm to our cultural functions with his sweet recitation. Many of these gentlemen stood by me in my personal and domestic illnesses and other Problems. They made life worthliving. Let me now pass on to:-

1952

The three terms were: 2nd January to 11th May (Summer vacation from 12.5 to 9.7), 10th July to 16th september (Autumn recess from 17.9 to 20.10), 21st October to 23rd December (cold weather recess from 24th

December to the end of the month). During the first long term the local terminal exams, the two test Exams, University Intermediate Exams and College Annual exams were held; during the 2nd University Degree Exams followed. Otherwise we had a fairly full schedule of normal work including recruitment and training of the two UOTC platoons. Despite attempts made by myself and the Governing Body the factious groups did not come to an agreement in regard to another draft constitution placed before them according to the suggestions of the Governing Body. They agreed to an Interim Cabinet which ran the Union barring a short period of quarrel between Mr. Abdul Hai, Professor-in-Charge of the Union and some of the office bearers. In the hostel vacancy caused by the departure of Professor Ekhlas I had Mr. Sirajul Islam Choudhury appointed. He was an all-round sportsman and had a place in the athletic activities of the town. In addition to his proficiency in football, hockey, cricket he was an outstanding Tennis player as well.

In the administrative set-up of the district there were notable changes. Mr. Hussain Haider, C. S. P., took over as D. C. on the transfer of Mr. Rahmatullah; Khondker T. Hossain as Executive Engineer in place of Mr. Noor Mohammad transferred. We had a new Civil Surgeon in Dr. Mahbulul Ameen, a new Addl. Superintendent of Police in Mr. Khalilur Rahman and a new District Controller of Civil Supplies. Our relations with Lt. Col. I. H. Choudhury and the 8th Punjab Regiment continued to be cordial; indeed, socially, we came closer together. We had serious discussions with Major Maswood Karim over the introduction of Military Science as a subject of studies. Internally in addition to all other preoccupations I directed my energies to the implementation of the Biology-Botany Laboratory Construction Scheme for which a sum of rupees three lakhs, eighteen thousand, five hundred had been sanctioned in October, 1951 and to that of the Development Schemes (additional hostel structures and the Assembly hall in the same campus, especially) approved in the beginning of 1952. Externally my association with work at Dacca University, the Directorate of Education, the Secondary Board became so close that I had to be at Dacca at least once a month on an average. The death of the Director of Public Instruction,

☆ Since dead others in the list are holding different positions and status in 1968 when the book is, under print. A. H.

Mr. F. Rahman, from a sudden stroke (in his case it was angina pectoris) practically coincided with the historic February disturbances of the year over the Urdu-Bengali State Language issue. On the 6th March there was a Radio announcement of Dr. Mumtazuddin's appointment as DPI. Exactly a month earlier to a day, the Commonwealth was stirred by the news of the death of king George VI of England -the succession passing on to the present Queen. The year ended with the election of Eisenhower as President of USA.

On the 13th January, 1952, Mr. Ghulam Mohammad, the Governor General of Pakistan, was at Sylhet. We had to line up at the air-strip according to the Warrant of Precedence but on the eve of "introductions" Mr. Rahmatullah, the D. C. (who left in February), brought up the rear first (I refer to the young probationary CSP's) and gave them precedence over all-they thy being the "Gold Frame" of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. On the following day Mr. Shamsul Huq, one of our former pupils of Calcutta Islamia and then Planning Adviser and now DPI, (In October, 1965, he took over as Vice-Chancellor, Rajshahi University.) East Pakistan, was with me to have my immediate but minimum requirements in development. As already indicated more than once I pinpointed the expansion of the hostels and soon afterwards he arranged for its approval. On the 21st January, Central Minister, Mr. F. Rahman, who had threatened me with dire consequences at Chittagong over a dénigrating leafet presented to him was at Sylhet Circuit House. He remembered me and sent state transport to renew friendly contact with one whom he had known for years. It was so nice of him. To meet Brigadier Omrao Khan, the 8th Punjab Regiment entertained us twice at lunch at the end of January, 1952. In addition to other meetings in the opening months of the year we attended the annual Dacca University Court Meeting on the 10th Februry. As usual it was a noisy event when the Vice-Chancellor was hauled over the coals by the elected representatives of the Registered Graduates for all his 'misdeeds' in the outgoing year. The office-bearers of the University and Ex-Officio Government members had to rally to his support- altogether an unedifying spectacle. After ten days the State Language Controversy reached a sanguinary climax when there was a showdown between the student and the forces of law and order around the Dacca Medical College and university buldings. The Dacca University Convocation was due to be held on the 24th February and I left Sylhet on the evening of 22nd

February. But serious clashes and incidents, Shootings and killings had occurred both on the 21st and 22nd. There was a black-out of relevant news. Some verbal reports were heard at noon on the 22nd but confirmation came from Dewan Abdul Baset who travelled to Dacca in the same compartment with me. It was moving slowly by the Salimullah Muslim Hall Campus we saw a scene of tumult and uproar; thunderous speeches for assemblies of people near and far boomed out of the microphone placed in the southern grounds which looded like battle-fields. The train came to a halt at the crossing of the Bakshibazar Road at the south-western corner of the Medical College campus. Wild scenes of people hurrying to and for reminding me of corresponding ones during the 1946 August Calcutta riots were in sight. There was not the slightest symptom of the train moving forward to the nearby Dacca railway station; a report went into circulation that the driver had deserted his post being frightened. Like many others I managed to have a coolie for an exhorbitant price to go to my brother-in-law's place at Agha Sadeque Road. I had also to pay 'relief' subscriptions to clusters of volunteers. There were strikes all over the town, casualties in the University areas and eventually a curfew was clamped down from 8 p. m. The Convocation was cancelled; I was in a pretty funk. All shops and establishments were closed; a vehicles were off the roads. The walls of all houses were plastered with posters which demanded the blood of Mr. Nurul Amin, the Chief Minister. I was amazed how a million posters could be written up and hung or stuck within a couple of days. The whole of the civilian population was out in the streets loitering and chatting; it appeared no government was functioning. On Sunday the 24th February having received the report of the death of the DPI Fazlur Rahman I called at his place off "Hossaini Dalan" to have some details of his stroke. The house was desolate; he had no issue; his wife had predeceased him by a year. I felt acutely "the paths of glory lead but to the grave". On the 25th forenoon I walked up to the Vice-Chancellor's house where I found him practically alone and totally upset. Every moment his telephone rang to add to his confusion; one of these rings was from a lecturer who commanded him to resign immediately. simultaneously Salimullah Muslim Hall was beseiged and raided by the Military to snatch away their microphone. I got imprisoned in his house till 12-30 p. m. when I took a circuitous route and

bypassed picketing students. The same evening I left for Sylhet, my fellow-passengers being Mr. Akshoy Kumar Das, Special Officer, Scheduled Castes, and Mr. Abdul khaliq, Parliamentary Secretary, both being natives of Sylhet. M. C. College students continued to be on strike till the 1st March and again observed "Complete Hartal" on the 5th March. It should be observed here however that in Sylhet whether within the College or without there were no fanatics on either side and things settled down after the 5th March. "Morning News" carried on henceforward the warfare in defence of Urdu and in propagating a campaign of hatred against Bengali and the natives of East Bengal both being inseparable from Hinduism. Further the handful of Hindu teachers who were still continuing in the University were infecting the Muslims and should be hounded out. Virulent attacks were made on the University authorities in its leading articles on the 9th and 10th march under the caption "University Affairs", "Guilty Men" respectively. Thirteen years have passed since then but the students of Dacca University and the whole province have been observing 21st February as (শহীদ দিবস) or Martyrs Day with a solemnity and loyalty, courage and determination unsurpassed anywhere on the Pakistan India sub-continent. Their sacrifice in the cause of their mother tongue is something immortal. They were driven to desperation by the insidious propaganda of all West Pakistani colonial rulers including that of Mr. F. A. Karim. Even now there are lone voices in support of Arabic Script which, according to these, will lead to national integration. Woe to them. West Bengal took Hindi lying down. But Madras now has shown the way to fight the imposition of Hindi on non-Hindi areas. Let the lessons of Madras go deep into the minds of our pro-Urdu rulers. By and large Pakistan after 21st of February, 1952 has been on the path of sanity in regard to the language problem. Let regional language in both the wings develop as it is doing. That Bengali here or Urdu in Urdu-speaking areas should replace foreign tongues does not require any fatuous propaganda. Each is growing and will continue to grow in nature's irresistible course. each will vitally dominate all commerce of day to day life, in speech, in reading and writing and in bringing about mass education to which topmost priority must be given. The percentage of literacy still hovers round 15%; the introduction of compulsory primary education is still a far cry but the work of starting another two Universities (or

three of four)? in East Pakistan has been taken up in hand. What is still more disconcerting is the catchy tune of the commercial propaganda for the show and sale of a Bengali University, Bengali College, Bengali test-Books in Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Zoology, Economics, Political Science, Sociology and all other subjects of expanding knowledge in the modern world. The contention is that higher education in mother tongue and through the medium of mother tongue must be taken up immediately although hunger, nakedness, diseases and filth, ignorance and illiteracy stalk the land not only in rural areas but also in urban. Cliches and cheap propaganda have already done incalculable harm to education; very soon we will ruin the nation if we produce doctors, engineers, teachers, officers without their respective skill. English should be the link language not only between the two wings but also between our country and the whole world. Through English, we must acquire higher education and skill and knowledge to keep pace with the breath-taking progress of the modern world. Why waste time, energy money in writing or reading unintelligible copy-books when inexhaustible wealth is available in English in all branches of study, when laboratory and workshop equipment are available in international terms and measurement. Keep up sanity in order that the nation may prosper exactly as the East Pakistan students maintained their freedom of thought and action and made sacrifices in order that the children of the soil might lisp in their own tongues.

While the *Morning News* was busy denouncing "Guilty Men" on the 10th March, 1952, two of our Tennis Players, one a Professor and other a student were making a thrilling display as Sportsmen in Singles. On the 26th March a display of skill in debate was made in the Students Common Room. On the 14th March in my own home an indigenous surgeon of circumcision made a display of his 'skill' in surgery by cutting an artery in his area of operation over a son of mine. Non-stop bleeding necessitated his Civil Surgeon, Dr. Mahbul Ameen, did the stitching under chlorform and saved our family from an agonising ordeal. Exactly a month after his assumption of office, the new DPI, Dr. Mumtaz, favoured us with a visit on the 6th April and afforded us the opportunity of entertaining him in a befitting manner. In less than a week we had a direct evidence of a police Constable's commendable skill in detecting a thief who had stolen an attache case containing 300

"Admit Cards" of the University Intermediate Examination candidates of our College. The suitcase in its journey from Dacca to Sylhet was removed from the train by a Habiganj burglar who was caught redhanded by a Habiganj Police Constable while he was attempting to open it under cover of darkness. It was recovered, and restored to us on the 12th April by Dhanakrishna Babu, S. I. of Police, Habiganj-a fine performance to resolve an ugly tangle. On the 19th April Khondker T. Hussain, the new Executive Engineer, inspected sites in the College and Hostel Campuses for the construction of the Botany-Biology and extension buildings. We were on the move in both the schemes. But the same evening there was an open fight in the town between the Police and the public over the highhandedness of the police in arresting and detaining an innocent rickshaw-wallah who was conveying one of our students. This student was also prosecuted. Naturally the students of the area and the people gathered together and were reported to have beaten up the police party. Early next morning I heard that the day scholars from the town had declared a strike in all educational institutions against the Police "Zoolum" (oppression). But we had made elaborate preparations for the observance of Iqbal Day on this 20th day of April and the news of the sudden strike shook us badly. To avoid the disruption of the function I alerted my hostels and also the Police authorities and I succeeded in having normal attendance at classes from 10 a. m. to 11-40 a. m. when a small group of students under the leadership of Badrul Huq arrived from the disturbed locality and caused temporary dislocation. Huq was an accredited champion of the Muslim League against Tara Mian of the leftists. When occasions arose he had no hesitation in breaking discipline and therefore I had to keep a sharp eye over him too exactly as on Tara Mian of the leftists. When occasions arose he had no hesitation in breaking discipline and therefore I had to keep a sharp eye over him too exactly as on Tara Mian. He withdrew and we were exceptionally lucky in having a very successful function from 12-30 p. m. to 2-40 a. m. when a number of Urdu experts from outside the College attended. There were seven essays and one speech from our students. Mr. R. U. Khan, Distric Controller of Civil Supplies, who later took a Ph. D. degree on a Urdu thesis, also delivered a short speech of Iqbal. It is true we averted a dislocation in our work but the district authorities were not wise enough to ignore the clash that had resulted from the unjust-

fiable conduct first of the Police Constable on patrol and then of his colleagues who joined and dragged the rickshawalla to the Police Station. They convene a Conference of the heads of educational institutions, of MLA's and officials on the 22nd afternoon to discuss indiscipline among the students. I have already described how Mr. S. Rahmatullah and his ill-advised friends held such a meeting earlier in the Jinnah Hall and added to the then prevalent confusion. This time it was Mr. Hussain Haider, the successor of Mr. Rahmatullah. The Conference began at his bungalow at 4-30 p.m. and continued till 6-30 p.m. I was the main target of attack but I kept quiet for sometime till I was prodded into giving a reply to what the S. P. and his colleagues thought an unanswerable presentation of their case. I cited three concrete instances in which I had written to the S. P. and his colleagues for appropriate action against Police "Zoolum" on some of our students and said that far from any show of action being taken, the elementary courtesy of acknowledging my letters was not observed. And then I proceeded to the ugly, shameful incidents that had taken place on the Independence Day in 1951-incidents that were provoked by the lawless conduct of the Police Football Team. When law is broken, I continued, in the streets of a town, whether by students or guardians or by the riff-raff elements, the custodians of law and order should have the courage and honesty to proceed according to the laws of the realm and have the culprits punished irrespective of any other consideration. What happened to lead to present conference and discussion? For all I knew and gathered was that at 10 O'clock at night on the 19th April an innocent student of M. C. College was travelling in a licensed rickshaw; they were illegally halted by the patrolling constable and persecuted; the latter in reply to remonstrance brought his colleagues from the nearby Police Outpost and started a fray.; when worsted they dragged the innocent rickshawwallah to the thana and detained him to create further disturbances. Instead of holding an impartial inquiry and taking effective measures against the culprits, the executive authorities thought it fit to bring together the heads of the members of the legislature. Who prevented them and what stood in their way to proceed according to the provision of law? Mr. Haider was very much unlike his predecessor in office. He saw and appreciated reason Among the leaders present many including Khan Saheb Modabbir Hussain Choudhury did the same. It

was agreed that in all cases involving the students the heads of institutions should be taken into confidence with the respect they deserved before anything like denunciation should be attempted. The D. C. further expressed his displeasure at the S. P's not having acknowledged my letters.

The above coincided with the beginning of the University Intermediate Exams which continued till after the end of the first term. Slightly earlier our Bengali Professor, Mohammad Mansooruddin, left us being appointed as Regional publicity Officer. Having had important meetings at the Directorate and the University to attend I left for Dacca on the evening of the 16th May and during the night journey I had a tremendous (but also slightly amusing) experience. On top of the lower berth I occupied there was a Malabar Christian gentleman, Mr. Jacob by name and in the employ of the Joint Steamer Company at Narayanganj; he was strong and stout. The other two berths were occupied by a Captain, his wife and a child. At about midnight when the train was speeding between Bhanugachi and Srimangal (both have big tea estates) Mr. Jacob fell down upon me with tremendous thud; if his whole bulky body had covered mine I might have been smothered. But I with my lean physique was sleeping at the edge of the bunk close to the wall of my berth; the impact, therefore, was distributed by halves and I escape with a bad pain of one side only. The suspending straps of the upper bunk had snapped; the strong cords along with their rusted sockets had been dangling above; the bunk itself dangled too. I was advised not to bother about the swaying above but to fall asleep with Mr. Jacob sitting at one corner of my berth. But with the lady and child resting in front the risk of allowing the bunk to continue as it was, was considered too great by me. At Srimangal when the train stopped I brought the Assistant Station Master to the scene and requested him to have the hanging danger removed. He said that this could be done only at Dacca. When I insisted he held out a covered threat that our bogie would have to be detached and we would be detained at this station. He had now the lesson of his life when I challenged him to carry out his threat. A mechanic was soon available to do the job of removal. I carried the straps, sockets, broken pieces of glass etc. to Dacca railway station where I deposited them and made a formal complaint. Nothing was heard in reply. From the 17th May to the 19th May I had several sessions with the DPI and of the

Executive Council. There were many behind-scene activities in Govt. circles as well as in University circles in regard to the confirmation or otherwise of Dr. K. J. Newman, Professor of Political Science, Dacca University. Of Bulky body and thinhaired pate, he had a loud voice, irrepressibly garrulous tongue continental accents in speaking English. He was an Austrian by birth and upbringing but finished off his academic career with a D. Phil from Oxford. His energy was prodigious, his movements were more in Government dovecotes than elsewhere. He constituted a class by himself. Now he was obsequious, next moment violently defiant. His ways were unpredictable. His relations with the students of his department (and his was one of the largest numerically) were uncommonly chummy and enigmatic. He would proceed to Chittagong with presents to attend the marriage ceremony of one of his pupils, Among the Ministers he was considered indispensable. But the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. S. M. Hussain had a heap of papers with him to oppose Newman's confirmation. The latter however was too strong and influential to be balked of his rights. In the three-and-half hour meeting of the Executive Council held on the 17th May, 1952, there was a storm over Newman's confirmation, The Government officials and members supporting it, the Vice-Chancellor noisily opposing the same. As usual the scene was unedifying. Decorum and restraint were not in the Vice-Chancellor's line of life. He had lumped together the trivial and the serious into an unweildly mass of allegations and presented them without any clear decision. Newman's supporters appeared to be unconvinced. The meeting ended inconclusively. But it came up for consideration of the 8th July in a Committee of the whole House which at the end of a three-hour debate and deliberation recommended that Dr.. Newman be confirmed and a warning given to him against a repetition of his objectionable activities. In the regular meeting of the Executive Council held on the following day the Committee's recommendation was approved. Dr. Newman continued strong and undaunted for at least six years more when his "objectionable activities" proved too much for the University to ignore. An agreement between the parties was effected and he quitted Pakistan. There was a short-lived press campaign in his favour in U. K.

On the 23rd July our Sanskrit lecturer, Jagadish Babu, read a learned

paper on "The Condition of Sanskrit Literature under Muslim Rule", on the 28th we had another musical entertainment from Mr. Abbasuddin; on the 30th a very successful "tree Plantation," On the 9th August Mr. Jamil, Accountant-General, East Pakistan, and leader of the "Tabligh" Movement addressed our students and staff and then offered prayers in the College Mosque. In our own academic life, in the civic life and also in social life 1952 Independence Day was observed with great fervour and enjoyment. The public function of the 14th was marked by Parade and March Past in the Police Grounds, a meeting in the early afternoon and football later. The College function spread over the 19th and 20th. The first day's programme included literary, cultural and dramatic items beginning from 4 p. m. and ending at 10-30 p. m. the second day's programme was restricted to sports. We had a number of dinners including one in Block No. 3. We and the district authorities were now knit together in warmth and fellowship. Similarly during the Eid-ul-Azha week extending from 29th August to 5th September we had many pleasant social contacts to enliven the many stresses of administrative duties. The rump of warring factions of the preceding year became active from time to time to ask for revenge on each other or for the admission into the College of avowed malcontents and leftists. I handled them with impartiality and generosity. Rancour and reprisal were alien to me. Our sportsmen rose above unsportsmanlike trends and came out victorious in the shield competitions on the 6th September. I could afford to ignore on the 8th and 9th the rude and vindictive ways of Professor Abdul Hai in regard to his views and methods. And I had to attend to far more important duties. Since the transfer of Mr. Wahed Baksh, the 2nd Professor of Chemistry we did not have a successor. The post of a Lecturer in Zoology was vacant and now the 2nd Professor of Physics, Mr. Nasimuddin Ahmed of high academic attainments was transferred to Chittagong College. I exerted my personal pressure on the DPI on the 14th and 15th September (while I was at Dacca) to fill up these vacancies. There was a tangle in the selection of suitable site for the Botany-Biology Building and I secured a personal inspection by the Superintending Engineer, Mr. Shafiqur Rahman, on the 17th when we spent a couple of hours together in finalizing it. The site proposed by me was the whole stretch of open space on the south of Swimming Tank so that we could have another south facing structure in perfect symmetry

with other buildings in the campus. He turned it down absolutely for the reason that it was low-lying and sodden and liable to further depression unless enormous sums of money beyond the sanctioned estimates were spent in filling and consolidating it. After careful scrutiny the Executive Engineer and he finally selected the whole range of the eastern boundary of the Botanical Garden extending some distance away from the south-east corner of the tank to the corner of the Shillong Road. The only disadvantage of this site was that the building upon it would be west facing. But he assured me that effective architectural planning would obviate any difficulty to the placement of equipment and the carrying on of practical work. I accepted it and got the district Selection Committee to do the same. The foundations were laid and the work of construction proceeded apace with what future fate will be, told in due course.

Some distance away from the Sylhet town and in the midst of wood land the Government of East Pakistan maintains a Forest Institute for the training of rangers and foresters who receive a diploma on completion to the course. It holds a diploma-giving annual function which they call the Convocation of the Institute. In 1952 it was organised on the 25th September. The Chief Conservator of Forests then, Mr. Gholam Ghaus, and the Divisional Forest Officer, Mr. Nooruddin, approached me on the 24th and requested me to deliver the Convocation Address. Normally the Deputy Commissioner does in but Mr. Haider shoved the duty on to me and naturally there was no escape for me. On arrival I saw a distinguished gathering including ladies; smart young trainees made an attractive turnout and looked for a suitable speech from the Chief Guest who had treated the affair as a joke more or less and came altogether unprepared. I noticed however that the inauguration was made with garlands of synthetic flowers and this provided me with material for the beginning of my address; the cordiality of the assembled and the eager looks of the trainees did the rest. I said here was a forest of Arden as it were of rare beauty and riches combined; true there were no season flowers or roses or jessamine but woodland sweet little flowers were there all about. While they lay neglected the members of the Forest Institute imported spurious counterparts from urban stalls for decorative and ceremonial purposes. What a commentary on their career and conduct. In the popular Bengali songs a great deal of tribute is paid to

বনফুল (Woodland flower). Have they not heard about such poetic praise? A Convocation in a Forest Institute is just like comparison between a small thing and big, a misnomer it would seem. Was it so? No it was not. In the context of the birth of our truncated, poor-in-mineral-wealth, primitive little country, the rural areas with their jute as raw material, with their forests as their wealth, an Institute of the present nature was better than a University of politically obsessed students working in congested areas, and therefore, this was an appropriate Convocation and I was happy to offer my warm greetings to the Instructors and the trainees wedded not only to conserve our forests but also to develop them.

This was 1952, end of September. We were close upon travel restrictions between Pakistan and India. From the middle of October the system of Passports and Visa would be clamped down Two of my sons were M. C. College students. One having passed I. Sc. was in the junior B. Sc. classes, the other in the 2nd Year I. Sc. classes. A craze seized most of the officials and many non-officials to make unhampered trips to Shillong for all purchases they could afford. Having never been to any hill station before these two youngsters were eager to have an experience of the attractive tourist spot that Shillong was and so close at the same time from Sylhet. Others had their cars and plenty of money to satisfy their urge and shopping ; both these advantages were not ours. We decided to go up 'pedestrian wise' for a very short holiday and by public transport in both sections; Sylhet to Tamabil, Dowki to Shillong. Three bus tickets on this side cost only Rs. 7.50 and for the other Rs. 15.00. We were up there at 12-30 p. m. on Sunday, the 5th October. The whole place had a deserted appearance; all shops and restaurants were closed—a total sabbath. "Ferndale" and "Pinewood" being costly we had a comparatively cheaper place in the "Peak Hotel" centrally situated and quite close to the first named. We were contented with a four-bed room with the fourth bed unoccupied. My sons did not agree to my having Indian style food which they had and persuaded me to join the higher standard Dining Room on payment of extras. We were lucky to have fair weather for 2 days so that we went out sightseeing and enjoying ourselves otherwise but during the remaining $2\frac{1}{2}$ days we had heavy near-incessant rains and very restricted movements. One of the places I did not see earlier was St. Mary's up at Laitumkhera—a Roman Catholic

educational institution of large size having provision from Kindergarten upto Intermediate College standard. When I introduced myself to the Principal she showed us round with great courtesy introducing us at the same time to resident children (both Hindu and Muslim) from East and West Bengal. She knew each child by name and had a kind word for each. All the mistresses and all the College teachers (mostly men) were alert every moment; their handling of the students was most affectionate but very firm. they got work done by each; there was no escape for any one. Decently equipped and furnished there were order and cleanliness every where. That was the way to make a nation grow and prosper. On the rainy evenings I took my sons to the pictures- the Magic Carpet at the Garrison Theatre proving enjoyable, After 3 days the vacant bed in our room was occupied by an incoming guest, Mr. Srivastava, an Advocate of Patna High Court, sociable and cultured. A middle-aged man of good address he was proud of pursuing his profession in the High Court at Patna and frequently cautioned my sons against their impression, if any, that he was associated with the lower Courts. Within minutes of his induction into our room he and we felt perfectly at home with his bonhomie. Joining the same mess with my sons he developed warmth and friendliness for them. He asked me more than once (and even after correction) What I was doing to stimulate and diffuse the study of Hindi in my College forgetting that we at Sylhet at the foot of the hills were Pakistanis. But we did not perceive the slightest trace of any rancour in his mind against the Muslims. One of these evenings as I was returning from a call on my friend Mr. Nooruddin and his family living at the contiguous Ferndate Hotel a gentleman popped out of a grove and sheltered himself under my umbrella-it was drizzling and asked me straight away where my two young companions were at the moment . It was quite clear that we were under surveillance by I. B. or Security men. On being told who we were he apologized profusely and parted with friendly greetings. The rains having spoilt over holiday and we having had a lean purse to afford longer stay we decided to get down on the 10th afternoon. Shortly after we had boarded our bus blinding rains and a strong gale overtook us; it was terribly foul and continued to be so for more than two hours while we were moving on the dangerous hill section and by and through the " Devil's Neck". The driver had no wipers on the windscreen; we repented we were out. But

what a daredevil of a driver he was, an unflustered expert taking the steering wheel easy and p;laying it cool, now smoking, now looking at his wrist watch. By the time we left Paniursula at 3-30 p. m. (we started at 1-20 p. m.) the weather-god had relented; in another I hour we were down at Tamabil when it was all clear. My sons had a unique experience of lovely hill tops in climbing and of nature red in tooth and claw getting back . But wait, we had another extraordinary experience of an opposite kind from **Tamabil** in our own country . When we reached Tamabil it was 4-45 p.m. Our expectation was that the corresponding bus would start at 6. p. m. and we would be at the College Gate by 7.30 p. m. at the latest and the weather was absolutely clear. The particular bus which we boarded showed no sign of starting for an unconscionably long time while two others speeded away. When we the passengers made a row he made a show of a motion while knowing very well that his vehicle was not in working order. At 7.30 it was in motion but went off after 15 to 20 minutes when it was dark and Tamabil was two miles behind and no sign of human habitation in front. We got off and on at his bidding while he pretended to be going on with repairs. During the next motion the under -carriage section appeared to be on fire; we were asked to get off and walk a little while he would come up after proper repairs. We walked and looked behind, a whole company of 20 to 25 people. After we covered a mile or so we noticed a blazing bus which not only overtook us but bypassed us as well in speed and fire and disappeared in the surrounding darkness. Weary and exhausted we walked another mile or so when we reached a roadside Police Station having a telephone connexion. I put through frantic calls to the S. P. and to our own bungalow . The former rang back to the office-in-charge to improvise arrangements with any stationary bus available at **Tamabil**. He was good enough to comply and another out-of-the schedule commandeered bus was available at 8.45 p.m. We reached the College Gate at 10 p.m. Just think of the contrast between the drivers and managers of the two sections of the Journey, the National Transport Co. of Shillong and the individual bus owners of Sylhet forming a loose syndicate While the other driver was a trustworthy gentleman, we had here a thorough bred scoundrel and an absconding criminal. The even tenor of social and public life at Sylhet had exciting moments on the 16th and 26th of October by the visit respectively of Khan A.

Qayyum Khan, Chief Minister, NWFP and Mr. Doha; Inspector-General of Police, East Bengal. Public meetings, Police Parade, Tea and Dinner marked both the occasions. Inside the College we combined two functions together the death anniversary of Quaid-i- Azam and of Quaid-i-millat and held them after suitable preparations on the 28th October when many essays from students were read,, many speeches made. The second of the two sons of mine who had accompanied me to Shillong was adjudged to be the best speaker On the following day Pilot Officer Ahsan addressed the students.

The most outstanding event for all concerned was the formal opening on the 9th November of Sylhet Branch of the Pakistan Co-operative Book Society in the presence of Mr. Niaz Mohammad Khan, then Chief Secretary of East Bengal and the elite of the place including the staff and students of our College. Since I was placed in overall charge of this Branch I had to play the chief part (if not an exclusive part) on the occasion. Among other things I observed that Mr. Khan had recently been to Japan to import Japanese coaches for our railways; to-day he was providing us with a coach which is designed to transport us on the intellectual highway etc. " Another outstanding event in public life was the appointment in the last week of November of Mr. Modabbir Hossain Choudhury as Pakistan's Ambassador in Indonesia. There was a round of greetings entertainment for him. Within the College literary and cultural activities followed the usual pattern.

In the Middle of November while I was attending a number of meetings at Dacca University and a Principals' Conference with the DPI, the Vice-Chancellor and the latter requested me to serve on a Committee of the Executive Council to investigate a case of assault between the University Librarian, Mr. Fazal Elahi and a Lecturer in Arabic, Mr. Hussaini. The latter had sent for a library book for his immediate use in a class he was holding. The former did not comply. Mr. Hussaini walked straight into the Librarian's Room and abused him. Then the two came to blows in the presence of many. In the course of the inquiry we had interesting revelations from the attendance of the two gentlemen involved and of some witnesses. Fazal Elahi was an upcountry Urdu-speaking gentleman, looked about 50, plump and well-groomed, had a voluble tongue despite his stammer, an infinite capacity for bringing

in irrelevant things into his defence. That he was generally overbearing and now very sneakish to a lachrymal degree was very clear to the committee. Mr. Hussaini was a Madrassi gentleman of 40 to 45 years with a coal tar skin and a scarred face. His black Sherwani to match his complexion had been, I was told, in his use for years; his loose "Pajamas" (trousers) were dun. He had clear accents with rolled "r's"; his department was quixotic. He was tough and strong, also rugged in disposition, The Librarian's case was that according to rules he could not issue the book asked for but the Lecturer on his advent inquired "Is this your father's property"? and then took off his shoes to beat the librarian with. Naturally he had to defend himself against violence from the other side. Mr. Hussaini's case was that he had simply demanded an explanation for the withholding of the book when the Librarian left his seat in anger and rushed at Mr. Hussaini to beat him when he discarded his shoes, sat down on the floor and practised his 'leg' trick which he had known and practised in his youth; his 'trick' had floored the Librarian when he collected his shoes in his hands and ran out of the library. Mr. Hussaini made a practical demonstration of his 'leg' trick before the Inquiry Committee which while deploring the whole incident leaned slightly in favour of the teacher whose toughness and acrobatics were impressive.

The little drama of our day-to-day life at M. C. College in 1952 had a grand finale on the 22nd December when we accorded a ceremonial reception to His Excellency Dr. A. Wahab Azzam, Egyptian Ambassador to Pakistan. The UOTC platoons of our College first gave him a Guard of Honour. After introduction to the Staff he was conducted to the Assembly Hall where he was presented an Address of Welcome in English and printed in silk-cloth and properly framed. A counterpart in Arabic followed; this was read by Mohammad Mustafa Mian of the 3rd Year Arts Classes. The staff Club Tea held on the hill spur in front of the Administration Building rounded off the visit in sweet and solemn grandeur.

My superannuation from Government Service was due 9 months away. Before the birth of Pakistan there was no question of my settling down anywhere other than in my own native place in West Bengal where we had a home and some ancestral property of which we were proud. For

thirty years now I had been moving from place to place and with such deep absorption in my day to day duties that I was utterly indifferent to making any provision for the future. And how could I do otherwise? I started with an income of less than two hundred and now it was a little over a thousand. And meanwhile the lady of the house went on making a frequent yield of "wealth" at which I gazed in love and wonder. When people stand amazed at the size of my family I remind them that family planning was yet unknown in our country. Clean clothes a certain standard of nourishment, prompt medical care in sickness, meeting all social obligations and returning entertainments in a generous measure, giving some education to children swallowed up all income including the remuneration from examination work. All I can plead against the charge of extravagance is that we never incurred any large debt. From 1922 to 1937 I made small savings, none thereafter. In 1950 the development of Dhanmonda residential area and the allotment of one-bigha plots of land to applicants was publicised. Although I was acutely conscious of the strength of my purse, I made the first deposit Rs. 1500/- (fifteen hundred) for the plot allotted to me slightly before the marriage of my daughter was finalised. From the beginning of 1952 the problem of some shelter somewhere in East Pakistan, preferably at Dacca, haunted us. I was definite that it would be impossible for me to meet the expenses of construction of the allotted plot. And although the idea of living in a dirty, congested locality of old Dacca continued to be agonising I looked for the buying of a small house in such areas. After the partition many houses of Hindu gentlemen migrating to West Bengal were available on moderate prices. But living as I did far away from Dacca it was not possible for me to secure one. The availability position was difficult now. But my friend, Professor Sayidur Rahman introduced me to Mr. Bhabesh Chandra Nandi, (elder brother of Dr. M. N. Nandi) who brought me and the intending seller, Mr. Sujit Nandi together. Sujit Babu was living in his native village. Sarail, in Brahmanbaria Consistent endeavours for five months led to the taking out of Income-Tax Clearance Certificate, an assurance that the property was free of earlier encumbrances and the making of connected preliminary arrangements. On the eve of finalisation I was pick-pocketed in a bus and robbed of my fixed Deposit Certificate from the Imperial Bank of India and a draft on the Habib Bank both of Dacca Branches. The

calamity that was to follow was averted by the promptest SOS given to the two Banks; arrangements for duplicates involved a lot of fresh troubles. At the end of May and during the Summer Vacation the deal was completed by a registered deed of sale and purchase. But this was just the beginning of another series of awful botheration in the law courts for the possession. Two youngmen, both being my former pupils of Chittagong College, had been in free occupation and enjoyment of the house since the last riots. They paid neither any rent not the dues of the Municipality. When one of them was transferred to chittagong he inducted the upstairs friend into the ground floor with the help of goondas and against the order of the SDO secured by me. For six months my sons and I attended the Civil Courts of Dacca by turns in connexion with suits I had filed but adjournment after adjournment secured by the defendants barred any hearing or progress. But if two former students were uncharitable and hostile, two others of the same College were assiduously active in effecting an amicable settlement-the leading part being played by Mr. Azizul Huq, at present Chairman of the Small Industries Corporation, (He has since been appointed as a Director of EPIDC.) and a quieter role by Mr. M. Firdous Khan, Chairman of the Dacca Board of Secondary and Intermediate Education, now DPI, East Pakistan. Azizul Huq paid Rs. 300/- (three hundred) cash to the man in occupation and a guarantee to write off all areas in rent and taxes while Firdous Khan used all his persuasive power in bringing him round. Young-stork-like they sustained the parent-birds by securing possession on the 10th December, 1952. This is the house art Gandaria where we have been living since superannuation on the 15th October, 1953. On the eve of quitting Sylhet I surrendered my Dhanmondai Residential Area Plot and took a refund of the money I had deposited chiefly to cover our expenses to get to Dacca and meet initial financial implications. Even now stupid interrogations of 'good' friends and affectionate kinsmen about preferring a slum area to a posh locality have not ceased. God bless them.

When I took over charge of M. C. College I was reading **Four Quartet** which I enjoyed without proper comprehension. Several years earlier when I attempted **The Waste Land** I found myself too inadequate to appreciate. In the thirties however not only I enjoyed and read **Murder in the Cathedral** But I got others to do the same. Now I turned

occasionally to **East coker, The Hollow Men Ash Wednesday, Two Choruses from the Rock** etc. and understood them better. In 1952 I got my sons to recite extracts from the **two Choruses** in College literary function. I turned to interpretative and critical apparatus on Eliot for an enhanced enjoyment. Presently came out **The Cocktail Party** which I was one of the earliest to read and which stimulated study and discussion in Dacca as in other places. Miss Stock led discussions in University circles. I then turned to the **Family Reunion** which made a deeper impression on me than **The Cocktail Party**. before I left Sylhet I also read **The Idea of a Christian Society and Notes towards the Definition of Culture**. When Eliot died early in 1965 and there was a spate of reviews on his works. I looked in vain for any appreciation of the **Family Reunion**. The relevance of the writing of these lines is in another context. Shortly after my arrival at Sylhet I received one or two packets of books and magazines as gifts to the College addressed to the Principal from Mr. Ghazanfar Ali Khan living in the interior of the district. On inquiry I gathered that after a distinguished career at Cambridge he competed in the I. C. S. in which he rose to be the Commissioner of Nagpur in Central Provinces and was awarded a C. I. E. But the demand for his personal supervision at home of his ancestral Zamindary and Estates had led to his premature retirement. In a personal letter written to him I acknowledged with thanks the receipt of his gifts and informed him that the Magazines were placed in the Students' Common Room and the books entered in the Library Stock Book. Thus began a three-year-long literary friendship in the course of which we exchanged books and comments. He was now an old man but a keen lover of books most of which he imported directly from U. K. An admirer of Keynes, John Stuart Mill and Leslie Stephen he had his own special favourites. When I sent him **The Cocktail Party** and later the **Family Reunion** he liked the latter better. It was by pure coincidence that his sister and he (maid and bachelor like Mary and Lamb) came into my compartment at Kulaura Railway Station sometime in 1951 enroute to Dacca. By another such coincidence we (not his sister this time) travelled back from Dacca. He was old enough to require support in his movements but his memory was prodigious and mental alertness intact. Epistolary acquaintance deepened in to "another intensity..... a deeper communion" He backed up his book gifts by further and bulkier

instalments. Sometime during the last few years he breathed his last. I have never come across a Muslim scholar of his calibre and temperament, one who shared his enjoyment of books with others. His nephew, Mr. Saadat Ali Khan, at that time was the Post-Master General of East Pakistan.

A few jottings from my 1950 to 1952 diaries about books and publication may indicate my predilections:

- | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Memoirs of king Abdullah of Transjordan
edited by Philip Graves | } | Jonathan Cape |
| 2. English Ribbon by Jack Hilton (the itiner
any of a Commoner | | Quadrivium from |
| 3. Having the Last Word by Ivor Brown
(authology of Verbal felicities) | | Times Lit. Supp- |
| 4. Old Testament Plays (the plays of a poet):
Laurence Houseman | | Lement dated |
| Thirty Years with Shaw by Blanche Patch: Gollancz | } | These were read by
me |
| World Within World by Stephen Spender: | | |
| Hamish Hamilton | | |
| Liberties of Mind by Charles Morgan | | |
| Sufism by A. J. Arberry: Allen and Unwin | | |
| The Life of Mahatma Gandhi by Louis Fischer:
J. Cape | | |

The Life of J.M. Keynes by R. F. Harrod:
 by McMillan : 25s.

The Art of India and Pakistan: Edited by Sir Leigh Ashton: 4 guineas
 (Commemorative catalogue of the exhibition held at the Royal
 Academy of Arts, London 1947-48)

The English Stage 1850 & 1950: Lynton Hudson : Harrap Keats -
 Shelley Memorial Bulletin, No. III: The St. Catharine Press. W.
 W. Greg: The Editorial Problem in Shakespeare: The Clark Lec-
 tures: Trinity College, Camb, 1939.

H. B. Charlton: Portrait of a University (Manchester), 1851 to 1951.
 Walter de La Mare: Winged Chariot (a new, long poem): Faber and
 Faber: 10s-6d.

Richard Hoggart: Auden: Chatto & Windus : 12s.

Times Lit: supplement, 10th August, 1951

Mrs. Betty Miller: Robert Browning: A Portrait: John Murray: 21s.

Miss Louise Greer: Browning and America: The University of N. Carolina Press, London, Cumberlege: 32s.

J. m. Cohen: Robert Browning : Longmans: 10s 6d.

Leonard Burrows: Browning: An Introductory Essay: Perth, Australia: 6s 6d.

Graham Greene : The End of the Affair.

G. B. Harrison : Shakespeare's Tragedies : Routledge and Kegan Paul: 21s.

Harry T. Moore: The life and Works of D. H. Lawrence: Allen and Unwin: 25s.

Nones (a new volume of poems): W. H. Auden: Faber and Faver: 10s. 6d.

The Philosophie of Modern Art: Herbert Read: Faber and faver: 10s. 6d.

The Film of Murder in the Cathedral: T. S. Eliot and Holering: Faber and Faver 10s. 6d.

The Language of shakespeare's Plays: Ifor Evans: Methuen: 18s.

Essentials of English grammar: jesperson: Allen and Unwin: 12s. 6d.

Omar Khayyam: A. J. Arberry: John Murray: 15s.

1953

(First Nine and Half Months)

The Meteorological distinction of Sylhet in rigorous cold and mist, in storm and thunder, torrential rains and inclemencies, fierce heat and stuffy conditions made itself acutely felt throughout. Their impact on the health of my family and myself was occasionally shattering. Activities within the College had an increasing tempo till the middle of September. The cast wing of Pakistan like the west and the country as a whole were administratively and politically unstable leading to the dramatic downfall of Khawaja Nazimuddin and the induction of Mohammad Ali (of Bogra) as Prime MInister of Pakistan in the "cruellest month" of April. The Muslim League had been slumping catastrophically with its total rout of 1954 staring it in the face and also the image of Iskander Mirza invisible behind. Earlier in the year on the 30th January, 1953, the report was received of khuro and Fazlullah being disqualified for public office for six and four years respectively.

In February when Mr. Nurul Amin was on a visit to Sylhet and addressing a public meeting under strict Police protection, he was shouted down and the meeting ended in some violence and confusion. He had arrived the same morning (8th February, 1953) and while he was being escorted in a triumphant Muslim League procession over the Keane Bridge a skirmish with the opposition party had taken place. This was exploited to create a commotion in the town as well as in the College by the circulation of a rumour that **Dhala Bari**, an Opposition leader of Sylhet had been killed. I had considerable difficulty in sending back the students to their classes. A province-wide strike was observed on the 21st February in commemoration of the language-controversy martyrs of 1952. To correct an omission let me refer to the unfortunate killing of seven students and wounding of 56 people at Karachi on the 8th January, 1953. A strike was observed in East Bengal on the 11th January out of sympathy with the Karachi sufferers. On the 27th February a History Conference being held in the Curzon Hall, Dacca was disrupted allegedly by the students of the Salimullah Muslim Hall, and venerable old scholars (champions of Urdu) were manhandled. On the 1st March Mr. Tafazzal Ali, Revenue Minister, East Bengal, was insulted and humiliated (so verbal and newspaper reports went) in a village of Sylhet. On the 16th May there was a strike in Sylhet town over the conviction of Maudoodi in the Punjab. In the Commonwealth the most significant event was the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II on the 2nd June. It coincided with the announcement of the conquest of the Everest by the 34-year-old New Zealander Hillary (now Sir Edmund) and Sherpa Tenzing, two members of the British Mt Everest Expedition led by Col. Hunt. The summit, 29002 ft. was reached by them on the 29th May. On the 9th June the world heaved a sigh of relief over the signing of the Prisoners of War Agreement in Korea. This led to complete cease fire and armistice of the conflict that had brought about two million casualties. On the eve of Pakistan Independence Day the whole country was shocked over the dismissal of Sheikh Abdullah of Kashmir and subsequent developments. Broadcasts from Radio Pakistan on the evening of 12th August and the following morning announced the cancellation of all festive items of the Independence Day programme. Sheikh Abdullah rotted in jail since then to 1964 when on his release there was a glimmering hope of a settlement among Pakistan, India and

Kashmir but at the moment of writing (4th April, 1965) he is causing the wildest excitement and keenest concern to India. He is out along with his trusted followers to perform the coming Haj-But having taken an indirect route he has just been to Cairo, London, Paris and Algiers. At Algiers he met the Chinese Premier Chou En Lai who invited him to a visit of China. The Pakistan, China entente is maddening enough to India but now the conduct of Abdullah is that of a traitor who is driving India to desperate lengths. The demand in India is that the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister must resign immediately. It is feared that Abdullah is likely to form an emigre Govt. in China where in the opinion of Editor of The Statesman he will only be "a gilded tool" in the gallery of exiles" but that the Sheikh should realise that "a settlement cannot be reached via Peking". India forgets how it lionised Subhas Chandra Bose at the head of his Indian Republican Army formed and financed by the Japanese. After 17 years the Kashmir tangle like the present Vietnam one is as matted as ever. Vanity of vanities. But I have been writing about my life in Sylhet in 1953. It was packed with varied engagements and pre-occupations.

I had only two terms to serve: 3rd January to 11th May and 9th July to 15th October. During the first long term in addition to lectures and tutorials we held all terminal and Test exams, University Intermediate and Degree Exams. This time the degree Examinations were concluded before the long vacation so that admissions to the academic year 1953-54 were completed practically on normal schedule. During the first term we had three mileposts in the extra-academic field while others were usual. The first milepost was attained in January by the visit of a West Pakistan Delegation of 23 men, 7 women and 2 Professors, on the second by a four-day long Science and Commerce Exhibition in February, the 3rd by a British Council Book Exhibition in March. The West Pakistan Delegates' tour was a purely educational affair and sponsored on a Government to Government level. Its itinerary together with detailed instructions of the formation of reception committees at local centres of visit, the character of entertainment programme etc. was received by me in the first week of January with the Principal of M. C. College as Secretary and Treasurer, and the Deputy Commissioner as President. There was no scope or provision for associating non-officials or political leaders with the Reception Committee. From the 10th

January 25th the delegation arrived at Sylhet on the 26th-the D. C. and his staff on the one hand and some representatives of the teaching staff and I on the other worked in close cooperation in organising accommodation, feed and entertainment. Without the D. C's authority and assistance it would have been impossible for us to secure accommodation for such a large body of visitors including 8 ladies, A mile off from the College and in the midst of woody ridges and rice fields stood newly constructed structures for the establishment of a T. B. Clinic which was still a pious aspiration and not equipped in any way. A furlong away to the south stood on a small eminence a residential bungalow having modern amenities. It was untenanted since the departure of the last occupant, the Assistant collector of Customs. These two were finally selected for men and women delegates respectively. We called them Camp I and Camp II. for the first temporary arrangements in respect of water-supply, lighting and conservancy had to be made. Mr. Hussain Haider, the Deputy Commissioner, being young and enthusiastic got things done quickly. From the College and the Hostels we raised a Volunteer Corps to wait upon the guests round the clock. Eager women students were also available to do their parts. Men and Women volunteers got busy with the logistics of the visiting corps. When all arrangements were completed Maulavi Moinuddin Choudhury, MLA, gave a ring tome on the 25th January and demanded why I had excluded the public. My explanation did not pacify him. I asked him to exercise his power with the Government. At 1-40 p. m. on the 26th January we accorded tumultuous reception at the Sylhet Bazar Railway Station to the 23 men and 7 women students under the leadership of Major Aftab, Principal, Urdu College, and the Vice-Principal of Women's College (I forget her name) both of Karachi. Tall and shapely the Major sported a trim beard and wore a perennially kind smile reminding one of Harold McMillan, "for ever amber", the last but one Tory Premier of U. K. Unlike his disciples who were egregiously westernised in clothes and manner, he had Sherwani and loose trousers on. One would have thought he was a teacher of Arabic or Persian or Urdu but his subject was Chemistry. The men under his charge were all Post-Graduate students as far as I remember and smothered him and others under puffing smoke., he Professor-in-College of the Women was middle-aged, plump, matronly, She hated fuss, avoided meeting and promiscu-

ity, Her charge were quiet too. One of them Nusrat, a very sweet young lady, was one of our pupils at Chittagong College. The first day's programme at College consisted of Tennis, Tea and variety entertainment and show-all these proving enjoyable. One upcountry businessman, Mr. Zia Huquani, then living with the District Controller of Civil Supplies, had fixed up dinner in the evening. Contrary to all expectations he had roused by his enthusiastic invitation he made a poor showing; he had brought together a huge crowd of guests to serve them worthless and inadequate food. On the 2nd day the programme from after breakfast to 6 p.m. was at the College; a meeting in the Assembly hall, Cricket in the playing fields, teaching staff lunch, combined staff-student tea. At tea held in the Administration Building open spur where the Egyptian Ambassador was entertained in December, 1952, we had roped in the public leaders, It was a wonderful day of touching harmony and fraternisation free from artificial restraint and reserve, free from any taint of the Urdu-Bengali language controversy. Our students wearing simple clothes and accustomed to speaking in Bengali were undoubtedly a contrast to their western counterparts. But they had conquered the hearts of the guests by their spontaneous warmth and ready service. Youth, Islam, the link-language English wrought a miracle. In the evening the men were entertained at dinner at sylhet Jinnah Hall by Mr. Majduddin Ahmed (already mentioned). President of the Local Branch of the Anjuman-i-Taraqqii-Urdu; the women at Ladies Club. By consensus of opinion the duration of the visit was extended to include a look at the Cement Factory at Chhatak on the 28th and "Shikar" at Srimangal "Haur" on the 29th. The visit to Chhatak Cement Factory, a miniature of a fragment at Tata's in India was completed by 3-30 p. m. An all-hostel dinner in the evening led to a crescendo of enjoyment for all concerned. On the 29th January a cavalcade of transport for what looked like a marriage party was formed with the State Car, the Dy. Commissioner's Personal new Dodge', Ata Mohammad khan's Buick and one hired bus. The road journey to Srimangal via Maulavi Bazar, a distance of, say, 45 miles, was completed shortly after 10 a. m. According to detailed instructions given by Mr. Haider, the S. D. O. of Maulavi Bazar, had organised a sumptuous early lunch at Srimangal 'DAK BUNGALOW'. This we enjoyed tremendously after which the majority went out for a four-hour Shikar

in course of which 68 birds were bagged. These were stripped, disembowelled, cleansed and salted and then handed over to the guests on the eve of their departure from the Srimangal Railway Station where we saw them off at 6-30 p. m. of 29th January. I returned to my bungalow at 9 p. m., Mr and Mrs. Haider slightly earlier. We have since been cherishing the reminiscences of such a pleasant visit. What pains me on occasions is that neither Major Aftab nor any other member of the delegation did ever care to write a line to M. C. College as a token of their responsive goodwill. But these are little things that matter little. The only big thing about life is that it moves on and we did move forward to the making of preparations for a Science and Commerce Exhibition at the College in the middle of February. Our Science staff emerged from their sunken state in the depths of their Laboratories, shook off their oozes and set about smartly in polishing their tools and putting them up for the projected show. They raised their own volunteers with whom they pounded away for five days to stage their drama of magic and miracle. Mr. D. L. Das, Vice-Principal and Professor of Physics, turned over a new leaf, was up and coming to a degree that his old self could not be recognised. Mr. Nuruzzaman who succeeded Mr. Wahed Buksh as Professor of Chemistry did the overall planning and execution with his London Laboratory work and experience at his back. Professor Md. Sirajuddin and Mr. W. H. Wasty had their respective Botany and Biology Laboratories ever ready for an Exhibition. Messrs. Satyaban Dash and Akhteruzzaman replenished their Commerce Museum stock and gave it a seductive look on the shop-front decoration pattern. The Educational Adviser of Pakistan., Mr. M. S. Mohiuddin having had a tour programme in the near future of East Pakistan including M. C. College I proposed to the DPI that the honour of formal opening of the Exhibition should go to him. This was approved; his itinerary included his arrival at Sylhet on the 14th February so that he might perform the ceremony on the 15th. He was reportedly, an eminent scientist whose prior consent was secured. The Education Minister, Mr. Abdul Hamid, would also be available simultaneously. The Educational Adviser did arrive from Chittagong on schedule. Two of my professors represented the College at the Railway Station along with the representatives of the District Authority. On account of unforeseen circumstances neither Mr. Haider nor the state Car was available. He looked at the

attending jeep to take him to the nearby Circuit House and flew into temper. When my professors approached him he became still more rude and said that he would go back immediately afterwards. And in a huff he actually did so in two hours by the same train bound for Chittagong and not for Dacca which was his destination after the Sylhet visit. When my Professors returned to report about this epic wrath and withdrawal from what may be called a national commitment and obligation we were completely flabbergasted. What a high functionary was here, how much pampered by considerations of rank and authority and how little by those of his duties and responsibilities in public service. I called an immediate meeting of the teaching staff who decided on adhering to our programme with the Principal to inaugurate. The Exhibition was opened on the 15th forenoon and closed on the 17th, the last day being set apart for ladies. On the first day the whole town was at the College. Having had immense space about we could absorb them. But on the following day the crowd was beyond control. The jugglery of the chemists, the miniature transmitting station set up by the Physics Department together with its network of telephones and so on proved irresistibly attractive. On the 2nd day we had Minister and his party for a look and later for entertainment at Tea. On the concluding day we had a wonderfully huge audience of ladies. The following sentence in my diary will be an appropriate quote "That the Exhibition would achieve such tremendous success was beyond my imagination". I should take it that Mr. Mohiuddiin was the poorer for his offended dignity. The British Council Book Exhibition in the spacious library hall of M. C. College was held exactly during the corresponding period next month, from the 15th to the 18th. If the afternoon of 14th February was marked by he indignation of the Educational Adviser, the evening and the whole night of 14th March was marked by tragic gloom and terror in our family. Let us go back to the first week of March when the seeds of both were sown. On the 3rd March the Regional Representative of the British Council at Dacca, Mr. Elliot come over and fixed up a schedule for his books show. On the 5th March I received a telegram from my daughter who had joined a teaching assignment at Karachi seven months earlier, to say that her husband had just returned from Washington after two and -half year separation since their marriage. On the 13th March Mr. Saidullah, Khan, M. A. M. Ed. Regional Education Officer, British Council

arrived to make all arrangements for the Book Exhibition to follow on the 15th. Practically simultaneously I received a message from my daughter intimating that she and her husband would be arriving soon, the tentative date given being 14th March. On the morning of the 14th. Mr. and Mrs. Elliott arrived at Sylhet to supervise and complete Book Exhibition arrangements which they did in course of the day. They had fixed up the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Haider, to preside over the opening ceremony. At 9 p. m. exactly when I was expecting a trunk call from Dacca about the arrival there of my daughter and son-in-law the telephone rang; it was Mr. Khalilur Rahman, was at my bungalow, the latter being badly needed to accompany Mr. Haider immediately to Agartala area in Indian territory where the Orient Airways Dacca-bound "Convair" had crashed all aboard being killed. A furious storm disrupted ground communication and blew the plane sway to the hills of Agartala. Literally I fell down from my chair. It was a night of terrors for us. At 1-35 a. m. we succeeded in contacting Mrs. Qudrat-i-Khuda at Karachi who told us that in all probability the couple had not travelled by the ill-fated plane and that she would make sure and let us know. The resultant suspense and gloom continued till the evening of the 16th March when we were lucky enough to listen to the voices of two who, meanwhile, had been out picnicking. That was how youth behaved to cause agony to their parents and brothers Mr. Haider having ~~left~~ immediately afterward for the scene of the crash Mr. Elliott failed to have a President in him exactly as we had missed Mr. Mohiuddin. On this occasion too I had to fill the gap. Neat arrangements for putting up the books on who were made in our Library Hall while those for the formal opening in the Assembly Hall where we gathered to listen first to recitation from the Quoran, then to adopt a condolence resolution of grief and sorrow for the victims of the plane crash and later to hear Mr. Elliott's speech. Next we formed a procession and moved with measured steps to cut the red ribbon and enter into intellectual banquet-hall where invitations were unrestricted and the bill of fare spread for universal consumption, Table by table, showcase by showcase stood delicious dishes in fine stance and exquisite poise inviting a partaking share. Here was no clangour of fork and spoon, no scurrying of attendants, no fun and frolic-altogether a solemn, silent feast. The spectacular demonstration of the Science Fair, together with its noisy

commentary by young under graduates to attract crowds was a mid-February madness. Here was a mid-March sacred festival of worship of immortal gods of the intellect and the spirit by priests and adorers of a temple of learning. This was the first time that M. C. College had such an entertainment through the courtesy of Mr. Elliott, a far-travelled seasoned, scholarly administrator having a mellow charm about him. His wife a Spanish lady of slight build and quiet demeanour was a perfect match. His young Education Officer, Mr. Saidullah Khan, was all efficiency. It was no wonder that he should soon be recruited to a responsible Government post.

British Information Service at Dacca with Mr. George as its head made an entry as if by a sort of competition and gave us Cinema shows in the first week of April. Sports, games and matches, parties and dinners, occasional transfers, sickness at home kept us fully occupied but let me jump them all to spare my readers boredom.

Of the death of two of my elder brothers I have already made mention. Reports of the bad state of health of the third were coming in since January, 1953, when I took out a Passport and on the eve of the summer vacation I secured a Visa as well. Within ten days of the beginning of the summer recess alarming news came and I left for my native place in West Bengal on the 21st May from Dacca by surface route. Never before I made any air travel; I had an inexplicable dread of the same. All my brother's sons and daughters were at Narayanganj. The eldest one flew to Calcutta on the following day and reached Rampurhat the same evening. But I got there on the evening of 23rd May having made a night's stop-over in Calcutta. This was my first visit after Independence. The check-posts on the border at Darsana and Banpur cost at least four hours of trying time. I have made many journeys since then. But travel restrictions have been getting more and more strict. The securing of valid travel documents in each country for the law-abiding citizens and travellers is an exasperating affair, and the conditions in which a journey has to be made are most humiliating. On arrival at Ramprhat I found my afflicted brother in a serious state; he struggled on for two more days and passed away on the morning of the 26th May, 1953. The burial ceremony, the associated religious and conventional functions, the settlement of complex problems of the maintenance and manage-

ment of property my brother having been in charge of all these things since the death of my father in 1926—detained me and my nephew for about a month. I returned to Dacca on the 20th June and I was back at Sylhet on the 22nd. My heart sank within me when I had a look at my wife. She was run down and emaciated beyond recognition through continuous illness. When I left she was slightly indisposed and therefore, placed under a course of medical treatment which at the hands of our intimate friend, the Civil Surgeon, did have only one single remedy, the administration of antimalarial drug no matter what the malady was; from headache to common cold, from diarrhoea to dysentery, from simple fever to enteric, the panacea in each case was the use of the drugs just mentioned in heavy, heavier, heaviest doses. Sylhet according to him called for perpetual, unvarying caution against malignant malaria. My wife went on swallowing superlative degrees and quantities of these drugs with the inevitable sequence of anaemia and devitalisation. She and I had implicit confidence in the 'unquestioned skill' of our physician friend. This confidence brought her low. I changed her treatment but I did not grow wiser in my own case later in the middle of september. The 1953 monsoon in Sylhet was insufferably heavy. I had to make frequent trips to Dacca. Through exposure I developed cold, cough and catarrh. The telephone in both the bungalows made consultation easy. When I complained I had the unique prescription. I find from my diary that all the three drugs by turns or two of them simultaneously. A fortnight's continuance brought me down almost to the same level with my wife's in the months of May and June. A prolonged course of anti-anaemia injections on the eve of my retirement and subsequently set me up on my feet.

At the reopening of M. C. College on the 9th July, 1953, we had occasion to pride on and rejoice over the achievements of our students at the Dacca University Intermediate Exams. Nirmalendu Sen stood first in Science; Shaukat, Ataur Rahman, Lutfur Rahman secured high position in Arts, and Ruhul Quddus in Commerce. We offered them ceremonial greetings. A month later Satyen Deb stood first in B. Sc. Pass Examination. Two years earlier when the latter had passed I. Sc. Examination in the First Division securing high position I discovered that he was too poor to meet his expenses. He had only one change of simple clothes. I organised relief and helped him through. His admis-

sion into Dacca University M. Sc. Chemistry classes synchronised with my employment at the University where again for another two years I gave him the backing and support he needed. He came out first in both Preliminary and Final M. Sc. Examinations. Later he went to U. K. with Govt. Scholarship. Short slim and fairlooking this hard working quiet boy richly fulfilled our expectations of him. My son, the second of the two who accompanied me to Sylhet in 1952, also secured a high position in I. Sc. First Division. In July, 1953, he joined the Dacca medical College immediately afterwards. During his five-year course there he was admittedly one of the best students. The elder of the two stayed behind for six months (after we had left) to complete his B. sc. On his arrival at Dacca, the younger one undertook and completed extensive repairs to the house that came into our occupation in December, 1952. Early in 1953 the post of the Inspector of Colleges, Dacca University, was advertised. But it escaped my notice. Later when I came to know about it I wrote to the Registrar to say that I was willing to be considered. On the 25th July, the Dacca University appointed me to the post for a term of three years with effect from the date on which I should be free to join. On the 8th August the hostel development building plan was finalised and the work was taken up immediately afterwards. But meanwhile the Botany-Biology building work which was proceeding apace was stopped under peremptory Govt. orders on the grounds of financial straits. I received this as a bullet in my heart and no amount of **Tadbir** on my part proved fruitful. The Government had to agree to the payment of suitable compensation to the Contractor.

Here was a deplorable decision in the context of a hundred other items of wasteful expenditure allowed to continue by the same Government. After the summer vacation there was a rush for admissions and there were 664 students on the rolls on the 22nd September when I delivered my Inaugural Address to them. Earlier on the Independence Day on the 14th August, at 7-40 a. m. the students and the staff and also the Rover Scouts had organised a neat and moving flaghoisting ceremony and the singing of the National Anthem. At the ceremonial parade in the town of the forenoon the performance of the P. T. Squad was most impressive; in the public meeting I was accorded the top most priority in speaking. On the 9th August Professor Elias Ahmed read a learned paper in the Assembly Hall on Milton's moral Laws. A week earlier

Professor Gholam Rasal read another paper on "Some Methods of Improving Plants". On the 13th September we had a very successful, three-hour function to commemorate the death of Quaid-i-Azam and although we had pouring rains on that day the house was full. In connexion with the illness of my wife I have already referred to my own illness in the middle of September. Towards the end of the month I was too weak to move about freely. But my havitual resilience and will to conquer odds succeeded. With effect from the 9th October onwards I started attending farewell functions and dinners at the College Hostels and friends' places right upto the evening of 15th October when we left for Dacca. All our friends gave us an exceedingly nice time on the eve of my retirement. I took the rough along with the smooth with intrepid spirit. We made the place our own and gave of our best ever working in the light of truth and impartiality, love and sympathy, patience and toleration and ever ready to forget and forgive.

I propose to give a short account of my eleven-year life and work at Dacca University in a separate Volume. (April 8th, 1965)

THE END

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A short Sketch of Abu Hena

Mr. Abu Hena was born in the year 1898 at Rampurhat (Sub division) under the District Suri in West Bengal. He studied at Rampurhat Midnapore, Presidency College Calcutta and obtained his Master's Degree in English from Calcutta University and was placed in the First Class. This distinction has so far achieved by only a few muslims.

Mr. Abu Hena had all through his life been in the teaching profession. Only for a brief period of 3 years he has been Director Public Information during the Second great World war under the Govt. of Sher-E-Bangla A. K. Fazlul Huq. A man of strong principle and uncompromising attitude he loved his students which included a late Prime Minister of the then Pakistan. Before his death in January 19th, 1975 he was the treasurer of Dhaka University. He left behind 10 sons, one daughter and several grand children at the time of death.