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Report

ON THE

LAND REVENUE SETTLEMENT

OF THE

RAEPORE DISTRICT,

CHUTEESGURH DIVISION,

CENTRAL PROVINCES,

1869,

EFFECTED BY

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**Note by the Officiating Chief Commissioner on the  
Raepore Settlement Report.**

Mr. Hewitt's report commences by an account of the physical features of this little known country, which may be described as the southern half of Chuteesgurrh, that is of the upper basin of the Mahanuddee. With the dependent Chiefships it comprises an area exceeding 15,000 square miles, or nearly ten millions of acres, half of which is under direct management or "khalsa," while the rest is held by tributary Chiefs of varying degrees of independence. To the west and south the plains are covered with blacksoil, but to the east the country is undulating, and the soil is comparatively light. In fact the level portions of the Raepore district may be said to consist of the basins of two distinct river systems,—that of the Seonath with its tributaries to the west, and that of the Mahanuddee to the east. The former is the more important of the two, as the rivers which compose it, flowing in firm beds, retain water throughout the year; while the Mahanuddee, here a petty stream passing through a sandy country, is dry for more than half of the year. The soil of the plains is, however, throughout, pretty fertile, and much advantage is taken of the facilities which are afforded for irrigation by the undulating surface of country. The tanks are generally small, but in a tract so recently reclaimed from the forest, and still so undeveloped, it is something that the value of irrigation should be thoroughly recognised; and the completion of the line of communication, now well advanced, with Nagpore, should do much to stimulate trade and agriculture.

2. The history of Chuteesgurrh under the Hy-Hy Bunssee kings has been discussed in the Settlement report of the Belaspore district, and needs no detailed mention here. The Mahrattas took the country in the middle of the 18th century, and, with a short interregnum from 1818 to 1830, during which it was administered by British officers, held it until the cession in 1854. "The character of their administration," writes Mr. Hewitt, "may be judged from the description of Major Agnew in 1819, who says that the country presented one uniform scene of plunder and oppression, uninfluenced by any considerations but that of collecting by whatsoever means the

largest amount possible." Major (afterwards Colonel) Agnew's principle of administration was to work as much as possible through the people themselves. He got rid of the "Patels," or village officers, introduced by the Mahrattas, and dealt direct with the Gonteyas or village headmen, who were almost invariably inhabitants of the country, with some hereditary tie to the villages which they managed. Under this system the revenue increased by more than 21 per cent in eight years. The second period of Mahratta administration was more successful than the first. The system introduced by Colonel Agnew was followed, and the country continued to improve, though slowly, owing to the famines of 1835 and 1844. On the introduction of British rule in 1854 a succession of three-year Settlements was made, the last of which, effected in 1861-62, was prolonged until the commencement of the long term Settlement now under review.

3. In his 3rd chapter Mr. Hewitt gives a good many curious details regarding the people. The Chumars and their new religion have been described at length in the Belaspore report; but Mr. Hewitt adds a piece of information which does not seem to have been before published. He says that the so-called Chumars do not by any means necessarily belong to the caste of that name, but that admission to the Sutnami religion, which is open to all classes, carries with it in the eyes of orthodox Hindoos the brand of Chumarism. He also gives some interesting information regarding the Kaurs (more properly Kavars), a race who may be regarded as forming a link between the aborigines and the Hindoo immigrants, and the Hulbas, a caste "who gain their living by distilling spirits, and worship a pantheon of glorified distillers, at the head of whom is Bahadur Kalar." It is curious to notice from the "Table of land-owning castes," appended to paragraph 125, that even in dissenting Chuteesgurrh, Brahmins are by far the largest land-holders.

4. The staple produce of Raepore is rice, which occupies more than half of the cultivated area. Mr. Hewitt remarks that this points to the necessity of enlarging the facilities now enjoyed for irrigation, and there is much justice in his remarks. It is proposed this season to send two officers to examine the country carefully, and to ascertain the best localities for

storage of water. There is no doubt that much of the Chuteesgurbh soil is light enough to require irrigation; while the conformation of the country affords, in many places, great natural facilities for the construction of reservoirs. I look upon it as most important that every endeavour should be made to stimulate cultivation in Chuteesgurbh, for on the grain supply of this great rice and wheat field depends the cotton supply of Nagpore. Every additional cart load of corn which Chuteesgurbh can spare means so much more of the Nagpore plain devoted to cotton.

5. The remarks on the production and trade of Raepore bring out in a strong light the peculiar circumstances which give something of an exceptional character to the social economy of Chuteesgurbh. The great extent of land and the comparative thinness of the population have the double effect of making food abundant in ordinary years, and of reducing the numbers of the day-labouring class to a minimum. Almost everyone in Chuteesgurbh is a cultivator on his own account, and great part of the grain trade which has set in towards Nagpore, since our rule has made trade possible, is carried on by the cultivating peasantry at slack times in their own carts. Although then irrigation is undoubtedly very important, the first requisite of Chuteesgurbh is improved communications; and though financial considerations may long prevent the construction of the tramway which has been advocated as the true means of stimulating the prosperity of these grain-bearing districts, much has already been done to open out communications with Nagpore, and it is hoped that by degrees the road to Jubbulpore through Mundla may give egress to part of the grain reserves of northern Chuteesgurbh. The present grain exports are estimated by Mr. Hewitt at not more than one-seventh of what the district can spare, and he thinks there is no immediate prospect of any considerable increase. But without undue sanguineness something may be hoped for from the yearly improvement of the road, and from the growing wealth of the country, which, in spite of occasional cholera and rarer drought, is certainly prospering.

6. At present it is only when prices are high in Nagpore that grain pours in very freely from Chuteesgurbh; but, as has been said above, we must look to the time when as cotton

cultivation increases, and the people of Nagpore advance in wealth, they will draw most of their food from Chuteesgurrh. Land is still so abundant in Raepore and Belaspore, and communications must always be so difficult in every direction but the west, that Nagpore will long retain the command of a cheap market ; and when matters are ripe for the construction of a tramway, it appears unlikely that a single acre of land suitable to cotton in Nagpore will be taken up with food grains. It certainly seems as if it were but a question of time, with, on the one hand, a tract of fine black cotton soil tapped by a railway, studded with cotton marts, and cultivated by the Koonbees, to whom cotton has become a kind of speciality ; and on the other, a wide plain as eminently fitted for rice, and shut in on all sides but the west, that the one should by degrees accommodate itself to the wants of the other, and by a division of labour that both should be enriched. In any case the development of Chuteesgurrh and its closer union to the Nagpore country must be regarded as most essential to the enlargement of our cotton supplies, and therefore as possessing a double interest, especially at a time when it has been pronounced by good authority, that under present circumstances we can look to no great extension of the Wurdah valley cotton cultivation.

7. The measurement operations occupied a considerable time, but not perhaps longer than might have been expected from the unmanageable extent of the tracts to be mapped, and from the ignorance of the people. Until the measurements commenced there was absolutely no fixed superficial measure in Chuteesgurrh, the only way of estimating the extent of land being by the quantity of seed sown on it. Still, after many delays and difficulties, pretty accurate results were obtained, the maps corresponding almost exactly with those of the Revenue Survey. The areas computed from them seem to have been curiously less, which Mr. Hewitt accounts for by the unusual smallness of the fields in Chuteesgurrh. This would have been a serious defect in a long settled and closely cultivated country ; but in a district like this, where cultivation is shifting and uncertain, and the increased area to be brought under assessment was, by the most favourable calculation, so considerable as to make it

questionable whether it would be safe to go as high as statistics would seem to warrant, the assessment was little if at all affected by some apparent diminution of the assessable area.

8. The enquiry into rights in land was well conducted in this Settlement. The habit of shifting cultivation, noticed by Mr. Hewitt in his 241st paragraph, would have annulled the growth of occupancy rights under the ordinary rules, but the Government of India, on the representation of Mr. G. Campbell, the then Chief Commissioner, made a special rule to meet the difficulty; and generally full provision was made for the recognition and maintenance of subordinate rights.

9. The assessment is described in Chapter V. The difficulties which existed in obtaining trustworthy guides to assessment are not overstated, and the Settlement officer shows satisfactorily that the adoption of an average revenue rate of 5 annas per acre was warranted by the circumstances of the district. The general principles which guided Mr. Hewitt in fixing his proposed jumma would appear to have been sound; and without going into details, which will be found given at length in the report, it will suffice to remark here that whilst the very low standard assumed for the average revenue rate, viz., 5 annas per acre, is a sufficient guarantee of the moderation of the assessment, the large enhancement imposed on the khalsa portion of the district, viz., Rs. 2,13,650, or 67 per cent on the former Government demand of Rs. 3,17,819, proves conclusively that the interests of the State have not been neglected. The revenues formerly paid by Feudatories and Zemindars have also been raised from Rs. 92,140 to Rs. 1,27,249, or 38 per cent; and the total *annual* increase, including the amount of the forest revenue, formerly comprised within the village jummas but now assessed separately, reaches the large sum of Rs. 2,68,590, and is within half a lakh of the entire cost of the Settlement from first to last.

10. It now only remains for me to notice the services of the officers most prominently engaged in carrying out this Settlement. Although Settlement operations were commenced

in October 1862, but little was done up to the time of Mr. Hewitt's arrival in December 1864. During the three and a half years of this Officer's incumbency nearly all the real work of this Settlement has been taken in hand and finished. Much credit is due to the Settlement Officer for his exertions, and for the complete and satisfactory manner in which each important operation has been taken up and carried through. I have been very well satisfied with such of Mr. Hewitt's work as has come directly before me, and as all his assessment proposals have been submitted for my inspection and sanction previous to being announced, I have had good opportunities of judging of his merits as a Settlement Officer. He has in my opinion laboured assiduously and successfully to make this by no means easy Settlement as complete and accurate as circumstances would permit, and has submitted a full and detailed report. I have much pleasure in bringing his services to the favourable notice of Government.

Lieutenant Ducat held charge of this Settlement for a year previous to the arrival of Mr. Hewitt, who justly attributes much of his own subsequent success to the admirable organisation introduced by him (Lieutenant Ducat) into the Settlement.

Mr. Sinclair, the Assistant Settlement Officer, is favourably reported as an executive officer, and is entitled to credit for the material aid afforded by him in the completion of measurement operations.

11. Lastly, I would recommend the confirmation of this Settlement for a term of 20 years, from the dates borne in the several engagements made with the people. As in Belaspore, the Settlement has been very severely tried during the last twelve months by the existence of great scarcity, if not actual famine, notwithstanding which the revised assessments have continued to work smoothly and successfully; and as I have every reason for considering the Settlement to be a really good one in all essential respects, I beg to solicit the sanction of Government to its confirmation for the prescribed period of 20 years.

J. H. MORRIS,

*Offg. Chief Commissioner,  
Central Provinces.*

22nd November 1869.

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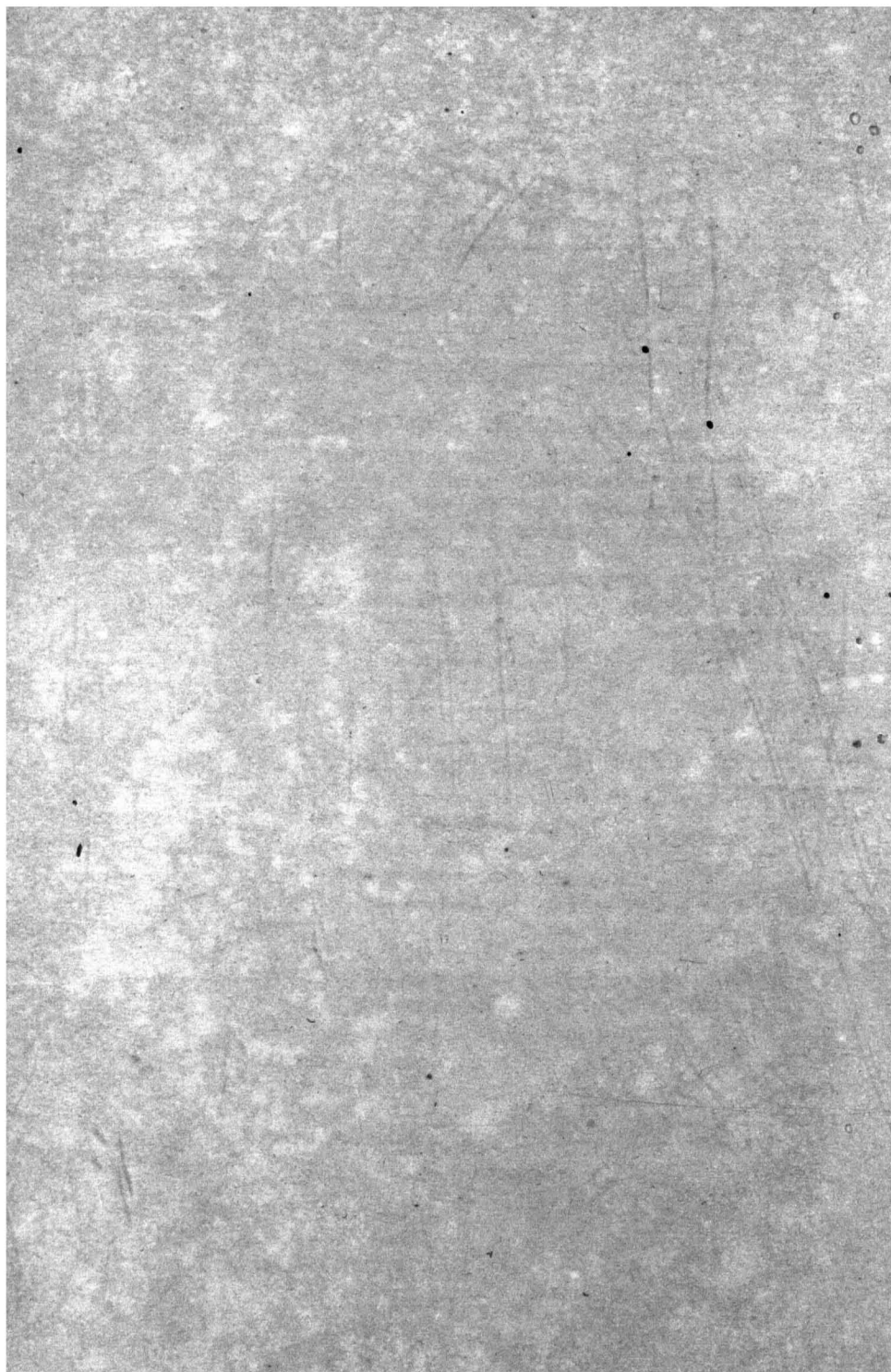
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# CHAPTER I.

## RAEPORE SETTLEMENT REPORT.

### I. GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

THE District of Raepore lies between  $80^{\circ} 28''$  and  $82^{\circ} 38''$  east longitude, and  $19^{\circ} 48''$  and  $21^{\circ} 45''$  north latitude, within its limits is comprised the larger part of the tract known by the name of Chuteesgurh, together with a large area formerly attached to Sumbulpore. It is about 150 miles in breadth from east to west, and 135 miles in length from north to south, and the whole area is about 15,000 square miles.

2. Besides the Khalsa portion of the District which is more directly under the management of the District authorities, there is a large area of country held by petty Chiefs, called Zemindars, holding their estates at low quit-rents and semi-independent Feudatories. These estates are as follows:—

|            |          |                 |                   |                |   |                                                               |
|------------|----------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|---|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Zemindars. | {        | Feudatories.    | Zemindar          | of Nandgaon.   | { | Belonging to Chutteesgurh.                                    |
|            |          |                 | "                 | of Khyragurh.  |   |                                                               |
|            |          |                 | "                 | of Chooekadan. |   |                                                               |
|            |          |                 | "                 | of Kakeir.     |   |                                                               |
|            | {        | North-Western.  | Purporee.         |                |   |                                                               |
|            |          |                 | Lohara Sahaspore. |                |   |                                                               |
|            |          |                 | Gundye.           |                |   |                                                               |
|            |          |                 | Burbaspore.       |                |   |                                                               |
|            | {        | South-Western.  | Silhetee.         |                |   |                                                               |
|            |          |                 | Thakoortola.      |                |   |                                                               |
| Worarbund. |          |                 |                   |                |   |                                                               |
| Khoojee.   |          |                 |                   |                |   |                                                               |
| {          | Eastern. | Doundee Lohara. |                   |                |   |                                                               |
|            |          | Gondurdehee.    |                   |                |   |                                                               |
|            |          | Ferungeshwur.   |                   |                |   |                                                               |
|            |          | Soormar.        |                   |                |   |                                                               |
| {          |          | Nurra.          |                   |                |   |                                                               |
|            |          | Kowrea.         |                   |                |   |                                                               |
|            |          | Deoree.         |                   |                |   |                                                               |
|            |          | Khuriar.        |                   |                |   |                                                               |
|            |          |                 | Bindra Nowagurh.  |                |   | Lately attached to Raepore, formerly belonging to Sumbulpore. |

Area.

3. The whole area of these tracts as shown by the Settlement records is as follows :—

|                                             | Acres.     | Square Miles. |
|---------------------------------------------|------------|---------------|
| Khalsa inclusive of Government Wastes ..... | 50,442,365 | 7,881         |
| Chutteesgurhee Zemindarees .....            | 1,130,844  | 1,767         |
| Sumbulpore Zemindarees attached to Raepore  | ...        | 2,800         |
| Feudatories .....                           | ...        | 2,940         |
| Total.....                                  | ..         | 15,388        |

Of these areas only those of the Khalsa and Chuteesgurh Zemindarees are given from actual measurements made by the Settlement Department. Those of the Sumbulpore Zemindarees are calculated from the maps of the Topographical Survey, while the area of the Feudatories are only approximate guesses, as there are as yet no maps of these tracts.

4. While the name of Chuteesgurh was only applied to a portion of the country now included in the Raepore and Belaspore Districts, yet the whole of the area of both Districts is Geographically homogeneous, and may be shortly described as the basin of the Upper Mahanuddee and its tributaries, together with the hills in which these tributaries take their rise. The whole of this tract is surrounded by ranges of hills branching from the great Vindhyan chain of Central India.

5. Below the hills to the west and south of Chuteesgurh there is a broad belt of black soil. The North-Western portion of this belt is in the District of Belaspore, while the remainder of the tract belongs to the Zemindaree estates of Purporee, Lohara Sahaspore, Gundye, Silhetee and Burbuspore and to the Feudatories of Choocekadan, Khyragurh and Nandgaon. To the south the black soil tract is, with the exception of a portion in the Gondurdehee Zemindaree, entirely within the Khalsa Pergunnahs of Rajim, Dhumturry, Balod and Sanjaree.

6. The centre of Chuteesgurh beyond the black soil is an undulating plain, intersected by numerous rivers and nullahs, with broad fertile valleys, which are separated from one another by rolling downs. This formation affords peculiar facilities for irrigation, which have as yet been by no means fully utilised. Almost the whole of this is cleared of jungle, inhabited, and cultivated.

7. To the East of the Mahanuddee the hills come close to the stream, leaving except in the Rajim Pergunnah and in the north-east of that of Dhumturry, but a small share of fertile plain between the hill country and the river.

8. Formerly the Khalsa lands were divided into about 20 divisions; but in 1820 this number was reduced to 6 by Colonel Agnew. However when Settlement operations were commenced, 15 Pergunnahs were found to be entered in the District records. These were, proceeding from the north :—

|                                                   |             |            |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------|------------|
| Former and present sub-divisions of the District. | Nowagurh.   | Doroog.    |
|                                                   | Deorbeejah. | Patun.     |
|                                                   | Simgah.     | Rajim.     |
|                                                   | Lowan.      | Sehawa.    |
|                                                   | Seerpore.   | Dhumturry. |
|                                                   | Khallaree.  | Balod.     |
|                                                   | Raepore.    | Sunjaree.  |
|                                                   | Dhumda.     |            |

These have now been separated into 4 Tehseels and to make these as compact as possible it has been found necessary to disregard in many instances the old Pergunnah boundaries. The following are the names of the Tehseels with the Pergunnahs belonging to them :—

|               |                                               |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Simgah.....   | 1. Nowagurh.                                  |
|               | 2. Deorbeejah.                                |
|               | 3. The North-Eastern half of Dhumda.          |
|               | 4. Simgah.                                    |
|               | 5. The Northern portion of Raepore.           |
|               | 6. The Northern half of Lowan.                |
| Raepore ..... | 1. Southern portion of the Raepore Pergunnah. |
|               | 2. Southern part of Lowan.                    |
|               | 3. Seerpore.                                  |
|               | 4. Khallaree.                                 |
|               | 5. Northern half of Rajim.                    |
| Doroog.....   | 1. South-Western half of Dhumda.              |
|               | 2. Doroog.                                    |
|               | 3. Patun.                                     |
|               | 4. Northern half of Balod.                    |
|               | 5. Northern half of Sunjaree.                 |
| Dhumturry ..  | 1. Southern half of Sunjaree.                 |
|               | 2. Do. Do. of Balod.                          |
|               | 3. Dhumturry.                                 |
|               | 4. Sehawa.                                    |
|               | 5. Southern half of Rajim. ✓                  |

9. Of these Tehseels, the most Northern is Simgah. It contains the very fertile tracts of Nowagurh, Deorbeeja and the Northern portion of the Dhumda Pergunnah. The rest of the Tehseel has been recently cleared of jungle, and still contains a good deal of low scrub jungle here and there. The jungle is however retained rather to satisfy the requirements of the

people, than from their inability to clear it, and there are very few villages with more than 100 per cent. of jungle in excess of the cultivation. A good deal of this is rocky soil and more valuable as jungle than if it were cultivated, but there is also a large portion which remains uncultivated because of the thatching grass it yields, a product which is quite as valuable as an average crop of cereals.

10. In the Raepore Tehseel the western portion is well cultivated and populous; but in the east there is a large area of jungle and the extensive Government Wastes of Lowan, Seerpore and Khallaree.

11. Droog has no jungle whatsoever within its limits, and the whole of the Tehseelee is well cultivated, while Dhumturry presents the greatest contrasts of all the Tehseels. There are, except in Lowan, no such wild tracts in the District as the Sehawa, Dhumturry, Balod and Sunjaree jungles, while the villages in the black soil tract in the centre of Dhumturry and of Balod are the most fertile and populous in the country.

12. Within the country above described there are two principal river systems which subsequently unite and form the Mahanuddee proper.

13. The first of these, the Seonath, which contains much the larger supply of water rises in the hills of the Panabarus Zemindaree in the Chanda District, and flows after its entrance into Raepore in a direction for the most part north-east for about 120 miles, till it is joined by the Huhap from the west; after this junction it turns eastward for about 40 miles till it joins the Mahanuddee in the north-east corner of the District. Its tributaries in the Raepore District are on the left bank, proceeding from the south, the Goomurria, Am, Soorie, Garaghat and Ghogwa, and the Huhap; on the right bank the Kerkura, Tendoola, Karom and Khorse. In the latter part of its course after the junction with the Huhap it forms the boundary between the Belaspore and Raepore Districts, except where it flows to the north of the Tarenga Pergunnah belonging to Belaspore, but lying to the south of the Seonath.

14. Of the tributaries of the Seonath, the only one that merits any detailed description is the Karom, which rises in the south of the Dhumturry Pergunnah, and flows in a course generally due north for about 75 miles through the centre of the District till it joins the Seonath about 5 miles below the town of Simgah. It only receives one considerable tributary in its course, the Kanhan, which joins it near its junction with the Seonath from the south-east, but the numerous other small nullahs which flow into it fertilise a large area of country as a general rule, much larger than that which is fertilised by the Seonath, in an equal distance as the

Seonath flows for the most part between high banks, while the bed of the Karom is generally, but little below the surrounding country, and the space of fertile land intervening between the latter river, and the barren uplands which intersect the interior of the District is much wider than that along the banks of the Seonath.

15. Though it ultimately gives its names to the River, the stream known as the Mahanuddee in Raepore is of very little importance to the country as compared with the Seonath and Karom. It takes its rise a few miles to the east of the town of Sehawa in the extreme south-east of the District in an insignificant puddle in the middle of a rice field, and thence flows due west through the Sehawa Pergunnah, and the Kakeir Feudatory estate for about 30 miles, after which it turns sharply to the north-east through a very narrow valley in some places not much more than 5 or 600 yards broad, through which it flows for about 20 miles. It continues in this course till it reaches a point about 16 miles to the north-east of the town of Dhumturry where it turns more to the north and thence flows in a N. N. E. direction till its junction with the Seonath.

16. The Mahanuddee receives no large tributary till it reaches Rajim, about 30 miles to the south-east of Raepore, where it is joined by the Pairee which flows from the south-east, rising in the Bindra Nowagurh Zemindaree, and flowing in a north-easterly direction through a hilly country for about 60 miles, before its junction with the Mahanuddee. About 15 miles to the south of Rajim, the Pairee is joined by the Soondar, a river of nearly equal length; which rises in the Jeypore estate under the Madras Government, and flows through a similar country to the Pairee.

17. The other tributaries of the Mahanuddee are the Kesho, Korar and Nainee, all of which flow from the east through hilly tracts, watering narrow but fertile valleys. Along the western bank, it only receives a few insignificant nullahs, and the space of fertile black soil plain which lies between it and the uplands of the interior of the District is generally narrow.

18. Besides the rivers above mentioned the only others of any note in the District are the Jonk and Udet. The former rises in the Khuriar Zemindaree, and forms for a considerable distance, the boundary of that estate, after which it forms the boundary between Raepore and Sumbulpore, and finally entering the Sonckhan Pergunnah of Belaspore, it falls into the Mahanuddee at Seoreenarain below the junction of the latter river with the Seonath. Its general course is north. The Udet rises in the Bindra Nowagurh Zemindaree, whence it flows nearly due east through Khuriar, and finally falls into the Tel in the Patna State, in Sumbulpore. The country along the banks of both of these rivers is very wild.

19. The general character of the Mahanuddee, and the rivers in

General character of the Mahanuddee and its tributaries.

the east of the District is very different from that of the Seonath and its tributaries. The latter streams generally flow over a rocky or gravelly bottom, and consequently retain water for the whole or greater part of the year, while the beds of the former are wide wastes of sand, dry for more than half the year, and at all times except those of high flood, contain little water. The Mahanuddee is occasionally but very seldom navigable for boats of light draught from Arung about 50 miles below its junction with the Seonath.

20. As above stated the whole of the country to the east of the Mahanuddee occupied by the Zemindarees of Deoree, Kowreea, Nufra, Soourmar, Fingeshur, Khuriar and Bindra Nowagurh is hilly and covered with jungle, and the same may be said of the tract to the south of the District occupied by the Pergunnah of Sehawa, the Kakeir Feudatory state, and the southern portion of the Dhumturry, Balod and Sunjaree Pergunnahs, together with the Zemindarees of Doundee Lohara and Khoojee. To the west the Feudatories of Nandgaon Khyragurh and Chooekadan hold but a small portion of hill country, the hills in this direction for the most part belonging to the Bhundara and Balaghat Districts, and the same may be said of the Zemindarees to the north-west, where the Thakoortola Zemindaree is the only one of which the whole or greater part of the area is occupied by hill and jungle.

✓ 21. The hills are generally low, rarely rising over 15 or 1,600 feet high, except the Gouragurh plateau, and the hilly portions of the District. The range in the south of Sehawa, extending into Bustar and Kakeir. This latter range running to the south of the Kakeir estate, and separating it from Bustar forms the watershed, separating the affluents of the Mahanuddee from those of the Godavery. The general height of the range is from 2,000 to 2,500 feet high.

22. The Gooragurh plateau between Bindra Nowagurh and The Gooragurh plateau. Khuriar rises in several places to a height of 3,000 feet, and on it a pleasant site for a sanitarium might easily be found, the scenery is very fine, and the climate much cooler than that of the plains, but at present it is covered with jungle and almost entirely uninhabited.

23. It is with diffidence that I remark on the Geological characteristics of the District, as I have little practical acquaintance with the science, but as no scientific survey of it has yet, as far as I am aware, been made, I note the following characteristics which I believe may be accepted as a fairly correct account of the leading Geological features. The hilly tracts on the out, skirts of the District are mostly composed of gneiss and quartzose, while sand-stone rocks are inter-

sected with trap dykes. Iron ore is abundant, and that found in Dullee in the Lohara Zemindaree, and in the hills to the west of Gundy, is particularly good. Lead has been also found in the south-west of the Naudgaon Zemindaree, and the red ochre of Gundy and Thakoortola are celebrated.

24. In the interior of the District, the stratum below the alluvial deposits is invariably a soft sand-stone slate, covered generally by a layer of laterite gravel, and in many places the shale has been converted into hard vitrified sand-stone, forming an excellent building stone. Below this again lies the blue limestone which crops out in numerous places on the surface, and is invariably found in the beds of the rivers.

25. Throughout the plain country the soil is generally fertile, about 57 per cent., being equally adopted for the growth of rice and rubber crops, while of the remainder about 23 per cent., though not fitted for rubber crops produces better rice crops than any soil but the best first class. The remainder of the soil is either rocky or hard, poor laterite, which will only occasionally yield a poor crop of the inferior grains such as Kodo.

26. In the hilly country the soil is generally poor, except in the valleys which are generally narrow; but in these where the soil is good it excels for the purpose of rice cultivation that in the rest of the District, as the constant supply of water and the natural barriers to their out-let furnished by the hills keeps these valley lands almost always in that swampy state which is necessary for the production of the best crops of rice.

27. The greater portion of this fertile soil lying among the hill valleys has long since been cleared and cultivated and there is but little good land now to be found among the Government Wastes which lie entirely in the east and south of the District. The soil of these tracts is generally hard and rocky and there are only a few spots that would re-pay the toil and expence of clearing.

28. One of the most distinguishing features of the District is the large number of tanks. These are generally formed by throwing a bund across a hollow; but in most large villages there are one if not more tanks to be found embanked on all four sides and planted with trees, the work of some patriotic Malgozar or ryot or of some enterprising Bunjara who used to pasture his cattle in the village in the day when the jungle was uncut. These tanks which depend almost entirely on the rain-fall for their water-supply are considered on that account to give better drinking water than those formed by throwing a bund across the valleys, and in this respect they must be allowed to have some advantages but as but little care is taken to keep them clear, the water before the

hot weather is, generally a muddy mass of impurity. ✓ Besides the trees round the tanks, there are but few to be seen throughout the greater part of the District, and mango groves so common in Upper India are here few and far between. Wells were unknown in the District till the last two years, but the recent orders granting rent-free land to persons digging wells have led to the construction of wells lined with masonry in many of the Khalsa villages. Along the banks of the Mahanuddee, and to the south of the District water is found at from 12 to 24 feet from the surface, but in the east it is difficult to be procured.

29. Though the tanks in the District are numerous yet the result of the want of capital and enterprise, and of the absence of co-operation between villages has been that few of large size have been constructed, and the water supply of the country is frittered away in a number of small reservoirs which are incapable of holding a large supply and dry up when there is at all a prolonged drought. The only tank in the Khalsa worth mention is one at Thilka in the Raepore Pergunnah which covers an area of about 177 acres. It has a fine masonry bund of about 400 yards long. In the Zemindarees the only tanks worth mentioning are those at Worarbund, in the Zemindaree of that name, and Sabusore in the Sabusore Lohara Zemindaree, both these latter have been made by filling up a very small gap in the hills, and the area of neither of these is equal to that of the Thilka tank.

✓30. The average rain-fall is about 40 inches. The hills which encircle the District generally insure the fall of an adequate or nearly adequate supply of water, and within the last 50 years beyond which no records are available only one very severe famine has been known in Raepore. This occurred in 1835, and numbers of people are said to have died of hunger, but there is no trustworthy evidence extant, from which the extent of the calamity can be learnt, but that it must have been severe is shown by the fact that the revenue of almost all the villages in the District declined considerably in the next few succeeding years, while another but less severe famine occurring in 1844 completed the ruin of many villages.

31. That the District should suffer severely in case of famine is inevitable, as it is surrounded on all sides by almost uninhabited jungles varying in breadth from about 50 to more than 200 miles, and during the rains is perfectly inaccessible from the want of good roads, and even if these were in existence the cost and difficulty of transporting grain from such distances as those from which it must come would render it even now almost impossible to provide for the subsistence of the great mass of the population in case of a failure of the rice crop and the exhaustion of the stocks of rice which forms the staple food of the country, and as population increases the difficulties will be still greater. ✓

32. As it is from Bengal alone of all the neighbouring countries that a large supply of rice can be looked for in times of scarcity, the measure that would apparently be most effective in securing the District against famine would be the improvement of the Navigation of the Mahanuddee up to Seoreenarain, so that boats might go to and fro throughout the year, while the opening of the river would lead to a largely increased trade with the Eastern coast.

33. Though chiefly owing to the want of funds but few roads have yet been made in Raepore, yet the physical features of the country and the condition of the people are such as to make the construction of roads a comparatively easy task. The long and gentle sweep of the uplands present easy gradients which will require little alteration; the valleys are swampy but there are few places where a good foundation may not easily be found; the streams flow gently and evenly over rocky and gravelly beds and labour is cheap and abundant during the slack season after the rice harvest has been gathered in. But though roads can be laid out without much difficulty, it cannot be said that they can be kept easily in repair. Even metalled roads, unless the outer covering is unusually thick and well rammed, are soon ploughed up by the narrow wheels of the carts of the District, and in a few months the surface of the road is turned into an incoherent mass of loose stones which destroy the hoofs of the drought cattle and render all progression except at a foot's pace almost impossible.

34. The only metalled road in the District is the Great Eastern road, the Imperial line running from Nagpore to Sumbulpore through Raepore. That part of the road between Raepore and the Western boundary of the District towards Nagpore is nearly finished; but that between Raepore and Sumbulpore has not been begun. Two fair weather roads have been made from local funds, one to Dhumturry, and the other *via* Simgah to Nandghat on the banks of the Seonath, where it meets the Belaspore District road leading to that station. A branch from Simgah to join the road from Belaspore to Jubbulpore over the Chiklee Ghat is now being begun and a road from Raepore to Seoreenarain has also been commenced. On the Simgah road a few bridges have been built, but except on the Great Eastern road no bridges have yet been attempted on the other lines.

35. The Customs line runs through the District from east to southwest, and there are ancient tracks leading along the commercial routes of which the most important are those from Raepore to Rajim, from Raepore to Balod and thence to the Eastern coast from Dhumturry through Balod and Sunjaree to the Great Eastern road, from Raepore

through Khyragurh, Kampta and Toomsur to Nagpore, from Raepore to Dhumda and from Nowagurh and Deorbeeja to the Khyragurh and Nagpore road which it joins near Khyragurh.

36. The climate of the District is generally good, varying less than in the Districts of Bengal and Upper India, and though the cold season is very different from what it is in Behar or even in Bengal, yet the rains are always cool and pleasant. The District has been for the last few years generally healthy, though previously it had a bad reputation from the cholera which visited it almost every year for 20 years, but the last bad outbreak of the disease was in 1866, and then it was only confined to the north of the District. The people attribute this immunity in a great measure to the sanitary precautions which have lately been introduced, and the coincidence of the cessation of cholera, and the introduction of sanitary reform is certainly fortunate, as it has induced the people to take up with a sort of enthusiasm a system of precautions which is generally distasteful to the natives of the country. It is to be hoped that their newly born faith may not sink under a premature trial.

37. Though this is not perhaps exactly the place for remarks of this character, I would wish to state that there can be very little doubt as to the origin of the cholera in the two years in which it has appeared since I came to Raepore. In the first year it broke out at the great fair held at Rajim in April, and was thence disseminated over the District. In the next year it was introduced by pilgrims from Juggernath. These men were stopped at the Jonk river, and not allowed to proceed along the Great Eastern road, but managed to make their way through the jungles, and pass the boundary to the north. My camp happened at that time to be in that part of the District, and the villages first attacked were invariably those which lay on the track that the pilgrims had taken.

38. Now, however, that the time of holding the Rajim fair has been altered from April to February, and that a stricter watch is kept over the Juggernath pilgrims, it is to be hoped that the freedom from disease which the District has enjoyed for the last two years may not prove to be merely temporary.

✓ 39. Besides cholera the prevalent disorders are fevers, and small-pox, the former are very frequent during the rains, and the beginning of the cold weather, but except in the jungles the fever is generally of a mild type. Small-pox has hitherto yearly carried off a large number of children, but now that vaccination has been introduced, its ravages may be mitigated, if it be not entirely exterminated. Stone is also very prevalent, and a large number of operations for this disease are yearly performed at the Raepore dispensary.

40. There are no large towns in the District except Raepore, but Dhumturry and Rajim are rising places. The population of these three towns is as follows :—

|                 |         |
|-----------------|---------|
| Raepore .....   | 16,645. |
| Dhumturry ..... | 4,632.  |
| Rajim .....     | 2,571.  |

Raepore is the head-quarters of the grain trade of the District, and the residence of the principal merchants, while Dhumturry and Rajim derive their importance principally from the jungle produce which is brought there for sale. The trade is a somewhat speculative one, but very lucrative to those who succeed, and the number of those who engage in it is yearly increasing as the value of the jungle produce becomes better known. Arung was formerly the seat of a considerable trade in lac, but the clearing of the jungles to the east of the District has greatly diminished its importance. Among agricultural villages, Kooroodh, Pularee and Amdee, all of them in Dhumturry, are the most populous. Droog, as the head-quarters of a Tehseelee, and Dhumda, as the former residence of a Gond dynasty only extinct within the last 70 or 80 years, also contain a considerable number of inhabitants ; while in the other parts of the District, Koosmee ; Lowan and Saragaon in the Simgha Tehseel, and Koora in that of Raepore, deserve mention.

41. In Raepore, Dhumda, Patun, Droog, Dhumturry and Balod, there are the ruins of old forts of considerable extent, but except in Dhumda these remains are of little architectural beauty. In Lowan along the Mahanuddee the forts are almost as numerous as the villages, but they are invariably rude and now ruined structures made for the security of the inhabitants on the occasion of the periodical raids of the Binjwars from the Sonekan hills. At Arung in the Raepore, at Deobuloda in the Droog Tehseel, and at Gundye in the Zemindaree of that name, there are fine Buddhist or Jain temples, and at Rajim the original portion of the temple which still exists shows a good deal of artistic skill and taste. Throughout the District there are numerous ruins of temples, and almost every village has as its deity some old statue reft from some decayed building, some of them showing considerable refinement in the sculptors, and almost all exhibiting a skill which would now be sought for in vain in Chutteesgurh. Of more extensive ruins those of Seerpore may be mentioned, consisting of the remains of temples, and palaces of stone for the most part hidden in the jungle.

42. Weekly markets are established in many villages throughout the District, and there are very few villages where the inhabitants are not within easy reach of a market on every day in the week ; but the sales which take place at

these gatherings are of the pettiest description, and neither cattle nor large quantities of grain are ever to be purchased at them. These markets have evidently been held at their present sites for ages, for it is of no unfrequent occurrence to find a market held in the middle of an open treeless plain far from a village but generally near some old tank which, with the mounds about it, marks the site of a long deserted village, and to these, in spite of their disadvantages, the people adhere with an obstinacy which is one of the characteristic features of the inhabitants of Chutteesgurh.

43. Fairs\* are held yearly at Rajim, Dhumturry, Gundye, Koorra and Bungolee, the last in the Simgah Tehseel, and at these a considerable business is done in cloths, brass vessels, bullocks, lac and other jungle produce. Grain is usually sold to Bunjaras on their rounds through the District, to Buneas in Raepore, or transported in the Ryots carts to Nagpore and Bhundara. ✓

## POLICE.

*District Police.*  
2. Inspectors.  
14. Chief Constables.  
52. Head Do.  
359. Constables.  
427....Total.

*Town Police.*  
1. Chief Constable.  
4. Head Do.  
34. Constables.  
*Mounted Police.*  
2. Head Constables.  
63. Constables.

44. The Police force in the District is as per margin, distributed in the following stations. In the Khalsa :—

## RAEPORE.

## Head Quarters Station House.

*Station Houses.**Out-Posts.*

|                |             |
|----------------|-------------|
|                | { Nowagaon. |
|                | { Do. 2nd.  |
| Arung .....    | { Pitteeah. |
|                | { Assoudh.  |
|                | { Boryah.   |
| Droog .....    | { Patun.    |
|                | { Bhelaie.  |
|                | { Somnee.*  |
| Simgah .....   | Kurrah.     |
| Dhumturry .... | { Jhurondh. |
|                | { Silghat.  |
|                | { Durghun.  |
| Balod .....    | Sunjaree.   |
| Rajim .....    | Pandooka.   |
| Lowan .....    | Duttan.     |
| Dhumda .....   | Deorbeejah. |
| Sihawa .....   | ..          |

\* This Out-Post is situated in the Nandgaon Zemindaree.

## IN THE ZEMINDAREES.

|                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Narrah.....     | { Khumureeah.   |
|                 | { Shikarpailee. |
|                 | { Bagnuddee.    |
| Worarbund ..... | { Chicholee.    |
|                 | { Ghar Tallao.  |
|                 | { Paindree.     |

Dispensaries. 45. There are two Civil Dispensaries in the town of Raepore, and three in the District at Dhumturry, Doroog and Arung.

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## CHAPTER II.

### HISTORY.

46. THE isolated state of Chuteesgurrh from the earliest times renders the facts of its history, except as they illustrate the growth of its present institutions and customs, of little interest or value, while the paucity of the materials extant renders it a task of some difficulty to obtain even such an out-line as is necessary for the purpose of this report. However from traditions (most of which owing to the heterogeneous character of the population, and the fact that most of the inhabitants are descended from recent immigrants are vague), inscriptions either existing in the original, or in copies made by orders of Colonel Agnew when in charge of Chuteesgurrh from 1818-1825, and from the hints found in the customs of the people, a not wholly inadequate account of the past history of the District may be framed.

47. Like the rest of Central India, Chuteesgurrh seems to have been inhabited in the earliest times by Boonjias and other Kolarian races from the east. These, however, having little administrative ability or instinct for cohesion, never succeeded in establishing any thing like a regular Government and were, in very early times conquered and driven to the hills by the Gonds, by whom the first system of Government was founded ; and in this system though greatly corrupted, and in the last three or four hundred years almost obliterated, will be found the key to the innumerable anomalies which now perplex the inquirer into the customs of Chuteesgurrh.

48. To the East of the Mahanuddee, the Boonjias and Binjwars maintained themselves till a late period. The last Binjwar chief of Sonekan was hung in the mutiny, while tradition still tells of the Gond conquest of Bindra Nowagurrh, and the victories of the Gond heroes over the barbarian giants, though the latter were assisted by magical and supernatural gifts.

49. That the Gonds were of the same Scythian race (though much inferior to their fathers) who are mentioned in Elliot's supplementary Glossary (article Gour Tuga) as known under the name of Takshacs, and who invaded India about 600 years, B. C. under Suhes Nag is possible. The Gonds still adopt the name of Thakoor, which is possibly a Hindooised form of the national name Tak, while the local deity universally revered throughout the Raepore District is Thakoordeo ; and a further reason for assuming a connection between the Gond and Scythian races is furnished by the

fact that the most mysterious ceremony of the Gonds' worship is that generally performed by the chief poojaree of each clan in honour of Seknag the father of the Gods, a name which may probably be a corruption of Suhes Nag.

50. Again these Takshacs became Buddhists and the great supporters of the Buddhist doctrines, and the numbers of Buddhist remains still existing in the District show that that religion must have once been professed by large numbers throughout Chuteesguruh.

51. From inscriptions found in Seerpore, Arung and Rajim, all of them unfortunately, except that at Rajim, without date, it appears that the country was originally ruled by a number of petty chiefs—— those of Seerpore, Arung, Rajim and Doroog being mentioned. These chiefs were, as is related in the Rajim inscription dated 796 Sumbut, 739, A.D., conquered by Juggut Pal the descendant in the 4th generation from Sahishna Deo, a chief who is said to have come from Wurar or Wuddradesh, probably an old name for Orissa, as I find (Prinsep's Indian Antiquities Volume II. page 266, Thomas' edition) that Orissa was formerly called Uddradesh. The alleged extent of the family conquests which are said to have extended from Rameshur to Malwa is probably mythical, but there can be but little doubt that Juggut Pal conquered the greater part of the Raepore District and that he was a Buddhist. The latter being proved by the image of Budh still existing in the temple built by him at Rajim, said in the inscription to be a portrait of Juggut Pal.

52. The time at which Juggut Pal lived is not certain. Two of his successors are mentioned in the inscription which, however, appears to have been engraved by a Brahmin at times when the heterodox nature of Juggut Pal's tenets had been forgotten; and it is probable that the Hyhybunsee genealogists who place it from 427-478 Sumbut 370-421 A.D., are not far wrong.

53. From the time of the Rajim inscription up to the year 1458 Sumbut, 1401 A.D., the date of an inscription formerly found in the Wall of the Raepore fort, but now as far as I can learn only existing in the copy made by Colonel Agnew, there is no record of events in Chuteesgurih, but as this inscription records the praises of Luchmun Deo, a Prince of the Hyhybunsee dynasty, who ruled in Raepore, and those of his son and grandson, it may be presumed that the conquest of Chuteesgurih was effected after 739 and about 1,350 A.D., for the Rajim inscription makes no mention of the Hyhybunsee Princes. Nor is it indeed probable that they had advanced so

far South as Raepore till long after the earlier date, as it is admitted that they did not descend from the fastnesses of Lappa till the reign of Prithee Deo, who is said to have died in 909 Sumbut, 852 A.D.; and from an inscription at Ruttunpore telling how Bhopal Deo, a Raja who ruled from 1145-1183 Sumbut, 1088 to 1126 A.D., was driven from Ruttunpore, their new capital, to Mundla by a Rakus, they seem to have had some trouble in maintaining themselves in the plains for many years after leaving the hills.

54. From the inscription in the fort above mentioned it would appear that Raepore was ruled by a younger branch of the family, but as in the list of territories and tributary states dated 1583 Sumbut, 1526 A.D. and still extant, the Pergunnahs of the Raepore District are entered among the estates under the immediate control of the Government, it would appear that the rulers of Raepore were entirely subordinate to the Head of the family at Ruttunpore.

55. This abstract statement of the territories and revenues of the Ruttunpore Kingdom purports to have been drawn up by the order of Kullian Sen, a Prince who appears to have been among the best of the dynasty, as his name is still well known and revered in the District. He is said to have been taken to Delhi and to have lived there for 11 years, during which time he stood high in the favor of Akber; but as Kullian Sen died in 1563 A.D., while Akber only came to the throne in 1556 and did not approach Chuteesgurbh before 1562 A.D., when he led an expedition to Malwa and against Durgawatee, the Ranee of Gurha Mundla (now Jubulpore), it is clear that either the dates must be wrong or the tradition false. It may probably, however, be a fact that Kullian Sen did homage to Akber during this expedition, and he may have gone with him to Delhi and died soon after his return. His visit to Delhi is mentioned in the Deshboee above referred to. He is there said to have received a full recognition of his rights to levy tribute from the neighbouring Rajas, but nothing is said as to any tribute paid by himself.

56. If the Deshboee and the lists of Talookdars dated 1629 Sumbut, 1563 A.D., at the beginning of the reign of Luchmun Sen, Kullian Sen's successor are genuine, and I see no reason to doubt it as they have been long preserved in the family of Rewaram of Ruttunpore, the descendant of the hereditary Dewans of the Hyhybunsee family, they show that in the time of Kullian Sen and his son the chiefs of Ruttunpore were lords paramount of a very large extent of country, extending far beyond the limits of Chuteesgurbh, which formed, however, the most valuable portion of their dominions. Besides Chuteesgurbh which

they held in their own hands the neighbouring hill states of Kowrea, Sirgoojya, Chuttia (now called Chota) Nagpore, Singhbhoom, Sumbulpore, Phooljhur, Kharonde, Bustar, Ambagurh chokee and Lanjee, all of which paid tribute to them; and it may not be out of place to note here the amount of the tribute paid by each state :—

|                 |     |                 |
|-----------------|-----|-----------------|
| Ramghur         | ..  | } Rs.<br>21,022 |
| Pertapgurh      | ..  |                 |
| Kowrea          | ..  |                 |
| Sirgoojya       | ..  |                 |
| Chuttia Nagpore | ... | } 5,001         |
| Singhbhoom      | ..  |                 |
| Ambagurh chokee | ... | } 12,000        |
| Lanjee          | ... |                 |
| Sumbulpore      | ... | 10,025          |
| Bustar          | ... | } 5,015         |
| Kharonde        | ... |                 |
| Phooljhur       | ... | 6,000           |

To defend these territories, an army of about 14,000 men, with 116 elephants, was kept up.

57. The whole revenue of Chuteesgurh, within which was included the whole of the present districts of Belaspore and Raepore (except the feudatory states of Khyragurh and Nandgaon which belonged to Lanjhee, and Khurriar and Bindra Nowagurh which belonged to Sumbulpore) is stated to have amounted to Rupees 6,57,019, as the same area, with the exception of the Droog Pergunnah which was in 1817 attached to Bhundara, produced in the latter year only 4,15,508 Nagpore Rupees (though the revenue had been more than trebled since 1799). The prosperity of the country under the Hyhybunsee rule as compared with its state fifty years ago is manifest, and even if the tradition that the revenue in the Hyhybunsee times was paid in cowries were true, yet the large numbers of villages then borne on the rolls as paying revenue attest the prosperity of the country.

58. In determining what portion of this revenue was yielded by the present Raepore District, a difficulty arises from the change of names which has since taken place, rendering it impossible in some instances to identify the Pergunnahs with those now existing, but the following may be accepted as a very nearly accurate statement of the revenue then assessed on Raepore :—

Revenues of Chuteesgurh under the Hyhybunsee dynasty, and former prosperity of the country.

Revenue of the Raepore district under the Hyhybunsee dynasty.

## KHALSA PERGUNNAHS.

| Name of Pergunnahs.        | No. of Villages. | Revenue.<br>Rs. |
|----------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Amera ..                   | 84               | 4,800           |
| Raepore ..                 | 640              | 85,600          |
| Khallaree ..               | 84               | 3,000           |
| Droog ..                   | 84               | 15,000          |
| Lowan ..                   | 252              | 55,160          |
| Seerpore ..                | 84               | 5,000           |
| Tengnajhur (now Kowrea) .. | 84               | 225             |
| Deorbeejah ..              | 84               | 13,000          |
| Seersa (doubtful) ..       | 84               | 800             |
| Simgah ..                  | 84               | 5,000           |
| Singungurh (doubtful) ..   | 84               | 2,300           |
| Rajim ..                   | 84               | 9,036           |
| Patun ..                   | 152              | 32,000          |
| Akulwara (doubtful) ..     | 84               | 2,845           |
| Mohdee ..                  | 84               | 3,100           |
| Soormar ..                 | 84               | 3,100           |

## PERGUNNAHS HELD BY SUBORDINATE

## ZEMINDARS.

|                   |             |                |
|-------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Dhumda Surda ..   | 568         | 15,513         |
| Balod Sunjaree .. | 795         | 72,156         |
| Dhumturry ...     | 750         | 81,212         |
| Ferungeshwur..    | 84          | 78             |
|                   | <hr/> 4,333 | <hr/> 4,08,925 |

Of the Pergunnahs held by subordinate Zemindars, Dhumda was held by a Gond Raja, Balod and Sunjaree by the descendant of the Gond Raja of Mundla, and Dhumturry by the Kakeir Raja.

59. Under the Hyhybunsee dynasty the Government seems to have been a patriarchal aristocracy, the system being derived from the Gonds. Under the nomade invaders of the Turanian race, the unit seems not to have been, as among some at least of the more civilised Aryans of Upper India, the family but the clan, hence while in Upper India the family developed into the village community, among the Turanian races the clan settled themselves in a number of neighbouring villages which were formed into a Talooqua. All the original inhabitants of each of these Talooquas were attached to their chief by the ties of blood or community of interest.

60. As long as the original tradition of a connection between the members of each Talooqua and of the different Talooqdars with one another under a common chief existed, the aggregate thus formed was a powerful State, formidable alike for attack and defence; but as the hereditary bond of connection was weakened by time, and the loss of the constant stimulus of common action, the parts separated from each other and fell easily, one by one, under the yoke of a common invader.

61. Such an invader would replace the indigenous chiefs by strangers attached to himself, and hence the system would receive a further shock from the absence of any bond between the new Talooqdars and their subordinates, and this process had probably taken place once at least before the conquest of the district by the Hyhybunsee Princes.

62. The Hyhybunsee rulers introduced a number of adventurers from Hindoostan, making over to them the lands of the older settlers; and the lists of Belaspore Talooqdars prepared in the time of Luchmun Sen show that the greater part of the Talooqdars were of foreign extraction. As there are no such lists extant for Raepore it does not appear how far the change had been carried in this part of the country, but there can be little doubt that the old system had been even at this time greatly changed, while in succeeding generations it was almost obliterated, and not only were the older holders ejected from their Talooquas, but the boundaries of Talooquas were disregarded, and two or three, or even single, villages were given to applicants, while the Gond ryots were swamped by foreign settlers.

63. It is clear that under such a system the only bond that united the whole country was their common dependence upon a united authority, and when that authority was weakened by the gradual decay of the ruling race the Mahrahtas met with little or no opposition when they invaded the country.

64. The first Mahrahta invasion took place in 1741 A.D. when Bhaskur Pundit, while on his way to attack Benagal, defeated Rughoonath Singh, the representative of the older branch of the Hyhybunsee race at Ruttunpore; but neither he nor Mohun Singh, who was put in charge of Chuteesgurh by Rughojee Bhonsla Raja of Nagpore in 1745, seems to have at first interfered with Ummer Singh, the representative of the younger branch ruling in Raepore. He continued to administer the Government till 1750, when he was quietly ousted and received for his maintenance the Pergunnahs of Rajim, Patun and Raepore, for which he paid a yearly tribute of 7,000 Rupees. On his death in 1753 his son Seoraj Singh was absent on a pilgrimage and the Mahrahta Government confiscated the Pergunnahs, but when Bim-

bajee, the younger brother of Janojee, the heir of Rughojee, assumed the Government in 1757 he gave Seoraj Singh the village of Burgaon in the Raepore Tehseelee free of revenue, and one rupee on every village in the district for his maintenance. This arrangement continued till 1822, when in lieu of one rupee on every village in the district Rughoonath Singh, son of Seoraj Singh, received the villages of Gobinda, Moor-bena, Nandgaon and Bhalesur, all near Burgaon, free of revenue; and these he still holds.

65. When the Mahrahtas undertook the Government of the country decay had already, in all probability, reduced it to a state very much inferior to that in which it was during the earlier days of the Hyhybunsee rule; and the raids of the Binjwars of Sonekan, a tribe allied to the Boonjias living in the hills to the east of Lowan, between the Mahanuddee and the Jonk, had seriously affected the prosperity of the eastern Pergunnahs of Lowan, Seerpore, Khullaree and the eastern portion of Raepore, and a continuance of these disorders gradually caused their almost total depopulation. So entirely was the country ruined that the revenue of the three first named tracts, which had amounted to 63,160 Rupees in 1563 A.D., was reduced to between three and four thousand Nagpore Rupees in 1817 A.D., and it is only within the last few years that they have begun to recover their original prosperity.

66. After the assumption of the Government of Chuteesgurbh by Government of Raja Bimbajee. Bimbajee order was maintained, though chiefly by the strong hand of military rule, and some efforts were made to harmonise the Mahrahta and Chuteesgurbh institution which had already been assimilated by the influx of immigrants accustomed to the village system of Upper India. On his death in 1787, his widow Anundee Baie managed the country for a year and was succeeded by a Soobadar, Vittul Deokur, who is said to have introduced a form of Pergunnah accounts on the village system known to the Mahrahtas. After his time the Government seems to have degenerated into anarchy; insurrections were, as is stated by Colonel Agnew, frequent, and the revenue of the Khalsa lands was raised in the 18 years from 1799 to 1817 from one lac and twenty-six thousand to three lacs and eighty-three thousand Rupees. The character of the administration may be judged from the description of Major Agnew, in 1819, who says that the country "presented one uniform scene of plunder and oppression, uninfluenced by any considerations but that of collecting by whatsoever means the largest amount possible."

67. After the deposition of Appa Sahib in 1818 the country was taken under British superintendence during the minority of the younger Rughojee, and Captain Edmonds was the first officer put in charge of Chuteesgurbh.

Events in 1818.

Imp 15506 Dated 21.12.09

He, however, had scarcely succeeded in putting down the disturbances in Dongurgurh, in the west of the District, when he died a few months after his arrival and was succeeded by Colonel Agnew.

68. This officer, whose name is still well remembered throughout the country, was Superintendent from 1818 to 1825. His first task on assuming charge was to put down the pretended heirs of the Gond Raja of Dhumda who had rebelled, and to compel the Binjwar chief of Sonekan to give up the Government lands he had usurped during the disturbances. Having restored peace and adjusted the large balances of revenue shown as due in the Mahrahta accounts, he proceeded to organise the civil administration.

69. Finding that the division of the Khalsa of Chuteesgurh into 27 Pergunnahs only caused confusion and delay in the despatch of business, he reduced the number to 8, afterwards altered to 9, over each of which he appointed a Kamawishdar as the chief executive and revenue authority. The Kamawishdars received pay at the rate of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on the revenue of their Pergunnahs, and had criminal jurisdiction in cases of petty theft &c., with civil powers to decide cases up to the value of 300 Rupees.

70. Besides the Kamawishdar, the Pergunnah Officers were the Ameen and Phurnuvis each of whom received pay at the rate of 1 per cent. on the revenue, the head of the Punchayut, and the Bootkars.

71. The Ameen's duty was to enquire into the state of the villages in the Pergunnahs, and he reported directly to the Superintendent, while the Phurnuvises or accountants were under the orders of the Kamawishdar, and each Officer was allowed access to the records of the other.

72. The head of the Punchayut, called the Punje, was generally an influential inhabitant of the Pergunnah, appointed on a salary of from 150 to 200 Rupees a year, to Superintend the Punchayuts or Arbitrators, who were assembled for the decision of petty disputes, while the Bootkars of whom there was one to every 20 or 30 villages, used to collect the revenue, receiving each a monthly pay of two-and-a-half Rupees.

73. The absence of all records of former years rendered it impossible to assess the revenue without fresh and minute inquiries into the circumstances of each village; and accordingly Pandeyes were appointed one to every 20 or 30 villages to assist the Ameen, but these appointments were abolished after two years.

74. Though the vitality of the land system of Chuteesgurh had been almost annihilated owing to the causes stated in para. 66 of this report, yet the old Talooquas were still numerous in 1818, as the following remarks quoted from a report of Colonel Agnew's to the Resident will show :—" I am led to believe that the Gountias of Chuteesgurh, as contradistinguished from the Patels, have different avocations from those filling the same situation in other parts of the Raja's territories. The Gountias here are the heads of the villages in which they reside, and cannot hold Office in more than one village ; they are almost invariably inhabitants of the country. The Patels on the contrary have authority over a Talooq or several villages, and are frequently strangers who have obtained the situation from interest against the Gountias. I have very seldom met with complaints from the ryots, but against the latter they are frequent."

75. In consequence of these complaints the Patels, called in Chuteesgurh Daos, were set aside wherever possible, and in all cases their remuneration was restricted to one anna in each Rupee of land revenue ; but though the Talooqdars were removed, yet the names and limits of the estates are still in many cases well known to the people, more especially in the jungles where there has been less change, and consequently traditions have been more faithfully preserved. In some instances the Talooqas were found at the settlement in the hands of men who had held them from the time of the Hyhybunsee Rajas, though in most instances the boundaries of the Talooqua were much altered from what they had been in ancient times ; among these may be mentioned the Goolloo Talooqua in Raepore, of which only three villages are now in the hands of the old Gond proprietor, and that of Bhooteedeeh in Dhumturry held by a very old family of Kowurs belonging to a colony which appear to have been settled in that part of the country about the middle of the 16th century.

76. The Gountias who had been originally only the Talooqdars' servants, but who by the frequent change of Talooqdars had begun to be looked upon as chiefly responsible for the revenue, had established a custom which was continued, under which they received one plough free of revenue out of every eight in the village, instead of the one or two ploughs they had originally received as payment for their services, while one in every sixteen was allotted for charity and the subsistence of travellers, the latter being dressed by the ryots. Their position was still further strengthened by an order directing that all complaints must first be preferred to the Gountia, and it was only in case of his not being able or willing to afford redress that the complainant could apply to the Kamawishdar or Superintendent.

77. No proprietary right in the soil was found to be claimed by any one, and the Gountias were stated by Colonel Agnew to be liable to be displaced on the complaint of the ryots, the person of their choice being named in his stead. As the Gountias were at the same time enjoined to lend money and grain to their ryots, their position was theoretically hardly an agreeable one, though practically it had advantages in villages where the Gountia had held Office for several generations, or where he was a man of tact or wealth.

78. The great obstacle to the improvement of the country was the migratory character of the ryots, who having long lost any recognised place in the land system, and being in many cases immigrants of a comparatively recent date, had no attachment to the soil and were ready to move at the smallest provocation of superstition or annoyance—a death in their family, or even a headache, being stated by Colonel Agnew to be sufficient cause for a flitting, and to such an extent had the evil grown under the oppressive system of recent years that the Gountias invariably refused to be responsible for the revenue unless the ryots were ordered to continue, as had been customary, to pay their rents while the crops were on the ground.

79. To mitigate this evil every endeavour seems to have been made, and the Gountias were, besides being directed to lend money and grain, strictly forbidden to take from the ryots more than the Government revenue, together with the petty fines for offences which they were allowed to levy, subject to appeal to the Kamawishdars, and the tax on widow's marriages, which latter were to be credited to Government.

80. This latter order which was strictly consonant with ancient custom, as the ryots could never be justly called upon to pay more than the Talooqdar's demand, seems to have been rescinded two or three years afterwards by the Resident, but the custom continued to prevail up to the time of the present Settlement, except in villages where the Gountias could offer advantages to the ryots which would compensate them for payments over and above this amount. But the scantiness of the population, and the quantity of waste land, tended to increase the demand for ryots to such an extent as to allow only of a few of the wealthiest men receiving any thing approaching to what would elsewhere be regarded as an equitable rent. Besides the authorised cesses abovementioned, the Kullalee, or excise, and Pandree, or house tax were collected by the Gountia. The former from the distillers, and the latter from occupiers of houses not agriculturists.

81. In assessing the revenue, which was done annually, it was found impracticable for the assessing officer to apportion it to each village, and therefore Colonel Agnew, following the ancient custom of the District, as modified by the Mahrahtas, first fixed the amount to be assessed on each Pergunnah; this was based on the receipt for previous years, and the reports of the Ameens and Pandeys, the amount being calculated on the number of ploughs at the rate of four to sixteen Rupees a plough, and this total revenue was then apportioned to the villages by the Kamawishdar and Gountias together, while the Gountia and ryots afterwards decided what sum each individual was to pay. ✓

82. This system, the leading principle of which was to work as much as possible through the people themselves, was one well suited to the country which rapidly began to improve. The clearance of the fertile black soil tracts to the south of Dhumturry and Balode, the greater part of the Rajim Pergunnah and that of the Eastern part of Raepore which had been allowed to lapse into jungle was commenced, and every where the area under cultivation increased.

83. The progress of the country is shown by the revenue of the Khalsa of Chuteesgurh which increased from 3,31,470 Rupees in 1818 to 4,03,224 in 1825 or over 21 per cent. in 8 years. ✓  
 Progress of the country under Colonel Agnew and his successors.

84. In 1825, Colonel Agnew was succeeded by Captain Hunter who held charge only for a few months, when Captain Sandys took charge and remained till 1828, when he was succeeded successively by Captains Wilkinson and Crawford, the latter of whom held till 1830, when the Raja attained his majority and the Mahrahta Government was restored.

85. From 1830 till 1854 when Chuteesgurh with the rest of the dominions of the Nagpore Raja lapsed to the British Government, Chuteesgurh was governed by Soobahs, but the general system followed was the same as that organised by Colonel Agnew, and the country seems to have been on the whole well administered, and it might have improved rapidly, had it not been for the famines of 1835 and 44, which checked the increase of the population and ruined many villages. However, on the whole, progress was made, and the District was in a much more flourishing condition when taken over in 1854, than when Colonel Agnew received charge in 1818. The revenue of Raepore alone in 1855, the year after the annexation, amounted to 2,78,536 Company's Rupees, equal to about 3,25,886 Nagpore Rupees, or very nearly the revenue paid by the whole of Chuteesgurh in 1818. ✓

86. The first Officer appointed to the charge of Chuteesgurb after the annexation was Captain Elliot. His jurisdiction, of which the limits were the same as in the time of Colonel Agnew, included not only the whole of Chuteesgurb but also Bustar, an extent of country which necessitated at first the continuance of a similar system of patriarchal Government to that instituted by Colonel Agnew, but from 1856, when the country was divided into three Tehseelees, of which two, Dhumturry and Raepore were in the Raepore District, a more regular system began to be introduced. In 1857, Droog was made a Tehseelee, and in 1861, Belaspore was separated from Raepore, and in 1863, a fourth Tehseelee at Singah, completing the number now existing, was added to Raepore.

87. Raepore suffered but little during the mutiny, the only disturbances being those which were excited by Narain Singh of Sonekan. He was hung in 1858, and his estate confiscated. Since that time the Binjwar raids into the east of the District have been completely discontinued, and the flourishing tracts of Lowan, Seerpore and Khullaree, which had so long suffered from the oppression of these hill tribes, began to be again populated and cultivated, and are now rapidly becoming one of the most flourishing portions of the District.

88. During the earlier period after the annexation assessments were made for three years, the assessment on each village being fixed by the Deputy Commissioner, but owing to the imperfection of the data for forming a decision, the revenue which existed at the time of the annexation was but little altered. The following are the successive assessments from 1855 to 1862 :—

Rs.

|              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| 1855-57..... | 2,78,536-5-8  |
| 1858-60....  | 3,11,192-11-4 |
| 1861-62..... | 3,17,819-10-4 |

Before the expiry of the last settlement, it was determined to make a regular settlement for a lengthened period, and therefore the settlement of 1861 was extended, pending the completion of the preliminary operations of the new settlement.

89. It now remains to say a few words concerning the History of the Zemindars and Feudatories belonging to the Raepore District. Of the Feudatories the oldest is the Kakeir Zemindar, who boasts of Rajpoot blood, and a descent of fifty generations.

90. The family of the Khyragurh chief who is a Gond, and whose ambition it is to be refined into a Rajpoot is an old one, but it is only quite of late years that he has gained his present estates. His family first held the petty Pergunnah of Kholwa in the Salehtekree hills, and a little before the Mahratta invasion, they received Khyragurh from the Dhumda Raja. Bimbajee gave them Khummuria, and they gained half of Dongurgurh in 1820, in compensation for their services against the Zemindar of that estate who had joined Appa Sahib.

91. The other two Feudatories of Nandgaon and Kondka are held by chiefs of the Byragee caste, and both owe their estates to grants from the Mahrattas, and have been quite recently settled in the District. The Nandgaon chief received half of the Dongurgurh estate for his services against Appa Sahib.

92. Of the Eastern Zemindarees, the oldest are the Ferungeshwur and Bindra Nowagurh Zemindarees. Both belong to Gond families of very ancient date. The latter of these was subject to Sumbulpore. Khurriar though comparatively recently made into a separate estate is held by a very old Rajpoot family descended from one of the Patna Rajas, who gave it as an appanage to his younger son on his marriage with the daughter of the Jeypore Raja.

93. Soormar and Kowreea, held by Gonds, were Khalsa Pergunnahs in the time of Kullian Sen, but being held continuously by the old Talooqdars and their descendants, have established a claim to be regarded as Zemindars, while Nurra is an off-shoot of Khurriar, and Deoree was formerly attached to Sonekan, and is still held by a Binjwar chief.

94. Of the Southern Zemindarees, Lohara and Goonderdehee were Khalsa Talooquas, and were given about the commencement of the 16th Century by the Hyhybunsee Princes to the ancestors of the present Zemindars as the reward of Military service. Lohara being given to a Gond chief, and Goonderdehee to a Kawur. The Khoojee Zemindaree is of very recent date, being given by the Mahrattas to a Mussulman family, who still holds it, while the diminutive tract of Worarbund is held as a compassionate allowance by the representative of the old Zemindars of Dongurgurh, whose family had been ousted by the chief who joined Appa Sahib in 1816, and whose estates were confiscated and divided between the chiefs of Nandgaon and Khyragurh.

95. Of the North-Western Zemindarees, the family of the Purporee chief is probably the most ancient, as he is a descendant of the old Gond Raja of Dhumda, who held the country from a time anterior to the Hyhybunsee conquest. The Zemindar of Lohara Purporee, and Sahaspore Lohara. Sahaspoor is a Gond, belonging to the family of the Pundureea Zemindar. The family is a very old one, as it is mentioned as existing in the Deshboee of Kullian Sen, drawn up in 1526, A.D., but the grant of this Zemindaree is modern, the estate having been conferred on the grand father of the present Zemindar by the Mahratta Government.

96. The families of the Gond Zemindars of Gundyee, Silhetee, Burbuspore and Thakoortola are much more recent. The Gundyee, Silhetee and Burbuspore chiefs are descended from a family, who are said to have conquered their present territory from the petty chiefs of Kholwa, the ancestors of the chief of Khyragurh. The ancestor of the Thakoortola Zemindar received a grant of the estate from Rughojee in 1840, A.D., Sumbut 1783, on the expulsion of the former chieftain who was found guilty of plunder and robbery.

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## CHAPTER III.

### CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE AND RESOURCES OF THE COUNTRY.

✓ 97. The first census taken in Chuteesgurh seems to have been that made in 1820-21 by Colonel Agnew, but I have not been able to find any records showing the area over which it extends or the manner in which it was made, but even if it only gives the population of the Khalsa area of Belaspore and Raepore, the number of 5,71,915, inhabitants would only give about 50 persons to the square mile. If this could be relied on as an accurate enumeration of the people, it would show more forcibly than any words could do, the wretched condition to which the country was then reduced.

I. Population-census of 1820-1.

✓ 98. The next census taken was on the night of the 5th November 1865. The population then counted, amounted to 952,754 souls, or about 101 persons to the square mile over the whole area of the Khalsa, and the Chuteesgurh Zemindarees, exclusive of the Feudatories and the wild tracts of Khurriar and Bindra Nowagurh. In the Khalsa, the total population was 835,874 souls, giving, after deducting the 1,350 square miles of uninhabited waste, an average of about 130 persons to the square mile ; while in the more populous portions of the Dhumturry Tehseel, the population is from 210 to 230 per square mile.

Census of 1865. Population of Khalsa and Zemindaree estates.

✓ 99. In the Feudatory estates the population was found to amount to 317,275 souls, giving an average of about 108 persons, and if the wild tract of Kakeir be excluded, the population will be about 140 to the square mile ; while in Khurriar and Bindra Nowagurh, the total population was only 52,633 souls, or about 18 to the square mile.

Population of Feudatory states.

Census statistics.

100. The following extracts from the census statistics may be interesting :—

## NUMBER OF HOUSES.

|                      | Khalsa. | Zemindarees. | Khurriar & Bindra<br>Nowagurh.        | Feudatories. |
|----------------------|---------|--------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|
|                      | 156,765 | 39,217       | 5,655                                 | 55,754       |
|                      | Khalsa. | Zemindarees. | Khurriar and<br>Bindra No-<br>wagurh. | Feudatories. |
| Adult Males .....    | 220,550 | 31,339       | 13,492                                | 81,085       |
| Males under 14.....  | 201,360 | 27,661       | 12,949                                | 78,420       |
| Adult Females .....  | 240,239 | 34,254       | 14,670                                | 88,981       |
| Females under 14.. . | 173,205 | 23,626       | 11,522                                | 68,789       |

## PRINCIPAL CASTES.

|                   | Khalsa. | Zemindarees. | Khurriar and<br>Bindra No-<br>wagurh. | Feudatories. | Total.  |
|-------------------|---------|--------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|---------|
| Chumars .....     | 163,226 | 8,005        | 1,471                                 | 13,619       | 186,321 |
| Telees .....      | 133,950 | 14,022       | 646                                   | 32,717       | 181,335 |
| Gond .....        | 109,379 | 34,618       | 20,444                                | 58,457       | 222,898 |
| Aheer.....        | 83,803  | 10,070       | 4,688                                 | 28,110       | 126,671 |
| Koormee .....     | 45,494  | 2,335        | 121                                   | 2,431        | 50,377  |
| Ganda or Punka .. | 40,331  | 5,466        | 4,699                                 | 16,729       | 67,225  |
| Khewut .....      | 32,988  | 3,425        | 740                                   | 9,023        | 46,176  |
| Hulba .....       | 21,966  | 1,792        | 2,374                                 | 3,549        | 29,681  |
| Murar .....       | 16,668  | 6,532        | 2,649                                 | 9,969        | 33,618  |
| Muhra .....       | 15,272  | 3,610        | 543                                   | 9,431        | 28,856  |
| Brahmin .....     | 14,949  | 935          | 238                                   | 13,619       | 29,741  |
| Kular.....        | 13,313  | 3,185        | 3,726                                 | 6,959        | 27,783  |
| Koar .....        | 11,508  | 2,391        | 102                                   | 14,112       | 28,113  |
| Dhobin .....      | 11,910  | 1,502        | 344                                   | 5,032        | 18,788  |
| Koshta .....      | 10,908  | 589          | 152                                   | 6,729        | 18,378  |
| Rajpoot .....     | 6,492   | 751          | ..                                    | 14,646       | 21,889  |

## OCCUPATIONS.

| Agriculturists.     | Khalsa. | Zemin-darees. | Khurwar & Bindra Nowagurh. | Feudatories. |
|---------------------|---------|---------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| Landholders .....   | 11,459  | 1,323         | 220                        | 3,206        |
| Tenants .....       | 534,962 | 51,496        | 38,827                     | 175,579      |
| Farm Servants ..... | 4,351   | ...           | 394                        | 1,006        |
| Cowherds .....      | 29,889  | 2,938         | 4,380                      | 8,731        |
| Shepherds .....     | 1,517   | 1,812         | 42                         | 557          |

## NON-AGRICULTURISTS.

| Principal Traders.            | Khalsa, | Zeminda-rees. | Khurwar & Bindra Nowagurh. | Feudatories. |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| Bankers .....                 | 4,045   | 76            | ...                        | 208          |
| Grain-sellers .....           | 4,782   | 1,281         | 464                        | 1,122        |
| Cloth Merchants .....         | 1,094   | ...           | ...                        | 225          |
| Workers in Iron .....         | 5,771   | 863           | 1,679                      | 1,908        |
| Do. in Gold and Silver..... } | 1,399   | 108           | 93                         | 263          |
| Do. in Copper and Brass ..... | 1,030   | 30            | 206                        | 91           |
| Weavers.....                  | 28,579  | 13,522        | 134                        | 11,158       |
| Potters .....                 | 3,330   | 682           | 100                        | 703          |
| Carriers or Bunjaras...       | 4,743   | 877           | 1,759                      | 830          |
| Beggars .....                 | 10,396  | 2,043         | 2,128                      | *20,982      |

\* Of these 19,236 are in Khyragurh.

- ✓ 101. The above statistics show an excess of the adult female population over the male, and of infant males over the infant females. These differences nearly balance each other, and produce nearly an equality between the two sexes, the males slightly preponderating; the proportions of females being as follows :—

|                     |     |    |       |                       |
|---------------------|-----|----|-------|-----------------------|
| Khalsa              | ..  | .. | 49.49 | per cent. of females. |
| Zemindarees         | ..  | .. | 49.52 | do. do.               |
| Khurriar and Bindra | No- | }  | 49.76 | do. do.               |
| wagurgh             | ..  |    |       |                       |
| Feudatories         | ..  | .. | 49.13 | do. do.               |

102. There are few data in existence for determining the progress of the population, as the returns of births and deaths are not so perfect as to render them reliable guides in the inquiry, and perhaps the best criterion to be found is the ratio between children and adults, as compared with the standard tables given in appendix C of the north-west census report. According to these tables the ratio between children under 14 years of age, and adults ought, in a population increasing at the rate of 2 per cent. per annum to be :—

| Adults. | Children<br>under 14. |
|---------|-----------------------|
| 57.62   | 42.37                 |

The census papers show the following results for this District :—

|                                  | Adults. | Children<br>under 14. |
|----------------------------------|---------|-----------------------|
| Khalsa .. ..                     | 55.16   | 44.83                 |
| Zemindarees .. ..                | 56.63   | 43.36                 |
| Khurriar and Bindra Nowagurh..   | 66.06   | 33.93                 |
| Feudatories .. ..                | 53.18   | 46.51                 |
| Average over the whole District. | 55.23   | 44.76                 |

So that if the average term of life were the same in India as in Europe, the increase of the population ought to be nearly  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. per annum. Probably, however, the average of life is shorter for India than for European countries, and hence calculations founded on European experience cannot be accepted as conclusive in this country, while as the census was taken at the close of a long series of periodical visitations of cholera and small pox, these disturbing influences must not be overlooked. On the whole it seems probable that an increase of 2 per cent. yearly in the population may be looked for during the next 20 years, provided epidemics occur less frequently than in the past.