

HOOGHLY

PAST AND PRESENT

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AND

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सत्यमेव जयते

PREFACE.



This work has a narrow compass. It does not take in the whole of the district of Hooghly but confines itself merely to its chief town. However it is the town which gives importance to the district which without it would lose much of its significance. Indeed, town Hooghly has a brilliant record to show, though that record does not glow with uniform lustre right through. Like all things human, Hooghly has had its ups and downs. Built at a time when Calcutta was one wide waste of jungle and-marsh, it rapidly rose to fame and fortune under the fostering care of its founders. The Portuguese drove a brisk trade and made their settlement the rival of Satgaon, so well known to fame. But prosperity soon brought pride in its train, when those haughty sea-farers from the Far West, exceeding the legitimate bounds of trade, commenced to play the role of absolute rulers. The attention of the Great Mogul of Delhi was drawn to this unnoticed corner of the Empire, and the result was that an Imperial army soon came upon it like a hurricane and swept away the proud intruders from Bengal. This done, Hooghly took the place of Satgaon and became the capital of West Bengal. Not long after the English came in for trading purposes, and established

a factory at this place. Things went on smoothly along for some years, and if they had been allowed to continue their even course, Hooghly might very probably have risen to be the capital of British India. But it seems that Fate had doomed otherwise and her decree is irrevocable. Some unpleasant circumstances cropped up which rendered the continuance of the English at Hooghly almost impossible. Accordingly, their Chief, Job Charnock, left the place with mingled feelings of rage, regret and disgust and going down the river founded Calcutta. The founding of Calcutta gave a death-blow to Hooghly. However, when under the English a new district was carved out of Burdwan and Nadia with Hooghly for its capital, the place continued to hold a fairly respectable position. But in time even this modicum of its former greatness was taken away from it, and now that the Courts have been removed to Chinsura, it has almost become the sepulchre of what it was in days gone by.

Thus, this town has had a chequered career, and the events which happened in it are of such a varied character that they have an interest for the historian no less than for the novelist. Indeed, a few of the events have an air of romance about them and might in the hands of experts be moulded into works partaking of the nature of Scott's Waverly Novels or Shakespeare's Historical Dramas. The present work, therefore, though professedly a history,

will read like a romance, and by serving both to instruct and to amuse, will prove to be of general interest. Although the Past of Hooghly far surpasses its Present, still the latter has had given to it some new features which, it is to be hoped, will find favour at least with readers who are residents of the district or take interest in its affairs.

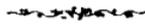
Although some portions of this book had appeared in print in the last decade of the last century, still that circumstance alone would not detract from its merit as a purely new publication, the said portions having had additions and alterations made to them in view of change of circumstances and increase in the fund of information. Thus, the book as a whole will appear to be an altogether new birth of time and if in reading it be found to combine pleasure with profit, I shall consider all my pains amply requited, and also have the proud satisfaction of having done my duty to the dear old place that gave me birth.

Hooghly, August 17, 1906.



सत्यमेव जयते

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HOOGHLY

PAST AND PRESENT.

CHAPTER I.

HOOGHLY UNDER THE PORTUGUESE.

VERY little is known of Hooghly* before the Portuguese came to settle in it. In fact, it had no separate independent existence as a city; it was a lowly outlying village, and bore almost the same relation to Satgaon,† which was then in its glory, as, by a painful irony of fate, Satgaon now bears to Hooghly. But, though it formed a most insignificant part of Satgaon, still it had a name of its own, and that name it is which it has continued to bear, through good report and evil report, down to the present time. It is commonly believed that Hooghly is a corruption of Golin, the name by which it was known to the Portuguese; but this is only reversing the natural order of events, the fact being that Golin was a corruption of Hooghly, and not Hooghly a corruption of Golin. The name Hooghly was derived

* This spelling has been accepted by Government, as being fixed by historical and literary usage. Dr. Hunter, however, has adopted "Hughli," which seems to be the more correct spelling.

† Satgaon is the Saptagrama of the Pauranik writers, so called from "the seven villages" composing it having been inhabited by seven princely Rishis of old. It was the royal emporium of Bengal

from *hogla** reeds, with which the place was for the most part covered; and as *hogla* easily slides into *gola* in pronunciation, the Portuguese, finding it difficult to pronounce the native name correctly, changed it to Golin. In the *Ain-i-Akbari*, which, as is well known, was written in 1596 A.D., Abul Fazl calls the place Hughli, whereas in Faria Souza's† *Asia Portuguesa*, which was written some years

and was known to the early Romans as *Gangē Regia*. Some, however, identify the *Gangē Regia* of Ptolemy with Gaur, the ancient capital of Bengal. In the fourteenth century it was taken by the Mahomedans and was the seat of a satrapy, Izzuddin being its first Governor. Distant as Satgaon was from the Imperial Capital, it is no wonder that its governors often kicked against authority. Even in Akbar's time it had the nickname of "Bulghak-Khanah," or "House of Revolt." Satgaon was also a place of great trade. The Venetian traveller, Caesar Frederick, who visited it about 1570, states that in it "the merchants gather themselves together for their trade." This exactly tallies with the account given in the well-known poem of *Chandi*, written about the same time. But with the dawn of the seventeenth century its trade was on the decline, owing to the gradual silting up of the river Saraswati. True it is that, in 1630, the author of *India Vera* described it as "a beautiful town;" but if De Laet had seen it with his own eyes, his description would have been otherwise. The *Padishahnamah* says that in 1632 Satgaon was "decayed;" but though in a state of decay, it still continued to be a place of trade for the Portuguese for some years to come. (See Admiral Warwick's *Account*, as quoted in Rev. Long's article, *On the banks of the Bhagirathi*, in the *Calcutta Review* for 1845). In Van Brouche's Map (1660 A.D.) it is called "a village," and when Blochmann visited it in 1870, he found the name applied to a collection of *eleven* huts. I saw it only the other day. It looks like a "deserted village," a far more wretched place than Goldsmith's "Sweet Auburn."

* Elephant grass, or "reed mace," as the genus is called in English Botany. Taylor's *Topography of Dacca*, Chap. II.

† Faria y Souza, the author of *El Asia Portuguesa* and other similar works, flourished in the first half of the seventeenth century. He was not only a historian, but also a poet. Souza and Osorius are the two most ancient as well as the fullest writers on the Transactions of the Portuguese in the East.

afterwards, it is called Golin.* In Hughes and Parker's Letters, too, which are dated December, 1620, the latter name appears, with this little difference, that while in Souza's History there is but one *l*, in the Letters it is spelt with a double *l*. In the Dutch memoir of Brouche,† which was written in 1660, the name appears as *Oegli* or *Hoegli*, which approaches nearer to the native name than the *Golin* of the Portuguese. All these circumstances plainly show that the name is not an exotic, but a plant indigenous to the soil.

But though Hooghly does not owe its name to the Portuguese, any more than Calcutta‡ does to the English, still it owes its fame to them. Indeed, its rise as a city dates from their settlement. The precise date of this settlement, however, it is not easy to determine. All that we can do is to try to fix a probable date. In 1497, the famous Portuguese navigator, Vasco-de-Gama, sailed round the Cape of Good Hope§ and landed at Calicut,|| a city on the

* In De Laet's *India Vera*, however, it is called *Ugeli*.

† Van Brouche was Chief of the Dutch Coromandel Agency from 1658 to 1664. Blochmann's *Notes*, appended to Hunter's Statistical Account of Bengal, Vol. I.

‡ Kalikata (Calcutta) is mentioned in the poem of *Chandi*, as well as in the *Ain*.

§ "The Cape of Tempests, now of Hope renown'd." Camoens's *Lusiad*.

¶ More properly Calicodu. The poet Camoens thus speaks of it in the hey-day of its power and wealth:—

"Imperial Calicut, the lordly seat
Of the first Monarch of the Indian State."

The Lusiad, Book vii.

west coast of India on 26th August, 1498. Before him no European had come to India, *by sea*, for purposes of trade. Gama returned to his country in 1499. The Portuguese, finding the trade profitable, sent out ship after ship, and at length obtained land and built forts. With the increase of trade there was also increase of dominion: Goa,* Ceylon,† Malacca‡ and Ormuz§ were taken in succession. All these conquests were made by Alphonso Albuquerque who might be called the Clive of Portuguese India. Albuquerque proved himself a very popular ruler, so that, when he died at Goa, on 16th December, 1515, he was bemoaned not more by his countrymen than by the natives. It is said that a Portuguese named Samprayo, or rather Sampayo, entered the Ganges with nine vessels in 1537 A.D., and that he built the fort at Hooghly, the vestiges of which are still

* Goa was taken in 1510. Rennell's *Memoir*, p. 33. For an account of Goa as it was in the 16th century, see Linschoten's *Travels*.

† *Sirendwip*, or *Selendwip*, of the Arabs, *Singhaladwip* of the Hindus, and *Taprobane* of the Greeks and Romans,—Milton's "utmost Indian Isle Taprobane." The Portuguese were expelled from this island by the Dutch in 1656. (Murray's *History of British India*, p. 143.)

‡ "The Golden Chersonese" of the ancients. It was conquered by the Portuguese in 1512, and remained in their possession till 1640, when they lost it to the Dutch. Murray's *India*, pp. 129, 144.

§ The poet Camoens describes it as the "Golden Ormuz." Milton in his *Paradise Lost* speaks of "the wealth of Ormuz and of Ind." This splendid emporium of the Persian Gulf was taken by the Portuguese in 1513, who lost it to the Dutch in 1646. See Murray's *India*, pp. 130, 144.

|| Albuquerque, surnamed the Great, was called the "Portuguese Mars," from the magnitude and extent of his military conquests.

visible in the bed of the river. Sampayo may have reached the borders of Bengal; but there is no reliable evidence to show that he made any settlement at Hooghly. Indeed, the scene of his action was Goa, where, by force of arms, he had usurped* the office of Chief Governor. His rule, however, was of a very short duration. The Home Government soon appointed Nunio to supersede him, and the result was that he was sent home a close prisoner to Lisbon. In 1545, Don Juan de Castro† was appointed Viceroy. His administration was a brilliant success, as that of his predecessor, the infamous Souza,‡ had been a sad failure. During his rule the Portuguese Settlements in India “touched the highest point of all

* The injustice done to the “Great Mascarine,” and the usurpation of his Government by Lopez Vas de Sampayo, afford one of the most interesting periods of the history of the Portuguese in India. Mascarine ruled from October 1529 for nearly ten years, during which he gained some notable victories. Hence the great Portuguese poet says :—

“Thou seest and weepest thy country’s blotted name,
The generous sorrow thine but not the shame.
Nor long the Lusian ensigns stain’d remain,
Great Nunio comes and razes every stain.”

† He was the fourth Viceroy of Portuguese India, and, though his rule lasted barely four years, established a high reputation and made the Portuguese name dreaded on all the coasts of India. See Murray’s *India*, p. 135.

‡ Martin Alphonso de Souza was appointed to the Government of Portuguese India in January 1541, but he did not arrive in Goa till the 7th May, 1542, bringing St. Francis Xavier to India. (See *Historical Sketch of Portuguese India* by E. Rehatsek, *Calcutta Review*, 1881).

their greatness.* Adverting to this fact, the popular poet of Portugal, Camoens,† thus exultingly sings :—

“ O'er Indus's banks, o'er Ganges' smiling vales,
 No more the hind his plunder'd field bewails ;
 O'er every field, oh Peace ! thy blossoms glow,
 The golden blossoms of thy olive bough ;
 Firm based on Wisdom's laws great Castro crowns,
 And the wide East the Lusian Empire owns.”

But poets are always given to exaggeration, and the author of the *Lusiad* is not an exception. If his glowing description were taken to be literally true, it would follow that the Portuguese India of his time covered a very large area, including the whole of the Gangetic valley. But history gives the lie direct to such an inference. India was then ruled over by the great Akbar, whose empire extended from Attock on the one side to Cuttack on the other. In point of fact, the Portuguese possessions lay principally along the coast ; and this is all that appears from Souza's account, who, in an ecstasy of patriotic zeal

* Shakespeare's Henry VIII, Act III, Sc. 2, Wolsey's words.

† Camoens came to India in 1553. He composed the *Lusiad* at Macao, whither he had been banished for having written a satire on his countrymen in India when Francis Barreto was the Viceroy. The satire which is named *Disfarates na India*, gives a faithful picture of the state of morality during his rule. The poet was afterwards recalled from exile and returned to Lisbon in 1569. His grand Epic, for which he has got the cognomen of “the Lusitanian Homer,” was dedicated to King Sevestian, and appeared in 1572. It has been rendered into English by both Sir R. Fanshawe and William Julius Meikle. The poet died in 1579. The quotation is from the 10th Book.

boasted that his country's empire in the East stretched from the Cape of Good Hope to the frontier of China, and comprehended a coast of 12,000 miles in extent. In 1569, three Portuguese missionaries, of whom Aquaviva, Padri Radaf of Abul Fazl, was one, arrived at Akbar's Court, the Great Mogul having expressed a desire to learn something of the Christian religion.

As yet Hooghly had not risen from obscurity. In the well-known *Chandi*, which, as its colophon shows, was completed in 1499,* Saka era, corresponding to 1577 A.D., the poet, Kabikankana does not make mention of it, though he notices Hali-shahar and Gorifa (Gouripur), which are situated opposite to it, on the other side of the river. As for Satgaon, he makes too much of it, and the sacred Tribeni† also comes in for its due share; but even the name of Hooghly is not to be found in the whole poem. If the Portuguese had at that time had their settlement at the place, the poet would not have left the matter unnoticed, more especially when he vents his spleen

* The couplet referred to runs thus :—

শাকে রস রস বেদ শশাঙ্ক গনিতা।

এত দিনে দিলা গীত হরের পনিতা ॥

† Raghunandana in his *Prayaschittwa Tatwa* calls Tribeni "South Prayaga," inasmuch as the bathing at that place secures, in a Hindu point of view, the same sanctity as the bathing at Prayaga, properly so called, the Allahabad, or rather Halabassu of the Mahomedans, does.

against what he terms "Feringir-desa," which he places lower down the Ganges, on the "Hijlee Route." But there is no doubt that they had established themselves at Hooghly at least twenty-five years before the close of the sixteenth century. The author of the *Ain* states that the Feringis* (meaning of course the Portuguese) were in possession of Hooghly and Satgaon, and that the latter alone paid the revenue. The well-known traveller, Ralph Fitch, who visited Hooghly in 1585, described it as the "chief keep of the Portuguese." It would also appear that the great Military Revolt of 1580 found them in power at Hooghly. Mir Nazat, who was attached to the Imperial cause, on being defeated by the Afghan chief, Qutlu Khan, near Salimabad, a town on the left bank of the river Damoodar, south-east of Burdwan, fled to the Portuguese Governor of that settlement,† whom the MSS of the Akbarnamah called *Bartab Bar Feringi*, or *Partab Feringi*. This hybrid name shows that the officer was either a

* The word Firingi comes from the French 'Franc,' through the Arabs and the Persians, who pronounced it Ferang. When the Spaniards and the Portuguese first came to India, they were called Firang, and the error was never after rectified. It is now used to indicate the mixed descendants of Europeans. In the Vidyasundara of Bharat Chandra, Firingi stands for the Portuguese and Farash for the French. (Dr. Rajendra Lala's *Indo-Aryans*, Vol. II, p. 203, Note). In the present day the Hindus call the English *Ingrej*, the French *Farashi*, the Portuguese *Portukes*, the Danes *Dinamar*, the Dutch *Olandaj*, the Germans *Ellamar*, &c. The Portuguese are now more commonly called *Matti* (earth), or *Kala* (black) Feringis.

† *Vite Blochmann's Ain*, p. 440.

convert or an offspring of a Hindoo woman by a Portuguese. In view of all these facts and circumstances, it would not be wide of the mark to place the Portuguese settlement in Hooghly in the eighth decade of the sixteenth century at the latest.

The Portuguese had come out to India as traders; but it was not long before they found the necessity for making territorial acquisitions. Fortunately for them, the celebrated Albuquerque was at the head of their Indian affairs. He was a remarkable man, and united in himself the valour of a soldier with the wisdom of a statesman. He conquered place after place, and laid the foundations of that Empire, the fame of which attracted other European nations to the Far East. Goa was established as the seat of the Viceroy, and from Goa, as the base of operations, other conquests were made. While their affairs were thus looking up, the Portuguese entered Bengal and made their settlement at Hooghly. This was done with the permission of the Mogul Governor who then ruled the Province. A factory was built, and an agent was placed in charge of it.

Satgaon had not yet fallen, but was on its decline, though it was still the centre of commerce. The Portuguese of Hooghly tried to divert its trade to their own settlement, and in this they succeeded to a considerable extent, more especially as river communication with Satgaon was becoming difficult, owing to the gradual silting-up of the river Saraswati.

This successful attempt on their part excited the jealousy of the Mogul officers at Satgaon, who began to throw obstacles in their way. But the Portuguese were not slow in taking steps to ensure their safety. They built a fort, and strongly fortified the place. It does not appear who the first Portuguese Governor of Hooghly was; but, whoever he was, he derived his authority directly from the Government at Goa. In fact, he bore almost the same relation to the latter Government as the Governor of French Chandernagore* does to the Government at Pondicherry. Hooghly went on prospering, and large numbers came both from the mother country and Goa. As yet the place had no regular Church to pray in. This was felt to be a desideratum, but the want did not remain a want long. Before the close† of the sixteenth century a splendid Church, with a beautiful Convent attached to it, had been built. The Church was blown up in the siege of 1632; but it was rebuilt in 1660. The inscription on its keystone gives the date‡ of the first and original building. In course of time the Portuguese became very powerful

* Properly *Chandannagore*, so called from the place having once abounded in sandal-wood. It is stated in the *Khitishvanshavali*, that Rudra, the most pious of the Nadia Rajas, procured sandal-wood from the vicinity of Hooghly.

† During the incumbency of the fifteenth Viceroy of Portuguese India, Mathias de Albuquerque (1591-97 A.D.), the English made their first appearance in India. (See Rehatsck's *Portuguese India*, *Calcutta Review*, 1881).

‡ That is, the year 1599 A.D.

at Hooghly. Though nominally subject to the Great Mogul of Delhi, they were really the lords of the land. They used to pay some revenue, it is true ; but the payment was not regular. Now and then the Provincial Governor raised an outcry against them ; but he was soon bribed into silence. Many converts were made to the Roman Catholic religion, not so much by persuasion as by force ; but after they had been so converted, they were, it would appear, not left in the lurch. Great pains were taken to improve their condition, and it is in evidence that some of them filled important posts. Nay, there was one who rose so high as to have become the Chief of the Settlement.

As long as Akbar was on the throne of Delhi, the Portuguese fared well at Hooghly. A wise ruler as he was, he did not deem it prudent to harass them as the country had benefited much by their trade. In fact, the turbulent Afghans had kept him so very busy that he hardly found time to look to other matters. Certain it is that, with the fall of Daud, in 1575, the Afghan supremacy in Bengal had come to an end ; but the storm had not yet subsided : it continued blowing on till some time after the close of the sixteenth century, when it died away. In 1599, they sustained a signal defeat at the hands of the Ambar Chief, Raja Man Sing, who crippled their powers and resources.

Akbar died in 1605 and was succeeded by his son,

Salim, who ascended the throne with the title of Jehangir. Protapaditya,* the powerful ruler of the Sunderbans, having refused to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Emperor, Man Sing was ordered to "bring him in subjection." That valiant Rajput, who was the first general of his time, hastened to Bengal and attacked the capital of Protapaditya. The battle raged loud and long, but at last victory† sided with the Imperialists. The hero of the Sunderbans, who had fought with the greatest gallantry, was at last made a prisoner, and while he was being taken to the Imperial capital, died on the way at Benares. But troubles in Bengal did not cease with his death. The Portuguese pirates‡ renewed their incursions into East Bengal with redoubled energy, under the leadership of one Sebastian Gonzales, and many were the reverses which the Mogul army sustained at their hands. The Portuguese of Hooghly, however, kept themselves quite aloof from this struggle; they did not take part with the one side or the other. Their main object was trade, and to trade they principally directed their attention, not taking much thought of the questionable doings of their countrymen in East Bengal.

* He was one of the *Bara Bhuiyas* of Bengal.

† The conquest of Jessore (Jasohara) by Man Sing has been graphically described by Bharat Chandra in a well-known poem which bears the name of the victor.

‡ From these 'sea-robbers,' the branch of the Hooghly, now known as Channel Creek, got the name, "Rogues' River."

These doings raised such an alarm in the land that the seat of Government was removed from Rajmahal to Dacca. This was done when Islam Khan was Governor of Bengal. The well-known Khan certainly kept the Portuguese under check and control, but he did not succeed in conquering them. He died in 1613, and was succeeded by Kasim Khan, who was anything but an energetic ruler. The next Governor, Ibrahim Khan, however, was a different man altogether. He was not only a first-rate soldier, but also a first-rate administrator. Through the benignant influence of his rule, the country smiled with peace and prosperity. But soon a change came over it, which, however, was owing to a cause over which he had no control.

Jehangir was undeniably a good man, but his goodness degenerated into a fault. As Sir Thomas Roe* says of him, "he is of so good a disposition that he suffers all men to govern, which is worse than being ill." But, in the matter of governing him, none approached his favourite wife, the far-famed Nur Jehan: In fact, he was a mere puppet in her hands. Among the sons of the Emperor, Khurram (afterwards Shah Jehan) was undoubtedly the fittest; but, notwithstanding his superior worth and ability, he was not liked by Nur Jehan. The latter favoured the fourth son, Shahryar, to whom her only daughter

* Roe visited India in 1615-16 A.D.

by her first husband had been married ; and it was but natural that she should have been anxious to have him nominated successor to the throne. The consequence was that Khurram raised the standard of revolt in 1621. He marched against Delhi, but was soon defeated by the Imperial army. On being pursued, he fled into Bengal and stationed himself at Burdwan. While at this place, he was waited upon by the Portuguese Governor of Hooghly, Michael Rodriguez, whom he received with the greatest kindness. The Prince promised him rich reward, if he would help him with some pieces of artillery and a detachment of European soldiers. But the Governor declined the offer, lest, by accepting it, he should incur the displeasure of his father, the Emperor. The Prince's feelings were sorely wounded, and it is very probable that he secretly vowed vengeance. But, though he did not get any assistance from the Portuguese, he, with the means and resources at his command, engaged the Mogul governor on the banks of the Ganges, who after having performed many feats of valour, fell fighting on the field of battle. Victory smiled on the Prince, and he became the Lord of Bengal in 1622. But, after he had held it for two years, fortune again frowned upon him. He was defeated by the Imperialists, and, on his asking pardon from his father, was forgiven.

Jehangir died in 1627, and was succeeded by Shah Jehan. Kasim Khan, a favourite of the new Emperor,

was appointed to the government of Bengal early in the next year. The principal event during his vicereignty was the siege and capture of Hooghly. The Portuguese might have forgotten all about the offence which their Governor, Michael Rodriguez, had given to Shah Jehan in 1621; but Shah Jehan himself, it would seem, had not let the matter pass out of his mind, and, now that he was in a position to make them feel the weight of his displeasure, was on the look-out for an opportunity to take action against them. Accordingly, he directed Kasim Khan to keep a sharp eye upon them, and to inform him of their doings, if they acted arbitrarily or unjustly. For two full years, the wary Viceroy watched them with the greatest attention, and, having obtained sufficient information in the matter, preferred a complaint against them to the Emperor. The principal charges were, that they had converted many natives to Christianity by force, and fortified their Settlement without permission. There were also some minor counts, as, for instance, their having levied tolls on the boats which passed by their factory, and drawn off all the trade from Satgaon. Shah Jehan, who was only seeking for a specious plea to give vent to his displeasure, ordered Kasim Khan at once to turn the Portuguese out of Bengal. But the Governor knew very well that the order could not be carried out with the same promptitude with which it had been given. Hooghly was strongly fortified, and the garrison which defend-

ed it, was pretty considerable. The place* could not be attacked from the side of the river, as there were many well-equipped vessels always ready to serve as a strong bulwark to it. The fort, besides being well-founded, was surrounded by a deep moat which never became dry. Great preparations had, therefore, to be made before such a place could be attacked with any chance of success. But Kasim was equal to the occasion, and he had a worthy co-adjutor in his brave son, Enayet Ullah, whose soldierly qualities were of a very high order.† A large corps was sent from Dacca, under Enayet, with Allah Yar Khan as the second in command, while a small detachment was despatched, under Khwajah Shere, from another quarter.

On the 11th June, 1632, the Mogul army besieged Hooghly. The Portuguese had written to the Government at Goa for reinforcements; but as yet none had arrived. In fact, no succour ever came, though the siege lasted for a pretty long time. The Portuguese, in their despair, endeavoured to escape by means of boats down the river; but all their efforts in that direction were baffled by Khwajah Shere, who

* William Bruton, quarter-master of the *Hopewell* East India-man, who wrote an account of his party, describes Hooghly (in 1632) as "an island, made by the Ganges, having several thousand Portuguese Christians in it." A writer, in Stewart's Descriptive Catalogue, represents Hooghly as "protected on one side by a river, and on the other three, by a deep ditch which was filled by the tide."

† Masum Khan, grandson of "the rich zamindar Isa" of Khizipur, was also in command of a detachment at this important siege. Bahadur Kambu also assisted, he having come from Murshidabad.

guarded the river at Srirampur where he had constructed a bridge of boats with a view to cutting off their retreat. The besieged held out for three entire months,* when the Mogul soldiers succeeded in laying dry the ditch in front of the Church, dug a mine, and blew up a portion of the town. Hooghly was taken on the 10th September. The loss on the side of the Portuguese was immense: out of 64 large vessels, 57 grabs, and 200 sloops which were anchored opposite the town, only one grab and two sloops made their escape. The captain of the largest vessel, on which were embarked 2,000 men, women and children, with all their goods and valuables, rather than yield to the Musalmans, set fire to the magazine and blew them up; and many other vessels followed his desperate example. Ten thousand Portuguese are said to have perished during the siege, and 4,400 were taken prisoners. About 10,000 natives, whom the Portuguese had in their power, were liberated. A thousand Musalmans died as martyrs for their religion.† Thus fell Hooghly‡

* In the *Badshahnamah* of Abdul Hamid Lahori, it is stated that the siege lasted for three and half months. But in the *Taurikh-i-Khafi Khan*, or Kafi Khan's Annals (a later work,) the period is given as three months only. (See Elliot's 'History of India as told by its own Historians,' Vol. VII.) The author of the *Badshahnamah* died in 1654.

† Blochmann's *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, p. 499. See also Stewart's account in his History of Bengal. The *Badshahnamah* gives a similar account.

‡ At that time D. Mignel de Noronha was the Viceroy of Portuguese India. He ruled from October 1629 to December 1635. Rehatssek's *Portuguese India, Calcutta Review*. 1881.

and with its fall the Portuguese bade a final farewell to Bengal, so far as their political power was concerned. Three days after the fall, the Governor, Kasim Khan, who had brought it about, departed this world.

Hooghly, having thus fallen into the hands of the Moguls, was made the Royal Port in Bengal. All the offices and records were removed thither from Satgaon, which soon sank into insignificance. A Fouzdar was appointed from Court, who had considerable powers given him. He, it would appear, was the head of the Police, and also exercised jurisdiction in criminal cases.* The Fouzdar at first held his office subject to the Governor of the province, but in process of time he was made independent of him. It was the Nawab Murshid Kuli Khan who, again, reduced him to his subordinate position. The pay of the Fouzdar was at one time very high, but it was afterwards cut down to Rs. 32,000 a year.

CHAPTER II.

THE ENGLISH IN HOOGHLY.

While the Portuguese were desperately contending with the Moguls in Bengal, the English, who were the

* The *Fouzdar* was the Chief Police Officer and Judge of all crimes not capital; the *Kotwal*, the Head Constable of the town, was subordinate to him. The *Nazim*, as Supreme Magistrate, presided at the trial of capital offenders—Field's *Regulations*, p. 135.

first* to follow them to the "gorgeous East," had gained a footing in India. In 1609 their ambassador, Hawkins, arrived at Agra,† and had the honour of an interview with Jehangir, who was highly pleased with him. The Emperor bestowed on him many favours, which induced him to prolong his stay till November 1611, when he left for England. The year following‡ is memorable for the first settlement§ made by the English in India. Hawkins was followed by Sir Thomas Roe,¶ who landed at Surat in 1615. Early in the next year he waited upon Jehangir, by whom he was received in a manner quite becoming

* Just after, the Dutch followed them and ere long succeeded in depriving the Portuguese of many of their possessions in the East.

† Akbar removed the seat of Government from Delhi to Agra, where he built the red-stone fort which still receives its tribute of praise from all beholders. Within the fort is Shah Jehan's *Moti Masjid*, which is, perhaps, the purest and loveliest house of prayer in the world. But the wonder of wonders is the *Taj Mahal*, a romance in marble, "designed by Titans and finished by jewellers." As "seats of mightiest Empire," the sublime poet of the *Paradise Lost* makes mention of "Agra and Lahore of Great Mogul."

‡ The *firman* was obtained from Emperor Jehangir in December 1612. See Bruce's *Annals of the East India Company*. Vol. I., page 163.

§ Surat is the "Saurashtra" of the Sanscrit writers. Here the Parsees also made their first settlement, on being turned out of Persia. Surat continued to be the principal seat of British commerce on the Western Coast, or virtually in all India, until the year 1687, when the Presidency of Western India was transferred to Bombay, which island had been ceded to Charles II by the Portuguese in 1662, and was transferred by him to the East India Company in 1668. (See Broome's *History of the Bengal Army*, pp 2-3). Surat was taken by the English on 2nd March, 1759. Bishop Heber, who visited Surat in April 1825, described it as "a very large and ugly city."

¶ In Thomas Kerridge's letter to the East India Company, dated, Ajmere, March 20, 1615, Edwardes is described as the "Messenger" of the Company to Jehangir, and the predecessor of Sir Thomas Roe. See *Calcutta Review*, Vol. LII, (1871), p. 69 note.

his position as ambassador from a powerful king. But clever as he was, he clearly saw that his country could not expect much from a sovereign who so greatly resembled his own master, the only difference between them being that, while the one was a fool* of Minerva, the other was a fool† of Venus. About the same time the Shirleys appeared as English envoys at the Court of the great Shah of Persia. Thus, it is manifest that the English were very active in their endeavours to obtain a firm footing in the East, to the detriment of the Portuguese, whose power and influence were rapidly on the decline. But up to this time they had not been able to enter Bengal. This much longed-for object was at last gained, not by the sword of the soldier, but by the lancet of the surgeon. Fortunately for them, a Princess of the Imperial family suddenly fell seriously ill. All the skill which the Court hakims possessed in the healing art had been employed in vain, when the sorrowful Emperor, in sheer despair, wrote to the English at Surat, asking them to send up a competent doctor to the Imperial Presence. Accordingly, Mr. Gabriel Boughton, of the London Company's ship *Hopewell*, who was the best man available on the occasion, was readily deputed

* James I. was known in his time as "the wisest fool in Europe"

† The Emperor's personal character is vividly portrayed by Sir Thomas Roe in his *Travels*. Indeed, he was an inveterate drunkard, and was led by the nose by the Empress Nur Jehan, the Helen of the East.

to the Imperial camp,* and as good fortune would have it, he succeeded in effecting the cure of the Princess in a comparatively short time.†

Shah Jehan was highly pleased with him and asked him to name his reward. Boughton could have made a fortune for life; but, preferring the good of his country to his own, he begged that the English might be permitted to establish a factory in Bengal and to trade in it free of duty. The prayer was no sooner made than granted by the grateful Emperor; and Pipli, near Baleswar, was the place fixed upon for the factory. There, in the year 1634‡ the English anchored their first ship. Boughton, who had come across the country with the Imperial firman, purchased cargo without difficulty. All this took place during the Viceroyalty of Ajim Khan, who had succeeded Kasim Khan, and who ruled Bengal till 1637. But the trading privilege thus granted to the "Jân Kompani," as they were quaintly called, was very restricted, inasmuch as their vessels were prohibited from entering any other port than Pipli.

The affairs of the Company continued in this state till 1644,§ when the same Doctor Boughton, by

* Boughton was sent to Agra in 1645. He died in 1657. See Dr. Crawford's *Hooghly*, p. 13.

† See Murray's *India*, p. 183.

‡ Murray makes it 1640 (see his *India*, p. 183); while Bruce (see *Annals*, Vol. III, p. 188) states that Shah Jehan gave the English a firman (*Nishan*) in 1651-52.

§ See Broome's *History of the Bengal Army*, p. 5. Murray says that the factory at Hooghly was built in 1656. (*India* p. 183)

another successful cure in the Viceregal court of Shah Shujah at Rajmahal,* obtained for his countrymen permission to establish a factory at Hooghly. No sooner was the privilege granted than it was availed of, and a factory was built, after the manner of the Portuguese, whose place the English occupied after an interval of only a few years.† Although they were allowed to build a factory, they were, however, not permitted to approach it with their ships, but were constrained to anchor them further down, near the mouths of the river, and to bring up and send down all their cargo in sloops. Shah Shujah ruled Bengal for nearly twenty years‡ and his rule was one of unusual prosperity, not a little of which was owing to European trade. Shujah, who had such a sad end, was succeeded by that remarkable man, Mir Jumla, whose high military talents had been of immense

Colonel Yule, editor of Hedges' *Diary*, gives the date in January 1651. (See Vol. III, pp., 194-95).

* Rajmahal stands on the confines of Hindustan, separating it from Bengal Proper. Man Sing first made it the Capital of Bengal. It was once a very splendid city. Among its ruins, which, like those of Gour, are of great interest to the antiquarian, the most important are those of Shah Shujah's palace, built in 1640.

† This factory was constructed under the supervision of the officers of the Mogul Government, the utmost vigilance being exercised to prevent the place being well fortified. The establishment of armed retainers was, moreover, strictly limited *to an ensign and thirty men to do honors to the principal Agents*. (See Orme's *Military Transactions in Indistan*, Vol. II, p., 10).

‡ In 1651-52 he granted the British a firman giving them the privilege of free trade throughout the Province on payment of the trifling sum of three thousand rupees annually. Bruce's *Annals*, Vol. I, pp. 463-64. This firman was confirmed by Shah Jehan by a fresh one, dated the 12th September, 1678. Vol. II, p. 431.

service to Aurungzebe in his struggle for the throne of Delhi. This Viceroy removed the seat of Government again to Dacca, and engaged in a series of warlike operations which well-nigh engrossed his whole attention. Thus, he fought on like a veritable son of Mars till 1663, when he breathed his last on his way back to his capital from his ill-starred Assam campaign.

Mir Jumla was succeeded by Shaista Khan, who was the nephew of the celebrated Nur Jehan. Shaista Khan's administration was long, for, barring a break of about three years, he governed Bengal from 1663 to 1689. During the first period* of his rule, European commerce made great progress. In the year of his accession to the government, the English East India Company placed their factories in Bengal under the control of Madras† and established out-factories at Baleswar and Kasim-Bazar. Their first manager was Marshall, probably the first Sanscrit scholar among Englishmen. It has been already stated that the English, though they had been allowed to build a factory at Hooghly, were not permitted to approach it with their ships. This being found very inconvenient, they petitioned Shaista Khan for permission

* Muhammad Sharif was Fouzdar of Hooghly about 1665.

† Madraspatam was purchased by the English from the Rajah of Chandragiri in 1639. Here, Mr. Francis Day built Fort St. George, and became the founder of Madras which was the first territorial possession of the Company in India. The sacred Kanchi, the Benares of Southern India, is not far from Madras.

to proceed in their ships at once to their factory, and the good Governor granted it in 1669. A number of pilots having become necessary for the purpose, the Court of Directors* gave orders, and thus the present pilot establishment† originated.

But it was not the English alone who benefited by the rule of Shaista Khan; three other European nations also came in for their share of his favours. The Dutch had well begun their Indian career. They had already ousted the Portuguese from Malacca and Ceylon, but they had not been able to make any settlement in Bengal. It was Shaista Khan who granted the necessary privilege, and, accordingly, in 1675,‡ they built a factory at Hooghly, whence they subsequently removed to the neighbouring village of Chinsura§; and we have the authority of Mr. Stewart, the well-known historian of Bengal, for stating that in the very next year, the French made their settlement|| at Chandernagore and the Danes at Serampore.¶

* The Directors were first elected in 1704. They were twenty-four in number, and were invested by the Company with the power of managing their territorial possessions in India, as well as their commerce in the East and West. *Vide* Raja Ram Mohan Roy's *English Works*, Vol. II, p. 516, note.

† See Broome's *History*, p. 8; and Bruce's *Annals*, Vol. II, pp. 228-29.

‡ Marshman's *Bengal*, p. 62.

§ Chinsura is the English form of the native name *Choochoora*, the "Chinchura" of Orme. The Dutch records have "Cintsurah," and Surgeon Garcin's *Journal* has *Chinchora*.

|| Marshman, however, places it in 1672.—*History of Bengal*, p. 62. Dr. John Fryer visited India in that year.

¶ Serampore (Srirampore) is about twelve miles to the south of Hooghly. It was visited in December 1823 by Bishop Heber, who

Shaista Khan resigned his high office in 1677. But even when away from the Province he did not forget the Europeans. The English had hitherto been obliged to take out a fresh firman on the appointment of a new Viceroy. This was no small grievance, for on every such occasion they were obliged to pay a large *douceur* to the Mogul officers. When Shaista Khan left Bengal, the Chief of the English factory sent an envoy with him to the Emperor Aurungzebe to solicit a perpetual firman, precluding the necessity of periodical renewal. The order was at last obtained, but not without difficulty, and chiefly through the aid and influence of Shaista Khan. The well-known French physician, Bernier, was present at the Court of the Great Mogul at this time; and had it not been for the fact that his countrymen had only recently made their settlement in Bengal, he would have tried to obtain some such order for them.

Shaista Khan was re-appointed to Bengal in the latter part of 1679. This time he proved the very reverse of what he had been before he resigned his office in 1677. But this change in his policy was not owing to any change in his character. The fact was that he could not disobey the unjust and arbitrary orders of a bigoted monarch, who ran counter to the wise policy of his illustrious ancestor, Akbar the Great.

described it as "a handsome place, kept beautifully clean, and looking more like an European town than Calcutta, or any of its neighbouring cantonments." At that time Colonel Jacob Krefing (1805-1828) was the Danish Governor of Serampore.

and, so far from endeavouring to weld his Musalman and non-Musalman subjects into one harmonious whole, greatly widened the gulf between them. The hated *Jazyah*, or poll-tax on non-Musalman, which had been abolished by his wise great-grand-father,* was renewed by him, and under cover of it many Hindoo temples were destroyed and many harmless Hindoos were thrown into prison. But it was not the Hindoos alone who were harassed by this odious tax. At Hooghly, the Nabob's officers demanded the same payment from the Europeans, but they got off by a rich present to the Viceroy.

The Company's trade in Bengal having acquired considerable importance, the Court of Directors decided to make Bengal independent of Madras. Accordingly, in 1681, they raised it to the dignity of a separate and independent settlement, and Mr. William† Hedges, who was appointed its first Chief, entered Hooghly with a body-guard consisting of a corporal and twenty European soldiers. This was the germ of the British Army in India. Before this time the ships bound for Bengal had always called at Madras to receive their orders; they now

* See Blochmann's *Ain*, vol I p. 186.

† See Broome's *History* p. 9. Hedges reached Hooghly on 24th July 1682. He held office only for two years. Having failed to give satisfaction to the Court of Directors, he was superseded on 30th August 1684 by George Gifford, the Governor of Madras, Bengal being again made subordinate to Madras, and John Beard, the Third in Council, succeeding Hedges as Governor of Bengal. (See Crawford's *Hooghly*, p. 17, and Broome's *History*, p. 10).

sailed right up the Ganges, and one of the very first that came was armed with thirty guns.

The Company's trade proving very lucrative, many private merchants intruded into it, though, by the terms of the Charter which had been granted by Queen Elizabeth, the right was restricted to the Company's Agents.* Many efforts were made to put down these "interlopers," as they were called, but all to no purpose. The Court of Directors at length found that the only way to prevent their trading in Bengal, was to prevent their entering the river. Accordingly, they desired the Chief at Hooghly to solicit the permission of the Nabob to erect a fort at the mouths of the Ganges, or on its banks, that they might more effectually intercept the vessels of the interlopers. But Shaista Khan, rightly thinking that this would give the English the command of the whole river, refused their petition. There had also been about this time some disturbances in Bihar; and the Company's Agent at Patna, having been charged with complicity, was placed in confinement. The heart of the Nabob was, in fact, quite alienated from the English, and he issued orders confiscating all their factories in Bengal. Thus, the trade of the Company was thrown into the utmost confusion, and their ships returned with scarcely half their cargo. The Dutch

* The Company's monopoly of trade ceased altogether on the *last* renewal of their Charter in 1853.

took advantage of this gloomy aspect of their rivals' affairs to push on their own traffic. It was about this time that they began to fortify their settlement at Chinsura. The fort,* however, was not finished until 1687.

The English now perceived that they must either give up the trade in Bengal or resort to force. They determined upon the latter alternative, and in this they were supported by their King, James II. A fleet of ten ships was sent out under Admiral Nicholson, on board of which were six hundred soldiers. His orders were to embark all the Company's servants and property, and, proceeding to Chittagong, to capture it, with the assistance of the zemindars of East Bengal and the king of Arracan.† But this ambitious scheme was doomed to a disastrous end. A storm at sea having dispersed the fleet, only six ships reached the Ganges and sailed up to Hooghly.‡ A little before this time, the Chief at Madras had sent four hundred soldiers thither. These preparations for war, both by sea

* The fort was called Fort Gustavus, after the name of the then King of Holland.

† Otherwise called Racan, the Roshun of the natives. The *Ain-i-Akhari* has Arhung. Chittagong formerly belonged to the king of Arracan, from whom it was conquered by the Portuguese; and the latter lost it to the Monguls in 1666, on which occasion its name was changed to Islamabad.

‡ Job Charnock was, at this time, the chief Agent at Hooghly, he having taken the place of Beard on his death. The ships reached Bengal late in 1686.

and land, alarmed the Nabob,* and he was anxious soon to make up his differences with the English. But, while negotiations were going on, an incident happened which gave a fatal turn to the whole affair. On the 28th October, 1686, three English soldiers, strolling in the market-place in Hooghly, quarrelled with some of the Nabob's people and were severely beaten by the latter. This little row soon assuming a formidable shape, troops were turned out on both sides, and a regular engagement ensued. Many men were killed, and more were wounded. During the engagement Admiral Nicholson opened fire on the town, and upwards of five hundred houses were destroyed, including the Company's godown, in which property worth thirty *lacs* of rupees was lost. The Fouzdar taking alarm, begged that hostilities might cease, to which the English agreed, on his assisting to convey their saltpetre on board their ships. Not only was this done, but their trade was allowed to continue until orders could be received from the Emperor.

As soon as the Nabob heard of these events, he directed all the out-factories at Patna, Malda, Dacca and Kasim-bazar to be seized, and sent both infantry and cavalry to Hooghly with the view of expelling the English from the country. The merchants at Hooghly, not thinking themselves safe,

* Abdul Gunny was then Governor of Hooghly.

retreated, under their President, Job Charnock,* about twenty-six miles down the river, to the swampy village of Satanuti† on the 20th December. About a week after their removal, three of the Nabob's officers arrived at Hooghly, whither Mr. Charnock proceeded to treat with them; and a treaty was agreed upon, whereby the English were restored to their former privileges. But the Nabob's object was only to gain time, in order that he might crush the Company once and for ever. Accordingly, in the beginning of February 1687, he sent a large army under Abdul Sumad Khan to Hooghly, whereupon Mr. Charnock quitted Satanuti for Hijli.‡ On his way down the river he destroyed the fortress at Tanna.§ and captured some Mogul ships. The island of Hijli was the worst site for a settlement that could have been selected. It was a low, unhealthy swamp, covered with long grass, where not a drop of fresh water could be found. Thither, however, Mr. Charnock escaped, and commenced building fortifications, with a view to protecting himself from the attacks of the enemy. In three months,

* Charnock came out to India in 1655 or 1656 and never saw his native country again. He became Chief of Hooghly in 1686 on the death of Beard.

† So called from the innumerable *hanks of cotton thread* which the inhabitants, who were mostly of the weaver class, used to dry in the sun.

‡ De Laet, in his *India Viva*, calls it "Angeli," which he places in the province of Orissa, not very far from "Ugeli," the port Piqueno of the Portuguese.

§ The Fort of Tanna lay about 5 miles below Calcutta, on the opposite shore. Orme's *Indiastan*. Vol. II.

half the troops perished, and the other half were only fit to be sent to hospital. The prospects of the Company thus wore a very gloomy aspect, and it seemed as if they would ere long be obliged to abandon Bengal, when fortune again began to smile on them. This favourable turn in their affairs was owing to the determination of the Court of Directors to carry everything by force. When the troubles in Bengal commenced, the Court sent peremptory orders to their Governor at Surat to close the Company's factory, and to seize on every Mogul ship of war that could be found at sea. Now, Surat was the port whence pious Musalmans embarked on their pilgrimage to Mecca, and the chief business of the war-vessels was to protect the pilgrims during the voyage. As the English now guarded the harbour and commanded the sea, the way to Mecca was virtually closed; and it was with a view to re-opening it that the haughty Emperor condescended to accommodate matters with the English. Accordingly, on the 16th August 1687, a treaty was concluded, by which the English were permitted to set up factories in different parts of the Empire, and Uluberia* was given them for magazine and docking purposes, while Mr. Charnock, on his part, engaged to return all the Mogul ships he had captured. After the treaty was concluded, the

* So called from the place having been for the most part covered with *ulu* grass. The Uluberia of olden times has since been washed away by the river.

English under their Chief removed to Uluberia whence they afterwards returned to Sutanuti in September 1687.

The Nabob, however, soon renewed his oppressions. He ordered the English to return to Hooghly, and not to build either with stone or brick at Sutanuti, at the same time allowing his soldiers to plunder them, and also demanding a large amount from Charnock, who had neither army to oppose his men nor money to satisfy his demand. He, therefore, sent two of the members of his Council to Dacca, in the hope of conciliating the Nabob and obtaining leave to continue at Sutanuti. After much difficulty these officers had just succeeded in their endeavours when the affairs of the English were again involved in still darker clouds. The Court of Directors, having heard of the engagement at Hooghly and the retreat of the troops to Hijli, had, with great promptitude, sent out re-inforcements under Captain Heath, with orders to take all their servants in Bengal and proceed to Madras, in case they failed to obtain what they desired, namely, a fort and a mint.* Heath was a hot-headed, inexperienced soldier, governed more by passion than by "the pauser, reason."† He arrived in Bengal in October, 1688, and ordered all the Company's servants to embark with all the public

* See Bruce's *Annals*, vol. II, p. 595.

† Orme describes him as "a man of courage, but of variable disposition, not far removed from craziness."

property on board his fleet, and on the 8th November sailed down to Baleswar. When he had reached the Baleswar Roads, the Mahomedan officer of the town seized the Company's factors there, and held them as pledges. But, though the two chief officials of the factory were now prisoners, and the two deputies were still in the power of the Nabob at Dacca, Heath landed his troops at Baleswar on the 29th November, and, after plundering it of all "goods and chattels," burnt it to ashes. Having thus ravaged the place, he sailed direct to Chittagong, but, failing to capture it, moved his fleet down towards Arracan. On his arrival there, he sent words to the King, offering to join him in attacking the Moguls, if he would permit the English to settle in his dominions. Not having received any reply for a fortnight, he became very impatient, and sailed towards Madras with the whole fleet, consisting of fifteen sail, on which were embarked the Governor, the Council, the Company's servants and all their merchandise. Thus were the English settlements in Bengal wholly abandoned about fifty years after their first establishment. As Bombay and Madras were well fortified, they were not touched; but the Emperor ordered all the other factories of the English to be destroyed, and their goods to be seized throughout his Empire; and Shaista Khan was obliged to comply. He, accordingly, sequestered all the Company's property in Bengal, and placed their two agents at Dacca in irons.

CHAPTER III.

SHOVA SINGH'S REBELLION AND THE MARHATTA RAIDS.

THE Nabob, Shaista Khan,* having grown very old, was permitted to retire into private life. The high office resigned by him was first given to Bahadur Khan and a few months later to Ibrahim Khan,† son of the celebrated Ali Murdan Khan. The new Viceroy proved a very mild ruler‡ and the prospects of the English again brightened up under his "temperate sway." They were invited back to Bengal, and, on the auspicious day of 24th August, 1690, Job Charnock hoisted the standard of England at Sutanuti and laid the foundation of Calcutta, leaving Hooghly in the lurch. On 10th February, 1691, an imperial order was issued, under the seal of Arsad Khan, allowing the English to "contentedly continue their trade" in Bengal, on payment of Rs. 3,000 yearly in lieu of all dues.§ Charnock, however, did not live to see Calcutta become a flourishing town; as, two years after, he departed

* Shaistabad, the seat of the well-known Mir family, was founded by him.

† Mir Ali Akbar was, it would seem, appointed Fouzdar of Hooghly about the same time.

‡ He is described in the Consultation, dated the 10th October 1689, as "that famously just and good Nawab Ibrahim Khan."

§ Crawford's *Hooghly*, p. 19.

¶ Towards the close of 1632, the seat of Government was removed from Hooghly to Calcutta.

this world.* This remarkable man† who founded “the City of Palaces” and has given name to the Viceregal villa which is still called Achanuck‡ by the grateful natives, lies humbly buried in the north-western corner of the grounds of St. John’s Church.

The English had all along longed for a fort and a mint, but the jealousy of the Mogul officers had hitherto stood in the way of the fulfilment of their wish. In 1696, however, an event happened which enabled them to effect their purpose, at least to a certain extent. Rajah Krishna Ram§ of Burdwan having plundered Shova Singh, the troublesome Zemindar of Chitwa,|| the latter was highly enraged,

* He died on 10th January 1692, old style, (1693, modern style), as appears from the inscription on his tomb. Charnock was succeeded by Mr. Francis Ellis, the next in seniority, but not a fit man though, for the situation. The latter was soon after removed, and Mr. (afterwards Sir Charles) Eyre, the Chief of the Dacca factory, appointed in his place on 12th August 1693. (See Broome’s *History*, p. 26).

† Charnock is well worthy of high praise, and may be considered to have paved the way for Clive. Though he had suffered much for the Company, yet he steadily persevered to advance their interests. On one occasion he was severely scourged by order of Nabob Shaista Khan.—*Wheeler’s Early Records*, p. 162.

‡ The English name is Barrackpur, so famous for its fine park, which, to use Bishop Heber’s words, “offers as beautiful a display of turf, tree, and flowering shrub, as any scene in the world can produce.” In the park there was once also a menagerie which was well worth a visit. Orme writes “Job Chanock” instead of Job Charnock.

§ Krishna Ram was the third in descent from Babu Rai, the founder of the family. His son, Jagat Ram, was slain in 1702, and was succeeded by Kirti Chandra, in whose time the poet Ghanoram Chakrabarti wrote his admirable Epic, entitled *Dharma Mangal*. Both Krishna Ram and his son Jagat Ram were called ‘Rajah’ by courtesy, and their Zemindari “was of very confined dimensions, comprising no more than six or seven pergunnahs.” (See *The Fifth Report of the Select Committee*, p. 402).

|| Now in Midnapur. Abul Fazl, in the *Ain-i-Akbari*, says that Chitwa is a *mehal* lying intermediate between Bengal and Orissa.

and marching through a forest by a road unknown to the people of Burdwan, passed the river Damoodar* and took up a strong position commanding the Rajah's palace. Krishna Ram, being thus taken quite unawares, and finding no means of escape, secretly sent away his son Jagat Ram to the Court of Ram Krishna, the Rajah of Nadia, while he, in right Rajput fashion, slew the females of his family in order to avoid their falling into the hands of the enemy. After this horrible deed had been done by Krishna Ram, Shova Singh, with his army, entered the city, and, in the battle which ensued, defeated and killed him. Thus, his power extended over the whole of Burdwan. A beautiful maiden daughter of Krishna Ram, who, by a pure accident, had escaped from the slaughter committed by her father, fell into the hands of the victor, who, smitten with her personal charms, kept her as his mistress, little thinking that she was destined ere long to prove his murderer. Prince Jagat Ram, having made his way from the Court of the Nadia Rajah to the Viceregal Court at Dacca, and laid his complaint before the Viceroy, Ibrahim Khan, the latter forthwith ordered

Stewart spells the name wrong, Jetwa, and Marshman distorts it into Chituyan. It belonged to Shova Singh, as also Barda, which lies close to it. (Blochmann's *Notes*, appended to Hunter's Statistical Account of Bengal, Vol. I). Shova Singh's great-grandfather, Raghunath Singh, first settled in Bengal. Raghunath's son, Kanaye Singh, purchased Chitwa, but subsequently lost it for a debt to Futteh Singh of Barda. Shova Singh's father, Durjaya *alias* Durlabh Singh, again purchased Chitwa from Futteh Singh's son, Bir Singh, to which patrimony Shova Singh added Barda. The latter became very powerful and set up the standard of revolt against the despotism of Aurungzebe, the last of the Great Moguls.

* The "Jan Perdo" of Colonel Gastrell's charts.

Nurulla, Fouzdar of Jessore, to punish Shova Singh who had, by this time, been joined by the Afghan Chief, Rohim Khan. A body of troops, three thousand strong, was despatched to Hooghly ; but, no sooner did the rebels make their appearance, than the Nabob's army took fright, re-crossed the river and fled ; and Hooghly thus fell into the hands of the rebels. The English, taking advantage of the confusion, fortified their settlement at Sutanuti ;* so did the Dutch at Chinsura who built Fort Gustavus ; and also the French at Chandernagere who built Fort Orleans.

The rebels, having taken Hooghly, became much elated, and sent out troops in all directions to ravage the country ; and the wretched people crowded into Chinsura where they found refuge. To put a stop to these ravages, the Dutch sent up two of their ships of war to Hooghly, which poured in such a shower of balls that the rebels quitted it and fled to Satgaon. Thence Shova Singh, having detached Rohim Khan with the larger portion of his army to take possession of Nadia and Murshidabad, returned to Burdwan. Here he soon after met his deserved end at the hands of the young princess of Burdwan, whose person he, in an evil hour, attempted to outrage. Just as he folded her in his arms, the outraged girl, pulling out a sharp knife which she had concealed in her thick luxuriant hair, plunged it into the bosom

* Here they laid the foundations of the *original* Fort William.

of the ruffian, and then stabbed herself. This double-tragedy was enacted towards the close of 1696.

After Shova Singh's death, his son, or younger brother, Himmat Singh—for the accounts vary on this point—came up to Burdwan with a considerable army, and began to behave as unjustly as the deceased had done. As Ram Krishna had given shelter to the Burdwan Prince, Jagat Ram, Himmat sent a detachment of soldiers against him; but they were repulsed with heavy loss. As long as Shova Singh was alive, the Afghan, Rohim Khan, had acted as his deputy; but after his death the troops under his command elected him as their Chief, and he, to give dignity and importance to the office, assumed the pompous name of Rohim Shah. The rebels daily extended the range of their depredations, and by March 1697 they had become very powerful, both in purse and possessions. In fact, by March 1697, their chief, Rohim Shah, had made himself master of all Bengal west of the Ganges, except the European Forts.

The Governor, Ibrahim Khan, having failed to quell the rebellion, the Emperor's grandson,* Azim Ushan, was appointed to succeed him on the Viceregal throne, and his own son, Zubburdast Khan, to take the military command. Zubburdast was a very able general. True to his name, he immediately assembled the troops and proceeded in search of the rebels, with whom he came up at

* Second son of his eldest son, Shah Alam (Bahadur Shah).

Bhagwangola.* A desperate battle ensued in which the rebels were completely routed. Rohim Shah was driven from Murshidabad to Burdwan, and from thence back to Orissa. He was, however, only scotched, not killed, and it was not long before he resumed his ruinous depredations.

The valiant exploits of Zubburdast Khan having excited the jealousy of the new Viceroy, the latter, who feared that there would be nothing left for him to do, ordered the victorious general not to risk another battle. Zubburdast plainly saw through the motive of Azim Ushan, and, accordingly, asked leave to resign the service, which was readily granted. He took away with him eight thousand soldiers, who were the flower of the Bengal army; and, when they departed, the province might have been considered as almost without defence. Azim Ushan came down to Burdwan, where he held his Court in right royal fashion, and received the congratulations of the Rajahs and Zemindars. Rohim Shah despised this silken prince as much as he dreaded the iron Khan. He readily assembled his men, plundered Hooghly and Nadia, and approached within a few miles of Burdwan itself. But his end was near. Having resolved to kill the prince at any risk, he surrounded his camp with a body of sturdy Afghans, and would

* Bhagwangola was visited by Bishop Heber in August, 1824. He "found the place very interesting and even beautiful; a thorough Hindu village, without either Europeans or Mussalmans." Here he composed that delightful little poem, beginning with the beautiful line,

"If thou wert by my side, my love!"

have succeeded in his enterprise, but for the bravery of Hamid Khan, the bravest of the brave attendants of the prince, who having challenged him to single combat, severed his head from his shoulders. The rebels, seeing their Chief fall, dispersed in all directions. Azim Ushan continued some time at Burdwan. While staying at this historic city, he caused to be constructed, at some distance to the north of Hooghly, a Bazar to which he gave the name of Shahgunge.* He likewise regulated the customs of the port of Hooghly at two-and-half per cent. for Mahomedans, five per cent. for Hindus, and three-and-half per cent. for Christians. The English, however, were exempted from this tax, as, according to the Imperial firman of 1691, they had only to make an annual payment of Rs. 3000 in the lump. He was said also to have established the sayer, or internal duties, on articles passing from one place to another. In 1700† he formally transferred‡ to the English the zemindari rights of the villages of Sutanuti, Calcutta and Govindapur. This little zemindari, which has now developed into a great Empire, was placed under the charge of a Civilian, assisted by a native Dewan.§

* Shahgunge, the "gongee" of Broome, still keeps up its reputation as a place of trade.

† A Fort, called "Fort William", in honour of His Majesty, King William III, was completed in 1700. It had been commenced some three or four years before.

‡ In this very important matter, Mr. Walsh was agent for the Company. The consideration for the transfer was Rs. 16,000.

§ The Civilian was styled the 'Zemindar,' while his native assistant was called the 'black Zemindar.' The salary of the former

The Portuguese had left Hooghly for good; but they were not much missed by the natives, as their place was soon after taken by the English. When, however, the latter retreated, towards the end of 1690, and none came to fill the void, Hooghly began to decline.* True it is, it continued to be the seat of the Fouzdar; but that officer, it would seem, was quite unmindful of the duties of his office. Accordingly, a great many wealthy Hindus removed to Calcutta, where the English had made their new settlement. This naturally excited the jealousy of the Fouzdar, who threatened to place a Kazi† in Calcutta, to administer justice according to the Mahomedan law. But the English made a handsome present to Azim Ushan, and the Fouzdar was told to leave them alone.

It was about this time that a rival East India Company, called the *English Company*, in contradistinction to the old London Company, was established in England. The new Company sent agents all over India, and, among other places, to

was Rs. 200 per mensem, and that of the latter Rs. 30 only, which was eventually raised to Rs. 50. In 1720, one Govinda Ram Mitter was appointed Dewan. His influence was very great, even greater than that of the Civilian Zemindar himself. When Mr. Holwell was placed in charge of the Company's Zemindari in 1762, Govindia Ram was compelled to retire.

* The English factory at Hooghly, however, was not finally abandoned till 1704, when the officers were all withdrawn to Calcutta.

† The duty of the *Kazi* was to execute the law which was expounded by the *Mufi*. In later times the *Mufi* was merged in the *Kazi* who did both the duties.

Hooghly.* But the rivalry of the two bodies having been found seriously injurious to English interests in India, they were amalgamated in 1702, under the title of the "United Company of Merchants trading to the East Indies."† Thus, the dark cloud which had threatened to involve the English trade in ruin, rolled away without doing any great harm. But fresh difficulties were in store for them, and it was not long before they presented themselves.

In 1704, Jafar Khan was appointed Dewan of Bengal, and, as he possessed brilliant parts, soon gave satisfaction to the Emperor. But before he had filled his office for barely three years, the great Aurungzebe died. On his death in March 1707, there was a fierce struggle for the throne among his sons. Azim Ushan, Governor of Bengal, hastened to help his father, Shah Alam, leaving Jafar Khan as his Deputy in Bengal, who was now dignified with the title of Murshid Kuli Khan‡ which was perpetuated in the new capital which he afterwards founded. The latter, however, had to make room for Azim Ushan's son, Farakh Siyar, who acted as Deputy Governor until some part of the year 1710, when

* Sir Edward Littleton, who was appointed President and Consul of the new "English Company," arrived with his council and establishment at Hooghly in July 1699, where he fixed his head quarters. He fortified the factory there in the next year and raised troops for its defence. (See Broome's *History* at pp. 30, 32.)

† Marshman's *India*, vol. I, p. 219.

‡ Later on, he assumed the higher title of Mahabat Jung, on which occasion he bestowed his former title on his grand-daughter's husband, Mirza Lutfullah, Naib of the eastern districts.

Murshid Kuli was given his place, and in the year following promoted to his father's place as chief head of the Government. Murshid Kuli was the ablest ruler the Province had under the Moguls but, able as he was, his ability suffered much from his tyrannous habits. The English fell under his displeasure, and he began to oppress them so severely, that, in April 1714, they sent an embassy to the Great Mogul* at Delhi,† which ultimately proved successful through the instrumentality of the Doctor attached to it, Mr. William Hamilton, who had the good fortune to cure the Emperor of a serious illness.‡

But it was not only to the subjects under his rule that the Governor was severe; his subordinates also were made to feel his high-handedness. From before his time, Zynuddin had been the Fouzdar of Hooghly, but no sooner did he take charge of his high office,

* Emperor Ferokshere, son of Azim Ushan.

† Mr. Hedges, or rather Hodges, was at this time in sole charge of the Presidency. See Broome's *History*, p. 35.

‡ Hamilton having, on being desired by the Emperor to name his reward, preferred the Company's interests to his own, the English in 1717 obtained the royal license for the purchase of thirty-eight villages in the vicinity of Calcutta. But this license they could not carry into effect, owing to the machinations of Murshid Kuli Khan, who secretly instigated the Zemindars of those villages not to sell them to the Company. Thus, for more than half a century, the three villages of Suranuti, Calcutta and Govindpur continued to be the whole of the Company's possessions in Bengal. Hamilton, to whom the Company was so deeply indebted, died soon after his arrival in Calcutta, on the 10th of December 1717. His tombstone is placed in the same building with that of Charnock. (See Broome's *History*, p. 37).

than he dismissed* that officer, and appointed in his place Wullee Beg, a Mogul protégé of his. The powers of the Fouzdar were also curtailed, and he was made subject to the Viceroy's orders, and rendered accountable to him for his conduct. Thus, the Fouzdar became a mere tool in the hands of the provincial Governor. Wullee Beg's successor, Ashan Ali Khan, fared no better : he, too, was a mere tool in the latter's hand.† Murshid Kuli Khan was succeeded, in 1725, by his son-in-law, Shujah-ud-din, who was far from being tyrannical. Shujah's rule was one of peace and prosperity. In 1726 the English established a Mayor's Court at Calcutta‡ on the model of the one at Madras ; and, except on one occasion, they were not molested during the whole period of his administration, which lasted fourteen years.§ The Nabob favoured not only his kith and

* This took place in September, 1711. The dismissed Fouzdar had, it seems, succeeded Mir Ibrahim who was Fouzdar from before 1704.

† Holwell, in his *Interesting Events*, thus describes Murshid Kuli's character : " His name to this day is remembered with detestation ; to fill his coffers he inflicted the most cruel punishments on the Rajas and Zemindars by ways and means unheard of and unknown but in this Eastern Government. He also highly oppressed the Europeans settled in these parts ; yet, notwithstanding his very mal-administration, he had the address to obtain the Government of Behar and Orissa united with that of Bengal in his person, which ever before had been distinct and separate Nababships."

‡ Mr Bolt, who is well known for his *Considerations*, was a Judge of the Mayor's Court at Calcutta. This Court, which consisted of a Mayor and nine Aldermen and in which the Governor presided, was superseded by the Supreme Court, with Sir Elijah Impey as its first Chief Justice.

§ Some annoyance and jealousy was excited by the establishment of a Company, called the "Ostend East India Company," who settled themselves at Banky-Bazar, a little below Chandernagore, but were finally driven out of the province in 1733. (See Broome's *History*, p. 38). In an unfinished poem on the goddess, *Manashá*,

kin, he was also very kind to his servants and dependants. The office of Fouzdar of Hooghly falling vacant, he gave it to his old domestic, Shujah Kuli, in 1727. This officer having seized a boat laden with silk belonging to the English, the latter sent up a file of soldiers and released it; and this being represented to the Nabob as a great affront, he issued an order forbidding the natives to supply Calcutta or the other factories with grain. In view of the inconvenience caused by this order, the English averted his displeasure with a large present. Their trade was greatly augmented during Shujah's rule, but it was ill-managed, the Agents of the Company being too deeply engaged in trade on their own account to pay sufficient attention to the interests of their masters.

Shujah-uddin was succeeded, in 1739, by his son Surferaz Khan; but it was not long before the latter was defeated and slain at the battle of Gheriah,* by Aliverdi Khan, who, accordingly, ascended the throne. During Aliverdi's rule the Marhattas† gave an immense deal of trouble, and the country was thrown into great confusion, which reached its

mention is made of a place called *Banky-Bazar*. See "Notes on the Banks of the Ganges" by Haraprosad Sastri, in the Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal for December 1892.

* In January 1741. *Scir Mutarkherin*, vol. I. p. 364. Calcutta Edition, 3 Vols, Raymond's Translation.

† The Marhatta freebooters much resembled the Scythians of old, and like them, were all horsemen. Their incursions were greatly dreaded by the people of Bengal, who were repeatedly plundered of their property and tortured in their persons.

highest point in 1742. Mir Hobeab, who had gone over to the Marhattas, induced Bhaskar Pundit, who had made up his mind to return to his country, to establish his head-quarters at Kutwa for the rains which had already set in. The renegade, taking several thousands of the best horse, ravaged the country from Baleswar to Rajmahal. Hooghly did not escape uninjured,—indeed, it was sadly plundered and the inhabitants were roughly handled.* It was at this time that the Marhatta Ditch† was dug in order to secure Calcutta against their depredations.

Bhaskar Pundit was treacherously killed‡ in 1744. By this event the Viceroy obtained some respite from the Marhattas, but a more dreadful enemy soon appeared in his own camp. This was no other than his famous General, Mustapha Khan, to whose advice and valour he owed so much. This proud Afghan revolted from the Nabob, and marched out of Bengal with eight thousand horse and as many thousand foot. He *looted* Rajmahal, took Monghyr, and encamped before Patna. Before he left Bengal, he had invited the Nagpur Marhattas to join him in his projected attempt at conquering that country.

* See Broome, p. 41.

† This celebrated Ditch continues to mark the Municipal boundaries of Calcutta, and has fixed on its citizens the soubriquet of the “inhabitants of the Ditch.”—I Marshman’s *India*, p. 27; and Orme, vol. II, p. 15.

‡ Tradition, however, reports that he fell fighting at Bishenpur, on which occasion the god Madan Mohan, much like Castor and Pollux at the battle of Regillus, is said to have taken an active part in the engagement on behalf of the Rajah.

The Nagpur Rajah, Raghuji Bhoonsla, who was still burning with revenge for the murder of his General Bhaskar Pundit, readily acceded to his proposal, and entered Bengal with a large army. Aliverdi, who had gone in pursuit of Mustapha, hastened back to Murshidabad on hearing of the arrival of the Marhattas, directing his son-in-law, Zynuddin, Governor of Bihar, to keep his eye on that rebel, and prevent his approaching Bengal. Some time after, Zynuddin met Mustapha in battle, slew him, and dispersed his followers. The Nabob, on his part, fought several engagements with Raghuji with success. After the last battle, which took place at Kutwa, the latter fled to his own country. But the Marhattas, though repeatedly defeated, did not cease to make incursions; and the province of Orissa was still in their hands. The Nabob again gave them battle, and, beating them, returned to Murshidabad before the rains of 1748.

A few days after, Zynuddin was murdered by the Afghans, Shumshere Khan and Sirdar Khan, who had revolted from the Nabob. Haji Ahmed, the father of the murdered Governor, also shared the same fate. Again, the Marhattas invaded Bengal, but, again, they were repulsed. Siraj-ud-daula, son of Zynuddin, was given his father's place in Bihar, while Syed Ahmed, second son of Haji Ahmed, was appointed Fouzdar of Purneah. Sokut Jung, who figured afterwards as a rival of Siraj-ud-daula, was the son of Syed Ahmed.

During the Marhatta raids, Hooghly was plundered several times. Satgaon fared still worse. It was about this time that the renowned Moháshaya family of Bãnsberia,* dug a deep and wide moat around their extensive dwelling-house; and not unfrequently did the inhabitants of Bãnsberia and the adjoining villages take shelter in their well-fortified residence from the attacks of the Bargis,† as the Marhatta marauders were called in native parlance. The moat is still in existence, though in a state of disrepair.

Nabob Aliverdi concluded a treaty with the Marhattas in 1751. Thereafter they never appeared in his dominions, as they were quite satisfied with its terms. The cession of the large province of Orissa‡ was certainly a big sop. The Province had suffered much from their ravages, and the few remaining years of his life were spent by the old Nabob in repairing the damages. He died on the 9th April 1756.

* More properly 'Bangshabati.'

† This word seems to be another form of the Arabic word *bāghī*, which means an insurgent, a rebel, a mutineer. The Bargis are not to be confounded with the Bagree Dacoits, of whom Colonel Sleeman wrote a very interesting account.

‡ Orissa remained in their hands till 1804, when it was ceded to the English by the Raja of Berar, after Wellesley's campaign in the Deccan.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DAWN OF BRITISH RULE IN INDIA, AND THE REFORMS OF HASTINGS AND CORNWALLIS.

ON Aliverdi's death, the Government of Bengal and Bihar devolved upon his daughter's son, Siraj-ud-daula, whom he had spoiled by too much indulgence.* The new Viceroy, who was still in his teens, soon proved himself a veritable tyrant, and his subjects longed in their hearts for his death or dethronement. Even the foreign merchants were not allowed to live unmolested. The Nabob soon picked a quarrel with the English at Calcutta, the head and front of their offence being that they had repaired their ramparts facing the river, and refused

* Broome thus speaks of Siraj-ud-daula :—"This youth, naturally of a weak mind and cruel disposition, and educated in the worst of all schools, the vice and luxury of an Eastern Court, was completely spoiled by the indulgence and doting fondness of his grandfather, and gave way to every description of vice and profligacy without any check." (See *History of the Bengal Army*, p. 46). The author of *Seir ul Mutakherin* paints him in still darker colours. He says :—"He made no distinction between vice and virtue, and paying no regard to the nearest relations, he carried defilement wherever he went ; and like a man alienated in his mind, he made the houses of men and women of distinction the scenes of his profligacy, without minding either rank or station. In a little time he became as detested as Pharaoh, and people on meeting him by chance used to say, God save us from him !" See Vol. 1, p. 645-46.

to deliver up Krishnadas,* who had taken refuge with them. Siraj-ud-daula marched against the settlement with a large army. The command was given to Manick Chand, Fouzdar of Hooghly, who attacked the place. Both Drake, the Governor, and Minchin, the Commandant, fled, and thus Calcutta surrendered on the 20th June. The night of this day was dreadful indeed, for in it was enacted the horrible tragedy of the "Black Hole." One hundred and forty-six able-bodied persons were thrust into a dark little room,† with the painful result, that, when the door of the prison was opened the next morning, only twenty-three came out alive. A few days after, the Nabob quitted Calcutta‡ leaving it in the charge of his General, Manick Chand.

The news of the "Black Hole" massacre filled the hearts of the English at Madras with mingled feelings of alarm and indignation. Fortunately, Clive had come back from the mother country. Preparations for war were immediately commenced, and, in October, he and Watson sailed from Madras with about 2,400 soldiers, and reached the mouths

* A son of Raja Rajbullubh, Deputy Governor of Dacca. Though generally so called by European writers, his real name was Krishna Bullubh. He reached Calcutta on 17th March 1756, and obtained leave from Governor Drake to reside in it.

† It was about 18 feet square, having only two small barred windows on the western or leeward side, and those obstructed by a low veranda. See Broome, p. 67.

‡ The Nabob ordered the name of Calcutta to be changed to Alinagar to perpetuate the memory of his conquest. See Orme, Vol. II, p. 80.

of the Ganges in the month following. The Mogul fortification at Budge-Budge was soon afterwards attacked. Manick Chand, who had arrived there two days before with a reinforcement of 1,500 horse and 2,000 foot, retreated to Calcutta after some resistance, and from thence to the Viceregal capital, leaving five hundred men to defend the fort. Clive entered the dismantled town on the 2nd January, 1757, and the fort surrendered at discretion.

Two days after, he sent an expedition to the important port of Hooghly.* Nanda Kumar,† who had succeeded Manick Chand as Fouzdar, made some resistance, but was at last obliged to yield.‡

The news of these transactions filled the Nabob with indignation, and he lost no time in marching down to Calcutta with an army of forty-thousand men.§ Clive was anxious for peace, and he offered most reasonable terms, but the

* Mill condemns this expedition, quite forgetting that under the circumstances nothing could be more legitimate than a sudden and well-directed blow at the commercial emporium and principal grainary of the Province. Vide Broome's *History*, p. 88 note.

† Nanda Kumar, on whom the Emperor of Delhi afterwards conferred the title of "Maharajah Badadur," played a most prominent part in the political affairs of his day. He rose very high, so much so that even the Governor-General, Hastings, stood in fear of him. At last, he was tried in the Supreme Court on a charge of forgery, and, having been found guilty, was hanged on the 4th August, 1775, much to the wonder and amazement of the general public. Raja Gurudas was his son.

‡ Hooghly was stormed by the English, under Major Kilpatrick, on the 10th January, 1757.—Colonel Mallon's *Clive*, p. 172.

§ The Nabob made his head quarters in Omichand's splendid garden (see Broome, p. 92), now known as *Halsee Bazar*.

Nabob turned a deaf ear to his proposal. 'Finding a contest inevitable, that brave soldier determined to take the initiative, and, accordingly, marched to attack the enemy's entrenchments. An engagement ensued in which the Nabob's army was worsted, and he consented to a treaty which restored to the English all their privileges, and gave them ample compensation for their losses.*

But this peace was only short-lived, and, as matters stood, it could not have been otherwise. Siraj-ud-daula was at heart an enemy of the English, and, though his anger was stifled for a time, it was not altogether quenched, and an occasion now presented itself which stirred the hidden fire into a blaze. War having been declared between England and France, Clive rightly thought that Calcutta could not be safe while the French kept a large garrison at Chandernagore. Accordingly, in March, he attacked their settlement, and captured it after a nine days' siege.† This proceeding incensed the

* This treaty of 9th February 1757 was signed by Admiral Watson and Colonel Clive on the part of the English.

† The English would have found great difficulty in capturing the place, had not Monsieur Terranneau, a French officer, owing to some injury, real or imaginary, received from Monsieur Renault, the Governor, gone over to Colonel Clive, and pointed out to the Admiral the narrow passage that had been left between the sunken vessels. Nanda Kumar, Fouzdar of Hooghly, had also been bought over by the English; and he not only did not assist the French himself though repeatedly ordered by the Nabob to do so, but also dissuaded Rajah Doorkub Ram, who had been especially sent by the Nabob for the purpose, from doing it. Chandernagore was taken on the 23rd March 1747. (See Broome's *History*, pp. 110, 111 and 161 note).

Nabob, and he encamped his army at Plassey,* forty miles south of Murshidabad. But Clive had already bought over some of his principal officers, of whom Mir Jafar was the most important, and, when he saw that his plans were ripe for action, set off from Chandernagore, on the 13th June, with 1,000 Europeans, 2,000 natives, and 8 pieces of cannon. On the 5th day he reached Kutwa, and immediately captured the fort. The rains having set in with great violence, he was obliged to halt till the 22nd, when he crossed over with his little army, and encamped for the night in the mango-tope at Plassey in the vicinity of the Nabob's army, fifty thousand strong, supported by fifty pieces of cannon. The memorable 23rd of June dawned, when the two armies faced each other in battle array. The fight was loud and long, but, at last, victory sided with the English. Mir Jafar, who, all day long, had kept himself aloof, now moved off with his troops and joined their standard.†

Clive entered Murshidabad on the 29th June and, proceeding to the palace, placed Mir Jafar on the throne, being careful to obtain a *firman* from the

* More properly Pala'si.

† The battle of Plassey gave a death-blow to native rule, and made the English masters of Bengal. Well does the poet sing:—

“The English bless the Plassey day,
They sure will shed their blessing aye,
And sing with merry hearts and gay
How Clive the battle wondrous won.”

Mogul Emperor, Alamgir II. Thus, within one year the English raised themselves from the lowest to the highest position. As a fitting reward of the services performed by Clive, the Court of Directors appointed him the first Governor of the Company's Settlements in Bengal.* He entered upon the duties of his high office with his usual ability, energy, and earnestness, and, before he left for England, had dispersed the army of the Imperial Prince, arrested the progress of the French in the Deccan, and defeated the Dutch, whose settlement at Chinsura existed thenceforth only on sufferance.†

From 1760‡ to 1765, Clive was away in his native country, his *locum tenens*, for almost the whole period, being Mr. Vansittart. The latter, though a very honest man, was not a good ruler. The machinery of Government soon went wrong, and there was confusion on all sides. In 1761 "Clive's Jackass",§ as Mir Jafar was called, was dethroned.

* Watson, who, like Clive, really deserved reward for his services, did not live to get it, for, as Colonel Malleon says, he died soon after the battle of Plassey. (See *The Founders of our Indian Empire*, p. 283). In fact, he died of fever on the 16th August 1757, in the 44th year of his age, and was buried the following day in the cemetery of Calcutta, where his tomb still remains. (See Broome, p. 161).

† Mahomed Omar Beg Khan was Fouzdar of Hooghly in 1759, the year which witnessed the downfall of Dutch power in Bengal.

‡ Clive took his departure on the 25th February 1760.

§ Mirza Shamseddin, an officer of rank under Nabob Mir Jafar, had been accused to the Nabob of having permitted a fray between some of his own soldiers and some of Colonel Clive's. Upon this

and in his place his son-in-law, Mir Kasim, was appointed.* The new Nabob was a very able man and he applied himself to the duties of his office with remarkable energy. But he soon forgot that that he owed his elevation to the English, and endeavoured to play the rôle of an independent ruler. He returned to Monghyr,† a strong position on the Ganges, organised a regular army under Gurgin Khan‡ and carried on secret negotiations with the Nabob Vizier of Oudh.§ Having thus strengthened himself, he abolished all transit duties.

the Nabob called upon him to explain. He appeared before him at the Durbar and thus expressed himself with his usual wit. 'My Lord-Nabob! me, to quarrel with the Colonel! me! who never get up in the morning, without making three profound bows to his very Jackass! How then could I be daring enough, after that, to fall out with the rider himself!' (See Mill's *History of British India*, vol. III. p. 194 note).

* The consideration for the appointment was a sum of £200,000, and the surrender of the districts of Burdwan, Midnapore and Chittagong to the Company. (See James' *British in India*, p. 37). The treaty under which the cession was made was concluded on the 27th September 1759. The tract of country which now forms the Hooghly district was included then in the *Zilla* of Burdwan.

† The *Mugdagiri* of the Sanscrit writers. It was at one time the capital of the Pala Kings of Bengal.

‡ This famous General was an Armenian by birth, whose real name was Gregory. Khaja Gregore or Shircore was brother to Khaja Petroos, the great Armenian merchant in Bengal. At length, Mir Kasim, suspecting that he was in communication with the English through the medium of his said brother, Khaja Petroos, had him slain one night in his tent in October 1773. (See Broome's *History*, pp. 352, 389). Walle Reinhardt, better known by his *sobriquet* of "Sumroo," took service under Gregory, and it was he who was the principal instrument of Mir Kasim in the massacre of Ellis and all his followers at Patna about the time of the mysterious death of his master, Gregory.

§ Sujah-ud-doula, recently named Vizier by the Emperor Shah Alam.

throughout the land. This greatly enraged the English, and the consequence was a resort to arms.

The commencement of the conflict* was favourable to the Nabob, but this temporary sunshine was soon followed by gloom. His trained regiments were defeated in two pitched battles† by Major Adams‡ and he himself took refuge with the Nabob Vizier of Oudh, who refused to deliver him up. Thus was the war prolonged, and it closed only with the decisive battle of Buxar, on the 23rd October, 1764. This victory§ laid Oudh at the feet of the English, and brought the titular Emperor, Shah Alam, as a suppliant to the English camp. Mir Jafar was made Nabob a second time, but he died in January 1765. On the 3rd May following, Clive (now Baron Clive of Plassey in the Peerage of Ireland) arrived at Calcutta as Governor of Bengal for the second time.

On the 12th August, the Dewani || of Bengal,

* War broke out with Mr. Kasim in July 1763.

† One at Gheriah on the 2nd August 1763, and the other at Wadoynala on the 5th September next.

‡ This able and gallant warrior did not long survive his brilliant successes. He died at Calcutta on the 16th January 1764, having left the army on 9th December preceding.

§ It was achieved by Major Hector Munro, who was the first to introduce strict discipline in the Bengal army. The army of the Nabob of Oudh on the occasion was between forty and fifty thousand men, and he himself commanded the left wing. The Emperor himself took no part in the action. Munro left India in January 1765.

|| In a letter from the Select Committee in Bengal, dated the 30th September 1765, and signed by Clive himself, the Dewani is explained to be, "The collecting of all the revenues, and after defraying the expenses of the army, and allowing a sufficient fund

Bihar and Orissa was conferred upon the Company by the titular Emperor at Allahabad, but the actual collection of the revenues remained for seven years longer in the hands of native officials. In 1766 he organised the service in spite of very strong opposition, and left India for good on the 29th January following.

In 1770* a terrible famine † overtook Bengal, and swept away one-third of its inhabitants.‡ In 1772 Warren Hastings, a tried servant of the Company, was appointed Governor by the Court of Directors, with express instructions to carry out a series of reforms. The Court, to use their own words, had "resolved to stand forth as Dewan, and

for the support of the Nizamut, to remit the remainder to Delhi, or wherever the king shall reside or direct" (Bolt's *Considerations*, p. 34). On the occasion of the conferring of the *Dewani*, Clive represented his Honourable Masters and agreed to pay on their behalf a tribute of two lakhs of rupees per mensem from the proceeds of the revenues to the Emperor.

* John Cartier was then Governor of Bengal.

† This famine, which is still called by the natives "the great famiae of '76," Macaulay has graphically described in his *Essays*. He writes:—"Tender and delicate women, whose veils had never been lifted before the public gaze, came forth from the inner chambers in which Eastern jealousy had kept watch over their beauty, threw themselves before the passers-by, and, with loud wailings, implored a handful of rice for their children. The Hooghly every day rolled down thousands of corpses close to the porticoes and gardens of the English conquerors. The very streets of Calcutta were blocked up by the dying and the dead. The lean and feeble survivors had not energy enough to bear the bodies of their kindred to the funeral pile or to the holy river, or even to scare away the jackals and vultures which fed on human remains in the face of day." (See *Essay on Lord Clive*.)

‡ This is Marshman's estimate. Mill raises it to five-eighths, while Grant reduces it to one-fifth of the entire population. Whichever estimate be correct, the morality was simply appalling.

to take upon themselves, by the agency of their own servants, the entire care and administration of the revenues." In execution of this plan, Hastings removed the exchequer* and treasury from Murshidabad to Calcutta, appointed European officers, under the now familiar title of Collectors, to superintend the land dues and to preside in the revenue Courts, and established two Courts of appeal at the seat of Government. Though no lawyer himself, he drew up unaided a short and simple code of regulations for the new Courts, which showed, in a remarkable degree, the versatility of his genius.† The system of administration inaugurated by him, worked well for some time; but, with the arrival of the new members‡ of Council, after the passing

* The *Khalsa*, the revenue office—(Arab. *Khalisa*—pure: a revenue office: land held immediately from Government.) As to the meaning of the same word in the history of the Sikhs, see Lady Logan's *Sir John Logan and Dulcyp Singh*, Chap. V. *The Sikhs*.

† Hastings was the administrative organiser, as Clive was the territorial founder, of the British Indian Empire. Cornwallis only completed the edifice. See also Malleon's *Founders of the Indian Empire*, p. 496.

‡ Of these members, Sir Philip Francis, the reputed author of Junius's Letters, proved his bitterest opponent. Referring to his Indian appointment, by which Junius was silenced, Lord Campbell, in his admirable *Life of Lord Mansfield*, observes:—"At last, 'the great boar of the forest,' who had gored the King and almost all his Court, and seemed to be more formidable than any 'blatant beast,' was conquered—not by the spear of a knight-errant, but by a little provender held out to him, and he was sent to whet his tusks in a distant land."—*Lives of the Chief Justices*, Vol III. p. 376. In the end matters took such a bad turn that the two opponents could not avoid fighting a duel. In this respect, Hastings' successor, Sir John Macpherson, did not fare better, for he too had to fight a duel with Major James Brown.

of the Regulating Act, towards the close of 1774, the state of affairs took so bad a turn, that he was at last obliged to resign his office. He left India in February, 1785, and was received with great honour in England, where a well-known member of the House of Lords described him as the Company's great Minister—"the Chatham of the East." But soon a change came over his fortune, and he was made to undergo a trial which, though it terminated in his honourable acquittal, reduced him to poverty. Hastings had faults, but they were cast into the shade by his brilliant talents. One of the most eminent statesmen of the day very justly observed, "though he was not blameless, if there was a bald place on his head, it ought to be covered with laurels." Indeed, Hastings was no less the "heaven-born" Governor, than Clive was the "heaven-born" General.*

Hastings was succeeded by Lord Cornwallis,† who reached Calcutta in September 1786. The new Governor-General possessed dignity and firmness

* Even Macaulay himself, who in his famous *Essay* has attacked, on almost every point, the public and private character of the great Governor-General, has at last been constrained to acknowledge that "he was the first foreign ruler who succeeded in gaining the confidence of the hereditary priests of India, and who induced them to lay open to English scholars the secrets of the old Brahminical theology and jurisprudence."

† Napoleon entertained a very high opinion of Cornwallis, whom he described to O'Meara as "an honest, generous, and sincere man, a very brave man," and whose "integrity, fidelity, candour and nobility of sentiments" made him for the *first* time think favourably of the English. [See Napoleon's *Table Talk*, p. 106, (1875).]

of character, and the current of business, which had hitherto been disturbed by the spirit of faction and insubordination, soon began to "run smooth." Several abuses were corrected, and the salaries of public officers were increased, thereby giving a death-blow to the old and vicious principle of "small salaries and large perquisites." But the great fame of his administration rests upon the revenue and judicial reforms which he effected in 1793, a year memorable in the annals of British India. The Settlement of the land revenue of Bengal and Bihar was made permanent, and the result has been increase of population, extension of cultivation, and general improvement of the people. Not less important were the reforms in the Judicial department. The Collector of revenue had hitherto acted also as Judge and Magistrate.* Lord Cornwallis separated the financial from the judicial functions, and confined the Collector to his fiscal duties, placing him under

* Under the system introduced by Warren Hastings, the offices of Civil Judge, Collector and Magistrate were combined in the hands of one officer at the head of each district. In 1793 Lord Cornwallis separated the office of Collector from that of the Judge-Magistrate. Again, in 1832 the Magistracy was taken away from the Civil Judge and made over to the Collector who thus became the chief Police and Revenue officer. The Civil Judge of each district became also its Sessions Judge. This arrangement lasted till the year 1838, when the offices of Collector and Magistrate were again separated. From that time until 1860, there were in each district a Magistrate who was also the chief Police officer, a Collector whose duties were confined to fiscal matters, and a Judge who tried both civil and criminal cases. Since then the arrangement of 1832 has been restored, and one officer has been acting in the dual capacity of Collector and Magistrate. (See *The Bengal Police, Calcutta Review*, 1874).

the Board of Revenue at the metropolis. A Civil Court was established in each zilla and in the principal cities, under the presidency of a Judge, with a Registrar and a few Moonsiffs and Sadar Amins to determine petty cases. To hear appeals from the zilla and city Courts, four Appellate Courts were constituted at Calcutta, Dacca, Murshidabad and Patna, and from the decisions of the Provincial Courts, as those Courts were called, a second appeal lay to the Sadar Court, the jurisdiction of which also extended to criminal cases. The zillah and city Judges were likewise invested with the powers of a Magistrate, and authorized to pass and execute sentences for trivial offences, and, in other cases, to commit the offenders for trial before the Judges of Circuit, who were no other than the Judges of the Provincial Courts when exercising their criminal functions. In the department of Police, the native Daroga took a leading part, and his influence for good or for evil was very considerable. He was more dreaded than the Magistrate himself, as the latter in later times has been more dreaded than the Commissioner of the Division.

For more than a decade, the clear and simple rules for the administration of justice drawn up by Sir Elijah Impey, the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court,* had been the guide of the Courts.

* This Court was established in pursuance of the Regulating Act of 1773, in the place of the old Mayor's Court. Afterwards, on

Lord Cornwallis considered it important that his new institutions should have all the certainty of fixed rules, and that all regulations affecting the rights, persons and property of British subjects should be formed into a code. Mr. George Barlow,* a distinguished Civilian, had the chief hand in framing what was commonly called the Cornwallis Code. Cumbrous as it was, it did not well answer the purpose for which it was framed, and thus justice "was made sour by delay, and equity smothered by legal processes."†

Lord Cornwallis was, no doubt, an able ruler; but he was misled into a policy which was quite at variance with that followed with so much success by most of the Mogul Emperors. He studiously excluded the natives from power, placing Europeans in charge of Districts. The office of Fouzdar, which had been in existence from 1632, was also abolished.‡ Nabob Khan Jehan Khan was the last Mahomedan Fouzdar of Hooghly. It does not appear in what

the transfer of the Government from the Company to the Crown, it and the Sadar Courts were amalgamated into the High Court.

* This gentleman was afterwards made a Baronet, and officiated for some time as Governor-General of India.

† See also Bacon's *Essay on Judicature*.

‡ Mr. W. H. Morley, however, states that the Fouzdars were instituted in 1775 and were abolished in 1781, when the Police jurisdiction was transferred to the Civil Judges, or in some cases, to the Zamadar, by special permission of the Governor-General in Council. *The Administration of Justice in British India*, p. 51. In the Fifth Report of the *Select Committee* of the House of Commons, 1812, the establishment of Fouzdars and Thanadars is stated to have taken place in 1774.

year he entered upon office, but this much is clear, that he succeeded Mahamed Omar Beg Khan.* Khan Jehan Khan, though he was deprived of his office, was allowed to occupy the old Mogul fort until his death, and was granted a pension of Rs. 250 a month during his life. The fort covered a pretty large area, its site being now occupied by the Collector's house, the Road-cess office, the Branch School, and the various public *kutcheries*† between them and the river. Khan Jehan Khan died insolvent on the 23rd February, 1821,‡ and a pension of Rs. 100 was continued to his widow.

* Omar Beg Khan was, as we have already stated, Fouzdar in 1759, and it was he who was directed by Nabab Mir Jafar to cooperate with the English in opposing the landing of the Dutch troops which had arrived in the Hooghly river in a vessel in August. (See Broome's *History*, p 263).

† Since the above was written, these *Kutcheries* as well as the Road-cess office have been removed to Chinsura and the buildings occupied by other people.

‡ Napoleon Bonaparte, a standing instance of the vanity of human greatness, died at St. Helena in 1821.

CHAPTER V.

SOME CELEBRITIES OF OLD IN HOOGLHY.

Nawab Khan Jehan Khan.—No name is more familiar in this part of Bengal than the Nawab's, and none more honoured. Indeed it has become a household term and is held in very high esteem. Khan Jehan Khan was an Irani Mogul, and was, of course, of the Shiah persuasion. He was the son of Shuja Kali Khan* of Teheran, and came to India somewhere in the first half of the eighteenth century. He ere long entered the service of the Great Mogul, and as he was a man of parts and diligence, rapidly rose in it until he was entrusted with the rule of a district. He was sent to Hooghly as Fouzdar in succession to Omar Beg Khan,† about the time when the East India Company were entrusted with the Dewani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. He proved a good ruler and was much liked by the people under his control. But with the establishment of the Supreme Council when dissensions raged very high between Hastings and the majority of his Councillors he too got into

* This gentleman should not be confounded with his namesake who was Fouzdar of Hooghly up to the time when Aliverdi Khan obtained the throne of Bengal.

† He was otherwise called Ameer Beg Khan and succeeded Yar Beg Khan in the Fouzdari at Hooghly.

troubles. The great Brahman, Nanda Kumar Roy, who had had such a chequered career, was the evil spirit of those stirring times, and however wicked and monstrous an act might be, he was not backward in doing it.* When in response to the invitation of the opponents of the Governor-General, complaints flowed in against Hastings, Nand Kumar set up one Zeenul-ud-deen, who made a representation to the Council charging the latter with appropriating a considerable portion of the salary of the Fouzdar of Hooghly. This is how Mr. James Mill puts the matter. The great historian says:—"On the 30th of March 1775, a curious accusation against Hastings occupied the attention of the Council Board. In a representation received from one of the natives, it was set forth, that the Phoujdar of Hooghly was paid by the Company Rs. 72,000 as the annual salary of his office; that out of this sum, however, he paid annually to Mr. Hastings 36,000 rupees together with 4,000 rupees to Mr. Hastings's native secretary, reserving 32,000 rupees to himself; and that the author of this representation would undertake the duties of the office for this reduced allowance, producing an annual saving to the Company of 40,000 rupees,

* What was said of Cinna might well be applied to him:—"He had a head to contrive, and a tongue to persuade, and a hand to execute any mischief."

now corruptly received by Mr. Hastings and his Banyan.*

This was, indeed, a very serious charge, but no evidence was adduced to substantiate it. In fact, acting upon this simple unsupported accusation, the majority of the Council who were dead against their President, asked the Fouzdar to depose to the truth or otherwise of the charge on oath. But the latter, as Mr. Barwell puts it, "either would not or could not authenticate the improbable relation given by Zeen-ul-ud-deen Khan to the Board, of his holding the station of Phoujdar upon condition of paying to the Governor the major part of the salary annexed to his office."† This refusal on the part of the Fouzdar was construed into contempt, and on this pretext, he was dismissed from office without any ceremony or formality. Thus, the arch fiend, Nanda Kumar, who was a tool in the hands of Philip Francis and his party in the Council, gained his end, and on his recommendation, Mirza Mindee, a dependant of his (on a low salary of Rs. 20 a month) was appointed to the vacant office, with a stipend of Rs. 3000 per mensem. This was, in fact, making Nanda Kumar Fouzdar of Hooghly,

*See *History of British India* Vol. iii, pp. 441, 442, 5th Ed by H. H. Wilson.

† See Mr. Barwell's Letter to Mrs. Mary Barwell, dated the 5th August 1775, as quoted in Sir James F. Stephen's *Nuncomar and Impey*, Vol ii, p. 293.

while it was ostensibly in the name of Mirza Mindee.

But it was not long before the biter himself was bitten, and bitten so very damnably that he was hurried to an ignominious end. As Mr. Barwell says in another letter,—“Poor old Nuncomar is at last fallen by his own villanies. He was brought to trial on the charge of a forgery to defraud the estate of Bollakey Doss.....the jury brought him in guilty, and on the fifth of the present, at half past nine in the morning, he suffered by the hands of the executioner. He conducted himself with decency, and at the place of execution acknowledged the justness of the sentence by which he suffered.”* With the fall of Nanda Kumar, the prospect of Nawab Khan Jehan Khan again brightened up. He was restored to his former post, which he held without any further break until it was abolished by Lord Cornwallis in the memorable year 1793. But though deprived of his office, the Nawab was permitted to occupy the old Mogul fort as before, and was granted a pension of Rs. 250 a month.

The Nawab, while he was in power, lived in a princely style. His residence was the finest and best in the whole town, and his establishment of horses and elephants was on a very large scale.

* See Letter to Mr. John Graham, dated the 9th August, 1775, as quoted in *Nuncomar and Impey*, Vol. ii, p. 291.

The Fouzdar's house was an object worthy of special notice. The Dutch traveller, Stavorinus, who visited Hooghly in 1769, says that the "place has little worthy of observation within it, except the house of the Fouzdar and the stables for his elephants." The Nawab fed on rich costly viands and used to ride out on splendidly caparisoned elephant in a very fine *howdah*. In fact, he was the Beau Brummell of his day, and was nothing if not foppish. He was, undoubtedly, the first man* of his time in Hooghly, at least in point of power and influence. His Court quite resembled the Durbar of a provincial Governor and his administrative powers were well-nigh absolute. Indeed, he not only looked like a prince, but also lived like one. His salary, large as it was, was, however, not his only income. He possessed landed property of his own, which brought a good round sum into his pocket. Gondalpara, where the Danes first made their settlement and which is still known as "D·namardanga," was the property of Nawab Khan Jehan Khan. After the Danes removed to Serampore and settled there for good, he let out the

* In view of his great power and rank, a saying has passed current in this part of Bengal, and when one is in a mood to condemn upstartism, nothing is more common for him than to say—"বেটা যেন নবাব খানজা খাঁ," (*The fellow airs himself as if he were Nawab Khan Jehan Khan*).

village in *putni* to the French on the condition of their paying a fixed annual sum to himself and his heirs. The *talook* was afterwards sold by him to his cousin, Mirza Nasratullah Khan of Motijhil within the limits of Chinsura; but it is still held by the French, the place being contiguous to their principal settlement, Chandernagore. The Nawab had two other *talooks*, *vis.*, Shunbinara and Mahamadaminpur, which were very valuable properties, more especially the latter. These *talooks* afterwards passed to the East India Company. Besides these, he was in possession of Belcooli as *jagir*. The *jagir* was afterwards resumed by Government and now forms one of the five-and-twenty *khas* Mehals which are in the district of Hooghly. What differentiates Belcooli from the other *khas* Mehals is the fact that it was not held in consequence of the recusancy of the proprietors as all the others were. The ryots of this estate do not bear a good character; they are constantly referred to as "wicked and refractory," and they maintain that character in the eyes of the Tehsildar to this day.

True to the lascivious instinct of the generality of Mussalman grandees, the Nawab kept a large number of mistresses commonly called Begums. Indeed, his Zenana was chockful of pretty women. But when fortune frowned upon him, he had to cut short his harem establishment, and was perforce compelled to satisfy himself with one lady princi-

pally, and that lady was his lawfully wedded wife, who long survived him.

When the Fouzdari was abolished and the Fouzdar pensioned off, things came to a sorry pass. Having lived so long in affluence, the Nawab found it very difficult to cut short his expenses. Thus, he had to maintain his old way without the wherewithal to do so, and it is, therefore, no wonder that he rapidly ran into debt. In this state of his affairs, he hitched upon an expedient which, if it had proved a success, might have enabled him to tide over the difficulty. At that time a rich lady who had long lost her husband, was living in Hooghly. She had grown old, and, notwithstanding that her religion allowed it, was not at all disposed to take a second husband. The late Fouzdar, longing to have his hand in the rich lady's pie, made her a proposal of marriage, though he had his own wife living; but Mannu Jan Khanum, for that was the name of the lady who was so sought after, so far from accepting the proposal, with a boldness not very common to her sex, replied that she should be the last person to unite herself in holy wedlock with one who wanted to marry, not for love but for lucre, pure and simple. This bold reply at once silenced the broken old man and he gave up all idea of setting up a rival to his old wife.

Thus foiled in his attempt at improving his fortune, the Nawab had no other alternative left

than to incur debt for the purpose of maintaining his position. At last, his affairs wore a very bad look, and he was obliged to have recourse to the Insolvent Court. The last days of his life were spent in misery and he died head and ears in debt on the 23rd February, 1891. His widow, who was thus left without means, was allowed a pension of Rs. 100 a month, which she enjoyed till her death, which took place many years after.

The Nawab, though he all along lived in the Mogul fort at Hooghly, had a very fine garden in Dharampur within hail of the old European cemetery. This garden was in consequence of its having had a splendid octagonal *Boitak-khana* known as the "Atpala Bagan." The garden afterwards passed to Babu Khetra Nath Seal of Chinsura and is now in the possession of his son, Dwarka Nath. It is still called the Nawab's garden. Nawab Khan Jehan was till his death held in high esteem by the English Government as being the last of the Fouzdars of Hooghly, and due honour was shown him on important State occasions. When in 1803, the present Government House was opened, he was invited to the grand Ball which was given by Lord Wellesley on the occasion, and he was present at that great assemblage of Rajahs, Nawabs and Nobles. Indeed, though latterly he was not in good circumstances, still the measure of honour which used to be accorded to him while in power,

was not appreciably diminished, thereby showing that wealth and rank are two different things.

When Nawab Khan Jehan Khan was lying on his death-bed, his cousin, Nasratullah Khan, went to see him, but was not allowed access by the Abyssinian guard at his house. At last, his body had to be carried to the burial-ground under European guard and interred in their presence. As the deceased was in very bad circumstances, no big tomb was erected over his earthly remains. In fact, his corpse was buried in the land of his said cousin in Motijhil and a small tomb was built over it. This tomb still exists, but it is in a very bad state; it is broken and is crumbling into pieces amidst wild shrubs and bushes.

A short account of the Nawab's cousin, Nasratullah Khan, who gave a piece of his land for his last remains to lie in, may not be quite of place here. This gentleman was the son of Mohammad Aleph Khan, and came to Bengal, probably sometime after his noble relation, the Nawab. He acquired considerable property and lived in a grand style. He built a big house in Khakrajole within the limits of Chinsura, greater portion of which has fallen down; but the little that still remains plainly shows what a splendid thing it was in its original state. As was customary with rich natives in days gone-by, he excavated several big tanks near his dwelling-house, one of which, the biggest and best

of the lot, called Motijhil, has given name to the place.

Nasratullah Khan was a zemindar and possessed very large property. Besides Gondalpara which he had purchased from Nawab Khan Jehan Khan, he owned mouza Moheshpur and mouza Garbati in Chandernagore. Khakrajole, so called from its having been originally a marsh overgrown with *khagra* reeds—also belonged to him. In front of his dwelling house, he built a splendid mosque which by the beauty and elegance of its structure still attracts attention and excites admiration, though lying in a state of disrepair. It considerably resembles the mosque of prince Golam Mohamed in Calcutta, and, like it, is surmounted by minarets having tops decked with coatings of gold. This mosque was built, as the inscription on it shows, in the Bengal year 1239. In front of the mosque, at a distance of a few short paces only, is his tomb, which has nothing extraordinary in it; indeed, it is of the common sort, but as it is, it is much better than that of Nawab Khan Jehan Khan, which, as I have already stated, is rapidly going to wrack and ruin.

Attached to the mosque is a very large orchard, but neither of them is in a good condition. The garden with the grounds adjoining it, is known as Aleph Khan's *Ber*. All this was Nasratullah Khan's property and he named it so in honour of his father who probably did not come out to this country.

Nasratullah Khan left two sons, Abul Hossein Khan and Hadi Ali Khan, to succeed to his estate ; but they, not proving worthy of him, sold away considerable portion thereof. Both the sons have died, without leaving any male issue. Now the income from all sources would not exceed six hundred rupees, a mere trifle compared with what Nasratullah died possessed of. This little estate is now in the charge and possession of one Mirza Romzan Ali, the son of a daughter of Abul Hossein, one of the sons of the original proprietor.

Mirza Saleh-ud-din Mohamed Khan—This gentleman was a native of Ispahan in Persia. Like some of his countrymen he came to Bengal, when quite young ; and, as he possessed great ability and tact, was employed by Nawab Ali Verdi Khan to negotiate a treaty with the Marhattas who had become such a fearful pest to the country. The negotiation having been concluded with advantage to the Bengal Government, the Nawab recommended the young Mirza to the Emperor of Delhi, who, in recognition of his valuable services, bestowed upon him a *khilat* (robe of power) and a *jagir*. He was also appointed Naib Fouzdar of Hooghly on a salary of Rs. 1500 per mensem ; and it was during his incumbency that he married Mannu Jan Khanam, the beautiful daughter of a rich merchant, named Aga Mutahar. The marriage proved a very happy one, the wedded couple being well worthy of each other. The

Mirza rose, high in rank and riches. He was one of the recognized zemindars of Bengal. In the famous Fifth Report of the Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company, it is stated that "a considerable dismemberment by *sunnad* from the original zemindary called Jessore *alias* Yusefpur, took place, in favour of a Mussalman landholder, Sellah-ud-dien Mahomed Khan, including under the head of Saidpur, one-fourth of that pergunnah with the like proportion nearly of the ancient painam, or territorial jurisdiction of Yusef-pur."* Further on, the said Report says: "Among the principal of the zemindars who held estates near the zemindary of Calcutta, was Selah-ul-deen Mahomed Khan, who obtained under the denomination of Saidpur a fourth portion of Serykant Eathiman of Yusef-pur."† Thus it is manifest that the Mirza was a *sunnadi* zemindar of the first rank among landholders near the zemindari of the East India Company, and it is very gratifying to observe that unlike the generality of zemindars of the present day who harass their tenants to the utmost, he loved his tenantry as if they were his children. In pursuing this noble course he was aided and influenced by his beloved partner who was a lady

* See the Fifth Report, page 382.

† See the Fifth Report, page 407. Although the name of the zemindar is somewhat differently written in the two places, still there is no doubt that only one and the same person is meant.

far above the ordinary run of females. As both the husband and the wife were quite in affluent circumstances, they spent a good deal in charity, thereby endearing themselves to the common people in and about Hooghly. In addition to his other qualities, the illustrious Mirza Saleh was an excellent Persian scholar and poet. He wrote some works both in prose and poetry, but none of his compositions are extant. Aga Mutahar, whom we have referred to above, had built a small Imambara somewhere in 1717 A.D. This house of God being found to be somewhat inconvenient, a wing was added by his son-in-law, the good Mirza, which he termed *Tasea Khana*. It is upon the site of this humble building that the present magnificent edifice has been erected. But the one act for which the Mirza Saleh is best known and which still bears his honored name, is the old *hât* which is held on Tuesdays and Saturdays in an enclosed place, a little to the east of the Imambara buildings. This market was at one time in a very flourishing state, but now for some years it has been on the decline, the reason being that it is not held *khas*, but let out in *ijara*.

Mirza Saleh ud-din died in 1176 Hegira, corresponding to 1764 A.D., in the prime of life, leaving his wife Mannu Jan Khanum to mourn his loss and enjoy his property. This lady was of a pious turn of mind, and, though her religion permitted her to take a second consort, deemed the bond of matrimony

too holy to be dissolved by death, so that, it is no wonder that when Nawab Khan Jehan Khan, the last Fouzdar of Hooghly, made a proposal of marriage, she rejected it with supreme contempt. Thus, though the very reverse of a Hindu in her faith, she lived like a widow of that race, much to the wonder and admiration of those who knew her. She survived her husband nearly half a century, and died in the year 1803, much regretted and mourned by her friends, relatives, tenantry and many others. She was buried by the side of her father and husband in the Imambara garden which adjoins the *hât*.

Khojah Wazeed. Hooghly was the trade-centre of Bengal and as such was resorted to by many merchants of note. Of these wayfarers by sea and land, Khojah* Wazeed was the most famous. He was a native of Cashmere and came to Bengal in the first half of the eighteenth century. He traded principally in salt and prospered highly in it. He was a great favourite of Nawab Ali Verdi Khan and

* The proper word is *Kwaja*, which means a merchant. As for the word *Khojah*, it signifies a member of the Mahomedan community of that name and has no necessary connection with commerce or merchandize. But it seems to have ever been the practice of European writers to write the word *Kwaja* in that way, as would appear from the names, Khojah Johannes Markar and Khojah Serhand. Both these persons were Armenian merchants and won celebrity in their times. Markar was the father of the founder of the Armenian Church at Chinsura, while Serhand, who knew both English and Persian, accompanied the English embassy to Emperor Ferokshere in 1715.

obtained special privileges by his favour. A writer in the *Calcutta Review*,* states that while rice was saddled with a duty of eight per cent, salt paid only two rupees and two annas per cent, except that introduced by Khojah Wazeed, the first great salt monopolist on record, whose salt in consideration of the services rendered by him at the Durbar, was taxed only to the extent of a rupee a maund. The author of the *Guide to Bengal*† also testifies to the Khojah's having possessed a monopoly of the trade in salt. In this way, this prince of merchants acquired great riches and influence. What Omichund was in Calcutta, Wazeed was in Hooghly. Indeed, both of them were immensely rich. Major Marshall says that the daily expenditure of the Khojah was Rs. 1000, and that on one occasion he presented fifteen lakhs of rupees to Nawab Ali Verdi, who regarded him as one of his best friends and well-wishers. The well-known historian‡ of the Bengal Army has spoken of Khojah Wazeed as "the great merchant at Hooghly." Indeed, he was the acknowledged chief of Hooghly merchants, and was held in very high esteem, not only by the people at large but also by Government for the time being. While Ali Verdi Khan occupied the *musnud* of Bengal, the Khojah had no reason to be dissatisfied

* See *Notes on the Banks of the Hooghly*, Vol. iii, p. 450.

† Major G. T. Marshall.

‡ Captain Arthur Broome, who brought out the first volume of his History in 1850.

with his rule. But when on his death his grandson, the notorious Seraj-ud-dowla, ascended the throne and conducted himself like a veritable tyrant, he, forgetting his friendship with the late Nawab, joined Omichund, Jagat Sett and others in inviting Colonel Clive to come with his army to Murshidabad, and, deposing Siraj, place Mir Jaffar in his place. Clive was far-sighted enough to miss such a golden opportunity. He readily acceded to the request, and the short but decisive battle of Plassey was the result, which made the English virtually masters of Bengal. Mir Jaffar was raised to the throne, while the infamous Siraj was brutally murdered. As had been expected, the new Nawab and Khojah Wazeed became fast friends, and it is a well-known fact that whenever Mir Jaffar passed by Hooghly, he never failed to pay a visit to his friend, the Khojah. The latter had a splendid garden where he entertained his friends and others in a manner befitting his rank and riches. The occasions were not "few and far between," on which Nawab Mir Jaffar graced that garden with his August Presence, but history records only one, and that was at a time when he was attempting to put down the English by aid of the Dutch, who were then the only power that could be pitted against them with some hope of success. Having been secretly encouraged by the Nawab, the Dutch managed to bring up a pretty large army from their head quarters at

Batavia in Java. The ships with troops on board arrived at the mouths of the river in October, 1759, when Mir Jaffar happened to be at Calcutta, ostensibly on a visit to Clive, whom he owed his throne. On being informed by the English Governor of the sudden and unexpected arrival of the Dutch armament, the Nawab, pretending ignorance of the whole matter and expressing deep displeasure at the conduct of the Dutch, instantly left* Calcutta for Hooghly with a view, as he declared, to severely chastising the latter for their audacious conduct. But instead of proceeding to the Mogul fort at Hooghly he took up his quarters in Khojah Wazeed's garden. Here he was waited upon by the Dutch agents, but so far from chastising them for what they had done, treated them politely and urged them on in their attempt at displacing the English. It does not appear whether his friend, Khojah Wazeed, was privy to the conspiracy, but it would be the height of credulity to believe that he was perfectly ignorant of it.† Captain Broome places the garden "half-way between Hooghly and Chinsurah;" and tradition reports that it lay somewhere in Protabpur.

* This was on the 19th October.

† Mr. Macfarlane even goes so far as to say that the Khojah was then an agent for the Dutch, and the secret medium by which they communicated with the Nawab and the Nawab with them. Clive, too, was awfully vexed with him, and though he was a most intimate friend of the Nawab, this circumstance did not prevent the wary English Governor from seizing the persons of the Khojah and his son, a short time after the Nawab's visit, when they were going to Murshidabad. (See *Our India Empire*, Vol. i, p. 85 note.)

No vestige, however, remains of this splendid garden, though at one time it cut a very remarkable figure. So fare things that are of earth, earthy.

Khojah Wazeed, as we have already observed, was immensely rich, but he did not come by this vast wealth by foul means. Indeed, he was considered a thoroughly honest man* and people had great confidence in him, so much so that if they could place their money in deposit with him, they deemed that such deposit was as good as investment in Government Securities. Rumour, however, points to one case in which he was said to have committed breach of faith. This is how it arose: Muniruddin Khan, having quarrelled with his brother, the Nawab of Arcot, came to Bengal and sought the aid of Ali Verdi Khan. The latter warmly welcomed him as became his high rank, and, as he was of a warlike turn of mind, appointed him Subadar of Cuttack in view of keeping the marauding Marhattas in check. The noble Subadar who was quite new to the country was given a tried man as his Dewan. This was Ram Charan, father of Naba Krishna, who afterwards so highly distinguished himself and, at last, rose to be Maharaja Bahadur. As the times were anything but quiet, Ram Charan placed most part of his property in deposit with Khojah Wazeed

* Mr. Macfarlane, however, gives him a very bad character, and says that the Khojah had lived a life of intrigue, serving and betraying all parties in turns. Thus, he would make him a second Nanda Kumar. (See *Our Indian Empire*, Vol. i, p. 55 note.)

who had such a high reputation for honesty. Muniruddin, accompanied by his Dewan, started for Orissa and in due time arrived at Midnapur. From thence he proceeded on his journey with a few followers, leaving the main body of his troops behind, but before he had gone far enough, he and his party were attacked by a body of some four hundred Pindaree robbers, and, in spite of the defence which they made to ward off the assault, were almost killed to a man. When intelligence of the sad end of Ram Charan reached Khojah Wazeed, he flatly denied having had in his custody any property of the deceased, and, thus, it was said, Ram Charan's family was reduced to great straits.*

We do not know how far this story is true, but if it was a fact, the Khojah lost all his reputation for honesty and fair dealing by this flagrant breach of trust. I would, however, fain believe that the story was a canard, pure and simple, being the fabrication of scandal-mongers, without the slightest foundation in truth.

Khojah Wazeed had no equal in the domain of commerce and was, therefore, justly entitled 'Fakkat-ujjar,' or *The Glory of Merchants*. What John Palmer was in the first half of the nineteenth century, Khojah Wazeed was in the last half of the eighteenth. But what distinguishes his case from that of the great

* See *Raja Radha Kant's Life*, p. 7, (1859.)

English merchant is that he did not die a poor broken man ; on the contrary, he passed his days in affluence and comfort, and, in the fulness of time departed this world in peace. It does not appear where he breathed his last, but the probability is that he died in Hooghly, and was buried either in a portion of his grand garden, or in Wazeednagore, a village in Municipal Ward No. 1, Shahgunge, which probably owes its name to him. His family dwelling-house, however, was in Turan-garh, the western portion of the present Chauk Bazar. Upon the site of this house, Dr. T. Wise in later times erected a splendid building which is still in existence and which was only recently occupied by the District Road-Cess office.

Khojah Fazal Cashmeery.—Like Khojah Wazeed, this gentleman too was a noted merchant of Hooghly, and, like him, was a native of Cashmere, as his cognomen plainly shows. He came to this place probably some years before his great countryman, and rose high in riches and influence. The local Fouzdar had great regard for him, so had the Provincial Governor himself. Indeed, he was considered as a power in the land, and his aid was sought in the matter of the misunderstanding which arose between the Fouzdar of Hooghly and the Ostend Company. This Company was established in Germany in August 1723. Before it was so established, a private ship had arrived in Bengal,

and its captain had obtained permission from Nawab Murshid Kuli Khan to build a factory in the village of Bankybazur, situated on the eastern side of the Hooghly, fifteen miles above Calcutta. In 1724, an Ostend ship came to Bengal, but was lost in going up the river. The officers and crew took possession of Bankybazur and erected temporary houses. In the two following years, the Ostend trade was fully established and the German factory rapidly rose in estimation. In 1727, however, owing to the remonstrances of the English, the French and the Dutch, the German Emperor withdrew his charter and ordered that the Ostend traffic should cease for seven years. Nevertheless, this traffic was carried on clandestinely. The English and the Dutch, being apprized of this, tried hard to root it out altogether. They, accordingly, bribed the Fouzdar of Hooghly, within whose jurisdiction Bankybazur lay, and the latter, pretending to believe in the representations that were made to him, sent a considerable force under Mir Jafar to take the place, who, accordingly, invested it. While the siege was going on, Khojah Fazal, having offered his services as a mediator between the Germans and the Moguls, sent his son with a message to Bankybazur. This young man was retained by the Germans as a hostage for their own security, and was not set at liberty till hostilities were suspended for some days. The siege, however, was renewed after his liberation, and the result was that

the place was captured after a very brave resistance. The Mogul troops took possession of the German factory, and levelling the fortifications with the ground, and delivering over the village to the local zemindar, returned in triumph to Hooghly, with drums beating and colours flying. This took place about 1732-33 A.D.,* just a century after the demolition of the Portuguese factory at Hooghly by the Mogul army in the reign of Emperor Shah Jehan.

The circumstances set forth above, plainly show that Khojah Fazal possessed great influence and was held in very high esteem. Though not so rich as Khojah Wazeed or Omichund, he was rich enough, and passed for a merchant of note. But it would seem that his local influence was much greater than one might have expected from his material condition ; and he passed his days in peace and happiness, until, when his time came, he was summoned away from this world unto the next.

Khojah Fazal Cashmeery, it is said, lived in the quarter which was known as Mogulpura, the eastern portion of the present Chauk Bazar. He was buried probably in the *gorosthan* (burial-ground), a little to the south of Ghutia Bazar. The tomb, however, is not identifiable.

Mirza Mohammad Jafar Pombai.—This gentleman

* Orme, however, postpones the expulsion of the Germans till 1748. See his *Historical Sketches*, from which the above account is mainly taken.

also was one of the principal merchants of Hooghly. What Khojah Wazeed was in the trade in salt, Jafar Pombai was in that of cotton, and hence got his distinctive cognomen, the Persian word, '*pomba*,' meaning cotton. His house and factory were situated on the banks of the river, the ruins whereof are still visible in its bed. He flourished at a time when the East India Company were rising in their career of glory, power and affluence; and reached the height of greatness in his profession. He possessed great influence in Hooghly and its neighbourhood, and was held in high esteem. But death is a great leveller. The place which saw him rise so very high also saw him laid low in the "narrow cell," otherwise called a grave. He was buried in the enclosed burial-ground in the very heart of the town, a few yards to the south of the Bara Imambara. His tomb which stands in the north-west portion, is a fine piece of architecture, but owing to disrepair, it has lost much of its beauty and elegance. It contains an inscription on a black stone slab, from which it appears that he was a *Rumi*, or native of Constantinople, or rather of Asiatic Turkey, and that he died on the 3rd day of Romzan 1200 Hegira, corresponding to 19th June 1786 A.D. Thus, it appears that his death took place in the very year in which Lord Cornwallis began to rule British India.

Jafar Pombai left a son, Mirza Roshun Ali, who

carried on the trade of his father. Having inherited very large property, Roshun Ali could well afford to live splendidly, and, as a matter of fact, did live in a very grand style. Mircala, Keota and Shahgunge belonged to him, besides several other properties on this side of the river as well as some on the other side. Biru Nandi, the ancestor of the Nandis of Shahgunge, was his Dewan. When Mirza Roshun flourished, Mr. David C. Smyth was the Judge and Magistrate of Hooghly. Unfortunately for him, the Mirza incurred the grave displeasure of the great Englishman. This is how it arose: On some festive occasion, Roshun Ali got up a great show by letting off squibs and beating drums. It so happened that Mr. Smyth's wife was then ailing very severely, so much so that her life was well-nigh despaired of. The Sahib who lived in his *kooti* at Keota, not far from the residence of Roshun Ali, sent him word not to go on making such disturbance; but the proud Mahomedan without paying heed to his request, continued the *tamasha*. Mr. Smyth naturally took great offence, and resolved to put down the haughty man.* Mirza Roshun was thrown into great difficulties and almost all his properties were sold, of which the major portion was purchased by his Dewan, Biru Nandi.

When his fortune was at its lowest ebb, Roshun

* For some such indiscretion, Nawab Baboo of Singhur came to grief at the hands of the very same big official.

Ali removed to the quarter called Tamlipara, where he lived very poorly. Indeed, his condition became so very deplorable that he had to support himself and his family by selling fruits and tobacco. Surely, the goddess of fortune is nothing if not fickle in her favour, of which Mirza Roshun Ali is a very striking instance, who began life as a rich lord, but died a wretched pauper.

Roshun Ali left a son, Abul Hossein, who somehow managed to make the two ends meet. He did not long survive his father, and, at last, died leaving two sons, Abul Kasim and Muhammad Hasem, who for some years resided in the house in front of the Bara Imambara, close to the place where their illustrious great-grand-father was buried. Being apprized of their good antecedents, Prince Ferokshere of the Mysore royal family, took them into his service and continued maintaining them for years in his Chinsura house. They are still in the service of his grandson.

Kazi Mohammad Lal.—This gentleman was a noted character in Hooghly. He was a great Persian and Arabic scholar and was also well up in Mahomedan Law. Indeed, law was his forte, and he distinguished himself in it. He held the office of *kazi*, or Mahomedan law officer, for a considerable time, and was highly respected for his vast erudition. He had his house in the northern portion of Turangarh, which was named after him *Kazir-dauri*. The big gateways leading to his grand edifice were, as a

rule, closed "at curfew-tide," so that people could not pass or repass through that quarter after eight o'clock in the night. This almost unique privilege was granted him in consideration of his high rank and position in society as well as in the republic of letters. The grand gateways still exist, though in a dilapidated state. After having filled his office with honour to himself and advantage to the public, the good old man died full of years, leaving a son to succeed to his estate and title.

Kazi Mohammad Sadek, for that was the name of the old man's son, was well worthy of such a father, nay, he surpassed his sire by his wonderful parts and learning. He was, besides, a successful waver of the Muse of poetry, and was honoured by the King of Oudh, Gazi-ud-din Hyder, with the title of *Muluck-o-Shair*, or prince of poets. This was certainly no small honour, seeing that it was conferred by one who was himself a poet of no mean order. It was said that he made a gift of his academic title, "*Uktar*" (star), to that King who had expressed a wish to purchase it from him for a lakh of rupees. Such sale or gift of titles was not uncommon in olden days, and was not confined to India.

Mohammad Sadek was, as became him, a man of sedentary habit. He retired to Delhi where in his studious retreat he composed some works which well deserve praise, if they do not actually command

it. He married Shabani Bibi, by whom he had no other issue but a daughter, named Nishani Bibi. Kazi Mohammad Lal had another son, Golam Lillahi, whose son, Abdul Muktar, married Nishani Bibi, the only daughter of Mohammad Sadek, marriage between such near relatives being quite authorized, if not highly approved, by the Mahomedan Law. The husband and wife lived in health and happiness for some time, after which the matrimonial tie was dissolved by death. Upon this Nishani Bibi married, in the *Nikah* form, Kazi Hossein Ali who lived close by, and lived with him for some years, after which she, again, became a widow. She was the last representative of the once famous Kazi family of Hooghly. She died two or three years ago, and with her the family came to an end.

The property of this family was, at one time, pretty considerable, and was interspersed in Hooghly, Satgaon and Hosanabad. But, now, it is reduced almost to nothing; nay, even the very dwelling-house and the lands and gardens attached to it have passed into other hands.

The large Aga Somash tank which looks like a lake, was until lately a portion of the estates of the Kazi family; it now belongs to pleader Moulvie Anwar Meah, a relation of Moulvie Nasiruddin, a distinguished Principal Sadar Amin under the rule of the East India Company. Thus, all that

remains of this renowned family is its name, a mere empty sound signifying nothing.

Haji Kerbelai Muhammad.*—This gentleman was another merchant of note. He was an Irani Mogul and came out to this country towards the latter half of the eighteenth century. He settled in Chinsura and commenced trade on a large scale. He was the son of Haji Kerbelai Ali Reza of Teheran. He traded principally in indigo and prospered very well in it. He had indigo factories at Taldanga, Dhaniakhali and Bansberia in the district of Hooghly as well as at Pyegachhi in the district of Burdwan. He also owned ships which he used to send out, not only to distant parts of India but also to Arabia, Persia and Turkey. In this way he became immensely rich. His big house was in the quarter of Chinsura called Mogultuli, so named from the fact of its having been principally inhabited by Moguls. But though a merchant by profession, the good man was religiously disposed and had made a pilgrimage to distant Mecca and more distant Kerbela, the two most holy places in the eye of a Mahomedan. But not satisfied with making pilgrim-

* *Haji* means a Mussalman who has made a pilgrimage (*haj*) to Mecca, or *Caaba Shariff*, as it is commonly called. Similarly, *Kerbelai* means a Mussalman who has been to the sacred field of Kerbela, in Mesopotamia, where are entombed the remains of Hussein, who fell in his contest against Ziad, the son of Moavia; and rosaries formed of the clay of his tomb are held in high estimation by the Shiah, and are supposed to possess magical qualities. (See *Syar-ul-Mutakherin*.) Kerbela is justly called the battle-field of the world. What Mecca is to the Sunnees, Kerbela is to the Shiah.

ages he founded an Imambara adjoining his dwelling house in Chinsura, and endowed it with property situated partly in Kasimpore and partly in Bansberia, the income of which is a little above 590 rupees. The Imambara is still kept up and is in the charge of Mirza Mehndi who is a gentleman of some importance in Chinsura. The Imambara is more than a century old, having been founded in the year 1801 A.D.

When he found that his end was fast approaching, Haji Kerbelai made a Will, thereby disposing of the properties he was master of. This Will was executed on 9th Jikada, 1218 Hegira. A few years after, the good old man ended his earthly career. He was buried in the Protappur garden which formerly belonged to Kasim Ali Khan. His tomb and those of some members of his family still exist there.

Haji Kerbelai had two sons, Mirza Hassan Ali and Mirza Mohammad Reza, of whom the first predeceased him. But though he died quite young, Hassan Ali had prospered well in trade and become in his turn a well-known merchant, though certainly not so rich as his father. He had purchased Bagh Kasimpore and Bagh Keota besides some property in Satgaon and Hosanabad. He had also some property on the other side of the Hooghly. Thus, he had grown a man of note, but the tenure of his life was short and he departed this world in the prime of life.

There was another Haji Kerbelai who built a little Imambara just opposite to the house of Mir Solaman Khan of Joraghat. But he was a man of small importance in comparison with the great merchant whom we have spoken of above. No vestige of this Imambara remains to tell tale of its existence, the site being one plain level soil which the boys have turned into a play-ground.

Kazem Ali Khan.—This gentleman was otherwise called Kasim Ali Khan, or Kasim Mullick. He came from Lucknow and settled just where Hooghly meets Chinsura. The Khan was a very rich merchant and was by courtesy styled Nawab. Indeed, though not actually ennobled, he resembled one belonging to the aristocratic order. He built the grand house which stands just to the south of *Joraghat* (double-ghat). In fact, these two ghats were attached to that house, one of them having been for the use of the inmates of the house, the other for the use of the public at large. In this splendid house, Kasim Ali lived like a prince. But this building was not his only landed property in this quarter. He had a very fine garden in Protappur which latterly was purchased by the late Radha Nath Bannerjee and is now in the possession and enjoyment of his son. This garden was named after him and is still commonly known as *Kaz-Mullicker Bâg*. Kasim Ali also established a big *hât* in the quarter which bears his name. This is the most flourishing market

in Hooghly and is held on Thursdays and Sundays. It lies to the west of the road which runs through Pipalpati to Chinsura. It forms a part of kismat Kulihanda, the property of the Bansberia Rajas, but is held in perpetuity by the Das family of Jogudaspara. A portion of the *hât* where rice, and potatoe are sold is held by the Bose family of Karpasdanga and some others. The market is known as Mullick Kasim's *hât* and the quarter in which it is situated goes by the name of Kasimpur. Kasim Ali died in his Chinsura house and was buried in his garden at Protappur. His tomb is still in existence, though not in a good state of repair.

This merchant-prince left a son, Taki Mohammad, to succeed to his estates, who also lived in a grand style in imitation of his father. But he proved a prodigal son and parted with most of his rich patrimony. Afterwards, the dwelling-house itself passed out of the hands of the family, and came into the possession of Haji Baba of Kazan who occupied it for a pretty long time. The rich Haji's grandson was a merchant of great note. This appears from his very title itself—*Makk-ul-Tuttejar* (merchant of the world)—a title which considerably resembles that of the famous banker of Murshidabad, Jagat Sett, who cut such a prominent figure at the time when the Mahomedan rule was about to give way to the English power. The present

owner of the house is Baboo Sarat Chandra Mundal, who has been living with his family in it. The house, though it has passed through very many summers, is still very strong and is well able to bear the wear and tear of time for years to come as well as the violence of the river that runs close by. It is of a Gothic structure in which strength is more consulted than beauty. It is one of the strongest and most durable buildings in this part of the country.

Ashanulla Meah.—This gentleman was commonly called Meah Ahsan. He was a principal merchant of Hooghly and was a personal friend of the powerful Nawab, Ali Verdi Khan, with whom, it was said, he had exchanged his turban in token of real, sincere friendship. This fact is alone sufficient to show that he was a very famous character and was held in high esteem. His dwelling-house was a grand thing, and, as it had twelve entrance gates,* gave the name of Baradwari to the quarter in which it stood. Here he lived like a prince and entertained Rajahs and Nawabs in a manner which considerably resembled the reception which William Beckford used to give to his guests at his splendid Vatek

* Some, however, say that, not that the house had twelve gates, but that it had so many glass windows which looked like doors, so big and high they were. One such house with twelve entrance gates was built by Raja Protapaditya, the last king of the Sunderbans, in Ishanpur within the limits of the Satkhira Sub-Division. Some remains of the said Baradwari house are still visible *in situ*. (*See Objects of Antiquarian Interest in Bengal.*)

Castle. Fickle as fortune is, she never, however, withheld her favours from Meah Ahsan, who lived and died a rich man. He had a son, but it seemed, he had died before him, so that the property left by the rich Meah was inherited by his grandsons, Enayet Hossein and Hamid Hossein. They, however, did not prove worthy heirs. They parted with considerable portion of their inheritance. Enayet died childless, but his brother, Hamid, left a son who was a translator of the High Court at Calcutta for some time. There is no knowing what has become of him since. Probably he is no longer in the land of the living.

Though no vestige of Meah Ahsan's grand edifice remains, the place is still called by that name and is likely to be so called for many long years to come.

Mir Solaman Khan. This gentleman certainly passed for a noted character in his day, but there was this deep dark stain in his life that he had acquired his vast fortune by the foulest of means. He was probably a Lucknow man, but in early life he came to Bengal. After serving in some minor capacities, he entered the household of the "Chota Nawab," as Mir Kasim, the son-in-law of Mir Jaffar, was called, and ultimately rose to be his steward. With the fall of Mir Jaffar, the prospect of Mir Kasim brightened up with the greatest effulgence, and he was placed on his father-in-law's *gaddi* at Murshidabad. Mir Solaman became the great

favourite and confidant of the new Nawab. But when, a few short years after, fortune frowned upon Mir Kasim, his pet steward was not slow to show his cloven foot and even went the length of robbing him of his jewels and other valuables.

On being finally defeated by the English, the Nawab fled towards the west, and crossing the much-maligned Karmanasa, passed into the country of Bulwant Sing, a dependant of Shuja-ud-Dowla, Nawab Vizier of Oude, whither he was hurriedly followed by his family. "Amongst the multitudes of covered carriages of all sorts," says the contemporary author of *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin*, "that attended Mir Cassem's *haram sera*, or sanctuary, in his retreat, there were numbers of covered coaches and chairs which passed for containing some favourite ladies, but which, in reality, contained but bags of white cloth, full of gold coin, and of gems, as well as of jewels of high value. All these together with Mir Cassem's Begum and his other ladies, both on going to Rhotas and in coming from thence, were entrusted to the care of Mir Suleiman Khan, his steward, a man in whom he used to repose the highest confidence, but who being apprised of the variety of contents, stole and embezzled a number of jewels of such a value as could not be reckoned but by lacs."* Mir Kasim had got scent of this

* See *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin*, Translation, Vol. II, p. 517, Cambay's Reprint.

treachery, but his affairs at that time had fallen into such a pitiable plight that he found no opportunity of examining the effects. Shortly after, the man from the Nawab Vizier came to compliment and console him, and, as he still reposed confidence in Mir Solaman who, to save appearances, never failed to show feigned grief and sorrow at his master's bad lot, he sent him along with the said messenger as an envoy to that Prince. "In this embassy," to quote again from the same author, "the treacherous hypocrite took care to make his peace with Beni Bahadur, who was Prime Minister to Shuja-ud-Dowla, with Aaly Beg Khan, his general, and with Mir Behloo, which latter had been once tutor to that Prince. With all these, as well as with all the favourites of that Prince, he found means to ingratiate himself by making them sharers in the treacherous booty he had made, giving to some of them gems of an immense value."* Mir Solaman, afterwards, returned to Mir Kasim and showed him the letters which he had secured from the Vizier's principal men by foul means. Mir Kasim, who, in the midst of misfortunes, had not lost his usual good sense, was shrewd enough to see through the rougé, and, accordingly, threw out hints which indicated strong suspicion of his steward's apparent innocence. Apprehending that the mask which he had put on to conceal his guilt, had been rent, this

* See Vol. II, p. 518.

rogue of a servant left his old master's camp and went over to the Nawab Vizier and took service under him. His subsequent conduct is thus portrayed in strong colours by the noble historian whom we have more than once quoted. He says :—
 “ Whilst Mir Cassem was consuming his days in the dungeon of a reverse of fortune, his unworthy steward, Mir Suleiman, was coming out from the corner of infamy, with Solomon's ring* at his finger, and not content with becoming a favourite of the Vizier's, he turned out informer and gave his new master advice to annex the fortress of Rhotas to his dominions.”† This advice, however, did not have its intended effect, for Sahu Mull, the governor of the fortress, not feeling sufficiently strong to defend it for his master, surrendered it to general Goddard instead of being a party to Solaman's villainy. The Mir stuck by his new master, the Vizier, and was present at the battle of Buxar, which, completing what had been left undone by the battle of Plassey, brought down both the Emperor and the Vizier to the feet of the English. When affairs of the native rulers wore this sad and gloomy aspect, Solaman fled with all his ill-gotten effects and money, and coming to Bengal, settled in a portion which abutted on, if it did not actually fall within, the Dutch settle-

* This ring, amongst an infinity of properties, had that of turning the wearers into any shape they chose to assume ; it could also render them invisible.

† See Vol. II, p. 553.

ment of Chinsura. Here he built a grand palatial residence and commenced living like an Eastern grandee which his immense wealth well enabled him to do. The big building has with the decline in the fortune of the family long since come down, only a poor relic remaining to tell tale of its pristine magnificence.

The vast wealth of Mir Solaman Khan having excited the cupidity of the powerful Haldars, who lived close by at Haldartuli, they engaged a lot of bad characters of which there was plenty in this part of the country, and by their aid caused a terrible dacoity to be committed in his house. The booty carried off was very large indeed, but enough still remained for the family to keep up its dignity for some time to come. In this way, Mir Solaman of infamous memory lived up to within two or three years of the close of the eighteenth century, when he departed this world, and with him passed away the power and importance of the family.

The deceased had seven sons of whom Mir Sabeth Ali cut a pretty good figure. Among the sons of the latter, Mir Mobarek Ali was comparatively well known. He was born in the year 1802, and was well educated in Arabic and Persian. He was also a nice hand at painting, and was, accordingly, employed at the Hooghly College, then only recently established, to teach that fine art. He was,

therefore, generally known as *Khosnovis*. This good man whom we well remember having seen in our younger days, more than completed the Psalmist's cycle of threescore and ten, he having died in 1879. One of his sons, Mir Mohamed Massum, is a well-known medical practitioner at Calcutta. He is domiciled there and only occasionally pays a visit to his ancestral abode, which, dilapidated as it is, and rapidly crumbling into ruins, is in the occupation of one of the grandsons of the good old *Khosnovis*.

Gouri Sen.—No name is more frequent in the mouths of the people of this part of Bengal, and yet there are very few, indeed, who know who the man was that bore that honoured name. Gouri Sen* was a scion of the Sen family of that important quarter in the town of Hooghly which is known as Bali. He was a *Suvarnanabick* by caste and was the son of Hara Krishna Murari Dhar Sen. The exact year of his birth is not known, but there is evidence to show that he lived and moved and had his being about three hundred years ago, Iswar Chandra Sen, the present representative of the family, being the eighth in descent from him. This exceptionally noted character rose from very small beginning. He did not inherit any property worth the name: indeed

* It is not known whether the name of the man was Gouri Sankar or Gouri Nath or something else. So we give the name as it is commonly known.

he was by God's grace the sole architect of his immense fortune. As is usual with his caste people, Gouri Sen began life as a trader on a very small scale. It seems that he had a friend in one Bhoirub Chandra Datta, a Kayastha, who was a resident of Medinisankarpur, probably the present Midnapur ; and to whom he used to send goods for sale. On one occasion when his trade had thriven to a certain extent, he had sent him seven boatsful of zinc. It so happened that on one of the boats there was an old Sadhu or saint as a passenger who was going on a pilgrimage to the South. When the boats so laden reached their destination, the consignee, the aforesaid Bhoirub Datta, on being informed of their arrival, came to the riverside, and what was his surprise when on examining the goods he found that the cargo was not zinc, as the advice showed, but pure unalloyed silver. Bhoirab, if he was so minded, might have appropriated the silver, sending his consignor money's worth of zinc of which the cargo originally consisted ; but he was too good a man to take advantage of his friend's luck, nay, he felt horror at committing such breach of trust. He, accordingly, sent back the seven boats, laden as they were with silver, to Gouri Sen at Hooghly, who thus rose one morning and found himself suddenly rich. Just before the boats reached Hooghly, Gouri Sen had seen in a dream that the Great God, Mahadeva, appeared before him, and informing him

of the strange conversion of the cargo, asked him to build a temple for him and consecrate it at his house. On the dream being found to be true in fact, Gouri Sen who thus rose in riches, as it were, *per saltum*, did what he was directed by the Mighty God to do. The shrine with the Deity in it is still in existence and the worship is well kept up by his worthy descendants.

The above story of the conversion of zinc into silver has, it is true, the air of romance, but all that we can say is that strange and mysterious are the ways of Providence, and that what to others appears miraculous becomes in the case of one, who has the good fortune of being unusually favoured by the Great on High, a stern reality. Having become immensely rich all on a sudden, Gouri Sen resolved to make the best use of the wealth thus poured in upon him. His liberality was not sectarian, but had a very wide range. He was always forward in relieving the poor and the needy, and helping up those who fell into difficulty. Indeed, people had become convinced that if they did any act for public welfare, they were sure to have the wherewithal from that Karna of his day, Gouri Sen. In this way the saying—"লাগে টাকা দেবে গৌরি সেন" (*If any money be needed it will be supplied by Gouri Sen*)—which has almost passed into a proverb,—became current in this part of the country. Some ill-disposed men, taking advantage of the good man's unbounded

liberality by construing the saying generally, sometimes committed objectionable acts in the hope of being assisted by him.

On one occasion Gouri Sen gave a grand dinner to his caste people of Hooghly and the neighbouring villages. They mustered strong and the assemblage looked like a large army of unarmed men. The guests were not only sumptuously fed but were also given some presents, the like to which was never done by anybody else on this side of the river. Indeed, rich as he was to his heart's wish, Gouri Sen well knew the use of money and spent it with both hands, as the common parlance goes, for the purpose of acquiring good name and fame. Taking him all in all, we feel no hesitation in saying that he was not only a child of fortune but a really good and great man. May his revered memory live long in the grateful remembrance of the people! Though by nature affable and mild, Gouri Sen always kept an eye on his dignity and would be the last person to compromise it in any way whatever. He was, it was said, "as humble as the very grass that lies low;" indeed, he made a virtue of humility, and yet would not allow pride in others to go unreprieved. A rich Baidya, named Balaram Sen, once came to invite him riding on an elephant; but instead of coming down from the elephant, as he should have done, invited him proudly sitting in the *Howdah*. Upon this, Gouri Sen told him there and then that if he

did not come down from his exalted seat to invite him, he could not accept his invitation. Being touched to the quick by this ready reproof, the haughty Baidya, Balaram, went away with mingled feelings of shame and indignation.

Iswar Chunder Sen, the present representative of the family, is the cousin (maternal uncle's son) of the late Babu Hira Lal Seal of Calcutta. The family is considerably reduced, but is still held in esteem.



सत्यमेव जयते

CHAPTER VI.

MADAME LE GRAND AND "ELEGANT MARIAN IN HOOGLHY.

Madame le Grand—This remarkable lady whose chequered life affords ample materials for a romance, was born at Tranquebar* on the Coromandel Coast on the 21st November, 1762. But though born a Danish subject, she was not a Dane by birth: Her father, † Monsier Werlée, was a true-born Frenchman of distinction, who had done eminent services to his country and had received honors ‡ at the hands of his sovereign; but her mother, Laurance Allancy, was not of note, and even her very nationality is anything but certain. In her infancy, Coël Catherine Werlée, § for that was her maiden name, was taken to the French settlement of Chandernagore on the Hooghly, where her father was in good grace with

* The Danes made their settlement at Tranquebar in the first quarter of the 17th century, having obtained a grant of the land from the Raja of Tanjore. Mr. Macfarlane thinks that the Madame was a native of Pondicherry. See *Our Indian Empire*, Vol. I, p. 220 note.

† Thomas Kaikes who was in Paris at the time of the Lady's death, however, says in his Journal that she was a Creole, born at Martinique. Lady Brownlow in her "Reminiscences of a Septuagenarian," on the contrary, says,—“She was, I believe, either English or Scotch by birth.” Indeed, grave doubt hangs over her origin; but the account I have given seems to be the most probable one.

‡ He was a Capitaine du Port and Chevalier de St. Louis.

§ Some say that her maiden name was Dayrel, but this is a mistake.

the Governor. There the girl grew up and became the "cynosure of neighbouring eyes."

About this time one Mr. George Francois Grand, who, though of Swiss nationality, had adopted England as his fatherland, paid occasional visits to the French Settlement. He was a member of the Indian Civil Service duly appointed in England, and had previously been in the Company's army, in which he had risen to the rank of captain in 1773, when owing to broken health, he was "ordered by the Faculty to make a trip to Europe." As the rule then stood, compliance with this order entailed resignation of service; so giving up service though most reluctantly, the young invalid returned to his land of adoption. The bracing climate of England did him much good, and after he was completely restored in health, he obtained a "writership" on the list of 1776, "which station was accepted accompanied with the assurance that I should be so recommended to the Government of India as to be deemed eligible to such situation as Factors were placed in;" and sailed for the Far East. He arrived in Calcutta in June, 1776, and, entrusted as he was at Madras with official despatches from Colonel Maclean to the Governor-General, was very kindly received by Mr. Hastings, whose conduct towards him was such that he soon considered himself an inmate of the family, and one partaking in a certain degree of the confidence of that great man. While

he remained with the Hastings, he generally accompanied them in their hebdomatical excursions on the river. In these pleasure trips, Hastings sometimes stopped at Sukhsagar, the sugarcane plantation of his friend, Mr. Crofts ; or at Ghyretty House, the residence of the French Governor, M. Chevalier. At this gentleman's house there reigned the truest hospitality and gaiety. His admiration and personal friendship for Mr. Hastings ensured the most welcome reception to those who were patronised by this excellent man. In one of these trips, Mr. Grand made the acquaintance of Miss Werlée which soon warmed into love, and when shortly after, he obtained a situation enabling him to commence house-keeping, the matrimonial alliance was resolved upon. The tenth day of July, 1777, was fixed for the wedding. As Miss Werlée was of the Catholic persuasion, it became necessary for the happy lovers to be married both in the Romish and the Protestant Church. To these forms they strictly conformed, and on the morning of that day, the Popish priest legalized the union first in the Church at Chander-nagore ; and then at the " Hooghly House," where the bridegroom's old friend, Thomas Motte, Esquire, dwelt. The Rev. Dr. William Johnson, who by special license from the Governor-General had come from Calcutta, tied the nuptial noose with the usual benediction. Soon after the marriage the wedded couple went to Calcutta and took up quarters in the

house of Mr. Robert Sanderson, father-in-law of Mr. Barwell,* where they stayed for ten months, after which they came to reside at Chandernagore. Remaining here a few months, they again went back to Calcutta and took a little house not far from the town. The course of events went smoothly along until the 23rd November, 1778, in the night whereof there was a grand ball at the house of Mr. (afterwards Sir Philip) Francis at which the Governor-General with his suite were present. It would appear that Mrs. Grand was also at this very ball and received marked attentions from the host, who, it seems, danced with her on the occasion. Mr. Francis, though he held a very high post, was not a man of strict morals, and it was only natural that he should have fallen in love with the most beautiful lady† in

* Barwell's wife, Elizabeth Jane Sanderson, survived her marriage only a little over two years, she dying in November, 1778. She lies buried in South Park Street ground. The bereaved husband retired in March 1780, and returned to England where he purchased a fine estate--Stanstead in Sussex--and entered Parliament. With the colossal fortune which he had amassed in India he lived like a prince, and at last died in his estate in September 1804, aged sixty-three. (See *Echoes*, pp. 152, 153).

† Francis came single to India, his wife remaining in England. Her brother, Macrabe, accompanied him, who as Sheriff of Calcutta, played an important part in the trial and execution of Nanda Coomar. While Francis lived with his wife in England, though their income was limited, they lived very happily, and he was able to tell his brother-in-law in 1769, "I believe I lead a happier life than a Prime Minister." Francis's letters to his wife before his Indian appointment testify to the strong attachment which existed between them. Whether this attachment continued after he had been away from her, we have no means of judging, as very few of his letters from India to his wife have been preserved. He returned to England in 1781, quite an altered man. His love was not fixed on his wife, it wandered here and there, and if we may believe Lord Byron, he

the land. All authorities agree in testifying to the surpassing beauty of Mrs. Grand: In face, form, figure, and gracefulness of carriage she seems to have presented a combination quite unrivalled. But beyond all these, she was dowered with that special charm, which perhaps ranks highest in the scale of female attractions and always commands universal admiration, *viz.*, a glorious head of thick luxuriant hair. This description of her person is not at all exaggerating, confirmed as it decidedly is by the testimony of one who would have been the last person to assent to it, if the fact had been otherwise. We refer to the account which Sir Francis's second wife has left of her. She says:—"Mrs. Grand was at that time the most beautiful woman* in Calcutta. She was tall, most elegantly formed, the stature of a Nymph, a complexion of unequalled delicacy, and auburn hair of the most luxuriant profusion; fine

showed the utmost indifference, when his wife died in April 1806, a month or two before he was knighted. Even after he had passed the Psalmist's cycle of three-score and ten by five years, he married, in the Waterloo year, Miss Watkins, who was forty three years his younger. Sir Philip was wont to playfully address her as "Infanta Carissima."

* Surely this is saying a great deal, considering the number of European beauties then living in and about Calcutta. There were Lady Chambers, the Judge's wife, and Lady Day, the Advocate-General's wife, who were very beautiful. More beautiful than either was "Elegant Marian," the Governor-General's wife. Besides these there were Madame Pelle, the Bandel beauty, and Miss Emma Wrangham, 'the Chinsura belle,' who now and then paid visits to Calcutta. In August 1781, Raja Nabakissen gave a *nautch* and grand entertainment "in commemoration of Miss Wrangham's birthday." All these were so many Helens, so to say, and to have topped them all in personal charms was an achievement which has no parallel even in romance, far less in real life.

blue eyes, with black eye-lashes and brows gave her countenance a most piquant singularity." A writer in the *Calcutta Review* for 1844* says that "her picture painted by Zoffany now adorns the walls of Mr. Marshman's residence at Serampore;" and with a discrimination which, perhaps, as Dr. Busted properly observes, is somewhat *ex post facto*, he adds,— "there is more of feminine softness than of strength of character in her fair countenance;—the sensual prevails everywhere over the intellectual." Speaking of her wealth of hair which in the eyes of a female is richer than the wealth of Cræsus, Madame Rémusat, who saw her late in life when she was in Paris, says that "her fair golden hair was of proverbial beauty." Such was the beauty who was singled out in the social life of Calcutta for the marked attentions of Mr. Philip Francis, and the lady too had every reason to be proud of such attentions being paid her. Apart from his high position which counts much with the tender sex, Francis was almost the Hyperion of his time. He was not only remarkable for his rare mental endowments, his exterior also was "strikingly handsome." His contemporaries speak very highly of his person and their glowing description of him is not at all over-coloured. "The Lady of Cambridge," as Milton was called in his youth, was not more beautiful than Francis was when a young man. Lady Francis

* This is the year in which that *Great Quarterly* was established.

records that so noticeably good-looking was he as a young man that, when in Paris in 1766 he was alluded to as the "le bel Anglais." His manner towards ladies is said to have been characterized by an air of easy politeness and attention marked with deferential admiration. Indeed, it was the very reverse of the Junian severity. "Many of his letters to women," says his biographer, "have that mixture of playfulness, humour and sentiment which is said to be particularly captivating to them. He had also that peculiar attraction which they are sometimes apt to find in one who is feared by men, and reputed haughty and unyielding among them, but who shows himself tractable and submissive to the other sex and eager to obtain their favour." When such was the posture of affairs, it is not unreasonable to suppose that young and unwary as Mrs. Grand then was, she gave a willing ear to the addresses of Francis, who on his part chuckling over the glorious conquest he had made in the reign of Love, thus triumphantly recorded in his Indian Journal under date the 24th November, "Omnia vincit amor ; job for Wood, the salt agent."* But though he had gained the lady's heart, there was formidable difficulty in getting access into her chamber. The husband was inordinately fond of his young wife

* At the time we are speaking of, Mr. Grand was Secretary to the Salt Committee, and Head Assistant and Examiner in their Secretary's office.

and would never, if he could avoid it, stay out after the still hour of "dewy eve." He used to gamble as many others of his time did, but since his marriage he had given up that perilous practice and set himself up a family man of the truest type. The garden-house in which he lived stood in a very good position, and he had also a sufficient staff of servants who were well able to guard against thieves and intruders. To steal into such a house for immoral purposes was no easy matter. Francis of whom illicit love had taken entire possession was trying every manner of means to gratify his lust. At last, an opportunity presented itself on the 8th December. On that day there was a symposium at Barwell's house at which it was absolutely necessary that Mr. Grand, who was under so much obligation to him, should be present. Indeed, his absence from it would have been regarded as an insult to the great host. Accordingly, at 9 o'clock in the night Mr. Grand left his house the happiest of men, with the view to sup at the house of his benefactor. Availing himself of this opportunity, of which he had been informed, very probably by the lady herself, Mr. Francis ventured into this dangerous affair, the like to which has proved almost fatal to many a gallant. Mr. Grand was then living in his garden-house, and shortly after he had left it, the desperate lover who had been biding his time, entered it like a thief, and got into the lady's chamber by means of a rope-ladder. It

does not appear who had brought this ladder, but there is evidence to show that Francis did not come alone, but had two or three accomplices with him who remained outside the house. After he had been in the lady's room for about three quarters of an hour, Mr. Grand's Jamadar, Rambux, on being shown the strange ladder by one of his subordinates, gave the alarm; whereupon Mr. Francis hurried downstairs and, on trying to escape, was caught by the sturdy Rajput. Mrs. Grand came down and told the Jamadar to let go Francis, but the servant without minding her order told her to go back to her room. Francis offered money, but his offer was rejected with scorn. When he found that the servant could not be gained over, he used force; but two fellows coming to the assistance of the Jamadar, he gave up all hope of making escape. The Jamadar sent one of his underlings to Mr. Grand to inform him of the matter. In the meantime at the whistle which Francis repeated several times, Mr. (afterwards Sir George) Shee and Mr. Ducarel scaled the wall from outside and came to his rescue. A scuffle ensued in which the Jamadar fell down and Francis took this opportunity to run out of the house, but his rescuers were seized in their turn, of whom Mr. Ducarel was allowed to go on the word of one Mr. Keeble, who lived close by. After this, Mr. Grand accompanied by Major Palmer, Hastings's Secretary, came in and on his order Mr. Shee was

allowed to go at large. Mr. Grand suspecting his wife's fidelity, did not go upstairs where she was, but returned himself to Mr. Major Palmer's house for the rest of the night, where seated on a chair, borne down with the deepest grief, he anxiously waited for the morning. Surely, "a thing of beauty" is not always "a joy for ever." When the day dawned he sent a challenge to Francis, requiring from him the satisfaction which the laws of honour prescribed for the injury done by him. But he curtly replied that, as he had done no injury, he could not but decline the proposed invitation. When the injured husband found that he could not get satisfaction in that way, he brought a *crim. con.* action, laying his damages at fifteen hundred thousand sicca rupees. The case came on for hearing before Sir Elijah Impey, Chief Justice, and Sir Robert Chambers and Mr. Justice Hyde, two Puisne Judges. Mr. Charles Newman* was counsel for the plaintiff, while Mr. Richard Tilghman† defended Francis. Both these

* This advocate was lost in the wreck of the *Grosvenor* in 1783—a catastrophe which plunged many Calcutta families into mourning. The ship was cast ashore on the "Coffee Coast" eastward of the Cape on her voyage home. Some of the passengers who reached the land were barbarously treated by the natives. (See *Echoes*, p. 219 note.)

† Tilghman was Francis's Philadelphian cousin and, after his brother-in-law Macrabie's death, his dearest friend. He returned to England with Francis in 1780, and, as he was a most amusing, cheery, affectionate fellow, must have been invaluable in helping to relieve the tedium of ten months' voyage. He started for Calcutta again in January 1785, but on arriving found that the climate did not suit him. So he left Bengal, but died on the voyage home in 1786, aged 39 only. Before his death was known, his father was written to by a

counsel were able men, but it would appear that the defendant's advocate was the abler of the two. At the final hearing the Judges differed in their views, Mr. Justice Chambers being of opinion that it was not proved the defendant had committed adultery, and that, therefore, there ought to be judgment for him. He gave his reasons categorically, and they were as follows: "1st—Because it appears to me that there is no proof, either positive or circumstantial, that Mrs. Grand knew of, or previously assented to, his (Mr. Francis's) coming for any purpose, much less for the purpose of adultery. 2nd—Because there is no proof, either direct or founded on violent presumption, that they were actually together, much less was there any proof that they committed any crime together. 3rd—Because the evidence appears to me to fall short of what is ordinarily considered as proof of any fact, and specially of any crime. 4th—Because it falls exceedingly short of what our Common Law considers as proof of adultery. And lastly, because I have never read or heard of any action for *crim. con.* in which a verdict has been given for the plaintiff on such presumption of guilt." In the face of such strong opinion one would think that the dissenting

friend in London to say that it was in contemplation to appoint his son Advocate-General at Calcutta in the place of Sir John Day, Warren Hastings, to his everlasting honour, having told the Directors that this intimate friend of Francis (then intriguing against himself) was the fittest person for the office. (See *Echoes*, p p. 220, 221 note.)

Judge had stuck to it to the very last, but, as Mr. Kaye says, he afterwards wavered and veering round assented* to the opinion of the majority, only differing from them in assessing the damages to be awarded at thirty thousand rupees, the Chief Justice and Mr. Justice Hyde having suggested fifty thousand and one hundred thousand respectively. At last, the suggestion of the Chief Justice was acted upon and rupees fifty thousand sicca together with costs of suit amounting to sicca rupees 947-8 annas were decreed in favour of the plaintiff. This trial which made quite a sensation came to a close in April 1779.

Having secured Francis's fifty thousand, Mr. Grand proceeded to settle accounts with Shee, whose friendly offices "to save his noble patron" both on the night of the escalade and in the witness-box during the trial in Court, Mr. Grand was evidently not disposed either to forget or forgive. He again had recourse to law, and brought an action of trespass, for breaking open and entering his house

* This, however, was denied by Samuel Tolfrey, Francis's attorney in the action, before the Committee of the House of Commons, who declared that the verdict was given contrary to the opinion of Sir Robert Chambers. This statement seems to gain some force from the preference and favour afterwards shown to that Judge by Francis. In the libellous Book of Travels which goes under the name of Mackintosh and in numerous other Publications, Chambers is held up as the most upright of Judges—as a contrast in integrity, humanity, and all other virtues to Sir Elijah Impey. (Macfarlane, Vol. I, pp. 293, 294 note). But strange to say, Francis himself harps upon Chambers's weakness. Surely something like mystery hangs over the whole matter.

on the 8th day of December 1778. But he did not make much by this, as the verdict was "one Rupee damage and one Rupee costs." Thus were all the legal proceedings which arose out of Francis's ugly doings wound up. But the injured husband who, as he himself acknowledged, was "fully satisfied, contented, and paid," was not reconciled to his wife. Indeed, he did not take much thought after her, and almost left her to shift for herself. Thus circumstanced, Mrs. Grand was in a manner compelled to throw herself upon the protection of the lover who had been instrumental in damaging her honour and reputation, and Francis, as if under sense of duty, took her under his care and patronage. He established her at Hooghly in the house of his Irish cousin, Major Phil Baggs. This bully of a man had only lately arrived in Calcutta, fresh from the glory of a desperate duel which he had successfully fought in France with no less redoubtable a personage than "Fighting Fitzgerald." He was also a very expert gambler and had won large sums at hazard. Deeming that Hooghly would suit him better than Calcutta, he took an elegant, modern-built house there and made it his permanent abode. It was at this house under the guardianship of such a dreaded Dragon that Francis placed the young Mrs. Grand somewhere in September 1779. As Francis's thoughts were now much occupied on matters amatory, he made frequent trips to Hooghly and

stayed there for days together, almost forgetting the important affairs of Government. His Journal has this entry under date the 9th September: "Go up to Hooghly, where I propose to stay till we hear decisively from England. If it be possible to avoid it, I will never meet these villains in Council again." From such language one can easily imagine in what direction the current of his thoughts was running at that time. Indeed, the incomparable beauty had taken absolute possession of his heart, and he found it extremely difficult to remain away from her sweet agreeable company. But the exigency of service sometimes got the better of his 'tender passion,' and he could not avoid going down to Calcutta. His stay there, however, was very short, and as soon as the business which had dragged him there was done, he would hurry back to Hooghly. Indeed, he liked his dear Hooghly so much that if circumstances had permitted, he might have made it his abode for good. As for Mrs. Grand, she too was very fond of the place which, comparatively quiet and peaceable as it was, pleased her more than busy, bouncing, boisterous Calcutta. While at Hooghly, Francis would now and again make pleasant excursions on the river in the company of his sweet mistress and his boon cousin, Baggs. The latter despite his terrible countenance, was quite gentleman-like in his manners and deportment, and as he was a cheery, jolly, amusing sort of a fellow he

was well able to give quite an exquisite zest to the sweet entertainment of the river journey. Indeed, during his residence at Hooghly, Francis well-nigh forgot all about Calcutta. The entry in his journal under date the 2nd November, runs thus:—"At Hooghly, where I propose to stay as long as I can, and visit Calcutta as seldom as I can. Last night an invitation was sent to me from Mr. and Mrs Hastings to dine with them to-morrow. Considering the terms on which we parted yesterday and that I never received such an invitation before, it is an odd unaccountable circumstance, and subject to infinite speculation." In fact, during the last few months of the year 1779, Francis, if he ever happened to be absent from his mistress, always had his eye on Hooghly, where all his tender concerns were focussed. He felt the absence very deeply, and was very anxious to be there again. But with the close of the year 1779, Hooghly ceased to have much attraction for the lover and the loved. Major Baggs, who was evidently in the service of the East India Company, was ordered out of India by the Court of Directors, and he, accordingly, started on the 3rd January, 1780. Shortly after, his house at Hooghly was advertised for sale in *Hicky's Gazette*. It does not appear what became of that house or by whom it was purchased, but it was left by the fair denizen who had occupied it for more than six months. When Francis found that Major Baggs

had gone, he brought his unprotected fair friend back to Calcutta somewhere in February. Barwell, who had all along supported Hastings in Council, started from Calcutta on the 3rd March, 1780. His absence complicated matters between the Governor-General and Francis which culminated in the all but fatal affairs of the 17th August. On that day a duel,—that barbarous practice of barbarous times—was fought between the two great opponents, in which Francis was wounded. He bled profusely and was taken in a cot to a neighbouring house, and then to Belvedere itself. The wound, however, was other than mortal, and it was not long before he recovered and was in a position to resume the duties of his high office. But the painful recollections of what had happened to him in India made a very deep impression upon his mind and he left this country on the 3rd December, 1780, never to see it again.

When Mrs. Grand found herself forsaken by Francis, she was quite at a loss what to do. Her husband had altogether cut off all connection with her, but had not formally divorced her from him. The marriage-tie was still tight in the eye of law and she could not, therefore, take a second husband without committing an offence. In this state of suspense she remained for some time in Calcutta, and then made up her mind to bid a long adieu to India. She sailed for Europe, but instead of going

to England with a view to renewing her connection with Francis, she went to reside in France, where she put herself into the charge of two respectable ladies, and though largely (if not mainly) dependent on the slender support which they could give her, she refused any assistance from Francis. The latter, however, frequently went to see her in Paris and Spa, but she, though acknowledging her affection for him and her attachment for no one else, "resisted the temptation of renewing the improper part of her intercourse with him." She remained in France until the troubles of the French Revolution compelled her to leave it in the month of August 1792. She stayed in England for three or four years, after which she returned to Paris. Whether Talleyrand de Perigord met Madame le Grand in England where he was early in the Revolution, or on the Continent, it is certain that he came to the French metropolis with him from Hamburg in the first days of the year 1796. At that time this distinguished Frenchman, who afterwards rose to be the greatest character in France, only inferior to Napoleon himself, was not in very good circumstances; so he was forced to put up with his travelling fair companion in a modest-furnished lodging. He soon had the vexation to see her arrested and sent to prison, on suspicion of her having had intimate relations with some emigrants at Hamburg. To obtain her release, Talleyrand himself was obliged

to write to Barras, the Director, who readily ordered the "rare and nonchalant Indian beauty" to be set at liberty. Mrs. Grand came back to Talleyrand's and they lived together in the closest intimacy. With the rise of the former to the post of Foreign Minister, the influence of the latter rose correspondingly high. She had gained complete mastery over her lover's heart, and became the sole and absolute mistress of his house. She did the honor of the great man's table and saloon, and held his demi-official receptions as Foreign Minister. This latter circumstance created considerable difficulties, inasmuch as some of the ambassadresses would not consent to be received at the foreign office by the Lady presiding there. This unpleasant matter coming to the ears of the First Consul, he at once sent for Talleyrand and told him in so many words that Madame Grand must leave the house. But as circumstances then stood, this order, peremptory though it was, could not be easily complied with. Accordingly, Madame Grand with admirable promptitude, not very common in her sex, went to Josephine, and supplicated that August Lady to procure her interview with Napoleon, to whose presence she was readily admitted. Though then nine-and-thirty and, therefore, not in the heyday of beauty, still she was in the rich maturity of charms. These coupled with her earnest entreaties moved the heart of the Great Bonaparte who dismissed her saying, "I see

only one way of managing this,—let Talleyrand marry you, and all will be arranged. You must bear his name, or you cannot appear in his house.” But there was a formidable difficulty in the way. Mrs. Grand not having been formally divorced by her first husband, the latter, who had had a chequered career and was now in bad circumstances, was sought out and was gained over by money and the divorce obtained. The way being thus made clear, the marriage took place on the 10th September 1802. Thus, Mrs. Grand was metamorphosed into Madame de Talleyrand. When Madame de Talleyrand appeared before Court after her marriage, Bonaparte, who was certainly not very courteous to ladies, with patronising impertinence, expressed a hope to her, that the future good conduct of the citizeness Talleyrand would cause to be forgotten the indiscretions of Madame Grand, to which the bride naïvely rejoined, that in this respect, perhaps, she could not do better than follow the example of citizeness Bonaparte. And yet this is the lady whom it is the fashion to represent as a silly fool. Francis was perfectly right in saying of her that “her understanding was much better than the world allowed.” Whatever may have been the indiscretions chargeable to Madame Grand, her conduct, after her acquaintanceship with Talleyrand began, seems to have been without reproach. In only one instance was the whisper of scandal heard about

her, and that was when the Spanish princes, namely, Ferdinand, the eldest son of the King, and his brother and uncle, were kept in silken bondage in the chateáú of Valency, the country-seat of Talleyrand. The spiteful tongues of "all Paris" said at the time that Madame de Talleyrand played her part in the arrangements for the amusement of the Princes, in a manner much more calculated to please the Emperor than her husband, and proved once more the fallacy of the observation that "a woman of forty is only beautiful to those who loved her in her youth." Indeed, the lady retained a considerable portion of her charms till late in life, and, if the comparison may be allowed, she looked like Venus "ever fair and ever young."

Madame de Talleyrand was evidently very proud of her new name, because only twelve days after her marriage, in writing to M. Van de Goes, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Batavian Republic, she said: "You will see, sir, by the name which my union with M. de Talleyrand gives me the right to bear, how the tender and sincere affection of that amiable friend has made me the happiest of women." Little did she think at the time that far greater honor was in store for her. This came to pass in the year 1806, when Napoleon, though he hated Talleyrand for his immorality, yet could not do without him, advanced him to the rank of Prince Benevento. Thus, Miss. Werlée ultimately rose to be a

Princess of the French Empire, and she made the best of her high rank. She affected royal state, had maids of honor, pages, and almost all the paraphernalia of royalty, and lived in a princely style. Her power and influence in the realm almost staggers belief; nay, she wielded far higher authority than the Prince himself who was quite a slave to her personal charms. This lasted for several years together, after which there arose circumstances which rendered separate establishment desirable, if not necessary. Madame la Princesse had ceased to be what she was before. "The elegance of her form was injured by her becoming stout and this afterwards increased, and by degrees her features lost their delicacy and her complexion became very red." The Prince who was a slave to her personal charms, transferred his affection to another lady of more engaging appearance, whose daughter, a fascinating beauty, eventually presided over his household. The separation took place in 1815* when Princess Benevento took up her residence at Antenil. There she lived in a splendid style, quite becoming her rank and position, and there after strutting her hour she breathed her last on the 10th December 1835. The Prince survived her some three years, dying on 17th May 1838.

* Strange to say that in this very year Francis, her quondam lover, was joined in holy wedlock to a young girl who was almost like a granddaughter to him.

As for Mr. Grand he held several posts in India. From 1783 to 1787 he had served as Collector of Tirhoot. He was then thrown out of employ, and it was not till 1788 that he again got a post, and that a higher one, namely, that of Judge and Magistrate of Patna. But this appointment he was allowed to hold for a short time. On being directed to give up and dispose of his indigo concern in Tirhoot, he remonstrated against it, and finally proving contumacious and charges as to his conduct as Judge of Patna having been laid to his door, he was removed from the Service. But he did not leave India until February, 1799. Afterwards, in 1802, he went to the Cape of Good Hope as Privy Councillor of the local Government under the Batavian Republic. There he remained several years, though not in the same capacity. Sir James Mackintosh met him in January, 1812. He wrote in his Journal:—"At the 'African Club' where I went to read newspapers and reviews, I met Monsieur Grand, the first husband of Madame Talleyrand: he is rather a gentleman-like old man, a native of Lausanne, sent here with an office during the peace."* After the Peace of Paris in 1815, he came to London; so did Madame la Princesse de Benevento. What became of him afterwards, is involved in dim obscurity.

* See Macfarlane, Vol. I, p. 220 note.

Elegant Marian—This famous Lady, who posed as Queen for some years in Bengal, was the second wife of Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General under the East India Company. Mr. Hastings had a remarkable career. Though of noble descent, he was not in affluent circumstances, and had, as a matter of fact, to climb from the lowest rung of the ladder to the highest. From having been a "Writer" on a small pay, he ultimately became the Ruler of provinces.

Young Hastings came out to India in the year 1750. Before he had been long in Bengal, he attracted the notice of that far-sighted soldier-statesman, Clive, who, when, after the battle of Plassey, Mir Jafar was proclaimed Nawab of Bengal, Behar and Orissa, appointed him Resident at the new Prince's Court. Hastings remained at Murshidabad till the year 1761, when on being made a Member of Council, he came to reside at Calcutta. While residing at the Nawab's Court, a very terrible domestic disaster had overtaken him. This was the death of his first wife, whom he buried at Khagra* not far from the city of Berhampur, where her tomb still exists and is kept in good repair.†

On coming to Calcutta Hastings entered upon

* The old cemetery contains many interesting tombs including, besides this one, those of the great Irish adventurer, George Thomas, and of the hero of Mrs. Sherwood's tale, *Little Henry and his Bearer*. See *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

† See Revised List of Antiquarian Objects in Bengal, 1886.

the duties of his new office with his usual diligence and earnestness. He worked on till 1764 when, resigning his seat in Council, he returned to his native country. He had realized only a very moderate fortune, and that little was soon reduced to nothing, partly by his praiseworthy liberality, and partly by his mismanagement. Towards his relations he appears to have acted very generously. The greater part of his savings he had left in Bengal, hoping to profit by the high usury of India. But high usury and bad security generally go together ; and Hastings lost both interest and principal.*

When his affairs took such a bad turn, Hastings began to look again towards India. He had little to attach him to England, and his pecuniary embarrassments were great. He applied to his old masters, the Directors, for employment, and they gladly acceded to his request, by appointing him a Member of Council at Madras. In the spring of 1769 he embarked on board the *Duke of Grafton* and commenced a voyage distinguished by incidents, which might furnish matter for a novel. Among the passengers in the ship was a German of the name of Imhoff. He called himself a Baron ; but he was in distressed circumstances and was going to Madras as portrait-painter. Mr. Percy Fitzgerald, in his "Kings and Queens of an Hour," says that

* See Macaulay's *Essay on Warren Hastings*.

the Imhoffs were friends of the royal robe-keeper Mrs. Schwellenburg ("the old hag from Germany," as Macaulay* styles her in his indignation about Fanny Burney,) and that through her, Queen Charlotte's influence was solicited for leave from the East India Directors for the Imhoffs to go to Madras.† But by whatever means the permission was obtained, it is certain that the so-called Baron, accompanied by his wife, was going to Madras. This lady whose maiden name was Miss Anna Maria Appolonia Chapusettin, was, as is stated by the author of the *Seir-ul-Mutakherin*, a native of Archangel, where she was born on 11th February 1747. It does not appear under what circumstances she came to Germany, but this much is certain that her marriage took place in that country, the fatherland of her parents. This young woman, who though born under the Arctic circle, was destined to play a romantic part under the tropic of Cancer, had an agreeable person, a cultivated mind, and manners in the highest degree engaging. She despised her husband heartily, who in addition to his poverty was also poor in mental parts. Indeed, in point of accomplishments he fell very far short of Hastings, and it is, therefore, no wonder that the Baroness was interested by the conversation and flattered by the attentions of the latter. The English gentleman

* See his Essay on *Madame D'Arbly*.

† Vide Busted's *Echoes*, p. 134.

had no domestic ties, and the lady was tied to a husband for whom she had no regard, and who had no regard for his own honour. An attachment sprang up, which was soon strengthened by events such as could hardly have occurred on land. Hastings fell seriously ill, and the Baroness nursed him with womanly tenderness, gave him his medicines with her own hand, and even sat up in his cabin while he slept. Long before the *Duke of Grafton* reached Madras, Hastings was in love. But his love was of a most characteristic description. It was strong, but not impetuous: It was calm, deep, earnest, patient of delay, unconquerable by time. The Baron was called into council by his wife and his wife's lover. It was arranged that the Baroness should institute a suit for divorce in the Court of Franconia, that the Baron should afford every facility to the proceeding, and that, during the years which might elapse before the decree should be pronounced, they should continue to live together as husband and wife. It was also agreed that Hastings should bestow some very substantial marks of gratitude on the complaisant husband, and should, when the marriage was dissolved, make the lady his wife, and adopt the children whom she had already borne to Imhoff.*

On reachnig Madras the Baron took to painting,

* See Macaulay's *Essay on Warren Hastings* 5.

and after having painted all who chose to be painted there, came to Bengal in the latter end of the year 1770 A.D. Tysoe Saul Hamock, who was in some respects a protégé of Hastings, in a letter to his wife in England under date, April 1772, after glancing at the facts which we have set forth above, continues:—"She remained at Madras and lived in Mr. Hastings's house on the Mount chiefly, I believe. She is about twenty-six years old, has a good person and has been very pretty, is sensible, lively, and wants only to be a greater mistress of the English language to prove she has a greater share of will. She came to Calcutta last October. They do not make a part of Mr. Hastings's family, but are often of his private parties."* If it is true that the Imhoffs had come to Bengal while Mr. Hastings was in Madras, they must have returned to that place, for, as Macaulay says, when early in 1772 Hastings quitted Fort St George to take charge of the Bengal Government of which he had been appointed Chief, the Imhoffs, who, were still man and wife, accompanied him, and lived in Calcutta on the same plan which they had already followed during more than two years. In February 1773, Mr. Imhoff went to England, leaving his wife behind in the house of Hastings at Calcutta. Whether the latter's love was "patient

* See *Echoes*, page 134.

of delay” when he found such opportunity of gratifying it, is, perhaps, open to doubt. But there can be no doubt that his attentions to Mrs. Imhoff placed her in a very equivocal position, to say the least of it, when his late colleague, Mr. Macpherson, could thus venture to write to him from Madras at that critical time when the condemnation of Nanda Comar made it necessary for Hastings to take precautions for his personal safety: “Do not employ any black cook; let your fair female friend oversee every thing you eat.” And who could have been this “fair friend” but Mrs. Imhoff. The testimony of Mr. Francis on this point is, probably, not of much value, seeing that he was the bitterest enemy of Hastings. But this is what he wrote to a friend in England when Hastings was about to be married to Mrs. Imhoff. “I must inform you,” said he, “that he is to be married shortly to the supposed wife of a German painter with whom he has lived for several years. The lady is turned of forty, has children grown up by her pretended husband from whom she has obtained a divorce under the hand of some German prince. I have always been on good terms with the lady, and do not despair of being invited to the wedding. She is an agreeable woman, and has been very pretty. My Lord Chief Justice Impey, the most upright of all possible lawyers, is to act the part of father to the second Helen, though his wife has not spoken to her this

twelvemonth.”* There is much venom in all this, and no sane man would accept the statements made in the letter without considerable modifications.

Early in July 1777 came the much longed-for news that after a suit which had lasted several years, the Franconian Court had decreed a divorce between Imhoff and his wife. The Baron left Calcutta carrying with him the means of buying an estate in Saxony. The lady became Mrs. Hastings, the “elegant Marian” † of her most devoted husband. In the vestry records of St. John’s Cathedral, Calcutta, it is stated that the marriage was solemnized on Friday, the 8th August 1777, by the Rev. William Johnson, ‡ the same chaplain who a month before had joined the Grands in holy wedlock. The event, as one would expect, was celebrated by great festivities; and all the *élite* of Calcutta, without distinction of parties, were invited to the Government House. Colonel Clavering, as the Mahomedan chronicler whom we have noticed above, tells the tale, was

* Vide *Echoes*, p. 135.

† Mrs. Hastings well deserved to be so called, for not only was she elegant in her person, she was also elegant in her manners as well as in her dress; and she also reminds one of the beautiful ‘Maid Marian’ of the generous robber-chief of Sherwood Forest. But she, we believe, was called ‘Marian’ not on that account, but from the fact of her maiden name having been ‘Maria.’

‡ This gentleman who had officiated at so many marriages in old Calcutta was himself married (in 1774) to a lady who when a prisoner of Siraj-ud-Dowla, at Murshidabad in 1755, was the wife of her third husband. Her fourth and last husband evidently got tired of her and left India for good in February, 1788. She remained behind and was for her “dignified hospitality” known as “Begum Johnson” till her death at a very old age in 1812. See *Echoes*, p. 190 note.

sick in mind and body, and excused himself from joining the grand assembly. But Hastings, whom as it should seem, success in ambition and love had put into high good humour, would take no denial. He went himself to the General's house, and, at length, brought his vanquished rival in triumph to the gay circle which surrounded the bride. The exertion was too much for a frame broken by mortifications as well as by disease. It may be seen from Impey's letters that Clavering died of dysentery, so very fatal to Europeans and Natives alike. "He was taken ill about a fortnight ago," wrote Impey on the 31st August, the day after his diseases "returning home from a visit to my house." Francis, in his Journal under date the 30th August, 1777, records,—“Sir John Clavering, after a delirium of many hours, expired at half past two P.M, and was buried at eight, in the most private manner. The Governor ordered minute guns. I waited on the ladies and pressed them to remove to my house, but they declined. I attended the funeral on foot to grave.” Colonel Monson having died at Hooghly nearly a year before, only Francis remained to conduct the opposition against Hastings.

Francis, as we have seen above, stated that Mrs. Imhoff was turned of forty when she was married to Hastings. But this could not be the fact, as the inscription on the tablet to her memory in the Daylesford Church shows that she was born

in 1747. Thus, she was only thirty years old at her second marriage. Hastings was fifteen years older. But despite this disparity in age, he almost regarded her as if she had been his first wife, and the lady was in the full maturity of her charms.* Francis in writing to his wife shortly after the marriage, thus says of Mrs. Hastings:—"The lady herself is really an accomplished woman. She behaves with perfect propriety in her new station, and deserves every mark of respect." Lady Impey was not in favour of the marriage. Indeed it would appear from a letter written by Francis to a friend in England that she had not spoken to Mrs. Imhoff (she was not then Mrs. Hastings), for a year. But when the marriage did take place, the tables were turned and matters took quite a different turn. Mrs. Hastings promptly brought the Lady Chief Justice to her bearings, and, accordingly, Francis in his Journal, under date the 22nd September 1777, records:—"Mrs. Hastings returns Lady Clavering's visit, attended by Lady Impey *in formâ pauperis*." But though the two ladies were to all appearance reconciled, still there was no love lost between them. As Francis states further on in his Journal, their hatred

* Miss. Goldborne thus gives us a glimpse of her: "The Governor's dress gives you his character at once, unostentatious and sensible. His lady, however, is the great ornament of places of polite resort, for her figure is elegant, her manners lively and engaging, and her whole appearance a model of taste and magnificence."

was sufficiently cordial, but there were *some ties** which could not be dissolved. Mrs. Fay,† in one of her *Letters*, speaking of the Lady Governess says :—“ It is easy to perceive how fully sensible she is of her own consequence : she is, indeed, raised to a giddy height, and expects to be treated with the most profound respect and deference.” Nevertheless, it is true she seldom gave offence to any lady by her somewhat imperious demeanour. At that time the Government House was nothing in comparison with what it is now : it was not large enough to receive public guests, so that when large dinner parties had to be given, either the old Court House or the Theatre was held in requisition. Grandpré, the French traveller, even in the year 1790, comments on the poor accommodation provided for the Governor-General. He writes :—“ He lives in a house in Esplanade, opposite the citadel,—many private individuals in the town have houses as good. The house of the Governor of Pondicherry is much more magnificent.” It was not till the time of Lord Wellesley that the Governor-General had a residence worthy of his position as the ruler of a vast satrapy.

* Hastings and Impey were fast friends, and, despite their quarrel in regard to their official powers and privileges, continued to be so at heart. One of Impey's sons took the name of Hastings, and one of his daughters the name of 'Marian' The knot which tied these two great men was almost indissoluble.

† Mrs. Fay, who came to Bengal with her husband, the barrister, in 1780, was an old resident of Serampore. Her *Memoris* contain much valuable matter. She died in 1817.

Besides his Courtly residence at the Government House, Hastings had a house of his own in town as well as one in the suburbs. These residences were rather the houses of the Lady Governess than of the Lord Governor himself. In the *Letters* of a gentleman who visited Calcutta in 1771 is given a copy of an invitation card in which Mr. and Mrs. Hastings "request the favour of his company to a concert and supper at Mrs. Hastings' house in town."* But this house was not so frequently used by the Lady as the Belvedere House where she held her Court which quite resembled the Court of a Princess, or even of a Queen. Hicky, that pioneer of the Indian Press, who was nothing if not censorious was bold enough to insert the following in one of the issues of his *Gazette*†: "A displaced Civilian asking his friend the other day what were the readiest means of procuring a lucrative appointment was answered, 'Pay your constant *devoirs* to Marian Allypor's or sell yourself soul and body to Poolbundy." The first allusion is easy enough, for Mrs. Hastings, the Lady of Belvedere, was always lovingly called by her husband "elegant Marian"; but the second is somewhat obscure. The "Ven'able Poolbundy" points to Sir Elijah Impey, who, it was be-

* Tradition points to No. 7, Hastings Street, as being this house. Vide *Echoes*, p. 137-

† Hicky's was the first Indian newspaper, and Dr. Busted in his charming *Echoes*, devotes one entire chapter to it, recording in detail its Life and Death. See also p. 188.

ved in Calcutta, had taken a lucrative contract for the keeping bridges in repair in the name of a relative, one Mr. Frazer, Sealer of the Supreme Court. Indeed, in those days even Judges of the Highest Court in the land were not so free from all underhand practices as they are now. As for Mrs. Hastings she was much less scrupulous than her husband, the Governor-General, who, if he had been a rapacious man which he certainly was not, he could have returned the richest subject in Europe. It was generally believed that she accepted presents with great alacrity, and that she thus formed a private hoard amounting to several lacs of rupees. Whether all this was done with the connivance of her husband is a matter of doubt; but this is undeniable that she had vast influence over him, which was, indeed, such that she might have easily obtained much larger sums than she was ever accused of receiving. "Hastings seems to have loved her with that love which is peculiar to men of strong minds, to men whose affection is not easily won or widely diffused."* Indeed, love, though it resides in 'a feeble woman's breast and though oft to agony distress'd,' really wields an immense power, far mightier than physical force or potent magic. Hastings fully felt the force of its influence and could not say 'nay' to what his 'elegant Marian' intended to do. Thus

* See Macaulay's *Essay on Hastings*.

Mrs. Hastings reigned like a Queen in her suburban Belvedere House. But holding Court in that sweet lovely retreat was not her only amusement: she used to accompany her husband in his pleasure-trips on the Hooghly river. At that time there was no "Simla" to resort to to relieve the tedium of official life: Hastings made the river his "Simla." While out making such excursions, he generally stopped at certain river-side stations. Barrackpur, though often graced by Job Charnock, whose name it bears, with his Presence, had not at this time risen to importance. The nearest place up the river which Hastings loved to visit was Rishra. Here he had his garden and grounds where he used often to reside. This estate was still his property even after he had retired from India. It subsequently passed to other hands and is now the property of Messrs. Birkmyre & Co., where they have built their splendid Jute Mills. Hastings also honoured Chinsura with his August Presence, whose Governor, Mr. Ross, who had succeeded Mr. G. Vernet in 1780, was his personal friend. Since the fatal day of Biderra* in 1759, Chinsura had ceased to have any political importance. Though subject to the Batavian Government, it had a Governor and Council of its own whose powers were pretty considerable.

Sooksagar, now in the Nadia district, about 40

* The correct name, however, appears to be 'Bejara.'

miles from Calcutta, on the left bank of the Hooghly, was also frequently visited by Hastings in the company of his beloved 'Marian.' Mr. Grant, in his "Sketches of Rural Life in Bengal," says,—“The original house was built by Warren Hastings as a country residence for himself and three other Civilians ; and for the purpose of their having an English farm where experiments in the growth of coffee and other productions of that character could be tried.” Even after Hastings had become the Civilian of Civilians and reached the very summit of his ambition, he did not forget that sweet little retreat : He would now and then pay visits to it and while away some hours in the company of his friend, old Mr. Croft,* to whom the property would seem to have passed, and who had turned it into a sugar plantation. Lord Cornwallis, who succeeded Hastings, was also very fond of the place and seemed to have made it his "Simla."

But of all the places on the Hooghly above Calcutta, Hooghly possessed the greatest charm for Mr. Hastings, not so much for its peculiar historic importance or for its having been the earliest English

* From Croft the property subsequently passed into the hands of a rich Portuguese merchant of Calcutta, the celebrated Joseph Baretto, who lived there like a prince and founded a Roman Catholic chapel for the use of his own family. Mr. Baretto's successor, Mr. Lauraletta, a Spaniard celebrated for his hospitality and sporting propensities, converted the chapel into a residence for Mahouts and fighting cocks. While he was there, the whole village together with all that were in it were swallowed up by the fitful river, so that no vestige now remains of the old villa.

settlement in Bengal, but as being the favourite resort of his 'elegant Marian.' It was at Hooghly that Mr. Motte, the husband of her bosom friend, Mrs. Motte, had taken up his residence. Mr. Motte was a free merchant. In 1766 he undertook a journey to the diamond mines in Orissa by direction of Lord Clive, and wrote an account of it. He afterwards lived at Benares and moved thence to Hooghly.* In January 1779 he married the pretty Mary Touchet, who, true to the sweetness of her name, like her namesake in French history, charmed all. The Mottes made Hooghly their permanent abode and the building they put up in was known as the 'Hughly House.' It was here that Mrs. Hastings used to visit her intimate friend. Hooghly, however, was not Mr. Motte's place of business. He held a police appointment in Calcutta, where his name is still preserved in 'Mott's Lane.' He had quite a reputation in the police department like the 'one-eyed Sergeant' of later times, and had a peculiar tact in detecting crimes. He did not, however, use force, as is generally done, but resorted to some kind of conjuration for which purpose he kept a set of grave men who were called "Motte's conjurors". While the dissension between the Supreme Council and the Supreme Court was raging very high, the Mottes were living at Hooghly and it was not unoften that

† See *Echoes*, p. 118 note.

Mrs. Hastings paid them visits at their lovely country house. This residence which was so frequently trod by the greatest lady in Bengal was situated on the banks of the river, and had a very pleasant appearance. Like Major Bagg's house where Mr. Francis had established his "infamously famous" mistress, it has disappeared altogether leaving no trace behind. The site cannot now be identified, but the likelihood is that it was near the English factory, which, as we know, was in Gholeghat. An old Eurasian lady of Chinsura, however, told us that 'Hughly House; stood near the Bandel Church.

While his "elegant Marian" was at Hooghly in the hospitable abode of his friend, Mrs. Motte, Hastings would write to her very frequently. Indeed, he was an inexhaustible correspondent. The letters to his sweetheart were written with the most ungrudging frequency, and, though frequent, were as a rule anything but short; and, surely, the length to which most of them did go was something wonderful in the case of an official Atlas bearing such a world on his shoulders. The letters, as Macaulay properly remarks, "are exceedingly characteristic. They are tender and full of indication of esteem and confidence." The burden of nearly every one of them is the same—the assurance of his increasing love—of the aching void her absence has created—his morbid apprehensions and repinings, and his passionate yearning to regain her: All

indicate what a good and faithful husband Hastings really was. Indeed, he stuck by one and knew no second woman to fix his love upon. To compare great things with small, William of Orange was not more faithful to Queen Anne than Hastings was to his sweet 'elegant Marian,' although there were so many beauties at the time, most of whom he could have had for the mere asking.

When, in August 1780, it became quite evident that he could not avoid a terrible passage-at-arms with Francis, Hastings thought that it was not safe to keep his wife at Calcutta, who might very probably get alarmed. So he took her in a boat and went straight to Chinsura where he left her in the hospitable charge of his friend, Governor Ross, who was living with his wife, a most amiable lady who welcomed her guest with the warmest cordiality. It, however, appears that Mrs. Hastings was first left in the house of Mr. Motte in the morning of Monday, the 13th August, whence she and Mrs. Motte moved together to Mr. Ross's place in the afternoon; for, while in the letter which he wrote at 11 o'clock from his boat opposite Nai Serai, Hastings makes no mention of the Rosses, but of Mrs. Motte only, the letter which he wrote in the evening he concludes by saying, "My compliments to Mrs. Ross and Bibby Motte." On this occasion Lady Hastings resided at the Dutch settlement for some days together. On Thursday the 17th August, the day on which

the duel was fought, Hastings writes from Calcutta as follows :—“My dearest Marian, I have desired Sir John Day to inform you that I have had a meeting this morning with Mr. Francis who has received a wound in his side, but I hope not dangerous. I shall know the state of it presently and will write to you again. He is at Belvedere, and Drs. Campbell and Francis are both gone to attend him there. I am *well* and *unhurt* I cannot leave Calcutta while Mr. Francis is in any danger. But I wish you to stay at Chinsura. I hope in a few days to have the pleasure of meeting you there.” In the evening of that very day he sent another letter to his wife at Chinsura, the bearer whereof was very probably Mr. Motte, who had brought her key and some gold mohurs. In that letter he says,—“I am obliged to stay in Calcutta at least until Mr. Francis is known to be free from all danger, lest my absence should be called a flight, so that I cannot join you this week, but do not let this bring you to Calcutta before the time you have fixed for your return.” On the next day he writes to say that, “Mr. Francis continues well and I pronounce his cure certain.” It would seem that Sir John Day, the Advocate General, with his wife were also living at that time in Chinsura, and possibly in the same hospitable house of Mr. Ross. Lady Day had fallen ill, and Mr. Hastings tenders his compliments “to her, to Bibby Motte, and Mr. Ross.” Perhaps, Mrs. Ross

was not at home on that day to the knowledge of the writer. In the morning of Saturday, the 19th August, Sir John Day returned to town, and in the evening Mr. Hastings writes to his wife at Chinsura. But before Thursday next week Mr. Hastings seems to have removed to Mr. Motte's house at Hooghly, from which she stirred not for some time. In the evening of that day Hastings thus writes to her:—"I am glad that you resolve to accept no more invitations. Mrs. Ross is too good not to approve your reasons, and if you visit nobody, nobody will be displeased." And from the letter which he wrote in the night it is clear that she was then putting up at Motte's "Hooghly House." Either in the end of August or in the beginning of September she returned to Calcutta and stayed there for some time. Then, again, in December she came back to Hooghly and took up quarters at the residence of her favourite Bibby Motte. But Mrs. Motte was not her only companion while she remained there; Mrs. Palmer, Mrs. Sand, Mrs. Samson and a few others now and then eagerly sought her company. In his letter, dated the 22nd December, which he wrote from Calcutta, Hastings notices those ladies by name and compliments them with his usual courtesy. That Mrs. Hastings was very fond of Hooghly would appear among others from Hastings's letter of the 28th December. In that letter he writes, speaking of Mr. Motte who now and again ran on errand

from the husband to the wife,—“I have referred him to you, saying (which is not always true) that nobody knows a lady’s mind so well as herself, but that I supposed that if you did come to Calcutta on Monday you would again return to Hooghly some days after.” While at Hooghly, as large boats were not always available, Mrs. Hastings generally made river excursions in a small boat. As this is not safe, especially in unfavourable weather, Hastings is found warning her against running such serious risk. In the letter referred to above, he writes :—“ I own I am not pleased with your venturing on the water at this season in a small boat. I have made inquiries for a pinnace but hitherto without success. I will certainly get one for you and a good one, I hope, in a few days. You may then *trive** about the river as much as you please, and neither of us be a loser by it.” From all this one can easily make out how very tender and warm were the feelings which Hastings bore towards his beloved wife.

Although Mr. Motte held a very lucrative appointment,—for then as now the radically corrupt police line has been notorious for the perquisites which it brings into the pockets of its employees,—he could not avoid running into debt. The probability is that he was a veritable prodigal and lived far above his means

* *Trive* for drive, intended probably as a playful allusion to Mrs. Hastings’ foreign pronunciation of English.

In 1781 his financial difficulties became so great that there appeared an advertisement in the Newspaper calling a meeting of his creditors. We do not know what the result of this meeting was, but it appears that though recourse to law was postponed for a time, matters did not show any marked improvement. Poor Mr. Motte was at last thrown into the Calcutta jail in 1783, and he felt his position so very hard that he ere long presented a petition to Court, praying that with the consent of his creditors he might be released from prison on the score of humanity. It does not appear whether his plaintive prayer was listened to or not, but this is undoubtedly true that not long after, Mrs. Motte accompanied Lady Hastings to England. Before the year 1783 closed, the health of the Lady Governess had given way, and the Governor-General, much against his will, was obliged to send her home. Mrs. Hastings sailed for England in the *Atlas* in January, 1784. Macaulay says how busy rumour was, as to the money lavished by the Governor-General in providing comforts and luxuries for his wife's voyage. Mrs. Motte, who had all along followed her as her very shadow, was offered a very large amount in order that she might give to the great Lady the benefit of her society during the tedious voyage, and it seems that she felt the temptation too strong to be resisted, even at a time when her husband was sunk in the depth of misery. In the year following,

Hastings himself followed his wife to the mother country where his fortune underwent such sore trial. The passionate affection of Hastings for his 'elegant Marian' never out-grew its spring; neither time nor fruition seemed to lessen the fascination which even her physical attractions had for him. Writing to her son in 1803, he says,—"Your good and amiable mother, who continues even in beauty to exceed every woman who comes within my observation,"—and is candid enough to tell him how he loves him and his wife, "as the children of my adoption and of my heart's election." Hastings after a very stormy career died on 22nd August, 1818, in his eighty-sixth year. His wife survived him nearly two decades, for, as a matter of fact, she did not depart this "vale of tears" until 29th March, 1837. While residing in England, she was always called Madame Hastings.

CHAPTER VII.

HOOGHLY AS AN EMPORIUM OF TRADE.

Before Hooghly rose to fame, Satgaon was in its glory : it was the recognized port of West Bengal and drove a very busy and brisk traffic. Both Pliny and Ptolemy style it *Gangé Regia* and speak of its importance in a commercial point of view. Indeed, it was the trading centre of this part of the country. The Divisional Governor also had his headquarters there. It was almost what Calcutta is now in the present day. At that time the sacred Saraswati on which Satgaon stands, was the main stream of the Ganges, and was swarmed with ships and sails of almost all nations. Satgaon being, as it were, the focus of commerce, merchants from all important places came to it for purposes of trade. In course of time the water of the Saraswati began to run short, thereby rendering navigation by merchantmen and large vessels very difficult. De Barros, the Portuguese Livy, who flourished in the sixteenth century,* states :—“ Satgaon is a great and noble city, though less frequented than Chittagong, on account of the port not being so convenient for the entrance and departure of ships.” This shows

* Born 1496, died 1570.

that the mouths of the Saraswati had at least to a certain extent silted up.

When Satgaon as a port was thus on the decline, the Portuguese who had been transacting business there came to settle in Hooghly, by which the main stream had for some time commenced to flow. At that time the place was mostly covered with dense jungles and infested with wild beasts. The Portuguese, taking the permission of the Governor of Bengal, built a factory somewhere in the year 1540. The factory was an ordinary building ; in fact, it was no better than a collection of clumsy bungalows and warehouses, all bamboos and thatches. But notwithstanding their small beginning, they rose pretty rapidly, and, at last, succeeded in diverting to a considerable extent the trade of the Royal port to their new settlement. This gave great umbrage to the Divisional Governor who threatened to turn the "Feringees" out. The Portuguese who understood eastern people well, silenced the offended Governor by giving what is very efficacious in purely worldly affairs, "a sop to Cerberus." Indeed, bribery has a potent charm for gaining favour and disarming opposition, and nowhere is its influence so much felt as in the East. The Portuguese made rich presents to the Governor, and the latter who had threatened to gore them, quietly drew in his horns. Having thus made their position secure, they drove a brisk trade and suc.

ceeded remarkably well in it. They lived in the quarter called Bandel, a name which is only a corruption of the native word *bandar*, signifying a port. Indeed, Hooghly rose so very high that it made Satgaon "hide its diminish'd head." When this once famous place was thus rapidly declining, the turbulent Afghans from Orissa attacked and plundered it in 1592. But this was not the only misfortune that befell it. Four years after, the rebel, Sobha Singh, with a body of chosen followers, came upon it and *looted* a considerable portion of its properties. In this way this grand emporium was denuded of its wealth, so that what little remained was only a wreck of its former self. But none the less it continued to attract people who resorted to it, at least for purposes of personal comfort. Even in the 18th century the Dutch merchants of Chinsura are said to have had country houses at Satgaon and to have walked up to it from Chinsura, a distance of fully six miles. Early in the 19th century the village,—for the great city had dwindled into one such,—was still in existence, and was celebrated for its manufacture of country paper. Now it is for the most part overgrown with jungle, thereby adding a very striking instance of the instability of earthly pomp and prosperity.

The decline of Satgaon hastened the rise of Hooghly. Indeed, in proportion the one went down the ladder, the other stepped up. Purchas, who

lived in the reign of James I, thus writes :—“The Portuguese have here (*i. e.* in Bengal) Porto Grandé (Sundip)* and Porto Pequeno (Hooghly), but without forts and Government.” Hamilton, who travelled in Bengal in the first decade of the 18th century, also says, “The town of Hooghly drives a great trade, because all foreign goods are brought thither for import, and all goods of the product of Bengal are brought hither for exportation and the Mogul’s furze or custom-house is at this place. It affords rich cargoes for fifty or sixty ships yearly, besides what is carried to neighbouring countries in small vessels, and there are vessels that bring saltpetre from Patna.” Bolts only repeats what Hamilton has said. He writes :—“To Hooghly formerly all the foreigners in general resorted for the purchase and sale of the commodities in Bengal.” Thus, it appears that by this time Hooghly had become the first port in Bengal, and fully deserved to be called Porto Grandé, the name by which Chittagong was known to the Portuguese. Indeed, the trade and commerce of Hooghly was renowned from remote antiquity. Bukshbunder, which seems to mean a port with a custom-house, was an *alias* of Hooghly, and the place has been so described in the famous Fifth Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Affairs of the East

* Rather Chittagong.

India Company. Under the head of *Sayer*, that most important official document contains the following entry, relating to the year 1728-A. D.:—"Buksh bunder or Hooghly.—The ground rent of 37 markets and gunges, chiefly in the vicinity and dependent on the European Settlements in the chukleh of Satgong, together with the customs levied on goods paying that *grand emporium of foreign commerce*, in all Rs. 343,708 ; deduct from which already included under the head of Calcutta Rs. 45,767 making *net* Rs. 297,941."* Fifty years later, river-borne trade of Hooghly had almost completely deserted in favour of Calcutta, the gross collections on account of port duties and customs being only Rs. 91,196 at Hooghly, against Rs. 890,604 at the latter. Murshidabad, Dacca, and Patna all gave a larger customs revenue than Hooghly.

Bengal trade was carried on principally in salt, sugar, tobacco, indigo, cotton, rice, piece-goods, silk, saltpetre and opium. Hooghly was the most important mart for salt, an article which forms an essential ingredient in human dietary. The sale and purchase of salt was on a very large scale. This article was a local product, as it was manufactured down the river in Hijlee, Contai and Tumlook. When on the fall of Portuguese power in Bengal the Moguls domineered in Hooghly without let or hin-

* See Vol I, page 265.

drance, Hooghly still continued to be a mart for salt.

The sweet savory cane, from the juice of which sugar is commonly made, though scarcely known to the ancient inhabitants of Europe, grew luxuriantly throughout Bengal in the remotest times. From India it was introduced into Arabia, and thence into Europe and Africa. From the Sanscrit term for manufactured sugar (*sarcara*) are derived the Persian, Greek, Latin and modern European names of the cane and its produce. Even the Arabic term may also be derived from another Sanscrit word (*c'hand*) which bears the same signification.* In later times Mr. Croft, a personal friend of Warren Hastings, had a large sugar plantation at Sooksagar which at one time was in a flourishing state. After Mr. Croft left, the place fell into insignificance until it was altogether engulfed by the fitful river.

Tobacco, it is probable, was unknown to India as well as to Europe, before the discovery of America. It was introduced into India by the Europeans either in the reign of Jehangir, or in that of his illustrious father, Akbar the Great. In the current literature of the time it was described as a

* The author of *Remarks on the Husbandry and Internal Commerce of Bengal*, (1794), supposes that Gaur, the ancient capital of Bengal, and the name of the province itself, is apparently derived from *gur*, which both in the ancient and modern languages of India signifies raw sugar. But this is clearly a mistake, for the word *gaur* means *beautiful*, as in the name *Gouranga*. The name *Gaur* means *the cautious city*.

“deleterious reed,” and its use was condemned by government. King James wrote a short treatise poohpoohing it in very strong terms. However, the practice of inhaling the smoke of hemp leaves and other intoxicating drugs is ancient. In the present day, tobacco has become a necessary article of life in most parts of the world, and its consumption is simply wonderful. I doubt very much if any European could be found who did not smoke cigar or some other preparation of tobacco.

Indicum, from which the words *indico* and *indigo* are derived, is, as its very name shows, of Indian origin. The Americans, it is said, call it *Anil*, which is evidently a corruption of the oriental name *Nil*. Yet the plant is probably indigenous in America as well as in Hindustan. Indigo,* however, was not largely manufactured in Bengal. It was Mr. Prinsep† who for the first time gave a strong im-

* There was an indigo factory at Taldanga within the limits of Chinsura as well as at Bansberia. The original proprietor of the former was a Dane, named Berg Andreas, and that of the latter Mr. J. B. Birch. Both these factories were in a flourishing state. When in 1827 Mr. Temple held the Bansberia concern, he took a lease of the large char, in front of the place, measuring 1700 bighas at one rupee per bigha, of which 1500 bighas were actually sown with indigo. In later times indigo plantations were carried on with a vengeance in the Nadia district; and the oppressions of the foreign planters became so very great that Government thought it right to interfere. It was about this time a popular poet of Bengal wrote a drama called *Nil Darpan*, or the Mirror of Indigo, which created quite a sensation and opened the eyes of the public to the evil. Mr. Long rendered the piece into English, and though he suffered for his performance, has left a name which will be always remembered with gratitude.

† Chintz was also introduced by him.

petus to its culture and manufacture. Indigo is used for the purpose of colouring cottons.

Cotton seems to be of Indian origin. The term* is evidently derived from the Sanscrit word *carpas*. At any rate some sorts of cotton are certainly natives of India ; some are undoubtedly indigenous in America. Dacca has long been celebrated for its muslins. These fine fabrics were known in Europe in the first quarter of the Christian era, and according to some writers† they constituted the “serice vestes” which were so highly prized by the ladies of Imperial Rome in the days of its luxury and refinement. Both Pliny and Arrian testify to their extreme fineness and transparency. “Carpassus” and “carpassium” or “carpassian”‡ are the words used by them for Indian muslins and other fine kinds of cloth. The fine cloths of Dacca § are also mentioned in the “Accounts of India and China by two Mahomedan Travellers in the 9th century.” The fine muslins of Dacca are styled in the figurative language of the East “webs of woven

* The Arabic word, *Kutu*, considerably resembles the English word, *cotton*. The Persian term for the article is *pombi*. Cotton was long known in Arabia.

† Salmassius and Dr. Ure, for instance.

‡ *Capasia*, it is to be noted, is the name of a village in pargana Bhawal in the district of Dacca. It produces cotton and has been producing it from a very long time. “*Linum carpassium*” of Pliny is the fine flax of Spain. In fact, “carpassus” came to mean any fine cloth.

§ Subarnagram, also in the Dacca district, has long been famous for its fine embroidered cloths.

wind."* In the reigns of Jehangir and his son and grandson, when Dacca was in its most flourishing state, those gossamer-like cloths were largely made, which have been compared "to the work of fairies rather than of men," and which constituted "the richest gift that Bengal could offer to her native Princes." The Dacca muslins were introduced into England † between the years 1666 and 1670. In 1787 the whole commerce of Dacca was estimated at one crore of rupees, of which thirty lacs was the value of muslins exported to Europe. With the abolition of the commercial Residencies ‡ the export of muslins to England has altogether ceased. Indeed, the days of Dacca muslins have been well-nigh numbered. Muslins and other cloths which were manufactured in the country were like others all brought into Hooghly and from thence exported abroad. In this way Hooghly drove as busy a trade

* The two kinds are respectively called "abroan" (*running water*) and "shubnam" (*morning dew*), names which testify to their wonderful fineness and transparency.

† The English appear to have settled in Dacca about the year 1660.

‡ These Residencies in which silk and cotton cloths appear to have been the chief articles of manufacture were gradually abolished, and the buildings and sites were sold off between 1830 and 1837. The commercial concerns of the Great Company were by degrees wound up by the Board of Salt, Customs and Opium, and the post of Resident appears to have been abolished about 1830. The cause of this collapse was the competition of cheap Manchester cotton goods. The native cloth industry is in a moribund state, and most of the weavers who for several generations together had merrily plied the shuttle and managed the loom have through pure painful necessity taken to other pursuits.

as Calcutta does now, and was the most noted place of trade and commerce in all Bengal.

Silk was probably the produce of China only. Sericulture, however, was not unknown to the eastern parts of Hindustan. The ancient language of India has names for the silk-worm and its manufactured silk. The mulberry tree is quite common in Bengal as well as in many other parts of India. Silk *runals* and *dhutees* and *sarees* are still made in some parts of the Hooghly district. The Watsons have the largest concern of all in silk in Bengal. But the palmy days of silk industry seem to be over.

Rice is the staple food of the people of Bengal and is, therefore, largely cultivated in it. The best rice is produced in the districts of Barisal and Burdwan; Hooghly also is a rice-growing district. As for Backergunge, it is justly called the granary of Bengal, and, in this respect, might stand compare with Egypt in the olden times.

Saltpetre, * which forms such an essential ingredient in the manufacture of that diabolical instrument of Death, namely, gunpowder, was also an article of merchandise in Hooghly. Its manufacture scarcely passed the western limits of Bihar. This article was largely imported from Patna and Purneah. Time was when there were many vessels in Hooghly

* Nawab Mir Jaffer, on being raised to the *musnud*, granted the English, among other favours, the monopoly of trade in saltpetre.

that brought saltpetre from these places, more especially from the former.

Poppy plantation was very common in Bengal and Bihar, more especially in the latter province; and it is well kept up to this day. Opium, as we all know, has been monopolised by Government. In former times it used to be brought into Hooghly and sold in market overt. It is now provided in the provinces of Bihar and Bengal, and disposed of in Calcutta by public auction. Opium, poisonous as it is when taken in large doses, is a necessary article of food in the Celestial Empire, and a Chinaman who does not take it in some form or other, must be considered a *rara avis*. Opium is also very prevalent among the Rajpoots who from a warlike race have well-nigh become a strange community of idlers. Like the generality of Chinese, they are often found dosing under the influence of this stupifying drug.

When the Portuguese held almost absolute sway in Hooghly, trade was at its best. Indeed, they one and all went in heartily for it. Even the big officials, and, what would appear somewhat strange, some of the professed Ministers of religion also could not keep themselves aloof from it, so very potent is the power and influence of Mammon over mankind. These foreigners prospered so very well that they roused the jealousy of the natives. Indeed, they became the eyesore of the Moguls themselves.

who were the paramount lords of the country. At last, matters came to a crisis, and it was deemed necessary for Government to put down the foreign merchants at any cost. Accordingly, the local Governor trumped up several charges against them, one of which was the diversion of trade from the royal port of Satgaon. Both the Emperor and his beloved wife, the world-renowned Taj Bibi, who were not at all favourably disposed towards the Portuguese, gave a willing ear to these complaints, and at once ordered the expulsion of the Frank merchants, as the Europeans were called in the current native parlance. Accordingly, a Mogul army invested Hooghly, which fell after a siege of three months and odd days. The Portuguese power was destroyed altogether, and they who not long before were audacious enough to have bearded the Great Mogul himself, were reduced to the condition of petty traders. This memorable event took place in the year 1632. Thereafter, the Portuguese remained in Bengal only by sufferance. They, however, kept up their trade though on a small scale, for Warwick, a Dutch admiral, states that in 1667* Satgaon was still a great place of trade for the Portuguese.

The fall of the Portuguese paved the way for the

* About this time Muhammad Sharif was Foujdar of Hooghly. In August, 1665, he had been sent with 500 sharpshooters and 1000 matchlockmen to assist in the conquest of Chittagong. (Hunter's *Statistical Reporter*, Vol. VI, p. 295).

coming-in of the English. So far from being damped by the disaster of the Portuguese, they entered on the arena of enterprise with greater zeal and vigour, being firmly resolved to replace them in the best way possible. They established a factory somewhere in the year 1651 and commenced trading on a very large scale. This factory was erected under the supervision of Captain Brookhaven of the "Lyonesse," who had been sent from Madras, the then chief seat of Government of the East India Company. The English agents opened business at Hooghly by purchasing silk and sugar. On the 31st December, 1657, the Madras authorities issued instructions to the Council in "the Bay" to procure at Hooghly cotton yarn, saltpetre, silk, piece-goods, cinnamon, Taffatas, turmeric and gumlac. In this way, the trade of the East India Company went on prospering. John Kenn, who was appointed chief of the Kasimbazar factory in 1658, made a very interesting report on the trade of Hooghly in 1661, from which it appears that English trade at that place was rapidly on the increase. The Report was pretty elaborate and dealt with the subject quite cleverly, giving among other particulars the proper time for making purchases of goods at Hooghly.

In 1658 the governor of Hooghly, on behalf of the Viceroy, insisted on the English making an annual *peshkash*, or payment of Rs. 3,000 in lieu of custom duties. Jonathan Trevisa, who had suc-

ceeded Gawton as chief in Hooghly in September of that year, at first disputed the liability, but afterwards gave in. Streynsham Masters, who was sent out from England to re-organize the Bengal settlements, reached Hooghly on 13th September 1676. As Governor of Madras he had control over Bengal which was then under that settlement. He decided and very properly, that Hooghly should be the chief factory in Bengal, and, accordingly, wrote to the Court of Directors to that effect. His reason was that Hooghly was the most fitting place, "being the key or scale of Bengala, where all goods pass in and out, to and from all parts; and being near the centre of the Company's business is more commodious for receiving of advices from, and issuing of orders to, all subordinate factoryes."* Mr. W. Clavell was then chief of Bengal, but he died in 1677. Mr. Clavell has done good service to Bengal by inditing an "Accompt of the trade of Hugly." His account was sent home by Governor Streynsham Masters, as an Appendix to his Diary. Mr. Clavell says:— "About Hugly there live many weavers who weave cotton cloth and cloth of *Tesser* or *Herba* of several sorts, and from the parts thereabout there is brought silk, sugar, opium, rice, wheat, ayle, butter, course hempe, *gunneyes*, and many other commodities." In the town there is a quarter which is known as

* See Hedges' *Diary*, Vol. II, p. 236.

Tantipara. Even up to the middle of the last century many looms were at work here, so much so that the sounds of shuttles shooting backwards and forwards almost deafened the ears of the passers by. But those days have long since gone, and most of the weaving class have sought "fresh fields and pastures new." The weaving operation, however, was not confined to that noted quarter, it was as well practised in some other parts of the town.

Mr. Wilson in his "Early Annals" says that, in the 17th century, "Hooghly sugars to be bought at Chandracona and Tania." Chandracona has also been long famous for its fine cloth and *ghee* (clarified butter).

The Portuguese who had traded so triumphantly in Bengal had by this time fallen very low, indeed, their trade not being worthy of notice. Speaking of them, Mr. Clavell says:—"The Portuguese, though numerous in Hooghly, yett are reduced to a very low, and meane condition, their trade not worth mentioning, their subsistence being to be entertained in the Mogall's pay as souldiers."

Mr. Clavell was succeeded by Matthias Vincent, while Streyusham Masters was superseded by Giffard at Madras on 3rd July 1681. Giffard, it would seem, was in his turn succeeded by Hedges. The latter remained at Hooghly until Christmas, 1684, when he sailed for the mother country. He had buried his first wife at Hooghly. After his return home he

was knighted by King James II. on 6th March 1688, a year memorable in English history. He died in the second year of the next century. He left a most interesting Diary, which came to light in the latter half of the 19th Century, and was edited by Colonel Yule in 1887-1889 *

So long as Hooghly was not superseded by Calcutta, it was the head quarters of the English in Bengal, and as such had a lucrative and extensive trade. This trade was, of course, not confined to local articles produced or manufactured in or near Hooghly itself, but the Hooghly factory was the general Exchange to which the products of Bengal were brought for export to Europe, and the exports of Europe for distribution throughout Bengal. While some of the articles so exported were produced locally, such as silk and such like fabrics, many of the exports from Hooghly were not local products, as for instance, saltpetre, which all the European companies obtained chiefly from Bihar, through Patna.†

Even after Calcutta was founded by the English and made their capital in Bengal, the trade of Hooghly had not suffered much, for it is noted that "everything had to be made, or got in the way of furniture, from Hooghly." The tables are turned

* See Crawford's *Hooghly*, p. 17.

† See Crawford's *Medical Gazetteer of the Hooghly District*, Chap. II.

now, with a vengeance, when nearly everything used in Hooghly has to be brought from Calcutta. Hamilton, who visited Bengal early in the first quarter of the 18th century, writes about Hooghly as follows :— “Hooghly is a town of a large extent, but ill built. It reaches about two miles along the river’s side, from Chinsura before mentioned, to the Bandel, a colony formerly settled by the Portuguese but the Mogul’s Fouzdar governs both at present.”

As in the time of the Portuguese, so under the Mogul Government, Hooghly was a most important mart for salt. The treaty between the East India Company and the young Nawab Najum-ud-Dawla executed in 1765, stipulated that the duty of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on salt was to be calculated at the “rowanna, or Hooghly market price.” Khojah Wazeed, the richest merchant of Hooghly, had the monopoly of salt and was charged with duty at only a rupee per maund. These special privileges were given him in consideration of his having rendered some good services to the Company. The lucky Khojah made a mint of money by his monopoly and lived like a prince. To compare great things with small, he was the Rothschild of his day.

There was a Salt Agency at Hooghly in the Mogul’s time. This was kept up by the English when they got into political power. In 1826 the management of the Salt *chowkis*, or stations, at Baduria, Gobardanga, Habrah, and Mullikbagh was

made over to the Collector of Hooghly, who got an allowance of Rs. 200 per month for his trouble. There was a Collector of Customs at Hooghly up to 1827, when the post was amalgamated with that of the district Collector. Mr. H. Belli was the first to hold this dual office.

The smuggling of salt was most extensive in the south of the district, and the Magistrate and Police were ordered to make special efforts to put a stop to the illicit manufacture and sale thereof. Zemindars and others were warned, and, finally in 1835, a European officer, Mr. Macleod, was appointed as Superintendent of the salt *chowkis* with head quarters at Khirpai. In the year following, a Government salt *gola*, or ware-house, to hold about 50,000 maunds of salt, was established at Bhadreswar. The Hooghly Salt Agency continued till 1862 when it was united with the larger one at Tumlook.

The whole trade seems to have been conducted on a system of advances, or *dudan*, as it is called in native parlance, a system, or rather practice which is still adhered to in the case of indigo and opium. Losses of advances must have been great, not only from fraud and foul dealing, but from sheer ill luck, such as the death or illness of those who got the advances.*

* At the present day the chief articles imported into the Hooghly district are common rice, European piece-goods, lime from Sylhet, Burdwan and Raniganj, timber, and articles of luxury. The chief

Hooghly has long ceased to be a place of trade and is now fallen very low. Indeed, Calcutta has taken all the shine out of it, leaving it a poor wretched thing which has now nothing to boast of but its glorious past.

exports are fine rice, silk, jute, cotton, cloths, vegetables, and brass and bell-metal utensils. (See Crawford's *Medical Gazetteer of the Hooghly district*, Chap. II).



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CHAPTER VIII.

HISTORY OF THE HOOGHLY DISTRICT FROM ITS FIRST FORMATION TO ITS FULL DEVELOPMENT.

After the office of Fouzdar had been abolished, Hooghly was thrown into the back-ground in which obscure position it continued till it was again brought to the front by being formed into a district in 1795.* On its first formation the new district, carved, as it principally was, out of the district of Burdwan, was placed in the charge of the Hon'able C. A. Bruce, as Judge and Magistrate, the revenue jurisdiction remaining, as before, with the Collector of Burdwan. Mr. Bruce would seem to have been much above the ordinary run of district officers, inasmuch as he corresponded direct with the Governor General† in Council. We do not know what the exact extent of his criminal jurisdiction was but it must have been pretty considerable as it com-

* Previous to this year, the town and some parts of the Hooghly district were within the jurisdiction of Nadia.

† Sir John Shore, afterwards Lord Teignmouth. Sir John distinguished himself not only in the region of politics, but also in the republic of letters. His biography of his famous friend, Sir William Jones, whom he succeeded in the presidential chair of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, is an excellent production.

prehended thirteen thanas.* Mr. Bruce's tenure of office† is not rendered notable by any event of importance. In fact, he left no mark on the district, any more than his successor, Mr. Thomas Brooke, who is remembered only for a very able report which he made in 1799,‡ condemning the character of the village paiks, and recommending a more efficient safeguard against dacoities§ which were unfortunately

* Hooghly, Bansberia, Benipur (now Balaghar), Pandua, Dhania-khali, Haripal, Rajbalhat (now Kristanagar), Jehanabad, Dewangunj, (now Gohat), Chandracona, Ghatal, Bagnan and Ampta. Baidyabati and Chinsura have since been added, while, on the other hand, Chandracona and Ghatal have been transferred to Midnapur, and Bagnan and Ampta to Howrah.

† Mr. Bruce was in charge of the district till 1799. He was afterwards appointed Governor of Penang where he died on 27th December 1810.

‡ In this year, Ward and Marshman, on being driven out of the dominions of the East India Company, took refuge in Danish Serampur, where they were joined by Carey from Malda early in the next year. Here they set up a printing press, managed by Ward, and while Carey was engaged in translating the Bible into Bengali, Marshman preached, and both he and his wife opened schools. All these undertakings prospered exceedingly well: the receipts from the schools sometimes amounted to Rs 4000 a month. Shortly afterwards, Carey was appointed Professor of Sanscrit in the College of Fort Willam in Calcutta. In 1812 they founded the Serampur College which is still in existence. To these large-hearted pioneers of education, the inhabitants of the district owe an immense debt of gratitude.

§ Dacoity was not an outcome of British rule; it had been in existence long previously. But during the transition period, when peace was striving for supremacy, it stalked over the land with giant strides. The terrible famine of 1770 added much to its strength, by compelling many people to take to highway robbery. Weak as the Police was at the time, the dacoits ravaged the country with impunity, and even went to the length of attacking the red coats of the Company. Hunter in his "Annals of Rural Bengal," says that in 1780, they burnt to ashes 1500 houses and 200 souls in Calcutta. In fact, even Anglo-Indians lived in the utmost dread, and until they had well secured their household goods for the night, they would never unbolt their doors.

then becoming too common. Some steps were taken to arrest the rapid course of crime, but they failed to restore peace. The dacoits continued their ravages, and no man's life or property was safe. In 1808 the dacoities in the district amounted to over a hundred. In the year following, Mr. Secretary Dowdeswell drew a most harrowing picture of the heartless enormities committed by the dacoits, which was followed up by a despatch from the Governor-General to the Court of Directors describing the terrible state of affairs. The result was that a Superintendent of Police was appointed to hunt down the dacoits by means of *goindahs*.* Of all the districts of the

Among these dacoits was one Sham Mullick who was the head of a very powerful gang. But though a robber by profession, his mind possessed a certain degree of robleness; and he was much vexed that the great pundit Jagannath Tarkapanchanan who had got together a large amount of money did not make proper use of it. Accordingly, one night he with a sturdy body of followers, broke into his house at Tribeni and, taking his seat in the outer courtyard ordered his men at once to bring the old pundit before him, that he might reprimand him for his miserly habits. Every search was made, but the pundit was nowhere to be found, for, in the confusion which followed the first attack, he had managed to make his escape. Sham Mullick, thus disappointed of his main object, gave the signal for retirement, and the whole party, headed by their chief, walked out of the house in the same state in which they had entered it. This event took place some years before the death of Jagannath, who breathed his last in Assin 1214 B. S., corresponding to September 1807 A. D., at the patriarchal age of one hundred and thirteen years. Uma Charan Bhattacharjee's *Life of Jagannath Tarkapanchanan*. 1886 A. D.

* This system of espionage worked remarkably well, exemplifying the good old adage, "Set a thief to catch a thief." The word "goindah" means an informer and appears to have the same signification as the Sanskrit word *char*.

Calcutta Division, Hooghly suffered the most from their depredations.*

Mr. Brooker† was succeeded by Mr. Ernest, who, in addition to his proper title of Judge-Magistrate, was, in 1809, also styled "Superintendent and Commissioner of Chinsura,‡ Chandernagore§ and Seram-

* About this time "Radha Dacoit" was the head of the dacoits on this side the river. By his ruinous ravages, he had introduced a "reign of terror." The Sultan of Morocco is not more tamely obeyed by his slaves than this prince of dacoits was by his fellows. He was a man of very great pluck and power, and in the course of his wild career, had performed very wonderful exploits. He might be called a hero in a certain sense of the term, but he died a convict's death. The hour of retribution drew nigh, and he was arrested at a harlot's house, tried by the Judge of Hooghly, and sentenced to suffer the extreme penalty of the law. The sentence was duly executed, and the corpse was carefully disposed of, lest the mother of the "great dacoit," by her marvellous power in the black art, should, as she had boasted, conjure up such a dangerous character by muttering some mystic *mantras* over the bones.

What Radha was on this side the river, Bissonath Bugli was on the other side. Strong in men who were all desperate characters, Bissonath carried on his depredations without let or hindrance. But though he robbed the rich, he was very kind to the poor, whose wants he never failed to supply, after the manner of the well-known robber of Sherwood Forest. To distinguish him from the rest of his class, he was called "Bissonath Baboo." Baidyanath and Pitamber were only second to Bissonath. Many of the Nadia dacoits were arrested in 1808, A. D., and several of them paid dearly for their crimes on the gallows. Kartikeya Chunder Roy's *Accounts of the Nadia Raj Family*, pp 27-28.

† He was in charge of the district till at least 1802. His rule was signalized by the visit of the Governor-General who was kind enough to put up with him for the time.

‡ Chinsura was taken possession of by the English on the 28th July, 1795, and they did not restore it to the Dutch until the 20th September, 1817. It was finally ceded to them in 1824.

§ Chandernagore was captured for the second time by the English in 1794, and it continued in their hands till 1815, when it was given up.

pur"* these cities having, in the interim, come into the hands of the English.

But though the powers of its official head were extended and enlarged, Hooghly was anything but a respectable-looking town. Early in June 1814, the Magistrate described it as "a small straggling town." In order to improve its condition the Municipal law, as embodied in Regulation XIII of 1813, was introduced into it in the following year, and sixty Chaukidars were appointed to the two main sections, Bali and Gholeghat, into which the town was divided. The law thus introduced had its desired effect, and the Magistrate was able to report† that "since the establishment of the Chaukidars in the town of Hooghly there have been no robberies or thefts." Hooghly prospered under the rule of Mr. D. C. Smyth‡ who was appointed its Judge-Magistrate about 1817.§ This officer, whose

* Serampur was taken by the English in 1808, and it was not restored to the Danes until the Waterloo year. It was finally ceded to the English in 1845, when the Hon'ble L. Lindhard was its Governor. Serampur is held *khas* by Government, and is under the management of an officer who is called the *Khas Tehsildar*.

† This report, it would seem, was prepared at the request of the Governor-General himself, who made a progress through some parts of the district in that year.

‡ This very excellent officer was afterwards raised to the Bench of the Sudder Dewani Adalat. He remained in this district for the first time till 1820 and was again in charge of it from 1827 to 1836.

§ Middleton was Bishop of Calcutta in this year. He was not only an excellent Christian minister but was a ripe scholar; and his *Life of Cicero* is a masterly production. His name lives in a well-known Street in the grand "city of palaces." But he is more honourably remembered for his having founded the Bishop's College.

name has become a household word in the land, was a very able man, and he laboured for the district with admirable zeal and energy. Not long after he had taken charge, his attention was called to the affairs of the local Imambara. The two Matwalis having mismanaged the trust property, Government stepped in and interfered under Regulation XIX of 1810. Syed Ali Akbar Khan was appointed, in September 1815, as "Ameen, or Controller of the funds of the Institution," and the Local Agents, of whom Mr. Smyth was the chief, were instructed to make a full and searching inquiry into the affairs of the Imambara in concert with him. The report drawn up by Mr. Smyth in 1817 was a masterpiece of its kind, and received high commendation from the Board of Revenue. He showed, beyond doubt, that the Matwalis had misappropriated nearly fifteen thousand rupees; and the result was that, in August 1818, they were dismissed, and Ali Akbar Khan was appointed in their place. The latter continued to hold the office till 1836, when he, too, was removed for a similar offence.

Hooghly had, it is true, much improved but there was wanting a Collector to make it a full-formed district. This want, however, did not long remain unsupplied. In 1817 Mr. A. Ogilvie was deputed to it as Assistant Collector. He might be considered the first Sub-Divisional officer ever appointed to the district. In 1819 a further advance was made by the

appointment of M. R. Saunders as "Collector of Government Customs and Town Duties at Hooghly," with the power of collecting the land revenue and the *sayer* duties in the *mehals* then under the Assistant Collector. This state of things continued till the 1st May, 1822, when Hooghly became a full Collectorate.* The Collector, Mr. William H. Belli, was ordered to go to Burdwan, and sort and bring away the records belonging to his charge. The land revenue of the district was Rs. 11,23,474 and the stamp, abkari and other revenues about Rs. 76,526, making a total of twelve lakhs of sicca rupees, as against thirty lakhs, which remained as the revenue of Burdwan and the Jungle Mehals.†

But although Hooghly was made a full Collectorate in 1822, still the office of Collector of Customs and Town Duties was not amalgamated with that of the Collector of land revenue. This position of affairs continued till 1827, when the two offices were joined in one and the same person. For this addition to his duties, the Collector was allowed Rs. 200 over

* Dr. Hunter, however, gives a different account. He writes: — "The revenue jurisdiction of the district of Hughli with Howrah was established in 1819. Prior to that year it had formed a part of the Collectorate, although it had been created a District Magistracy some years previously. The Resolution constituting the district of Hughli is dated 26th February 1819. Mr. R. Saunders, the first Collector, was appointed on the 1st March 1819. —"Statistical Account of Bengal, Vol. III, p. 253.

†See Mr. G. Toynbee's *Administration of the Hooghly District from 1795 to 1845*, p. 32. This very useful publication has been of considerable service to me in the preparation of some portions of this book.

and above his pay and commission. Afterwards, on the 1st May, 1836, the Customs office was abolished, and with it the allowance of Rs. 200 which the Collector had been in receipt of. Mr. Belli made a very feeling representation to Government regarding his loss, but it does not appear that his appeal was listened to.*

* Mr. Belli remained in the district till 1841. Though his name is not so much known or honoured as that of Mr. D. C. Smyth, still there is no doubt that he deserved well of its people, in whose welfare he took considerable interest. During the period of nearly 20 years for which he was in charge of the Collectorate, he seems to have availed himself of leave for a few months only. He was succeeded by Mr. James Balfour Ogilvy.



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CHAPTER IX.

INTERESTING EVENTS IN HOOGHLY FROM 1823 TO 1837.

The Dutch had made Chinsura "the cynosure of neighbouring eyes," but with the decline of their Indian trade it lost much of its former attractions. At last, matters came to such a pitiable pass that the painful resolution was formed to part with it. Mr. David Anthony Overbeck, its last Governor, gave his reluctant consent to the proposal,* and negotiations were at once opened with the English for its transfer. While the terms were being settled, a serious natural calamity overtook this part of the country. This was the memorable "flood of '30," which is still talked of by "the oldest inhabitant" as an event that has no parallel in the rural annals of Bengal. The river Hooghly,† rose to an unprecedented height. Dharampur, Mulla Kasim's Hat, and Bali, all in the town, were entirely submerged, and the roads rendered impassable. The portions of the town which were above water were

* The treaty was signed on the 17th March, 1824. In the following year was passed Regulation XVIII for annexing the settlement of Chinsura to zillah Hooghly.

† The *little Ganges* is more commonly called the *River Hooghly*.—Orme's *Industan*, Vol. II.

crowded with men, women and children, who had come from the interior with their household goods and cattle. Prompt steps were taken by the Judge-Magistrate, Mr. Smyth, for their relief and protection. Temporary huts or sheds were put up for their accommodation, and food to the value of Rs. 123 was distributed gratis to the weakest, and Rs. 138 was spent as wages of the able-bodied who were employed on the station roads. It was at this time that the old Mogul fort and the buildings which had been in the possession of Nabab Khan Jehan Khan up to his death, were pulled down, and the materials thereof were partly utilised and partly sold. In the flood, Pargana Mandalghat,* which then formed a part of the district, would appear to have suffered the most. The Collector, Mr. W. H. Belli, was ordered to proceed thither and ascertain by actual inspection the amount of damage sustained by the ryots. His report disclosed a most lamentable state of things. But, serious as the calamity was, it was not followed by disastrous consequences. There was no famine, or even scarcity, such being the wonderful recuperative powers of the soil and the people of the district.

A few days after the flood, the sepoy's mutinied at Barrackpur. In this matter, too, the Magistrate of Hooghly acted with his usual energy, and his

* Mandalghat is now included in the district of Midnapur. It is the Zemindari of the well-known Seal family of Calcutta.

efforts were crowned with success. He promptly sent the Police *burkundazes** to the scene, and, as good luck would have it, they succeeded in arresting forty-five mutineers, of whom twelve were executed on the spot. This had a very wonderful effect, and the mutiny, which would otherwise have assumed a very serious aspect, was at once quelled.

Regulation XIII of 1813 was introduced into the town of Hooghly early in June the following year; but defects in its working having come to light, it was amended by Regulation XXII of 1816, and this law contains the first provisions made for conservancy, lighting and other municipal purposes. In 1825† nearly Rs. 2,000 was spent on the improvement of the town, from the surplus town duties levied under Regulation X of 1810. This was followed up by a further expenditure of Rs. 4,768 in 1829. The road near the Collector's *kutchery* was widened; the large tank opposite the Civil Court buildings, the Pipalpati and some other tanks

* The native irregulars designated "Buxaries," who were formerly employed at Calcutta as necessity arose, were nothing more than *Burkundaz* armed and equipped in the usual native manner, without any attempt at discipline or regularity. (See Broome's *History of the Bengal Army*, p. 92).

† Doubts having been raised as to the legality of an union of the powers of Judge and Collector in one and the same person, Regulation V was passed in this year to remove them. Within two months of the passing of this Regulation was passed Regulation XII for exempting females from corporal punishment by stripes, and for discontinuing the *korah* as an instrument of punishment in all cases.

in the town were excavated ; trees were planted by the road sides, and several of the roads were metallised with brick. Some conservancy "carts" were also purchased, and "a staff of scavengers" was entertained to work them.*

In 1828, the well-known Zemindar, Baboo Prankrishna Haldar, made a gift of Rs. 13,000 for a masonry bridge over the river Saraswati, at Tribeni.† The bridge was built by Mr. Goss.‡ The donor in recognition of his munificence, was allowed the privilege of entertaining six sepoy's as sentries at the gate of his splendid dwelling-house (the present College building). In the same year a suspension bridge was also constructed at Nauseraï from money raised by public subscription "under the auspices of Mr. D. C. Smyth."

In 1829 § Mr. Smyth signalled his administration

* See Mr. Toynebee's *Administration of the Hooghly District*, page 124.

† *Tribeni* is not the name of a place, it means the *confluence of three streams*. There are several such spots in India, but the most sacred of them all, in the eyes of an orthodox Hindoo, are those at Satgaon and Allahabad. The former is called the *South Priyag*, the latter *North Priyag*:—They are the *Kings of holy places*.—See also Kaghunandan's *Prayaschitta Tatwa*.

‡ This bridge was nearly destroyed in the great storm of 1242 B. C. by an overflow of the Damudar. (See Rev. J. Long's article, "The Banks of the Bhagirathi," in the *Calcutta Review*).

§ In this year the Courts of Circuit were abolished, and their duties were transferred to the Commissioners of Circuit, who were likewise Commissioners of Revenue. But this plan being found very inconvenient, the Zillah Judges in 1832, were, with few exceptions, vested with the powers of the former Courts of Circuit which they have ever since exercised in their capacity of Sessions Judges.

of the district by another act of public utility, which still bears his name. We refer to the handsome masonry *ghat* near the Civil Court buildings. This *ghat*, as the tablet shows, was built from subscriptions given by some of the Zemindars, Government amlas and muktears; and the *chandni*, by Baboo Chhaku Ram Singh of Bhastara alone, at a cost of Rs. 3,000. The Baboo was one of the most public-spirited and enlightened land-holders in the district, and many were the acts done by him for the public good. His character stood very high, and he was kind and even indulgent to his happy tenantry. The Magistrate commended this gentleman to the special notice of Government, and asked that he might be "decorated." But it does not appear that his recommendation was complied with. However, he was known as the "Baboo" *par* excellence. In the same year the Raja of Burdwan gave Rs. 36,000 for the construction of a masonry bridge across the Kunti Nala, at Magra.† The bridge was probably built by Captain Vetch, and is still in existence. In

* The Chinsura barracks were built by Captain W. Bell in 1829. Before that the soldiers that used to come, were accommodated in the old Dutch barracks. The soldiers continued coming to Chinsura till 1871, when the barracks were finally vacated by the Military Department, but they are still under their superintendence.

Towards the close of the year 1829 was passed Regulation XVII for declaring the practice of *Sati*, or of burning or burying alive the widows of Hindus illegal and punishable by the Criminal Courts.

† It was known in old records as Golagore, so called, perhaps, from its having contained a large number of *Golas*, or warehouses. Magra is still a place of trade.

consideration of his princely gift, the Raja was allowed to have badges for his peons. The old circuit-house was also built at or about the same time. It was until recently used as the Courts of the Joint-Magistrate and the Bench Magistrates, and some other offices.

In 1830 Hooghly witnessed the beginning of a noble undertaking which has borne good fruits,—the great Trigonometrical Survey was commenced by Mr. Oliver. The operations were suspended in June 1831,* and resumed in March following. In 1843 they were again carried on, the spacious roof of the Hooghly College buildings being selected as the first station. The survey parties experienced the greatest difficulties from obstruction on the part of the inhabitants, most of whom did not at all understand the laudable object which Government had in making the survey. There was, therefore, considerable delay, and, as a matter of fact, the operations were not finally concluded until after 1845.

In 1832,† a wholesome change was made in the mode of administration, the offices of Judge and Magistrate, which had hitherto been combined, being

* In this year was passed Regulation V for extending the powers of Munsiffs and Sadar Amins in the trial of civil suits; and for authorizing the appointment of Principal Sadar Amins at the Zillah and city stations.

† Maharaja Tej Chandra, Zamindar of Burdwan, died in 1822. In this year *fatwas* by Mahomedan law officers were dispensed with. (See Reg. vi of 1832).

separated. This separation was not only desirable but necessary, as it had become almost impossible for one officer to perform the duties of both offices. Besides, it was deemed inadvisable to keep the judicial and executive powers in one and the same person. Mr. Smyth continued Judge, while another gentleman was appointed Magistrate.* This change in the administration was followed in the next year by a change in the aspect of the district, which was caused by a storm† of "incredible violence," that swept over the land on the 21st May. It blew a perfect hurricane for full six hours, accompanied by heavy rain, and the damage done was immense. Almost every embankment in the district was destroyed. But the after effects were more serious still; sickness prevailed to an alarming extent, insomuch that civil and criminal business was almost brought to a stand-still.‡

* Dr. Hunter, however, places the event in the year 1829. He says that "up to 1829, a single officer exercised the powers of Judge and Magistrate throughout the entire district of Hooghly with Howrah; but owing to an increase in both departments, the offices were separated on the 26th September 1829, and Mr. H. B. Brownlow was appointed Magistrate of the district, the civil jurisdiction remaining with the Judge." (Hunter's *Statistical Account of Bengal*, Vol. III, p. 253). Dr. Crawford says that Mr. (afterwards Sir) Frederick James Halliday was appointed Magistrate of Hooghly in 1829, and Mr Henry Benjamin Brownlow in the year following. (See *Medical Gazetteer of the Hooghly District*, Chap. XIV).

† Like the great tempest in November, 1703, which Addison, in his well-known poem of the *Campaign*, describes, —

“Such as, of late, o'er pale Britainia pass'd.”

‡ In 1833 was passed Regulation VIII for the occasional appointment of Additional Judges.

The year 1834 is memorable for a noble act of Mr. Smyth's in the direction of education. It appears that from before 1824 Government had been supporting fourteen schools with a monthly grant of Rs. 800. These schools were situated on both sides of the river, and were the only schools available in these parts, except the Hooghly Imambara school and the Chinsura Free school. The Government, for reasons best known to itself, withdrew the grant from the 1st of November 1832, but it offered to make over the school-houses (with the furniture) and keep them in repair, should any parties be willing to carry on the schools as private institutions. Unfortunately, no one came forward to accept the offer, in spite of the efforts of Mr. Lewis Betts, the late Superintendent of the schools, in that direction. At last, Mr. Smyth, the Judge, came to the rescue and founded the present Branch School. The Government gave the site, measuring two bighas and seven cottahs, and the funds for the building and other expenses were raised by subscription among the principal zemindars of the district, the noble founder also giving his own quota.* To indicate the source

* The tablet in the school hall contains the following inscription :--
" This school-house was erected in 1834 under the patronage of D. C. Smyth Esquire, Judge and Magistrate of Hooghly, with the funds subscribed by the following gentlemen and others :

D. C. Smyth Esquire
Maharajah Dhiraj Mahatab Chunder Bahadur
Baboo Dwarka Nath Tagore.

from which it was established, the school was called the "Subscription School;"* and it continued to be so called until the 4th December 1837, when it was opened as a branch school of the College of Mohammad Mohsin. With this school was subsequently associated the Madrassa attached to the Inambara. Baboo Parvati Charan Sircar, elder brother of the well known educationist, the late lamented Baboo Peary Charan Sircar, was the first Head-master of the Branch School. This institution flourished well under the fostering care of its founder, who is still remembered as a public benefactor, a just and humane judge, and a true friend of the people.

In 1836 there were many brave doings in Hooghly, the first and foremost of which was the opening of the Hooghly College, established through the munificence of a wealthy Mahomedan,† who, in

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Baboo Callynath Moonshee.
 Baboo Pran Chunder Roy.
 Baboo Sheebnaran Chewdery.
 Baboo Kamnaran Mookerjee.

Opened on the 4th December 1837 as a Branch School to the College of Mohammad Mushen.

T. A. WISE, Principal."

* Baboo Ishan Chunder Bannerjee, who is so well-known in the education department, was the first Head-master of this school. He afterwards became a professor in the Hooghly College, where he, with his very worthy brother, the late Baboo Mohesh Chunder Bannerjee, taught for years together. Baboo Ishan Chunder used to spend most of his time in reading and study.

† The stone in the College Hall bears the following inscription:—
 "This College was established through the munificence of the late Mohammad Moshin, and was opened on the 1st August 1836."

1812, left his large property *in pios usus*. We have already seen that the two Matwalis were dismissed by Government in consequence of their having misappropriated trust funds to the tune of Rs. 15,000. So far from remaining satisfied with the orders of Government, they filed a civil suit to contest the legality of their dismissal. The litigation dragged its slow length along, and terminated in their total discomfiture in 1835.* It was found that, during this long period, the surplus of the Mohsin funds had accumulated to over eight lakhs of rupees. Out of this large sum, the Hooghly College was established. The splendid edifice, now occupied by the college, was built by a Frenchman named Perron,† in 1810. He came out to India in 1774 as a common sailor on a French frigate, and afterwards—entering the service of Scindia, rose to eminence, and amassed a fortune which was believed to have amounted to half a crore of rupees. Having retired from service, he settled down at Chinsura and, built the edifice in question. There he lived like a prince. From his possession the building passed to Baboo

* By the by, I may mention that in this year, rupees were *first* issued in the name of an English King, the Company's coinage having hitherto been issued in the name of the Mogul Emperor,—See S. L. Poole's *Catalogues of Oriental Coins*.

† General Perron must not be confounded with the great Orientalist of that name, who was present at Chandernagore when it was captured by Clive in March, 1757. The latter was a very learned scholar and linguist. Born 1731; died 1805. For further particulars regarding the General, see Col. G. B. Malleison's article, "Foreign Adventurers in India," in the *Calcutta Review*, 1877.

Pran Krishna Haldar, who converted it into a palace of pleasure. When fickle fortune frowned upon Pran Krishna, Baboo Jagomohan Seal, of the same place, caused it to be sold in execution of a civil court decree in 1834, and purchased it himself. It was from Jagomohan that it was bought for Rs. 20,000 for the new College, which was opened on the 1st August, 1836.* Dr. Thomas A. Wise,† the Civil Surgeon, was its first Principal, and he continued to occupy the post till 1839, when he left the district, on being appointed Secretary to the General Committee of Public Instruction in Calcutta. About seven years afterwards, the well-known Captain D. L. Richardson‡ was appointed Principal. He was succeeded by Mr. James Kerr, and the latter by Mr. Robert Thwaytes, who held the post for a considerable period. Mr. Booth was also Principal, who, like his immediate predecessor, Mr. Griffiths, has the reputation of being an able mathematician. The present incumbent is Mr. Robert W. F. Shaw.

The "Joykissen Mookerjee affair," as Mr. Toynebee

* The *Hurkura*, February, 1839, says that "the General Committee of Public Instruction have paid twenty thousand Rupees in purchasing General Perron's house, for the reception of Mahomed Mohsin's College, instead of building one for that purpose."

† Dr. Alexander Wise was a voluminous writer. His chief works are "A Commentary on the Hindu System of Medicine"; "A Treatise on the Diseases of the Eye, as they appear in Hindustan"; "Cholera, its symptoms, causes, and remedies"; and "A Review of the History of Medicine." He retired on 11th May, 1851; and died on 23rd July, 1889.

‡ Captain Richardson was appointed Principal in 1846 and acted as such till 1848.

calls it, also took place in 1836. The Baboo had been appointed record-keeper of the Collectorate by the Collector, Mr. Belli, who entertained a high opinion of his ability and energy. In addition to his duties as record-keeper, he had to see to the exchange of Dutch for English pattaahs of the Chinsura ryots. It was in the *bona fide* discharge of this special duty that he got into a serious scrape. The Revenue Board's orders regarding the exchange of pattaahs were extremely unpopular with the ryots, and it was only natural that Baboo Joykissen, who was very strict in carrying them out, should have become an object of dislike to them. So, when, in the cold weather of 1835-36, the Commissioner, Mr. Evelyn Gordon, visited Hooghly, they in a body went up to him with a petition charging the Baboo with taking fees for himself on the issue of English pattaahs. The Commissioner sent the petition on to the Collector with a private note saying that he "believed it all." But as no specific charge was made, the latter returned it, stating that he could not proceed regularly under the provisions of Regulation XIII of 1793. The Board then ordered the Commissioner to inquire into the matter personally. He did so, and the result was that Baboo Joykissen was dismissed.* The

* To compare great things with small, Joykissen's dismissal from the Collectorate "Duftar," like Lord Bacon's removal from the "Marble Chair," proved a great blessing. From that date, he commenced the role of a patriot, and soon distinguished himself. Indeed, there was not a public movement in which he did not take a part, and his words of wisdom were always listened to with the attention

report of the Commissioner was quite out of the ordinary run of such documents, for, instead of confining himself to condemning the character of the party accused, he made some uncalled-for reflections upon the conduct of the Collector himself. But Mr. Belli was not the man to pocket such an insult, and he, accordingly, vented his spleen in a manner which showed that he was a better master of the language of abuse than his detractor. As to the merits of the case, the Collector was perfectly justified in condemning the proceedings of the Commissioner, for a calm and impartial consideration of all the papers on the subject shows that great injustice was done to Baboo Joykissen, who was merely the victim of a foul conspiracy on the part of the Chinsura ryots.

The year 1236* also witnessed a change in the official language of the Courts, the Bengalee superseding the Persian. This change was justly considered one of the greatest blessings that British rule had conferred upon the country. The Persian, however, was still retained for correspondence, but whenever possible, the English language was to be used. The English, were also substituted for the Bengali, months, in the revenue accounts. As a

they deserved. Whatever may have been his faults, they were counter-balanced by his good qualities. Taking him all in all, we shall not find his like again. Raja Peary Mohun Mookerjee, C. S. I. who is well-known for his public spirit, is the worthy son of such a worthy sire.

* In this year was passed the well-known Black Act which bore the number XI.

necessary consequence of these changes, the staff in the English Department was increased.

A somewhat sensational case marks the year 1837. Three moonsiffs made a serious complaint against the District Judge, Mr. Charles Ray Martin, who was thereupon suspended pending further inquiry. One Noona Bai also came forward and charged him with having received money from her under promise of bestowing Moonsiffces on certain persons named by her. At the same time, the Government pleader, Moonshi Tafazzal Hosein, was suspended on a charge of taking a large amount of money from a client on the plea that it was required to be paid to the Judge, according to "dustoor," or custom, in order to win the case. A full inquiry was held under the provisions of Regulation XVII of 1813, and the charges brought against the Judge were considered to have been so far proved by the investigations held by Mr. W. W. Bird, that His Honor, the Deputy Governor of Bengal, deemed it inexpedient to continue him in office. Accordingly, he was removed, and Mr. James Curtis was appointed to fill the office. Much praise was bestowed by His Honor on Mr. Lewis for his first having brought to notice the reports affecting Mr. Martin's character which were current in the Hooghly district.*

* See *Calcutta Monthly Journal*, part II, (1838), p. 74. Mr. Toynbee, however, states that Mr. Martin was found not guilty, and

The Government pleader was also removed and his place given to Baboo Prosumno Coomar Tagore.

The Collectorate also was not without its disturbance. In it was brought to light a case of embezzlement which covered a period of five years, beginning with September, 1832. It was found that no less than Rs. 16,023 had been misappropriated by the mohurrirs concerned, from sums paid to Government under the heads of fines, ferry-funds, and escheats. The defalcation was made good by the luckless treasurer. It does not clearly appear what punishment, if any, was inflicted upon the guilty parties, beyond dismissal.

The first systematic attempt at "numbering the people" was also made in 1837. The procedure adopted by the Magistrate, Mr. Samuells, was to send out blank forms to gomastas, village headmen, and Zemindars, with orders to fill in and return them. On receipt, the papers were made over to the Police darogahs for check and scrutiny. The result of this census, if we may so call it; showed an aggregate population of 1,508,843 souls in the whole district, inclusive of 70,025 in the town.

that his accuser, Noona Bai, was prosecuted for perjury and sentenced to seven years' imprisonment. What became of the Moonsiffs he does not say one way or the other. See his *Administration*, p. 146.

CHAPTER X.

THE GREAT BURDWAN CASE, OR THE TRIAL OF THE SO CALLED JAL RAJA.

The present Raj family* of Burdwan was founded by Abu Rai, who, with his son, Babu Rai, came down from the Punjab and settled in Bengal about the middle of the seventeenth century. In 1068 Hejira, Abu Rai was appointed Chowdhuri and Kolwal of Pekali Bagan in the town of Burdwan, under the Fouzdar of chukla Burdwan. His son, Babu Rai, fared much better and became owner of pargana Burdwan and three other mehals. The sixth in lineal descent from Babu Rai was Chitra Sen Rai, who first got the title of Raja. He died in 1744, and, as he left no male issue, was succeeded by his cousin Troyluckya Chandra *alias* Tiluck Chand. The latter cut a very remarkable figure, and was created "Maharaja Dhiraj Bahadur" by the Emperor of Delhi. He died in 1771, leaving a minor son, named Tej Chandra to succeed to his vast estates. Tej Chandra had a wife, Nunku Bibi, who bore him Protap Chand. But, though he had a son living, and was himself turned forty, he married a

* For an account of the ancient Raj family to which Bir Singh of Vidya Sundara fame belonged, see *Khitish Fungarali Charitam*, W. Pertsch's Edition with English translation, Berlin, 1852.

young girl of the name of Kamal Kumari, daughter of one Kashinath. This fortunate man had also a son, who was afterwards known as Poran Babu. Kashinath settled in Burdwan, and, like Nur Jehan's father, soon rose in power and riches. After his death, Tej Chandra, who had already enjoyed half a dozen wives in succession, married, in his old age, Basanta Kumari, Poran Baba's daughter.* Thus Poran, like a skilful actor, dexterously passed from the gay to the grave side of relationship.

Protap's mother having died when he was a mere infant, he was brought up by his grandmother, the Dowager Maharani Bishen Kumari. As usual with sons of rich men bred up by their grandmothers, Protap's education was neglected, and, in point of fact, he learned very little; but nature had given him very strong common sense, "that best and rarest of all senses," as Southey calls it. After he had attained years of discretion, he was styled the "Chota Raja."† With all his shortcomings, Protap was sociable,‡ and often mixed with gentlemen of this part of Bengal. His most

* Napoleon Bonaparte married Josephine while his brother Louis married the Princess Hortense, her daughter by another husband.

† Meeran, the favourite son of Nabob Mir Jaffar, was called the "Chota Nabob." He was a greater villain than Siraj-ud-dowla himself. He died in his twenty-first year, being struck by lightning in his tent on the 2d July, 1760. Mir Kasim was also called the "Chota Nabob" before he became Nabob himself on the forced retirement of Mir Jaffar.

‡ Would we could say with the poet that he led "A social, not a dissipated life." But truth compels us to say that he was all but a

intimate friends were Nabob Babu* of Singhoor, and Ramdhone Babu† of Telinipara.‡ During his stay at the Chinsura Rajbati he spent many pleasant hours with Mr. Daniel Antonio Overbeck, the last Dutch Governor of that Settlement.

Protap hated his wily uncle, Poran Babu. Indeed, there was no love lost between them. Finding Poran's influence continually on the increase, he got his old father to execute a deed of gift of all his property in his favour. After that, he took upon himself the whole management, and, be it said to his credit, effected many reforms and improvements. It was at his suggestion that Government framed and passed Regulation VIII of 1819,§ more commonly called the *Patni* Regulation. But sociable and business-like as he was, he was unfortunately addicted to "wine and wassail" which got such a firm hold on him that it was little restrained by the strait-laced

सयमं जयते

confirmed rake, and it was not unoften that he was admonished by the Dutch Governor of Chinsura, Mr. Overbeck, for his gaities and lax habits.

* His real name was Srinath. He was the handsomest as well as the richest man of his time in the Hooghly District. Jodunath, who was also a man of note, was his younger brother. Srinath's branch of the family has become extinct.

† Ramdhone Babu is now represented by Babu Bhagabati Charan Banerjee.

‡ Among the Hindoos of Calcutta, Protap visited the houses of only two, namely, Gopi Mohan Deb of the Shova Bazar Raj family, and Ram Mohun Roy, the famous Hindu reformer.

§ See S. B. Choudhari's article on *Pattani or Patni Tenures* in the "Calcutta Review," 1876.

tenets of his religion. This bad habit did him infinite harm, and at length estranged his doting father from him.

Thus passed twenty-six years of his life, after which there was a sudden change in his mind and mood. He lost his usual hilarity and became pensive and morose. He seldom talked with any body. Except Sham Chand Babu* and the well-known painter, Chinnery, whom he had engaged to paint his portrait, he allowed no one to have the pleasure of his company. This melancholia was followed by an intermittent fever which soon took a very serious turn. At his own request he was taken over to Kulna that he might die on the banks of the holy Ganges. No relative or friend accompanied him, nay, not even one of his wives† was allowed to go with him. Tej Chandra was then at the Kulna Rajbati, but he returned to Burdwan on the very night Protap died.‡ Three or four days after, however, a rumour got abroad that the "Chota Raja" had not died, but had fled from the burning ground. Tej Chandra also heard the rumour, but he did not say yea or nay to it. As Protap had acquired the whole of the Raj estate by virtue of

* Sham Chand was the brother of Mahurani Joy Kumari, the elder wife of Tej Chandra.

† Protap had two wives, Peary Kumari and Ananda Kumari

‡ This was in January 1821, when the *Samachar Durpan* of the day stated he was aged only twenty-nine years and two months.

a deed of gift from his father, his two widows brought a civil suit* for recovery of the same. But ultimately the gift was pronounced void, and thus the property remained, as before, with Maharaja Tej Chandra, the baffled Ranees being merely allowed an inconsiderable monthly sum for their maintenance.

Some time after, a proposal was made to the old Maharaja to take a son in adoption as he had no natural-born son living. He was at first averse to the proposal, but at last gave in, and the youngest son of Poran Babu, who, like our Krishna, was his eighth child, was duly adopted. This lucky boy was afterwards known as Maharaja Mahtab Chand Bahadur. Tej Chandra died in 1832, and was succeeded by his adopted son. As the latter was then a minor, the estate came under the management of the Court of Wards, but the party really in power was Poran Babu, the father of the young Maharaja.

Fifteen years after Protap's death or disappearance, that is, in 1835, a Sannyasi presented himself in Burdwan. He looked with earnest, inquiring eyes into every creek and corner, as if they had been the scenes of his early days. At last, he appeared at the gate of the well known Golap Bagh.

* In this suit the Ranees were assisted with money by Babu Dwarka Nath Tagore of Calcutta. Mr. Oakley decided this suit. This gentleman was Judge-Magistrate from 1816 to 1826, having succeeded Mr. William Brodie.

One Gopinath Moira* who had kept a confectioner's shop there for a long time, recognised him as the "Chota Raja." In this he was confirmed by several others. This unpleasant news coming to the ears of Poran Babu, he sent a parcel of sturdy clubsmen who drove the suspicious Sannyasi across the Damudar. A few months after, the same Sannyasi made his appearance at the Bishnupur† Rajbati. The then Raja, Khetter Mohan Singh, soon recognised him as Raja Protap Chand, and treated him in a manner quite becoming his high rank and position. By his advice the so-called Sannyasi proceeded towards Bankura with a view to having an interview with the Magistrate. He reached his destination, but reached it only to be arrested as a vagabond and peace-breaker by the Magistrate, Mr. James Balfour Elliott,‡ along with some others who had come to see him.§ He was at once sent to jail

* This man was examined as a witness in the trial which was held in the Sessions Court at Hooghly in 1838.

† Bishnupur preserved its independence during the Mahomedan rule. The Abbé Raynal is lavish in his praise of this country which he describes "as a happy and fortunate spot where liberty and property are held sacred, robbery, either public or private, is never heard of, and beneficence to strangers is practised both by the sovereign and his subjects." *History of European Settlements*, Vol. II, Book III. Alas! times have since altered, and Bishnupur is now almost a desert.

‡ In 1858, when Commissioner of Burdwan, Mr. Elliott pointed out to the late Babu Sanjeeb Chandra Chatterjee, Deputy Magistrate, the very spot where he had arrested the *pseudo*-Raja as he called him.

§ The excitement in our hero's favour, said a Paper of the day, fanned as it was by the disaffection and hostility subsisting towards

where he was incarcerated for nearly eight months,* when he was *challenged* to Hooghly for trial, although, as a matter of law, he should have been tried at Burdwan. Here his trial commenced in due course before Mr. Harrington, the Sessions Judge. Mr. (afterwards Sir Thomas) Turton,† the well-known barrister of Calcutta, came to defend him, but he was not allowed to utter a single word in his client's favour. The learned counsel then moved the Nizamat Adalat at the metropolis, but his motion was rejected, that Court taking the same view as the Hooghly Court. The charge against the accused was that, though his real name was Aluk Shah,‡ he had collected followers calling himself Raja Protap Chand, and had thereby given occasion for a breach of the public peace. The charge was found to be true, and the accused was sentenced § to simple imprisonment for six months, and was also ordered to enter into a recognizance for Rs. 40,000 to keep the peace for one year after the expiry of the term of imprisonment. The sentence was duly worked out; and the convict was allowed to go at large, but not before

the family of Poran Babu, contributed, in no small degree, to render his cause highly popular; but it gave a handle for the institution of a public prosecution against him.

* He was detained in custody in the Bankura jail until August 1839.

† Turton was appointed Advocate-General of Bengal upon the retirement of Mr. John Pearson in 1839.

‡ It is a mere *sobriquet*, signifying *Invisible King*.

§ This sentence was passed on the 4th August 1836

he had executed the said recognizance. This was in February 1837*

The above mischance does not seem to have damped the ardour of our hero and his followers a whit, and, as a matter of fact, his popularity, so far from losing hold, continued to gain ground. The so-called Aluk Shah after his release, went down to Calcutta where he was recognised by most of his former friends and acquaintances as the real Protap Chand. They naturally expressed great sympathy with him and advised him to go to law for recovery of the Raj estate. By their advice, backed as it was by counsel's opinion, he brought an ejectment suit† in the Supreme Court in respect of three Calcutta Bazars, the well-known Dewan of the General Treasury, Babu Radha Krishna Bysack, supplying the sinews of war.‡ The suit was contested by the Court of Wards on behalf of the minor Maharaja Mahtab Chand; Maharani Basanta Kumari also put in a defence therein. The hearing began in due course. Some respectable persons of Calcutta were examined, and they one and all declared that the

* Alexander Ross was then Deputy Governor of Bengal. He began his Indian career as an Assistant in 1795, and rose to be a Sadar Judge in 1825.

† In this suit the Advocate-General, Mr. C. R. Prinsep, Mr. L. Clarke, and Mr. J. F. Leith were counsel for plaintiff.

‡ Protap put up at the splendid Boitakkhana of Babu Bolu Chand, the eldest son of Baboo Radha Krishna. He afterwards removed to a house at Fouzdari Balakhana.

plaintiff was really Raja Protap. But this evidence was not thought sufficient by the Court, and it, therefore, became necessary to examine some inhabitants of Burdwan as to his identity. Protap Chand offered to go himself to Burdwan ;* but this was no easy matter, as there was every probability of his being roughly handled, if not killed outright, by Poran Babu's myrmidons. So, on the 13th February, 1838, he petitioned the Deputy Governor, Mr. Alexander Ross,† praying that "his Honor would be graciously pleased to grant to him (through the proper channel) some means of safeguard to protect his person and life from any eventual insult or danger during the time he might be obliged to stay at Burdwan."‡, On the 5th March following, the Government Secretary, Mr. Frederick James Halliday,§ informed him in reply ¶ that his prayer could not be complied with.

* His petition to the Deputy Governor, however, shows that his object in going to Burdwan was to "personally prosecute his claim before the established judicial tribunal stationed at the place, and in the meanwhile to show himself to his step-mother, aunt and wives, and other relations, and thereby, if possible, to induce them to persuade the usurper of his property to come to an amicable adjustment with him."

† The Honourable Mr. Ross retired in January 1839. He was very hospitable. Bentham was his favourite author.

‡ Some say that his alleged purpose was to obtain an interview with the Ranis.

§ Mr. (afterwards Sir Frederick) Halliday succeeded Mr. Ross Donnelly Mangles as Secretary to the Bengal Government in the judicial and revenue departments in 1838.

¶ The reply was quite Spartan-like, it was in these words: "The prayer of this petition cannot be complied with."

But nothing daunted, Protap made up his mind to go, and after making necessary preparations, started* for Kulna, on his way to the seat of the Raj. He embarked at Jagannath Ghat and proceeded up the river, a fleet of thirty or forty boats with numerous servants and followers on board accompanying him, and after a slow journey, reached Kulna on the 13th April 1838.† On reaching Kulna he sent up two muktears to Burdwan with a petition to the Magistrate, asking to be allowed to go to that place. But before they had an opportunity of presenting the petition, they were arrested by the Magistrate, Mr. James Balfour Ogilvie, and at once lodged in jail. He also sent orders to the Daroga of Kulna, Mahaboollah, ‡ directing him to call upon the *pseudo*-Raja to disperse his "rabblement," and, in case of refusal or non-compliance, to arrest him.

On the 20th April, Protap Chand landed on the Pathuria Mahal Ghat, and paraded the place in a *Tonjon*, with due "pomp and circumstance." Mr. Alfred Alexander, the local Padre (missionary), who

* This was on the 7th March 1838. "Sad was the hour and luckless was the day."

† He passed through the districts of 24 Parganas, Hooghly and Nadia, on his way to Kulna, and stayed several days at Santipur, only twelve miles distant from Goari, the birthplace of Krista Lal Brahmachari, about whom we shall have to say much later on.

‡ A worthy Daroga indeed, "who could neither read nor write," and was also such a huge heap of flesh that he could neither "walk nor run."

had been asked by Mr. Ogilvie to watch the movements of the *pseudo* Raja and inform him thereof, gave an account of the matter to the Magistrate; but his letter, which was probably based upon the report of one of his trusty underlings, was a little too highly coloured.* On receipt of this letter Mr. Ogilvie sent down his Nazir, Assad Ali, with orders to arrest Protap Chand, Poran Babu at the same time sending a batch of stout clubsmen under Radha Mohan Sircar. Not satisfied with sending his Nazir with such strict orders, the Magistrate† himself accompanied by his worthy adjutant, Dr. Cheek, the Civil Surgeon, started for Kulna and, taking with him on the way a detachment of native infantry which was then halting at Boinchee, under the command of Captain Little, reached his destination some time before dawn. ‡ At that “still and

* The Padre's letter ran as follows:—"My dear sir,—Protap Chand has just gone on board his boat, after parading the whole length of Kulna in a *Tonjohn* with a drawn sword in his own hand, attended by upwards of a hundred swordsmen and double that number of sticksmen. The concourse was altogether 6,000 or 8,000. He appeared to be intent on the Rajbarry. But your active Daroga prevented him. The aspect of things, I think, threatens an affray, if he is not checked soon." This letter was written in reply to the one which he had received from Mr. George Nicholas Cheek, the Doctor, on the night of the first of May. The Doctor, it seems, was a tool in the hands of the Magistrate.

† The Magistrate and the Doctor were each armed with a double-barreled pistol, which was given them by Mr. Barlow, the Judge of Burdwan. Dr. Cheek, as he himself admitted in his evidence, was once in the artillery.

‡ The *Hurkura* of the 7th May, however, says that the Magistrate arrived with Captain Little and his company in the morning of the

solemn hour," the Raja and his people were sunk in sleep in the boats but the Magistrate could not brook delay in the execution of what he in his overzeal considered to be his duty. Firing commenced, and some innocents were wounded while laying in an unconscious state.* The Raja awoke and, plunging into the river, saved himself from the bullets of the sepoy's by his practical moor-hen like skill in the art of diving. He got to the other side of the river out of harm's way. So did his friend,

3rd May and gave directions to fire a volley only to check the flight of the impostor and his men on boats. Protap got to the other side where he lay motionless like a corpse. But being discovered by an experienced habildar who had given him a kick, he was arrested. Among the persons who were made prisoners in the boats were Mr. Shaw and two other Europeans, who were lodged in the Burdwan jail. Protap was sent to Hooghly in charge of Little and his company, and was early in the morning of the 6th May delivered over to the Hooghly Magistrate who saw him safely lodged in jail. But the *Englishman*, the *Daily Intelligencer* and the *Calcutta Courier* condemn this hostile tone of the *Hurkara* and lay the whole blame upon the Magistrate. They also say that Shaw was not present at the disturbance, and that he was arrested while he was coming down to the Raja's boats from Mr. Lyall's factory in a *Falki*. So far from stirring up sedition, the main object of his coming to Kulna from Calcutta was to play the pacificator and prevent any breach of the peace on Protap's part.

* Mr. Ogilvie having considered the presence of Protap to endanger the peace of the district had sought the instructions of the Governor as to the course he was to pursue; and he received orders to arrest him, if no other alternative remained for preserving the public tranquillity. The Magistrate and Captain Little's regiment marched all night, and before daybreak arrived on the bank of the river. As there was not the slightest show of resistance, or even preparation for any on the part of Protap, the order to fire was quite unjustifiable. The Magistrate, it is said, was also accompanied by a number of the mounted soldiery of the *de facto* Raja of Burdwan, who were drawn up on the shore, and the balls which proved so fatal were discharged by them.—*Friend of India*, 17th May.

Raja Nara Hari Chandra of Nadia, and the two passed the rest of the night at a place to the north of Santipur.

The firing ceased, when plunder commenced, and after the plunder was over, there were arrests. But a sufficient number not being found on the Raja's boats, it was made up by arrests on some pilgrim-boats which are lying at anchor at a little distance. In this way two hundred and ninety-four persons, * amongst whom were several of the opposite sex, were arrested. The Raja and his friend, Nara Hari Chandra, † were also sought out and added to the number. Protap Chand, instead of being sent up to Burdwan as the others were, was *challaned* to Hooghly for trial. His attorney, Mr. William Dalrymple Shaw, also did not escape arrest, although he was not present at the engagement at Kulna. This arrest was made by Mr. Ogilvie him-

Several persons were wounded of whom three only, to wit, Tara Chand Chakravarti, Siraji Manjee and Gobinda Sing, died of their wounds. The story of about fifty men being killed is entirely false.

* Many of them had no more connection with Protap than the man in the moon. Mr. F. C. Smith, Police Superintendent of the Lower Provinces of Bengal, made the investigation.

† They were arrested by the Magistrate on the same day. The other arrests were made the next day, that is, the 2nd May. The *Hurkura* of the day, which was most hostile to Protap all through remarked:—"If this man should be permitted to go at large and wander about with a parcel of armed followers, from the thoughtlessness of the moment thousands of the people might be induced to join his standard, and thus cause a regular civil commotion." The *Calcutta Courier* slyly observed that "there is a good chance of his closing his eventful career, *an exalted character.*"

self, while Mr. Shaw was returning from his friend Mr. Lyall's factory at Pygatchee, three or four *croos* from Kulna, and he had to suffer a good deal for his high-handed and arbitrary proceedings.

In the morning of the 6th May, Protap Chand arrived at Hooghly under a Police guard, and was immediately placed in the local jail where he was made to await his trial. Mr. E. A. Samuells † was then the Magistrate of this District. Before that he had been for some time in charge of the Burdwan Magistracy, where he had heard all about the so-called *pseudo* Raja from Poran Babu. He had already formed his opinion that the claimant could not be the real Raja but a mere Perkin. He had heard from somebody that one Krishna Lal Brahmachari, son of Sham Lal Brahmachari of Goari in Nadia, had not been heard of for four or five years, and he at once jumped to the conclusion that the pretender was no other than that notorious cheat.

* Mr. Shaw was taken to Burdwan on Friday, and was mewed up 'in durance vile.' In this miserable state he remained till the 9th May, when he was released under a writ of *Habeas Corpus*. His caption and detention made a great sensation. Two actions were brought against Mr. Ogilvie in the Supreme Court, one by Mr Shaw for wrongful confinement, and the other for manslaughter of Tara Chand Chakravarti at Kulna. The latter case came on for hearing before Sir John Peter Grant on the 13th August 1838. The Judge in his charge having expressed it as his opinion, that "the fatal firing was purely accidental," the jurors by their foreman, Mr. Cameron, returned a verdict of "not guilty." Mr. Shaw's case was tried by the Chief Justice, Sir Edward Ryan, also with the aid of a jury, and resulted in the conviction of the accused who was fined Rs. 2000.

† He had been officiating in Hooghly for Mr. Grant since 1835.

He tried all manner of means to prove their identity and, as a matter of fact, nearly four months were occupied in the procuring of proofs.* At last on the 1st September, the trial commenced,† and the trying officer was Mr. Samuells ‡ himself. The

* The following letter which he wrote to Babu Dwarka Nath Tagore of Calcutta, plainly shows that the spirit in which he acted in the matter was not that of an impartial Judge, trying a case on the evidence adduced before him, but that of an interested party, bent upon securing a conviction.

"Hooghly, September 4, 1838 My dear Dwarka Nath,—I was disappointed at your non-arrival as I think you could speak more decidedly than any of the other witnesses to the man's non-identity, but it is not of much consequence I have no objection to make a bargain with you. I will let you off altogether if you will procure me the names of half a dozen good respectable witnesses from Baranagore, who know him as Krishna Lal. I dare say you could do this through Ka'li Nath Roy Chowdhury, Mathoora Nath Mukerjee, or any of your own servants. Let me know what you say to this. What a scoundrel that Buddinath Roy is. If I had known his character I would rather have gone without evidence altogether than have had his.

Remember I must have the evidence from Baranagore within a week or so. Persuade Mathoora Nath also to come. His *hornut* and *ijjut* shall be *kureck stoorut se bahal*.

सयमेव ज्ञाने
Yours truly,
E. A. SAMUELLS."

It is true, however, that as the law then stood, the Magistrate in a case of *public* prosecution was competent to search for and produce all the evidence which he might deem requisite; but in this instance Mr. Samuells overdid the law, defective as it was. He went to the length not only of discovering evidence but also of inventing it. The "Buddinath Roy" spoken of above, is no less a personage than Raja Baidyanath of Calcutta, and he is abused so very grossly because he stated what he knew to be true, and not what the biassed Magistrate had expected from him.

† On this occasion Protap was permitted to be defended by counsel, and, as a matter of fact, was defended by Messrs. Leith and Morton. Mr. Turton being unwell at the time could not hold a brief for him. The prosecution was conducted by Mr. M. A. Bignell, the Superintendent of Legal Affairs for Government.

‡ His pay as acting Magistrate was only Rs. 700 per mensem. He was made *pukka* in September 1838.

charge was that the accused had suppressed his real name and had falsely, deceitfully and wickedly assumed the name of Raja Protap Chand, the deceased zemindar of Burdwan. The trial lasted till the 20th September, in the course of which a large mass of evidence was adduced, and the Magistrate being of opinion that the prosecution had made out a sufficient *prima facie* case committed the accused to the Sessions.* Mr. James Curtis was then the Sessions Judge. The trial had been fixed for the 20th of November, but it actually began on the day previous. The same counsel who had conducted the prosecution and the defence before the Magistrate were also counsel on the same sides in the trial before the Sessions Judge. Monsaram

* While Protap was a denizen of the local jail awaiting his trial before the Sessions Judge of Hooghly, a contemporary thus writes of him and his claims: "His ambitious claims, though certainly by no means established, are not yet absolutely proved to be built upon sand, and after all, in great attempts 'tis glorious e'en to fail!" Again he says, "If the whole of Bengal Proper were to be brought to the roll, we suspect the show of hands would be incontestably in favour of our hero." He thus describes him: "In person the subject of our sketch is of a tall and well-proportioned figure: His countenance is expressive; the black eye has a somewhat pensive and melancholy gaze, the nose is aquiline, the features regular, and his hair is unusually worn long and flowing behind. When well-dressed, our hero certainly possesses something of an air *distingue*, and has no reason at all to be ashamed of his external *tout ensemble*." *Calcutta Monthly Journal*, Part I, 1838: *Hurkura*, pp 97-100. The late Babu Gour Das Bysack who had seen the claimant, Protap, many times and conversed with him, told us that his was a noble and grand appearance, considerably resembling Lord Mayo, the Governor-Genéral. But opinions differ, some declaring that the true Simon Pure, compared with his present representative, was Hyperion to a Satyr, or if there was aught of vague resemblance, that "Esau's hands suit ill with Jacob's voice."

Sircar, whose name is still held in abhorrence for ministerial misconduct, was Dewan* to the Judge. His influence was very great, indeed, even greater than that of the Judge himself. After the preliminaries had been gone through, the charges were read out to the prisoner. They were as follows:—1. That the accused whose real name was Aluk Shah *alias* Krishua Lal Brahmachari, had practised imposition by assuming the name and title of Maharaja Protap Chand, the late zemindar of Burdwan. 2. That under the said false pretence he had cheated Radha Krishna Bysack, Dewan of the Government Treasury, out of his money. 3. That he had formed an unlawful assembly at Kulna on the 2nd May, 1838.

The prisoner pleaded *not guilty*. As he was unwell, he was allowed a chair during the trial of his case.

The Sessions Judge had a mind to try the case with a special jury, but the gentlemen summoned, with the exception of Babu Annada Prosad Banerjee of Telinipara, having for reasons given by them refused to act, he was obliged to call in the aid of the Mahomedan Law Officer of the zillah, Moulvi Syed Ahmed. The first day was taken up in arranging the preliminaries, and the witnesses were commenced to be examined on the 20th November. Evidence was given under four heads:—

* Now called Sheristadar.

1. As to the identity of the prisoner with Maharaja Protap Chand. 2. As to Protap's death. 3. As to the prisoner being Krishna Lal Brahmachari of Goari. 4. About the alleged unlawful assembly at Kulna.

The *onus* was upon the Government to prove that the prisoner was not the man he represented himself to be, and the Government prosecutor, Mr. Bignell, admitted it in so many words. Seventy witnesses were examined on the side of the prosecution, most of whom were not men of much consequence. The most important witnesses who deposed on the question of identity were Mr. Gregory Herklots, the Fiscal of Chinsura, Mr. Henry Thoby Prinsep,* the Government Secretary, Mr. C. Troyer, the Collector, M. John Marshall, the Brevet-Major, and two well-known natives of Calcutta, namely, Babu Dwarkanath Tagore and Babu Radha Krishna Bysack. Mr. James Pattle, a member of the Revenue Board, Mr. John Ross Hutchinson,† a Judge of the Sadar Dewani Adalut, Mr. D. A. Overbeck, the late Dutch Governor of Chinsura, and the Rev. W. J. Deere of Krishnagar had been examined before the Magistrate, but they were not produced before

* The father of the great artist, Mr. Valentine Cameron Prinsep, better known as Val Prinsep, and of the eminent Judge, Sir Henry Thoby Prinsep, late of the Calcutta High Court.

† He was gazetted in 1836, to act as a Judge of the Sadar Dewani Adalut. He died on the 2nd September 1838. The *Calcutta Monthly Journal*, Part I, 1838.

the Judge, although the Magistrate had stated that every witness called for the prosecution in his Court would, as a matter of course, be produced before the Sessions Court. Mr. Overbeck and the Rev. Mr. Deere were, however, examined on the side of the defence. Besides the *spoken* evidence of witnesses, there was also a peculiar kind of evidence, which, though mute, spoke with a hundred tongues, and was of very great importance to the Judge in arriving at the real truth:—It was the life-like portrait of Protap, as painted by the well-known painter, Chinnery, a friend of the Raja. This portrait was brought down from the Burdwan palace, and was kept in a room adjoining the hall in which the trial took place. It was, as the *Harkura* of the 5th September stated, “a rather hostile witness.”

Mr. Herklots said: “My impression is that the prisoner is not Protap, whose features I have no precise recollection of.” Thus, from his own words the evidence of this witness is not worth much, if anything at all. Mr. Prinsep stated: “I should say that the prisoner is not Protap Chand. He appears much taller than Protap Chand.” He also stated that in June or July 1837, he had an interview with the prisoner at his office, when the latter mistook Pattle for him, and could not point out Hutchinson who was present in the room. He, however, admitted that General Allard told him that he had seen the prisoner travelling about Lahore as a *fakir*,

and that he believed him to be what he gave out he really was, namely, a Bengal Raja. On seeing the portrait referred to above, Mr. Prinsep said that there was no resemblance between it and the prisoner. The witness, Mr. Troyer, was Collector of Burdwan from 1808 until about 1817, and was a personal friend of Protap Chand with whom he not unoften played chess. He said that the picture which he saw in the Magistrate's Court was a striking likeness of Protap, and he gave his emphatic denial to the prisoner being Protap by observing that, "If the prisoner were to speak to me till eternity, he would never be able to convince me that he is Protap Chand." However, he admitted that Dr. Halliday, who was the family surgeon of Protap, and who had operated on a large boil on his thigh had told him that the prisoner was the Raja. Mr. Marshall stated: "I believe the prisoner to be the person I used to meet at Chinsura upwards of twenty yeras ago, under the name of 'the young Raja of Burdwan' I must have seen him frequently at Mr. Overbeck's when he was Governor of Chinsura, and that was in the years 1818, 1819 and 1820. The Raja was decidedly tall for a native." Babu Dwarkanath Tagore said that if he knew that the prisoner was the real Raja, he would gladly give him five lakhs of rupees out of his pocket. He also stated that Gopi Mohan Deb, who was one of the two natives whom Protap would visit at their house,

refused to see the prisoner. Babu Radha Krishna Bysack having assisted the prisoner with funds, his evidence might be objected to on the score of interest. But there is no doubt that he was a very respectable man and that his veracity could not be impeached except on very strong grounds which, however, did not exist in the case. He stated that, on being assured by Dr. Halliday of the identity of the prisoner with Protap Chand, he advanced him money; that General Allard also told him that he, the prisoner, was the son of the Burdwan Raja; that relying on the words of the General, Ganga Prosad Ghose also advanced money as did Dr. Jackson; that his own belief was that the prisoner was in reality what he gave himself out to be.

As the evidence for the prosecution stood, it did not satisfactorily prove that the prisoner was not Protap Chand, nor did it conclusively show that he was so. But when this evidence is coupled with the other evidence adduced in the case, as well as the surrounding circumstances, there remains not a shadow of doubt as to his identity with Raja Protap Chand.

The evidence adduced on the side of the defence consisted of the testimony of forty-five witnesses. Most of these witnesses were of the ordinary run, but there were some whose integrity and impartiality could not be questioned. They were Mr. Robert Scott, Surgeon, 37th Madras Native Infantry, Mr.

Daniel Antonio Overbeck,* the last Dutch Governor of Chinsura, Dr. Leotard, the indigo planter, David Hare,† the veteran educationist, and Raja Khetter Mohan Sing of Bishenpur. Dr. Scott said: "I was officiating surgeon at Burdwan from 1815 to the end of 1817. I knew the prisoner as the young Raja. He spoke and wrote English, but not very well. I was very intimate with him. I attended him in 1817, when he had an ulcer in the inside of his right cheek. The mark of the ulcer is still seen in the prisoner's cheek, and the tooth opposite to it is gone. The Raja had lost his tooth when I attended him. The prisoner's face is darker than Protap's, but the body is similar. The Raja used to perspire even in cold weather; the prisoner is troubled with the like complaint. The prisoner is thinner than the young Raja; he, I have no doubt, is Protap Chand." Mr. Overbeck said: "I can recognise the prisoner to be Raja Protap. I have traced the contour of the prisoner's face in the picture, which was shown as the picture of Raja Protap Chand. I have traced all the marks which Protap had on his body, and in my close examination of the prisoner in the presence of the counsel for the prosecution and the defence, he has answered

* Mr. Overbeck survived until the 25th September 1840.

† David Hare came to Bengal in 1800, and died of cholera on 1st June 1842. He was the father of "Native Education," and his whole life was devoted to one generous end, which, as the poet truly says, was

"To bless the Hindu mind with British lore,
And Truth's and Nature's faded lights restore."

every question which I put to him of days past satisfactorily and without any hesitation; consequently, to the best of my belief the prisoner is Raja Protap Chand". Mr. Overbeck went on to state: "Shortly after Protap's alleged death, I heard that he had absconded and was alive. I made enquiries and learnt that at sunset he took a bowl of broth; after which he was taken out in a *palkee* into a tent near the river, surrounded by *kunnets* and attended by his servants. At night, he was suddenly missed. Search was made for him, but to no purpose. Raja Tej Chandra was informed that his son was *glorified*. He ordered his funeral ceremony, and a trunk, filled with shells, was burnt on the pyre, and the ashes were collected and carried to Ambica. The report was, I believe, very general. I have been fifty-two years in India." The *Harkura* of the 2nd January, 1839, stated that on the day (*i.e.* 27th December) on which Mr. Overbeck gave his evidence, the Court compound and the entrance room were quite thronged by the populace; and that the crowd, as the *pseudo* Raja left the Court to get into his *palkee*, thrice shouted *Jaya Dhunnah Raja Protap Chand*. Mr. David Hare said: "I was acquainted with Raja Protap. I saw him six or seven times at his house at Chowringhee. I think the prisoner resembles the Raja Protap Chand very much. I have seen the picture in the room adjoining the Magistrate's Court. I examined him very minutely with it, and

I traced a strong resemblance between the nose and eyes of the prisoner with those in the picture. Then from prisoner's reply to certain questions which I put to him at the jail, I verily believed him to be Raja Protap Chand of Burdwan." At the conclusion of his deposition, Mr. Hare spoke of a peculiarity in the prisoner's nose which he did not find in the nose of any other person, that is, that it perspired. The Bishenpur Raja, Khetter Mohan Sing, said: "The prisoner is certainly and undoubtedly Raja Protap Chand. About three years ago I sheltered him at my house at Bishenpur for three months. The Bankura Magistrate, Mr. Elliott, abused me for succouring the prisoner, whom he termed an impostor and a vagabond, and he also threatened me with imprisonment in the event of my persisting in the same course. I have sold my zamindari to Raja Tej Chandra." Besides the witnesses already examined on the side of the defence as to identity, the prisoner had a mind to examine Poorsun Chand Baboo, Protap's maternal uncle, who all on a sudden presented himself in Court on the 15th January, but his legal advisers having advised him to the contrary, his evidence was not taken. They said that the evidence already adduced was quite sufficient for the purposes of the present trial, and that, as it was not a civil case, stronger evidence as to identity was not at all necessary. In this advice they were not far wrong, for as the evidence stood, it was quite

sufficient to establish the identity of the prisoner with Protap. If, however, stronger evidence was thought necessary, it was quite within the power of the Court to take it. But, as a matter of fact, the best evidence that was available in the case was withheld. The way to test the prisoner truly was to have him seen and examined, of course, so far as Hindu manners and customs would allow, by Protap's wives and aunts, all of whom were alive, and also to examine him by some artificial means which were not wanting in the Rajbati. But neither of these courses was adopted. The Ranis of Protap Chand were naturally very anxious to have a look at the prisoner, but they were not allowed to satisfy their curiosity. Indeed, when it became known that the younger Rani on being convinced, by the anecdotes which he related of his sweet dalliance with his wives in the sleeping chamber, of the identity of the prisoner with Protap Chand, was anxious to see and have him, some of her confidantes were removed from the place and double guard placed on it to prevent all egress and ingress. Protap's paternal aunt, Rani Tota Kumari, who along with the late Dowager Moharani had brought him up from his infancy, was also very anxious to see the prisoner; so was Protap's maternal aunt, Bibi Badami. But none of these ladies was allowed to have their wish gratified. Mr. Curtis, the Judge, on being pressed by the counsel for the defence to give these ladies an opportunity of seeing

and examining the prisoner, observed that he did not think Rani Tota Kumari would ever come to his Court and give evidence in the cause, and that the evidence of Protap's wives would not be legally admissible as wife and husband are, in the eye of law, one and the same. But was Rani Tota Kumari really unwilling to come? We trow not. As for the objection raised by the Judge to the legal admissibility of the evidence of Protap's wives, it could stand good only where the relationship of husband and wife was not disputed; whereas in the present case that was the very thing which was the subject of the inquiry. Thus, the Judge's objection had no force at all; indeed, it involved the logical fallacy of *petitio principii*, or begging the question. At length, to make matters all square and perfect, *subpœnas* were issued to the elder Rani and the aunts of Protap, in reply to which a petition was put in as coming from them saying that being convinced of the fact of Protap's death and of the prisoner being an impostor they did not think that their evidence would be of any avail to the latter, and they accordingly declined to attend. We doubt very much if the ladies aforesaid knew of the *subpœnas* or of the petition purporting to have come from them. But even supposing that the petition did really come from them, was it not incumbent on the Judge, for the ends of justice, more especially when the matter was so earnestly pressed by the defence, to take their evi-

dence and place the whole thing beyond the domain of doubt? The *Harkura* of the 21st May properly remarked: "Suspicious, well or ill-founded matters not, but suspicions *are* afloat throughout Burdwan, Bancoorah, and Murshidabad, that Poran Babu is at the bottom of this attempt on Protap Chand's life, and it is absolutely necessary for the peace and quietness of the country, that the truth or falsehood of the impression should be placed beyond all doubt." When such was the state of the public feeling, and that this was so might be easily inferred from the fact that a Journal which was notoriously hostile to the prisoner all through, gave such emphatic expression to it, was it not necessary, if not for anything else, at least for the good name of British justice against which there were "curses, not loud but deep," to make every possible inquiry into the fact whether the prisoner was really Protap or a mere pretender? But it does not appear that the Judge who tried the case was actuated by any such noble motive, and so far from trying all possible means to get at the truth he in a manner stifled inquiry. But supposing for the sake of argument that there was some difficulty in taking the evidence of the ladies, what difficulty was there in examining Poran Babu who was so well competent to speak to the fact. And is it not very strange that Poran Babu himself, who did not spare means or money to put down the prisoner, if not to polish him off the world, did not of his own accord

come forward to say on oath that he was not the man he represented himself to be but a false pretender. Again, there were some old servants of Tej Chandra and Protap Chand living at the time, and they too were not called to the witness-box. Protap had also some fast friends in this part of the country, conspicuous amongst whom were Sree Nath Babu *alias* Nabob Babu of Singhoor, and Ramdhone Babu of the Telinipara zamindar family. But no attempt would seem to have been made to take their evidence. Both of them were then residing within the jurisdiction of the Judge of Hooghly, and nothing was therefore easier for him to produce them in his Court, if he was so minded. But for some reason or other, neither of them was called to the witness-box. The mere fact that the prisoner could have examined them but did not do so, was not sufficient for the Government that was conducting the prosecution to have dispensed with their evidence. It should not have left any stone unturned to have the matter thoroughly sifted in order to find out the truth. Thus, it is quite clear that the best evidence that was available in the case was kept back without any very good reason being assigned for its non-production. Again, the prisoner had stated that there were in the palace a *Pandan* (betel-holder) and a hand-box so ingeniously made as to baffle the skill of all but the initiated to open them. But neither the *Pandan* nor the hand-box was produced, and as there was nothing to

show that they were not forthcoming, or that there were no such things in the Rajbati, their non-production could only be accounted for on the supposition that had they been produced they would have established the prisoner's statement and gone a long way to proving his identity with Protap Chand. Besides the evidence that was produced and the evidence that was kept back, there were many significant circumstances which served to raise a strong presumption, amounting almost to a moral certainty, that the prisoner was the real man and not a counterfeit. We have already observed that many respectable persons, including some Europeans, advanced him large sums of money. Babu Radha Krishna Bysack,* the Dewan of the Treasury, alone lent him more than a lakh, and the amounts advanced by other gentlemen were also not inconsiderable. Now, while these gentlemen assisted him with the sinews of war, there were several Rajas who, anxious as they were to see him restored to his ancestral Raja, in a manner fought for him. The Raja of Nadia, Nara Hari Chandra, and the Bisheupur Raja, Khetter Mohan, suffered much for him. As for the Raja of Pachete (Panchakote), he actually broke out into open revolt

* Attempts were made on the part of of Poran Babu to induce Babu Radha Krishna to abandon his protegee to his fate. At first, Babu Dwarka Nath Tagore was deputed to him for the purpose, but he failing, Babu Mathura Nath Mullick of Ramkrishnapur was asked to try the same thing. Very strong temptation was laid before Radha Krishna, but he put it aside, and went on assisting the man until he found that the matter was quite hopeless and beyond human power.

and attacked and took possession of a factory of Dr. Cheek; and the matter at last became so very serious that Mr. Halkett, the Magistrate of Bankura, found it necessary to call in the military to put him down. If these very respectable personages, whose position as the recognised nobility of the land dated from very remote antiquity, had entertained any the least doubt as to the identity of the prisoner with their brother Raja of Burdwan, would they have done and suffered so much for him. This circumstance, significant as any circumstance could be, was alone sufficient to show that it was very probable, if not morally certain, that the prisoner was the real Sunon Pure and not a false pretender. Unfortunately for the cause of truth and justice, all these circumstances were ignored by the Judge, nay, not even so much as taken notice of. But not only the gentry and the nobility of the land espoused the cause of the prisoner and did their best to see him restored, the general body of the people took great interest in his welfare. Both while he was on his way to Court and back during the trial at Hooghly, the commoners never failed to set up cries of *Jaya Raja Protap Chand*. This peculiar kind of demonstration, spontaneous as it perfectly was, had its origin in the conviction that the prisoner was the real Raja Protap Chand and not a false pretender.* And this conviction

* Some old people still believe that the ostensible was the real Raja. Indeed, his case stands on a much better footing than that of

would seem not to have been confined to the men, but extended to the women, who wished in their hearts to see him restored to the *Guddee* at Burdwan. It is said that while on his way to Kulna wherever he made a halt, the old matrons of the place would come to the river side, and standing at a respectful distance, feelingly exclaim, "Go child, go to thy home, sweet home, after suffering the pain of long exile, and reign in peace in thy own Raj!" This general out-burst of love and affection in favour of the prisoner afforded a very strong moral proof in support of the truth of his claim, but such was the spirit of the times that the voice of the people was given the go-by and the voice of the devil prevailed. Then, again, the prisoner had described some papers and documents bearing his signature, which used to be kept under lock and key in the Rajbati. It was not said that there were no such papers or documents existing, and yet none of them was produced to show whether the signature therein tallied with the signature of the prisoner or not. But this was a small matter compared with the other circumstances we have mentioned before,—circumstances which, to use the words of the greatest of modern poets, "lead directly to the door of truth." One word more about the portrait referred to above, and we

Perkin Warbeck who is believed by some great historians as the veritable Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York, even though Warbeck himself confessed his imposture on the scaffold. But opinions differ—*quot homines, tat sententiæ.*

shall have done with this part of the case. To repeat the words of the *Harkura* it was "a rather hostile witness." True it is, Mr. Prinsep, the Government Secretary, said that there was no resemblance between it and the prisoner; but this statement, it is to be observed, was not made after due comparison, else he would have agreed with Mr. Overbeck and Mr. Hare who took great pains in making the comparison, and gave it out as the result of their close examination that there was a strong resemblance between the two. In fact, the portrait was a damaging piece of evidence, and spoke, as we have already said, with a hundred tongues testifying to the truth of the prisoner's claim.

On the second head, the officials of the Rajbati, who were quite under the control of Poran Babu, were examined. Of course, they gave a story in support of the prosecution, but their evidence was not worth much, if anything. Though they were very large in number, the weight of their testimony was very small. Surely, evidence is not to be *numbered* but to be *weighed*. But the credulous Judge, overlooking this most important rule of the law of evidence, preferred *number* to *weight*, and held upon the evidence of those witnesses that Protap's death had been established beyond doubt. There were, however, very strong circumstances which went dead against such a finding, and yet, strange to say, they were not even taken notice of. Protap Chand

had two wives living, and there was also his father present at Kulna at the time. None of them did him the last funeral service; but the purohit, Ghasiram (since dead), according to the witnesses, gave "the lighted torch to his face." This was quite contrary not only to well-established practice but also to Hindoo Shastras; and if Maharaja Tej Chandra had been fully convinced of the death of his son he would not have allowed such a thing to be done, supposing that it was done at all. Our impression is that what Mr. Overbeck stated in his deposition before the Judge was the true state of affairs. A few days after the alleged death of Protap, there was a rumour, that "dispenser of popular favour," that he had fled from the burning ground and was still alive. This report, as Mr. Overbeck said, was very general, and spread like wild fire from one end of the country to the other. It cannot be denied that history furnishes only very few instances of such report spreading and gaining ground in cases of real death. This report, so far from fading away in course of time, received considerable strength from the ever-increasing number of its believers. In fact, it was seldom, if ever, disbelieved by anybody. Tej Chandra, when he was asked to take a son in adoption, long hesitated to take any such course, evidently in the belief that his son was not dead but might return home. It was after very strong inducements, which were brought to bear upon him by his

favourite wives, Kamul Kumari and Basanta Kumari, that he at last consented to adopt Poran Babu's infant son. If Tej Chandra had not been enfeebled by old age nor had been under the sweet but none the less coercive control of his young wives, this adoption would most probably have never taken place. Again, if Protap's death had really taken place, or had been placed beyond all reasonable doubt, his *shrad* ceremony would have been performed in the usual way. His wives had the preferential right to it, and failing them, his father was entitled to perform it. But in this case, although both the wife and the father were living and were fully competent to perform the ceremony, strange to say, neither of them did it but that this all important duty, upon which rest the future happiness and misery of a Hindoo in the world to come, was performed by the purohit, Ghasiram. This circumstance, coupled with the other circumstances we have taken notice of before, gives rise to a host of doubts and suspicions as to the truth of Protap's death. In fact, his alleged demise at Kulna is a mystery which has never been cleared up and never will be. The probability is that, by some unusual method, of which he was a master, he feigned death, and thus effected his escape, as he said, from the funeral pile at Kulna. Such feigning of death is not improbable in itself, and is quite possible, as is proved by the well-known case

of Colonel Townsend, related by Dr. George Cheyne.*

As to the cause of his having adopted such unusual means of escape, and abandoned not only kith and kin but such large estates, the prisoner stated that in an unguarded moment he had committed a great sin,† which lay like a mill-stone upon his conscience, and that, being advised by pandits and astrologers that it could only be expiated by death, or by remaining *incognito* for fourteen years, he struck in with the latter condition and effected his flight from Kulna,‡ In this way he had travelled over many countries, from Chittagong on the one side to the Punjab on the other. He stayed in Kashmir for six years, where he became acquainted with General Allard.§ At Delhi he was recognised by Mr. Ramsay. After the stated term of

* See T. H. Tanner's *Præticæ of Medicine*, vol I.

† It was not generally known what the nature of that great sin was, but the rumour was that he had slipped into one of his step-mothers, most probably Basanta Kumari. Oedipus's offence was certainly of a graver character, but it was purely accidental, whereas Protap's offence, though not equally grave, had no such palliating circumstance.

‡ While admitting that certain ceremonies were performed, he declared that his tomb was a cenotoph, that his illness and death were feigned, that the officiating priest (since defunct) who pretended to give him the *extreme unction*, was in league with him in the deceit, and aided him in his escape in the darkness of the night.

§ Allard was one of the foreign Generals in the service of Maharaja Ranjit Sing. He was in high favour with his royal master, who was himself a first-rate general. Ranjit's other foreign Generals were Ventura, Avitabile and Court. Allard assured Baba Rudra Krishna Bysack and others that he had seen Protap Chand travelling about Lahore as a fakir.

fourteen years had thus expired, he returned to Bengal, and was arrested at Bankura by Mr. Elliott. It was at that time that the invaluable Diary which he had regularly kept during his travels was lost. He stated all these facts in Court; and then concluded by saying that if he had really died, he would certainly have made some arrangements for his vast estates, either by a Will or by a deed of gift, which there was ample time for making, as he had lain sick for several days.

On the third head, several witnesses were examined. As most of them had been bought over by Poran Babu, who, to use a native phrase, spent money like water, they supported the prosecution. But there were a few others against whose testimony nothing could be said. Of these witnesses the most respectable and important was the Rev. William James Deere of Krishnagar. He had known Krishna Lal Brahmachari for a pretty long time, and his evidence on the point was, therefore, entitled to very great weight. He said: "I cannot say decidedly whether the prisoner is Krishna Lal or not. Krishna's nose pointed *upwards*, and the prisoner's *downwards*. I heard in 1821 bazar reports that Protap Chand left his country to go to Runjit Sing to form a conspiracy against the British Government." At the conclusion of his evidence he stated that "to the best of my recollection the prisoner is not Krishna Lal, the latter was much fairer."

After a careful consideration of the whole evidence and the surrounding circumstances the Mahomedan Law Officer gave his opinion that the prisoner's identity with Krishna Lal Brahmachari was not established. The Judge seems to have agreed with him in the main, but he observed, "circumstances considered, I look upon the proofs as being on the whole satisfactory." However, he went on to say that "the matter of the identity was of no importance, seeing that the death and cremation of Raja Protap Chand had been firmly established." Strange, very strange indeed, that a Judge who had received proper legal training and had long been administering justice in the name of Great Britain, where justice of all others is so very highly revered, should have considered the very point which was the principal issue in the case as a "matter of no importance."

As regards the fourth and last count no evidence had been taken by the Magistrate, and the Judge, too, expressed an opinion that the matter of the unlawful assembly was not material. And yet, as if to make the record complete in every respect, some evidence was taken. Nazir Assad Ali, and Daroga Mohaboollah were the principal witnesses. They stated many things thereby rendering their testimony open to the charge of *proving too much*. As for the chowkidars of Kulna, they flatly denied that there was any unlawful assembly. The Judge,

however, held that the charge was substantially established, though he admitted that there was "no proof of an affray, or actual breach of the peace." After the arguments had been read out, for the counsel on both sides did not argue the case *orally* but submitted *written* arguments, the Judge and the Mahomedan Law Officer differed in opinion, the latter holding that it was not proved who the prisoner really was, and so he could not be punished for having assumed the name of Protap Chaud, and the former holding the other way. According to the law then in force, in case of difference the Judge was not competent to pass sentence, so he referred the matter to the Nizamat Adalut, stating, at the same time, that all the charges except one had been brought home to the prisoner, and recommending that he might be sentenced to imprisonment at least for three years, if not five.*

On the reference of the Sessions Judge being placed before the Nizamat Judges, Messrs. W. Braddon and C. Tucker, so late as the 13th June, they found themselves in a difficulty from which they saw no means of escape. They could not convict the prisoner on the ground of his having caused an unlawful assembly inasmuch as the Chief Justice, Sir Edward Ryan,† in the case brought by Mr. Shaw

* The proceedings of the Sessions Court were sent up to the Sadar Nizamat under a letter dated the 23rd January 1839.

† Ryan was Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court for seven years before he became its Chief Justice in 1833.

against the Magistrate, Mr. Ogilvie, had given it as his opinion that "there was no disturbance whatever when the affray took place, nor had there been any for a considerable time before the events took place." While the Judges were in this pitiable plight, the Kazi attached to the Court came to their rescue. He said that the accused might be punished for having, for his own benefit, assumed and used the name of another. Thus fortified with the *fatwa** of this oracle of the Mahomedan law, they ordered the defendant, Aluk Shah *alias* Protap Chand *alias* Krishna Lal Brahmachari, to be fined Rs. 1,000 for having falsely and fraudulently assumed the name of the late Raja Protap Chand, and, in default, to undergo imprisonment for six months. As regards the other charges they entirely acquitted him thereof.

After the order had been passed, the aggrieved party presented a petition for retrial, mainly on the ground that the petitioner had not had anything like a fair, complete and satisfactory trial regarding the question of identity; and that further evidence as to his identity with Protap Chand, which circumstances beyond his control had prevented him from adducing:

* The *fatwa* ran in these words or to the following effect: "False personation for one's own advantage is an offence under the Mahomedan law; and although no specific punishment is laid down for such offence, it is discretionary with the Hakim to award what punishment he thinks fit to inflict, with a view to restrain the offender." The very wording of the *fatwa* gives ample ground for thinking that such false personation was no offence under the Mahomedan law, for an offence without any punishment being prescribed for its commission would, in reality, be no offence at all.

at the time of trial, might be taken and final order made. This petition was, as a matter of course, heard by the same Judges, Messrs. Braddon and Tucker, on the 1st July, when it was rejected, the Judges being of opinion that the said evidence not having been produced before, could not be taken now, more especially as the death and cremation of Raja Protap Chand had been established by satisfactory evidence. After this order was passed, another petition was presented to the same Court on the 18th July, asking the Court to cite the authority on which the *fatwa* of the Law Officer, declaring that false personation for one's own advantage was an offence under the Mahomedan law, was based; and also to mention the Circular Order or Regulation under which the proceedings in the case were referred to the Sadar Nizamat by the Judge of Hooghly, and the petitioner fined by the Nizamat Adalat. Couched as it was in improper language, this petition shared the same fate with the last. The Judges (Messrs. Braddon and Tucker) in rejecting it on the 19th July said that the proceedings in the case having been finally closed by the rejection of the petition for retrial, which, by the bye, did not contain the said objection on the score of mistake in law, they could not be reopened; and they concluded by observing "that as they had judicially pronounced the petitioner not to be the Maharajah Protap Chand, they could not in future receive any

petition or application from him under that name and title." This order gave a death-blow to the cause of the claimant, inasmuch as it closed the doors of the Civil Courts against him at once and for ever. But, though he was thus cut off from what may have been really his own, the general public sympathised with him, and condemned, in very strong terms, the decisions of the Company's Judges. Thus defeated, the claimant gave up all hopes of recovering his property. He continued to reside in Calcutta until the breaking out of the First Sikh war, when the vigilant eye of Government being again fixed upon him, he fled to the French Settlement of Chandernagore. After remaining there for some years, he passed over to Serampore, which had not then come under British rule. Here he stayed for nearly six years, and such was the force of his moral and intellectual powers, that he was regarded as one far above ordinary humanity. In fact, the women in the neighbourhood looked upon him as a divinity, and identified him with Gauranga Deva.* In this way he set himself up for a religious reformer, and many eagerly took *mantras* from him, acknowledging him as their *guru*, or spiritual guide. It is said that now-a-days his followers number more than the Puritan sect of Brahmos. It is not clear what the precise nature of his faith was, but it appears that

* The well-known founder of Vaisnavism in Bengal. He flourished in the first half of the sixteenth century.

from having been a Hindoo, he afterwards adopted Buddhism with some modifications.

Eight or ten months before his death, he had returned to Calcutta and stationed himself at the suburban village of Baranagore.* The *Harkura* of the day stated that the *pseudo*-Raja tried to lord it over the zemindar of that place; but the latter soon collected a picked band of clubmen and made his Rajaship decamp. The late Babu Gour Das Bysack, who knew the man well, informed us that during the Sepoy Mutiny he was confined for some time in Fort William, and that after he was released he lived in complete obscurity,

“The world forgetting, by the world forgot.”

He was sociable in his manners and found much pleasure in talking and conversing† with the gentlemen of the village. He died unknown and unwept towards the close of 1857 or in the beginning of 1858. Although, owing to circumstances over which he had no control, he failed to receive justice at the hands of the most enlightened Government in the

* Baranagore (more correctly Earahanagore) had its name from the fact of the Company's servants having been in the habit of slaying *boars* and hogs there. The famous Tyrolean Jesuit, Tiefenthaler, says that this place was famous for its *baftah* cloth; and Price, in his *Observations*, observes that the cloth manufactories there determined Charnock to choose Calcutta as the site for his new settlement. Hunter's *Statistical Account of Bengal*, Vol I. p. 379, note. From its having been the resort of bad women, Baranagore was called by the early English travellers the “Paphos of Calcutta.”

† Besides Hindustani and Bengali, our hero was conversant with the Persian and understood a little of English.

world, there is no doubt that he was a very extraordinary man and has left a name which generations after generations "will not willingly let die."

CHAPTER XI.

HOOGHLY DURING THE LAST TWENTY YEARS OF THE COMPANY'S RULE.

The appropriation of the surplus town-duties to purposes of public improvement had produced its desired effect, and both Hooghly and Chinsura looked much better than before. In a report dated March, 1838,* the Magistrate stated that these towns presented "an appearance of neatness and regularity not often observable in the towns of the Lower Provinces." But, while rejoicing at his success, he did not forget that such "neatness and regularity" could not last long unless they were kept up by proper supervision. Accordingly, we find that there were six conservancy-carts, with sweepers, costing Rs. 80 a month and two ameens on Rs. 10 a month to look after the repairs of the roads and to prevent

* In the same year a terrible famine swept over the North-West Provinces. Of all the distressed districts Cawnpur felt it most intensely, as appears from the Statistical Report of that District by Mr. (afterwards Sir) Robert Montgomery in 1890.

encroachments. And not only were the towns thus sedulously cared for, the villages also had due share of attention paid to them. The Dhaniakhali Road,* which passes through a thickly-populated and fertile region, was commenced in 1838. A peculiar interest attaches to this road, as it was mainly constructed with funds raised by public subscription, and as the supervision of the expenditure of these funds was entrusted to a committee of six well-known zemindars† of the District, thereby laying the foundation-stone of the Local Self-Government edifice, which took nearly half a century in building. To crown all these beneficial movements, the commercial Residencies‡ were abolished, thereby opening up private enterprise to the District.

By this time the judicial machinery had been placed within easy reach of the people. The Moon-siffie system§ had fully developed in the District,

* This road, which commences at Khudnia, is, after forming the western portion of the southern boundary of the town, crossed by the East Indian Railway line at a short distance from the Hooghly Railway station, whence it runs westward as far as Tarakeswar, the most noted place of Hindu pilgrimage in all Bengal.

† Paran Chandra Roy of Makhalpore, Chhaku Ram Singh of Bhastara, Roy Radhagobindo Singh of Hatishála *alias* Boshó, Jagomohan Seal of Chinsura, Kali Kinkar Palit of Amarpore, and last, though not least, Joy Kissen Mookerjee of Uttarpara. The road, important as it was, would appear to have been finished by the end of the year 1839.

‡ The rules for the conduct of the commercial Residents and Agents were embodied in Regulation XXXI of 1793, which having been partially repealed by two subsequent Regulations was at last wholly repealed by Act VIII of 1868.

§ The posts of Moon-siffs were created in 1793, and those of Sudder Amins in 1803. This state of things continued up to 1836, when by

and in 1839* we find no less than nine Moonsiffs dispensing justice according to law, equity and good conscience. Besides the Moonsiffs, there were the Sudder Amin and the Principal Sudder Amin, who were stationed at the head quarters. All these officers, together with the Zillah Judge as their chief, formed the entire body of the civil judiciary of the District.†

Act VIII the posts of Principal Sudder Amins were created. In 1868 the law relating to native Judges was again amended and consolidated by Act XVI of that year. The principal changes made by this Act were that, the office of Sudder Amin was abolished; the designation of "Subordinate Judge" was substituted for that of "Principal Sudder Amin," and the jurisdiction of Moonsiffs was extended to all original suits cognizable by the Civil Courts, of which the subject-matter does not exceed in amount or value one thousand rupees. Act XVI of 1868 was amended by Act II of 1870, and both these Acts were repealed by the Bengal Civil Courts Act (VI of 1871) which, with certain modifications made by a subsequent Act, is substantially the law relating to the District and Subordinate Civil Courts in Bengal.

The Moonsiffs were at first paid by commission. Afterwards, on the abolition of such fees by act V of 1835, their pay was fixed at Rs. 100 rising to Rs. 150; but as they could ill afford to maintain their position with such small pay, most of them swerved from the path of rectitude, and supplied their wants by unfair means. Baboo Hurro Chandra Ghose, however, was an honorable exception. He was distinguished no less for his ability than for his integrity, and, in recognition of both was afterwards appointed Sudder Amin of Hooghly. Babu Protap Chandra Ghose, the late popular Registrar of Calcutta, is his son.

* These Moonsiffs were stationed at Hooghly, Nauserai, Mohmat, Baidyabati, Rajapore, Dwarhatta, Kheerpoy, Bili and Uluberia. A change has since taken place in the locale, the present Moonsiff centres being at Serampore, Howrah, Uluberia, Amta and Jehanabad, besides the Sudder station of Hooghly. The number of suits having increased enormously, there has been a corresponding increase in the number of Moonsiffs, *viz.*, from nine to fifteen.

† In the East India Registers of 1813 to 1830 appear the names of officers holding the appointment of Register (Registrar) of Zillah Hooghly. As this appointment disappears about the same time as that of Magistrate and Deputy Collector appears, probably the functions and duties of the two offices were somewhat similar. Among

The District, it is true, had made considerable progress in many respects, but in the matter of securing safety to person and property it had advanced only a little. Mr. Samuells had tried hard to improve the village police, which certainly needed reform, but he could effect very little in that direction. The fact was that he was much in advance of the age in which he lived, and that most of his projects did not reach the stage of action. But there was one very important measure, the seed of which he sowed with some success:—This was the initiation of the Municipal system, properly so-called. Under his auspices a meeting was held by the inhabitants of Hooghly, Chinsura and Chandernagore in June 1840,* at which the first Municipal Committee was elected.† Notwithstanding considerable opposition on the part of the common people, who, not understanding its real object, took it to be a preliminary to fresh taxation, the committee lingered on, and, after its term was over, was re-elected in February, 1842. Its first act after its re-election was the most reasonable and sensible one, of asking the Magistrate to move Government to define more clearly its duties, powers and responsibilities. The

* Registers of Hooghly, we find the names of Mr. David C. Smyth and Mr. (afterwards Sir Robert) Barlow. (See Dr. Crawford's *Medical Gazetteer of the Hooghly District*, Chap. XIV.)

* In the month following, the *Bengali Gazette* was first printed and published at Serampore by Dr. Marshman.

† Vide Mr. Toynbee's *Administration*, pp. 125-26.

outcome of this request was the passing of Act X of 1842—the first purely Municipal law in Bengal—“to make better provision for purposes connected with the public health and convenience.” The local Municipality is now a well-accomplished fact, and surely it speaks much in favour of the sagacity and foresight of Mr. Samuells, who had laid its foundations under such adverse circumstances.

While Mr. Samuells was busy planning his measures of reform, the Collector, Mr. C. Troyer, got into a scrape in consequence of the wickedness of the stamp-vendors. Under the system which was then in force, the vendors on furnishing securities were allowed to take stamps on credit. This practice had been in operation for a long time, and all previous Collectors appeared to think that it was working well. But the evil, which had been gradually increasing in magnitude, at last became too big for concealment, and it was found that the stamp-vendors had fallen into arrears amounting to no less than Rs. 21,197. The sale of their securities being found quite insufficient to cover the deficit, the Collector was ordered to make good the balance. But this officer showed very clearly that, having been in the District only for a short time, he could not justly be held liable for misdeeds which must have been in operation from before his time. Being impressed with the force and reasonableness of his explanation, and not seeing its way to distributing

the deficit among the several Collectors, the Government ordered it to be "written off." While the Collectorate was thus put out of joint by the rascality of the stamp-vendors, the country at large was terrorised by the ruffianism of the dacoits. Taking advantage of the powerlessness and corruptibility of the Police, these dangerous characters infested the land and kept all good citizens in constant dread and alarm. The Grand Trunk Road* between Hooghly and Magra was so unsafe, that the Magistrate found it necessary to send a European head-constable with four *burkundazes* to patrol it. Not to speak of natives, who were maltreated in every possible way, even Europeans were attacked with impunity. About this time Mr. Samuells left the District, and his place was taken by Mr. S. Wauchope. † But the ravages of the dacoits being daily on the increase, the latter officer, who had the reputation of being a first class detective, was appointed Dacoity Commissioner, when Mr. G. P.

* This road commences from Sulkea and runs towards the North-West Provinces, *via* Burdwan. It was proceeded with gradually, its history beginning as far back as 1804. In 1829 it appears to have been first used by troops in preference to the old Benares Road, and the Military authorities speak of it as "the new route." This royal road of India—the *smooth bowling green* of Sir Charles Wood—earned for Lord William Bentinck the singularly inappropriate sobriquet of *William the Conqueror*, in consequence of his having metalled it with *kunkur*. Dr. Russell compares it to "a great white straight ribbon." The road cost, in round numbers, fifty lacs of rupees.

† Mr. Wauchope again became Magistrate of Hooghly in 1848, and governed it till 1852, when Mr. Charles Thome Buckland took his place.

Leycester* was put in charge of the Magistracy. During the incumbency† of this officer, the Deputy Governor of Bengal visited Hooghly. As such gubernatorial visits were "like angels' visits, few and far between," there was an unusually large gathering, and the town presented a grand spectacle. Mr. Leycester remained in the District for nearly three years. The soldiers stationed in the Chinsura Barrack having become a positive nuisance to the inhabitants the able Secretary of the Municipality, Baboo Ishan Chandra Banerjee, addressed a feeling letter to him in March 1842, and he took prompt steps to remove it. Indeed he was always mindful of the interest and well-being of the people whom Government had placed under his charge.

The duties of the Magistrate having by this time considerably increased, it became absolutely necessary to relieve him of a portion of the burden. Accordingly, Howrah was cut out from Hooghly, and formed into a separate Magistracy. The Government orders sanctioning this separation bear date the 27th February, 1843.‡

* He was, if my information is right, the son of Mr. W. Leycester, who was the Chief Judge of the Sudder Dewani Adalat till the 1st April 1831.

† In January 1841.

‡ In this year Lord Ellenborough created the post of Deputy Magistrate, as Lord Bentinck had created the post of Deputy Collector ten years before. Baboo Roma Prosad Roy, who afterwards so much distinguished himself, was the first Deputy Collector of Hooghly, and he took part in the memorable meeting of 1840, at which the first Municipal Committee was appointed. In 1842 he

Mr. William Taylor* was appointed Joint Magistrate of the newly-formed Zillah, with jurisdiction over Howrah and Sulkea. He was allowed Rs. 250 for establishment, and he began holding his Court in the building which in later days was used by the Magistrate of the 24-Pergunnahs. Mr. Taylor was succeeded by Mr. G. F. Cockburn† in 1845, in which year certain villages appertaining to Baidyabati thana were transferred to Howrah. Some further additions have since been made, and, as it now stands, Howrah is well worthy of being called a zillah, but its separation from Hooghly is only partial, its fiscal duties having all along been performed by the Collector of the parent District.

David Money's is an honoured name in the District. He succeeded Mr. E. Sterling in the Collectorate, and presided over it for a considerable period. In securing lasting popularity he is equally fortunate with the father of the Hooghly Collectors, Mr. W. H. Belli, and the memory of both these deserving officers is still cherished with the most heart-felt respect. While Mr. Money was in

was put in charge of the District during the Collector's illness, the *first* instance probably of a native Deputy Collector being in such charge.

* This gentleman rose to be a Divisional Commissioner, in which capacity he rendered yeoman's service during the dark days of the Sepoy Mutiny.

† This officer rose to be a District Judge, in which capacity he gained a good name in Sylhet. Like Scævola in ancient times and Hardinge in modern, he was one-handed.

charge of the Collectorate, Mr. F. Whitworth Russell was the Civil and Sessions Judge. The latter officer, too, remained in the District for a long time and by his ability and integrity earned a good name, which is not likely to be forgotten, the more so as it is kept in constant remembrance by his fine portrait,* which graces the Judge's office. He had a very able Dewan in the person of Krishna Chandra Chowdhury, who for his long meritorious services was, while enjoying pension, honoured with the then very rare, now very common, title of *Roy Bahadur*, and was also invested with a rich *khilat*, or robe of honour. The influence of the Dewan over his master was very great, indeed, but he always took great care not to abuse it. True it is, he did not know English, but he possessed strong common sense and had such a fine judicial head that the Judge was only too glad to avail himself of his valuable assistance in deciding intricate points of law and fact.

Mr. Money and Mr. Russell did not, however, gain such enviable popularity by merely performing the functions of their respective offices with ability and integrity ; they always took great interest in the mental welfare of people. They were warm

* From the inscription at its foot it appears that he was Judge of Hooghly from 15th March 1841 to 5th January 1853. Dr. Crawford, however, states that Mr. Russell was Judge from 1842 to 1851. (See *Medical Gazetteer*, chap. XIV.)

advocates of native education, and encouraged the cause of science and literature in the best possible way they could. In 1845, Mr. James Esdaile made some experiments in medical mesmerism in their presence, and, as the attempts proved pretty successful, and met their approval, the experiments were repeated in subsequent years.* Mr. Money used also to award gold medals to the best students of the Hooghly College. In 1853, as well as in 1854, the illustrious Dwarka Nath Mitter, whose life was one continued series of brilliant intellectual triumphs, carried off his gold medal, thereby giving rise to that good feeling which culminated when both of them were in the Sudder Dewani Adalat, the patron presiding on the bench, the protege practising at the bar. Mr. Money's tenure of office in the Sudder Court was, however, not long, as he was obliged through ill-health to retire before the happy union of the Supreme and the Sudder Courts took place. It is stated by Dwarka Nath's friend and biographer, Baboo Denobandhoo Sandyal, that on the day on which Mr. Money sat for the last time on the Sudder Bench, he took his young favourite into his private chamber, and prefigured in glowing colours the glorious future which awaited him, if God only

* As long as the learned Doctor remained in India, the cause of mesmerism fared well. But with his return to England in 1851, it fell through, in consequence of, as Dr. Buddun Chunder Chowdhury says, "a majority of medical men giving preference to chloroform in operative surgery."

spared his life. He then grasped his hands and shook them warmly.*

Mr. Wauchope had well begun his career as Dacoity Commissioner, but it was no easy thing to repress in a short time gang-robbery which had assumed such a gigantic shape. Certain it is, Darogahs had been stationed in all the principal villages from the time of Lord Cornwallis, but in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, they abused their power and authority, and so far from trying to check crime, they tacitly encouraged it by their culpable connivance. As for the village watch, instead of being a safeguard to the people, it was the chief source of their molestation.† The evil began to be felt more keenly as time rolled on, and before half a dozen years had elapsed, a very important provision was made for the greater efficiency of administration in the Mofussil. This was the establishment of subdivisions in 1845, a year memorable for the addition of Serampore to British India.‡ Mr. (afterwards

* Life of Mr. Justice Dwarka Nath Mitter, page 54.

† Mr William Brodie, the fifth Judge-Magistrate, in his report on the crime in the Hooghly District in 1814, thus condemns the village watchmen: "The greater number of robberies and dacoities are done by the village watchmen, who select houses from which the males are absent. No nightly watch is kept up by them, and few robberies occur in this district unless actively aided or secretly abetted by them." What was true in 1814 was with some little modifications also true in 1843. The ostensible protectors were in many cases the real destroyers.

‡ At this time Sir Henry Hardinge—the one-handed hero—was Governor-General of India. He won his laurels by demolishing the formidable Sikh army. A great warrior as he was, he was not the less

Sir, Louis Stewart Jackson* was stationed at Dwarhatta as sub-divisional officer of the present Serampore sub-division ; and Baboo Issur Chunder Ghosal,† who is so well known as a model Deputy Magistrate, was sent to Kheerpoy to take charge of the sub-division, subsequently called Jehanabad,‡ and now Arambagh.

Simultaneously with the ravages made by the dacoits, did the elements carry on their warfare with great fury. In June, 1842, there was a cyclone, in which among other damages, a fleet of Government arsenal boats was wrecked. The country had barely recovered from the shock thus given to it when it was overtaken in August, 1844, by a serious flood which, in violence and the amount of injury done by it, was only second to the memorable flood of 1823. The river Damudar burst its banks and bunds in several places, and the villages all round were inundated. The waters even reached Chinsura and Hooghly and filled the ditches and drains of those

an encourager of popular education. During his rule a hundred-and-one Bengali schools, bearing his proud name, were planted in different parts of the country. Lord Hardinge returned to England in 1848, after having been raised to the Peerage.

* This distinguished officer was afterwards elevated to the High Court bench which he adorned for many years. He then retired on pension and died only lately.

† This gentleman belonged to the renowned Ghosal family of Calcutta, which must not, however, be confounded with the Bhukailas House.

‡ In later times Baboo Issur Chunder Mitter distinguished himself at Jehanabad. He has since retired from Government service, and has been enjoying his well-earned pension for some time past.

towns. This flood was also followed by drought, and their joint agency caused much distress and mortality. It seemed that inundation had become chronic in the country, as there was another flood in September, 1845. It was described by one officer as "frightful," and the damages done by it were very great. Like the one in the year preceding, it too was followed by drought, and not a drop of rain fell between the end of August and the second week of October. Distress and increase of crime were anticipated in the cold weather of 1846; and the people had already begun to flock to Calcutta and Serampore for work. It does not, however, appear that any relief measures were adopted to meet these repeated calamities. The probability is that the consequences, serious as they were, were of a merely temporary character, and that the country soon recovered its usual condition.

There was comparative calm in Hooghly for some time, when all on a sudden a terrible storm was raised. It commenced brewing in Calcutta, but its greatest fury was felt in this place. Raja Radha Kanta Deva, the metropolitan head of the Hindoo community, had established a market near his dwelling house at Shova Bazar, and it proved a successful concern. Baboo Baikantha Nath Moonshee* of Taki

* Baboo Baikantha Nath was the very reverse of Raja Radha Kanta, *luttialism* and litigation being his favourite pursuits. Some years after, he was implicated in a murder case, and on coming to know that a warrant of arrest had been issued against him, he fled

became jealous of the Raja's success, and with a view to thwarting him, established, in the beginning of 1848, a rival market in the vicinity.* As the success of a market depends upon the number of persons who resort to it for sale of their garden produce, each party tried to secure as many such people as they could for their respective markets. In this way several skirmishes were fought between the men of these rival zemindars on the banks of the Bali Khal, by which Mofussil vendors come down to Calcutta. But these skirmishes were only preliminaries to the great fight that was to decide which of the two markets should stand. At last, the fatal day of the 11th July dawned. Both parties had mustered strong at Monohurpur, a small village situated on the Bali Khal between Bali and Jonai. The Raja was assisted by Rutton Roy of Narail, while the Moonshee Baboos were assisted by Rutton's first cousin and enemy, Gurudas Roy. The zemindars themselves were not present on the spot, but were represented by their respective agents, who took the actual lead in the whole affair. The combatants

into the French Settlement at Chandernagore. There he lived like a prince, and such was the power of his purse, that the English authorities failed to bring him to book. He died a voluntary exile in 1262 B. S.

* The joint-editors of the *Sabdakalpadruma*, in a short life of the Raja which they published in 1859, however, give a different account of the cause of the affray. They say that it originated "from the rival claims of two parties (one of which was the Moonshee and the other a perfect stranger to the Raja) to a certain share in the farming of the same village."

were almost equally matched, and their number was a legion. In fact, the combat looked like a little bit of a battle. RASHU PAL headed the Raja's party, while RAM DOYAL SINGH led the Taki party. Both these leaders were remarkable for their giant "make and might," and their heavy clubs dealt death at every stroke. The fight commenced at five o'clock in the morning, and lasted for four mortal hours. Victory at first seemed to lean to the side of the Moonshees, but when in the thickest of the battle RAM DOYAL was lanced by a sturdy spearman, the tide was turned on the Raja's side. Seeing their stalwart chief laid low on the ground, the Taki party took to their heels, leaving the Raja's people victorious on the field.

As the affray, or *Bakandanga* as it was called in the court slang of the day, was of a very aggravated character, and as two persons were killed and a great many wounded, the matter before long came to the notice of the constituted authorities, and BAKA-ULLAH,* the Darogah of Chanditala, was directed to hold a local enquiry. Baikantha Nath Moonshee tried hard to implicate Radhakanta, and, strange to say, he succeeded in doing so to a certain extent, although, as a matter of fact, the Raja was perfectly innocent. The latter was hauled up before the Joint Magistrate of Serampore on a charge of aiding and

* His son, Moulve Fuzlul Karim, is now a Deputy Magistrate and Deputy Collector.

abetting the affray. As he was the recognised head of the Hindoo community in Calcutta, almost all big folk came to Serampore in the hope of assisting their chief. Mr. Gordon Young* was then in charge of the Serampore sub-division. He was a sensible man and was well worthy of succeeding Mr. L. S. Jackson in the post he held. At the outset he acted very properly, and after some witnesses had been examined, remarked that a strong case of *alibi* had been established, and that it was not necessary for the Raja to attend again until officially required. But before a fortnight elapsed, a change came over his mind, and the Raja was ordered to attend and was treated very unbecomingly. Although the offence was bailable by law, and bail to any amount was forthcoming, yet he was sent to *hajut*. It is true, the Raja was not consigned to the ordinary cell of an undertrial prisoner,—he was lodged in a room standing upon the compound of the Joint Magistrate's own quarters,—but this little favour, which was shown in consideration of his high rank, did not in any way take off from the grave indignity to which he was subjected by being sent to *hajut*. No time was lost in moving the Nizam Adalat, and the Raja, as had been expected, was ordered to be enlarged on bail.† This interference with his order

* Mr. Young's *Hand-book of Law* possessed at one time considerable celebrity.

† Sir Robert Barlow in passing the order animadverted strongly on the arbitrary proceedings of the Joint Magistrate and on the abuse of discretionary power in the hands of inexperienced executive officers.

naturally irritated the Joint Magistrate, and he, believing that a *prima facie* case had been made out against the Raja, sent him up for trial before the Sessions Court at Hooghly. The two regular Sessions Judges having declined to hold the trial, Mr. Robert Torrens of the Civil Service, was appointed Special Sessions Judge to try the case. Almost all the well-known barristers of Calcutta were engaged on the one side or the other. The trial commenced on the 19th October and occupied thirty-seven days. The learned Judge after considering all the evidence and circumstances came to the conclusion that the charge had no foundation in truth and that the Raja had been unnecessarily dragged into Court. He was accordingly acquitted.* This honourable acquittal of the Raja, which was pronounced on the 26th November, was a source of great satisfaction to his friends and relatives. Not to speak of the natives generally, who congratulated him on the occasion, even high European officials did not fail to express their pleasure at the successful termination of his case.

* On hearing this very just decision of the Judge, the Raja who had, throughout the whole trial, preserved a dignity of demeanour which only conscious, and I had almost said heroic, innocence and firm faith in a just Providence inspire, rose up from his seat and complimented him by quoting a couplet from the celebrated Persian poet, Sadi, in praise of King Nushirwan, whose blessed name still survives for justice, though ages have passed since he died.

No less a personage than Sir Herbert Maddock, K. T., the then Deputy Governor of Bengal, in a letter dated the 14th January, 1849, thus wrote to him:—"I wish you would call upon me to-morrow or the next day. You have had my sympathy in your late misfortune, and I wish to congratulate you on the honourable acquittal which you have received."*

The temporary excitement which had been created in the town by the trial of Raja Radha Kanta subsided with his honourable acquittal; but the chronic anxiety in which the people of the District had been living in consequence of the repeated ravages of the dacoits was not a whit diminished. Mr. Wauchope had entered upon his career as Dacoity Commissioner in right good earnest, but his

* Radha Kanta was born in 1783; made Raja Bahadur in 1837; and was created K. C. S. I. in 1866. In the year following, he died a saint's death in holy Brindaban. Bholanath Chandra in his "*Travels of a Hindu*," while noticing the notabilities who were present at the Grand Durbar which was held by Lord Canning at Agra on the 20th November, 1858, thus describes Raja Radha Kanta:—"There, too, was one who commanded the general respect of his countrymen for his venerableness, his rectitude, and his remarkable consistency. In youth his habits must have been temperate, and to his temperance does he owe his singularly green old age. Long has he passed his eightieth year, but he still retains the vigour of his body and mind. Toiling for half a century in the cause of his nation's education and well-being, and bequeathing a literary legacy for distant unborn generations, he had retired to a quiet haven to spend the evening of his life. But his sovereign had reserved honours for him, and quitting his seclusion, his peace, and his prayers, he had once more come before the world to receive those honours. It is long that Bengal had ceased to have her national historic character, and the name next to that of Ram Mohun Roy, that shall adorn our historic page, is that of the author of the *Sabda Kulpa Droom*." Vol. II pp. 406-7.

first attempts, as we have already observed, had not proved successful. In fact, the dacoits, emboldened by his failures to capture them, continued their depredations with greater freedom and fearlessness. By this time sub-divisions had been established, and able executive officers placed in charge of them. Having got such powerful allies to back him, Mr. Wauchope renewed his attempts with the aid of the *goindahs*, but as the dacoits carried on a sort of guerilla warfare, he still found it very difficult to capture them. In this way some years passed without his being able to do anything. Indeed, the effect would seem to have been in the other way. In no year down to 1849 did the number of dacoities committed in the district come up to one hundred, but after that year the number went on increasing, till, in 1852, it rose to one hundred and twenty-eight. This terrible state of things, which would have damped the spirit of an ordinary man, only served to brace the energies of Mr. Wauchope whose long experience enabled him to direct them in the right course.*

* About this time Gour Vediya gained great notoriety by his daring deeds. He lived on the other side of the river, within the jurisdiction of the Naihati thana. Though inferior to the great robber-chief, Radha, in prowess and influence, Gour was not an ordinary mortal. Many wonderful feats were performed by him, and well-to-do people stood so much in dread of him that they used to make him yearly allowance according to their respective means. It was he who committed dacoity in the house of Madhab Chandra Datta, which was almost within a stone's throw of the Military cantonments at Chinsura, and carried off considerable property both in cash and jewellery. It was said that even while he had to pass his nights at

He found out the forest retreats of the dacoits and attacked them in their solitary strongholds. There were many passages-at-arms between the two parties, but at length the peace-seekers prevailed over the peace-breakers. Many of the dacoits were captured and their gangs broken up, and the country was restored to peace which it had lost for so many years. This hero of a hundred fights got his laurels, and his name deservedly became a household word in the land. His vigilance induced the famous author of the "*Meghanathbatha Kabya*" to nickname him "Sam Watch-up," and the system of espionage adopted by him earned for him the proud title of "The Indian Fouche."*

While the District was suffering from the continued depredations of the dacoits, the cause of native education received a rude shock from the death of Mr. Drinkwater Bethune in 1850. The same fell disease which had carried off David Hare in 1842

the Police station under strict surveillance, he more than once managed to commit dacoities without even giving rise to the least suspicion of his having done so. His widow died only lately, and his son Bechu is still alive, but he is a quiet sort of man, and earns his livelihood by the sweat of his brow.

* After he had restored peace to the District, Mr. Wauchope was appointed Additional Judge of East Burdwan, whence he was transferred to Hooghly in the same capacity about the middle of 1865. This office he held for several years, till he was made Police Commissioner of Calcutta. Even after retirement from Indian service he was not allowed to enjoy his well-earned rest. He was called upon by the same Government to take charge of the London police, and he responded to the royal summons with commendable alacrity. His usual success attended him in his own country and he has left a name in England as well as in India which generations after generations will hold in grateful remembrance.

also swept away this next best friend of the natives. Mr. Bethune was not only President of the Council of Education,* but also Law Member of the Supreme Council of India, and in his dual capacity he has rendered immense service to the cause both of Education and of Legislation. His successor in the Supreme Council effected many reforms towards the material prosperity of the country. The Telegraph was introduced in 1852,† and was followed by the universal use of half-anna postage stamps.

The Charter of the Honourable East India Company was renewed for the last time in 1853,‡

* The General Committee of Public Instruction was appointed on the 17th July, 1823. On 7th March, 1835, Lord Bentinck in Council recorded a resolution directing the promotion of European science and literature by means of English education *alone*. This resolution having caused great dissatisfaction, his successor, Lord Auckland, recorded a minute on the 29th November 1839, adopting English and the vernacular as media of instruction till a series of good vernacular books were prepared. The Education Despatch of 1853, which was promulgated in India on 18th July 1854, settled this vexed question, by declaring that "our object is to extend European knowledge throughout all classes of people," and that "this object must be effected by means of the English language in the higher branches of instruction, and by that of the vernacular languages of India to the great mass of the people." The Calcutta University and the Grant-in-Aid Schools in Bengal were the results of this famous Despatch, which has immortalised Sir Charles Wood, the then Secretary of State for India. This University was established under Act II of 1857, when William Gordon Young was the Director of Public Instruction in Bengal, and Hodgson Pratt and Henry Woodrow, Inspectors of Schools. The first Chancellor was Lord Canning, and the first Vice-Chancellor was Sir James William Colville, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

† Act XXXIV for regulating the establishment and management of Electric Telegraphs in India was, however, not passed until late in the year 1854.

‡ The *Hindoo Patriot* was started by the talented Harish Chandra Mookerjee in 1853, and, after his death in 1861, was conducted by that self-made man, the illustrious Kristo Das Pal. It is now in the

not for a definite period, but only for so long as Parliament should see fit. On this occasion the number of Directors was reduced, and their patronage as regards appointments to the Civil Service was taken away, to make room for the principle of selection by competitive examination. Bengal was placed under a Lieutenant-Governor, and Mr. Halliday,* (afterwards Sir Frederick James Halliday), was appointed its first Lieutenant-Governor, in 1854.

This year, which saw so many good things done, also witnessed a sight the like to which had never been witnessed before. This was the opening of the East Indian Railway.† The trial trip was made in July, and the line was regularly opened up to Hooghly on the 19th August, and, two months later, extended to Burdwan. But as every human good has its attendant evil, the facilities which the railroad afforded for travel, brought down desperate characters from the North-West. Some of these ruffians soon made their appearance in this part of Bengal, and in December, a horrible murder was committed. Availing himself of the Christmas holidays, Baboo Madhab Chandra Datta of Chinsura came down from Calcutta on the evening of the

editorial charge of Rai Rajkumar Sarbadhikari, who has converted it into a daily paper,—a change which has not been attended with beneficial results.

* Mr. Halliday was for some time Magistrate of Hooghly. His son was for some time a member of the Board of Revenue.

† The first enactment relating to Railways in India is Act XVII of 1854.

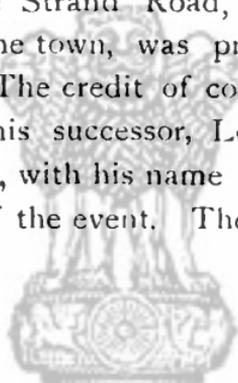
24th December. While he was driving home in a hackney carriage, accompanied by his son-in-law, Sreenath Mullick, some up-country people, probably five in number, waylaid him near Jiban Pal's splendid garden. His son-in-law, who was on the coach-box, jumped down and ran for his life into a neighbouring paddy field. He was not pursued, as the object of the way-layers was to take away the life of old Madhab Datta. The latter, being left alone in the carriage, defended himself for some time by holding fast the bars, but was at length obliged to give in, when he was shot dead like a dog. As the murdered man was not on good terms with his son, Gurudas, suspicion pointed to him. But no other circumstances cropping up at the time to confirm the suspicion, the matter was allowed to drop, though not until some rich offerings had been made in the Police pagoda. In the Mutiny year, however, two up-country roughs came down to Gurudas's house at Calcutta, and, not finding his Jemadar, Gonesh Singh, there, went up direct to him, and demanded the balance of the money which Gonesh Singh had, as they stated agreed to pay them on condition of their killing Madhab Datta, which they had done. Gurudas, thus taken quite unawares, made them over to the Police on the ground of their having made false statements. While in the custody of the Police, they made a clean breast of the whole matter, and Mr. Wauchope, who was then at the

head of the Police, believing their statements to be true, arrested Gurudas in his house at Calcutta, and bringing him up to Hooghly, lodged him in the local jail.

Some time after the arrest of Gurudas, the trial of the two ruffians who had indirectly accused him took place at Hooghly. They could not have said, and, as a matter of fact, did not say, that he had engaged them to murder his father; on the contrary, they stated that they did not know him, but had been hired by Gonesh Singh to do what they had done. As Gonesh Singh was then not to be found, the link which might have been supplied by him was wanting to connect Gurudas with the offence. He was, accordingly, allowed to go at large. As for the two assassins, they were convicted on their own confession, and were hanged on the spot where they had perpetrated the "foul deed."

In the beginning of 1855 signs of discontent showed themselves in Santhalia, which before long assumed a threatening aspect. Its semi-barbarous population rose up in rebellion under their chiefs, who hoped to conquer India with antiquated bows and arrows. But the destructive fire of British guns soon made them repent of their folly. At one time the danger was felt to be very great; and the people expected something like a renewal of the Marhatta raids. At last, the storm passed over, and was followed as usual by a calm, but this calm was only

short-lived, and was ere long disturbed by a terrible hurricane which swept over the whole of the Gangetic valley. Need we say that we refer to the Sepoy Mutiny. At this critical period Mr. F. R. Cockerell was the Magistrate of Hooghly. While the whole country was trembling at the sounds of war, he was engaged in a work of public utility which has rendered his name famous in the annals of Hooghly. The Strand Road, which is so great an acquisition to the town, was projected and commenced by him. The credit of completing it, however, belongs to his successor, Lord Ulick Browne, who set up a stone, with his name engraved on it, in commemoration of the event. The stone bears the date 1858.



सत्यमेव जयते

CHAPTER XII.

MOHAMED MOHSIN AND THE HOOGHLY IMAMBARA.

When the great Murshid Kuli Khan was Governor of Bengal, a Persian merchant, named Agha Mohamed Mutahar, who had been domiciled in India, came down with his family to settle in Hooghly. He was a favourite of the Mogul Emperor, Aurungzebe, and had received some *jaghirs* at his hands. Whatever might have been the reason which led to his removal from Hindoostan Proper, there is no doubt that he did a very wise act in quitting the Imperial capital, which was soon after thrown into the utmost confusion. After coming to Hooghly, he purchased the site of the present Imambara, and built thereon an ordinary one-storeyed house, which he dedicated to God, calling it "Nazargah Hossein." This was in A. D. 1717. Afterwards, his son-in-law, Mirza Saleh-uddin Mohammed Khan *alias* Mirza Saleh, extended the building, in 1148 Hegira (1735 A.D.), by adding a portion which he termed "Tazea Khana." It was upon the ruins of this ordinary, looking house that the present grand edifice was, erected.

Agha Mutahar, as we have already said, was a family man. But though he bore an excellent

character, he failed to secure that first of human blessings—a quiet and happy home. Mutahar's wife, whose temper was akin to that of Xantippe, rendered his abode too hot for him, and he would have left it, but for his only daughter,* Manno Jan Khanam, to whom he was most tenderly attached. Domestic happiness lengthens life, while family dissensions cut it short. This was painfully exemplified in the case of Agha Mutahar, who fell a victim to carking cares before he was well stricken in years.† He left a will by which he made his beloved daughter, Manno Jan, the sole heiress to his property. The bereaved widow, aggrieved as she was at the conduct of her husband, did not take any step to question the validity of the will, but showed her displeasure in a way which was quite in consonance with the teachings of her religion. Agha Mutahar had a nephew (sister's son) of the name of Haji Faizulla. This person, like this uncle, was a merchant, and had acquired much money; but having suffered considerable loss, he was now in impoverished circumstances. To him Mutahar's widow pledged her love, and the nephew and the aunt were soon united in holy wedlock, and the good Haji‡ came to reside with his newly-married wife at the house of the late-

* "The sweet Ada of his house and heart."

† Agha Mutahar died in 1144 Hegira.

‡ A Mussalman, who in a religious point of view makes a pilgrimage (*haj*) to the holy *Caaba*, the Sanctum Sanctorum of the Mohamedans, becomes a *Haji*. So also does a Greek who makes a pilgrimage to

Agha Mutahar, and be it said to the credit of both, they enjoyed comfort and lived happy days. The fruit of this union was Mohamed Mohsin, who was born in the year of grace, 1732 * A. D.

Mannoo Jan† was quite young when Mohamed Mohsin saw the light of heaven ; but it was not long before she was married to Mirza Saleh-uddin, of whom we have already spoken. This gentleman had come from Ispahan, and as he had great parts was employed by Nabob Ali Verdi Khan Mohabut Jung, to negotiate a treaty with the Marhattas, which he succeeded in concluding to the advantage of his Government. For this successful diplomacy he was recommended to the Emperor of Delhi, who, in recognition of his valuable services, bestowed a *khilat* and *jaghir* on him.‡ He was also appointed

Jerusalem acquire the same appellation. The Armenians term such a person a *Mukisse* which is in reality a Turkish word.

The Greek historian Diodorus, in his description of the coast of the Red Sea, evidently refers to the famous temple at Mecca, whose superior sanctity was, as he says, revered by *all* the Arabians. The fine rich veil or curtain, which is annually renewed by the Sultan of Turkey, was first presented by a pious king of the Hamirites, who reigned 700 years before the time of Mahomet.—Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, Vol. III, page 128.

Haji Faizulla died in 1157 Hegira.

* Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General of India, was also born in the same year. He attained a ripe old age, dying in 1818.

† The author of the *Hooghly Imambara*, a historical romance in Bengali, makes Mohamed Mohsin and Mannoo Jan children of the same father, Agha Mutahar ; but this is falsified by Mohsin's deed of endowment, in which the endower describes himself as the son of Haji Faizulla. The fair writer also errs in making Mohsin the elder of the two.

‡ In the famous Fifth Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, this gentleman's name appears among the

Fouzdar of Hooghly on a pay of Rs. 1,500 a month; and it was during his incumbency that he married the beautiful Mannoo Jan Khanum. The marriage, as had been expected, proved a very felicitous one, husband and wife being well worthy of each other.* Their lives passed smoothly along. Being in affluent circumstances, they spent a good deal in charity, thereby endearing themselves to the people in the neighbourhood. The illustrious Mirza, who, by the by, was a good Persian poet, was rich in the possession of many noble acts—"that best portion of a good man's life"—but all of them have perished save and except one which still bears his proud name:—It is the flourishing Hat which is held twice a week on the grounds near the Imambara buildings.

As for Mohamed Mohsin, he grew up under the fostering care of his mother, and, when he was in a position to receive education, the same Shirazi

principal of the Zamindars who held estates near the Calcutta Zemindary of the East India Company; and in regard to his estate it states as follows:—"A considerable dismemberment by Sunrud from the original Zemindarry called Jessor *alias* Yusefpoor, took place in favour of a Mussalman landholder, Sellah u'dien Mahomed Khan, including under the head of Saidpur, one-fourth of that pergunnah, with the like proportion nearly of the ancient painam, or territorial jurisdiction of Yusefpoor." (See *Fifth Report*, p. 382, published in 1812).

* The author of the *Hooghly Imambara*, whom I have already referred to, however, represents Saleh-uddin as a dissipated young man of loose morals, and makes him leave Mannoo Jan, when she was barely twenty years of age, and marry Roshunara, daughter of Nawab Shere Jung. But this is only sacrificing truth at the altar of imagination, the real fact being that Saleh-uddin was an excellent man and proved a very loving husband.

who had been Mannoo Jan's tutor, began to teach him. The boy made rapid progress, and learned a good deal of Persian and Arabic. He became also a first-rate penman, and his handwriting, which is so carefully preserved in the Hooghly College Library, is highly praised by the Maulvies. But he was not only a good hand at caligraphy, he was also a good hand at the most attractive of the fine arts that "hath charms to soothe the savage breast." He could play very well on the *sitara*,* having taken his lessons regularly for some years from one Bholanath, who was one of the best musicians of the day. In the midst of all these improvements of the mind, he did not, however, forget to take sufficient care of his body. In fact, not a day passed without his devoting some time to bodily exercises, and the result was that he became very robust and strong. But he was not a mere athlete; he could dexterously play with the sword. He was also a good pedestrian, and seemed to find great pleasure in walking long distances. Mohamed Mohsin's morals were of the purest; he had taken the vow of celibacy and there was nothing in his conduct or character which could raise the slightest suspicion of his having ever made a slip. He professed to be a religious man, and a religious man he certainly was. In fact, he was more an ascetic than a man of the world.

* The *sitara*, which is a *four-stringed* instrument, is said to owe its origin to the fine poet. Amir Khusru.

His tutor, the old experienced Shirazi, having instilled into him a desire to see men and manners as they appear in different countries, Mohamed Mohsin set out on travel, now that the property of his affectionate sister, Mannoo Jan, was being looked after by her able husband. His travels had a wide range, and included even distant Arabia. He thus acquired a valuable stock of knowledge, which could not have been got together by the mere study of books. He, it would seem, had a mind to pass his days in this way; but the melancholy death of Saleh-uddin, in 1167 Hegira (1754 A. D.), brought about a change in the programme. Mannoo Jan, it is true, was an intelligent lady, and was competent to look after her own affairs. But still she was a woman with all the disadvantages attending the life of a rich widow, and she plainly saw that she could not get on without the helping hand of her brother, whom she knew to be a very able and honest man. Accordingly, she sent words to him, earnestly insisting upon his immediate return to India. Mohsin, reluctant as he was to engage any more in worldly affairs, could not refuse the request of his beloved sister, and returned to Hooghly, accompanied by two chosen friends, Rajab Ali Khan and Saker Ali Khan.* His return was the occasion of great rejoicings amongst the inhabitants of the place. As

* These two gentlemen were not strangers to each other. Indeed, the latter was the son-in-law of the former.

for Mannoo Jan, her joy knew no bounds. She had long cherished the desire to make Mohamed Mohsni heir to her vast estate, and she now rejoiced to see her wish on the eve of fulfilment. True and faithful wife as she was, the very thought of taking a second husband appeared to her unholy, so that when Nabab Khan Jehan Khan, the most influential nobleman of the place, made a proposal of marriage, she rejected it with contempt. Thus, she lived like a Hindoo widow, much to the wonder and admiration of the people. She died in 1210 B.S., corresponding to 1803 A. D.

As Mannoo Jan left no nearer heir, the whole of her property was inherited by her brother. The estate, as we have already stated, was large enough. Kismat Syedpur, in the Jessore District, alone yielded a net income of Rs. 45,000 * and there were some other properties† besides. Mohsin entered

* Dr. R. F. Thompson, in his Report of the Hooghly District for 1869, stated that the Jessore Estate yielded Rs. 1,65,000, of which Rs. 95,000 was Government revenue, leaving a net income of Rs. 69,000. This substantially agrees with the information which the present Matwali has been good enough to give me. He says that the income of the Waqf mahals in 1810 was about Rs. 69,000 and the interest on 10 lacs of rupees was Rs 40,000 making a total of rupees 1,09,000. From 1879, however, he continues to state, the net income from the mahals in Jessore has been about Rs. 64,135, and that from properties situated in Hooghly, 24-Perparas and elsewhere, Rs. 3,780, besides interest on about 13 lacs of rupees.

† Of these properties the lakharaj mahal of Sobnal is the most valuable, in respect of which Turab Ali, the younger son of Shaker Ali Khan, set up a tenure, alleged to have been created in his favour by Mohamed Mohsin in 1213 B. S. He also set up a tenure in respect of Basandia, Chingotia and Magora, the most valuable mahals of the Trust Estate. But both the grants were pronounced by the Sudder Court to be forgeries, and the two suits brought by him were dismissed.

into possession, but a rival presented himself in the person of one Bandah Ali,* who laid his claim on the ground of his being the foster-son of Mannoo Jan. On his claim being treated as fictitious, he sought the assistance of the Court, but the suit was dismissed, and Mohamed Mohsin was declared the sole legal heir of the deceased. This vast acquisition, which would have turned the head of an ordinary mortal, wrought no change in the mind of Mohamed Mohsin. He remained what he was—an intensely pious man—only that he was now possessed of means of satisfying the longings of his heart by active benevolence. His charity had a wide range. In fact, he lived only for God and man, and did his best to serve the one and improve the other. His deed of endowment by which he left

* The old dilapidated building opposite the south gate of the Collector's compound, was the dwelling-house of Bāndāh Ali.

† The present Matwali has favoured me with an English translation of his deed, which is in Persian. As this document is of considerable importance we deem it advisable to insert the translation in full. It runs thus:—"I, Haji Mahomed Mohsin, son of Haji Faizulla, son of Agha Fuzlullh, inhabitant of Bundar Hooghly, in the full possession of all my senses and faculties, with my own free will and accord, do make the following correct and legal declarations: That the Zemindary of Pergana Kismat Syedpur, &c., appendant to Zilla Jessore and Pergana Sobnal, also appendant to the said Zilla and one house situated in Hooghly (known and distinguished as Imambarah), and Imambazar and Hat (market) also situated in Hooghly, and all the goods and chattels appertaining to the Imambarah agreeably to a separate list;—the whole of these properties have devolved on me by inheritance, and the proprietary possession of which I have enjoyed up to the present time; as I have no children, nor grand-children, nor other relations, who would become my legal heirs; and as I have all wish and desire to keep up and continue the usages, and charitable expenditures (Murasum-o-ukhrajat-i-husneh) of the Fateha, &c., of

his whole property *in pios usus*, shows what excellent stuff he was made of. As he had no heir or kinsman to inherit his property under the law, he made God and man his heirs. He, however, did not forget his two staunch friends, Rajab Ali and Saker Ali, who

Hazrat (on whom be blessings and rewards) which have been the established practise of this family, I therefore hereby give purely for the sake of God the whole of the above property with all its rights, immunities and privileges, whole and entire, little or much, in it, with it, or from it, and whatever (by way of appendage) might arise from it, relate or belong to it, as a permanent appropriation for the following expenditures; and have hereby appointed Rajah Ali Khan, son of Sheik Mohamed Sadiq, and Saker Ali Khan, son of Ahmud Khan, who have been tried and approved by me as possessing understanding, knowledge, religion and probity, Matwalis (trustees or superintendents) of the said Waqf or Appropriation, which I have given in trust to the above two individuals; that aiding and assisting each other, they might consult, advise, and agree together in the joint management of the business of the said Appropriation in manner following—that the aforesaid Matwalis after paying Government revenues shall divide the remaining produce of the Mahals aforesaid into nine shares, of which three shares they shall disburse in the observance of the Fateha of Hazarat Syed-i-Kayanat (Head of Creation) the last of the Prophets, and of the sinless Imams (on all of whom be the blessings and peace of God), and in the expenditures of the Ushra of Mohurrum-ul-huram (ten days of the sacred Mohurium) and all other blessed days of feasts and festivals; and in the rebuilding of the Imambara and cemetery. Two shares, the Matwalis, in equal portion, shall appropriate to themselves for their own expenses; and four shares shall be disbursed in the payment of the establishment and of those whose names are inserted in the separate list signed and sealed by me. In regard to the daily expenses, monthly stipends of the stipendiaries, respectable men, peadas, and other persons, who at this present moment stand appointed, the Matwalis aforesaid, after me, have full power to retain abolish or discharge them, as it may appear to them most fit and expedient. I have publicly committed the Appropriation to the charge of the two above-named individuals. In the event of one of the Matwalis finding himself unable to conduct the business of the Appropriation, he may appoint any one whom he may think most fit and proper as Matwali to act in his behalf. For the above reasons this document is given in writing, this the 9th day of Baisack in the year of Higre 1221, corresponding to the Bengal year 1213, that whenever it be required it may prove a legal deed.”

had accompanied him from abroad, but appointed them supervisors of the endowed estate. The deed, after giving some account of the founder and of the property which formed the subject of the endowment, went on to state that the proceeds were to be divided into nine equal shares, of which three shares were to be applied to the celebration of the Mohurrum* and other festivals and feasts and the repairs of the Imambara buildings, and the cemetery† attached thereto; two to be allotted as remuneration of the two Matwalis appointed to supervise the affairs of

* This is the greatest festival among the Mahomedans, so called from its taking place in the month of that name, which is the first month of the Mahomedan year. It is annually observed in commemoration of the martyrdom of Hosein, the younger of the two sons of Mahomet's son-in-law, Ali. Hosein, having resolved to prosecute his claim to the Caliphate against Yezid, the tyrant of Damascus, was proceeding towards the banks of the Euphrates, accompanied by a handful of followers. After the little party had reached the plain of Kurbala, they were encompassed by a body of 5,000 horse, whom Obeidollah, the Governor of Cufa, had sent to waylay them. An engagement ensued, in which the Fatamites were defeated, and their leader Hosein slain with three-and-thirty strokes of lances and swords. This tragic occurrence took place on the 10th October 680, A. D. In commemoration of this sad event is celebrated the Mohurrum which lasts for ten days, and is marked by the religious frenzy of sorrow and indignation. (For a fine graphic description of this festival, See F. B. Bradby-Birt's *Chota Nagpore*, pp. 52, 53.)

† This cemetery is situated in a garden adjoining the Hat. In the midst of the garden, which is partly a parterre of flowers and partly an orchard, stands a *makburá*, or walled enclosure, containing six tombs. Beneath five of these tombs lie the remains of Mohamed Mohsin, Mirza Sale-uddin, Mannoo Jan Khanum, Agha Matahar and Haji Faizulla, but as to the one which is in the extreme west, it is not known to whom it belongs. Outside the *makburá* there are about a dozen other tombs interspersed over the whole garden. The *makburá* is lighted every night, and passages from the Koran are read morning and evening for the spiritual benefit of the souls of the dead. One, and all the tombs are, like those in the *Khusru Bagh* at Allahabad, on the model of a Mahomedan *Tazca*.

the endowment; and the remaining four to be devoted to the expenses of the establishment and the pensions and allowances.* The Matwalis were given ample powers, and it was also provided that, in the event of either of them finding himself unable

* How the proceeds of the trust property are at present appropriated, will appear from the following information, which the present Matwali has been pleased to furnish me with. After stating that the net income from the Mahals in Jessore has been about Rs. 64,135, he goes on to say, that of this amount "the Matwali receives one-ninth share as his own portion; three-ninths share of it is devoted to the religious purposes of the Imambara; another one-ninth share called the College share, under the control of Government, is for education; and out of the remaining four-ninths share Rs. 10,653-12 is for the secular establishment of the Imambara and Committee; Rs. 8,090-12-5 for the Imambara Hospital; Rs. 1,600 for the main Imambara Dispensary; Rs. 640-1-9 for local Agency; Rs. 61 for pension, and the remainder in the hand of Government for secular purposes."

As regards the interest on accumulations he states, that "out of it such amount is set apart as is necessary to provide appropriate buildings, including the charges of rebuilding or repairing the Imambara and other religious houses, and the remainder is considered as Trust Fund, the interest on which, along with the one-ninth College share, lapsed pension, &c., is appropriated to the purposes of education." He adds that "the Chittagong, the Dacca, the Rishahi, and the Hooghly Madrasas, as also the foraghat Branch Madrasa and the Mahomedan Hostel at Hooghly are supported from the Mohsin Funds. Besides, one half, and in some instances two thirds, of the schooling fees of almost all the Mahomedan boys, along with the pay of the Persian teachers, are contributed from the same funds, in the Schools and Colleges all over Bengal. There are also Mohsin scholarships for the encouragement of Mahomedan education." Expenses for religious, charitable, and other purposes, and costs of the secular establishment of the Imambara are thus given in detail:

"The expenses of Mohurrum are about Rs. 7,000, and those of Rumzan Rs. 4,006 exclusive of the permanent religious, cuisine and Toshakhana establishments which are Rs. 8,190,639 and 1407 respectively. The establishment of the Guards Department costs Rs. 2,088, that of the Imambara Office Rs. 2,448, that of the Committee Rs. 624, and that of the Mooly Imambara, excluding repairs, Rs. 1,200. The other expenses, including the performance of other religious ceremonies, Thursday *majlises*, daily lights, maintenances, mosaffers, students, &c., exceed Rs. 1,000; so that there is no surplus left."

to conduct the business of the endowment, he might appoint a fit and competent person to act in his place. This deed of endowment, the beneficial effects of which are still enjoyed by the people, was executed on the 9th Baisack 1213 B. S., corresponding to the 20th April 1806 A. D., some six years before the death of the endower.*

Learned man as he was, Mohamed Mohsin was not slow in providing means for the education of others. He established a school where Persian and Arabic were taught by two well-known Moonshees. It was, of course, a free institution, and was open both to Hindoos and Mahomedons. After his death the two Matwalis appointed by him trod in his steps in this respect. They established what was called the Imambara School, having Mr. Francis Tydd as its head. This gentleman was a good educationist, and the school flourished under his care and management. It continued in this state till it was amalgamated with the Hooghly College in 1836 A. D.

One of the blessings of charitable and religious habits is healthy longevity, and this blessing Mohamed Mohsin enjoyed to a considerable degree. He died, as I have already stated, on the 29th November, 1812, † after attaining his eightieth year.

* Mohsin died on the 16th Aughran, 1219 B. S., corresponding to the 29th November, 1812 A. D.

† Lord Canning was born on the 14th December 1812, and died on the 17th June 1862, having left India in March preceding.

He enjoyed good health, and retained his faculties unimpaired till his last moments. His remains were interred in the Imambara garden, close to the tombs of Agha Mutahar, Haji Faizulla, Mannoo Jan and Mirza Saleh-uddin. His resting place is of the commonest kind possible, no monument or tablet marking the sacred spot, but it is well cared for, and honours are done to it in the orthodox Mahomedan fashion. As for his name, it has become a household word in this part of Bengal, and is kept in grateful remembrance by the thousands benefited by his bounty and generosity.

The two Matwalis, Rajab Ali and Shaker Ali, had taken the management of the trust property even in the lifetime of Mahomed Mohsin. After his death they continued to act in harmonious concert for some months, when Shaker Ali* died, and his son, Baker Ali, took his place in the matter of the management of the endowment, on the allegation of an appointment from him. Some time after, Rajab Ali on his part appointed his son, Wasik Al *alias* Mogul Jan,† to act on his behalf. These two

* Shaker Ali died on the 28th Baisack, 1220 B. S., corresponding to the 9th May, 1813.

† Mogul Jan's house stood on the site on which Dr. Buddun Chandra Chowdhury has erected his picturesque dwelling-place. From Mogul Jan's widow, Nurunnissa *alias* Nishani Begum, his house was purchased by Gopi Kristo Gossain, of Serampore, in 1264 B. S., and from Gopi Kristo it passed into the hands of the Doctor. The Doctor's new residence has proved an apple of discord, and the matter has become so very serious that even the Lieutenant Governor, Sir Charles Elliott, deemed it necessary to advert to it in the speech

persons, the sons of the first Matwalis, did not, however, agree together, and mismanagement followed as a necessary consequence. The Board of Revenue interfered under the provisions of Regulation XIX of 1810, and on the 16th November, 1815, Nawab Ali Akbar Khan Bahadur was appointed Visitor to report abuses, and check the Matwalis in the management of the trust. The Local Agents at Hooghly were at the same time asked to make a full and searching inquiry into the affairs of the Īmambara, in concert with Ali Akbar Khan. The result of this enquiry, as embodied in a very able and elaborate report of the senior Local Agent, Mr. D. C. Smyth, disclosed a misappropriation of trust funds to the extent of nearly Rs. 15,000. Pending the enquiry, Rajab Ali had died, leaving his son, Wasik Ali, his sole heir. After considering the report of Mr. Smyth and the statements of the Collector of Jessore, the Board was convinced that the Matwalis had been guilty of various acts of abuse and misfeasance; and, accordingly, on the 12th September 1817, it held that Baker Ali was unfit to hold the office of Matwali, and as regards Rajab Ali's heir, Wasik Ali, it held that he was also unfit to succeed to the vacant Matwaliship, as his participation in abuses was apparent, and, besides, the office was not hereditary. The Government, in

which he delivered on the occasion of the opening of the local Town Hall.

confirming these orders, on the 15th September, 1818, constituted itself one of the Matwalis, and another Matwali was appointed to administer the religious functions in the person of Nabob Ali Akbar Khan.* The management of the Syedpur estate was entrusted to the Collector of Jessore, under whose supervision the finances of the institution improved considerably.†

Of the two dismissed Matwalis, Baker Ali went mad; and Wasik Ali, having failed to secure his restoration by amicable means, instituted a civil suit in the Court of the District Judge to recover the office of co-curator of the endowment, with the emoluments annexed, in 1826. His case was this:—
 “In Baisak 1220 (April 1813), my father, Rajab Ali, acting on the power given him in the deed, appointed me Matwali in his place. I and Baker Ali (who had been similarly appointed by his father) thus became joint Matwalis; notwithstanding this, the Board has displaced us from our offices and appointed Akbar Ali Khan in our place. The deed of trust executed by the Haji is not merely a deed of endowment, but includes also a testament. My removal contravened the general law, and, in particular, section 2, Regulation V of 1799, whereby an executor

* In the interval, from the end of 1816, the estates had been under the charge of the Collector, and the other affairs of the trust under the direction of Ali Akbar as Visitor.

† The Syedpur Trust Estate was managed by Government till 1823, when it was let in putni.

is only removable on breach of trust judicially proved. Baker Ali has become insane, therefore I alone sue for my own right. I estimate the cause of action in the sum of 7,199 Sicca Rupees, being one-ninth of the net income of the estates."

The defence of Government was this :—Rajab Ali and Baker Ali, the last Matwalis, had on enquiry been found guilty of abuses. Under the provisions of Regulation XIX of 1810, the Board had assumed the control of the trust, and displaced them, and with the sanction of Government, Akbar Ali Khan had been appointed sole Matwali.

On the 12th September, 1826, the case came on for hearing before Mr. D. C. Smyth, the District Judge.* He was of opinion that the plaintiff had failed to show that he had been legally appointed to, and held, the office from which he alleged his removal. He had not been displaced,—but the former Matwalis had been guilty of abuses, in which plaintiff too had participated, and hence he had been passed over, in the selection of a successor. Then, referring to the *Sudder Dewani* case of Mahomed Sadik *versus* the sons of Mahabbat Ali, he observed that the principles of Mahomedan law laid down therein showed that the Ruling Power might remove

* Mr. Smyth was afterwards promoted to the *Sudder Dewani Adalat*, having been appointed an officiating Judge thereof on the 23rd June, 1834. He afterwards reverted to his permanent post in Hooghly, remaining in it till 1836.

a misfeasing trustee of an endowment, and appoint a fit person, where no competent heir of the endower existed. The Board had done this under section 3, Regulation XIX of 1810, and the claim of the plaintiff was untenable. The learned Judge considered section 2, Regulation V of 1799, relied upon by the plaintiff, as quite irrelevant. The essence of a testament was irrevocability: now, the endower could not, had he wished it, have recalled the Appropriation made in 1213, and since plaintiff could not, by inheritance, claim the income assigned to an office, Mr. Smyth dismissed his suit.

Wasik Ali, not satisfied with the decision of the District Judge, preferred an appeal to the Sudder Dewani Adalat; but there, too, ill success followed him, and his appeal was thrown out on the 29th November, 1834, the final judgment being passed by Mr. C. W. Smith.* The case was afterwards carried up to the Judicial Committee in England, but their Lordships of the Privy Council did not see any ground for interfering with the concurrent decisions of the Indian Courts, and thus all hopes of Wasik Ali were put an end to.

During this long litigation, which lasted nearly ten years, a large surplus had been accumulating until

* Vide the case of *Wasik Ali Khan vs. Government.*—6 Select Reports, pp. 427-37.

it swelled to Rs. 8,61,100 in 1835.* This surplus was devoted to the establishment of the Hooghly College and to the construction of the present Imambara buildings and the masonry revetment.

Ali Akbar Khan had enjoyed his office for a pretty considerable time. At last, when it was found that he, too, like his predecessors, had misappropriated the trust funds, he was made to share their fate. The Government dismissed him in 1836, when the Local Agents took temporary charge of the institution. On the 3rd January, 1837, the Government appointed to the vacant post Moulvi Syed Keramat Ali Sahib of Jaunpur, the companion of Lieutenant Conolly's travels, on a fixed salary of Rs. 500 a month, together with any surplus which the one-ninth share might yield over and above that amount. He joined the appointment on the 18th April, 1837, Moulvi Zainuddin Hosein Khan having acted as the 5th Matwali until his arrival. Syed Keramat Ali was a great favourite with Government, and this prize appointment was given him in reward for his former important services. He was a very able and learned man,† and it is, therefore, no wonder that

* In this year the Governor-General, Sir Charles (afterwards Lord) Metcalfe, wrote his well-known minute on the Mohsin endowment.

† Syed Keramat Ali was not a mere literary scholar, he was also well up in mathematics and the sciences. He had attempted to solve the mathematical riddle of bisecting an acute angle geometrically, and, be it said to his credit, nearly succeeded in doing so. In his old age he was engaged in compiling a philological lexicon, but did not live to complete it.

independence formed a prominent feature in his character. So far from tamely obeying the orders of the Local Agents, he often set their authority at defiance, and acted according to his own sense of duty. At length, matters came to a crisis, and he received a severe rebuke from Government, which brought about a thorough change in the manner of his dealings with the constituted Authorities.

The handsome buildings and river revetment, which now form the chief attractions of the town form an architectural point of view, were constructed under his supervision. There was considerable discussion as to the agency by which these buildings should be erected, and the matter was allowed to remain in abeyance until 1841, when the Deputy Governor of Bengal, after an inspection of the *Imambara*, decided that the work should be entrusted solely to the *Matwali*, the engineering officers of Government confining themselves to the general duty of seeing that the money spent was properly applied. The work was begun in August 1845, and was not finished until May 1848.* The original estimate of costs of

* Baboo Bholanath Chandra first visited Hooghly on the 12th February, 1845. He, in his well-known "Travels of a Hindoo," has described the local *Imambara*, but his description could not be contemporaneous with his first visit, as the present building which forms its subject, had barely been commenced at that time. In fact, the description refers to a period long subsequent to the year of his first visit. He says:—"One of the noblest buildings in Bengal is the *Emambara* of Hooghly. The courtyard is spacious and grand. The trough in the middle is a little-sized tank. The two-storied buildings, all around, are neat and elegant. The great hall has a

the buildings was Rs. 2,85,000, but the actual cost did not exceed Rs. 2,17,418. The revetment appears to have cost in round numbers Rs. 60,000. The tower-clock, which is of so great use to the public at large, was procured from England, at a cost of Rs. 11,721. The Matwali was thanked by Government for his very careful supervision.

Syed Keramat Ali was the recognised head of the Mahomedan community. Indeed, his influence with the Mahomedans of this part of Bengal was as great as that of Raja Radha Kanta among the Hindoos of Calcutta. In the case which he brought against Doyal Chand Mullick in respect of a garden which one Mahomed Daem had made Wuqf in 1844, but which his son, Golam Sarwar, subsequently sold to the said defendant, Mr. Justice Glover described him as "the leading Mahomedan of Hooghly, and a man of considerable influence and importance for many miles round."* He was instrumental in bringing about the amalgamation of the Bara Imambara with the Mohsin Imambara, in the year 1864. The subsequent years of his life were not marked by any

royal magnificence. But it is profusely adorned in the Mahomedan taste with chandeliers, and lanterns, and wall-shades of all the colours of the rainbow. The surface of the walls is painted in blue and red inscriptions from the Koran. Nothing can be more gorgeous than the doors of the gateway. They are richly gilded all over, and upon them is inscribed, in golden letters, the date and history of the Musjeed.—Vol. I, pp. 13-14.

* In that suit the great Matwali succeeded in all the three Courts, the judgment of the highest Court in the land being dated the 30th June, 1871.—16 *Weekly Reporter*, p. 116.

public act. They were, for the most part, employed in learned labours in the study. He died on the 10th August, 1875, at a good old age. He had been consulted by Government as to the person whom he wished to succeed him in the office, and he nominated the present incumbent, Moulvi Syed Asruf-uddin Ahmed. This gentleman is the eldest son of the late Nabob Amir Ali, who so much distinguished himself in several spheres of life. He is a quiet man, and has been discharging his duties in a manner which quite becomes the head of a religious institution.*

The Imambara Hospital was established in 1836. It was brought into existence by Dr. Wise, the first Civil Surgeon of Hooghly, the wherewithal being supplied out of the Mohsin funds. The good doctor, who, like his celebrated relative of Dacca, Dr. James Wise, was a man of varied acquirements, watched its progress with parental care, and it flourished under his charge. He left the district in 1839, and was succeeded by Dr. James Esdaile, who, too, took considerable interest in it. In 1847, Baboo Buddun Chandra Chowdhry was placed in charge of the hospital on a

* Two important events have happened during his incumbency, viz. the appointment of the Committee for the Imambara in 1876, and the repairs of the Imambara buildings by Government in 1883. He has lately been elevated to the rank of *Khan Bahadoor*, an honour to which he is fully entitled, as well by his personal merit as by the respectability of his family. Only the other day he was offered a high post in Egypt by Lord Cromer, but he declined to accept it, preferring the clear atmosphere of the cloister to the hazy gloom of the cabinet.

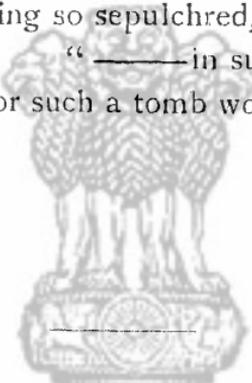
salary of Rs. 100 a month; and from that time the allowance of this sum, hitherto drawn by the Civil Surgeon, was discontinued. Dr. Buddun's appointment was not at all liked by the Mahomedan community, and they, accordingly, got up a petition, charging him with haughtiness of spirit and neglect of duty. They also stated that they considered his salary to be a "mis-appropriation of the Imambara funds." Only one solitary Hindoo signed the petition. The Local Agents were fully satisfied with the Baboo's explanation, and there the matter came to an end.* The localé of the Hospital has not been the same from the beginning. Its present "local habitation" is at Chinsura, to which it was removed in August, 1862. The number of patients who have received treatment in it have never been less than seven thousand, nor more than ten thousand. The patients receive medical advice and medicines *gratis*. The establishment also contains sufficient accommodation for a goodly number of *indoor* patients, and, as a matter of fact, it is never without some such patients. This Hospital being the only public dispensary that exists in the whole Municipality, it behoves every one who has any hand in its management to see that it does really

* Baboo Buddun Chandra is still alive. He is perhaps "the oldest inhabitant" living in the town. He is an adept in the healing art, and his fame as a medical practitioner is very great. He is still with his armour on, and benefits the country by his sound advice and skilful doctoring.

good service to the poor and the miserable who resort to it.

Thus, the princely charity of Mahomed Mohsin has had a very wide range : it has contributed not only to the glorification of God, but also to the mental and physical welfare of God's noblest creatures. The good and great Haji is one of those few glorious mortals who are sacredly sepulchred in the hearts of the many, and being so sepulchred,

“ ——— in such pomp do lie,
That kings for such a tomb would wish to die.”



सत्यमेव जयते

CHAPTER XIII.

HOOGHLY DURING THE TIME OF THE QUEEN'S RULE.

THE storm of the Mutiny was followed by a calm, but "not a calm of that kind which is more appalling than the tempest." No retributive measures were adopted to avenge the shocking cruelties which had been perpetrated by the rebels. The divine spirit of forgiveness prevailed, and peace was proclaimed throughout India on the 8th July, 1859. This peace, heralded as it was by trophies of war, had also trophies of its own to boast of. Several important reforms were effected in the matter of the general administration of the country. The hitherto unsettled relation of landlord and tenant was placed on a permanent basis. The procedure for the trial of Civil Suits was improved and arranged in logical order. People, with old claims, were roused from their lethargy,* and, as a consequence, the Courts were flooded with suits, so that even the humblest member of the legal profession was agreeably surprised at the sudden increase in his income. An old

* The Mahomedan statute-book does not contain any law for the limitation of actions. According to it, lapse of time, however long, does not bar any claim which is otherwise good.

friend of ours,* who had deservedly led the local bar for a considerable period, told us, that, although it was only the beginning of his forensic career, he made a mint of money during that millennium for Bengal lawyers, and laid the foundation of his future fortune. In the midst of this unprecedented activity, the Collector had his burden of business considerably increased. Hitherto the offices of Magistrate and Collector had been held by two different persons; but this being found neither necessary nor convenient, the two offices were combined. The order sanctioning the union was passed in 1859, but it was not carried into effect till the year following, when Mr. Charles Scott Belli,† the son of Mr. W. H. Belli, was appointed to the dual office. The Bellis are not likely to be forgotten in the District, the one heading its Collectors, the other its Magistrate-Collectors. This time, Mr. Belli was in charge of the District only for a year and odd months, but he did not leave it for good, as he again came to rule it in the same capacity a few years later. The people loved him, especially for the sake of his father, and he, on his part, took good

* Alas! that friend is now no longer amongst us: he has travelled into an unknown region, "from whose bourne no traveller returneth."

† This gentleman rose to be a District-Judge, in which capacity he distinguished himself in Rajshye, and earned well-deserved popularity. While he was in Hooghly, he was commonly known as "Chota Belli." Mr. C. S. Belli was also Magistrate of Hooghly from 1854 to 1857.

care not to abuse their love. Indeed, if the son was not equally popular with the sire, he was only second to him in that respect.

While Mr. C. S. Belli was in charge of the District, a great change came over the criminal administration of the country. This was the passing of the famous Act XLV* which is better known as the Indian Penal Code. It had been drafted by the celebrated Thomas Babington Macaulay so far back as 1837,† but it did not receive the assent of the Governor-General till the 6th October, 1860. Hitherto, the Mahomedan law, bristling as it did with

* This Act, although it was passed in 1860, did not take effect until the 1st May, 1861.

† The Bill, on its first promulgation, met with bitter opposition from the Press. A writer in the *Hurkara* thus begins a letter, bearing date the 19th January 1838:—"The Code of Penal Law just promulgated, is so replete with absurdity, that one would suppose it to be rather a burlesque on legislation than a reality." Then, pointing out some supposed absurdities, he concludes his tirade with a final fling at "lucky Tom's" departure from India. As the conclusion is quite of a piece with the commencement, we will quote it also for the delectation of our readers. "Truly," says this Thersites, "Mr. Macaulay does wisely to run away from his Code; a more childish piece of insanity was never put together. He had 'done his job,' and the Macaulay job is the most flagrant. A code of law! a legislator!

Little Bo-Peep
Has lost her sheep,
And cannot tell where to find him,
Let him alone,
He'll soon go home
And leave his Code behind him."

But, condemned and laughed at as it was in the beginning, Macaulay's code has proved to be an excellent piece of legislation. He, however, did not live to see it permanently placed on the Indian Statute-Book, as he was cut off, in the midst of his brilliant career, in 1859, a year which deprived English literature and Indian history of two other most worthy workers in Washington Irving and Mount-stuart Elphinstone.

barbarous punishments, had been in force. The new Code did not come upon the public as a very agreeable surprise, but even its bitterest opponent could not deny that it was leniency itself compared with the cruel law which it superseded. Severe as some of its provisions were, it was principally a preventive measure, as criminal codes generally are, the object of the Legislature being that, except in extreme cases, which crop up only rarely, the maximum punishments provided for by it should not be inflicted. It was intended to be viewed rather in the light of a Damocles' sword than that of a Procrustes' bed: it is something like a scarecrow set up more to prevent a breach of the law than to punish it to its fullest extent. President Washington used to say, 'that to be always ready for war is the best way of preventing it.' The object which the wise code-makers had in view was something of the same sort.

But although the code was passed in 1860,* it took some time for the general public to learn that such a terrible weapon had been introduced into the legal arsenal. The Mofussil people being for the most part ignorant, and law being quite foreign to their ordinary pursuits, it is no wonder that it was

* This memorable year also witnessed the well-known Indigo crisis, in which the founder and first editor of the *Hindoo Patriot* so much distinguished himself by his able advocacy of the cause of the weak ryots as against the powerful Planters.

long before its stringent provisions came to the notice of the villagers*; the criminal list of the district for the year† was a heavy one and contained offences of divers descriptions. But there was one case which was unique in its character. It was a charge of culpable homicide brought by a native named Hoshein Buksh against one Mr. T. Morrel. The accused was committed by the Joint Magistrate, Mr. R. V. Cockerell,‡ and was tried by the then Sessions Judge, Mr. C. P. Hobhouse. The charge was brought home to the prisoner by good legal evidence, but the Judge did not think it necessary to inflict a severer punishment than a fine of Rs. 500.

* Surely, it would be sheer cruelty to apply the well-known legal maxim about the non-excusableness of the ignorance of law to the common people of this country.

† To add to the sufferings of the people of Lower Bengal, the much dreaded Burdwan Fever, as it was called, appeared with all its horrors this year. It visited Chakdaha, whence it extended along the east bank of the river, in a southerly direction down to Kanchrapara, Halishahar, Naihati, and other places. Then suddenly appearing at Tribeni on this side of the river, it spread like wild fire along the west bank to Kalna in the Burdwan District. In 1861, it broke out with redoubled fury: Dwarbashini was nearly depopulated: Santipur and Ulla suffered most severely; Halishahar as well as Kanchrapara lost most of its inhabitants. In 1862, the same harrowing scene was repeated. But in the following year, there was a slight abatement in its virulence. The Epidemic Fever Commission was appointed, and by the 31st March, 1864, they were ready with their Report, in which they ascribed the fever to sub-soil humidity caused by obstructed drainage. The drainage theory originated with Dr. Dempster in 1845, but it was the late Raja Degumber Mitter who discovered that impeded drainage, generating dampness, was caused, not by silted-up *khal's* and rivers, as had been hitherto supposed, but by the Railways and their feeders.

‡ This gentleman was the younger brother of Mr. F. R. Cockerell, who was Magistrate of Hooghly in the Mutiny year.

Reforms in criminal law were followed up by reforms in other directions. An Act of Parliament was passed in 1861,* establishing High Courts of Judicature in India. In pursuance of this Act, Letters Patent were issued on the 14th May, 1862† constituting the High Court of Judicature for the Bengal Division of the Presidency of Fort William in supersession of the old Supreme and Sudder Courts. The new Court consisted of a Chief Justice and fourteen Puisne Judges, the first Chief Justice being Sir Barnes Peacock.‡ Simultaneously with the passing of the High Courts' Act was passed the India Councils' Act, which brought about a great change in the Legislative power. Previous to 1834, when the Legislative Council of India first came into existence, each Presidency Government had power for itself to enact what are called *Regulations*; but in that year this Legislative power ceased, and until the coming into operation of the India

* In 1861 our late beloved Queen lost the Prince Consort, and the legal profession, Lord Campbell.

† In 1862 Henry Thomas Buckle, whose *History of Civilization* is so well known, departed this world.

‡ Sir Barnes was Law Member of the Supreme Council before he became Chief Justice. In both capacities, he highly distinguished himself; but it seems that his reputation as a Judge has eclipsed his reputation as a legislator. After his retirement from Indian Service, he became a member of the Judicial Committee. His son, Mr F. B. Peacock, was Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal. He has since retired on pension. Mr. F. B. Peacock's son, Mr. F. Peacock, is a rising member of the Calcutta bar. He is now officiating as Receiver of the Court.

Councils' Act, which received the royal assent on the 1st August, 1861, the Legislative Council of India was the sole body. Since that Act came into force, the governments of Bengal, Bombay, and Madras have each had power, subject to certain restrictions, to pass *Acts*. While these reforms were being introduced into the two highest departments in the land, the subject of criminal administration was not lost sight of. The Indian Penal Code had been passed in the previous year, but as such substantive law requires for its full operation the aid of adjective law, the Criminal Procedure Code (ActXXV)* was passed in the year under notice. Both these Codes are excellent in their own way, and it is not at all to be wondered at that they still substantially retain their place on the Indian Statute-Book. A Police Act† was also passed, whereby the District Superintendent of Police was invested with authority over village watchmen, subject to the general control of the Magistrate. But though these measures were initiated with a view to the repression of crime, still they did not appear to exercise a wholesome influence over the Hooghly District. True, no dacoity or murder was brought to light; but offences of a deeper dye, so far as the morals of the people are

* The draft was ready by January, 1857, and the Bill was introduced by the Hon'ble Mr. Peacock, then at the head of the Law Commission. But it did not become law until 1861.

† Act V of 1861.

concerned, were committed. In proof of this, we would mention two important trials which were held in the Sessions Court, and ended in the conviction of the parties accused. The one was the case of Babu Joykissen Mookerjee of Uttarpara, and the other that of Ramji Ghose of Hooghly. The Babu, who had a chequered career, was charged with having been privy to the forging of certain leases relating to the Mukla talook, the Debutter property of the Dhurs of Chinsura. His brother, Babu Rajkissen Mookerjee, who, from a devoted friend had become his deadly enemy, being interested in the same estate, took up the cudgel against him and fought with might and main. The preliminary enquiry was held by Mr. G. P. Grant,* Joint Magistrate of Serampore, who, being of opinion that a *prima facie* case had been made out, committed the accused to take his trial in the Sessions Court. The trial came on before Mr. F. E. S. Lillie, who, according to the practice then in vogue, was assisted by a Mahomedan officer of law. The prosecution was conducted by Messrs. R. V. Doyne and L. Clarke,† while the prisoner was defended by Messrs. A. T. T.

* This gentleman is the son of the then Lieutenant-Governor, Sir John Peter Grant. Mr. Grant distinguished himself in the honourable service to which he belonged. He became Judge of Hooghly, and, while serving in that capacity, officiated for some time as a Judge of the High Court. He has since retired on pension.

† Mr. Clarke stood *nulli secundus*, and had a very extensive practice. His bland and persuasive address reminded one of the great Roman orator, Cicero.

Peterson and W. Newmarch,† The trial lasted for some time. Very strenuous efforts were made by the counsel for the defence to get the Babu off, and it seems that their great forensic powers, more especially those of Mr. Peterson, had produced considerable effect on the mind of the Judge. The latter held that there was no sufficient evidence to bring home the charge to the accused, and that he would not at all be justified in convicting him. But the native Kazi or rather Mufti was of a different opinion, and thought that the offence had been satisfactorily established against the prisoner. As the law then stood, in case of difference of opinion between the Judge and the Kazi, a reference was necessary. Accordingly, a reference was made to the Calcutta Court, which, unfortunately for the accused, upheld the views of the latter and the result was that he was convicted and sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for five years and a fine of ten thousand rupees. He lost no time in sending his counsel, Mr. Newmarch, to England, where an application was made to the Privy Council for leave to appeal from the sentence of the Court in India. This application was heard on the 16th July, 1862, by four Judges, of whom two, Sir Lawrence Peel and Sir James William Colvile, had long been Chief Justices

* To good legal lore Mr. Newmarch added high mathematical acquirements.

of the Supreme Court. There were two questions for the decision of their Lordships:—*first*, whether there was a prerogative right of appeal to the Privy Council in matters of Criminal Jurisdiction; and, *secondly*, whether the case in question was one in which the authority of the Crown could properly be interposed in the interests of justice.

As regards the first question, the Judicial Committee held that the Crown had such a power. But the second question their Lordships answered in the negative. They, however, gave it as their opinion, that justice had not been very well administered, and that if it had been a civil case, they would certainly have recommended Her Majesty to admit the appeal. But the case before them, they continued to observe, was a criminal one, and was subject to very different considerations. Then, showing how, if the appeal were admitted, “not only would the course of justice be maimed, but in very many instances it would be entirely prostrated,” they rejected the application. But as their Lordships believed that justice had not been done, they suggested that an application might be made to the Sovereign in Parliament, who, they had no doubt, would examine into the peculiar circumstances of the case and do that which justice might require.* Accordingly, an application was made *ad misericordiam*, and was attended with its

* 1 W. R. Priv. C. Rulings, pp. 13, 14.

expected result. Considering all the circumstances of the case and keeping in view the many good and charitable acts which the Babu had done for the public good, and which on this occasion pleaded for him with that silent eloquence which is sometimes more effective than the thunders of a Demosthenes or the persuasions of a Cicero, Her Majesty in the exercise of her Royal mercy, pronounced the defendant's release from prison.

Mr. C. S. Belli, as I have already stated, was in the District for a little more than a year. After he left it, his place was taken by Mr. Archdale Villiers Palmer.* Notwithstanding his eccentricity, Mr. Palmer was an able officer, and he signalized his rule by some important acts, of which the most important was his bringing to justice Ramji Ghose aforesaid. This notorious rogue was in the habit of forging deeds and documents, and his skill in this black art was such that in many instances his forgeries had escaped the vigilant eyes of very able and careful judicial officers. As zemindars who profited by his malpractices used to countenance him, he thought himself out of the reach of danger. But, at length, his fancied security proved his greatest enemy, and he was ruined for life. One Ram Chandra Mookerjee, having got scent of his evil doings, after he had

* This officer rose to be a District Judge, in which capacity he distinguished himself in Shahabad in South Behar. He held the Hooghly Magistracy and Collectorate from 1862 to 1866.

made sure of his ground, informed Mr. Palmer of the matter. That wary Magistrate took it up in right good earnest, and, availing himself of a favourable opportunity, of which he was duly informed by Ram Chandra, came upon the forger unawares, and caught him red-handed, as it were, with all the appliances of his foul practice. A formal enquiry was held in accordance with the provisions of law, and the accused, with some others, was committed to the Sessions on the 31st October, 1861. Baboo Ramkrishna Tarkálankár,* the then Peshkar of the Criminal Court, conducted the prosecution, while the principal accused, Ramji Ghose, whose cause was espoused by the zemindars who had benefited by his misdeeds, was defended by some able pleaders. The case created an immense sensation, and the court-house was full to over-flowing while the trial lasted. Every endeavour was made by his pleaders to get Ramji off, but the charge was so clearly proved that the Judge felt no hesitation in convicting him and an order was passed on the 31st January, 1862,†

This gentleman distinguished himself as Sherishtadar of the Hooghly Collectorate. He retired on pension in the time of Mr. Cooke. The title of *Roy Bahadur* was afterwards conferred upon him in recognition of his meritorious services, and, as a farther mark of special favour, the office of Sub-Registrar was given him, in which capacity he served in Serampore for some years until death relieved him of all earthly labours.

† In this year, Lord Elgin succeeded Lord Canning in the Viceroyalty, but died at a Himalayan station in the year following, a year which saw Mr. W. M. Thackeray close his very amusing and interesting labours on this side the grave.

whereby he was sentenced to transportation for a period of seven years.

Mr. Palmer left the District in 1866* and was succeeded by Mr. R. V. Cockerell†, who held charge of it for a considerable period, not bidding it final farewell until 1870. A few months after he joined office, a terrible cyclone swept over the land, spreading ruin and desolation in its way. The wrath of Æolus was followed by the wrath of Indra. The clouds forgot to rain, and mother Earth was scorched up. Felt Famine‡ made its appearance early in the next year, and there was wail and woe all round. The "meagre fiend" stalked over the length and breadth of Bengal, but her malignant influence was most severely felt in the districts of Burdwan and Midnapore. When it was found that people were dying of sheer starvation, relief centres were opened on the part of Government, and a few rich folks also came forward to invest some portion

* In the commencement of 1864 Sir John (afterwards Lord) Lawrence took charge of the Viceroyalty; and towards its close, the great Rent Case was heard by the full complement of the High Court Judges under the presidency of Sir Barnes Peacock, in which Dwarka Nath Mitter so ably succeeded in defending the cause of the ryots, and thus paved his way to a seat in the same high tribunal. The Whipping Act (Act VI) was also passed in 1864.

† This gentleman rose to be a District Judge. He officiated for some time as Additional Judge of Chittagong in 1867. Dr. Crawford states that Mr. Palmer was succeeded in Hooghly by Mr. David James McNeile and the latter by Mr. George Stewart Park. (See *Medical Gazetteer*, Chap. XIV). But he does not appear to be correct.

‡ In Calcutta the price of *balam* rice rose from Rs. 3-1 in October, 1865 to Rs. 5-12 in November, 1866. Hooghly and Howrah were considered distressed districts in the latter year.

of their surplus money in works which make the ascent to heaven much easier. We know for certain that in this town not a few middle-class people, whose peculiar social position did not permit them to partake of charity, somehow managed to keep body and soul together on only one poor meal a day. In the matter of providing relief for the many the Magistrate did his utmost, and he is deservedly held in love and esteem for his good work at this trying time.

But while this life-and-death struggle was going on, Mr. Cockerell did not forget to look after the improvement of the town, into which the Municipal Act (III of 1864) had now been introduced. As its first Chairman under the new Act, he tried to supply its wants. The first thing he put his hand to was the making of a road, running from the Hooghly Railway Station to the side of the river at Baboogbuge. This road was commenced in 1865, as appears from his report to the Divisional Commissioner,* dated the 2nd June, 1866. But, though it was proceeded with without intermission, it was not finished before 1868. The road cost, in round numbers, eighteen thousand rupees. In connection with this improvement, it may be mentioned that some portions of private lands

* Mr. Charles Francis Montresor, who was Commissioner of the Burdwan Division from June 1863 to August 1866, and again from December 1866 to January 1868.

which fell in the road were given free of charge by the benevolent gentlemen* of Hooghly and Chinsura who were the owners thereof. As this road, which forms, as it were, the girdle of the town, owes its existence to Mr. Cockerell, it justly bears his name.

While Mr. Cockerell was thus ingratiating himself into the favour of the people by his good acts, Mr. Arthur Pigou was discharging the duties of head of the Civil Department. He joined his office early in 1864, and soon made his mark as a good judge.

During his incumbency, Mr. Pigou[†] had to try several dacoity cases, of which we shall notice only one, to wit, the Kurtapook dacoity. This dacoity was committed on the night of the 9th November, 1866. Early the next morning, six of the dacoits were caught at the neighbouring village of Chandipur. Jogeswar Bagdi and several others were committed to the Sessions, and were tried by Mr. Pigou. The Judge, concurring with the Jury, convicted all the prisoners. On appeal to the High Court, the sentences were upheld except as to Sadoy Mitia, whose sentence was amended. The final order passed by the Court of Appeal is dated

* Among these benefactors of the public the name of Raja Purnendu Deb Roy Mahasoy of Bansberia is worthy of special notice, who made a free grant of a large quantity of land and for which he was warmly thanked by the Commissioner.

† Mr. Pigou was Judge of Hooghly from 1862 to 1863, and, again, from 1864 to 1867.

the 28th May, 1867.* Perhaps, this was the last criminal trial held by Mr. Pigou, and hence its painful significance.

Mr. Pigou died, somewhat suddenly, on the 17th April, 1867, and was buried in the crowded cemetery at Dharampur in Chinsura, which contains the bones of many a European, including some Dutch Governors of the place. He was succeeded by Mr. George Bright, who came by transfer from East Burdwan. The new Judge, like his lamented predecessor, was an able officer, and he soon gained a good name in the district by his just and equitable decisions. Several important trials were held by him in his capacity of Sessions Judge, one and all of which created considerable sensation at the time.

Towards the close of the year 1868,† a Mahomedan of Paharpur preferred a complaint against Bahirdas Sircar and Dharmadas Sircar, two powerful zemindars of Peashara, charging them with having, by their labourers and *lathials*, forcibly cut and carried off his paddy and beaten him and his people, they themselves being present on the spot and giving orders. Mr. W. H. Ryland, the Sub-Divisional officer of Serampore, within whose jurisdiction the offence was said to have been committed, held the preliminary enquiry, and, being convinced that the case was a true one, committed the accused

* 7 W. R. Cr. Rulings, p. 109.

† Lord Brougham, the great lawyer and writer, died in 1868.

to the Sessions. Mr. Bright held the trial. The Government pleader, Baboo Eshan Chandra Mitter, conducted the prosecution, while Mr. Peterson, the then leader of the Calcutta bar, defended the prisoners. Mr. Peterson had the reputation of being a first-class cross-examining counsel, and so he certainly was. Indeed, he was a terror to the witnesses. The witnesses for the prosecution could not stand the brisk fire of his cross-examination, and the result was that the evidence lamentably broke down. The jury, headed by Baboo Gopi Krishna Gossain of Serampore, returned a verdict of "not guilty", and the Judge, concurring with them, acquitted the prisoners. This order, which, however, was not received by the public with unmixed satisfaction, was passed in February, 1869.

The case against Baboo Purna Chandra Banerjee* was even more important than the Peashara affair. The Baboo was a well-known zemindar of Ahla, a village within the limits of the Dhaniakhali Thana. The offence with which he was charged was of a very serious character, the complaint being that he had killed a poor man of the weaver class with a double-barrelled pistol. The defence set up was, that the fatal shot which was intended to kill a rabid dog, missing its aim, hit the deceased by the

* This gentleman had long been a member of the Subordinate Executive Service, but, for some gross misconduct, afterwards lost his appointment.

purest of accidents. The Government pleader, Baboo Eshan Chandra Mitter, as usual, conducted the prosecution, while Mr. J. W. B. Money,* Barrister-at-law, defended the prisoner. After the evidence had been gone into, it was found that the charge of murder or culpable homicide was not sustainable. However, the prisoner could not be allowed to go scot-free, seeing that he confessed to having caused the death of a human being, though by pure accident. Accordingly, he was found guilty under Section 338 of the Indian Penal Code and was punished with the maximum fine of one thousand rupees provided by law.

Two things are necessary for the good administration of a District:—*first*, that its two chief officers should be able and honest men; and, *secondly*, that they should not be antagonistic to each other. At the time of which we are speaking, Hooghly was very fortunate in this respect. Both Mr. Cockerell and Mr. Bright were able and honest officers, and they were also on the best of terms. But, in the discharge of their respective duties, their intimacy, warm as it was, was never allowed to influence their conduct. Cases happened, though their number was not large, in which the Judge, having found fault with the orders of the Magistrate, did not fail

* Mr. Money's work on *Java* in which he made some strong strictures upon the legal practitioners rendered him very unpopular. He was an able counsel and had considerable practice.

to invoke the aid of the High Court for their reversal or modification as the case in his opinion required. In this connection we may mention two typical cases, *viz.*, *Shanta Teorni versus Mrs. Belilios*, and *Mr. Larrymore versus Baboo Purnendra Deva Roy*.

In the first case, the woman Shanta brought a charge of theft against Mrs. Belilios. The District Magistrate made over the matter for disposal to the Deputy Magistrate, Mr. Godfrey, who, deeming a Police enquiry necessary, requested the Magistrate to order it. The Magistrate, in compliance with the request, directed the Superintendent of Police to make the necessary enquiry. The latter reported that the charge was utterly false, and he also recommended that the complainant should be summoned for preferring a false charge. The Magistrate, in his order upon the Police Superintendent's report, passed no decision on the original complaint; he merely stated that he could not encourage the bringing of charges of "false complaint," but that the injured person might appear and swear on information, if she chose, under section 200. A day or two after this, the complainant again made a petition, praying that her witnesses might be summoned, who were to prove the charge of theft. She also objected to the Police proceedings as being irregular, and asked that the Police report, together with the other papers in the case, might be sent back

to the Deputy Magistrate by whom the case was first entertained. But the Magistrate rejected her prayer, saying that her case had been dismissed as false. The Sessions Judge, on being moved in the matter, made a reference to the High Court, mainly on the ground that, as the case had been made over to the Deputy Magistrate, the Magistrate had no jurisdiction to do anything more in it so long as the transfer to the Deputy was in existence. The reference came on for hearing on the 16th September 1869* before Mr. Justice Glover and Mr. Justice Dwarka Nath Mitter, who, agreeing with the Sessions Judge, quashed the proceedings of the Magistrate as bad in law, and ordered that the case, as brought by Shanta against Belilios, should be returned to the Court to which it was originally made over for final disposal.†

The facts of the other case were as follows: One evening, about the middle of the year 1870, Mr. A. W. Larrimore, the Superintendent of Police, was riding along a narrow road, when Baboo or rather Raja Purnendra Deva Roy,‡ the head of the

* Dr. Thompson, in his Report of the Hooghly District for 1869, states that there was a hurricane on the 9th June, which was followed in the next day by an earthquake, causing oscillation of buildings. Beyond causing cracks in some old ricketty houses, no substantial damage was done by the earthquake, but the fury of this visitation proved fatal to some trees which were blown down.

† This year forms an epoch in the commercial world in consequence of the opening of the Suez Canal.

‡ 12 W. R. Cr. Rulings, p. 53.

‡ This excellent gentleman has only lately died.

renowned Mohasaya family of Bansberia, was coming in a carriage from the other side. Mr. Larrymore called the coachman to stop, but, for some reason or other, the latter did not do so, and the result was a collision, in which Mr. Larrymore was injured. The Joint Magistrate, at the instance of the Magistrate, tried the case. He held that as the Baboo did not interfere, he was liable under Section 279 of the Indian Penal Code, and he, accordingly, inflicted a fine upon him. The Baboo then applied to the District Judge, Mr. Bright, and he thinking that as Mr. Larrymore did not address himself to the Baboo inside the coach, and as there was no ground for assuming that, although hearing Mr. Larrymore's calls to the coachman, he, the Baboo, who, by the bye, was sleepy at the time, tacitly assented to the coachman disregarding them, referred the matter to the High Court under Section 434 of the Criminal Procedure Code, with his opinion that the conviction and sentence were not good in law. On the 13th August, Mr. Justice Kemp and Mr. Justice Bayley heard the reference, and, after considering the arguments addressed to them by the pleaders on both sides, held that the coachman, and not the Baboo, was liable under Section 279, and, accordingly, quashed the conviction and ordered the fine to be refunded to the Baboo.†

* 12 W. R. Cr. Rulings, p. 53.

† 14 W. R. Cr. Rulings, p. 32.

Fast friends as Messrs. Cockerell and Bright were the stern exigencies of Government service brought about a separation between them in 1870.* Mr. Cockerell was transferrad from the Hooghly District, and his place was occupied by Mr. F. H. Pellew. After the latter had joined office, the Village Chaukidari Act (VIII of 1870)† was passed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, thereby giving large powers to the District Magistrate. True the chowkidars were placed under the direct control of the village punchayet, but the thread of their destiny was in the hands of the Magistrate. Mr. Pellew exercised his powers of superintendence with great care and discretion, and the result was a considerable improvement in the character and efficiency of the village watchmen. Dacoity, which had again reared its grissly head, was considerably repressed. The number of dacoities previous to 1870 averaged forty a year, but in 1871‡ it was reduced to ten. Thus the District became comparatively quiet and peaceable. But, though it was fortunate in the matter of the repression of crime, it was very unfortunate in another respect. Fever, which had begun to rage

* In this year England lost a worthy son in Charles Dickens and France in Alexander Dumas. In the midst of this loss, the civilised world rejoiced to find Rome united with Italy under Victor Immanuel.

† This Act is still in force, being only a little modified by Acts I of 1871 and 1886 of the Bengal Council.

‡ In this year, Sir William Grey retired, and was succeeded at Belvedere by Sir George Campbell, who, like Sir John Peter Grant, had been a Puisne Judge of the highest tribunal in the land.

in 1860, went on increasing, and reached its height in October, 1871.

While Mr. Bright was Judge, a very important suit was decided in the Civil Courts. The Deputy Magistrate of Jehanabad, Baboo Issur Chunder Mitter, having cut away a *bund* which had been erected on the Mandeswari river for *boro* cultivation by Baboo Taruck Nath Mookerjee of Jonai, the latter brought a suit for damages as well as for declaration of prescriptive right to erect the *bund*, making the said Deputy Magistrate and his two subordinates, *viz*, the Ferry Fund Overseer and the Police Inspector, defendants. The Government had not been made a party, but it elected to interfere in the matter, and was, in accordance with its prayer, placed on the record. The suit was brought in the Court of the Sub-Judge. Mr. Money, of the Calcutta bar, led the plaintiff's party, while the Government pleader, the well-known Baboo Eshan Chandra Mitter, led the defendant's party. The fight was a tough and obstinate one, and continued for days together. The Subordinate Judge, in an elaborate judgment, gave his decision on the several issues which were raised in the case, and finally passed the following order: "The plaintiff's prescriptive right to erect the disputed *bund* is declared, and the claim for damages is dismissed, and in the circumstances of the case, each party will bear his own costs." As such an order failed to satisfy any

of the parties, there were no less than four separate appeals to the Judge. The plaintiff appealed as a matter of course, his claim for damages having been dismissed. The Government appealed, being dissatisfied with the declaration of right which the plaintiff had obtained. The other two appeals, which were preferred by the Deputy Magistrate and the Ferry Fund Overseer respectively, were not of much importance. All these appeals were heard by Mr. Bright, and he, too, like the Sub-Judge, passed an elaborate judgment. He upheld the order of the Lower Court as far as the dismissal of the claim for damages went, and modified its decree as to the rest. The case then went up in special appeal to the High Court, and a Division Bench, composed of Mr. Justice L. S. Jackson and Mr. Justice Macpherson, decided it on the 5th January, 1870.* Their Lordships held that the plaintiff was entitled to recover damages from the defendant, Issur Chunder Mitter, in respect of an act done by him in his official capacity as Deputy Magistrate of Jehanabad, and that he was also entitled to a declaration of his right to erect and maintain a certain *bund* as against Issur Chunder Mitter and the Government. Here, however, this litigation, which had dragged its slow length along for such a long

* 13 W. R. p. 13.

period, did not end. The Government applied for a review of judgment,* mainly on the ground that the Honourable Court's judgment was defective, inasmuch as it did not decide whether the Deputy Magistrate in removing the *bund*, acted judicially and with jurisdiction. This ground was held to be good and valid; but as the petition of review had been made by the Government, and not by the Deputy Magistrate, it could not be admitted as it stood. The High Court, however, deeming it proper to deal with the matter leniently, allowed the petition to be amended by adding the Deputy Magistrate's name as a petitioner. Having done so, the Court dismissed the plaintiff's suit as against the Deputy Magistrate altogether and declared the plaintiff's right to erect and maintain the *bund* as against the Government. Thus, this protracted and expensive law-suit, in which the Government, having once made a blunder at the outset, went on blundering to the very last, ended in its total discomfiture by being made to pay full costs to the plaintiff.

In the year 1871† a very important case was decided by the second Sub-Judge in connection with the local Imambara. Moonshee Abdool Waheb,

* 16 W. R. p. 63.

† The Hooghly and Burdwan Drainage Act (V of 1871) was passed this year. The great Mathematician, Sir John Herschel, died in the same year. His title descended to his son, William James Herschel, who some time after, became Magistrate of Hooghly. Sir John was the son of the famous Astronomer.

who had served as *Khajonchi* (treasurer) of the Imambara from the 22nd November, 1860, was, on the 6th March 1869, found to have embezzled seventeen thousand and odd rupees. A criminal prosecution was in the first instance instituted against him, and he was committed to take his trial before the Sessions Court. Mr. Wauchope, the Additional Sessions Judge, who held the trial, however, acquitted the prisoner. Afterwards, Syed Keramat Ali, the Matwali of the Imambara, brought a civil suit for the amount so misappropriated, making Abdool Waheb and his sureties defendants. The case came on for hearing before Baboo Jagabandhu Bauerjee, the Sub-Judge. The hearing lasted for several days, and did not come to an end until the 27th January, 1871. The learned Sub-Judge, after disposing of the preliminary objections in favour of the plaintiff, held, on the merits, that Abdool Waheb had really misappropriated the amount claimed, and, accordingly, passed a decree for the entire claim with costs against him; and, as regards the sureties, he held that they could not be rendered liable for more than was covered by the stamp paper on which the surety-bond was engrossed, and, accordingly, passed against them a decree for Rs. 1,000 only with proportionate costs. These appeals were preferred to the High Court, of which the one made by the plaintiff had reference to that portion of the decree of the Sub-Judge which held the sureties liable only to the

extent of Rs. 1,000. All these appeals came on for hearing before Justices F. B. Kemp and E. Jackson; and their Lordships, agreeing in the main in the conclusion arrived at by the Lower Court, dismissed them on the 9th January, 1872. In dismissing the appeal of the sureties, the learned Judges remarked that, although there was gross neglect on the part of the Matwali in looking after the affairs of the trust committed to his charge, yet, as there was no evidence of fraud or virtual connivance at the delinquency of the treasurer, the sureties could not be allowed to go scot-free.* The decree as against Abdool Waheb was only partially satisfied, as the dishonest judgment-debtor had fraudulently disposed of the main *corpus* of his property before it could be attached and sold in execution. Thus, there was a considerable loss to the trust estate. As for the Matwali, he was, it is true, not called upon to make good the balance, but such was his high sense of honour that the censure of the High Court greatly affected him, and before long brought on a disease which only left him with his life.

Mr. Bright was Judge of Hooghly when the embezzlement of the trust funds was first brought to light, but he had left it before the civil suit which arose out of it was finally decided by the High Court. In fact, he bade adieu to the District towards

* 17 W. R., page 131.

the close of 1871, when he was succeeded by Mr. H. T. Prinsep.

The year 1872* is a memorable year. In it, a census was taken of the Hooghly District, at which it was found that the town contained a population of 67,538 souls against 70,025 in 1837. This decrease in population might very well be attributed to the fearful mortality from the epidemic fever which had raged in the District for such a long period.

During Mr. Prinsep's time a very important case was instituted in the Criminal Court, though he was away from the District when the trial was held in the Sessions Court. We refer to the ugly affair in which the Mohunt of Tarkeswar stood charged with a most infamous offence. The Tarkeswar adultery case marks an important epoch in the annals of Hooghly. It would have been very strange indeed, if it had not created the sensation which it did, and the reason for it was not far to seek. The accused, Madhab Chunder Giri, was the premier priest of a very rich Hindoo shrine, perhaps the richest in all Bengal. It was not, however, for his immense wealth, but for his supposed superior sanctity, that he commanded so much respect. Among his brother Mohunts, he passed for a Maharaja, and was looked

* In January of this year, Lord Mayo in a luckless hour started on a visit to the convict Settlement at Port Blair in the Andamans, but he landed in it only to fall a victim to the dagger of a ruthless ruffian. Lord Mayo was succeeded in the Viceroyalty by Lord Northbrook.

upon as their spiritual liege lord. As for the reverence which he received from the Hindoo community at large, it was almost without a parallel. Even high caste Hindoo ladies did not hesitate to appear before him for the purpose of making holy salutation. When it was reported that such a highly venerated saint, who was enjoined by the rigid rules of his holy order to observe strictly the vow of celibacy,* when people said and believed that such a vicegerent of God, whose very touch had a talismanic effect in the spiritual concerns of mankind, and whose very word could raise a mortal to eternal bliss in Heaven, or doom him to perennial punishment in Hell,—when it got abroad that such a human divinity had gone wrong with a beautiful girl of sweet sixteen, it was only natural that there should be a terrible uproar and agitation in Hindu society. One and all were anxious to know what the facts were, and the facts soon became public. Indeed, the facts lay in a nut-shell. The young Pandora who created this unprecedented strife and commotion in the minds of the Hindus, was a daughter of one Nilkamal Chakravarti of Kumrcol, a village in the vicinity of the Tarkeswar temple. When a mere infant, Elokeshi, for that was her name, was married to a high caste Brahman, named Nobin Chandra Bando-

* A Mohunt has no zenana, and ought not to have any intercourse with women whatsoever. Thus, he resembles the Roman Catholic priest, and like him, unfortunately, often goes wrong.

padhya. Nobin was an employe in the Government Printing Office at Calcutta, and, as usual with such men, generally resided in his place of business, occasionally paying visits to his wife at his father-in-law's. In 1873, having obtained leave on the Queen's birthday and for some days subsequent thereto, he came to Kumrool on a visit to his wife. As people are generally fond of publishing their neighbours' shame,* he before long heard slanderous reports of his wife's misconduct. Suspicion soon ripened into certainty. On the fatal night of the 27th May, the much-afflicted, but not the less enraged, husband, stung by the hornets that were tearing him within, suddenly asked his wife point-blank what the real state of the case was, and, on her repudiating the imputation, though not with the bold consciousness of offended innocence, made her pay the penalty of her guilt with life. This brutal murder was soon bruited about in the village, and the result was that the culprit was caught red-handed by the Police, or, rather, be it said to his honour, he, of his own accord, surrendered himself to them. He was brought up before the Joint-Magistrate of Serampore, who ordered him to *hajut*. While there, he preferred a charge of adultery against the Mohunt, under section 497 of the Indian Penal Code, and, accordingly, in August, a preliminary enquiry was held by

* For, as Gay justly says, "scandal is conversation's spirit."

Mr. William Fitzpatrick Meres,* the Joint-Magistrate of Hooghly. The Mohunt, who had disappeared after the murder of Elokeshi, did not appear in Court until the 1st August.† The enquiring officer, Mr. Meres, thinking that a *prima facie* case had been made out against him, committed him to the Sessions. This commitment, however, was quashed by the Sessions Judge of Hooghly, Mr. Prinsep, purely on the technical ground of non-jurisdiction, he being of opinion that the preliminary enquiry should have been held by the Joint-Magistrate of Serampore, within whose jurisdiction the offence was said to have been committed. But Nobin was a very determined opponent. He renewed his complaint, upon which a second enquiry was held by the same Magistrate, especially empowered in this behalf, and the result, as had been expected, was a second commitment. This time, the trial came on before Mr. Charles Dickinson Field, who was then officiating for Mr. Prinsep in the District Judgeship. The Judge was assisted in the trial by two native Assessors, Baboos Shib Chandra Mullick and Shumbhoo Chandra Gargory, both residents of Chinsura. The trial commenced with considerable "pomp and circumstance," quite befitting the rank

* This officer, who earned great popularity in Hooghly, rose to be a District Judge. He was the son-in-law of Mr. R. Thwaytes, the then Principal of the Hooghly College.

† A warrant for his arrest had been issued so far back as the 16th June.

and respectability of the accused person. The crowd that used to assemble during the period it lasted was immense. There was a sea of human heads in and about the suffocated Court-house and the place looked, indeed, like a great *melá*. Baboo Eshan Chandra Mitter, the able Government pleader, conducted the prosecution, while Mr. W. Jackson* and Mr. (afterwards Sir) G. H. Evans, two well-known counsel of the Calcutta bar, defended the prisoner. The main points for determination were, *first*, whether the accused Mohunt had intercourse with Elokeshi or not; and, *secondly*, whether at the time he had such intercourse, he knew or had reason to believe her to be the wife of another man. There was no question as to Elokeshi having been the wedded wife of Nobin, or of consent or connivance on the part of the husband. Gopinath Sing Roy was the most material witness in the cause. He was in the employ of the Mohunt as durwan, when the adultery was said to have been committed. His evidence disclosed certain circumstances which raised a strong presumption of the Mohunt having really played the gay Lothario. The prisoner's counsel fought tooth and nail to demolish the testimony of Gopinath, but truth triumphed in the end, and the Judge fully believed

* Mr. Jackson is the nephew of Mr. Peterson, as the latter was that of Mr. Turton. He is a very able criminal lawyer and is sometimes called the "Tiger of the Calcutta bar." Sir Griffith Evans died only lately, and his untimely end has made a gap which is not likely to be filled up. He was a very sound and learned lawyer.

him. There were some other material witnesses, but before the second enquiry began they had somehow or other disappeared from the scene. Only Gopinath clung fast to the post of honour. Some attempts would seem to have been made to buy him over, but he stood firm and unmoved, and his evidence turned the balance in favour of the prosecution. The Judge, after a very patient and careful consideration of the evidence and the surrounding circumstances, found the prisoner guilty on both the counts. Baboo Shib Chandra Mullick concurred with him, but the other Assessor, Baboo Shumbhu Chandra Gargory, gave a different opinion, on the ground that there was no direct evidence as to sexual intercourse, quite forgetting that in such a case such evidence could hardly be expected to be forthcoming. Indeed, if the direct fact of adultery were necessary to be established before a conviction could be had, "there is not," as is remarked by Lord Stowell in *Loveden versus Loveden*, "one case in a hundred in which that proof would be attainable."* The Judge, disregarding the opinion of the dissenting Assessor, convicted the accused under section 497 of the Indian Penal Code and sentenced him to undergo three years' rigorous imprisonment and to pay a fine of Rs. 2,000.† This order, which gave general satisfaction

* 2 Haggard's *Consistory Reports*.

† The maximum punishment, as provided in the Code, is five years' imprisonment with or without fine.

to the country, was passed on the 20th November, 1873.*

There was, of course, an appeal to the High Court, but the Mohunt was not enlarged on bail. He was made to put off his holy canonicals, and put on the ignoble dress of a convict. The Jail is a great leveller; it makes no distinction between a pariah and a priest. As was the case with convicts of his class, he had to play the meanest part of the bovine companion of his Deity, being yoked to the oil-mill and made to tread the rounds.

The appeal of the Mohunt was heard by a Division Bench, consisting of Mr. Justice Markby and Mr. Justice Birch, on the 15th December, 1873. His counsel, Messrs. Jackson and Evans, fought hard to get him off, but their Lordships held that the conviction was good and valid. As regards the sentence, they observed that, speaking generally, though it might be considered to be severe, still taking the peculiar position of the accused into consideration, it ought not to be mitigated. The

* In June, there was an agrarian rising in Pubna, the ryots of that district having broken out into a serious revolt. Moving in hundreds and thousands from place to place, headed by three ringleaders, they not only looted goods and chattels, but sometimes cruelly took men's lives and ignominiously committed outrages on females. The young widowed sister of a zemindar was taken away by force, and treated most brutally. In fact, no one in the District considered himself safe. During this trying period, Sir George Campbell, who had, as I have already stated, succeeded Sir William Grey, was the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. About this time the world lost a very able writer and deep thinker in Sir John Stuart Mill, son of the historian and philosopher, James Mill.

observations of Mr. Justice Birch on this point being very proper and pertinent, I insert them here. His Lordship said: "To my mind the offence of which I find the accused guilty is considerably aggravated by his position as head of a venerated shrine, by virtue of which he is regarded by his co-religionists as an impersonation of the Deity whose shrine is in his charge. A man in his position has immense power and influence in this country. If he is faithless to his trust, and if under the cloak of religion, and regardless of the decided prohibition of such conduct in the writings which he holds sacred, he employs his opportunities to debauch married women, he merits condign punishment."* Surely, if persons, who from their peculiar position are supposed to possess special sanctity, so far forget themselves as to commit foul offences, the Court ought to inflict exceptionally severe punishment upon them.

The Mohunt's senior disciple, Sham Chand Giri, took his place on the *guddee* at Tarkeswar, while he himself passed his hard and laborious days in the local jail. The term of imprisonment, however, at last expired and he was released in the latter part of November, 1876. His *locum tenens*, Sham Chand Giri, having refused to vacate the *guddee* in his favour, he forcibly re-entered the temple premises and resumed possession of them and of the

* 12 W. R. pp. 13-21.

landed property. Sham Giri brought a summary suit for recovery of possession under Section 15 of Act XIV of 1859 in the District Court at Hooghly. Mr. G. P. Grant, the Judge, decreed the suit on the 28th August, 1877. On the 3rd September, the defendant, Madhab Giri, moved the High Court under Section 15 of the Charter Act, whereupon a rule was granted, calling upon the other party to show cause why the order of the District Judge should not be set aside. This rule was heard by a Division Bench consisting of Mr. Justice R. C. Mitter and Mr. Justice W. Markby on the 24th November, 1877. Their Lordships, while finding fault with the Judge as to the way in which he tried the suit, held that they could not interfere with his decision under their general powers of superintendence, and they, accordingly, dismissed the application. Thus defeated, Madhab Giri brought a civil suit for declaration of title and recovery of possession, and in this he was signally successful. He was restored to the *guddee* which he occupied up to the time of his death, which took place only lately in Calcutta.*

As for poor Nobin, he was tried for the murder of his wife, and was convicted and sentenced to transportation. He was deported to a lonely and

* Since his death, there has been a scrambling for the *guddee*. True it is, Satish Chandra Giri has taken possession of it upon the strength of an alleged Will of the late Mohunt, but his position is anything but secure. The fight was raging high when Sham Giri died, leaving Satish Giri almost without a rival.

desolate island ; but, in view of the peculiar character of his offence, he was released in 1877, on the occasion of the assumption by the late Queen of the title of Empress, when, according to a time-honoured custom, upwards of three thousand prisoners were set at liberty before the expiry of their term in the exercise of royal mercy.

Orissa had, as I have already stated, been depopulated by a terrible famine in 1866.* Before seven years elapsed, a similar visitation overtook the two other Provinces of the Bengal satrapy. Taught by bitter experience, the heads of Government were on the alert this time. Relief measures were promptly adopted, and the result was that there was not much distress or death. Only a little scarcity was felt in Hooghly, and it was of a short duration, the price of food-grains soon coming down to its normal rate.†

* This famine was mainly due to drought. The distress and mortality caused by it were very great. A writer in the Calcutta Review for 1874 thus describes the harrowing state of things :—“The sufferings and anguish of the poor and helpless people it is impossible to depict. After the generality of people were unable to obtain grain, they subsisted for a short space of time on the roots and branches of trees, and greedily devoured even the snails they could pick up on the tanks and trenches ; truly this disgusting fare too soon failed them. Then very many died in their homes, and far more emigrated to the metropolis and other well-known places ; but of these, the greater portion composed of men, women, and children, perished *en route*. The mortality of the inhabitants during the continuance of the famine may, without any exaggeration, be set down at the high figure of two millions !” The Lieutenant Governor, Sir Cecil Beadon, was justly accused of culpable carelessness and surely in this instance he could not be said to have “done his duty.”

† The loss of life caused by this threatening calamity was infinitesimal, and hardly numbered more than a score.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BANDEL* CHURCH AT HOOGHLY.

THE Portuguese may have, as Faria y Souza† says, first entered Bengal as military adventurers about the year 1538,‡ but there is nothing to show that they had made their settlement at Hooghly before the Pathan domination was put an end to by the Moguls. Indeed, that event, as I have already shown, took place somewhere in the eighth decade of the sixteenth century. After Bengal

* The name Bandel appears to be another form of the Persian word *bandur*, the letters l and r being convertible, and to signify a port, as Hooghly, the *Porte Pequeno* (the *Little Haven*) of the Portuguese, was. So also there is Bandel Church (Le Bondor) at Chittagong, the *Porte Grande* (the *Great Haven*) of the Portuguese.

† Manuel Faria y Souza's history of *Asia Portuguesa*, which is in Spanish, commences with 1412 and closes with 1640.

‡ This was the last year of the Portuguese Viceroy of India, Nuno da Cunha. In 1534 he had sent Martin Alfonso with 200 men in five ships to Chittagong with a view to establish friendly relations with the King of Bengal, and to obtain permission to erect a fortress and build a factory at Chittagong. The mission, however, failed, and Martin and some of his men were made prisoners and forwarded to Gour. Antony de Sylva Meneses was then sent by Cunha with 350 men in nine vessels, to try and effect the ransom of the prisoners. At this time, Mahmud Shah, the last of the independent kings, reigned in Bengal. The Portuguese having agreed to assist him against Shere Khan, the King released most of the captives retaining only five as hostages for the succour which was expected from Goa. But when this succour arrived in nine vessels under the command of Vasco Perez de Sampayo, Shere had taken Gour and Mahmud had been killed. Sampayo came and saw and went away without doing anything. (*The Feringhees of Chittagong* by Mr.—afterwards Justice—Beverley, *Calcutta Review*, 1871.)

had come under the Mogul sway, Akbar ordered his Viceroy to send up a picked man among the Feringhees to the Presence. Accordingly, a captain of the name of Taveres went up to Agra* which had been newly made the capital of the Empire. He was treated by the Emperor with the utmost kindness, and, as a mark of Imperial favour, was given permission to pitch upon any spot near Hooghly for the erection of a town, with full liberty to build churches and preach the Holy Gospel. Availing themselves of such an unexpected opportunity, the Portuguese settled on the lands now occupied by the Church and its surroundings, and built houses for trading and other purposes.† As the province was then anything but peaceable, and as disturbances were always apprehended, the new settlers deemed it absolutely necessary to fortify their settlement. The requisite sanction being given by the Mogul Governor, they built a fort‡ in the place now called Ghole-

* Agra (*Agravan* of the Pauranic writers) was a mere village before Akbar's time. He turned it into a splendid city, and graced it with a palace, the largest and most magnificent in the East. The world-renowned Taj is also near Agra. To this newly-built city, Akbar removed his capital from Futehpore Sikri in 1566, calling it after his own name, *Akbarabad*.

† The *Shah Jehan-namah* states that the Portuguese, purchasing some lands in Hooghly, built houses thereon with the permission of the Nabob.

‡ Purchas, speaking of the Portuguese settlements in Bengal, writes:—"The Portuguese have here *Porte Grande* and *Porte Pequeno*, but without forts and Governments; every man living after his own lust, and for the most part they are such as dare not stay in those places of better Government for some wickedness by

ghat. It was of a square form, flanked by four bastions and surrounded by a deep ditch on three sides and by the deeper river on the fourth. This must have been done before 1585, inasmuch as the well-known traveller, Fitch, who visited Hooghly in that year, described it as "the chief keep of the Portuguese." As the Portuguese went on prospering in their new settlement, the missionaries of the order of St. Augustine came to Hooghly and founded, in the year 1599, * the Convent of Bandel, the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, and the Church of Misericordia, to which was attached an orphan-house for the protection of young ladies. Merchants and others, whom business or enterprise called to distant parts, committed their maiden daughters, in their absence, to sacerdotal protection in the orphanage of the Church of Misericordia. These sacred edifices were frequented by a large body of worshippers, and, thus, Hooghly became a place of great importance from a secular, as well as from a religious point of view.

them committed." But the historian does not appear to be quite correct in his statements, for the Portuguese had built a fort at Porte Pequeno (Hooghly) in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, whilst the first volume of his *Pilgrimages or Relations of the World* was published in 1614 in the reign of James I.

* This is certainly a memorable year, as in it the East India Company was formed, and the Dutch first traded to the Moluccas. But not only from a commercial, but also from a religious point of view, it is kept in remembrance, for in it the furious bigot, Archbishop Alexis de Menezes, held his famous, or rather infamous, Synod at Diamper or Udayampura, entirely effacing the individuality of the Syrian Church in India. The efforts which culminated

The Portuguese drove a brisk trade, and their fame as master merchants spread far and wide. In the meantime the great Akbar was summoned from this world by the mightiest of monarchs, and was succeeded by his son, Jehangir. The latter, though undoubtedly much inferior to his father in wisdom and ability, was not an intolerant prince. So far from molesting the Portuguese, he bore kindly feelings towards them. The French traveller Bernier * states, "that Jehangir suffered the Portuguese in Hooghly upon account of traffic, and of his having no aversion to Christians, as also because they promised him to keep the Bay of Bengal clear from all pirates." † In this way the Portuguese gradually rose to be a power in the land. They acquired lands on both sides of the river, and collected the rents, or rather revenues thereof

in that Synod had their origin in the full fervour of missionary enterprise which set in after the time of St. Francis Xavier, and which was directed towards stamping out the peculiarities of the Syrian Christians, and bringing their doctrines into harmony with those practised by the Catholic Church in Europe. St. Xavier came out with the Governor of Portuguese India, Martin Alfonso de Souza, and arrived at Goa on the 7th May 1542. He was the recognised head of the Jesuits of India. He lies buried in New Goa, and his tomb is certainly, as Bishop Wilson has said, "a great curiosity."

* Bernier resided in India for twelve years from 1657 to 1669. The greater part of his residence was spent at the court of Aurungzeb, whose camp he followed in 1665 from Delhi to Cashmere through the entire length of the Punjab. He was a physician by profession.

† In the time of the early Mogul Emperors, the Bay of Bengal was infested with Mughls and Portuguese, who lived by "levying *chout* on the seas," as that arch-pirate, Angria of the Malabar Coast, used to say of his dreaded sea-robbery.

after the manner of princes. Their fort at Hooghly was well garrisoned, and they had also a sufficient number of war-vessels always ready to protect them from the attacks of the enemy. Though nominally subject to the Great Mogul, they often assumed an air of independence, and were certainly not very regular in the payment of tribute due to the Paramount Power. At this time, however, an event happened which had the effect of undermining their power and prosperity in Bengal. The Empress, Nur Jehan,* who had absolute control over the pleasure-loving Emperor Jehangir, and "whose lightest whisper moved him more than all the ranged reasons of the world," having shown herself hostile to the interest of the Heir Apparent, the latter revolted, and being pursued by the Imperial army, fled to Bengal and stationed himself at Burdwan. While at this place, he asked for some assistance from the Portuguese Governor of Hooghly, Michael Rodriguez, who had waited upon him; but his request was not complied with. This refusal, polite though it was, so

"Rankled in him and ruffled all his heart,"

that, after ascending the throne, he made it a point to drive the Portuguese out of Bengal. Accordingly, he directed his Viceroy to watch their movements with the eye of a spy, and to lodge com-

* *Light of the World*, and really the lady was so for she was the Helen of her day.

plaints before him, if in any matter they overstepped the bounds of law and justice. The result of this well-laid plan was the siege and capture of Hooghly in 1632. The fort was demolished, so also the Churches, but it would seem that the Convent did not suffer much, if at all. The Governor and a large number of Christian captives were dragged to the Imperial residence at Agra, where they were very harshly treated. Excepting the five Augustinian friars, the rest of the prisoners of war were distributed as slaves amongst the grandees of the Court. The monks were more cruelly dealt with. Four of them were immediately put to death, and the fifth, Padre* da Cruz, was reserved for a severer punishment, for which a day was appointed. When that dreaded day dawned, the Emperor, forgetting his usual good nature, ordered him, in the spirit of a Nero, to be cast under the feet of a furious elephant. But, wonderful to relate, the burly brute, moved at the sight of the holy man, lost his native ferocity, and commenced cockering him gently with his "lith proboscis." The Emperor was taken quite unawares, and, seized with religious awe, at once determined on the Padre's pardon, and also offered to grant any

* Padre is a Portuguese word signifying a priest, a missionary. It has a close affinity to the Sanskrit *pilara*, Latin *pater*, and English *father*. Several other words which are in common use in Bengal are also of Portuguese origin, such as *chabi* (Port. *chave*), a key; *kabi* (Port. *quove*), cabbage; *grija* (Port. *igreja*), a church; *fitah*, (Port. *fitá*), a ribbon; *caste* (Port. *casta*, breed), a class; *nilam* (Port. *leilam*), an auction.

reasonable request he might make. The good Augustinian solicited his own liberty, with permission to reconduct the surviving Christian captives to Bengal, and also a grant of some rent-free lands as an endowment to the Bandel Church. Both the requests were readily granted by the awe-struck Emperor, and thus some amends were made for the immense loss which the Portuguese had sustained at his hands.

The grant, thus made in 1633,[†] covered an area of 777 bighas of land. By the *firman* which was granted on this occasion, the Portuguese were given permission to found churches, and the friars were exempted from the authority of the Fouzdar and other officers of Government. Within the precincts of that small tract they were allowed to exercise all magisterial powers with regard to the Christians, save and except the strictly royal prerogative of life and death. They were, at the same time, exempted from all taxes and tolls. This little bit of a principality, as one might say so, appears to have included all the foreshore from the present jail to the northern limit of the circuit-house compound. There is a small piece of a very old wall still remaining on the extreme east of the Hooghlybridge-yard, which is said to be the remains of the Portuguese fort. The *Kuti-pukur*, or the factory tank,

* This grant was confirmed in 1646.

which is at the south-west corner of the jail, was, it is believed, attached to the Portuguese factory, as in later times it certainly was to the English factory.

Such of the land so granted was, however, lost during the times of the hostilities between the English and the Nabob of Moorshidabad, and the area has now dwindled down to about 380 bighas yielding a rental of about 1240.*

The Convent † of Bandel, which is dedicated to the *Virgin Mary of Rosary*, ‡ is the only building which remains to tell the sad tale of Lusitanian grandeur at Hooghly. It is the oldest Christian building in Bengal. Eight years after the siege of Hooghly, it was pulled down, and all the records that were preserved in it were destroyed. In 1661 it was rebuilt by that pious Christian, J. Gomez de Soto, and, as if to wipe out all marks of Mogul outrage, the new building was inscribed with the date of the old. In the nice little chapel which forms one side of the Convent, there is an inscription which shows that "the chapel was privileged for Saturdays by the Supreme Pontiff Benedict XII. in 1726."

* Besides property in lands which are all leased to ryots, there are, as the quondam Prior the Rev. Da Silva Furtado said, other sources of income. But he was not aware of the net annual proceeds, nor of the amount of expenditure.

† The monastery used to be occupied by Augustinian friars, the last of whom, Father Joseph Gomez, died in 1858. There is now in charge only a Parish priest, who, however, still retains the title of Prior.

‡ Convent De Nossa Senhora De Rozario of Bandel.

The vault below contains the remains of Soto and his family, as well as of some other fortunate Catholics.

The Augustinians of Bandel hail from Goa, and are subject to the Bishop of Meliapore,* not to the Vicar Apostolic. The Portuguese in Bengal, like the Jesuits in Pondicherry, have never recognized the ecclesiastical authority of the Pope of Rome.† The Court of Portugal, ever since the first establishment of its dominion in India, has invariably claimed the exclusive right of ecclesiastical patronage, and has viewed with great jealousy any interference with it.‡ But it is very much to be regretted that it has not

* Meliapore (probably *Malayapuram*) was erected into a Bishopric in 1607. It is now known as St. Thomas, after the great saint who wrought some miracles in India. At last, he was killed by the lance of a Brahmin, while kneeling at the altar. He is said to have built 3300 stately churches. The Portuguese Homer thus speaks of Meliapore in its days of glory :

“Narsinga’s fair domain behold ; of yore

Where shone the gilded towers of Meliapore.”

† The Padroado was granted by the Pope to the King of Portugal in the days of Portuguese supremacy in the East. But now that Portugal is only a petty Indian Power, the great majority of the Catholic Missionaries and Catholic converts who reside in British India, resent the claim of the Portuguese to this right of patronage to all bishoprics and benefices in India. The Portuguese cling to the right of the Padroado as a relic of their ancient greatness, while the Pope sympathises with the attitude taken up by the majority of Indian Catholics. After many fruitless attempts at an amicable settlement of the question, concordats were signed between the two parties, first in 1856, and afterwards in 1886, which have had the effect of placing the Catholic Church in India, outside the sphere of Portuguese territory, under the direct rule of the Pope. This dispute about Padroado has been a great obstacle to the progress of the Catholic Church in India.

‡ The late Prior of Bandel, the Rev. DaSilva Furtado, informed me that the reigning King of Portugal, Don Carlos De Braganza, is on friendly terms with the Pope, and is in spiritual communion

been equally careful in making a proper use of that privilege. The priests appointed by Government were, as a rule, not only ignorant, but also bore a bad character. "Buried in debauch," as they were, they were studious of their own ease rather than of the good of their spiritual charge. At any rate, they have never been highly spoken of for purity of morals. Captain Alexander Hamilton* thus wrote about Bandel:—"The Bandel at present deals in no sort of commodities, but what are in request at the Court of Venus, and they have a Church, where the owners of such goods and merchandise are to be met with, and the buyer may be conducted to proper shops, where the commodities may be seen and felt; and a priest to be security for the soundness of the goods." Thus, the profligacy of the Bandel priests seems to have equalled what is told of the corruption among European ecclesiastics in the Middle Ages, and their ignorance was equal to their licentiousness. Nothing was more common than to see high ecclesiastical offices conferred on men as amorous as Sybarites and as ignorant as

with him, as the head of the Catholic Church. He also stated that not long since His Holiness made a handsome present to the Queen of Portugal.

* Hamilton traded in the East Indies from 1688 to 1723. He wrote his *Account of the East Indies* about the year 1690, when Bandel was "chockful of pretty women." De Foe's well-known lines apply with full force to the state of the Bandel Church at the time:—

"Wherever God erects a house of prayer,
The Devil always builds a chapel there,
And 'twill be found upon examination
The latter has the largest congregation."

Boetians.* The church Government is still with the King, and, judging from the lax and careless way in which it is sometimes administered, it would seem that the cause of morals and letters would not suffer much by its being taken out of his hands and placed in those of the Pope. Attached to the Convent there was a Nunnery in which many dark deeds were done, over which a thick impervious veil has been cast.† Mention is made in 1723 of a College of Jesuits ‡ at Bandel on the way to Keota. Georgi § stated that the Christian religion and learning flourished in Hooghly under the auspices of the King of Portugal, and that the hospice of Bandel was as much crowded with monks as its schools were with native converts. But these statements must be received with considerable modifications, for, as a matter of fact, neither the cause of religion nor that of education was much advanced.

* The distinguished writer of the article, "The Feringhees of Chittagong," to which we have already referred, very justly observes: "The general neglect of education among the Feringhees was chiefly owing to the character of the priests sent from Goa. These half-caste men, renowned for their superstition, ignorance, and selfishness, brought discredit on their profession." What was true of the Bandel at Chittagong was more than true of the Bandel at Hooghly.

† This has unfortunately been the case with almost all nunneries. Though the nuns are closed about by high narrowing walls, and are kept afar from the world and all its lights and shadows, they are seldom found "to lead sweet lives in purest chastity." Nothing has contributed so much to immorality as the unholy vow of celibacy.

‡ Though the Jesuits have failed, they have afforded a noble lesson to mankind, namely, that an Institution, however strongly and vigilantly it may be fortified and established, if it "is not based on simple honesty," must sooner or later fall to the ground.

§ His grand work is called *Approbatum Thibetum*.

In 1760 this place suffered much from the calamities which were brought about by hostilities between the English and the Nabob of Moorshedabad, and, as a matter of necessary consequence, it was denuded of most of its inhabitants. The state of things precipitated from bad to worse, so that when, in the first half of the last century, the author of the *Sketches of Bengal* wrote his valuable work, he found that Hooghly had well-nigh reached its last stage of ruin. He says: "The ancient and famous port of Hooghly contains now but a few small houses and several poor huts. The lascivious damsels of this once gay city slumber under its ruins. When Pomp withdrew from thence, Debauchery vanished. Poverty now stalks over the ground." The sight of the Convent, however, impressed him considerably, and he could not avoid recording that the frontispiece of the sacred edifice "appeared to him to diffuse a cathedral gloom, and struck him with religious awe."*

The Bandel Church† does not deserve to be called a grand building, but its architectural skill lies in its very strong and durable structure. Though nearly

* In 1829, the number of Christian inhabitants of eighteen years of age and more was only thirty in Bandel. (Toynbee's *Hooghly*, p. 141). At the present day the number is still smaller.

† Bishop Heber visited Hooghly in June 1824. He thus speaks of this Church in his well-known Journal: "At Chinsura is a Church, and beyond Hooghly, at a place, I believe, named Banda, is a large Italian-looking Church, with what appears to be a convent." Vol. I, p. 64. Most probably the good Bishop did not enter the Church, otherwise he would have given some account of its sacred interior.

three long centuries have spent their elemental rage and fury over it, still it looks as fresh as if it had been built only recently. The Church faces towards the south, and is entered by a big gate, which is kept open only on service days and other important occasions. It has three "long-drawn aisles," which terminate in three handsome altars, of which the one in the middle is the most splendid. At the other extremity, over the entrance, there is a big organ, which none but the initiated may touch. Service takes place before the midmost altar, when the burning censer and the sounding organ add much to the sacredness and solemnity of the occasion. In front of that altar, at a distance, rises, under the support of the left wall, the winding pulpit, which attracts the sight by its gorgeous appearance. One of the side altars is very properly dedicated to the patron Saint Augustine, who seems to exercise a greater influence over the priests of Bandel than St. Veronique himself, the favourite Saint of the Portuguese. A spacious hall was built about a quarter of a century ago at the expense of Mr. Barretto* and other

* The famous Barretto family came very early to Asia. Both F. Barretto and A. M. Barretto were Viceroys of Portuguese India in the second half of the sixteenth century. The celebrated Barretto brothers, Joseph and Louis, who were the recognised heads of the Portuguese in the metropolis of British India, have immortalized themselves by several pious acts. The new church at Calcutta and the Roman Catholic Church at Serampore are standing proofs of their piety and liberality. The Portuguese burial-ground at Baitakhana was the gift of Mr. Joseph Barretto, who purchased it for Rs. 8,000 in 1785.

Roman Catholics of Calcutta. It was intended to serve as a sanatorium for invalids. The building, as a whole, is a quadrangle, one side of which forms the chapel. It has three gates, of which the one at the east, which faces the ever-receding river, is now the main entrance, though that honour is justly due to the big gate on the south, which, as I have already related, is opened only on service days and other important occasions. The west gate, which skirts the public road, is seldom unbolted. Though itself a branch of a bigger establishment, the Bandel Church has a branch of its own in the neat Catholic Chapel at Chinsura. This sacred building, as the tablet on it shows, was erected in 1740 with the funds left by the well-known Mrs. Sebastian Shaw and is dedicated to Jesus Maria Joze.

At one time the Bandel missionaries possessed considerable power and influence; but, by the end of the eighteenth century, it had well-nigh become a thing of the past, and they regrettingly found themselves absorbed into the general mass of British subjects. In 1797, the then Prior of Bandel memorialised Sir John Shore's Government with a view to having independent civil and criminal jurisdiction over the ryots of the Bandel lands restored to him. He based his claim on immemorial usage from the date of the original grant by Shah Jehan in 1633, and also on a certain letter from a high authority, dated the 17th July 1787, in which the Collector was

prohibited from exercising any civil or criminal jurisdiction over the inhabitants of Bandel. But the Governor-General decided against him. His Excellency held that no such claim could now be admitted, and that "the inhabitants of Bandel are subject to the jurisdiction of the Courts equally with other inhabitants of the Company's provinces; but that there was no objection to the Prior's continuing to arbitrate and settle the disputes of the Christian inhabitants of Bandel, as heretofore, whenever it may be agreeable to the parties to refer to him for the purpose." Thus, the question of jurisdiction was set at rest by the highest authority in the land, and one would have expected that thereafter the church dignitaries would have quietly abided by the decision. But it does not appear that the Priors always demeaned themselves as peace-loving and law-abiding subjects. In June 1828, the then Prior, the Rev. F. A. Guia, was proceeded against in the Company's Court, in consequence of his having wantonly assaulted two natives. A summons was issued against him in the usual course, but, so far from obeying it, he behaved in an "extremely indecent, violent, and illegal" manner. He was, accordingly, reported to Government, and it is very likely that he got a severe reprimand at its hands. This censure, well-deserved as it undoubtedly was, had a very wholesome effect, not only upon the individual for whom it was intended, but also upon

his successors in the Priory. In 1869 we find the Rev. Augustine Gomez in charge of the Church. He was a good man, so was his successor, the Rev. A. C. Rodriguez. The latter tried to retrieve the reputation of the Portuguese as promoters of the cause of education, and established the present Bandel School on the 10th July, 1870. This little Institution prospered under his parental care, and its successful working induced the English Government, in 1874, to allow a grant of Rs. 20 a month. The grant is still continued, and, together with the Mission allowance of Rs. 10, makes up nearly one third of the establishment charges of the School, the remainder being supplied from schooling fees. The School teaches up to the minor scholarship course, and the teaching staff consists of three English teachers and two pundits. The Rev. A. C. Rodriguez was succeeded by the Rev. D. Sante Maria, and the latter by the Rev. G. A. Britto. On the death of Britto, which took place on the 7th July, 1891, the Rev. J. Beatly was appointed Prior. Though not in charge of the church for a long time, his knowledge of Hooghly was much above the average. The Rev. Da Silva Furtado was in charge for nearly two years. He possessed considerable ability and discharged the duties of his sacred office well. He was a quiet sort of man, as becomes a Christian of his order, and, what is rare among monks and friars, bore a pure and unspotted

character.* The Prior gets nothing from the English Government. He is paid by the Portuguese Mission, and he has also other sources of income, the principal of which consists of presents from Roman Catholics on marriage and such like occasions.

Four solemnities are principally observed in the Bandel Church, namely, the Feast of the Blessed Lady of Happy Voyage in the "merry month of May"; the Feast of the Patron Saint Augustine in the Imperial month of August; the Feast of the Blessed Lady of Rosary, commonly called the Novena, in the cold month of November; and the Feast of Domingo da Cruz, in the hot month of February or March. The first solemnity mentioned above is not of much importance; but it must not be confounded with the Feast of the Assumption which is observed on the 15th August, on which day, Virgin Mary, the reputed Mother of Jesus Christ, is believed to have miraculously ascended to Heaven without passing through the gate of death. Augustine being the patron Saint of the monks of Bandel, his feast is observed with considerable pomp in the memorable month in which he, having done his work here below on earth, found supreme happiness in sweet communion with his

* The present incumbent, the Rev. M. V. Rodrigues, is also a good man and takes a deal of interest on behalf of the Church in his charge. In the year 1899, which completed the tercentenary of its existence, he published a little brochure giving historical facts in relation thereto.

Maker in Heaven, realizing the words of the poet—

“Man’s sickly soul, though turned and tossed for ever
From side to side, can rest on nought but Thee,
Here in full *trust*, hereafter in full *joy*.”

But the Feast of the Novena is the grandest of the festivals which are observed in the Bandel Church; and this is as it should be, for the church is dedicated to the Blessed Lady of Rosary, in whose honour the feast is celebrated. On this important occasion the church is brilliantly illuminated, and divine service is performed with the accompaniment of music, which adds much to the sacred solemnity of the occasion. After service fireworks of divers sorts are let off which, like a flourish of trumpets, wind up the ceremony. Visitors flock to the spot from Calcutta, Chandernagore, and some other places, and the scene assumes a most splendid appearance. The pyrotechnic exhibition and the solemn peal of the organ, with its “winding bout of linked sweetness”, have such a fascination for the common people, that the numbers that assemble on the occasion are very considerable. Sight-seers and others leave the place in the course of the night, so that, when the day dawns, one finds it difficult to realize that it has only a few hours before been the the scene of such rejoicings.

The last, though not the least, is the Feast of Domingo da Cruz. This is a peculiar ceremony with the Portuguese, and is as rigidly observed by them

as the *Rozah* is by the Mahomedans. On this occasion a procession, representing the Saviour bearing the cross, is formed on a Sunday in Lent, which makes the circuit of the entire quarter. The name of this ceremony reminds one of that very remarkable friar, Padre da Cruz, who, by his miraculous encounter with the royal elephant, gained the favour of the Great Mogul, Shah Jehan, and with his permission conducted the Christian captives back to Bengal.

Bandel is not what it was in bygone times. "Stern ruin has driven her ploughshare" hard over it. It has lost all its former pomp and magnificence, and stands as a sad and sorry relic, reminding one of the mutability of all mundane things. The very sight of the place amply testifies to its ancient grandeur. Indeed, at one time, it teemed with a gay stream of population in which the gaudy train of beauty shone the brightest. The present inhabitants of Bandel might be counted on one's fingers, and the sad loneliness of the locality offers a striking contrast to the sweet liveliness with which it was pregnant even at the beginning of the last century.

Save and except the church, which rears its hoary head in solitary gloom, a few broken walls, overgrown with bushes and brambles are all the "splendid wrecks" which remain to tell the painful tale of its former pride and populousness. From a splendid town Bandel has dwindled down into a sorry village

of the lowest type possible. Even the very river, which forty years before laved the church foundations with its sweet waters, as if afraid to catch the contagion of the surrounding desolation, has receded considerably to the east, leaving a large space of dry land, which was one vast sheet of water displaying a hundred gorgeous sail. But Bandel does not stand unique in this respect ; this has also been the case with all the Portuguese settlements in India, now that their power in the East has fallen so very low. Bishop Wilson visited New Goa, the metropolis of Portuguese India, on the 6th December 1835, and this is how he has described it in his Journal : "The Portuguese, for one hundred and fifty years the great European power in India, is silent in darkness, and the 'Beast,' which enjoyed her protection, expiring. Instead of two thousand priests, whose licentiousness was proverbial, there are now fifty, or even fewer stragglers. Immense masses of building crumbling daily, and some positively without a single monk. The nunnery alone remains, and that is to receive no more inmates. The Abbess has never been without its walls for forty-five years. One sweet-looking pupil attended her at the *grille*, downcast as a flower doomed to fade. The nuns we could not see." The reason why the good Bishop could not see them is, however, not far to seek ; for, as a matter of fact, nuns there were very few, if any. Similar fate has befallen the Convent of Bandel :

it, too, is bare of its inmates. Indeed, the place looks like

“a thing
O'er which the raven flaps his funeral wing.”

CHAPTER XV.

THE HOOGHLY JAIL.

Simultaneously with the formation of Hooghly into a district, there was established a jail for the safe custody of prisoners. At the outset the jail was little better than a big clumsy hut, being built with mats and bamboos. It was afterwards removed to a somewhat better building, but that too was not quite what a prison should be. Accordingly, in 1814 a new jail containing six wards, each 50 × 30 feet, to hold about six hundred prisoners, was sanctioned by Government at a cost of sicca rupees 69,580, the old jail being turned into a civil jail. Early in May, Captain Cave arrived at Hooghly, and fixed upon the site on which the present jail stands, on the score of its being high ground not liable to inundation by the flood waters of that wide unruly river, Damoodar.* The total area of land

* *Pucca* embankments having since been erected on this side the river, there is very little apprehension of these parts of the district being flooded by its surplus waters.

taken up was eighteen bighas, two cottas and twelve chataks. The main building was finished in the year 1816, and the hospital * in the next. In front of the Jail on the river side, was set up, some years after, a pump † by which water was daily pumped up from the river for the use of the prisoners. The Jail establishment on 1st January 1820 was one Jailor on Rs. 25 a month, one Naib on Rs. 15, and twelve *burkundazes* on Rs. 4 each, with additional six *burkundazes* for the Civil Jail. Neither the Jailor nor the Naib had their quarters at the Jail. The rooms over the main gateway, now occupied by the Jailor as a residence, were formerly used as a godown and buttery. The above arrangement continued till the close of the year 1835, when the dignity of the post of Jailor was considerably raised, a European on Rs. 200 a month being appointed to it.

* A native doctor on a pay of Rs. 25 a month is attached to this hospital, whose duty is to look after the health of the prisoners confined in the Jail. He is under the direct control of the Civil Surgeon who visits the hospital every morning and supervises its affairs. Besides these duties which have reference to his profession as a medical man, the Civil Surgeon acts as the general Superintendent of the Jail. The official destiny of the sepoys who keep watch and ward is in his hands. He can also punish the prisoners with whipping, if they are found fault with. Even over the Jailor and his Assistant he has some little power, but in all important matters they are under the direct control of the Inspector General of Jails, Bengal.

† This pump would appear to have been set up as early as 1831, if not earlier still. It has long since ceased to exist. Now, water is fetched from the river in *kulsees*, or jugs, and filtered before it is used for drinking purposes. This improved water supply is very properly assigned as one of the main causes of the present excellent condition of this Jail.

The average number of prisoners in the Jail between 1815 and 1829 was 414, and between 1830 and 1845, 353, while between 1870 and 1892 it was only 250. Thus, it appears that there has been a constant decrease in the averages. At the present time, however, the number is 385 including 9 females and 2 juveniles.

Up to the year 1835, the prisoners received a daily allowance in money, and purchased their own supplies from the Jail *Moodie* (grocer). In 1805 each prisoner's allowance was fixed at three pice or rather three *puns* of cowries. Owing to the change in the currency in 1831, the allowance was fixed at five-eighths of an anna, leaving it to the discretion of the Magistrate to reduce it to four-eighths, or to raise it to six-eighths. The allowance, slender as it would now appear, was fully equal to all the wants, such being the cheapness of the articles for the daily *menu* (*) of a native. This state of things continued till the close of 1835, when the ration system was introduced on the recommendation of the Magistrate, Mr. E. A. Samuells. With this system the prisoners were said to have been "very happy and contented." The monthly cost of each prisoner under this arrangement was

* Mr. Toynbee in his useful Publication to which we have so often referred has given details of the ordinary daily *menu* of a prisoner. In the present day, prisoners are fed according to sanctioned scale of diet, namely, rice eleven chuttucks and dal one and half chuttucks. besides vegetables and other necessaries. Fish is given twice a week,

Re 1-6-11. At first, the rations were given uncooked, but in November 1841 the system of giving cooked food instead of raw rations was introduced, the prisoners not being averse to the change. By Act XVIII of 1844, styled "An Act for the better control and management of Jails within the Bengal Presidency," the control and superintendence of the Jail * was vested in the Magistrate, acting under instructions from the Judge and orders from the Government.

Out-door labour on roads was the commonest, and, indeed up to 1836, the only form of labour on which the prisoners were employed. Afterwards, on the recommendations of the Convict Labour Committee which sat in Calcutta in that year, it was abolished, except in special cases, and intramural manufactures took its place. † Mr. Samuells, the Magistrate, who was one of the ablest officers ‡ that have held charge of this district, was strongly in favour of the change, though many of his brother officers were against it. The credit of converting this Jail into what is called an industrial Jail is entirely due to him. The first manufacture intro-

* This system is still in use, but there has been some change in the dietary. As for the civil prisoners, they find their own food and raiment. In fact, they have nothing to do with the criminal prisoners. They are quartered in the Civil Ward which is near the Assistant Jailor's quarter in a corner of the Jail outside the wall.

† This came to pass about the year 1840.

‡ Mr. Samuells rose very high in the Service, and was ultimately raised to a seat in the Sadar Diwani Adalat at Calcutta.

duced into it was that of paper, which was commenced in July 1841. The Jail-made paper was coarse and was certainly inferior in quality and finish to that made by private parties; but it was well able to "defy the tooth of time," and guard against the insidious incursions of the Vandalic white ants. Notwithstanding its coarse texture and rough exterior, the Magistrate largely used it in his own office, and tried to induce other officials to do the same. The sale of the Jail-made paper, though not rapid, was still attended with profits. From these profits, which in the average amounted to about Rs. 753 a year, the Magistrate in 1844 purchased four looms and started the manufacture of clothing with the intention of using it for the prisoners. As there were then some good weavers among the inmates of the Jail, the manufacture proved very successful, and not only coarse, but also fine, clothes were woven which were quite fit for the use of ladies and gentlemen. The Jailor was allowed 35 per cent on the net profits of these manufactures by way of encouragement. The result of this prudent and politic arrangement was that in course of time some other manufactures were gradually introduced *, so that when in 1869,

* Mr. Dobson whom we find in charge of this Jail in the Mutiny year and some years subsequent thereto, made considerable improvements. He was rewarded for his long and meritorious services in several places and was at last raised to the position of Deputy Superintendent.

Dr. Thompson, the Civil Surgeon, drew up his Report of the Hooghly district we find that gunny-weaving, blanket-manufacturing, oil-preparing and bed-making had been added to the number. In 1872 when Dr. Hunter collected statistics for his well-known Account of Bengal we notice that there was the further addition of flour-grinding and tailoring, besides some trifles which are not worthy of special mention*. The subsequent introduction of the manufacturing of *satranchees* (country carpets) and the turning out boxes and some other works of carpentry made up the sum-total of the manufactures which were carried on in this Jail with more or less success. The subsequent history of the Jail in this respect is, however, one of falling off. Paper-making was given up in consequence of the cheaper productions of the Balli Mill; and blanket-weaving in consequence of the abundant supply of the Alipur Central Jail. Flour-grinding was abandoned in view of the hard competition occasioned by the extensive scale on which this business has been carried on in Calcutta. The absence of the weaving class among the inmates of the Jail put a stop to the manufacture of clothing. Thus, it is quite manifest that the manufacturing business has considerably declined, and, as a matter of necessary consequence, the profits from Jail

* See Hunter's Statistical Account of Bengal, Vol iii, p 391.

labour have been much reduced. The only industries on which the prisoners are at present employed are gunny-bag-sewing and oil-pressing, the former the lightest, and the latter the hardest, form of penal labour. The Jail oil, being manufactured by human, instead of by bovine labour, is not used by scrupulous Hindoos. But the article itself is comparatively purer and at the same time not dearer on that account. Some prisoners are also employed in gardening. Besides all these forms of labour, some fetch water from the river, and some cook for the rest. Prisoners of the highest caste are as a rule employed as cooks.

The prisoners in this Jail are generally put to light labour.* As for the juveniles and females, the work they are made to do is lighter still, the former being employed on bag-sewing and the latter on husking and sifting rice, *dal*, and doing such like things. Easy and light as is the general character of the labour the prisoners are employed on, they are, however, on that account not kept on insufficient diet. Indeed, they must be considered to be fortunate in this respect, and, as the present jailor informs me, are fed three times in the day, an extra morning meal consisting of rice being served them before they go to work. They have to work only

* This is as it should be. From innocence to guilt there is but a step, and from guilt to innocence there may perhaps be but another. See Hutchinson on *Indian jails*.

nine hours in the day. After taking their afternoon meal they retire to rest for the night. They sleep in batches in their respective wards according to the capacity of each ward.

While the Mahomedan criminal law was in force,—and it was in force for a considerable period,—the different punishments to which prisoners were subjected were extremely severe, if not utterly barbarous; one of the commonest was the lopping off of the right hand in case of theft. The present Penal Code with all its stringent provisions falls short of it in point of severity. Life convicts were marked with the indelible curse of Cain. This was done by a cruel process known as *Godena*, whereby the name of the convict, the nature of the offence, the date of sentence, and the designation of the sentencing Court were branded on the forehead. Whipping which has from remote antiquity been a well-established form of punishment, was inflicted from 1794 to 1796 with the much-dreaded “cat,” but in the latter year the less-dreaded “korah” was again resorted to, until it gave place to the cane or rattan.* The luckless convict was tied to the whipping post, the “tik-tiki” of the commoners, and stripes were applied to his bare back and shoulders,

* The Whipping Act (VI of 1864) provides that in the case of a juvenile offender the punishment shall be inflicted in the way of school discipline and shall not exceed 30 stripes. In the case of an adult, whipping shall be inflicted on his breech with a rattan not more than half an inch in diameter.

and sometimes also on the posterior. The corpses of prisoners sentenced to be hanged were, after death, exposed to public view in gibbets near the place of execution, and no one was allowed to remove them. Up to 1810 the execution was carried out at head-quarters, but from that year it commenced to be done at the spot where the offence had been committed. Up to 1830, when some change in the mode of execution was made, the gallows consisted of two poles fixed horizontally, and surmounted by a cross-bar. On this bar rested a ladder, which the convict and the executioner then mounted. The latter descended after adjusting the rope, and the ladder was then pulled away. The fatal knot fixed itself on the throat, and after some fitful struggle life was extinct. Until lately, the execution took place outside the Jail, but now for some time it has been done inside, and the mode adopted is somewhat peculiar. Another curious, but much milder, form of punishment was that of "*tashir*," or public exposure. The poor wretched culprit, dressed in parti-coloured garment, with a garland of old worn-out shoes on his neck, was mounted on a donkey and paraded through the town amidst the hisses and hootings of the assembled crowd who sometimes went to the length of spitting on his face or throwing dirt at him. Thus, this punishment somewhat resembled the pillory which at one time was so very commonly practised in

Europe.* Relics of pillory "pitches" are still to be found in England.

The practice of branding and exposing convicts was abolished by Act ii of 1849. The practice of gibbetting was discontinued in 1833. All prisoners sentenced to labour were, unless found too old, weak or diseased,† employed in gangs on the public roads. They worked in irons, and at night were secured in tents or huts by a chain passed through the rings of their fetters, and fastened outside with a padlock. Up to 1812, some of the Jails were so insecure that prisoners were confined in stocks at night to prevent their escape. This practice appears to have been entirely discontinued in 1817. Now for some years Sunday is allowed as a day of rest, together with other native festival days.

The up-country sepoy, as we have already stated, keep watch and ward. They have no other duties to perform. Besides these sepoy, there are five *burkundazes* ‡ who are employed inside the Jail

* The pillory was established in 1837. De Foe's "*Hymn to the Pillory*" opens with this noble couplet :—

"Hail ! hieroglyphic state machine,
Contrived to punish innocence in."

† Moribund prisoners are as a rule released if their relatives or friends, as the case may be, offer to take charge of them and guarantee their safe keeping. Dr. Lethbridge, however, in his Administration Report, discourages this system.

‡ The native irregulars, designated "Buxaries," who were formerly employed at Calcutta as necessity arose, were nothing more than *Burkundazes* armed and equipped in the usual native manner, without any attempt at discipline or regularity. Broom's *History of the Bengal Army*, p. 92.

during the day. The warder establishment consists of 26 warders and 3 head warders. They are responsible for the safe keeping and maintenance of order, as well as for the industry of the prisoners under their charge.* The pay of the Jailor rises from Rs. 75 to 300, and that of the Naib from Rs. 40 to Rs. 50,—a very wide difference indeed. The present Jailor gets Rs. 135, and the present Naib who is only an acting man Rs. 20 only. This Jail, so far from being a self-supporting institution, charges Government a great deal, the amount whereof varies according to circumstances. The average cost per head in 1892 was fifty-two rupees and odd, while the average earning per head was twelve rupees only. Thus, it is clear that the charge for maintaining each prisoner was more than four times the earning. In the same year, the total profit was Rs. 3,944. But this profit, it must be observed, is not profit *over expenditure*, but *in reduction* of it. In these circumstances, the Inspector General is perfectly justified in observing that Hooghly is “one of the least economically managed jails” in Bengal.†

* Convict warders are “public servants” within the meaning of Section 223 of the Indian Penal Code, and are empowered to keep persons in confinement though they are themselves in confinement. (See *Queen V. Kalahand Maitra*, 7 W. R. Cr. Rulings, p. 99.)

† This observation was made by the Inspector General, Dr. Lethbridge in 1879, when Mr. Sankey, the very Falstaff of his day, was the Jailor. We wish we could say that circumstances arising since have given the go-by to it, but the truth can not be denied. The jail does not fare better.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE HOOGLHY MUNICIPALITY.

HOOGLHY, as we have seen, was almost in a state of nature before it was settled by the Portuguese, the site of the town that afterwards arose, having been for the most part covered with jungles and marshes. It was by reclaiming the jungles and filling up the marshes, that these foreigners laid the foundations of their settlement. The merchants who first came to the place to dispose of their cargoes, built mere sheds of bamboos for their temporary residence. With the increase of their trade, the bamboo sheds were replaced by brick-built houses. Of these buildings, the greater part were used for the storage of merchandise, and a few only for purposes of habitation. Satgaon was then the main centre of trade, but it was rapidly declining. The Saraswati having begun to be silted up, communications by large boats and larger vessels were becoming increasingly difficult, owing to which the once-flourishing trade* of the place was considerably affected. The Portuguese, taking advantage of this state of things, tried to divert the trade to their own settlement, and in this they were eminently successful.

* See Kabikankan's *Chand*

This diversion of trade from the Imperial Port was one of the grounds afterwards urged by the Moghul Viceroy of Bengal for attacking Hooghly and turning the Portuguese out of the Province.

Hooghly continued to prosper under the parental care of the new settlers, and its fame soon spread far and wide. The settlement, as we have already shown,† was made somewhere in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, when the first and foremost of the four "Great Moguls," Akbar, was on the throne. The necessary permission having been given by the provincial Chief, the Portuguese lost no time in availing themselves of it by creating a permanent settlement. The town which they built probably extended from the northern limit of the present circuit-house ‡ to the southern border of the present Joraghat (*double ghat*). It is certain that they had no land higher up the river, and it is almost equally certain that they had none lower down, except, perhaps, the quarter known as Haldartuli. As this part of Bengal was then anything but safe, the Portuguese thought it prudent to take steps for the protection of their settlement, and, accordingly, with the permission of the Mogul Viceroy, they built a fort and dug a moat round three sides of the town, the fourth being protected by the river, so

* *Ibid* Chapter I.

† This building stands on the boundary-line which separates Bandel from Keota.

that, when the moat was filled, as it was daily by the tidal waters, the settlement assumed the aspect of a small island. The fort had been built previous to 1585, the year in which the place was visited by the well-known English traveller, Ralph Fitch.

As the fame of Hooghly began to eclipse that of Satgaon, the Mogul Governor who had his headquarters at the latter place, built a castle in the new town and garrisoned it with Moghul soldiers. In 1603, it would seem, this castle was captured by the Portuguese and its garrison killed to a man. It is probable that the Moghul soldiers, or the Governor of Satgaon, were much to blame, otherwise the Great Mogul, Akbar, whose reign was one continued series of successes, would not have allowed the Portuguese to go unpunished. As a matter of fact they were not disturbed either in the reign of that Emperor or in that of his son, Jehangir. Hooghly rose to be the principal seat of commerce in this part of Bengal, and attracted people from all quarters. The Portuguese came in large numbers, some from Goa and some from the mother-country. Thus, in course of time, the number of Europeans alone came greatly to exceed ten thousand. Though the trade was principally carried on by water, still the town possessed almost all the advantages of lands within municipal bounds. There were good roads for the convenience of passengers and equally good drains for the discharge of surplus water.

Indeed, sanitation appears to have made a fair progress, and the general health of the towns-people was far from bad. As a matter of fact, we hear of no epidemic having broken out during the whole period the Portuguese held it. And not only sanitation, but what is called supreme law,* to wit, the safety of the inhabitants, was duly provided for. There were night-guards who were not allowed to sleep over their duty as some of them now do. Though the surrounding villages now and then suffered from the ravages of robbers, Hooghly itself was seldom the scene of such disturbances. The only oppression which the natives suffered was from the Portuguese themselves, and this was sometimes very unjust and arbitrary. Even the serious matter of religion was interfered with, and not unfrequently were people forcibly converted to Christianity, against the spirit of its teachings.

The Portuguese at Hooghly reached the acme of their power and affluence in the beginning of the seventeenth century. But their fall was as sudden in its occurrence as it was terrible in its consequence. This event took place, as we have already stated,† in 1632. The town was destroyed and with it the Portuguese trade in Bengal became a memory of the past. The offices were removed from Satgaon to Hooghly which became the chief port, if not the

* *Salus populi suprema lex.*

† *Vide* Chapter I.

only port, of the western arm of the Ganges. Thus, as a matter of fact, the prosperity of the town was not much affected by its change of masters. A Fouzdar was appointed to keep the country under check and control, and he fixed his headquarters at Hooghly. This officer was liberally paid, and possessed considerable powers. In fact, he was only second to the Chief Governor of Sircar Satgaon. The Portuguese fort having been demolished, another fort was built by the Moguls for the protection of the town. Close to the fort were the private palace and gardens of the Fouzdar. These works occupied the grounds extending from the deep ditch to the west of the Post-office buildings right up to the place on which the present jail stands.

Shortly after the expulsion of the Portuguese, the English came to Hooghly for purposes of trade, but they were not allowed to build a factory until the year 1644. The Dutch also arrived about the same time, but they soon removed to the neighbouring village of Chinsura* and established there their settlement, which they afterwards strongly fortified. The north gate of their fort stood somewhere on the land which adjoins the Joraghat. The Dutch drove as brisk a trade at Chinsura as

* The philosophic historian of the *European Settlements in the East and West Indies*, the Abbé Raynal, describes Chinsura as a suburb of Hooghly.

the English did at Hooghly, and as both these nations were remarkable for commercial enterprise*, they received great encouragement at the hands of the Mogul Governors. But though the town did not suffer in point of trade by the expulsion of the Portuguse, there was some falling off in a sanitary point of view. The roads were no longer kept as neat and clean as they had been during the time of the Portuguese, nor were the drains properly looked after. Nevertheless, it would seem that sanitation was not altogether neglected, and this is best proved by the fact that during the Mogul sway, the townfolk did not suffer from epidemics, nor was there much sickness in the land. True to their instinct, the Mogul officers never attempted European cleanliness in their persons, or European neatness in the places they lived in or governed. But there was one important improvement which the town owed the Moguls. This was its division into eighteen *Mohullas*,† or wards, some of which are traceable even in the present day.

With the loss of Moslem supremacy in Bengal Hooghly was cast quite in the shade. In January 1757, it was captured and sacked by the English.

* Commerce raised Holland from her morasses, and Venice from her canals. Chinsura was the chief trade-mart of the Dutch in Bengal.

† The town has now been extended to the southern limit of the village of Mir-Kala, and the number of *Mohullas* increased to thirty-seven.

This terrible mishap gave the death-blow to its pride and prosperity. Calcutta was established as the seat of Government, and all the public offices were removed there. Hooghly thus fell into sad insignificance. True, it continued to be the residence of the Fouzdar, but it lost its former importance. Even that office was at last abolished in 1793*, and in 1795 the Hooghly district was formed. With its formation into a district, Hooghly regained some of its former importance, though it was a mere trifle in comparison with what it had been before. An officer was appointed, who exercised the functions of both Judge and Magistrate, the revenue jurisdiction remaining, as before, with the Collector of Burdwan. Though the town became the headquarters of the district, it but ill deserved that honour, to such a low state it had fallen. Indeed, it was anything but a respectable-looking town. The Judge-Magistrate described it in 1814 as "a small straggling town," and, what was more to be regretted, it was anything but secure. The authorities soon adopted suitable measures for improving this deplorable state of things. The Government passed Regulation XIII in 1813, and, thus, sowed the first seeds of Municipal Government in Bengal. Under its provisions the inhabitants of towns were empowered to make better provision for watch

* Mr. Morley, however, says that the Fouzdars were abolished in 1781. *The Administration of Justice*, 1858, p 51.

and ward, and for the protection of their property. As Hooghly needed such a law, it was introduced into it early in June the following year. Sixty Chowkidars were appointed to the two main sections, Bali and Goleghat, into which the town was divided, and as they were only too earnest and careful in the discharge of their duties, the sleepless gentlemen of the night found their palmy days numbered. The Magistrate reported that since the establishment of the Chowkidars, there had been no robberies or even thefts.

The Regulation of 1813 was certainly a wholesome law, but the procedure prescribed in it was not equally happy. At any rate, serious defects were found in its working, and it was deemed absolutely necessary to remedy them. Accordingly, Regulation XII* was passed in 1816 which besides remedying those defects, laid down, for the first time, rules for conservancy, lighting and other municipal purposes. About this time, Mr. C. D. Smyth, whose name has justly become a household word in this part of Bengal, joined the District as its judicial and executive Head, and it is to him that Hooghly owes many of the improvements which still live to tell their own tale. But as Mr. Smyth was engaged in other matters in the first few years of his rule, none of these improve-

* This Regulation was a little modified by Regulations VII of 1817 and III of 1821.

ments date from a period anterior to the year 1823, in which a calamitous flood ravaged this part of the Province. In fact, it was this disastrous visitation which gave a strong impetus to his mind and mainly led to his initiating the reforms which he had so much at heart. He looked about for funds, and finding to his satisfaction that the town duties levied under Regulation X of 1810 showed a surplus, he took some two thousand rupees out of them, and spent the amount on the improvement of the town. But he did not stop here. In fact, this was only the beginning, and, as the measure elicited praise from the higher authorities, it was followed up, until in 1829 the town assumed a very respectable appearance. In that year nearly five thousand rupees were spent, and as Mr. Smyth was also a thorough man of business, the money was laid out to the best advantage. The public road near the the Collectorate was widened; the Civil Court tank, the Pipalpati tank and some other tanks were excavated; trees were planted by the sides of the roads, and some of the roads themselves were metalled with brick. The handsome masonry-ghat which bears the familiar, but not the less honoured, name of Smyth was built in the same year. The old circuit-house also dates from about the same time.

While these improvements were being made in the town, down came like a bolt from the blue the

order of the Government of India discontinuing "the further appropriation of the surplus town duties to purposes of public improvement;" dissolving the local committees and placing their duties in the hands of the Magistrate. Thus, the noble work which Mr. Smyth had taken in hand and in which he had made considerable progress, had suddenly to be stopped, and it is, therefore, no wonder that we hear no more of municipal matters until 1837, when a change for the better came over the aspect of affairs.

By Regulation XV of that year, the maximum Chowkidari assessment under Regulation XII of 1816 was raised to Rs. 2, and the principle of applying the surplus collections to improvements in the town was re-affirmed. Two fire-engines were purchased from Calcutta in this year. The work which had to be stopped towards the close of the year 1829, was resumed with re-doubled vigour, and the result was that Hooghly as well as Chinsura soon presented "an appearance of neatness and regularity not often observable in the towns of the Lower Provinces." But the work of improvement was not yet complete, notwithstanding the progress which had been already made. Some parts of the town were still overgrown with jungle and contained many stagnant pools which required to be filled up at once. The river, moreover, was subject to contamination from corpses and carcases and the dirty

contents of conservancy carts which used to be constantly thrown and emptied into it.

The offices of Judge and Magistrate having been separated* by this time, Mr. E. A. Samuel's was placed in charge of the executive department. This officer was a worthy successor of Mr. Smyth in the Magistracy, and gave his heart and soul to the work he was entrusted with. Owing to the increase of Chowkidari tax by Regulation XV of 1837, collections could not be made with ease and punctuality. The Chowkidars grumbled for the arrears into which their pay had fallen, and the safety of the town was jeopardised. At this juncture some leading men of the place came forward and offered to take the collections into their own hands, guaranteeing the full amount of the existing assessment. The Magistrate, Mr. Samuel's, approving of this system of local self-government, reported their offer to Government for sanction, and, on this being

* This was certainly a move in the right direction. Dr. Adam Smith very properly observes : "When the Judicial is united to the Executive power, it is scarcely possible that justice should not frequently be sacrificed to what is vulgarly called politics. The persons entrusted with the great interests of the State may even without any corrupt views sometimes imagine it necessary to sacrifice to those interests the rights of a private man. But upon the impartial administration of justice depends the liberty of every individual, the sense which he has of his own security. In order to make every individual feel himself perfectly secure in the possession of every right which belongs to him, it is not only necessary that the judicial should be separated from the executive power, but that it should be rendered as much as possible independent of that power." *Wealth of Nations* Book V, Chap. I, Part II. See also Sir Richard Garth's, *A few plain Truths about India*.

granted, called a public meeting of the inhabitants on the 5th June, 1840. The meeting was a great success, and a Committee consisting of nine members was appointed to take into consideration measures for the Municipal management of the towns of Hooghly, Chinsura and Chandernagore. Baboo Roma Prosad Roy, who afterwards so highly distinguished himself in the Sadar Dewani Adalat, and Syed Keramat Ali, the recognised head of the Mahomedan community, took part in the proceedings. The Meeting, indeed, may be said to mark an epoch in the annals of the Municipal Government of Hooghly. The Committee, appointed at it, elected Syed Keramat Ali as President, and Baboo Eshan Chundra Banerjee of the Education Department as Honorary Secretary. This being done, they requested the Magistrate to make over to them the full control of the conservancy, collecting and Chowkidari establishments, and to appoint a writer "to do the drudgery." But as the Magistrate was not legally competent to grant such request, the Committee was placed in an entirely false position. In the meantime, the President and the members quarrelled over the appointment of a Bukshee, and the result was that the former threw up his appointment, when Moulvie Akbar Shah, one of the members, was appointed President in his place. To add to the confusion, the people, mistaking the real object of the meeting of the 5th of June, took it to be a

preliminary to fresh taxation, and threw every possible obstacle in the way of the Committee. Thus, as a matter of fact, nothing of real importance had been done, when, in September 1841, the term of one year for which the Committee had been appointed expired.

Considering the untoward circumstances with which the Committee had all along struggled, there seemed to be little probability of its being elected a second time, but, as good fortune would have it, it was re-elected in February, 1842. Its first act, after its re-election, was the very proper and sensible one of asking the Magistrate to move the Government to define more clearly its duties, powers and responsibilities, and the outcome of this request was the passing of Act X of 1842,*—the first purely Municipal law in Bengal, “to make better provision for purposes connected with the public health and convenience.” By this Act the inhabitants of the town into which it was introduced were empowered to appoint a Committee, and the Committee, so appointed, was empowered to impose a tax on houses not exceeding 5 per cent. on their annual value. The details of the working of the Act were provided for by rules, and the Government reserved to itself the right of dissolving the Committee at any time. Under this Act Chandernagore was added

* This Act was repealed by Act XXVI of 1850.

to the Municipality, which formerly included only Hooghly and Chinsura. The Committee began their work in right good earnest, but an unforeseen occurrence soon presented itself which upset all their plans. In August, 1844, the country was suddenly overtaken by a formidable flood, which in violence and the amount of injury done by it was only second to the memorable flood of 1823. Many breaches were made in the Damodar embankments, and the consequence was that the villages all round were inundated. The waters reached Chinsura and Hooghly, and filled all the ditches and drains. This flood was followed by drought, and the drought again was followed by another flood in 1845.

From some time before that year Mr. G. P. Leycester was Magistrate, but he soon left the District, making over charge to Mr. S. Wauchope. The latter, too, remained only for a short time, and we find him succeeded in the next year by Mr. A. Reid. Mr. Wauchope had already distinguished himself as an executive officer; but much greater reputation was in store for him when, in his capacity of Dacoity Commissioner, he succeeded in putting down dacoity which had become so very dangerous to the peace of the country. The magisterial authorities being busy with more important matters, the Municipal administration of the town showed little sign of improvement. In fact, this state of things continued till 1856, when the Government passed

Act XX, thereby repealing Act XII of 1816, which had all along been in operation.

By the new Act, power was given to the Magistrate to determine the number of Chowkidars, with the limitation that in no case should it exceed one to every twenty-five houses. In the matter of assessment, option was given to levy the tax either according to the circumstances of the people, or according to the value of their holdings. But before the authorities had had time to put this Act into working order, the Sepoy Mutiny broke out and spread from one end of Hindustan to the other. At this time Mr. F. R. Cockerell was the Magistrate of Hooghly. Fully alive, as he was, to the danger which was hanging over the British Empire, he did not forget the ordinary duties of his office. Nay, he even found time to look after the improvement of the town. As Hooghly stood in need of a Strand Road, he made up his mind to construct one, and at once commenced work which had advanced far towards completion when the exigencies of Government service compelled Mr. Cockerell to leave the district, making over charge to Lord Ulick Browne. Only the finishing touch, as it were, had to be put to the work by the latter officer, and yet, taking the whole credit to himself, he put up a commemoration stone bearing his own name and that of the Jailor. The Strand Road is certainly a valuable acquisition to the town, for, besides affording considerable facilities

for locomotion and transit, it has added much to its beauty and symmetry. But, unfortunately, since the construction of the splendid Jubilee bridge over the river at Gholeghat, it has been wearing away, and it is apprehended that, unless preventive measures are taken, it will be swept away altogether in the course of a few years. In this state of things it behoves both the Magistrate and the Municipal Chairman to make every possible effort to check the further encroachment of the river.

Hitherto, no attempt had been made to reduce municipal administration to a system. But, as years rolled on, such a system became necessary, and, accordingly, in 1864 the Bengal Council passed Act III, which was the *first* attempt in that direction. This Act was introduced in Hooghly in the following year, when luckily the Magistracy was in the hands of Mr. R. V. Cockerell, a worthy brother of Mr. F. R. Cockerell. The Cockerells have done yeoman's service to the district, and it is only just and proper that their names should be held in grateful remembrance. As under the Act the Magistrate was to be the Chairman, Mr. Cockerell formed a Council of his own, and, with the assistance of his co-adjutors, proceeded to supply the wants of the town. But nothing could be done without money. Accordingly, assessment operations were set in motion. Baboo Romesh Chandra Mookerjee, who had distinguished himself as Darogah, was the officer selected for this

purpose ; but unfortunately his proceedings caused great dissatisfaction. That the hardship was keenly felt is evidenced by the heavy arrears which were found to be due at the end of the year. The demand for the year was Rs. 28,000 and odd, but the amount actually realised did not come up to Rs. 22,000.

While assessment was busily going on, the Magistrate put his hand to a work of public utility. This was the making of a road from the Hooghly Railway Station to the side of the river at Baboogunge. Some portions of the private lands which fell in the road were purchased, and some portions given free of charge by their owners. The work was commenced in 1865, but although it was continued without intermission, it was not completed before 1868. The Chairman's report of the 2nd June 1866 shows that in the year under review more than twelve thousand rupees had been spent on the road. Indeed, it cost in round numbers eighteen thousand rupees. But, heavy as the cost was, the road is certainly a very valuable acquisition to the town. Indeed, as far as road-making goes, the Cockerell brothers might well vie with Mr. D. C. Smyth who was the first to make some good roads in the station which still testify to the deep interest he took in its amelioration and advancement. Mr. R. V. Cockerell carried out some other works for civic improvement, but that for which he is best known, and which very

properly bears his name, is the splendid road we have spoken of above.

Mr. Cockerell left the district for good in 1870, when Mr. F. H. Pellew took his place in the Magistracy and the Municipality. In that year was passed Act VIII, which provided for the appointment, dismissal and maintenance of village Chowkidars. This Act underwent some modifications in subsequent years,* but the main provisions have remained unaltered up to the present time. In 1871, fever raged very violently in the district, and as subsoil humidity and obstructed drainage were considered to be its proximate causes, the Hooghly and Burdwan Drainage Act † was passed. But, beyond passing the Act, no noteworthy attempt would seem to have been made to introduce a better system of drainage. In fact, as far as the town is concerned, its drainage is still anything but good. But it is gratifying to observe that the Municipality has, at last, warmed up to its duty, and has made a survey and measurement of the town in view of a better drainage scheme; and it is needless to say, the sooner the scheme is put into operation the better.

In 1872, when Sir George Campbell was in charge of the Government of Bengal, a census was taken of the whole Province, and it was found that

* By Acts I of 1871 and 1886.

† Act V of 1871.

the population of the Hooghly Municipality amounted to 67,538, showing a decrease of more than 2,500 souls from that of 1837. This fact is alone sufficient to show that the health of the town, so far from improving, had deteriorated, and this conclusion is confirmed by the successive reports of the Civil Surgeon.

Act III of 1864 had worked pretty well, but change of circumstances necessitated an alteration in some of its provisions, and, accordingly, in 1876 the Bengal Council repealed it, along with its subsidiary Acts, by Act V, which was properly styled the Mofussil Municipalities Act. As a supplement to the latter Act, was passed in 1878 Act VI, which provided for the construction and cleansing of latrines in first-class Municipalities. These two Acts remained in force till 1884, when they were repealed by Act III, which is the governing law on the subject. This Act which came into force on the 1st August had for its object the amendment and consolidation of the law relating to Municipalities. The principle of this Act is very different from that of the English Municipal Corporations Act, 1882, for while, under the latter Act, Municipality means the whole body of the inhabitants of a borough, under the former, the body corporate is constituted by the incorporation of the Commissioners only; but since the introduction of the elective system, the difference has to a considerable extent disappeared. Although,

as a matter of fact, the Commissioners form the body corporate, two-thirds of their number being elected by the rate-payers, the inhabitants of the Municipality as a body have evidently a voice in the Council.

In order to understand the general scope of the Bengal Act, it is necessary to consider what the purposes are to which the Municipal fund may be applied, and how they have been provided for. Those purposes, as stated in section 69, are as follows:—1. Construction and improvements of roads, bridges, and the like. 2. The supply of water, and the lighting and watering of roads. 3. The erection and maintenance of offices and other buildings. 4. Other works of public utility for the promotion of the health, comfort or convenience of the inhabitants. 5. The construction and repair of school-houses and the like. 6. The establishment and maintenance of hospitals and dispensaries. 7. The promotion of vaccination. 9. The maintenance of a fire-engine.

The Municipal fund is mainly derived from a house-tax* and a conservancy tax. The holdings

* The principle under which house-tax is assessed in England is thus laid down by J. S. Mill:—"When the occupier is not the owner, and does not hold on a repairing lease, the rent he pays is the measure of what the house costs him; but when he is the owner, some other measure must be sought. A valuation should be made of the house, not at what it would sell for, but at what would be the cost of rebuilding it, and this valuation might be periodically corrected by an allowance for what it had lost in value by time, or gained by repairs and improvements." *Political Economy*, Book V, Chap. III

are assessed according to their annual value, which is determined by the gross annual rent for which any holding may be reasonably expected to let.* The only exemption is in favour of holdings of which the annual value is *less than six rupees*.†

* This is the right principle : but houses not inhabited should not be taxed at all. On the subject of house-tax, Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* may be advantageously consulted. In that learned work, the father of political economists observes :—"Houses not inhabited ought to pay no tax. A tax upon them would fall altogether upon the proprietor, who would thus be taxed for a subject which afforded him neither conveniency nor revenue. Houses inhabited by the proprietor ought to be rated, not according to the expense which they might have cost in building, but according to the rent which an equitable arbitration might judge them likely to bring, if let to a tenant." Book V, Chap. II, p. 355. Edinburgh, 1829. A little further on, the author says :—"Untenanted houses, though by law subject to the tax, are, in most districts, exempted from it by the favour of the assessors." This is as it should be. It is also worthy of remark that, as when a house is rebuilt, improved or enlarged, there is a new valuation for purposes of taxation, so by parity of reasoning in the event of a house having suffered much from wear and tear of time, there should be a new valuation with a view to the reduction of its tax. But unfortunately this equitable principle is seldom, if ever, acted upon in this Municipality.

† Mill very properly observes :—"As incomes below a certain amount ought to be exempt from income-tax, so ought houses below a certain value from house-tax, on the universal principle of sparing from all taxation the absolute necessities of healthful existence." *Political Economy*, Book V, Chap. III. Houses being *necessaries*, they should not be so heavily taxed as *luxuries*. Hence, house-tax must from its very nature be moderate ; but, unfortunately for the public, this sound principle is not always acted upon. In civilised Greece, even war tax, which is so very necessary for the defence of the country, was very moderate. The Abbe Raynal says :—"The impost laid by Aristides on all Greece for the support of the war against Persia was so moderate, that those who were to contribute of themselves called it *the happy fortune of Greece* ! What times were these, and what a country in which taxes made the happiness of the people !" *History of Settlements in the East and West Indies*, Book XIX.

In Chapter V. of the aforesaid Book V, speaking of *local* taxes as distinguished from *general* taxes, the author says :—"It is an important principle, however, that taxes imposed by a local authority,

The prevailing rate of taxation is not the maximum rate * of $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. allowed by the Act, but $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. only. The conservancy tax is a little more than half of the house-tax. In 1889-90 the total income was Rs. 56,861, but in the next year it fell to Rs. 49,531, and in 1892-93 it was still less, being Rs. 47,438 only. Thus, the average income may be stated in round numbers at Rs. 50,000, † and the average expenditure also being about the same amount, equilibrium is nearly maintained. ‡ This being the state of the finances of the Municipality, let us see how it has served the purposes for which it has been established and maintained.

At the outset of British rule in Bengal, the district had no road worthy of the name.§ As for the roads

being less amenable to publicity and discussion than the acts of the government, should always be especial laid on for some definite service, and not exceeding the expense actually incurred in rendering the service." He then goes on to say that when, for instance, the tolls on roads or bridges have repaid with interest the whole of the expenditure, the road or bridge should be thrown open to the general public *free of toll*. In this connection we deem it proper to notice that in this Municipality *no tolls* are levied on roads or bridges.

* Unfortunately for this poor town, the maximum has now been reached, and that at the instance of the present Chairman, Babu Bistupada Chatterjee, for which he certainly deserves to receive some substantial recognition from Government.

† In 1902-3 the total income was Rs. 54,060 against 36,794 in the previous year.

‡ It is observable that while the population increased from 31,177 in 1890-91 to 33,060 in 1892-93, the number of rate-payers decreased from 8,406 in 1890-91 to 7,715 in 1892-73; and, accordingly, there has been some diminution in the income.

§ In Kennell's Map of the Hooghly district, however, it is shown as traversed by roads in every direction, but they were rather tracks set apart as roads than roads themselves.

spoken of by the great geographer, they were, as a rule, strips of land set apart at the various settlements for the purpose of public trade. Metalling and raising were quite unknown, and bridges there were only few.* This state of things continued till Mr. C. D. Smyth was appointed to the district.† Now, what was true of the district in general was not untrue of the head station. This town, too, stood in sad want of roads. But, with the advent of Mr. Smyth, this want was removed to a considerable extent. He constructed some good roads, most of which, if not all, are still in existence in some form or other. The example set by Mr. Smyth was not lost upon his successors, so that Hooghly does not now stand much in need of roads. In fact, it is almost covered with a net-work of roads and lanes; and if one or two deficiencies were supplied, it would be well provided so far as road-making goes.

Besides the Grand Trunk Road, there are the Strand road, the Pipalpati road, the Pankhatuli road, and the Chuck Bazar road, all running southwards

* Toynbee, p. 105.

† Even in 1837, the Magistrate remarked that "there was not a single road in the district which a European vehicle could traverse, while the number passable for hackeries in the rains are lamentably few." In connection with road-making, we deem it proper to mention the name of Baboo Chaku Ram Singh, Zemindar of Bhastara, who at his own expense constructed and also kept in repair an excellent road from Tribeni to his own village. He also gave Rs. 500 for the repairs of the Hooghly town roads.

towards Chinsura. The Bolagore road, which after meeting the Grand Trunk Road, passes through Bali and the places to its south, supplies the wants of the people residing in the western quarter of the town. Corresponding to these roads which run north and south, there are the Jubilee road and the Cockerell road running east and west. The Jubilee road has been recently made, and, as it was constructed during the time when Mr. B. De was the Chairman of the Municipality, it bears his name. But, as a matter of fact, the road was not the work of the Municipality. It was constructed by the Railway Company for the easy transit of their building materials, and has since been purchased from them by the Municipality, which has metalled it. This road commences from the Imambara ferry-ghat and runs up direct towards the west, until it meets the Pankhatuli road, whence, taking a little turn, it moves on like a huge unwieldy cobra before it crosses the Cockerell road, whence it runs direct towards Chinsura. The Cockerell road is the best in the whole station. It lies like a long wide riband, having its one end at the Baboogunge ghat and its other at the Hooghly Railway station. It is so straight that even a blind man might travel by it without the aid of a guide. At the boundary between Hooghly and Chinsura, there is a lane which runs westwards from Joraghat. If this lane were widened into a road and made to join the Chorghata

road, it would not only be a source of great convenience to people living in that quarter, but would add to the beauty and symmetry of the town. The Bolagore road extension, which passes through Bali and its neighbourhood, also needs to be widened in some places. Some of the bye-ways, it is true, are not as good as might be wished, but it is impossible to give general satisfaction in this respect. Thus, on the whole, Hooghly cannot be said to stand much in need of the means of easy and convenient locomotion and transit.

But the mere making of roads is not all that is required of a Municipality; it is equally necessary to maintain them in proper order. It is often found that to get a thing is not so difficult as to *retain* it. In the matter of roads, other people might learn from the French. Europe of all parts of the world is famous for its roads, and France of all European countries stands conspicuous in this respect. French roads are the best in the whole world.* Their roadmen pay particular attention to the roads, and are always vigilant over them. If anything goes wrong, they readily set it right, always acting upon the maxim of "a stitch in time saving nine." To construct a road is not so difficult as to keep it in order. Good roads become bad roads through neglect, while bad roads become good roads, if well

* * See also Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, Book V, Chap. E. pp. 305-306.

cared for. French roads are well kept in both wet and dry weather. If there is mud in the roads, the road-men soon scrape it off, and if there is dust they sweep it off. This should be done in every respectable Municipality, but, as a matter of fact, it is seldom done. We hope, however, that in the matter of the maintenance of the roads, the Municipal authorities of this town will try to follow the French, and if they need ocular demonstration of the doings of that civilized nation, they might satisfy themselves by a glance at their only remaining Settlement in Bengal. Bridges there are few in this town, and they are not badly kept. But some hollow places require to be spanned by culverts, for in the rainy season locomotion becomes difficult in consequence of the overflow of water in them. This want is keenly felt in certain parts of Gholeghat and Bali, and I need not say that it should be supplied without any further delay.

Nothing is more conducive to health than pure, wholesome water, and it is no exaggeration to say, with the Sanskrit poets, that it is *life* itself. That this is so, we need not go far for proof, as it is best evidenced in Calcutta which, since the introduction of water-works, has, from an unhealthy place, been turned into almost a sanitarium. But all places do not require such works, nor can all places afford to pay for them. Hooghly is too poor to bear such an additional charge, and, unfortunately for us, we have

no Nabob Gunny Meah or Nabob Ahsanullah amongst us. It is true, Maharaja Durga Charan Laha * is a native of Chinsura. But, though the Maharaja has certainly the means, I doubt very much if he has also the wish to emulate these benefactors. We are told, however, that at a meeting which was held for the purpose he offered to pay ten thousand rupees for the proposed works, on condition that water should be supplied to the inhabitants free of charge ; but where is the remainder of the amount to come from? It is open to question whether such works are absolutely necessary in this part of the country. Here the water of the river is not brackish as in Calcutta, and, except in the rainy months, it remains sufficiently pure, requiring no filtering before it can be drunk. In this opinion we do not stand unique, as we are borne out by the Administration Report of the Municipality for the year 1890-91. In that Report it is stated, evidently on the authority of the local Civil Surgeon, that the river water in this part of the country is *not unwholesome*, and that the water of the tanks resorted to by the people is also good.†

* This prince of native merchants has since died, leaving two worthy sons to inherit his vast fortune.

† In the Serampore Municipality also, there are no water-works, and yet the people do not seem to suffer at all. "The river water is used by almost all the people residing close to the river. The people who live in the interior obtain water from tanks for drinking and other domestic purposes." *Administration Report of the Serampore Municipality for 1892-93.*

This being the real state of things, and as increase of taxation will make the burden intolerable, we may well defer the introduction of water-works to some future time. For the present, as a provision against the impurity of the river water during the rains, some additional tanks should be excavated, which should be reserved for drinking purposes only. To force water-works upon the people when they do not urgently require them, would be neither just nor proper. We need not remind our Chairman,* in passing, that, while there was only one meeting in favour of the scheme, there have been several to protest against it.

Russell, in his *Diary in the East*, observes that wind in Cairo means dust, and dust means utter discomfort. Now, what is true of that *Grand City* is also true of many other places in the East. Hooghly is not an exception. In the hot season dust rises on the least provocation. In such a place, road-watering is absolutely necessary, and the Municipal authorities too are not quite remiss in this matter. But unfortunately for the general public the watering is not done in the way in which it should be done. The fact is that while some favoured spots are watered to the consistency of clay, not a few are left wholly to themselves. In this connection, we ought to notice the benefit which

* The Chairman referred to has since been summoned away from his world unto the next.

has been conferred on the Municipality by the present Chairman * by sinking a large well at Bhutkhana, mainly for the purpose of watering the Pankhatuli and Pipulpati roads. This well, though it cost a pretty large sum, has done much good in the way of supplying water for watering the roads as well as for domestic purposes. An establishment of fifteen *gariwans* and ten sweepers has also been kept up for the purpose of sweeping the roads and removing the street sweepings.

The lighting of the town again has not been forgotten, the present Chairman † especially deserving credit for having increased the number of lights from 300 to 462. In Calcutta, the lights are so many and are so beautifully arranged that it seems as if the festival of the *Devuli* were celebrated there every night. Although this not the case in Hooghly, still the lights that exist are at least in some parts reasonably sufficient for the purposes for which they have been set up.‡

Next in importance to the supply of *pure* water is the drainage of *impure* water. Water has been called life, but what is *life* under one state of circumstances may prove *death* in another. Water which in its running state conduces to health and

* This was written when the late Rai Eshan Chandra Mitter Bahadur was the Chairman.

† Vide the above Note.

‡ In 1902-3 street lighting cost only Rs. 3,875. No lighting rate is levied in this Municipality.

happiness becomes a fruitful source of injury and misery when it is allowed to stagnate. This is the main, if not the only, reason why low marshes and silted-up streams breed malaria and give rise to fever and other diseases. The Districts of Twenty-four Parganas, Nadia, Murshidabad, Burdwan and Hooghly, were at one time very healthy; but they have become for some years very unhealthy, simply because the rivers and streams, which were the natural channels, have silted up and ceased to perform their functions, thereby producing obstructions and causing ague and fever. The silting-up of the Saraswati has contributed, not a little, to the generation and spread of malarial fever in Tribeni and its neighbouring villages, all of which were, in days not long gone by, remarkably healthy spots. The drainage of the Dankunia *bheels* in this district has considerably improved the health and fertility of the surrounding villages. Not many years ago, Calcutta was little better than the notoriously unhealthy places lower down the river, but since the introduction of water-works and the improved system of drainage, a great change for the better has come over it, insomuch that it would be no exaggeration to say that it has become almost a sanitarium.* Except in the comparatively dirty

* The island of Bombay was for a long time an object of general horror. No man chose to settle in a territory so unhealthy as to give rise to the proverb, *That at Bombay a man's life did not*

quarters of Bali the general health of the town is not bad ; but, bad though it is not, it cannot be said to be positively good, and this is mainly owing to its defective drainage. True it is, there are no marshes or swamps in it, or else the place would become a regular Golgotha ; but the existing drains are so ill kept that they have almost ceased to perform their functions. As they stand at present, the waters, not finding proper outlet, stagnate, and by coming into close contact with rank vegetation, breed malaria. Now that the Municipality has gained importance as a public institution existing for the promotion of the health and comforts of its inhabitants, it is its bounden duty to show that it has not been remiss in duly executing the grave charge which it has taken upon itself to perform ; and, as we have stated before, the proposed drainage scheme, in view of which survey has been made and levels taken, should be put into actual operation without delay.*

Besides adopting means to promote the health of its inhabitants, however, a Municipality should

exceed two monsoons. The country places were then filled with bamboos and cocoa trees : it was with stinking fish that the trees were dunged, and the coasts were corrupted with infectious fens. Afterwards, with the advent of the English, the insalubrity of the air was corrected by laying the country open and procuring a drain for the waters. See Abbe Raynal's *History of European Settlements in the East and West*, Book III., J. O. Justamond's translation, 1873.

* In 1902-3 drainage cost Rs. 3,360 against 2,794 in the previous year.

proceed further and also provide means for the recruiting of health when it has been put out of order. The human body, as the Bengali adage goes, is a store-house of distempers, and however carefully we may try to keep it from going wrong, it will now and then lose its even tenour and have to seek the aid of the healing art for the restoration of its normal condition. Our Municipality does not fulfil its duty in this respect, for the Commissioners have no dispensary of their own.* The only public dispensary which exists in the Municipality is the Imambara Hospital, the whole expenditure of which is borne by what is called the Mohsin funds. This Hospital has been in existence since 1836,† and has, we must admit, done some good to the general public. A Cholera Hospital has since been established in Chinsura, mainly through the exertions of the present Chairman.‡ The attempt is undoubtedly a very noble one, and we hope and believe that it will prove a successful institution in the cause of humanity.

If, again, it is necessary to provide means for the health of the body, it is equally necessary to provide means for the health of the mind, ignorance being no better than savagery. This want can only be

* The Serampore Municipality has two Dispensaries of its own, which are maintained at a cost of about Rs. 4,300.

† The Serampore Native Hospital was also established in this year, chiefly through the exertions of the Rev. Dr. Marshman and Dr. Voigt, the Civil Surgeon. See F. G. Elberling's Report, 1845.

‡ Written when the late Rai Eshan Chandra Mitter was the Chairman.

supplied by proper education, and education, as a rule, cannot be imparted without the agency of schools. Of all the duties entrusted to Municipal bodies, the encouragement of education, more especially primary education, is one of the most important, and it is needless to say that this duty should be performed to its fullest extent, of course as far as the funds in hand will admit. In the Administration Report for 1865-66, we find no expenditure entered under the head of public instruction; in fact, there is no such item mentioned even by name. But since then matters have improved, and we find that in 1889-90 Rs. 800 was spent on that account, which was increased to Rs. 980 in the next following year. In 1892-93 the expenditure under this head came up to Rs. 1,859. In this connection we would suggest that, if the Municipality can manage to establish and maintain a free school in the town, it will do an immense deal of good to poor people who cannot afford to pay for the education of their children.

In hot countries like Bengal, small-pox† is very common, especially in the months of April and

* In 1902-3 the total expenditure on the head of Public Instruction rose from Rs. 796 to 833. The increase was chiefly due to the grant of Rs. 5 per month to the Public Library.

† This dreadful scourge was unknown to antiquity, it having arisen in modern times. Indeed, David Hume very properly observes:—“Diseases are mentioned in antiquity, which are almost unknown to modern medicine: and new diseases have arisen and propagated themselves, of which there are no traces in ancient history. In this

May. Inoculation was all along the settled practice in Bengal, and it still lingers in some out-of-the-way villages; but the practice now in general use, as being favoured by Government, is vaccination.* One of the prescribed duties of Bengal Municipalities is the promotion of vaccination. For this purpose a staff of vaccinators is maintained at the expense of this Municipality, who go about vaccinating the people. Vaccination at a certain defined age has been made compulsory, and any departure from this regulation is met with due punishment.

In connection with the subject of health, the matter of burning ghats and burial grounds should not be left unnoticed. Neither the one nor the other should, if possible, exist in the heart of the town. They should be relegated to the extreme limits, and although that might entail some inconvenience on people engaged in the performance of the most painful of all duties, this does not count for much, when compared with the danger arising from the effects of cremation and interment in the midst of a crowded locality. The Kalitola burning ghat is not

particular we may observe, upon comparison, that the disadvantage is much on the side of the moderns. Not to mention some others of less moment, the small-pox commits such ravages as would almost alone account for the great superiority ascribed to ancient times." *Essay on Populousness of Ancient Nations*. See also Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Vol. I.

* The law relating to vaccination is embodied in Bengal Council Act V of 1880. Opinions differ as to the superior efficacy of vaccination; and some doctors even go so far as to condemn it. It seems to us that in Bengal it would be well if the old practice of inoculation were restored.

so objectionable as the Ghutia Bazar ghat, and if it be possible, the latter should be closed up and a new one built in its stead in a less crowded quarter. The burial grounds which are in the midst of the town are seldom resorted to, most of the corpses of Mahomedans being interred in the maidan at Kerbela, near the Hooghly Railway Station. The Bandel burial-ground for Roman Catholics cannot be removed, but its situation is not objectionable. The Gorosthan burial-ground for Protestants and the Mogultuli burial-ground for Armenians have become almost useless in consequence of the paucity of these sections of the population in the town.

A word or two about the offices and other public buildings, and I shall have done with this part of the subject. On this head we are sorry to observe, the Hooghly Municipality has not much to boast of. It has no school, no dispensary, no hospital of its own. But, though poor in these matters, it is rich in the possession of a building for its office. This is the Jubilee Hall, which is situated in the very heart of the town, and owes its existence to Mr. G. Toynbee, of whom we have already spoken in connection with his useful publication. This gentleman called a meeting of the principal inhabitants of Hooghly and Chinsura on the 21st March 1887, and thus laid the foundation of a work which has since become an institution of the town. Before this building was erected, the Municipal Office had only

“a name,” but, since its erection, it has also found “a local habitation.” Though not a splendid thing, it very well answers the purposes for which it was built. It is a one-storeyed house, comprising four rooms, two open verandahs, and a central hall, which gives it its name. This is the main office, in which all principal affairs are transacted. The building is also utilized for the purpose of holding public meetings. Thus, it is not only a business resort, but subserves other important purposes as well.

A short description of the Municipality may fitly close this chapter. It consists of Hooghly Proper and the townships of Chinsura and Chandernagore, and covers an area of six square miles. It extends along the west bank of the Hooghly river, from the southern extremity of Mircala to the southern extremity of British Chandernagore, with an average width of a little above a mile. It is divided into six Wards, of which three are in Hooghly Proper, two in Chinsura, and one in Chandernagore. The administration of the Municipality is conducted by eighteen Commissioners including the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman. Of these Commissioners, twelve are elected by the rate-payers and the remaining six are appointed by Government. The number of rate-payers is 7,715.* The Hindus muster strong in all

* In the Administration Report for 1902-3 it is stated that rate-payers rose from 7,329 to 7,618, representing 25.92 per cent. of the total Municipal population which at the last census was 29,383.

the three towns of which the Municipality consists. The number of Mahomedans does not exceed six thousand souls. At one time there were many Europeans living in Hooghly and Chinsura, but a change has since come over the place, and the European population has been reduced to about a dozen.



CHAPTER XVII.

OBJECTS OF ANTIQUARIAN INTEREST IN HOOGHLY.

The Bandel Church.—This is the oldest church in all Bengal, having been built in the last year of the sixteenth century. A certain captain, named Tavarez, having ingratiated himself into the favour of the Great Mogul, Akbar, obtained from His Majesty full liberty for Christians to preach the gospel publicly, and also to erect churches for public worship. In accordance with this Imperial permission a convent was built in Bandel, a village distant about a mile from the Portuguese factory. It is, as Bishop Heber has described it, an Italian-looking church and extends from north to south, the altar like that

of the Dutch being at the north end. The building is of a Gothic make, being erected on very strong foundations. At the western corner of the southern end is a low tower, south of which is a pointed arch. In a niche under this arch is a statue of the Virgin and Child, "Our Blessed Lady of Happy Voyage." Above the statue is the following inscription:— "The old tower was destroyed by earth-quake on 12th June, 1897. The new tower was built by the Rev. P. M. da Silva, Prior of the Bandel Church, by subscriptions raised by him, November, 1897." Beneath the statue is a model of a full-rigged ship.

The centre of attraction at the present moment in this once famous place is the statue of "Our Blessed Lady of Happy Voyage." This very same statue was, it is admitted, located on the altar of the Military chapel in the Portuguese factory at Hooghly Gholeghat, which was destroyed by the Mogul soldiery in 1632. The holy priest, Fra da Cruz, was devotedly attached to the "Blessed Mary of Happy Voyage," and was accustomed to spend many hours in prayer at the foot of this particular altar. A pious Portuguese merchant, an intimate friend of Fra da Cruz, and a fervent Catholic, it is said, had a lively faith in the maternal power and invoked her aid in all his undertakings. During the confusion which followed the assault on the Portuguese fort, this pious man, dreading the desecration of the statue by the Mogul soldiers, watched for a

favourable opportunity, and taking it from the altar where it lay, jumped into the river with the intention of swimming across with it, but was seen no more. This circumstance deeply impressed the holy priest Fra da Silva, who was amongst the prisoners of war, and he never ceased praying for the safety of his daring friend and the sacred statue.

The prisoners were sent up to Delhi where most of them were made to change their faith and adopt Islam. Among those who would not obey the Imperial command were the aforesaid priest Fra da Cruz and four other Friars. When all means failed to destroy them they were ordered to be trampled under the foot of a huge elephant. The big burly beast which had been kept without food for some days in order to make him inordinately furious, was let loose on an appointed day, but the animal so far from attacking the defenceless friars, all on a sudden became as meek as lamb and began to crouch at the feet of the holy priest. This wonderful circumstance made a very deep impression on the mind of the terrified Emperor, and he, there and then, ordered that the holy men might return to the place whence they had been taken. Accordingly, this handful of Christians came back to Bandel, and collecting a little money under the guidance of their zealous pastor commenced to repair the damage which the Church had sustained and also to improve it in other ways. As they were materially assisted by

Christians from all parts of India and Ceylon, it was not long before their task, arduous as it was, was completed.

Just when nearing completion, however, one beautiful night, the water of that part of the river over against the Church commenced to roar as if a terrible storm was at hand, and the noise swelled so very high that the holy priest was roused from his slumber. Suddenly a voice, as if that of his intimate friend, the merchant, who had jumped into the river with the statue during the assault on the factory, was heard, which spoke in these terms :—

Salva ! Salva ! Salva ! a nossa senhora da boa Viagem que dem nos esta victoria. Levante, levante, o padre, e orai por todas nos.

“ Hail ! Hail ! Hail ! to our Lady of Happy Voyage who has given us this victory. Arise ! Arise ! Oh Father ! and pray for us all.”

The holy priest was unable to sleep, but went at once to the window to see if he could fathom what the mystery was. But directly he had opened one of the venetians, he perceived that a part of the river was beautifully illuminated, and it appeared as if some one was approaching towards the Church. In another moment the beautiful light disappeared, all the noise ceased, and everything resumed its former quietness. The holy man, however, made no further endeavours in this direction, but imagining that it was only a freak of fancy that had deceived him,

sought his couch and was soon fast asleep. Early the next morning some half a dozen natives were seen near the Church compound shouting at the top of their voice that *Guru Ma* (meaning the Blessed Virgin Mary) had come to reign in the temple. The servants of the Church, noticing this, ran at once to the chamber of their master and roused him. The holy man, after hearing what the servants had to say, saw at a glance that his experience of the night previous was no idle dream but a stern reality, and at the same time remembered the voice of his faithful friend that had addressed him. He dressed as quickly as he could and ran out to verify the truth for himself. To his infinite surprise a few yards from the Church-gate he beheld the image of his beloved Heavenly Mother at whose holy feet he had poured out so often the longings of his pious soul. He prostrated himself before the statue, offered a short prayer of thanks-giving and carried the image with pious care and placed it on the principal altar inside the Church. A special feast was celebrated with due "pomp and circumstance" in token of this miraculous event, and on the feast day the image was borne in procession and placed in the small cavity on the tower facing the river. Some years after, it was again removed to the place which it now occupies, facing the south in the direction of the town proper. A *ghat* was also built on the spot where the statue was found, in commemoration of

this great event, the contributions for which came, not only from the Christian, but also from some of the non-Christian, families in the neighbourhood. The feast day too did not pass without another wonder being added to the strange events which had already come to pass. This relates to the great mast of an old Portuguese ship, which stands in the small enclosure, south of the Church. In those days of Portuguese power in India, Bengal was visited by a large number of Portuguese vessels, which constituted the vehicle for carrying on extensive commercial operations between Europe and Asia. Several Portuguese firms, doing a very large business, were established in Bengal. While the religious ceremonies, in connection with the remarkable discovery of the sacred Image were about to begin, a large Portuguese ship, evidently belonging to one of the firms referred to above, suddenly appeared at the *ghat*, facing the south entrance of the Church. No previous intimation had been received of this ship; and the officers and crew were not a little surprised to find that they had been brought to the very gate of a Church unknown to them even by name. They availed themselves of the opportunity, thus afforded them, of taking part in the celebrations. The service being over, the captain had an interview with the Rev Fra da Cruz, in the course of which he related how his vessel had encountered a terrific storm in the Bay of Biscay,

how the safety of the vessel had been endangered,—high waves, rising mountain-high, threatened every moment to engulf the storm-tossed vessel. The captain, a pious man, devoted to the Blessed Virgin, then made a vow promising suitable offering, if they reached some harbour in safety. His prayer was evidently heard, for the storm soon began to abate in its fury, and after a short time there was a perfect calm. Favourable wind and tide had brought them to the *Bandel ghat*. The captain had one mast of his vessel removed, and he presented it to the Church as a votive offering. Indeed, he had it firmly fixed in the ground where it has remained ever since. The mast has defied the elements for about two centuries and a half, and an examination of the wood shows no signs of decay,—indeed, it bids fair to last many years more. Unfortunately, the name of the ship or of the captain has not been preserved. This is the story * of the mast which has been existing since the year 1655.

The monastery used to be occupied by Augustinian Friars from Goa, the last of whom, father Joseph Gomez, died in the year 1859. There is now in charge only a Parish Priest who, however, still retains the title of Prior. The Church is, as we have

* The story of the mast as well as that of the discovery of the sacred statue is mainly taken from the Prior, M. V. Rodrigues's little Brochure on the *Bandel Church*, published in November, 1899.

already stated, under the Bishop of Meliapur and the Archbishop of Goa.

At the south-west corner of the Church stands a belfry five-story high, in which hangs a big bell. This bell formerly used to be rung every day, but now it is rung only on Sundays and on festive and funeral occasions. The bell emits a very solemn sound well fitted to the place in which it is, and is heard at a long distance.

The Bon Masjid.—This temple, as its name implies, is situated in the midst of a *forest* or rather *jungle*, about a mile to the east of the Bandel Junction station. It is an ordinary one-storeyed building, having three wide openings together with a *veranda* in front. It is not known when the inner room in which the *Sanctum* is, was built. The inscription which is on a black stone above the midmost opening, however, might give some information on the point, but unfortunately it is written in such uncouth characters and is moreover so badly blurred that it is impossible to make out what "the writing on the wall" means. Indeed, several attempts were made at different times to decipher it, but they all ended in failures. As for the *facade* or *veranda* in front, however, its origin is well-known. Haji Noor Mohammad Zakariah of Calcutta caused it to be erected in fulfilment of a vow which he had made anent a very dangerous illness from which he had been suffering for long. The rich Haji had also a

mind to furnish the openings of the inner chamber with doors, but on being warned against it in a dream by the presiding Divinity, he gave up his design.

The temple itself, however, is not of so much importance as the cave-like little structure which lies inextricably bound up with the giant roots of an ancient weird-looking peepul tree close by. Tradition has it that the said cave was the *astana*, or resting-place, of an old Fakir who was reputed for his great piety and was known as the Shah Sahib. He was credited with considerable powers over Nature and was said to have effected some wonderful cures. But his saintly fame seemed to have died with him until it was revived in the first quarter of the last century. A servant attached to the Bandel Church had been ailing for a long time, and life had become such an woeful burden to him that he would have been only too glad to have got rid of it. With some such object in view he one evening stole into the forest where the *astana* of Shah Sahib lay, and, accidentally lying down resigned on the sacred ground which to him, however, was common mother earth, went to sleep; but what was his surprise when, the next morning, he rose a sound healthy man free of all diseases and distempers. Recovering from his surprise he hurried out of his forest retreat and reported the matter to the Church people and

others in the neighbourhood. In this way this place gained celebrity and attracted persons from far and near. The Mahomedan community of Hooghly appointed a man to do regular service at the *Durgah* of the Saint. Some years after, when the *Durgah* had risen considerably in fame and importance, the late Radha Nath Banerjee of Ghutia Bazar laid claim to the sacred ground as forming part of his Zemindari and, therefore, liable to pay him rent. This being denied by the then Mullah, Solimullah, the claimant had recourse to Court. Solimullah being too poor to bear the expenses of litigation sought the assistance of the old Prior of the Bandel Church, who gladly responded to his call. The litigation lasted for some time and ended with the discomfiture of Radha Nath. The Prior who had helped the Mullah now asked to be repaid the money he had spent on his behalf; and the Mullah unable to meet his demand in kind conveyed the land in question to him, himself remaining as his tenant. Thus, the said land became the property of the Bandel Church and it is still so. The other land attached to the *Durgah* which was taken afterwards belongs to a neighbouring Brahman who also gets rent for it. The aforesaid Solimullah is long since dead. The present incumbent is Sheik Nababjan.

The *Durgah* is held in high esteem, and on every Friday many Mahomedans of both sexes come and

make free-will offerings, and after picnicing under its sombre sacred shade return home by dewy eve. At a few paces from the *astana*, there is an old-looking well whose water is supposed to possess some peculiar virtue. Indeed, it is considered to be a miniature of the famous *Zem-Zem* at Mecca, while the black stone above the central opening of the inner room of the temple is viewed in the light of the world-renowned *Caaba*. No wonder then, that the *Bon Masjid* with its surroundings have quite a charm for Mahomedans and serve to keep alive their faith in the saints of old.

The Tomb and Mosque of Syed Chand.—Syed Chand *alias* Shah Chand was an old fakir of great note. There is no knowing of what country he was a native, but this much is certain that he commenced his career of holiness in Hooghly in the second quarter of the seventeenth century. The times were very stirring. The Portuguese having incurred the grave displeasure of the Great Mogul of Delhi were attacked, defeated and turned out of the place. The offices were removed thither from Satgaon, and Hooghly was placed under the charge of a Fauzdar. Syed Chand was not only revered by the Mahomedans but was also honoured by the Hindus as well. Indeed, he passed for a saint * who could work wonders. At last, when

* What Shah Jelal was in Sylhet, Shah Chand was in Hooghly. He was a prince of fakirs. As for Shah Jelal, he lived in much

his time came, this great fakir, who almost rivalled Methuselah in age, died and was buried at the spot where his tomb now exists. The tomb is of earthy, no stone or brick being put on it. It is a plain, ordinary thing of its kind and has, as far as its character goes, no distinctive mark on it. But ere long a little brick-work was put up close to the tomb. This was done by a pious Mussalman, named Mahomed Ahsanulla, Naib Fauzdar of Hooghly, under Yar Beg Khan, the Fauzdar. The mosque bears no date, but the probability is that it saw the light about the middle of the eighteenth century. A person of the name of Mahomed Taheer was appointed to perform the duties of Muazzim *, for which he received two annas a day from the contingencies of the Fauzdari funds. Taheer was succeeded in the office by Habeeb Rahman, and the latter in his turn by his son, Khairul Rahman. In 1811 Hyder Ali, son of Khairul, was found performing the religious duties in connection with the above mosque and the tomb of the saint to which it is attached. After Hyder Ali came Sudfer Ali

older times and wrought some wonders. That prince of Moslem travellers, Abu Abdullah Mahommed, commonly known as Ibn Batuta, who visited Bengal about the year 1345 A. D., paid a reverential visit to the *Durgah* of Shah Jelal. He says that the saint was of a singular character and that his pretensions were wonderful. Shah Chand, though not so very well known as Shah Jelal, does not yield to him in point of sanctity of character and wonder-working powers.

* This word properly means one who calls others to prayer both in the morning and in the evening. •

who for some misconduct was dismissed by Nawab Khan Jehan Khan, the Ex-Fauzdar, who had been allowed by the English Government to occupy the Mogul fort. The Nawab as head of the Mahomedan community appointed Mahomed Muneer who held charge of the mosque and tomb, receiving Rs. 3-10 ans per mensem for his labour and trouble. This allowance he drew till his death. Muneer was succeeded by Mahomed Ameer who was found holding the sacred office in 1822, when Mr. Henry Oakley was Judge-Magistrate * By this time Nawab Khan Jehan Khan had died and it does not appear who took his place as head of the Mahomedan community.

In 1829, when Mr. D. C. Smyth was Judge of Hooghly, an addition was made to the mosque by the erection of a prayer-room. † Shaban Khan, who, for his deep learning in Mahomedan theology, was styled *Khari* Shaban Khan, was put in charge of the mosque and the small property belonging to it. As he had no son living, he was succeeded in his sacred office by his brother-in-law (wife's brother), *Khari* Goribullah, not an unworthy man to take his place. The latter died about three-and-twenty years ago, leaving a son, Abdool Karim, to succeed him.

* These facts I have gathered from a Persian robokari of the Collector of Hooghly, dated the 13th May, 1828. (See Toynbee, p. 174). Mr. Oakley was in Hooghly from 1816 to 1826.

† The inscription on it bears date 1244 Hegira, corresponding to 1830 A. D.

Abdool Karim was in his turn succeeded by his son, Abdool Gofur Khan, who is the present incumbent.

It appears that the great saint, Syed Chand, had his *astana* (resting place) at the foot of the sacred peepul tree which has been so long protecting his humble earthy tomb from the violent attacks of the elements. As is the case with the cave of Shah Sahib, close to the *Bon Masjid*, the roots of the tree have girt round the tomb of Syed Chand, as it were, with iron bands, so that the tree and the tomb could not be separated. Thus, it seems that there is truly what is called feeling of affection and reverence even in inanimate objects for human beings. Like the tree the tomb appears to be rooted to the soil by being closely embraced on all sides by it.

A little to the north-east of the prayer-room is a walled enclosure which contains the tomb of a fakir, named Mahbool Shah, which, unlike that of Syed Chand, is made of brick and mortar and in shape and size resembles a *Tasca*. This durbesh was a very peevish old man and was given to abusing people right and left, who paid him a visit. He gave up his ghost about thirty-three years ago.

The *Durgah* of Shah Chand has a wide repute and is held in high regard by all sections of the community. People make their vows at the sacred spot and, when their wishes are fulfilled, present

free-will offerings at the tomb and mosque. While the Courts were here, the successful suitor seldom left the place without making some presents to the saint at the *Durgah*. Indeed, the place is deemed a sacred ground, and people have the greatest regard for its sanctity. It is a veritable *sanctum sanctorum*.

It is said that when Mr. D. C. Smyth was in charge of the district, he had ordered some branches of the sacred peepul tree that overhangs the saint's tomb to be lopped off. A coolie had got up to the tree, but as the poor soul was going to use the axe, down he fell and died there and then after vomiting blood in profusion. The Judge too, it is said, being reproved by the saint in a dream, desisted from making any further attempt at having his order carried out. Surely, some spots have their peculiar sanctity, and any attempt at desecrating them in any way whatever is sure to entail some harm or mischief on the audacious perpetrator.

The Protappur Masjid:—This mosque was built on the site of an old mosque* which had been pulled down by the powerful Haldars of Haldartuli. In 1132 Hegira, corresponding to 1719 A. D., one Mir Mohammad Sakir, a rich native of Jaunpur, accompanied by a few followers, arrived at Hooghly *Bunder* on their way to Mecca. While waiting for

* This mosque probably bore date 1102 H. E. It was known as *But-Shaken Masjid* which means a Masjid built on the ruins of an idol temple.

the ship that was to start for that holy city, he, having heard of the violent outrage which had been committed by the Haldars, resolved to wreak vengeance on them. Accordingly, there was a free fight between the Hindus and the Mahomedans, in which among other mishaps, Moharnmad Sakir lost his brother, Shahabuddin. After the fight was over, he brought the whole matter to the notice of the Nawab of Murshidabad, the far-famed Murshid Kuli Khan, who caused a new mosque to be built on the site of the one pulled down, at the same time ordering the Fauzdar of Hooghly to keep a sharp eye upon the Hindus. The mosque with all its appurtenances covered a piece of land measuring three bighas.

While Murshid Kuli Khan was alive, the Haldars did not dare interfere in the matter of the mosque built at his instance. Nearly four years after his death, that is, in 1142 Hegira, they again tried to renew their animosity, but their efforts were baffled by the activity of the Mahomedan *Cazi*, backed as he was by the Mogul Fauzdar.

Mir Mohammad Sakir, feeling that his end was drawing high, executed, in 1170 Hegira (1758 A. D.)* in the fifth year of the reigning Emperor, Alamgir II, a deed of gift in favour of his two daughters, Taj Bibi and Rabiya Bibi, thereby creating them Matwalis of the Musjid. Some years after,

* At that time Solaman Beg was Naib Fauzdar of Hooghly

Rabiyah Bibi died without leaving any issue, whereupon Taj Bibi, who by this time had married Mir Fakir Mahi-uddin, became the sole Matwali. On Taj Bibi's death, her only daughter, Budrunnessa, who was married to Sheik Sofi Sana-ullah, took her place in the Matwaliship; and, again, on Budrunnessa's decease, her son, Golam Hyder, and daughter Kolimunnissa, became joint Matwalis. But, when some years after, Kolimunnissa who had no offspring to bind her to worldly concerns, went to Mecca and settled there for good, Golam Hyder became the sole manager of the mosque. This gentleman was very fortunate in having left behind him as his heirs three worthy sons. The eldest, Moulvi Azhur-ul-Huk, was a member of the Subordinate Executive Service. The second, Muzhur-ul-Huk, commonly called Mejli Meah, was a good Persian and Arabic scholar, and was in charge of the Musjid for some time. He did not take service under Government or any body else, but was a gentleman at large. The youngest, Zuhur-ul-Huk, also had acquired a good stock of knowledge, but the tenure of his life was short and he died quite young. The other brothers too have since died, and the Musjid and the property of the family are in the possession of their heirs and representatives.

The Bhetiarah Khana Mosque.—This mosque is situated in a quarter now called Bhetiarah or Bhut Khana, but formerly Shaistabad. There is nothing

very peculiar in the structure of this building, it is an ordinary one-storeyed house having three openings for access to the *Sanctum*. This temple was built by Syed Mohammad Ali, entitled Khan, in Hejira 1181, corresponding to 1769 A. D. It is walled all round. The blackstone inscription above the gate of this mosque is well worth recording, and, when rendered into English, runs as follows :—

"A good name is followed by everlasting fame,
I do, therefore, mention one so notable.

Perchance, good people, after the service is over,
May offer up prayer for the salvation of the founder
of this pious work.

Under directions from Syed Mohammad Ali,
entitled Khan,

The foundation of this religious institution
was laid.

With his great munificence and with divine
assistance,

When this structure was completed, I sought
for its date.

Wisdom, the old Sage, replied,

'On the Sunday of Zikad,

'In the year one thousand one hundred and
eighty one.

'This construction for the offer of prayers
was made,

—which date

'Thou mayest extract from the words—

Quad Quamat is—Salat (verily the prayer is to be offered=1197) with the word *adai* (offered=16) taken out.’”

This prayer-room was until lately in the charge of Moonshee Kefait-ullah, a government pensioner. His great-grandfather, Nazib-ullah, came from Hosenabad on the other side of Satgaon, and settled in Hooghly. He was a common school-master, whose earnings did not exceed Rs. 5 or 6 a month.. Nazib's son, Dianut-ullah, it is believed, was first placed in charge of the aforesaid mosque. Dianut's son was Moonshee Saifullah, the grand-father of the present incumbent, who is the son of Kefait-ullah. The site on which the mosque was erected was formerly occupied by a building (*Katra*) which had been built by Nawab Shaista Khan, whose name the quarter bore until it was superseded by the present name, Bhetiarah Khana. It would seem from the wording of the Persian inscription that although the foundation was laid under directions from Syed Mohammad Ali Khan he did not live to see it become a *fait accompli*. But as the building was erected with his money, it properly bears his name as the founder thereof.

The Forts.—Three forts have existed in Hooghly Proper at three different times, two of which must have been places of strength and importance in their day. The earliest of these was the Portuguese fort which was captured and destroyed by the

Moguls in 1632 A. D. This fort was built on the bank of the river at a spot about midway between the present Jubilee Bridge and the Hooghly, the main object being to safe-guard the factory which stood close by. The fort was, as we have already stated,* of a square form,† defended by bastions at the four corners. It was not only fortified with cannon, muskets and other implements of war, but was also defended by a deep broad ditch on three sides which was daily filled from the river which protected it on the fourth. Thus strategically considered, the place was a very strong one, and no wonder the Mogul army found great difficulty in capturing it. After taking the place the Mogul soldiers levelled the fort with the ground. All that remains of this stronghold are two low, broken walls which run into the river just to the north of the ditch on the west of the jail, and are visible only at low tide, and not even then when the river is high. The said ditch probably skirted the fort on the south,

* Vide Chapter I.

† Fort Orleans, which the French built at Chandernagore, was also of a square form, "about three fourths of a mile in circumference, with four bastions, each mounting sixteen guns, besides some on the curtain and a battery of four pieces of cannon on the top of a church. There was a dry fosse round the three sides to the land with a glacis of about 40 yards. At the north-ward port (i. e. gate) was a ravelin mounting five guns, and opposite the port towards the river side was a mud battery of six guns which flanked down the river". (see Ives's *Voyage from England to India*). Thus, the French fort was much stronger than the one in Hooghly belonging to the Portuguese; but it was nevertheless captured and levelled with the ground by the English in 1757. Since then, Chandernagore has remained unfortified.

while the moat which bordered it on the other two sides seems to have disappeared.

The second was the Mogul fort, built when Hooghly was declared the Royal Port of Bengal after the memorable events which took place in 1632. Like the Portuguese fort, it also stood on the river bank and occupied the space from about the spot where the Collector's *cutchery* stood to the deep broad ditch to the west of the Post Office on the way to Bali. A little to the south of the Portuguese fort for the space of about three hundred yards, a small indentation in the river bank gave rise to an eddy or whirlpool, whence the inhabitants called the place *Gholeghat*. The river having now silted up considerably on the Hooghly side, the eddy has ceased to exist, and if it appears at all, it does so when the river is very high during the rains. The foundations of the western wall of the fort which still exist in some form or other testify to the strength of the place. Save and except this, no vestiges of the fort remain *in situ*. The fort was pulled down in 1830, and its materials were largely used in metalling the station roads.

The third and last was the English fort which stood somewhere near the indentation referred to above. This, however, could hardly be called a fort, as it was abandoned before the European nations had seriously fortified their settlements on the banks of the Hooghly. Fort William at Calcutta was

the first position really fortified by the English. The English factory in which Job Charnock lived at Hooghly was not a strong-built house at all. In December 1712, a writer, quoted in Wilson's *Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, concludes his description of the English factory at Gholeghat by saying that, "it is an old, ugly, ill-contrived edifice wherein is not the least spark of beauty, form, or order, to be seen, being seated in a dull melancholy hole enough to give one the Hippochondra by once seeing it." No vestige remains either of the so-called fort or of the factory. But the factory tank, commonly termed *Kutipukur*, still exists, and, like Goldsmith's sad annalist of once "Sweet Auburn," tells tales, with its dumb eloquence, of the days of Job Charnock and his successors in ancient Hooghly.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SOME NOTABILITIES OF HOOGHLY IN MODERN TIMES.

Dr. Badan Chunder Choudhury.—This wellknown veteran of the healing art is the oldest man living in Hooghly. But though long domiciled in this place, he is not one of its natives. He hails from the "City of Palaces," where he not only saw the light of heaven but also imbibed the light of knowledge. His father, Ram Narain Choudhury, took great pains to train him up for the battle of life. But though belonging to the priestly class, young Badan was not intended to pronounce mass for the soul, but to prescribe medicine for the body. Accordingly, he was admitted into the Medical College, then only recently established. Indeed, he was one of its foundation students, and, as such, was looked upon with some consideration. On the 15th day of July, 1835, this promising lad entered the solemn sanctuary of the first medical Institution in Bengal, and studied in it for near seven years. As he brought parts, patience and diligence into his studies it was no wonder that he soon distinguished himself and obtained scholarship. This initial success gave a strong impetus to his mind, so that

“shunning all delights and living laborious days,” he prosecuted his studies with far greater earnestness and laid in a good stock of knowledge and experience not quite common with men of his immature years. At the final examination he acquitted himself well and obtained diploma on the 10th day of July in the year of grace 1842. A short time after, he got into Government service and was appointed Assistant Surgeon to the Imambara Hospital at Hooghly on a salary of Rs. 100 a month, he being the first to hold that appointment. Thus, commenced his connection with this place and as years rolled on, it became stronger and stronger until he made Hooghly the land of his adoption. He settled here for good, giving up what in the language of law is called *animus revertendi*. As he was well up in his profession, he performed his duties at the Hospital to the satisfaction of his superiors and the benefit of the public.

While serving at the Hooghly Hospital, Dr. Badan came in contact with Dr. James Esdaile, who had succeeded Dr. Wise both as Civil Surgeon of the District and as Principal of the College, and by his worth and assiduity soon ingratiated himself into his favour. That Medico-Majus was famous in his time for his operations under mesmeric anaesthesia before the discovery of chloroform, and Dr. Badan was his right-hand man in making the experiments. Dr. Esdaile retired on 11th October,

1853, leaving charge of his office in the hands of his favourite Assistant, and it was from the latter that his successor, Dr. Herbert Baillie, took over charge on 22nd November. Dr. Baillie was like his predecessor a proficient in the healing art and he soon gained popularity both by his successful treatment of difficult cases and by his exceptionally good manners.

Dr. Badan's name as a good and efficient practitioner spread far and wide, and the result was that his income went on rising at a rapid rate. In this way he remained in Government service till 1855 when he retired and carried on private practice without let or hindrance. He succeeded remarkably well and his practice became so very extensive that he could hardly find time to take needful rest. He had what might be called a roaring practice, and, thus, money flowed into his pocket in streams. In surgical operations he had no equal in the district and only a few in all Bengal. He was also an expert hand at doctoring. Dr. Radcliffe was not more popular in London than Dr. Badan was in Hooghly. But professional success, however great, cannot prevent the operation of natural decay brought on by time. Weak old age stole in upon him, and, at last, its infirmities weighed so very heavily upon him that he found to his sore regret he could not stir out of his house without doing serious injury to himself. Accordingly, since some years he has

altogether given up practice; but he still treats patients at home *gratis*. Indeed, he is never sparing in his efforts to do good to humanity by his deep knowledge of medicine and wide experience. Any attempt at numbering the difficult cases treated by him is simply impossible; and though he did not succeed in all, a feat which is quite beyond the power of any human being to do, the percentage of cures effected by him far exceeded the percentage of failures, and if, among his patients he saw a hundred die before him, he succeeded in recalling ten thousands from death's door. Thus, he has well earned his rest, and I wish from the bottom of my heart that God would allow him to enjoy it for a few more years to come.

Dr. Badan has made a mint of money and can well afford to live like a lord. But, wonderful to say, he is as simple in his habits and mode of living as an ordinary man having only a moderate income. But simplicity in the midst of affluence is not his only characteristic. His pleasing politeness forms one of the best features of his character. Though master of many thousands a year, he does not know what pride is, and, so far from encouraging pride in others, always tries to check it without, however, giving offence. Indeed, he is a model gentleman and is liked by all who know him. I doubt if he have any enemy at all. The only defect which I can find in his character is that, considering the extent of his income he

is not sufficiently charitable, and this I make bold to say that should he spend even one twentieth part of his income in charity, he would be doing an immense deal of good to indigent humanity. Charity, it is said, begins at home, but surely it should not end there, when one has means enough to extend its range. If sincerity is the first of virtues, charity is the first of blessings. Like the heavenly 'quality of mercy,'

"it is twice bless'd,

It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes." Happy, thrice happy is that man who has both the mind and means to acquire such an inestimable blessing.

Dr. Badan is now running his 97th year and judging from the present state of his health one may well hope that he has some years more to live.

Rai Eshan Chandra Mitra Bahadur.—This gentleman was the most distinguished character of his day in Hooghly. But this distinction he did not owe to any adventitious circumstances, it was the pure outcome of his own individual efforts. He cleared the way for himself and rose to an eminence which made him a glorious object of envy. For several years he held the destiny of Hooghly in his hands and was looked up to with a feeling in which there was more of fear than of love. His death has been a great loss to this old historic town.

Eshan Chandra was born in 1833 in Kona, an

obscure village which, true to its name, occupies a corner of the well-known pargana of Halishahar. His father, Guru Charan Mitra, was head clerk in the Assaye Office at Calcutta; and as he was in good circumstances, was not sparing in his efforts to give his son, who was his first child, proper education. When quite young, Eshan Chandra was admitted into the Hooghly College which was then in the heyday of its fame. As the promising lad brought parts and diligence into his studies, it was no wonder that he soon distinguished himself. He obtained in regular succession junior and senior scholarships, and, at last, left his *Alma Mater* with the reputation of a successful student in the memorable Mutiny year.

Eshan Chandra then joined the Presidency College at Calcutta as a law student, where he took his lessons at the feet of that eminent scholar and jurist, Mr. William Austin Montriou. He studied law with his usual zeal and diligence and in a couple of years passed the Pleadership Examination. He got his diploma in August, 1859, and early in the next year joined the bar at Hooghly. As the practice then in vogue in the mofussil was to address the Court in Urdu, he at first found some difficulty in doing Court business, but he soon got over it by learning that tongue which he did in a comparatively short time. He ere long made his mark at the bar and attracted the notice of the big officials

of the district. Indeed, his rise in the profession was very rapid. Before he had been two years at the bar, the post of Government pleader fell vacant. There were then many older men in the profession at Hooghly, but both Mr. A. V. Palmer, the Collector, and Mr. C. T. Buckland, the Judge, recommended Eshan Chandra for the post and, as was expected, their recommendation was carried out. This recognition of his merit by Government gave a strong impetus to the popular mind in his favour, and, thus, his forensic practice rose, as it were, by a long leap. While careering gloriously in his profession, the great Mohunt of the Tarkeswar temple, Madhab Chandra Giri, was committed to the Sessions on a charge of adultery, an offence which the lowest Chandal should be ashamed of. As the case was a very important one and was sure to be hotly contested, the Government in its anxiety to bring to justice the great culprit for whose offence there was no excuse, had suggested that some first-class counsel might be engaged; but Mr. Palmer, who had great confidence in the worth and ability of Eshan Chandra, wrote back saying that his Government pleader was quite a match for any counsel and would be able to conduct the prosecution single-handed; and, indeed, Eshan Chandra did more than fulfil his confidence, though he had to hold his own against such picked men of the Calcutta bar as Mr. William Jackson and

(afterwards Sir Griffith) Evans, not to mention some others of minor note. He conducted the prosecution very ably and cleverly, and the address which he delivered to the Jury on the occasion was a splendid performance which excited the admiration amongst others of the presiding Judge himself, Mr. C. D. Field (afterwards a Judge of the High Court), who was candid enough to remark to him at the close of his address,—‘I wish I could speak your tongue as fluently as you did mine.’ Indeed, he fought the better fight and succeeded in getting the “infamously famous” accused convicted, cast down and kept ‘in durance vile’, doing the meanest drudgery for some years. Eshan Chandra’s position at the bar was unique. He was its “friend, philosopher and guide.” Never in the annals of the Hooghly Courts did a pleader command such extensive practice or possess such honour and influence. He gathered money with both hands, to use a common expression, and rose high in rank and riches. But self-aggrandisement was not his sole aim in life, he had also the good of the community, in which he moved, at heart. After the transfer of Mr. B. De, Joint Magistrate, Eshan Chandra was elected to his chair in the Municipal office. This office he liked very much, as he was a warm advocate of Local Self-Government, and he filled it for about 13 years with great credit to himself and considerable advantage to the public. Indeed, the town

owes an immense debt of gratitude to him. The Hooghly Town Hall, Public Library and Lady Dufferin Hospital, all owe their origin to him. Such eminent public services, as might have been expected, did not go unrewarded. Babu Eshan Chandra was in his green old age decorated by Government with the title of *Rai Bahadur*, while the District Boards of the Burdwan Division showed their appreciation of his sterling merits by electing him as their spokesman in the Bengal Council. This last appointment being inconsistent with his position as custodian of the interests of Government, he had to give up his Government pleadership after having held it for three-and-thirty years. In his new sphere of action too, his usual success attended him. Endowed by nature with strong common sense and fortified by "the armour of experience," he proved a very useful councillor and his words of wisdom were listened to with attention. The late Sir Charles Paul, the Advocate-General, than whom an abler man never entered the Council Chamber, was much pleased with the manner in which Rai Eshan Chandra performed his duties at the Council Board. In politics, he was neither a Radical nor a Conservative ; he was an advocate of moderation and loved to be

"Like good Erasmus, in a golden mean."

He was in favour of progress, but not progress at break-neck speed. In this he followed that great Judge, Lord Tenterden, whose motto was *Festina*

lente. Latterly, Rai Eshan Chandra's health broke down all on a sudden, and much-dreaded heart-disease got hold of his frame. To keep in check this insidious foe that had grabbed on his very vitals, he gave up working altogether, bidding a long farewell to the profession in which he had shone so brilliantly.

“ But a neck that's once broken
Can never be set.”

Notwithstanding all the efforts of his friend, the famous Dr. R. L. Dutt, to arrest its course, the disease grew on apace, and, at last, carried him off on the 17th January, 1897, in the 67th year of his age.

Thus passed away from this earth a remarkable man who has left a deep mark on the history of this district which is not likely to be effaced by time. Rai Eshan Chandra possessed some very good qualities and was loved and respected by all who knew him intimately. He was, it is true, wanting in a flowing courtesy to all alike, but he was a good man at heart ; and though his power to do good or evil was greater than that of any other man in the place he seldom abused it. In the domestic circle Rai Eshan Chandra was an exemplary character. He had the highest reverence for his old mother and was always assiduous in fulfilling her wishes. His attachment for his brothers reminds us of the Roman Cato who would not accept service unless his younger brother were given a similar appointment. Towards his brothers Rai Eshan Chandra stood in *locoparentis*

and looked after their welfare as if they were his own. His love for his kinsmen was also deep and his long purse was always open to render them help whenever they were in need or in difficulty. But his charity was not confined to his home and its surroundings, it had a wider range and was devoted to helping some indigent widows and poor boys who were not his kith or kind. There was this noble feature in the character of his charity that it was quite unostentatious, and this was probably the reason why he passed for a close-fisted man in the eye of the general public who had no opportunity of entering into the real state of his affairs.

Of the three worthy sons left by Rai Eshan Chandra, Lal Behari, the best of the batch, has since followed him. The eldest, Bepin Chandra, is following the profession of his father. The youngest, Charu Chandra, is a graduate of the Calcutta University and a promising young man.

Rai Eshan Chandra also left three brothers, but, as is the case with his sons, one of them, Grish Chandra, who was the Treasurer of the Hooghly Collectorate and a really good man, felt the separation so very painfully that he soon followed his elder to that unknown region from whose border no traveller returneth. The death of two worthy sons dealt a very severe blow to the old mother and she soon succumbed under it. Of the two youngest brothers, Harish Chandra has only lately retired on

pension from the Subordinate Executive Service of which he was a worthy member. The last though not the least is Mahendra Chandra, upon whom the mantle of his illustrious brother seems to have fallen and who is steadily treading in the latter's footsteps. He is the Government pleader of Hooghly and was until recently also the Chairman of the local Municipality. He bids fair to keep alive the fame and reputation achieved by Rai Eshan Chandra Mitra Bahadur.

Dewan Krishna Chandra Choudhury Rai Bahadur.
This gentleman, though he passed a considerable portion of his life in Hooghly, was not one of its natives. He was born at Audharmanick in the district of Faridpur in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. His father, Ram Kanta Choudhury, was a man of some property and was held in high esteem by his fellow villagers. After he had learnt a little of Bengali at the village *patshala*, young Krishna Chandra was sent to Sylhet where his elder brother, Shib Chandra, was Nazir in the Collectorate, and it was at that outlying station that he commenced learning Persian which was then the language in vogue in the Courts, and in due time completed his education as it was understood in those days. Shortly after, he entered as an apprentice in the Court in which his brother had some influence, and having served his novitiate for some time got a mohirship on a small pay. But as he had good parts and made virtue of industry, he rose rapidly in the

service and was appointed Sheristadar in the Magistrate's Court in Rajshahye. He acquitted himself well in his new capacity and gained the goodwill of his European master who was much pleased with him.

From the Magistracy, Krishna Chandra got a lift to the principal Civil Court in a similar capacity and was put in charge of the Sherista of the Judge of Murshidabad. Here his reputation as an able and efficient Ministerial officer rose very high and he became a great favourite with his official superior, Mr. Whitworth Russell, and matters took such a favourable turn that when in 1842 that good Judge was transferred to Hooghly, he took his Sheristadar with him. Thus Krishna Chandra's connection with this place commenced from that year.

Mr. Russell was a cadet of a noble family in England, and a very near relation of his had considerable influence in Parliament. As is usual with the sons of nobility, he was not disposed to work and always preferred ease to labour. To such a pleasure-loving officer, an able and painstaking man like Krishna Chandra could not but be very acceptable, and it is, therefore, not surprising that he soon gained his love and esteem. The Dewan, for so the head Ministerial officer was then called, was given a seat by the side of the Judge in Court, and he materially assisted him in the discharge of his judicial duties. In this way the influence of the Dewan

became so very great that he eventually came to be considered as the *de facto* Judge. When the pleaders in their usual way were furiously contending amongst themselves over a case, it was not unoften that Mr. Russell was heard to say, "Patience, gentlemen, allow my Dewan to understand the case." So, it was not Mr. Russell, but his Dewan, Krishna Chandra Chowdhury, who was in reality the presiding Judge administering justice. A man in the enviable position of Krishna Chandra might, if he was so minded, have made an immense fortune by a little backsliding from the path of rectitude; but although the moral atmosphere of the Court at the time was tainted and bribery was in its full swing, Dewan Krishna Chandra preserved, like "Oliver Twist," a wonderful purity in the midst of worst influences. Thus, he proved the very reverse of his predecessor in office, Dewan Monsaram Sircar, whose name has almost become a bye-word for all the vices of Amlahdom. We have learned from a very reliable source that in one very important case in which property of considerable value was at stake, a rich Zamindar of the district offered Dewan Krishna Chandra forty thousand rupees, but the latter made no hesitation in rejecting the offer, remarking at the same time that he had far greater regard for honest poverty than for ill-gotten affluence. This very notable trait in his character at a time when official venality was very common and was

generally connived at, was an open secret to his master, the Judge, and when with his pay of Rs. 100 a month Dewan Krishna Chandra could not meet his expenses, Mr. Russell would be helping him with funds from his own pocket. Indeed, the Judge was under immense obligation to his Dewan, who, though unacquainted with English and not well read in law, possessed strong common sense, and such was the force of his intellect that the decisions which Mr. Russell passed under his advice were for the most part upheld by the Sadar Diwani Adalat in appeal. In fact, by the aid of his Dewan in the discharge of his judicial functions, Mr. Russell gained the reputation of a good Judge and people had such strong confidence in the ability and impartiality of his Dewan that they always felt that in his Court the party wronged and aggrieved was sure to get proper relief. Mr. Russell remained in Hooghly till 1851, and shortly after his retirement a full-sized portrait of him was by public subscription prepared in his honour and put up in the Judge's Court. That portrait still graces the Court-room, testifying to the goodness of the officer who administered justice in it in days long since past.

Mr. Thomas Bruce * succeeded Mr. Russell, and,

* Bruce remained in Hooghly for a little over one year, and was succeeded by Henry Stainforth in 1853, who in his turn was succeeded in the year following by James H. Patton, afterwards

as he was much younger and was not sufficiently informed of the worth and importance of Dewan Krishna Chandra, objected to the latter sitting in his presence. But when he came to know of his Dewan's rare merit and high position in society, he veered round and began to show him due regard. Not long after, the good man having grown old and infirm, retired on pension with a view to passing the last few years of his life in peace and contemplation, as becomes a Hindu of his right orthodox type. But pension alone was not the only reward the grand old servant of the Company got for his long and meritorious services. Two or three years after his retirement he was invited from his lonely retreat and was decorated with the then very rare title of *Rai Bahadur*, accompanied by a *seven-purcha Khelat* (robe of honour consisting of seven pieces) and Rs. 2000 in cash. Such honour done to a native Ministerial officer, standing as it does, almost unique, shows beyond a shadow of doubt that the fortunate recipient had done an immense deal of good to government.

Dewan Krishna Chandra had always expressed a wish to die in the place where he had so highly distinguished himself, the more so as it was situated on the banks of the sacred Bhagirathi. But Destiny whose decree is irrevocable, had, it seems, ordained

made a Judge of the Sadar Diwani Adalat at Calcutta and also a distinguished character in some other respect.

otherwise. When verging on his eightieth year the good old man paid a visit to the spot where he first saw the light of heaven. On his falling ill there, he asked to be taken back to his dear Hooghly. But the ailment taking all on a sudden a serious turn, he could not be removed, and so his most cherished desire was not fulfilled, and he closed his eyes for the last time just at the spot where he had first opened them. The wise old man had long passed the Psalmist's cycle of three score and ten when, about the year 1861, he breathed his last.

As Dewan Krishna Chandra lived almost from hand to mouth, he could leave only a little property for his family. His sons too were then quite young and were not at all in a position to earn. Thus, the family fared all but ill. But with the march of time a change came over its fortune and it was certainly a change for the better. On the occasion of a gubernatorial visit to Hooghly, Mr. William Grey, then Chief Secretary to the Lieutenant Governor, and afterwards Lieutenant Governor himself, who knew Dewan Krishna Chandra well, inquired about the state of his family and on being informed that he had two or three sons of whom one was far in his teens, made a note of the matter, with the result that not long after the Dewan's eldest son, Kali Prasanna, was made Special Sub-Registrar. This appointment was after several years followed by his being appointed a member of the Subordinate Executive Service,

which office he held till his death which took place some five years ago. The Dewan's second and only surviving son, Tara Prasanna, is practising as a pleader in Faridpur.

Dewan Krishna Chandra Choudhury Rai Bahadur is a striking instance of the truth of the well-worn maxim—"Honesty is the best policy." In the midst of the strongest temptations he kept himself clean out of corruption and led a life of wonderful purity. The tongue of scandal dared not villify him, nor did the finger of scorn point at him. He rose superior to all evil influences, and, to compare great things with small, was like the angel, Abdiel, the only faithful found among a set of rogues and miscreants. This moral victory not only brought its own exceeding great reward in holy peace of mind, but also met with a regular ovation at the hands of Government which filled the purse of the victor, clothed him with a rich robe, and added a glorious appanage to his name, and after his demise continued its favour to his son. Surely, as the poet says,

"An honest man is the noblest work of God."

Babu Hara Chandra Ghose.—This gentleman belonged to the renowned Ghose family of Babugunge. The original habitation of this family was at Khanacool Krishtonagar in the district of Hooghly, whence the grand-father of Hara Chandra migrated to the town of Hooghly and settled in the quarter known as Gholeghat. The Ghose family of Gholeghat cut a

very prominent figure during the time when Mr. H. Belli was Collector; and their social position too was very high. They could make or unmake Kayasthas by their breath, and any one who made connection with them considered himself very fortunate in a caste point of view. In course of time this family increasing in number and accommodation being scant, it became necessary for one branch of the family to make a further remove. This was done by Hara Chandra's father, Halloddhar Ghose, commonly known as Halloddhar *Kerani*, who removed to the present residence. Halloddhar Ghose was the head clerk of the local Collectorate and was held in esteem by the people at large. The good old man built a *pucca* house at his new residence where he lived in peace and comfort as the patriarch of a happy family. He was blessed with six sons of whom the subject of this short memoir was the fourth. To all these sons he gave such education as was available in those days.

Hara Chandra was born in the year 1817. When quite young, he was placed in the Imambara school, where, as was the practice in those days, he learned Persian and Arabic. English education had then only made a small advance, but ere long a change came over the place in that respect by the establishment of the Hooghly College in the year of grace 1836. Hara Chandra was entered at this seminary, where he prosecuted his studies with such assiduity

that in a few years he found himself as the headboy of the highest class. He carried off prize after prize, and also obtained two medals, one of silver and the other of gold, for proficiency in literature. On the occasion of the bestowal of the gold medal there was a large gathering of the *elite* of the station, and, what was very remarkable, His Excellency, Lord Auckland, then Governor-General of India, himself presided at the grand ceremonial. He handed in the glittering gaud* encased in a velvet-lined watch box to the promising young lad and cordially shook hands with him, saying with a sweet smile on his lips, "Lucky boy, the Governor-General shakes hands with you." This was, indeed, no small honour, considering the position of the exalted personage by whom it was done. Not long after, Hara Chandra came out of the College with a reputation far above his fellows and entered the world to fight the battle of life.

Having had such a brilliant academic career, it was no wonder that Hara Chandra found no difficulty in getting employment. In recognition of his great scholastic success, the then Head of the Bengal Government favoured him with an appointment in the Excise department, posting him to Rampur Boalia as Abkari Superintendent in the

* The Medal bore this inscription :—

"Awarded to Hurro Chunder Ghose, student of the Hooghly College, by the Right Hon'ble George Earl of Auckland for the best Bengalee translation of Bacon's Essay on Truth (1841)."

year 1844. Thence he was transferred to Malda some time after. These Excise duties Hara Chandra performed so very satisfactorily that he was ere-long appointed a Deputy Collector of Revenue Survey. In this capacity he served long in the districts of Rungpur and Murshidabad. He surveyed the well-known Baharbund estate of the Raj family of Kasimbazar. In the course of the Survey operations he had encountered many perils and had undergone considerable privations and hardships. This unpleasant sort of nomadic life told heavily upon his constitution and he was obliged to pass into the Executive branch of the Service. He became a Deputy Magistrate and was posted to the district of Burdwan in the year following the Sepoy Mutiny. While at this place he was deputed by his immediate superior, the Magistrate, to capture a gang of dacoits who had been committing ravages in some parts of the district, and, as luck would have it, succeeded in capturing many of them. These ruffians were tried in due course, convicted and were placed "in durance vile" for their outrageous deeds. This signal success in the detective line earned for Hara Chandra Baboo a good name and his eminent services found a fitting recognition in the pages of the Thuggee Commissioner's Report. But this was not the only service he did to the district of Burdwan. The local shopkeepers who were then in the habit of keeping short weights and measures were caught by the wary

Deputy and made to put a stop to their dishonest doings. Hara Baboo had remained pretty long in Burdwan when the exigencies of service necessitated his transfer elsewhere. In this way he served with distinction in several districts, and in the fulness of time retired on half pension in the year 1872, and on returning home passed the remainder of his life in the midst of his family until he was summoned away from this world on the 24th November, 1884.

As a revenue officer Baboo Hara Chandra had few equals, and, though in private life he was one of the most kind-hearted of mortals, this did not prevent him from proving an efficient Executive. But Hara Baboo was not only a good official all round, he had also gained a good name in the republic of letters. After he had won the gold medal in College, Iswar Chandra Gupta of *Probhakar* fame came all the way from Calcutta to pay him a visit with a view to get him contribute articles to his *Journal*. Hara Chandra thus began his literary career and the papers which he contributed were for the most part favourably received by the reading public. But his literary efforts were not confined to stray articles in Journals and Magazines, he wrote some works which earned for him a name in the world of letters. Of all his literary productions *Bhanumati Chittabilash* and *Charu Mukh Chitta Hara* are the best known. These plays were based respectively upon "The Merchant of Venice" and "Romeo Juliet" of that

prince of poets, Shakespeare. His lyrical drama of *Bhanumati* possesses this peculiar merit that it is the first drama in the Bengalee language after *Bhadrarjun*, as appears from a little book on Bengalee literature by the late Raj Narain Bose. The other drama, too, is not quite unworthy of its great original. Hara Baboo's books at one time found many readers, but with a change in literary taste they have fallen into desuetude.

The deceased has left two sons, Gopal Krishna and Ram Gopal, of whom one is a Moonsiff and the other a pleader.

Rai Grish Chandra Ghose Bahadur.—This most brilliant ornament of the Subordinate Judicial Service was born on the 30th September, 1819. He was the younger brother of Hara Chandra, of whom we have already given a short account. When quite young, Grish Chandra was like his elder placed in the Imambara school where he studied Persian and Urdu. He was considered one of the best boys, so that it was not surprising that he got a scholarship, or rather stipend, with which he joined the Hooghly College, then only recently opened, at the age of eighteen. As yet he was a perfect stranger to English and it was at the Hooghly College that he commenced to learn his A. B. C. At that time Dr. Thomas Alexander Wise was the Principal of the College, in fact, he was its first Principal. Grish Chandra prosecuted his studies

till 1841 when he left College, and, as he had by his worth and industry attracted the notice of the then Principal, Mr. James Sutherland, a distinguished man of letters, it was not long before he was appointed a teacher in the Hooghly Branch School on Rs. 50 a month. But he could not make his mark in the Education department. The fact, however, was that he proved an eyesore to his official superior, the Head Master, and the result was that though he was teacher for six years and odd months he got no promotion and ended his tutorial career with the same pay with which he had begun it.

While working as teacher Grish Chandra had, on the advice of the Joint Magistrate of Hooghly, whom he used to teach vernaculars, commenced to read law, and when the time for Moonsiffship examination arrived, appeared at it, Sir Edward Ryan of the Calcutta Supreme Court being Examiner-in-Chief. As most of the questions related to matters of procedure, Grish Chandra who had learned only the principles of law and was ill acquainted with procedure and practice, could answer only one or two out of the many questions set at the examination, and was, accordingly, entered in the list as "plucked." But in spite of his name being so noted down Sir Edward, whose curiosity had been excited by his having been the only candidate who had written his answers in English, condescended to speak to him as to how he had

managed to learn the general principles of Jurisprudence, and in the course of conversation was so favourably impressed with the worth and ability of Grish Chandra that he cancelled what he had recorded before and passed him as being duly qualified for a Moonsiffship.

Having achieved success by the purest of accidents Grish Chandra resigned his office as teacher on 9th April 1848, and, on 1st May following, was appointed to officiate as Moonsiff of Rajapur in the district of Hooghly on the same pay on which he had been serving in the Education department. From Rajapur he was sent to Faridpur as *pucca* Moonsiff on a salary of Rs. 100 a month, which afterwards rose to Rs. 150. In the Mutiny year he was made Sudder Amin on Rs 250 a month. In this way he rose higher and higher still until he got up to the topmost rung of the ladder. He was Subordinate Judge of Tirhut for a long time and it was at that place that he highly distinguished himself. Some of his decisions went up in final appeal to the Privy Council and their Lordships of the Judicial Committee were good enough to speak highly of him as a Judicial officer. Indeed, he was a capital Judge and discharged his duties very ably, learnedly and conscientiously, and it would not be too much to say that no member of the Service to which he belonged surpassed him and that only a very few equalled him. In recognition

of his high judicial ability and wide experience he was appointed to officiate as a Judge of the Presidency Small Cause Court on a salary of Rs. 1050 which rose to Rs. 1100. His career in that Court which lasted from 25th April 1877 to 5th January 1879, was quite in keeping with his career in the Mofussil, and we have heard from one who was long connected with that Court as an Interpreter that he gave general satisfaction and his retirement which was brought about by ill health, was considered as a very serious loss to the public. Grish Baboo was also in good grace with the "powers that be". While acting as a Judge in the Calcutta Small Cause Court, he was selected by the Lieutenant Governor to act as Additional Judge in Behar for six months on Rs. 1200 a month. At first, he had accepted the appointment, but subsequently receiving particulars of the heavy work which awaited him and deeming his failing health ill fitted for it, he declined the offer, and shortly afterwards applied for pension, which in view of the bad state of his health was granted in no time. As he had served Government for a long time, and served it so very ably and meritoriously, he was granted special pension by the Secretary of State for India under section 59 of the Pension Code, and, as long as he was in the land of the living after retirement from active service, he drew Rs 500 a month. But not only was this special favour shown him, he was also decorated

with the title of *Rai Bahadur* as a personal distinction in August 1879.

While enjoying his *otium cum dignitate*, Rai Grish Chandra was appointed by His Honor the Lieutenant Governor to arbitrate in the matter of the dispute between the Maharaja * of Durbhanga and his brother regarding their ancestral property, the other arbitrators being Mr. H. Reynolds, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, and Mr. James O' Kinealy who ended his Indian career as a Judge of the High Court. In the letter which the Government Secretary, Mr. Reynolds, wrote to him on the occasion on 10th February 1880, he said, "The Lieutenant Governor, Sir Ashley Eden, is of opinion that your high character, your eminent legal attainments, and the public confidence which you enjoyed as Subordinate Judge of Tirhut, especially justify you for filling the appointment of arbitrator in a manner satisfactory to both the parties who are interested in the question". This high commendation Rai Grish Chandra fully deserved, and we feel no hesitation in saying that he would have done full justice to the choice had it been necessary for him to act in the matter; but, as a matter of fact, the dispute was in the meantime amicably settled between the parties concerned, the younger brother who is now

* Maharaja Luchmeswar Singha, who has since died, leaving his said brother as heir to the *Gulder*.

the Maharaja retiring from the contest with only a slice of the property.

Rai Grish Chandra enjoyed his well-earned pension for a little over eight years. He died at his house in Babugunge from failure of the heart on the 18th June, 1888. He was a really worthy man. May his memory be cherished with fond regard. His only surviving son, Surendra Nath, is a member of the Subordinate Executive Service, a worthy son of a worthy sire.

Ananda Chandra Bose.—The life of this gentleman affords a striking proof of the truth of Dr. Johnson's saying,

‘Slow rises merit by poverty depress’d’.

Ananda Chandra rose from poverty to affluence. When he began life as a mohirir in the local Civil Court he had only a hut or two to hide his head ; but as years rolled on he became the head of the Ministerial department in the Highest Court in the land and succeeded in building a palatial residence with all the paraphernalia becoming the position of a rich man. Indeed, his life was one of continued success which ultimately landed him in a state which well might excite envy in the minds of less fortunate mortals.

Ananda Chandra was not a true native of the town of Hooghly, he hailed from Akna, a village about two miles to the west of the Mogra Station on the East Indian Railway line, where he was born early in

the beginning of the last century. His father, Chandi Charan Bose, was a very poor man, and, to add to his misfortune, died when he and his elder brother, Kali Pada, were quite young. Being thus left in a pitiable state, the two brothers came down to Hooghly and building two wretched huts at the quarter called Kabasdanga, settled there for good. The elder, Kali Pada, had only learned the rudiments of knowledge. Ananda Chandra got himself admitted into the Imambara Madrassa where he commenced to learn Persian and Arabic, and as he was a young man of parts, prosecuted his studies with considerable success. The Madrassa was a free school, and, as luck would have it, Ananda Chandra succeeded in securing a scholarship. Thus, there was not much difficulty in his completing the course which the institution gave scope for. Ananda Chandra, however, did not learn English at school, nor did he attempt to do so at home. In fact, he did not know English, not even a smattering of it.

After leaving the Madrassa, Ananda Chandra got into the Principal Civil Court of the district as a mohirir on a monthly pay of Rs. 20. At that time Mr. D. C. Smyth was the district Judge, indeed, he ruled the district like a Governor. The Judge was not only a very able man himself, but was also a good hand at finding out ability in others. Ananda Chandra by his able and assiduous discharge of duties soon attracted his attention and

became one of his favourites. He rapidly rose in service and, shortly after Mr. Smyth was raised to the Sadar Diwani Adalat, was taken there as Missil Khan or Reader on the Appellate Side of the Court, and from Missil Khan he was made Peshkar. Mr. Smyth retired in January 1838, but with his retirement the prospect of Ananda Chandra was not at all dimmed. On the contrary, it brightened up with greater lustre when Mr. H. T. Prinsep became Registrar on the Appellate Side of the Sadar Court. Ananda Chandra soon gained the favour of that eminent Civilian and the result was that not long after he got a long lift by being appointed Deputy Registrar on a salary of Rs. 500 a month. This was undoubtedly a great success, seeing that the fortunate recipient was a perfect stranger to English. But in those days when Persian was the language of the Court this deficiency on his part did not interfere with the due discharge of his duties; and, as a matter of fact, he performed them to the satisfaction of his superiors and the advantage of the public. In his new capacity Ananda Baboo's influence was very great indeed, and if he was so minded, he might have largely enriched himself; but his watchword was honesty, and it was, therefore, no wonder that he kept himself quite free from the very strong temptation which his office, high as it was, held out to him. He became a general favourite and the business of

the department of which he was the recognised head went on smoothly along. Years passed on in this way until, as an effect of the Sepoy Mutiny, there was a transfer of the rule of the Company to the Crown. This transfer also necessitated the amalgamation of the Supreme and the Sadar Courts into the High Court. The language of the Court so formed could not but be English, and, accordingly, the Ministerial department could no longer remain in the hands of one who was ignorant of that tongue. Ananda Baboo was thus placed in a very awkward position, and as his age fell short of fifty-five years he could not be compelled to retire. He was therefore kept on, not, indeed, as Deputy Registrar but as Assistant Registrar, Mr. J. H. Belchambers being appointed Deputy Registrar on Rs. 1000 a month. In this way Ananda Baboo served under the latter for some time, and when he completed his fifty-five years retired on pension, which he enjoyed for some years.

The last days of his life were embittered by the ungrateful conduct of his brother's sons whom he had well trained up for the world, and in sheer disgust, if not through fear, he left the house which he had built, and went to reside at his son-in-law's at Chandernagore. When he found that his end was not far distant, he went on pilgrimage and visited almost all holy places in the North-West. While returning from pilgrimage he fell seriously

ill on the way and died at Mongyr. This was in 1871, when he had just passed the grand climactic of sixty-three. The deceased left no son but a daughter only.

Balloram Mullick.—This distinguished member of the Subordinate Judicial Service was born in 1843. His father, Padma Lochun Mullick, was not in very good circumstances, but he somehow managed to give his son a decent education. After Balloram had learnt the elements of Bengalee in a neighbouring *patshala*, he was placed in the Free Church Institution at Chinsura, and, as he possessed natural parts and made a virtue of industry, prosecuted his studies with considerable success. He carried off prize after prize and became a general favourite with his teachers. In 1856 he passed the Entrance Examination and obtained a scholarship. He then joined the Duff College at Calcutta and successively passed with credit the Little-Go and the B. A. Examination.

Having thus finished his scholastic career, Balloram entered the world as a teacher in the Hindu School on a salary of Rs. 50 a month. While serving in this seminary he attended Law Lectures at the Presidency College, and after completing the terms passed the B. L. Examination in 1868. He at once joined the bar at Hooghly, but a few months after, having changed his mind on the advice of his maternal uncle, the well-known Babu Surja Kumar Dhar, entered

Government service as Moonsiff. In this capacity he served in several places, always winning golden opinions by able discharge of his judicial functions. In due time he was promoted to the grade of Sub-Judges. In that higher sphere too, his usual success attended him and he gained the approbation of his immediate superiors as well as of the High Court.

While serving as Sub-Judge his services were lent to the Kuch-Bihar State. In that semi-independent State Balloram was Chief Civil Judge as well as Member of the Maharaja's Council. In both capacities he did yeoman's service to the State and the Maharaja would have been only too glad to have had him for good. But two years after, there arose circumstances which threatened to disturb the even tenour of affairs. Observing this change in his relation, Balloram, in order to prevent further unpleasantness, threw up his appointment and reverted to his substantive post in Government service which he was fully competent to do. He was posted to Pubna in 1886 where by his able and impartial administration of justice he earned a good name. Things went on in this smooth easy wise till about the middle of 1887 when he got into some trouble. Having come home during the Easter Holidays without taking the permission of his immediate superior, the district Judge, Mr. Bradbury, the latter at once suspended him, but on the matter being in due course brought to the notice of the

High Court, this arbitrary order was cancelled with this reservation that he was made to lose his pay for the three days he was absent from the station.

In October following Balloram was transferred to Cuttack where in a short time he gained the love and esteem of the profession and the public. But the one purely gratuitous act which will ever keep his name in grateful remembrance in the minds of the whole Hindu community is the repair which at his instance and mainly by his exertions was done to the *Nilchatra* over the temple of Juggernath at Puri. The Raja had been directed by the Magistrate to do the needful on pain of the stoppage of pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine, but he having failed to comply with the order, Balloram like a true-born Hindu came forward, and by collecting subscriptions commenced repairs in right good earnest and in spite of his onerous duties at Court, had laboured in that sacred cause until 1894 when he was transferred to Khulna. In 1896 he was promoted to the first grade of Sub-Judges and was posted to Alipur. From before the time of this last remove his health had been going down, but taking hope from despair he had applied for extension of service. However, looking to the shattered state of his health Government thought that time had come for him to retire from active life and he was, accordingly, pensioned off in February 1899.

While enjoying his well-earned repose, Balloram directed his attention towards improving the shrine at Saptagram which was the seat of a saint of the Subornabanik caste, named Uddharana Datta, and which contains his tomb. His efforts were crowned with complete success; and besides needful repairs done to the old shrine some new buildings were erected, thereby adding much to the beauty and attractiveness of the place. A *mela* is annually held in the month of Magh in honour of the good saint, which lasts for days together and during which gala things are done along with solemn religious services.

Balloram also tried to do some good to the town of which he was a resident. At the request of some friends he stood for the Chairmanship of the local Municipality, and as he had a respectable record of services to show and was otherwise known as an able intelligent man, he was elected in 1900. Though he had not been keeping good health from long before, he laboured hard to do justice to the choice which the people had made, and soon won their respect and esteem, even at the risk of incurring the displeasure of the "powers that be." But this additional labour only the more told upon his fast-failing health, and he found to his utmost regret that he could not get on any longer. He, accordingly, resigned his post in 1901. Thereafter he lingered on slowly making his way, as it were

to death's door, which he at last reached on 4th January, 1903.

Thus passed away from this earth a really worthy man whose life was spent in doing good to humanity both in a secular and a spiritual point of view. He was also a good English scholar and had a fair command over the language of the rulers. Among his works, "Home Life in Bengal" and "The Model Huzoor" are worthy of special notice.

Mr. Brajendra Nath De.—This gentleman is not a native of Hooghly, he hails from the "City of Palaces," as Calcutta is called, where on the 23rd December 1852 he first saw the light of heaven. Mr. B. De's parents were in very good circumstances, and they spared no pains to give their son proper education. Young Brajendra was educated in various schools including the Hare School till 1865, when he was taken over to Lucknow where his father was employed in the Commissariate department. He was soon placed in the Canning College, where he matriculated in 1867, and passed the First Arts in 1869, in each examination taking a high place. In 1872 he achieved brilliant academical successes which very few have been able to do in such a short time, for while he graduated B. A. in the beginning of the year, he took Honours in Art about the middle, coming out with the late lamented Hukum Chund of Delhi as the only two students who passed in English in the First Division.

Shortly after taking Honours, that is, in the latter part of July, Brajendra Nath left India for England, arriving there at the end of August. In April following, he passed the open Competitive Examination for the Indian Civil Service, securing, as usual with him, a high place. In the beginning of 1874 he joined the Oxford University and obtained the Boden Sanscrit scholarship. He then joined the Middle Temple, and on the completion of the requisite terms was called to the Bar on the 7th June, 1875. A few days after, he sailed for his native land and returned to it on the 6th September.

Mr. B. De began his official career as an Assistant Magistrate. He pretty rapidly rose in the Service and earned name and fame. When a Junior Civilian he obtained Degrees of Honour both in Sanscrit and Persian. As Joint Magistrate he served in Hooghly for a considerable period during some part whereof he was Chairman of the local Municipality. In both capacities he won popularity by the able discharge of his duties. While he occupied the Municipal chair the road which runs past the Hooghly Branch line of the East Indian Railway Company from the river side right up to the Punkhatuli road was constructed and very properly bears his honoured name. It was while serving in Hooghly that Mr. B. De purchased the house in Keota and considerably added to it by making some additions and alterations. All this shows beyond doubt that he likes

the place, and, be it said to his credit, the people also hold him in high esteem. Indeed, he is one of the foremost residents of this old historic town.

Mr. B. De's official career, like his academical, has been quite a success. He has been serving as Magistrate and Collector for several years and it is gratifying to observe that wherever he goes, he wins golden opinions. This is no small credit for a Government official, more especially for a high officer in the Executive line whose very office carries terror and awe into the hearts of the people. Mr. B. De was promoted to the first grade of Magistrates and Collectors on the 31st October, 1896. He held sway over Faridpur for some years, and when he left that district on being transferred to Malda, the people very deeply felt the loss of his services and gave vent to their feelings in many ways. In Malda too which he has been governing since 1st October 1902, his usual success seems to have followed him and he is held in high respect and esteem by the profession and the public.*

Mr. B. De is not only an eminent executive and judicial officer, he is also an excellent scholar. His knowledge of English is far above the average, so is his proficiency in that most difficult of languages, Sanscrit, and, what is very unusual among the present race of Civilians, he has also a fair

* Since the above was written, Mr B. De has been transferred to this District which he seems to like best.

command of the sweetest of Indian languages, namely, Persian. In a social point of view also, Mr. B. De stands equally high : he possesses winning manners and carefully avoids giving offence to any body. Thus, in every respect he is an exemplary character, one of whom his country is justly proud. He has done honour to Hooghly by adopting it as his home, and when he retires, we hope to see him enjoying his *otium cum dignitate* in his Hooghly House.



CHAPTER XIX.

GENERAL ACCOUNT OF HOOGHLY.

Hooghly Proper extends southwards from the border of Mircala to Joraghat, and westwards from the fine flowing Hooghly to within a stone's throw of the stern-looking iron lines of the East Indian Railway Company. It is about four miles in length and a little above a mile in breadth. The land comprised within these bounds is a grotesque-looking figure in which one looks in vain for anything like regularity. Hooghly might be divided into three main parts, Northern, Central and Southern, nearly corresponding with the Municipal Wards of Shahgunge, Bali and

Babugunge respectively. In the Northern section there are several quarters of which the most important are Shahgunge, Keota and Bandel. Shahgunge is a well-known commercial mart. Its importance was very great in by-gone days. During Mogul rule it drove a brisk trade and was known as the great "Gungee". When Aurungzebe was Emperor, it attracted the notice of his grandson, Azim-Ushan Shah, who was Governor of Bengal. Having come to know of its importance and celebrity he lent it his own name and called it *Shahgunge*. While the place was thus cutting a prominent figure in the busy world of commerce many families came to reside in it. Among these families the Nandis distinguished themselves and rose to fame and fortune. The most famous among the Nandis was Bireswar Nandi, better known as Biru Nandi. This gentleman was born at a village near Kanchrapara on the other side of the Hooghly. Having quarrelled with his father he left his native place and settled in Shahgunge. As he had got together some money he in conjunction with one Ramram Ghose set up a shop and carried on business under their joint names. This firm lasted for some years and on its dissolution Biru Nandi opened business on his own account, and prospered much in it. He established branch firms in several important places and also opened a salt factory. Thus, he became very rich and his name and fame spread far and wide. In addition to his

own business, Biru Nandi was the Dewan of Mirza Roshun Ali, a neighbouring Zamindar. When fortune frowned upon this haughty Mahomedan, Biru Nandi managed to purchase some of his valuable properties and profited much by them. Indeed, Biru Nandi was a child of luck, and he died a rich man in the proper sense of the term. His sons lived in a grand style and well kept up the rank and dignity of the family. But the goddess of fortune is anything but constant, and this once famous family has fallen into insignificance. The present head of the house is Rajendra Nath Nandi, a grandson of Biru Nandi.

Keota * is to the south of Shahgunge. It owes its somewhat queer name probably to the fact of its having been mainly inhabited in former times by families of the Kaivarta caste, vulgarly known as Keots†. These families, however, have well-nigh disappeared and are to a large extent replaced by the carpenter class who now muster strong in it. There is also a sprinkling of respectable folks in their midst, conspicuous among whom is Mr. B. De, so very high in Government service. The building which he occupies was long considered a haunted house, but since he has taken his abode there, the ghost, or goblin, or whatever it was, has made himself conspicuous by his absence, so it seems that even evil spirits stand

* Bagh Keota is otherwise called Mullick Joyanti's Bagh.

† Keota had a very bad repute in by-gone times, as appears from the common saying:—*Beyond corrupt Keota and wicked Bali lie Kulinda and Hooghly.*

in dread of Magisterial powers. It is a big house with a very large compound covering several acres, where one, if so minded, might grow almost all the necessaries of ordinary life. To the north of Mr. B. De's residential building is the house of Babu Mahananda Gupta, lately Collector of Calcutta, only a narrow gloomy pathway intervening. The garden in which this house stands was originally the property of Mr. D. C. Smyth who ruled the Hooghly district for a considerable period. From the representatives of Mr. Smyth it passed to the late Pitambar Pyne of Ghutia Bazar, and it was from the latter's sons that Mahananda Babu purchased it. To the west of his grounds there is another big garden which also belonged to the same owner and which is still in the possession and enjoyment of his son.

South of Keota is Bandel, so well known to fame. Its native name is Balagor, but this name has been almost superseded by the one which the Portuguese gave to it. Indeed, the place owes its fame and importance to the Portuguese. These sea-farers from the Far West settled in it in the latter half of the sixteenth century and turned it into a great trade centre. With the rise in their trading concerns they also acquired power and almost defied the authority of the Great Mogul of Delhi. They forcibly converted most of the natives into Christianity and conducted themselves like tyrants in many other ways. Loud and long were the complaints against

them, and, at last, the Mighty Mogul was roused from his stolid indifference. An Imperial army invested the place and captured it after a pretty long siege. The Portuguese fort and several other buildings were levelled with the ground and the proud foreigners were turned out of the land with bag and baggage. At any rate their power and influence was all gone, and the only vestige which now remains of their tyrannical sway is the old church which has been in existence for some centuries together. And to say sooth Bandel is now known chiefly for its cream cheese.

Just at the border of Bandel on the way to Keota stands the big gate of the Circuit House. This building has a history of its own. It was erected at a time* when the Judges of the Provincial Court—now for a long time a thing of the past—went on circuit deciding cases and administering justice almost at the very door of the people. After the Provincial Courts were abolished, it used to be occupied by the Dacoity Commissioner, but since the breaking up of the latter's establishment it has been lying tenantless for the most part of the year. The house has certainly much to recommend it, being so favourably situated that one has only to look at it to like it. But it seems that with age it has lost its former charm. It is generally left vacant and only

* That is, in the year 1829.

resounds with sweet human voice when the Commissioner of the Division comes to visit the station. The Christian population of Bandel which at one time almost overflowed the land have been reduced to a very small number. The few who still cling to it are black native converts who live like ordinary Hindus. Even the Prior of the church does not permanently reside here. He generally stops at Calcutta, coming to his parochial abode only on service days and other important occasions. Indeed, the place is rapidly falling into decay and the time is not far distant when it will lose all vestiges of Portuguese sway. Instead of big beautiful buildings with which the place once abounded, one sees nothing but heaps of ruins. Besides the church and one or two houses close by, there is only one nice building which tells tale of the brave days of old; and that is what is called the *Chilabari* (Kite-house), which after passing through some hands is now in the possession and enjoyment of Prosad Das Boral of Bali who has considerably improved upon it. Purely native houses there are very few in Bandel, of which the house of the late Dwarka Nath Chakravarti is the only one worthy of notice. This gentleman was a well known educationist and was deservedly revered by his pupils of whom the present writer was one.

The portion to the west of Bandel and Keota, if not also of Shahgunge, is only sparsely peopled,

being for the most part overgrown with jungles which are occasionally visited by the spotted pards and wild tusky boars. These back-slums, if we may so call them, it behoves the Authorities to look after in order to their being reclaimed and rendered safely habitable.

The central portion of Hooghly is the most important of all. It consists of Bali, Town Proper and Gholeghat. Bali, so called from a Mohunt of that name, lies to the west of the big moat which runs past the Post Office down to the river. The bridge which connects it with the Town Proper was built in the time of Mr. D. C. Smyth, so well known in this district. In the west of Bali there is an important quarter called Rai Rayan Bazar. It was owned by an up-country Lala Kayastha,* named Alam Chand. He was a man of great note and had considerable influence at the Durbar of the Great Mogul of Delhi, by whom he was dubbed "Rai Rayan," or chief among princes. Having got an absolute grant of this part of Bali he settled here for good, built a large house, and, a devout Vaisnava as he was, established a Thacoorbati in which he set up the images of Radha and Krishna. After

* Another account is that the Bazar was established by one Hari Mullick, a man of wealth and influence who was honoured by the Nawab of Murshidabad with the title of "Rai Rayan". He, it is said, was the settlement officer of Dacca in the time of Warren Hastings and had his dwelling house in the western portion of that quarter. Nimai Charan Mullick of Calcutta was a relation of his.

clearing the jungle with which the place was densely covered, he got up a big market. This Bazar was the biggest in this part of the country and was held daily. Alam Chand lived in a grand style; but Death is no respecter of persons, so that when his time came, this great man fell a victim to the stern Destroyer, and, as he left no issue, all his property came into the possession of his widow, Makkhan Bibi. This lady was well worthy of such a husband; she was very pious and kept up the Deb Sheba established by Alam Chand Rai Rayan. When, at last, Makkhan Bibi found that her end too was nigh at hand, she made a free-will grant of her whole property including the family idols to one Purushottum Das Mohunt, a Saraswat Brahman, who had a high reputation for piety and virtue. The good saintly grantee passed his days in peace and happiness; and, at last, when he felt that his earthly career was drawing to its close, he constituted his *Gurubhai*, Ram Prosad Mohunt, his heir and successor. Shortly after, he closed his eyes for ever and passed into nobody knows where. His sacred garland (*Mala*) was buried along with his corpse, and a small brick-work was built over it. This bit of a tomb, if one may so call it, is kept in repair and is daily worshipped with *Chandan* (sandal-wood paste) and flowers.

Ram Prosad was succeeded by Sukhlal Mohunt who as usual carried on the Sheba and managed the

property. The present Shebaita are Sukhlal's descendants in the male line, the class to which he belonged not observing the vow of celibacy but living like ordinary Hindus.

The Bazar noticed above has long since ceased to exist. A part of the land was taken up by Government for purposes of the Grand Trunk Road which passes through Bali. For the land so taken, the Mohunt proprietors were allowed Sayer compensation under Act XXVII of 1793 * to the amount of Rs 152. ans 11. p 4; which is continued up to now. In fact, this amount is the main source out of which the Deb Sheba is maintained with its two sets of Shebaita.

At about a stone's throw from Alam Chand's Thacoorbati there is a much older *Akra* (house of God) which is known as the Bara Akra. This religious institution owes its origin to a very pious man, named Chaturdas Babaji who was a first class saint and devotee. While the portion now called Bali was covered with thick impervious jungle, the old Babaji came up (from what place or country none can say) nearly three hundred years ago and made his resting place here among the denizens of the forest. He used to do poojah by sounding the

* The Government order in pursuance whereof this Act was passed is dated the 28th July 1790. The last order of the Bengal Government in respect of this *Debutter* property is dated the 19th April 1865.

conch as is the wont with *saddhus* and *jogis*. It so happened that while so engaged in doing poojah in the depth of night, the winding bout of the conch caught the ears of the Mahomedan Governor of Hooghly. Early the next morning he ordered his guard to make an inquiry with a view to ascertaining whence the deep solemn sound came. On the matter being inquired into and ascertained, the Nawab had the jungle cleared and a path made whereby he might go visit the saint. When the way was made, the great man accompanied by a few followers proceeded to the holy man's place and arrived at it at a time when the latter was absorbed in prayers and contemplations. The Nawab tarried for some time, but deeming that the devotee was not likely to open his lips soon, left the spot and came back to his palace. The Nawab repeated his visit the next morning but with no better success. The third day or rather night he was more fortunate, as he found the holy man quite in a mood to speak with him; and from the short conversation he had an opportunity of holding with him, he was fully convinced of his worth and sincerity. By order of the Nawab the surrounding jungle was cleared and a proper place made for the holy man to live in with peace and content. On the fame of the saint spreading far and wide, several Rajas and Zamindars came to pay him a reverential visit, and, being pleased with his great sterling merit in a religious

point of view, made him grants both in money and land. In due time an Akra was built and the saint set up his holy idols therein with appropriate rites and ceremonies. When his time came, the great devotee "shuffled off his mortal coil," and his earthy remains were buried in the sacred ground adjoining the temple. His tomb is held in deep reverence, where daily worship is done all the year round with more or less circumstance. Some years after the demise of Chaturdas Babaji, Ram Krishnadas Mohunt held charge of the temple and maintained its dignity tolerably well. The *Akra* at Khamarpara near Shahgunge is an appanage to this temple, having been obtained under a Will which was executed by the then incumbent in favour of the Mohunt of the Bara Akra at Bali. The Khamarpara Akra was originally the property of Bhikaridas Mohunt. He was a very powerful man in the religious sense of the term, and flourished at a time when Daraf Gazi * of Tribeni distinguished himself. The Gazi was very proud of his piety and powers and considered himself superior to any Hindu saint. Mohunt Bhikaridas humbled his pride and this is how it was done. One day when the Hindu saint was clearing his teeth with a little piece of wood (*datan*), he was informed that Daraf Gazi

* Daraf, Dafar and Dafra seem to be corruptions of the name of Jafar, J changing into D. Jafar Khan, though a Mussalman, used to worship the Ganges. The roofless house which adjoins the wall containing "Dafar Gazi's Axe," is said to have been the residence of Jafar Khan after he became a worshipper of Mother Ganga.

was coming on a visit to him riding on a large tiger. Sighting the Gazi at some distance, Mohunt Bhikaridas endearingly patting on the wall on which he was sitting three times asked it to move on, and, strange to say, the old brick structure commenced to move forward as if it possessed life and locomotive power. When the two holy men came face to face, they each came down from their respective conveyances, and, embracing each other, returned to their several abode, but not before the proud Gazi had admitted in so many words the superiority of the Hindu saint. Thus, from a violent hater of Hindus that he was, Daraf Gazi became a warm admirer of the Hindu religion. He forthwith began his study of Sanskrit and mastered it, so much so that he could compose good elegant verses in that language. His prayer to the goddess Ganga is well known, and might well compare with the similar prayer of Sankaracharya, and even of that prince of poets, the sage Valmiki. The Gazi's "Axe" (iron bar), which is so wonderfully locked on to the wall of the dilapidated mosque at Tribeni that it could not be pulled out by any amount of human or brute force, is well worth a visit. Indeed, what Orpheus did by his powers of music, the Gazi did by his powers of prayer. He could tame wild beasts and make them obey his behests. Even tigers that are so very fond of human blood acted like the meekest lamb at his biddings. Surely strange and mysterious are the powers of faith and godliness !

The present Temple in which are enshrined Radha and Krishna, and Jagannath with his brother and sister, and which in itself is a nice piece of brick-work, was erected in the time of Ramsaran Mohunt, who died on 3rd Sraban 1273 B. S. The Temple has property worth about Rs. 500 or 600 a year. The lands are situated in Hooghly, Midnapur, Nadia, Beerbhoom and Doomka. The Zemindari, if such a small estate deserves to be so called, is free of all charges, either in the shape of rent, revenue or taxes.

North of Rai Rayan's Bazar is Tewari para, so called from its having been originally inhabited by the Tewari Brahmans, among whom Poran Tewari was the richest and most powerful. North of Tewari para is Palpara, anciently called Malpara in consequence of its having been peopled by the Mals, a low-caste Sudra tribe. Jagat Pal was the wealthiest man in Palpara. His grandson Shib Chandra Pal died only lately, full of years. The Pals had considerable landed property ; but in course of time they have fallen very low. The masonry ghat at Bali, near which dead bodies of Hindus are cremated, as well as the gangajatri-house (resting place for moribund people) attached to it is their making. The goddess, Kali, which has since given name to the *ghat*, is, however, not of their establishing : It was set up by one Bhairub Chunder Mookerjee who was the Naib Nazir of the Hooghly

Magistracy. The worship of the dreaded Deity is kept up by his descendants.

East of Rai Rayan's Bazar is Boralpara, the quarter of the Borals, rich folks of the Subarnabanik caste. Kartick Chandra Boral was a self-made man. He was a stock-jobber and bullion-merchant and prospered in his business. His son, Prosad Das Boral, has proved himself well worthy of such a father and is the richest man of Bali. The well-known Gouri Sen, as we have already stated,* was a native of this quarter. His liberality has passed for a proverb. Nanda Lal Baboo, a Kshetri by caste, was a noted man of Bali. He was a respectable Zamindar and had considerable property in the Hooghly district. He was religiously disposed and spent a good deal in charity. But the great monument of his beneficence is the *Atitsala*, or almshouse established by him at his residential abode, where many poor souls are daily fed and otherwise provided. An old lady of this family, Peari Bibi, widow of the late Radha Nath Babu, has only recently built a fine bathing *ghat* with its appendages on the river side for the convenience of the Bali people. Lala Matuck Lal, a Kayastha by caste, was also a notable character. He gained a name in the Police line and had got together a deal of money. His house stands by the side of the road leading to the nearest Railway Station. His family

* See Chapter V.

has felt the ruinous force of time and is fast declining. The Subarnabanik saint, Uddharana Datta, of Saptagram fame occasionally resided at Bali, and some of his descendants kept a full-sized statue of his at their house which was looked upon as a tutelary deity and worshipped in due form. The statue has, it seems, been since removed to their new residence at Calcutta.

What distinguishes the Bali folks from natives of less favoured spots is that they are fully alive to the benefits of education. The Hooghly Branch School was quite sufficient for the education of boys. But there was no institution for the imparting of education to the softer sex. Accordingly, some men, more earnest and zealous than others, opened a girl school at Bali on 2nd June 1876. This school was fairly conducted for some time, but afterwards, for one reason or another, it was found to be on the decline, when to prevent its falling still lower, it was made over (in 1878) to Miss Raikes for better management, and it is gratifying to observe that under her fostering care and with the co-operation of some local gentry, more especially of Prosad Das Boral and Lal Behari Boral, it is rising both in usefulness and importance. The Chinsura and Hooghly Zenana Mission which has done some real good to this part of the country owes its origin to this good lady. The girl schools at Ghutia Bazar, Chinsura and Suripara are also

of her making. All these schools are occasionally visited by high Government officials of the Education Department, and even the Provincial Governor for the time being, when he comes on gubernatorial visit to the district, condescends to visit Miss Raikes's schools and examine the girls; and, what is very remarkable still, Her Excellency Lady Lytton once came all the way from the Vice-Regal villa at Barrackpore and presided at the Prize distribution of her schools. Female education is undoubtedly a very desirable thing and it behoves every well-wisher of this district to thank Miss Raikes for her laudable efforts in that direction. But while encouraging such education we must be always on our guard against its proving a fruitful source of evil in the Hindu house-holder's point of view.

Crossing the bridge which connects Bali with the Town Proper one comes upon the site which was occupied by the Mogul fort. Here were the Courts and Offices until they were removed to Chinsura. In their stead we have now the Normal School, the Boarding Lodge and the School Inspector's office. The Hooghly Branch School also is situate in this quarter. Over against the school house on the west side of the public road is a big edifice which had been originally built by Dr. T. Wise and which was until very recently occupied by the Road Cess Office. It is now in the occupation of the lady teachers in connection with Miss Raikes's Zenana Mission. Here-

about in olden times was the splendid mansion of that *Glory of Merchants*, Fukkat-ujjar. From here commenced Turangarh which extended down to the portion known as Shaistabad. Turangarh was the quarter of the Turani Moguls, as Mogulpura which lay to the east across the present Chuck Bazar road was that of the Irani Moguls. Turangarh owes its name and fame to Khawjah Abdool Karim, son of the ephemeral Nawab, Serfaraz Khan. When Ali Verdi became the ruler of Bengal, prince Abdool Karim, not deeming his position safe at Murshidabad, came down to Hooghly *Bunder* and built a palace in this part which he surrounded, as was customary with the aristocracy of those times, with a deep broad ditch; and it was from this "moated grange" of a Turani nobleman that the place was called Turangarh. Kazi Lal Mohammed's house was also in a part of Turan Garh which was termed after that Mahomedan Judge *Kazir-Deori*.

West of Turan Garh is Sonatuli, formerly largely tenanted by the Sonars, or people of the goldsmith caste; and on the west of Sonatuli is Alipur, once an important locality, now fallen so very low as to have become almost a huge piece of jungle. In Shaistabad stands in all its architectural pride the house of the late lamented Shoshi Bhusan Banerjee, Government pleader of Hooghly. By sheer dint of merit he rose from small beginnings to a very high position; but the tenure of his natural life was

rather short and he died in the palmy days of his prosperous worldly career. He was a very good man and his memory is cherished with fond regard.

West of Shaistabad is Kabasdanga, so called probably from the fact of its having at one time been dotted with *Karpas* (cotton) trees. Ananda Mohan Bose, Deputy Registrar of the Calcutta Sadar Court, was the pride of this place. His nephews had kept up the dignity of the family to a certain extent, but since their death the family is rapidly going down and the splendid house built by Ananda Mohan appears to be on its last legs. Next to the Boses the Chakravartis are worthy of notice. The name of Ramtonu Chakravarti is fairly well known; he was the second clerk of the local Collectorate in the good old days when clerkship was held in some esteem. His eldest son, Hari Narayan, was a class fellow of the illustrious Dwarka Nath Mitter and was like him a senior scholar. Ramtonu's second son, Hurro Chunder, held a respectable post in the office of the Deputy Registrar of the High Court. Hurro Chunder's son, Kristo Lal, was a promising young man. He had become a Moonsiff, but was cut off by the cruel hand of death in his very prime. With the decline of the Bose and the Chakravarti families Kabasdanga has suffered a change for the worse, and, what is very much to be regretted, has become quite unsafe for good people to live in. Mogulpura was at one time in a very

flourishing state and was studded with many nice buildings. Most of the residents were traders by profession and they carried on their business on a very large scale. Latterly, one Nunna Meah, a protege of Mohamed Mohsin of revered memory, had a big house there, which is now the property of Doctor Buddun Chunder Choudhry by right of purchase from the owner's son, Meah Hassan. The houses of Moulvi Nababjan and Moulvi Badal Hossein, pleader, were also situate in that once crowded quarter. East of Mogulpura is Emambazar with its old *hat*. In this well-known quarter stand the two Emambaras with all their appurtenances. It is mostly occupied by Mussalmans, but the number we now find is but a trifle compared to what it was before. Some Hindu houses are also in this part, conspicuous amidst which is the family dwelling of Dr. Buddun. It is so very close to the culinary department of the Chota Emambara, as the bigger one is called, that if the rigid orthodoxy of the ancient Hindus were now in full force he would run the risk of being excommunicated from the pale of Hinduism. On the land to the east of the Doctor's picturesque edifice on the other side of the drain stood several Hindu houses, one of which belonged to Joy Narayan Das, dewan to the Emambara. The land now covered by the eastern wing of the Imambara buildings was the property of one Torab Ali Khan.

Just to the south of Emambara is Gholeghat,* a name so well known to fame. Here in 1650 captain John Brookham of the *Lyoness* commenced to build a factory on behalf of the English Company, and after it was completed, James Bridgeman was sent from Balasore as Chief, with a Mr. Stephens as Second, and two Assistants with them, Blake and Taylor. The pay of the Chief was £100 a year, while that of the Assistants was £5 a year only. But all these officers had large perquisites which made up for the poorness of their pay. In 1658 George Gawton was Chief, but before the year ended, he was succeeded by his Second, Jonathan Trevisa. Streyنشam Master, who was entrusted with the duty of re-organising the Bengal settlement came to Hooghly in September 1676, and having decided upon it as the most fitting place to be made the chief factory in Bengal † wrote to the Directors to that effect. His recommendation was carried out and a large factory was built. Attached to the factory was a chapel for Christians to say prayers in. The first chaplain of Hooghly was the Rev. John Evans who arrived here in 1678. Job Charnock who had already seen some service in India, came to Hooghly in 1686 when he took charge of the office

* Orme has *Golgal*.

† See Hedges' *Diary*, vol II p. 236. Hedges remained at Hooghly until Christmas, when he sailed for England, where he was knighted by king James II on 6th March 1688. He died in 1701.

which had fallen vacant by the death of Mr. Beard. About this time the town extended for about two miles along the west bank of the river between Chinsura on the south and Bandel on the north. During Charnock's rule the factory having been destroyed by inundation he commenced to build a better and a stronger one * but after it was raised sufficiently high, the rich Moguls and Syeds of Mogulpura as well as the Mussalmans of Gholeghat set up an outcry saying that if the foreigners were allowed to ascend their lofty houses, they would be greatly dishonoured by their females being exposed to public view. Upon this the Fouzdar, Mir Nazir, made a report to the Provincial governor, Nawab Jafar Khan, and the result was that all work at the factory was stopped. Being sorely chagrined Charnock left Hooghly † all of a sudden and proceeded to Hidgelee far to the south. Thus the prospect

* This building was erected on the site of the Benares Bagh which belonged to the Company's Agent at Gholeghat near the city.

† This is the account of Charnock's removal from Hooghly as given in *Akbar-i-Mahabhat* of Nawab Mahabhat Khan written in 1810 (see Elliot's *History of India as told by its Historians*, vol. VIII, pp. 378-80). But Orme gives a different account.

He says that it originated in a quarrel between an English soldier and the king's people in the market place. The dispute having taken a very serious turn Charnock brought in a strong reinforcement from Madras and with these troops attacked the Fouzdar, Abdul Gunnee and defeated him. The latter removed to a safe distance and applied to the king for reinforcements. When these came, he proceeded to attack Charnock. The wary Englishman seeing that resistance would be of no avail, sought his safety in flight and escaped to Ingelee. (See Orme's *Fragments*, pp. 281-284).

of the English in Hooghly wore a very gloomy aspect. Hereafter they never returned to this place but made their settlement at Calcutta which was then of very little importance. The Ghoses and the Choudhuries of Gholeghat have long been famous. The renowned Ghose family of Babugunge is only an offshoot of the Gholeghat family of that name. But strange to say, the main branch is rapidly on its decline and is likely to die out soon. The Ghoses of Gholeghat had originally received material help from another well-known local family, namely, the Sircars, who too have fallen very low. Gobind Chand Ghose had a good name. He was a protege of Mr. H. Belli, the Collector, and it was by his favour that he rose pretty high. The Choudhuries also have almost died out. They have a small Zamindari in the Hooghly district. An entirely self-made man by name Ghoneshyam Dey came by some portion of their Zamindari as a *brudhu* or cognate, and he enjoyed it till his death. But that small estate was not the only support of his life. He carried on jute business on a large scale and prospered in it. His earnings were pretty considerable, but as he latterly suffered loss in business, he could but leave a little behind. His eldest son, Shib Chandra Dey, is a well-educated gentleman. He has been practising as a pleader in the local Courts for a long time and has quite a reputation in his profession as a sound lawyer and a skilful

conveyancer.* The present writer owes to the departed good old soul "a debt immense of endless gratitude" and with deep filial piety ever holds his sacred memory in the utmost reverence.

The most noticeable thing in Gholeghat is the grand Jubilee Bridge over the Hooghly. It is a Titanic work in miniature and testifies to the wonderful engineering skill of Sir Bradford Leslie. Though seeming to be hanging, the Bridge is as fixed as a rock. One has only to look at it to admire its splendid workmanship. It is really a marvel in its own way †.

In Gholeghat there is a quarter called Tantipara described in Zamindar's books as Tatiyan Shahabad. Formerly this busy quarter constantly resounded with the shootings of the shuttles and the swingings of the handlooms; but alas! those good old days are gone, never perhaps to return. With the import of cheap Manchester goods, the native weaving industry has almost disappeared. Most of the weavers have taken to other pursuits and the few that still cling to their much neglected ancestral vocation often find it difficult to make the two ends meet. Subal Das was the head of the *Tantees* of

* Since the above was written Babu Shib Chunder has departed this world, leaving a large circle of friends and relations to mourn his loss.

† For a minute description of the Bridge see Dr. Hunter's Statistical Reporter vol. V.

Hooghly. He traded in *lungees* (a kind of red cloth worn principally by Mahomedans) and made a large fortune by it. He built a very big spacious house and did many good and pious acts. He also celebrated the *Tula Purush Dan*, or the weighing ceremony, which none but very rich folks are able to perform. Nanda Lal Das who distinguished himself in the Education Department and rose to be Head Master of the Hooghly College was a worthy descendant of his.

South of Tantipara is Kalupara, the quarter of the oilmen having also a small sprinkling of weavers. Like the Tantees, the Kolus are also on the decline and I doubt very much if there are more than half a dozen oil-pressing machines in the whole quarter. Some of the Kolus of Kalupara were in a well-to-do condition and used to celebrate Pujahs in their houses with something like *ecolat*. There is, however, one thing in Kalupara which differentiates it from the rest of this portion of the town, it has a *patshala*, not of the simple primitive type but of refined modern fashion. This is known as the Barodwari Upper Primary school. It is certainly a good thing of its kind and is to some extent aided by Government. The Municipality also, it seems, makes some grant to it. Abutting on the quarter of the Kolus was that of the Sankarees or shell-cutters. This small quarter is better known as Barodwari. Choitun Sankaree was a man of some note. In addition to

the knowledge of his profession he was an adept in the divine art of music. One of his sons was a school master and he is now enjoying his well-earned pension, not, however, at his native seat but in Calcutta.

At the extreme end of Gholeghat stands the Hooghly Jail with its outhouses. This place of correction is beautifully situated and commands a wide view of the noble Hooghly which flows fast, reflecting on its calm silvery bosom the magnificent range of buildings of Messrs. Barry Smith and Co., on the other side. West of Gholeghat is Mohesh-tola, so called from the cult of Shiva which is enshrined there under the shade of a branching banyan tree. The temple of the god was built about a hundred and fifty years ago by one Choitun Charan Dey, a resident of the spot and was duly consecrated at his expense. The Zemindar, Jogudas, gave away about eight bighas of rent-free land for the maintenance of the Sheba. The temple with the deity in it still exists and daily worship is well kept up. The *Gajan* festival is celebrated year by year in honor of the god. Some weaver families also have their houses in this quarter. The pride of the place is Kartic Chandra Pal. He was a Sub-Judge and has only lately retired on well-earned pension. He bears an exemplary character and has the good of his countrymen at heart. He has built a nice little *Ghat* on the Hooghly for the convenience

of the people of this part of the town, and assists persons without distinction of caste and creed who appear to him to be in real need. His eldest son—Ashutosh, is a Moonsiff and bids fair to prove worthy of such a father.

South of Shaistabad was Kattrā Shaista Khan, now known as Pankhatuli which owes its name from the circumstance of its having been formerly inhabited for the most part by the makers of hand-fans. These artizans, if I may so call them, have all died out or have taken to other professions or have removed to some other quarters. The place is almost deserted, only a portion of it being occupied by *ticca-wallas*, so very useful to smokers from *hubble-bubble*.

The southern portion of the town consists mainly of Ghutia Bazar, Pipalpati and Babugunge. Ghutia Bazar is the most crowded part of the whole town and its populousness is quite in unison with its opulence. It is inhabited mostly by the Subarnabaniks who as a class seem to be the special favourites of fortune, and a saying runs current that even the poorest widow of that caste, has her two thousands at the lowest calculation. Of the Subarnabaniks of Hooghly Proper, the Mullick family commonly known as the *Gushtipati* or lord of families, occupies the first and foremost position. Their name is legion, and one might say, comparing great things with small, that the family looks like

a modern miniature of the tremendous household of the ten-headed Demon-king of Lanka. The Mullicks trace their origin to one Luchsminarayan Dey, who coming from Satgaon, first settled at Ghutia Bazar * some three hundred years ago. Luchsminarayan was followed by the ancestors of the Dhars and of the Seals. Amongst the Mullicks the names of Gangaram and Purushottom are widely known. The bathing Ghat at Ghutia Bazar on the river side is a standing instance of Gangaram's liberality. Latterly, Shyam Mullick cut a prominent figure. Though he died rather young he left a pretty large fortune to his worthy son, Prosad Das, who is a rising member of the local bar and is otherwise a good man. Gobinda Dhar was one of the richest men of the place. His son, Gopinath Dhar, well maintained the dignity of the family. The latter is dead and his large property which consists mainly in Government securities is now in the possession and enjoyment of the younger widow, Tulsimani Dasi. Brajo Bullubh Seal was also a man of note. Last but not the least is Pitambar Pyne. Nursed in the lap of adversity this remarkable man by sheer dint of industry, perseverance and strong common sense rose to wealth and importance beyond

* The origin of the name is not known; but the probability is that it has some connection with the sale of dried dung-cakes (*Ghutia*), just as Khorua Bazar has with the sale of straw (*Khar*) and Machua Bazar with that of fish (*mach*).

expectation. Pitambar was a merchant and banyan and his power and influence was so very great that though his party was comparatively weak, he held his own against the gigantic Mullick family with which he was almost always at daggers drawn. He lived in a splendid style and his dwelling house is the best in the whole quarter or in all Hooghly for that matter. Latterly, there was some falling-off in his business but such was his tact and ingenuity that he kept up all appearances to the last moment of his life, and it was not till some time after his death that people came to know that he had died in debt. His worthy sons, more especially the younger, Gopal, who is the only one now living, have retrieved the fortune of the family and have well kept up their father's proud name. But not only are the Subarnabaniks of Ghutia Bazar well known in the trade mart and the counting-house, they have also cut a good figure in the republic of letters as well as in the official world. Norottum Mullick was a highly educated man. His college career was quite a success and he also highly distinguished himself in the Subordinate Judicial Service to which he was a brilliant ornament. His son Bepin holds a very respectable post in the Board of Revenue. Iswar Chunder Das was another noted character. He had a brilliant academical career, during the course of which he carried off many prizes and medals. As was the practice in those

days some of his essays were published in the Education Reports. He began life as a teacher but ended it as a pleader and in both capacities won esteem and regard. His worthy son, Gosta, is a translator in the High Court at Calcutta. Surji Kumar Dhar is also worthy of special notice. Having left college after a successful career, he entered the world where he acted many parts and in all of them acquitted himself well. He was Daroga, clerk and pleader joined in one; and in his retirement wrote some useful works thereby showing the versatility of his parts and his utmost devotion to the cause of Hindu religion. He has left a worthy son in Nogenra Nath Dhar who is a Moonsiff of the first grade. Rai Brohmo Mohan Mullick Bahadur is also a well-educated man of Hooghly. He followed in the footsteps of that illustrious educationist, Bhudeb Mukerjee, and ultimately succeeded him as Inspector of Schools. He is specially known for his Mathematical attainments and his *Elements of Euclid* in the vernacular is a text-book in Bengal. He is fortunate in having some worthy sons. Nor should we leave unnoticed Srinath Pal and Behari Lal Mullick. Both of them were Sub-Judges and had a fair reputation in the department to which their services pertained. They are now enjoying their well-earned pension. Both of them are blessed with worthy sons, more especially Behari Lal, one of whose son, Monmotho, is a moonsiff, and the other, Promotho, holds a very

high post in the postal department in connection with the East Indian Railway.

Bordering on Ghutia Bazar on the south is Tamlipara of which the Singhs are so well-known. In their palmy days, the two brothers, Ram Narayan and Madan Mohan, did many good acts in a Hindu point of view. Their Ras Festival had a wide repute and attracted people from all parts of the district. They also celebrated some *Shrad* ceremonies with very great *eclat*. Indeed, in this part of the country no family surpassed them in the matter of due performance of deeds of piety and virtue. Madan Mohan's sons celebrated the *Tula Purush Dom* of their parents at an enormous expense. The old man with his wife were weighed against money and valuable goods, and after the weighing was over, all these coins and valuables were distributed amongst Brahmans and Pandits. Both the families, however, have since suffered reverses and are now in a state of decay. The Ghoses of this quarter were once in their glory. Ram Mohan Ghose had left large property to his three sons, Ganga Narayan, Gopal and Koilas. Ganga Narayan had entered Government service and was Sherishtadar of the Judge's Court at Chapra. Gopal was very religiously disposed and spent a good deal in charity. It is said that like Madhab Dutta of Chinsura he had made a gift of a lakh of rupees to his Guru or spiritual preceptor, a Brahman of Nabagram. All the three brothers are dead, and it

is a great pity that their heirs and descendants have very little to live upon. Surely ill fares human fortune in this world of constant changes! There is another family in this quarter which has only lately risen to some importance, we mean the Deys, of whom Jugal Kishore is a Moonsiff of pretty long standing. His father and uncles were the brothers-in-law of Ram Narayan Singh of whom we have spoken above.

West of Ghutia Bazar is Pipalpati, so called from the grand public road passing through it having been for long lined with rows of peepul, Banyan and other big trees. This quarter mostly belongs to the Bansberia House as appertaining to their Zamindari, mouza Kalihanda, and to the well-known Das family of Jagudaspara as forming part of their estate, lot Shahabad. This lot comprises Tamlipara, Kalupara, Tantipara, and Jagudaspara. Jagannath Das commonly known as Jagu Das was an entirely self-made man, who, from an ordinary sircar of the late East India Company at Fort William rose to power and opulence. He used to celebrate some Hindu Pujahs at his grand dwelling-house with considerable *eclat* and was known as the Zamindar of Hooghly *par excellence*. His son, Rajkristo and his grandson, Bhupal, also kept up the dignity and reputation of the family, but since the death of the latter the family is fast falling into decay. The big hat *

* Otherwise called hat Shahazadpur.

bearing the name of Mullick Kasim on the way to Chinsura is owned by this family. Not far from the house of the Dases of Jagudaspara stand conspicuous the splendid mansions of the late Rai Eshan Chandra Mittra Bahadur and his brother Mohendra Chandra. Indeed, the Mitters and Dr. Buddun are the richest men in the whole town. The Mitters are natives of Kona, a village on the other side of the river, Hooghly being their business-resort and in point of fact their principal quarters where they spend most part of the year.

The Pipalpati outpost stands at the spot where the Pipalpati and the Pankhatuli roads cut the Cockerell road. On the west of the Pankhatuli road lies Khonkarpara or Khondkartuli, in which, however, there is only one Khondkar family, the rest having died out or removed to other localities. To the south of Khondkarpara is Goaltuli, the quarter of the *Goalas* (milkmen). Here the *Gajan* festival is celebrated with some pomp and circumstance in the closing month of the Bengal year. West of Pankhatuli and Khondkarpara is Kabaripara, the quarter of the *Kabarees* or fish-mongers and such like low people, where stands the magnificent garden-house of the late Jeban Kristo Pal of Chinsura. Ghazi Dewan's little *Durgah* is by the side of the Pankhatuli road, nearly opposite to the gate of the Town Hall and Municipal office. Abdool Rahman, commonly known as Fakir Shahib, was formerly in

charge of this Durgah. His grandson, Mahor Shahib, is the present incumbent.

The Pals* of Pipalpati, of whom Prem Chand Pal now of Emambazar, and Srinath Pal at present of Ghutia Bazar or rather of Tamlipara were members of the Subordinate Judicial Service, were once of some note. Srinath's eldest brother, Deno Nath, had built a house adjacent to their ancestral homestead. After his death it was sold by his sons and it is now in the possession of Rai Bepin Bihari Bose Bahadur who has largely added to and improved upon it. This gentleman is the son of Kashi Nath Bose who was a Deputy Collector. The house of the Bose family is in Protappur whence Rai Bepin Bihari has removed to Pipalpati, thereby casting his ancestral abode, which is still in existence, quite in the shade.

At the southern extremity of Pipalpati is Mullick Kashim's *hat*. This is the principal market in the whole town, and sells things of sorts. Even paddy, rice, potato and pulses are sold in some part of it. This portion is of recent making and belongs to some persons besides the Dases of Jagudaspara. Almost contiguous to the *hat* to the south is Kumarpara the quarter of the potters.

Babugunge Proper belongs to the Paikpara Raj family. It extends southwards from the Cockerell road to the laue which runs past the firm of the

* Their ancestor, Chand Pal and Raja Suknoy of Calcutta, it is said, belonged to the same family.

Koondos of Khamarpara and westwards from the river to within some distance of the Kulihanda road. The area covered by these boundaries had on it a big bazar which was a source of income to the owners. This bazar was called Gobindagunge after the name of Dewan Ganga Gobinda Singh's elder brother, Babu Radha Gobinda, and it is from this circumstance that the place is now generally known as Babugunge. It forms a part and parcel of the vast pargana, Arsha. When under Regulation XXVII of 1793 Government took possession of all hats, bazars and gunges, the owners of Babugunge were allowed Sayer duties to the extent of Rs 3,600, while they were made to pay Rs 100 as Government revenue, leaving a net income of Rupees three thousands and a half. Within the above area some land belonged to the Raja of Andool, for which the rent payable was Rs 15 a year. Half of this amount is now payable to the present-head of the Andool house and half to Radha Nath Banerjee who came by it by right of purchase. Babugunge, as its name implies, is a well-known place of trade. When the Singhs of Tamlipara were in affluent circumstances they had their firm in this place as they had in many others. Here they carried on business on a large scale and the river in front was almost all the year round crowded with large cargo boats. The place resounded with the ceaseless din and clatter of trade and was alive with bands of buyers and sellers and brokers. In Babugunge stands

the house of the late Annoda Prosad Ghose who was for long Personal Assistant to the Divisional Commissioner. The Purkait family of Babugung was once of note. Lot Kulihanda which now belongs to the Bansberia Mohashoy family was their Zamindari. This lot includes Sujan's Bagan, Pipalpati, Mullick Kasim's hat, Goaltuli, Kadamtola and some portion of Babugung. Sujan's Bagan derives its name from an up-country man named Sujan Singh who made a big garden there. Kadamtola's boast was Ram Krishna Kalliah and his brother. These rich folks came from the North-West and settled here. Probodh Chunder Dutt, a retired Judicial officer, has lately built a house at Kadamtala. He belongs to the well-known Moonshee family of Devanandapur and is otherwise a good man. Kashinath Rukhit, a gentleman of the Tambuli caste, was a noted character in Babugunge. He possessed considerable property, but with the lapse of time it has dwindled into nothing and his very name is fast fading away from the memory of the people.

South of Babugunge proper is Protappur and adjoining Protappur is Haldartuli. This locality owes its name to the well-known Haldar family which at one time cut a very prominent figure. The Halders were big zamindars and possessed vast influence. In course of time they have fallen into insignificance. The last representative of some note

was Kali Charan Halidar. The ruins of old buildings testify to the wealth and importance of this once famous Brahman family. Adjoining Haldartuli is Joraghat. Here is a small Madrassa where Persian is taught by a Moonshee who is a distant descendant of the infamously famous Mir Solaman Khan. Though a little thing, this school is doing some good in the way of Mahomedan education.

In the southern division of the town proper there are several *Akras* of which the Akra of Radhabullub and of Krishna Chaitanya are the most important. Almost all these monasteries, if we may so call them, are principally maintained with the money and means of the Suvernabaniks who are all Vaisnavas by religion.

Here we close our general account of Hooghly and in closing it we can not but express our deep regret that placed as it is, Hooghly is not likely even to recover its former importance, not even that amount of it which it possessed while the Courts and Offices were here.

CHAPTER XX.

THE CONCLUSION.

A history of Hooghly would not be complete without some account of Chinsura, the two places forming, to use Bishop Heber's words, "almost one town." His Lordship's words possessed a peculiar significance seeing that they were used at a time when Chinsura had just been ceded to the English. From long before the cession the two towns were rivals and vied with each other in the pursuits of pelf and power. This rivalry had continued in full force for a considerable period, but since the fatal day of Bejara on which Colonel Forde gained a decisive victory over the Dutch that rivalry had been confined to the matter of commerce. Indeed, the Dutch drove a very brisk trade in the latter half of the eighteenth century. The way to commercial enterprise in the Far East was first shown in modern times by the Portuguese. After the fall of their power in Bengal by the capture and destruction of their settlement at Hooghly in 1632, the English came in and established a factory in that very place. A few short years after, the Dutch * followed in their steps and became their next-door neighbours ; but finding

* The first Dutch fleet sailed for the Indies under Houtman in 1595, but it was not till 1602 that the Dutch East India Company was formed.

such close proximity neither pleasant nor convenient, they removed to the neighbouring village of Chinsura and settled there for good. Although trade was their main object, they, in order to provide against possible contingencies, deemed it necessary to fortify their settlement. Accordingly with the permission of the Mogul satrap they built a fort in 1687* which they named fort Gustavus after the then reigning king of Holland. This fort stretched from the site of the present Joraghat to where the barracks now stand. The whole range of buildings, however, were not erected at one and the same time, the southern portion having been built somewhere in the year 1692. The French *Garh* or moat separating the Dutch possession from the French lay to the south-west of Chinsura, some remains of which are still visible. The "*Tolaphatuk*" would seem to have been the boundary or barrier-gate where octroi duties were collected from people coming from Chandernagore with goods and merchandise. That wide and lofty gate used to be closed at curfewtime in order to prevent egress and ingress during the dark and drowsy hours of night. Hamilton who visited Bengal in 1716 thus describes Chinsura:—"About half a league further up is Chinsura

* Stavorinus, who visited Bengal about 1769-70, however, says that the old Dutch fort "was built in the year 1656, as appears by the date over the land gate." But if he meant Fort Gustavus, he was evidently in error, as appears from the Rev. Mr. Long's article—"Notes on the Right Bank of the Hooghly"—in the *Calcutta Review* for 1845.

where the Dutch Emporium stands. It is a large factory, walled high with brick, and the factors have a great many good Houses standing pleasantly on the river side, and all of them have pretty gardens * to their houses. The Chinsura is wholly under the Dutch Company's Government. It is about a mile long and about the same breadth, well inhabited by the Armenians and the Natives. It is contiguous to Hooghly, and affords sanctuary for many poor natives, when they are in danger of being oppressed by the Mogul's Governor or his harpies."†

Chinsura was not an independent settlement. It was under the Government of Batavia in Java,‡ and was ruled by a Director, or Governor as he was more commonly called, assisted by seven councillors. The pay of the Governor was not high, but he received a certain percentage on the sale of imported goods, and it was these large perquisites which enabled him to live as he actually did, in a princely style. Governor Vernet, it is said, used to spend Rs 36,000 a year as household expences, and in this respect

* Indeed, the Dutch excelled in gardening as the French did in road-making. The Dutch gardens were the very pick of the basket, if one might say so. Each gentleman had a garden attached to his house. Thus Chinsura was plentiful in gardens. The *olanda* pulse, as its name shows, was imported into this country by the Hollanders. The English learned the gardener's art from them.

† See Dr. Crawford's *Brief History of the Hooghly District*, pp. 27, 28, where the above passage is quoted.

‡ Chinsura, though subordinate to Batavia, had control over Fulta and Baranagore, and its Governor corresponded direct with Holland. See Crawford's *History*, p. 36).

he was out-did by former Governors who spent a good deal more. Indeed, they imitated the Eastern grandees and kept an eye on pomp and grandeur in all their actions and doings. The Governor alone could use the *Tanjan* (chair of state), and while parading the streets had six *Chobdars* with silver sticks in attendance. The high officials also were accompanied by *chobdars*. But though the rulers loved pomp and magnificence, they were not unmindful of their duties, and, as a matter of fact, governed the settlement in a manner which was not at all distasteful to the Natives. One person did the duties of both Judge and Magistrate and consequently wielded very large powers. The Police was sufficiently watchful, and kept the peace of the country without resorting to violent measures. Stavorinus speaks of the great influence of the Fiscal of Chinsura whom the Natives called *Jamadar*, but who would now be called Sheriff. He punished offenders by flogging and fines, and was dreaded all over the settlement. His perquisites from all sources were so very large that he could well afford to live in a grand style. Indeed, the people enjoyed peace and safety and lived happily and comfortably. Taxation was very light and the mode of collecting it quite easy. Thus, it would appear that, if Watermeyer's formula, "In all things political, purely despotic; in all things commercial, purely monopolist," was true of the Government of the Dutch

East India Company at the Cape, it was not so of their Government in India.

The comparative quietness of the Settlement invited many out-siders to come in and build houses. And not only Natives of the soil but also foreigners were attached to it. Among the latter, the Armenians came in large numbers, of whom the Markar family was the most conspicuous. The local Armenian church was founded by Markar, son of Khojah Johannes, in 1695, and was completed in 1697 by his brother Joseph. The church was dedicated to St. John the Baptist, in whose honor a feast is held annually on the 27th day of January. The famous Missionary, Mr. Kiernander, and the great merchant, Mr. Weston, made Chinsura their head quarters and were proudly named amongst its residents. The Missionary passed many long years in Bengal, during which he suffered many sad reverses, and, at last, when death came to his relief, he was an utterly ruined and broken man. As for Mr. Weston, he lived in affluence and was never deserted by that all-loved goddess who is so very notorious for the fickleness of her favours. His liberality was almost proverbial, and the poor and the destitute found in him a ready friend. Mr. Charles Lewis Vogel was also a notable resident of Chinsura. He opened an English school there on 6th January 1803; and his good example was readily followed by Mr. B. Rodriguez, who established the "Chinsura Standing

Commercial Academy School with a competent Usher" in August next. Monsier Perron * who had amassed a very large fortune in the service of the Maharaja of Gwalior and had distinguished himself in the military line, came to Chinsura in his green old age and erected a splendid edifice in 1810, the one in which has long been located the Hooghly College. M. Perron, while at Chinsura, lived like a prince and was held in high esteem. Unlike the Europeans of the present day, the Anglo-Indians of Chinsura freely mixed with the Natives and enjoyed their confidence and affection. There was no such thing as race antagonism. In fact, they seemed to have adopted in all their dealings the wholesome maxim,—“While at Rome do what they do at Rome.” The foreigners imitated native manners and indulged in some oriental luxuries. Cigar-smoking had almost given way to the long-tailed pipe, popularly known as “*Albola*.” In fact, there were very few Anglo-Indians who did not regale themselves with the sweet gurgling ‘Hubble Bubble’ after dinner. The Dutch women imitated their betters and complaisantly took to Eastern habits. They were generally very idle, unpersevering and careless. They did not get up from bed

* General Perron must not be confounded with the great orientalist of that name who was present at Chardernagore when it was captured by Clive in March 1757. The latter was a very learned man and a linguist. Born in 1731, died in 1805.

before eight, and like the Natives used to chew betel and *dokta* (prepared tobacco). Their dress was loose. Most of the Dutch gentry had their villas in Satgaon and some such places, to which they would repair of an evening and pass their leisure in ease and comfort afar from the worry and bustle of business.

Grand Pre,* who visited Bengal in 1789—90, says that Malay families had settled in Chinsura and had given birth to a class of women called Mosses, who were in high estimation for their beauty and talents. Like the damsels of Bandel and Baranagore, these East Indian women made their living by their looks.

The Moguls also came in goodly numbers and settled in the quarter which was called after them Mogultuli, just as the quarter inhabited by the Armenians was called Armenitola. But the same necessity which had induced the latter to build a church of their own did not exist in their case, as there was the great Emambara at Hooghly where they could well hold their religious meetings and perform religious rites and ceremonies. Many of the Moguls of Chinsura were very rich men and the houses they lived in were so many palaces in a miniature form. But the ruthless hand of all-destroying Time has swept almost all of them from the face of the earth, leaving not a trace behind.

* See his "Voyage in the Indian Ocean and to Bengal, 1789-90."

Similar fate, however, has not befallen the Feringhitola, the quarter of the Anglo-Indians, where some of the old buildings are still in existence in some shape or other. Here was the Roman Catholic chapel which was completed so far back as 1740, chiefly from the funds bequeathed by Mr. Sebastian Shaw. But not only was thus proper means provided for the catering of spiritual food, quite ample provision was also made for the supply of creature comforts. Chinsura could boast of two very good hotels. These were of long standing and they continued to exist even years after the town was ceded to the English.

A little to the west of Feringhitola the Mararaja Dhiraj of Burdwan, the Premier nobleman of Bengal, built a palatial residence, and, as it was his favourite villa, now and again graced it with his August Presence. The House is still in existence, but, as ill luck would have it, is not honoured by His Highness with even a casual visit. During Dutch rule, this royal abode was in all its glory and not unoften resounded with revelry and mirth. Prince Protap Chand, the only son of Maharaja Tej Chandra, had a strong liking for the Chinsura Rajbati and spent many days together in it in company with a few select friends and associates. The last Dutch Governor, Mr. Overbeck, was a constant guest at his hospitable board and entertained affectionate regard for him. Those were

indeed, very happy days for Chinsura, but alas! they have passed away into the glimmerings of things that are never, perhaps, to return. Latterly, when Maharaja Mahtab Chand Bahadur was a member of the Supreme Council, His Highness made the Chinsura Rajbati his head quarters and stayed in it with pomp and circumstance becoming his high rank, until he was relieved of his duties at the grand Council Chamber. The Maharaja was a first class nobleman and was the recognized head of Native society. The chief object of the Dutch in making settlements in India was trade, but when they saw the English gaining some political power they also directed their aim in that line, and in so doing seemed to have been favoured by circumstances. Mir Jaffer, who had been raised to the throne of Bengal by Clive after the battle of Plassey, soon found that his position was anything but secure. Stung by the worm that dieth not, he naturally feared that the same power that had put him up might pull him down; and it was, therefore, no wonder that he secretly sought the assistance of the Dutch with a view to get rid of English dominancy. Accordingly, an armament was sent from Batavia in 1859, but, unfortunately for the helper and the party helped, it was destroyed partly at sea by Admiral Wilson and decisively on land by Colonel Forde. These successes sealed the fate of the Dutch in Bengal and all their political power, supposing that

they had had any, came to an end at once and for ever. Since then they existed only as a commercial company. They, however, continued to drive a brisk trade which reached its height in the eighth decade of the eighteenth century.

When the Dutch power was, as already stated, destroyed on the fatal field of Bajara, commonly, but not the less erroneously, called Biderra. A. Bisdorn was Governor of Chinsura. He was succeeded by George Vernet who held his post for about 12 years. The Protestant Church at Chinsura owes its origin to him who built it at his own cost in 1768, the very year in which he took charge of the Government. The altar, as in the Church at Bandel, is at the north end. The Church-tower * had been built by a former Governor, Sichterman, who ruled the settlement from 1744. Vernet was succeeded by A. Ross who was a great friend of Warren Hastings, as A. Bisdorn was of Clive. The year after Ross took charge of the Government, that is, in 1781, Chinsura was a second time captured by the English, along with the other Dutch possessions in Bengal, but restored at the peace of 1783. It was again taken on the 28th July 1795 and appears to have been administered by the English up to 1817. † Not

* This steeple fell in the cyclone of 5th October 1864.

† While in the hands of the English, Chinsura was governed by a Special Commissioner. On the occasion of the restoration the Hon^{ble} J. A. Bream gave a grand dinner (See Crawford's *History*, pp. 38, 39).

long after, the Dutch found to their sore regret that their once famous settlement was rather an incumbrance, and it is, therefore, not surprising that they soon got rid of it in exchange for a more convenient place in the island of Java where stands their metropolis in the Far East. This took place in the year 1824.*

Shortly after the treaty was concluded, Bishop Heber visited Chinsura and preached in the old Calvinist Church which was given over to him. The Lord Bishop was of opinion that Chinsura was a fit place for Missionary station and he hoped that in a few years the Christian congregation would come up to a pretty large figure. Some eleven years after, that is, on 10th September 1835, Bishop Wilson visited the place: This was his fifth visit. His Lordship thus describes Chinsura in his Journal letter:—"The town is an old Dutch settlement, and with the former Governor † still residing as a private man. The old Calvinist Church was given over to Bishop Heber in 1824. The place stands on an exquisitely beautiful reach of the river Hooghly.

* Fort Gustavus was pulled down in 1827, soon after the cession, to make room for the barracks.

† This was Daniel Antonio Overbeck, who stayed on in Chinsura till his death which took place on 25th September 1840. Mr. G. Herklots, the Dutch Fiscal, gave up his pension and entered the service of the British Government as "Fiscal of Chinsura and Registrar and Secretary of the European Court of Justice." He also held the office of *Sudder Ameen*. His salary was *sicca rupees* 500 a month. His office was situate in *Feringheetolah* near the Armenian Church.

The native town contains 20,000 people. The bazar is enormous and highly characteristic of India." * The good Bishop is entirely silent on the subject of education, and, in point of fact, he had not much to say about it. The Dutch favoured the cause of learning and in evidence of their inclination in that direction had established in Chinsura a very good school which was known as the Chinsura Free School. This educational Institution was formerly supported by the Chinsura Poor Fund. But when the Rev. Mr. Mundy established fourteen native schools in the vicinity, these schools along with the Free School referred to above came to be supported by Government on account of which Rs. 800 were granted every month. This grant was continued by the English Government and took effect from the 7th May 1825, the date of the actual transfer of Chinsura. This state of things lasted till the close of October 1832, after which the grant was withdrawn. The Free School was under the management of the Chinsura School Society, of which Mr. Overbeck, the quondam Governor, and a few others were members. The Secretary to this school was the Rev. Mr. Lacroix. † After the grant was withdrawn, the Free School fell into considerable insignificance and was probably in a moribund state,

* See Journal Letters, edited by the Bishop's son in 1863, p. 84.

† See Mr. Toynbee's *Administration*, p 117,

unnoticed and uncared for, when Bishop Wilson visited Chinsura in 1835. But in the year after, a great change came over the place, and certainly it was a change for the better in the fortune of Chinsura in the educational point of view. In that memorable year the town witnessed a very grand spectacle: This was the opening of the Hooghly College, an institution which owes its origin and advancement to the princely bequest made by that good and great Mahomedan, Mohamed Mohsin of very laudable memory. Dr. T. Wise, whose name like that of Mr. D. C. Smyth has almost become a household word in this part of the country, was its first Principal. The Hooghly Seminary proved a great success. Among its Principals were such men as Captain D. L. Richardson, James Sutherland, Leonidas Clint, James Kerr, Robert Thwaytes, and, latterly, William Booth. The present incumbent, Mr. Robert W. F. Shaw, is also a well-known character. The College is very fortunate in having sent forth into the world many eminent scholars. Captain D. L. Richardson was Aid-de-camp to Lord William Bentinck before he became Professor of Literature in the Hooghly College. His literary attainments were of a very high order and even such a brilliant writer and scholar as Macaulay made him an especial object of his praise. James Sutherland, another noted literary character, was for some time Professor of Literature and Principal of the Hooghly College. He

wielded a powerful pen and edited the *Bengal Harkara* for a few years with credit. James Kerr too had a good name in the republic of letters, and his admirable *Discourse on Education* is still read with interest. Robert Thwaytes was a good Mathematician ; but William Booth who came some years after him greatly excelled him in that respect. Indeed, the latter might be called a genius in mathematical lore.

Side by side with the Hooghly College was established some years after the Free Church Institution by that prince of Indian missionaries, Dr. Alexander Duff. The missionary Institution like the Government College had its palmy days, but now both of them are in their decline. Latterly, there has been opened an Entrance School called the Training Academy which is under purely native manage, and, what is very remarkable, a girl school has been added to the educational institutions of the town, which strongly testifies to the unselfish and philanthropic labours of Miss Raikes. Nor is Chinsura wanting in a reading room accessible to the general public. Its public Library, though it leaves much to be desired, has some value of its own in the way of disseminating knowledge. It can also boast of what is justly called the Fourth Estate. Both the *Education Gazette* and the *Chinsura Bartabaha* issue from this place. The former is the Government organ in connection with the Vernacular Education Depart-

ment, while the latter is a fair exponent of local public opinion. And as a necessary appanage to journalism there exist in the new town two printing presses, in this respect excelling old Chinsura which could boast of only one such instrument of modern civilization. Thus, in an intellectual point of view Chinsura does not hold an insignificant place, and it certainly goes much ahead of Hooghly. The Chinsura Brahmo Samaj was once in all its glory, but it has long since become a thing of the past. But not only is Chinsura rich in wealth in the scholar's and reformer's point of view, it is also rich in wealth in the worldly sense of the term. This good old town has been the residence of some well-known families, the first and foremost amongst which are the Seals. This famous family carried on trade on an extensive scale and had also considerable banking business; and there was a time when the *Hoondacs* drawn by them were bought and sold in the money-market of Lower Bengal. The family had amassed a very large fortune and lived almost in a princely style. They were orthodox Hindus of the Vaishnava persuasion and used to spend a good deal on Hindu festivals and other religious acts and ceremonies. Nor were they wanting in accomplishments. A member of this family, Ram Chandra Seal, commonly known as Ram Seal, had spent about a lakh of rupees on music. He was not only an advocate of that most charming of the fine arts

and of its followers, but was himself a most accomplished singer and set to music some of the inimitable Lyrics of the sublimely sweet poet of the *Gita Gobinda*. The late Baboo Khetter Nath Seal was also a distinguished member of that family. He was a very rich man and was known as "Raja Baboo" in consequence of his vast wealth and pompous mode of living. Latterly he met with many sad reverses and the closing days of his life were passed in misery. Jagomohan Seal was also a well-known member of that family. He was the owner of the splendid Hooghly College building, and it was from him that Government purchased it and located the College therein. Last but not the least is Mr. Brojendra Kumar Seal * who was a District Judge for a long time and was held in high esteem for able discharge of his duties. He has since retired on pension and is now practising as a vakil in the High Court at Calcutta. His son is a barrister-at-law and also practises in the same Court. The Dutts of Chirsura are also of considerable repute. Lal Bihari Dutt who died only recently was a well-known merchant and had amassed a large fortune. He was also fortunate in other

* Indeed, never before him was a member of the Subordinate Judicial Service raised to the high post of a District Judge. Mr. Seal had a brilliant official career. From a second-grade Moonsiff he became a Sub-Judge and from a Sub-Judge, he became a District Judge.

respects. He had inherited the property of his maternal uncle, Jiban Krishna Pal, so well known to fame. Jiban Baboo was an accomplished man of fashion and like the Dutch of the place had a marked taste for gardening. His garden near the Hooghly Railway Station is a splendid thing and excites admiration in the minds of all beholders. There is another well-known Dutt family in Chinsura, the most prominent member whereof was Madhab Chandra Dutt, so well-known to fame both in his native place and in Calcutta. Madhab Chandra was a noted merchant and had become immensely rich by trade. He rose so very high that he became a rival of the far-famed Calcutta millionaire, Moti Lal Seal, and baffled all his attempts to lower the importance of the bazar established by him at Calcutta. The bazar which justly bears the founder's proud name is still in existence. Madhab Chandra, though a happy man in the worldly sense of the term, at last came to a very violent end. One night while coming home in a ticca-garry from the Hooghly Railway Station he was attacked by a band of hired ruffians and was so brutally dealt with that he expired the next morning. The deceased was a pious and charitable man, and made a princely gift of a lakh of rupees to his *guru*, or spiritual preceptor. It is a great pity that his sons and descendants have not been able to maintain the honor and dignity of the family of which he was

the only brilliant ornament. They are living in obscurity, unnoticed and uncared for.

Early in the eighteenth century the Mullicks distinguished themselves in this part of the country. They formerly resided at Kulihanda in Hooghly whence they removed to Chinsura in order to be freed from the frequent raids of the Marhatta freebooters, popularly known as *Burgis*. Their Kulihanda property has long been in the possession of the renowned Ghose family of Babugunge. Nabo Kissen Mullick was the originator of the far-famed pantomimic exhibition, commonly known as *Chinsura Sang*. Good old times those, when people lived in peace and happiness and had time and means to indulge in innocent amusements. About the year 1815, a major part of the Mullick family moved down to Calcutta as being a more convenient place for trading purposes and settled in the quarter called Pathuriaghatta, the seat of the well-known Tagores of Calcutta. Raja Rajendra Mullick of sacred memory was a member of this branch. Bir Narsingha Mullick, another noted member, was at one time a leader of the Subarnobaniks of Calcutta. He was a great friend of Maharaja Jotindra Mohan Tagore's father, Baboo Hara Kumar Tagore, and did him some good offices when he was in difficulty. Rameswar Mullick was the recognised head of the Mullicks who remained at Chinsura. As he died without male issue, his daughters' sons, the Dhars, succeeded to his property

by right of inheritance. But they were not allowed to enjoy it in peace, as they had to carry on a long litigation with Raja Rajendra Mullick who alleged that he had a preferential claim ; but he was cast in all the Courts and therefore retired from the field crest-fallen, leaving the Dhars victorious. The property of which *taluk* Makla is the chief is Debuttur, dedicated to the God Jagannath, of whom the Dhars are the Shebaitis. The Dhars have cut a good figure in the official world. Mr. Sham Chand Dhar who has only lately retired on pension was an eminent member of the Uncovenanted Judicial Service. He was one of the three Assistant Sessions Judges selected by the High Court from amongst the the Subordinate Judges, and it is very gratifying to observe that he did ample justice to the Honourable Court's choice. He was Civil and Sessions Judge of Noakhali when he retired from service. He has not only been granted the usual pension which he has so hardly won, but in recognition of his meritorious services has been dubbed " Rai Bahadur." The present Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Andrew Fraser, very kindly noticed his services with approbation in the speech which His Honor delivered on the occasion of his visit to Noakhali. Rai Sham Chand's elder brother, Deno Nath, served as Government pleader in several districts, and, at last, when acting in the same capacity in Midnapur, ill-health intensified by some domestic disaster compelled him to retire from service

in 1896. Deno Nath is a popular humourist and his social songs and witty sayings have been the admiration of many a man of cultured taste and sound learning.

The Mundals of Kamarpara are also worthy of notice. Padma Lochun Mundal was the architect of the fortune of the family. He acquired considerable estate in Balasore where he was held in very high esteem and was accorded something like princely honor. He left very large property to his sons, but owing to family dissensions and disputes it has suffered material loss. Some members of the family are living in the ancestral abode, while Sarat Chunder Mundal has left that seat for good and has been residing with his family in a purchased house close to Joraghat at the extreme end of Chinsura.

The Lahas too are of repute: Bissonath Laha's name is well-known, but his fame has been eclipsed by that of his sons, more especially of the illustrious Maharaja Durga Charan Laha. The Maharaja was one of the richest men of Calcutta and his influence was quite commensurate with his wealth. His mercantile transactions were on a very large scale and, no wonder, that he was called the prince of native merchants. Like the Maharaja, his sons do not care much for their Chinsura house and property their principal place of residence being Calcutta, and that is why we do not hear much of the Lahas at Chinsura.

All the families we have noticed above belong to the Subarnabanik caste. But now we shall notice a Kayastha family which is no way inferior to any of them. Need we say that we refer to the Shome family of Sham Baboo's ghat. The Shomes trace their ancestry from one Balobhadra Shome who held a high post under the Raja of Gaur, and had also acquired a unique position amongst his caste people. The original seat of the family was at Bagati, an obscure village in the Hooghly district, whence an important branch of the family migrated to Chandernagore in the hope of bettering their condition by service under the foreign merchants of Chinsura and its neighbourhood. That hope was to a certain extent realized by Gunga Narain Shome the sixth in descent from Balobhadra, who managed to secure a high office in the Dutch settlement and who in recognition of his meritorious services was given the title of "Sircar." Gunga Narain's son, Ram Charan, left Chandernagore and came to reside in Chinsura where he built a splendid house. He was Dewan to the Dutch East India Company, and, as a matter of necessary consequence, possessed great influence. As a mark of honour the title of "Baboo" was conferred upon him, and, as it seemed to have been something more than a purely personal distinction, it was assumed by his sons, Titaram and Sham Ram. Indeed, the fame of the sons, more especially of Sham Ram, cast that of the father in the shade.

Sham Ram's title to "Babooship" was recognized by the Nawab of Murshidabad, who, to add to its weight and importance, decorated him with *Khilut* (robe of honour). Sham Baboo built a large brick-built *ghat* near his residence which still bears his honoured name. The *ghat* was surmounted by a grand "*Nahabatkhana*" whence on festive occasions band of musicians played many country airs much to the amusement of the surrounding people. The orchestra has since fallen a prey to all-destroying Time and has altogether disappeared, leaving not a wreck behind. Sham Baboo was a pious orthodox Hindu and he set up an image of the goddess Jogadhya at Sandeswartola a few paces from the *ghat* which bears his name.

But not only did the family cut a prominent figure during the time of the Dutch, it also maintained its high rank and position in the time of the English. Radha Gobinda Shome, great-grandson of Sham Baboo, was the first Principal Sudder Ameen in Bengal, or in all India for that matter, and he was the only Indian Judge, who exercised unlimited original civil jurisdiction. Indeed, he was regarded as a power in the land. Ram Gobinda Shome another great-grandson of Sham Baboo, was the first Deputy Registrar of the Sudder Dewani Adalat. In fact, the post was specially created for him in order that he might be of material help to the Civilian Registrar who was generally deficient

in matters of routine and detail, and, to give due dignity and importance to the post, a salary not less than that of the highest Indian Judge was attached to it. Ram Gobinda was distinguished not only for his ability but also for his honesty. This family has furnished a larger number of Judicial officers than any other family in Bengal; even the Ghose family of Babugunge which produced such men as Rai Grish Chunder Bahadur and Baboo Hurro Chunder somewhat pales before it. Among the living we may mention Rai Purna Chunder Shome Bahadur, Baboo Barada Prosunna Shome and Baboo Debendra Lal Shome, all Government pensioners. As for Rai Purna Chunder who was an ornament of the Subordinate Judicial Service though he has long since passed sixty, he is still practising as a Vakil in the High Court with his energy and working capacity in full swing and vigour. *

Our account of the well-known families of Chinsura would be incomplete, if we did not say a few words about the Haldars who were in the hey-day of their power and influence when Pran Kissen Haldar held the destiny of the family. This man was a very remarkable character and acquired money with both hands, so to say, by fair means and foul. In an evil hour he took to forging Currency Notes

Rai Purna Chandra has since died.

and had succeeded for some time in hood-winking the Government and the public. But, at last, his dark doings were brought to light and he was convicted and sentenced to transportation for a period of fourteen years. He, it is true, had returned from his exile after working out his term, but his fame, fortune and reputation had left him for ever, and he died a poor man, unknown, unwept and un-honoured. The Hooghly College building was his property, and when he was in full swing of pride of pelf and power, its wide spacious Hall oftentimes resounded with the noise of jollity and mirth. It is certainly very pleasing to think that from having been the scene of the boisterous orgies of Bacchus it has become the solemn stately seat of Minerva. Surely, changes effected by Time are not uniformly bad, but sometimes have a pleasant and cheering aspect. The Haldar family has become almost a thing of the past, but the splendid House in which Pran Kissen gave his *nautches* and *jathras* and entertained his boon companions at sumptuous symposiums is still in existence thereby giving a striking proof of the instability of human power and greatness.

An account of Chinsura without some notice of the late Baboo Bhudeb Mookerjee would be like the play of Hamlet with the part of Hamlet left out. This most brilliant member of the Education Department was the son of a poor pundit, named Bissonat

Tarkabhushan, who was a native of Khanacool Krishtonagar, but had settled in Calcutta, and it was at the latter city that Bhudeb first saw the light of heaven on 2nd Falgoon 1247 B. S., just about the time when Chinsura, his future residence, was ceded to the English by its former owners, the Dutch.

When Bhudeb was only eight years of age he was entered at the Sanskrit College where in the course of three years he mastered the *Mugdhabodha* grammar and also learned a little of pure literature. Being desirous of learning English which was then coming into vogue, he entered an English school where he commenced study with his usual diligence. The last six years of his scholastic life were spent in the Hindu College where he obtained the highest scholarship attainable by a student, and, at last, came out of College with a reputation far above his fellows.

Having had such a brilliant academic career Bhudeb could have got a respectable post under Government for the mere asking, but the trend of his mind was in a different direction. In conjunction with some friends of kindred spirit he established schools in the interior, himself doing a considerable portion of the teaching, but for want of support both in men and money, this undertaking fell through. Shortly after, Bhudeb got the post of second master in the English department of the Calcutta Madrassa on a salary of Rs. 50 a month.

Here he discharged his duties so very satisfactorily that the higher educational authorities being highly pleased with his work appointed him Head Master of the Howrah Government School on Rs. 150 a month. At Howrah too success attended him and the result was that the local Magistrate, and the school Secretary, Mr. Hodgson Pratt, so well known especially for his mathematical attainments, became one of his fast friends. Sometime after, Mr. Pratt was appointed Inspector of Schools in South Bengal, but this separation did not affect their friendship which was well kept up by means of letters; and it was at the suggestion of Mr. Pratt that Bhudeb Baboo wrote a "Discourse on Education." His "Historical Stories" was also written about the same time. In this way Bhudeb Baboo won name and fame both as an educationist and as a scholar. No wonder, then that when subsequently a Normal School was established at Hooghly, he was appointed its Superintendent on Rs. 300 a month. By his fatherly fostering care this Institution made very rapid progress and its fame spread far and wide. There was then a great lack of books in the Bengali language. To supply this want, Bhudeb Baboo produced several useful works in that language, namely Natural Philosophy in two parts, A Brief Summary of History, History of England, History of Rome, and Euclid's Geometry. It would seem that his "Historical Stories" which he had written when he was

Head Master at Howrah was also published about this time.

The year 1862 witnessed a very important turn in his affairs. In that year Mr. Medlicott was appointed Deputy Inspector of Schools, and Bhudeb Baboo was made his Assistant on Rs. 400 a month. The latter proved a good adjutant and gained the affection and esteem of his Chief. Sometime before, Government had sanctioned Rs. 30,000 for purposes of educational improvement. Now in consultation with, and at the advice of, his Assistant, Mr. Medlicott drew upon that money towards the fulfilment of that end, and the result was the establishment at several places of Training Schools for teachers and of village *patshalas* for imparting instruction to the people at large.

In 1863 Bhudeb Baboo was appointed Additional Inspector of Schools. In the year after, he started a cheap Monthly, called *The Mirror of Education* in the name of his youngest son. This paper was successfully conducted for some years, but with the untimely death of the said son in 1869 it too came to an end. Not long after, Bhudeb Baboo was deputed to inspect the schools in the North Western Provinces and the Punjab; and the Report which he wrote in English embodying the results of his inspection with his opinions and suggestions thereon was certainly a masterpiece of its kind, and Government was so highly pleased with his work that it soon

promoted him to the first grade. In April 1869 he was appointed Inspector of the "North Central Division, then only newly constituted, and this was followed a few days after by his being made Inspector-in-Chief.

While serving at the Hooghly Normal School Bhudeb Baboo had built a house at Chinsura, and it was from here as his head quarters that he used to discharge his duties of Inspector of Schools of the Behar and West Bengal Circle. At that time there were very few readable books in Behar for the use of boys. Accordingly, he got some Bengalee books translated into Hindi and introduced them in that Province. On 1st December 1869 he started "The Education Gazette" from Chinsura, and it is gratifying to observe that it is still existing with only a little of its pristine glory dimmed. For his exceptionally distinguished services Bhudeb Baboo was decorated with the rare title of C. I. E. in the year 1877. Five years after, that is, in 1882, he was appointed a member of the Bengal Council, and, as councillor to the local Governor, did some good service for the cause of personal education. In the year following he retired on pension which he had so well earned. A few months before retirement he had published a work called "Puspanjali," which was followed by the most thoughtful of his works "Paribarik Probandha." Although Bhudeb Baboo's mind was imbued with the spirit of Western culture

and though he oftentimes came into contact with Europeans of all shades and colours, still he stood superior to all alien influence in his mode of life and remained a staunch Hindu all through. He has well observed in one of his latter day treatises that we have only to learn business habits from the English, we need not learn anything else from them.

But not only has this really great man done immense good to the Department in which he shone with such resplendent glory, he has also done some very substantial good to humanity at large. He has established at Chinsura a Sanskrit School called Bissonath *Chatuspati* after the name of his father, and a hospital called Brahmamayee *Ousadhalaya* after the name of his mother; and that these two Institutions shall continue and have permanency, he has set apart a fund amounting to a lakh and fifty thousand for their due up-keep and maintenance.

This good and great man whose memory deserves to be enshrined in the hearts of his countrymen passed out of this selfish world on the first day of Jaistha 1301 B. S. (14th May 1894), leaving two sons, of whom the elder, Gobinda Deb, who was a Moonsiff, has since followed him. The younger Mukunda Deb, is a Deputy Magistrate and Deputy Collector of note, a worthy son of a worthy sire.

THE END.