CHAPTER - I

RENAISSANCE IN BENGAL

In the 19th Century there came an awakening of thought opening up new horizons in Bengal and also in the whole of India. In French this awakening is called Renaissance. Majority of people are of the opinion that the significant signs of Renaissance are, human consciousness in place of spiritual consciousness, material wisdom in place of divine and mystic wisdom. Natural in place of the mysterious, liberty and freedom in place of divine devotion, knowledge based on proof in place of taking age old ideas for granted, liberty in the realm of thought in place of the blind following of the authority. These were what ruled the thoughts and life of the people in olden times. After the coming of Christianity, Europe began to be ruled by the teachings of the Bible. The Bible was everything, in the Bible alone there were history, Science, Philosophy and other aspects of human thought and endeavour. It was a strange kind of bondage. As a consequence of severance with Greece a sort of gloom engulfed the European mind. This age of gloom is the Middle Ages. This Middle Age or the Age of the Biblical rule was steeped with superstitions, corruption in all aspects of life and blind following of the outdated beliefs. The human soul cried out in agony for emancipation from this dark and
crude bondage. And then knowledge was remoulded in a new shape in place of the old after severing itself from the rule of the church and the stale cults and the teachings of the scriptures; in place of the pervading gloom, came a new light of knowledge. This was no religion but a new attitude to life, so it had no relation with religion and hence it was called Humanism. Man was everything, everything revolves around him, he is the measuring rod of all what touches his life. European Renaissance had another side, the Arts Renaissance gave the artists the freedom that he sorely needed to express himself. In the field of sculpture and painting the source of inspiration of the artists was the classical age. Nude Venus was sculptured and done in painting. As old relics of art was discovered, the artists were prompted to create something new.

The wave of this historic movement crossed the Atlantic and the Indian oceans and reached the shores of Bengal as well as that of India. Hence Calcutta became the Mecca of this new Renaissance. Its importance was still more increased when it became the capital of British India. It became the centre of learning, science and Arts, in India. The Bengalis took advantage of this opportunity fully. It was Ram Mohan who welcomed it first. He believed that not only Bengal but the whole of India needed the change. The pioneers were always a small group of educated people every where.
some of them belonged to the social elite while others came from the middle class. Never in the history of human civilization the masses started a new movement or Renaissance for that matter. Ram Mohan and his associates welcomed this new wave of reawakening with open arms, though it was not native but it was contemporary and went with the times. Without the advent of Ram Mohan, the modern age would have been much delayed in coming. Our Renaissance was just the same like its European counterpart, a transcendental journey from a world of darkness to a world of light. Renaissance may come in any country in any age but all awakening is not renaissance. Where there is no distinct severance from the past, there can be no transition from darkness to light. Renaissance can happen in a particular country and in a particular age when Science leaves behind scriptures theology is separated from philosophy. History is freed from the constraints of the "Puranas".

It was Ram Mohan who first realised that there was no need to evolve a new system to teach theology, the need of the hour was to teach philosophy and science. Renaissance persistently deals with subjects like man and the world around him, the Earth and the life on Earth. This new attitude and thought triumphed in the 19th century resurrection of the new thought defeated the old beliefs, the renaissance wanted to see things in a new perspective, under
things in a new light. Unless there is a reassessment of the old values, renaissance is not possible. Reconsideration and reassessment are the very soul of renaissance. If we compare our educational system with that of contemporary Europe we shall find that ours was more secular. For this we have to thank men like Ram Mohan and Vidyasagar who were free from the influence of outmoded customs on the one hand, and open-minded Europeans like David Hare and Macaulay on the other. The significant difference between the European and the Bengal or the Indian Renaissance was that the European Renaissance came to re-establish the old relations with Greece and Rome which was cut off. But we never lost touch with the old tradition and culture of India and hence the question of the re-establishment of the link between the old and the new did not arise at all. Our Renaissance came to free the country from the evils of superstitions and outdated customs of the dark Middle Ages and to establish a new link with the developed modern Europe. The greatness which Renaissance has bestowed upon man, irrespective of his nationality, caste, creed or religion, has not been by anything else. In support of this the remark of Ananda Shankar Roy is worth mentioning, "The Renaissance came to free man in every country in all the aspects of his life. To free him from the dictates of the scriptures, from the gods from his perceptors, from the priests, from the king, from the feudal lords, from superstitions, from evil customs, from
bondage and from inequality".¹

The importance of Calcutta increased when it became the capital of British India and it became the seat of the Indian Renaissance. The importance of education increased to run the day to day work of the administration and also to rule the country. Books on law were published in prose to rule the country and a printing press was already started. Since there is an intimate relation between education and administration the company established the Fort William College to teach Bengali. The 'Asiatic Society' was also established at this time. To meet the needs of the college books were written in prose.

"Though the evolution of the Bengali Prose was carried out by some Sanskrit and Persian scholars to some extent the major contribution in this regard was done by writers educated in English."²

As the English dominion extended its boundaries in this country and its administration took a firm root in the

¹ "Renaissance eseç-ila mānuṣke Sarbadeshe, sarbaprakār-mukta karte. Sāstrēr hāt theke, devatār hāt theke, Gurur hāt theke, Purohītēr hāt theke, Rājar hāt theke, sāmanta hāt theke, kusanskārer hāt theke, kuprathēr hāt theke. Asamyer hāt theke".

Ananda Shankar Roy: Banglār Renaissance D.M. Library, Calcutta-6, p. 49.

² "Banglā Gadyer kramabikāsh katak parimāñe Sanskrita bi Parasik shikhita lehakder hāte haleobipul parimāñe hāe Engrāji shikshita lehakder hāte".

Ibid - p. 33.
soil the need for English-knowing people began to increase. To impart education in English the famous Hindu College was established. Through the medium of English education the people of this country came in contact with European culture and civilization and her literature.

"Having got the taste of English literature the educated Bengalis became conscious of their own literature and became aware of the shortcomings and lack of development of it". The first reflection of it was seen in the enthusiasm to write text books in prose in the first part of the 19th century and in the publication of contemporary magazines. The polish of English education and the assessment of the new values derived therefrom paved the way for modernism in literature". 3

It was seen, "The chief tendency in the evolution of modern Bengali culture was to modernise it with the help of tradition". 4

3 "Ingrāji sāhityer swād pāiyā shikshita Bāngāli nijer sāhityer prati sachtan haṭ ebong se sāhityer apūrnata sambandhe tāhār bodh janme. Ihār pratham pratīfalam ghatila unabingsha shatābdir pratham bhāge gadya paṭhyan pustak rachanār utsāhe ebong sāmaik patrikār sādār prachalane. Ingrāji shikshār marjanā o tatlabdha nabo mulyabodher sange sange sāhitye adunikatār path prastūte haite thāke".


4 "Ādhunik Bāngāli sanskritir bibartane ektā mukhya prabaṇatā chīla aitijhyer sāhājye ādhunikikaran".

The Bengalis got acquainted with the European Renaissance through the medium of English education. The Bengali mind was already prepared to receive it. The study of Sanskrit and Persian for generations had done it. The soil was tilled for many ages and hence no sooner the seed was sown than it germinated. Ram Mohan and his associates were the pioneers in this regard and it can be said that without his advent the Bengal and likewise the Indian Renaissance would have been quite delayed.

Ram Mohan Roy was the most powerful and the greatest intellectual of the modern age (1772-1833). His works and thoughts, enthusiasm, energy and intellect have opened the door of the modern age to India. He was the pioneer of the men who got English education in India. He knew Sanskrit well and, Persian still better. He also learnt Arabic. Polyglot Ram Mohan was less interested in style but gave more stress on what he said. The chief traits of his character was his social consciousness and deep humanism. He was profoundly aware of the stagnation in the society, the prevailing superstitions, evil customs and religious bigotry which were all around. The chief object of his life was to alleviate the misery and suffering of men and give him a better life through social reforms. He was the first who tried to bring about a synthesis of the East and the West by acceptance and rejection of whatever was good and beautiful.
in them. He had a fearless and reasonable mind. So Sri Aurobinda said,

"All great movements of life in India have begun with a new spiritual thought and usually a new religious activity".  

His lifelong struggle began with reforms in the Hindu religion and the Hindu society which stagnated in blind beliefs and hence was powerless to judge itself. Having started to live in Calcutta permanently he, with some of his intimate friends and some middle class men with higher education, established the "Atmiya Sabhā" and started to discuss many topics among themselves regularly. With great courage and determination he started criticising the distorted Hindu religion which had lost the path of truth and virtue. He noticed that India is the confluence of many religions and people with many languages. When the comparative study of different religions and cultures was yet to begin, he noticed the good and the evil aspects of them. He realised that in the three great religions, Hinduism, Islam and Christianity there are some aspects which knew no boundaries of time and space and have an enduring appeal and, there are some which are just local and temporary. If the local and temporary aspects are done away with, the basic

5 Sri Aurobinda. The Renaissance in India, p. 44.
spiritual aspects of the religion is not harmed, rather with mutual understanding and synthesis an all embracing spiritualism is born. He came to conclusion that unrevealed Monotheism is that universal religion. Everywhere in Hindusim, Islam and Isahi this has been agreed upon. Studying the basic and fundamental teachings of the scriptures of all religions and using his reasoning power and strong common sense Ram Mohan wanted to get at the central truth of religion itself. To achieve this goal he learnt Hibrew, Greek and Arabic. He wrote "Vedānta Grantha" and "Vedāntasār" (1815) and translated the Upanishads. On one side he overcame the orthodox Catholics, Protestants and Baptists in argument and the orthodox Hindus and Vaishnabas on the other, he did not accept any other interpretation of Islam except what was based on reason and judgement. The concept of religion he arrived at he called, "Vedānta Pratipādita Satya Dharma". - The true religion based on the arguments of the Vedantas - what is commonly known as Brahminism, of course, the foundation remained rooted in the Vedantas. In his opinion the social objective of religion should be the welfare of the humanity. Following the teachings of the Geeta, he gave importance to work without any expectation of any reward as has been asserted by his biographer Nagendra Nath Chattopadhyay.
"In this stream of thought there was no place for the stagnating thoughts or nostalgia of the Middle Ages. This was work-prone and futuristic, what may be called achievement oriented. Such an idealism inspired the intellectuals of the time and continue its influence upto the coming of Vivekananda."  

He devoted himself heart and soul and with rare courage in the task of service to humanity and social reform. Then religious clash started and his real struggle began. He raised his determined voice against the cruel customs like castism, the cult of "Suttee", polygamy etc. quoting proofs from scriptures. On 20th August, 1828 he established the "Brāhma Sabhā" along with some of his followers. In this organisation regular discussions were held on the opinion, ideals and work culture of Ram Mohan. His opinions on different subjects and his ideals always appeared in writing. At first he published "Vedānta Grantha" and "Vedāntasār" (1815). And then one by one wrote "Bhattāchārjer Sahit Bichār" (1816-17) "Goswāmir Sahit Bichār", "Sahamaraṇ Biṣayak Prabartak O Nibartak Sambād" (1818-19) and such pamphlet

6 "Ei chintādhārāy Madhyajugiya Jaratta O nostalgiār konc sthān nei. E karma praban O Bhabisyatmukhi, jāke bale achievement oriented. Eman ādarshabād se juğer buddhihibider je prerana diyech-ila ta Vivekānanda parjanta prabahamān".

literature. (Discussions with Bhattacharya, "Discussions with Goswāmi" and "News in connection with the initiation and the culmination of the cult of widows immolating themselves in the same funeral pyre with their husbands", respectively).

To organise public opinion he arranged discussions and debates and at last appealed to the English Majesty. All these are the sure signs of a modern outlook on life. Justice and sincerity were his chief weapons to fight the evils. In his hands Bengali prose also developed. "Chāri prasner uttar" (Answer to four questions) and "Pathya Pradān" (Giving diet to the sick) have a prose style which is quite impressive. Ramgati Nayaratna has also admitted - his songs are completely devoid of the vulgar taste of the village minstrels and moved hearts of stone. A staunch lover of old tradition like Ishwar Gupta also said, "Dewānji (Ram Mohan) wrote Bengali like oil pouring out of a bottle".

Ram Mohan was also a pioneer in the discussions of scientific subjects. Essays on scientific subjects published in "Sambād Koumudi" are ample proofs of this. Ram Mohan was also a pioneer in newspaper publication. The first Bengalī newspapers "Samachār Darpaṇ" was published by the Srirāmpur mission in 1818. This event is of great importance in the history of Bengali language and literature. After this he published "Brāhmonical Magāzīne" and "Brāhmaṇ Sebadhi" in English and Bengali respectively (1821), and then "Mirātul
Akhbar" in Persian (1822). He wrote Bengali Grammar in English (1826). Later it was translated into Bengali. This grammar by Ram Mohan was the prescribed text book used in Hindu College for a long time. He overcame all the inhibitions of the orthodox Hindu society and went to England crossing the 'Black water'. He presented an appeal in the court of the Majesty exposing the corruption in the administration, the protestations of the peasantry and placed certain demands for the uplift and welfare of the Indian people. Even in those days his ideas and opinions were clear and progressive and he had an abiding love for the country's independence. Ram Mohan ceased to be - for men like him do not die - in 1833 and yet the seed he sowed for the rights of man and social reform grew into an immense tree in course of time, through works for human welfare overcoming all obstacles of nationality, religion, caste, etc.

Of the associates of Ram Mohan, the name of David Hare, a foreigner, must be mentioned. He came to India in 1800 as a supervisor in the East India Company. The chief object of his life was to spread modern education among the people of the country which he made his home and where he stayed till the last day of his life. He took Ram Mohan with him and discussed about the spread the European education in this country with justice Sir Hyde East (1816). As a result of this the famous Hindu College was established in 1817.
which has now been renamed Presidency College. Every day he
inspected the college and showed great enthusiasm in matters
of learning. He established the 'School Book Society' in 1817
for the writing and publication of text books and for the
learners of physical education he established the 'School
Society' in 1818. He helped in the establishment of many
schools in Calcutta and also looked after their running.
Henry Lewis Vivian Derozio initiated a few of his students
into a new world of thought. These students, in a way, are
the spokesmen of the modern Bengali generation. After he
became a teacher of the Hindu College, a few young men of
well-to-do families were attracted to him. These young men
became greatly devoted to Derozio for his fearlessness and
devotion to truth. They came out of the influence of orthodox
Hindusim and gathered around him for his guidance. Their
activities were solely directed against the age old customs
and rituals of Hinduism. They vehemently opposed them with
scatting criticisms. But Derozio (1809-31) desired that his
students should arrive at a reasonable solution through
independent analysis and assessment of problems. He wanted to
instil in them his own high moral ideals. But since these
young men had little acquaintance with their own old
traditions, they were confused and failed to distinguish
between the right and the wrong. However, there were good
exceptions like Parry Chand Mitra and Krishna Mohan
Bandhopadhyay. These young students of Derozio were together
called, "The Young Bengal". They not only opposed opinion but had contributed significantly towards the development of culture. In 1831 they brought out two magazines. "Enquirer" and "Gnānānweśan" in English and Bengali respectively.

"It did not escape their notice that the Indians were deprived of taking part in legislation that the executive and middle category jobs were monopolised by the whites, that the Company enjoyed absolute monopoly in trade and commerce, that immense wealth was drained out of the country and the burden of heavy taxation (upto 1833). They did not hesitate to complain against the zamindars siding with the subjects. Every one desired the spread of education and supported widow marriage and the wiping out of castism".  

Maharshi Debendra Nath Thakur (1817-1905) welcomed and accepted the new light of western culture and civilization which now illuminated the traditional Indian spiritualism. He gave the efforts of Ram Mohan a definite direction by accepting the old in the light of the new in his

7 "Ain pranayane Bhāratīyader anadhikār, samastabarao mājhāri chākūrite swetāngader ekchetīa niog, Bānijye compānir ekchetīa kartitwa (1833 parjanta) -- Desh theke dhan niskāsan, bipul karavār tāder najar erāini -- jamidārer biruddhe prajāder haye nālish karte bādhēni tāder. Strī shikshār bistār cheyechen sabāi. Bidhābā bibāhā O Jātibhed belope samarthan karech-en tārā". 

Ibid. p. 53.
thoughts and actions and brought a new faith "Brāhma religion", basing it on the worship of the "Brāhma". He brought out the magazine "Tatwabodhini" and cleared the way for intellectual prose writing in Bengali. His interpretations of the Brahma religion and his speeches delivered in the Brahma Samaj were regularly published in this magazine. Debendra Nath was the first person who started the translation of the "Rig Veda" and it was he who wrote the first Sanskrit grammar in Bengali prose (1845). There lurked a great literary talent in Rishi Debendra Nath. There was a strange lucid beauty in his Bengali composition. Akshay Kumar Dutta was the editor of "Tatwabodhini". He was also the principal writer of this magazine. He also wrote several books of which the best is "Bhāratbarśiya Upāsak Sampradāy". His style was easy, lucid and restrained. He was the chief collaborator of Vidyasagar in correcting and developing Bengali prose. He removed the complications of Bengali prose and made it usable in sentences. It was at this time when Iswar Chandra Gupta made his appearance. His magazine "Sambād Prabhākar" was an important addition in the history of Bengali literature. By nature he was a poet. Though he opposed and criticised the injustice and the other evils of the English rule, he could not free himself from the influence of old traditions. Though he was for the traditional values yet he was able to create a group of powerful writers through his "Sambad Prabhakar". These writer
earned much success in their own fields, such as Dwarkanath Adhikari, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Dinabandhu Mitra, Hari Mohon Sen, Rangalal Bandhopadhyay and Monomohon Basu. Akshay Kumar Dutta was much acclaimed by the literary elite of the day for his essays.

At this time the literary sky of Bengal was illuminated by a bright star, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. He was the greatest Sanskrit scholar of his time. He understood quite well what was true and what was counterfeit, what was relevant and what was not, what was enduring and what was temporary, in the old traditions of the country. The use of native tradition for social reforms shows his wisdom and great skill in handling public affairs. This is what we say the modernisation of tradition. Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-91), by instilling temperance and lucidity in Bengali prose gave a new life to it. Almost all his books fall in the category of text books, such as, "Bāsudev Charit", "Betal Panchabingsati", "Bāṅglār Itihās", "Jiban Charit", "Bodhoday", "Shakuntalā", "Kathāmālā", "Charitābali", "Sitar Banabās", "Akhyān Manjari", and "Bhrānti Bilās". Vidyasagar was essentially a reformer. He stood against the many evil customs of the Hindu Society. He had a natural gift for creation and a moral character firm as a rock. But he was not only a social reformer but he also brought about many changes in the field of education. He opened the doors of his
Sanskrit College for the non Brahmins. He showed great skill and efficiency in his work when he was a government inspector. In this period he opened 35 schools for girls and 20 model schools in four Parganas. He played a very distinctive and significant role in the spread of women's education in the country. He also made great efforts for higher studies of women. For a brief period he was the Secretary of Bethune School. He took up the work of Ram Mohan in social reform which he could not finish. He was associated with the magazine "Tatwabodhini" though he was not a Brahmin. He was an orthodox Hindu but without the narrowness of orthodox Hinduism, rather he had a generous, innocent and broad heart. He protested vehemently against child marriage (1850) and started a movement against polygamy. In 1855 he started a movement in favour of widow marriage which took the country by storm. He was greatly pained to see the injustice and torture upon child widows. He wrote two books in two volumes each. One was "Bidhabā bibāha prachalita howā uchit ki nā etadbiṣayak prastāb" (1855) - A proposal whether widow marriage should be introduced or not - the other was "Bahubibāha rahit howā uchit ki nā etadbiṣayak bichār" - A discussion whether polygamy should abolished or not (1871-73). He was known to be a great humanist. As an individual he was straight-forward and noble. In him there was,
"the genius and wisdom of an ancient sage, the energy of an Englishman and the heart of a Bengali mother". 

Among the people who ran the magazine "Tatwabodhini" many were the students of Hindu College. For the development and improvement of Bengali prose and poetry the contribution of the group from Hindu College can claim mention.

"The group from Sanskrit College brought reform. the group from Hindu College brought a revolution. In prose Parry Chand Mitra and in poetry and drama Michael Madhusudan Dutta brought an epoch making change".

Of the poets of the Hindu College group who came after Maharshi Debendra nath we should mention Rajnarayan Basu, Dwijendra Nath Thakur and Bhudeb Mukhopadhyay.

8 Madhusudan Dutta - B. Banerjee quoted from the letter of Madhusudan to Vidyasagar 2nd Aug., 1864.


9 "Sanskrit Colleger gosthi kariāchhilen sanskār Hindu Colleger gosthi ānilen biplab. Gadye Prāry Chānd Mitra ebong Padye - Nātake Michael Madhusudan Dutta jugāntar ghatāiyachilen".

In some countries, in certain times some men with rare virtues and qualities are born who bring about a social consciousness which flows into the nook and corner of the country. In their consciousness the image of the whole society is reflected. Rajnarayan Basu was one of such rare men (1826-99). He tried to arouse the sleeping faculties and numb mind of the Bengalis. In matters of religion and social practice, in literature and education, in patriotism and political consciousness, he put his best efforts to take his country forward. He was an educationist and by profession he was a teacher. He was also a literary preceptor. Many great writers were inspired by him to start a writing career. Michael Madhusudan Dutta wrote some of his poems and poetic works for the sake of his ex-classmate Rajnarayan. Dwijendra Nath Thakur was an intimate friend of Rajnarayan. At the bottom of his philosophical thoughts lay the inspiration of Rajnarayan. In his book "Jiban Smriti" Rabindra Nath has mentioned the role of Rajnarayan in his home education. The chief quality of his prose composition was straightforwardness steeped with humour. His best works are, "Sekal Ar Ekal" (1875), "Grāmya Upākhyān" (1883) and "Ātma charit". Besides these he also wrote about 8 to 10 books. Rajnarayan was the spokesman of the group of educated Bengalis who, in the mid 19th century, were moved with a desire for independence. He intensely desired the total consciousness of the people, to become fully alive to the current situation.
His nationalism was work-based. With tireless efforts, he and some of his associates, established "Chaitramelā - Hindumelā" (1866-77) and the "Jatiya Sabhā". What he made others do were much more valuable than what he did himself.

Bhudeb Mukhopadhyay (1825-94) was a classmate of Rajnarayan and Madhusudan and he was an educationist. From the very beginning he started writing in prose. In novel writing he came before Bankim Chandra. His "Swapnalabdha Bharatbarṣer Itīhās" - Indian history seen through a dream - "Pāribārīk Prabandha" - Essays on family matters", "Sāmājik Prabandha" - Essays on social matters etc. are worth mentioning. We observe three distinctive qualities in the characters of the three classmates, Bhudeb, Madhusudan and Rajnarayan. Rajnarayan was tradition minded, Bhudeb was for status quo and Madhusudan was for change. But the three friends, a Brahma, a Hindu and a Christian, were on the same level so far as generosity and broadmindedness were concerned.

The one among them who left sure signs of rare talent in creative arts, was Madhusudan Dutta. The well read, polyglot and highbrow Madhusudan called the language used by Iswar Gupta, the language of a woman fishmonger. Such monotonous rhyme and vulgar village-minstrel-rhetoric was unbearable to him. He wanted to be a great poet and that too
by western standards. His first play "Sharmiṣṭhā" (1859) was a war waged against the apeing of Sanskrit literature. His second play was "Padmābati" (1860). Here he not only disobeyed the dictates of the old style of rhetoric but the first act of the play seems to be an Indianisation of the Greek plays. He himself did not like his third play "Krishnakumāri". To us the burlsques of those days, "Ekei ki bale sabhyatā" - Do you call it civilization and culture - and "Buroshāliker ghare Ron" - Feather on the neck of an old magpie - are strangely alive even today. But Madhusudan was not the kind of man to be content with so little. He had an inborn literary consciousness. Tasting the strength of blank verse in the poetic drama "Tilottamā Sambhab", he wrote the poetic work "Meghnād Badh" (1861). A revolution happened in Bengali literature. Here he challenged tradition and sang the triumph of rebellion. He seated Valmiki and Vyas along with Homer, Virgil and Milton in the same seat. Breaking the constraints of rhyme he liberated Bengali poetry and opened up a new horizon for it and revived the inexhaustible store of Sanskrit vocabulary. He wrote "Biraangana Kabya" in the style of Ovid but not being satisfied returned to the bosom of Vaishnava literature in his "Brajānganā". The lyrical talent in his poems is irrefutable. Then his mind, seeking always the new, sought refuge in sonnets on the model of Petrarch. But though foreign in form the subject matters of his sonnets were native such as - "Kashirām Dās", "Kālidās".
"Kavi", "Aswin Mās", "Vijaya Dashami", etc. The greatest exposition of his proud Bengali mind is his "Ātma bilāp"—wailing of the self. Following the ideals of this work, Rangalal Bandhopadhyay, Hem Chandra Banerjee, Nabin Chandra Sen, and many others wrote patriotic poems in epic form. The first poem written in European lyrical style was written by Biharilal Chakraborty. In his play "Nil Darpan", Dinabandhu Mitra exposed the horrible poverty and misery and the cruel economic exploitation of the indigo farmers of Bengal. The play created a wave of agony and sympathy throughout the country which had no precedent. "Ālāler Gharer Dulāl" (1858) of Pyāry Chānd Mitra and "Hutom Pānchar Naksā" (1862) of Kali Prasanna Singha were written in pure rustic, colloquial language and they were scathing criticisms of the contemporary society. And then came Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay like a tidal wave to uplift and develop the Bengal language, novel and essay.

Apart from all these literary efforts Dwaraka Nath Vidyabhusan brought out the magazine "Somprakāś": Rajendralal Mitra published "Śārswat Samāj" and Mahendralal Sarkar established "The Indian Association" for the development of science and scientific studies in the country. Political consciousness among the people began to increase. Nabagopal Mitra, Rajnarayan Basu and Jyotirindra Nath Thakur together established the "Patriot's Association" in 1865, and
with their tireless efforts and enthusiasm the Hindu Mela or the Chaitra Mela was started in a very satisfactory manner in 1867. To bring out the true picture of the political and economic condition of the country Sisir Kumar Ghosh published "The Amrita Bāzār Patrikā". In 1879 Surendra Nath Banerjee, a great orator and political leader, published his magazine "Bengalee". Sisir Kumar Ghosh, Ananda Mohon Basu, Shibanath Shastri and others established "Indian Association" in 1876 and The Indian National Congress was organised in 1885. In this way renaissance came in Bengal in all aspects of life in the last part of the 19th century.