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## Memorandum on the Chindwara Settlement Report.

1. The present district of Chindwara formed a portion of the old Nagpore Province. It comprises what was formerly called Deogurh above the ghats, and a portion of Deogurh below the ghats. These names will explain the natural division of the district into two parts.

2. The Zer, or Zerghat, is described by Mr. Ramsay as a plain "intersected by ranges of hills running out as spurs from the main line of ghats: \* \* \* The general surface is, however, flat or merely undulating, except where the spurs "come down from the hills." The land is known to be well watered by numerous streams, chief among which are the Kunhan, an affluent of the Wynegunga, and the Jam, which again flows into the Kunhan. This portion of the district is the most populous, and Mr. Ramsay speaks highly of the manner in which the land is cultivated.

3. The country is but thinly wooded, and in natural features bears a close resemblance to the adjoining district of Nagpore. The climate is the same, and the people are of the same race, speak the same language, and have the same customs and mode of life.

4. The Balaghat, or tract lying above the ghats, "consists (as regards its central and eastern portion) of a succession of undulating valleys of black soil, producing fine autumn crops, and separated by long lines of trap hills. To the west, the country is of sand-stone, and occasionally achelone and metamorphic formation, and here and there is a large tract of very wild country sparsely inhabited with but little regular cultivation, and clothed in places by dense forest." This tract is also favoured with a plentiful water supply.

5. Although the soil is in many places naturally rich, and more productive than that of the Zerghat, the cultivation is not so careful; and, while the population is much more

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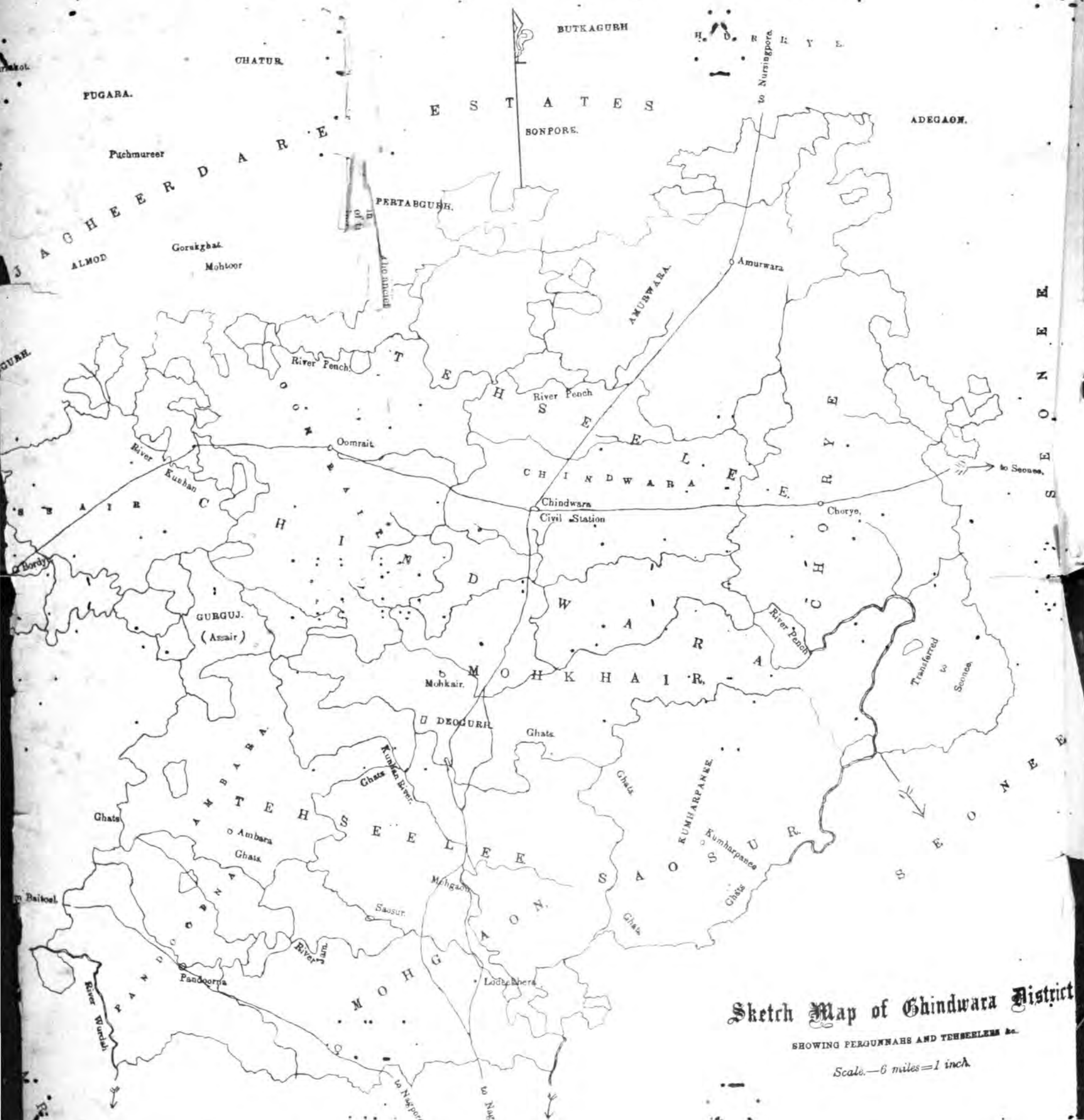
scanty, the people are generally poorer. The climate is much milder than it is below, and is like that of Seonee and Bait

6. The population of Chindwara may be said to be almost entirely agricultural. The number of towns is very small. The most important are Chindwara itself, which has about 9,000 inhabitants, and Lodheekhera and Pandoorna, with about 5,000 inhabitants. The only town above the ghats is Chindwara. Manufactures, there are scarcely any. In the town of Lodheekhera a considerable number of weavers have congregated, and the brass and copper utensils made at that place have some celebrity; but, generally speaking, only common articles for local consumption are manufactured. The trade of the district is not considerable. Cotton from the pergunnah of Mohgaon, goor, mowah blossom, and oil seeds are the chief articles of export; while rice, salt, piece goods, and a few miscellaneous articles are imported.

7. The traffic that there is, is carried on mostly by means of pack bullocks and buffaloes, owned by Telees, Kullars, and Bunjarahs; for, with the exception of the road connecting Chindwara with Nagpore, there are at present no regularly laid out or made roads in the district,—only country tracks, and but impassable at certain seasons of the year. Rice alone is said to be imported in carts.

8. Mr. Ramsay has devoted the third Chapter of his Report to an account of the population of the district. According to the recent Census, the district has 327,87 inhabitants. Of these, 128,252 are Gonds or Korkoos. The aboriginal tribes thus number more than one-third of the population. Of the Hindu castes, the Aheers and Gowlees, Koonbees and Lodhees are most strongly represented. The best cultivators are said to be the Bhoys, who are settled in the Zerghat, and after them the Koonbees.

9. The ancient history of Chindwara seems to be involved in the greatest obscurity. That Deogurh was the seat of the Gond dynasty is well known; but no information regarding the rise of this dynasty exists. The first historical Rajah of the race is Bukht Buland, who was a contemporary of



Sketch Map of Chindwara District

SHOWING PERGUNNAHS AND TEHSILS &c.

Scale.—6 miles=1 inch



Aurungzeb. In all probability the Deogurh Rajahs were originally among the petty Gond Chiefs, who acknowledged generally the sovereignty of the Gurha Mundla Rajahs. Eventually they may have become sufficiently powerful to overcome the neighbouring Chiefs, and ultimately to declare themselves entirely independent of Gurha Mundla. After this they seem to have over-run and incorporated with their dominions the whole of the Nagpore country and a considerable portion of Chutteesgurh.

10. Mr. Ramsay states that "local tradition points to a Gowlee dynasty having been seated at Deogurh previous to the period of the Gond Rajahs." The Gowlees seem at one time to have played a most important part in Central India and in the Nagpore district as well as in Chindwara. The people still retain traditions of a Gowlee Raj, which preceded the rule of the Gond Chiefs. To the time of this Gowlee Raj they are wont to ascribe almost all ancient structures, whether forts or tanks or temples.

11. To the Gonds succeeded the Mahrattas, who, taking advantage of family quarrels between the sons of Chand Sultan, the successor of Bukht Buland, under the leadership of Raghojee Bhonsla, made themselves masters of the country. From that time, until the year 1854, when the Nagpore Province became British territory, the Chindwara district remained under Mahratta rule,

12. Chapter V of Mr. Ramsay's Report treats of the Record of Rights. From the time of the Mahratta rule, the land has always been held on what may be called Zemindaree tenure. Every village had its Patel, who paid the revenue to Government, drawing the rents from the cultivators. The remuneration of the Patel was, as is stated, about 15 per cent. on the rental. The amount assessed on the village was made known to him; he, again, distributed this amount among the various cultivators.

13. As is shown by Mr. Ramsay, neither the Patel nor the cultivators had any fixed and indefeasible rights in the soil. The whole of the land belonged to the Government absolutely; and, if a Patel refused to accept the terms offered



him, or a cultivator to pay his quota of the assessment, the former would have been ousted from his Patelship, and the latter from his holding. In point of fact, however, many of the villages had remained in the hands of one family of Patels for several generations, at the time when the district became British territory.

14. The present Settlement has been made with the Malgoozars (Patels), to whom proprietary rights over their villages have been conceded. The manner in which this was effected has been thus described by Mr. Ramsay:—"Notices were issued in every village, calling upon all claimants to come forward and prefer their claims within a certain fixed period; at the expiration of that time, the actual occupant of the village was called up and examined as to his length of tenure, and so forth. Should no adverse claim have been preferred, his title to proprietary right was recorded, due care being had to record the rights of all collaterals who might be found entitled to share in the village profits."

15. Mr. Ramsay notes the difficulty experienced in many cases in inducing collaterals possessing rights to bring forward their claims at the proper time. They frequently waited for long periods of time before bringing to notice their claims. The same difficulty has been experienced in several districts. I believe, however, that ultimately all claims of this description were fully enquired into and satisfactorily settled.

16. Inferior proprietary rights in entire villages have been conferred in but very few cases. In these cases the persons on whom the rights were conferred were Theekadars, who had, however, been in long undisturbed possession, managing the villages as they thought best, effecting improvements, and paying little more than the Government demand to the lessor.

17. Four hundred and fifty-six persons have been declared proprietors of their holdings or Malik Muqboozahs. These persons are—

(1) Ex-Maafedars.

(2)—Relations of the proprietors who had been holding land at favourable and fixed rents in lieu of a share in village profits.

(3)—Descendants of former proprietors who had similar rights.

(4)—Cultivators of long standing.

18. In para. 203 Mr. Ramsay refers to certain tenants in the Mohgaon and Pandoorna pergunnahs below the ghats, who had been in the habit of mortgaging and otherwise disposing of their holdings for a consideration, without reference to the Malgoozars of the village. "After enquiry, however," says Mr. Ramsay, "into the subject, I found that these supposed rights were of very recent origin, being mere usurpations in point of fact by an independent tenantry, which were supposed to be sanctioned by our rules of law. \* \* \* Add to this that below the ghats very many of the Malgoozars were non-residents and giving little or no personal superintendence to the village affairs, and it may readily be imagined how the state of things above referred to arose. But it was clear to my mind that the custom was not of ancient date, nor founded upon recognized usage or right, and so no special recognition of it has been admitted into the record."

19. It may be doubtful, however, whether this determination of Mr. Ramsay was arrived at after a sufficiently careful consideration of the case in all its bearings. While he himself says his object was "to maintain fixed rights and interests, in whatsoever form they may have grown up, and to avoid all speculative interference with the same," he seems in this case to have declared irregular and unauthorized, an apparently sufficiently recognized custom; and it may be that some of the present occupants of these holdings acquired them by purchase or held them under a usufructary mortgage. In such a case, it would be evidently unfair to deprive them of the rights which they had purchased with a price. Further enquiry is, however, being made into this matter, and supplementary orders will be issued in all cases where such may appear called for.

20. The claims of all parties entitled to proprietary rights in the soil having been disposed of, there remained only the tenants. These have been divided into the same three classes as have been formed in other districts, viz., tenants with an absolute right of occupancy, simple occupancy tenants, and tenants-at-will. The first class consists of cultivators, the nature and duration of whose tenure has been such as to entitle them to hold their lands on easier terms than tenants-at-will, or those whose connection with the village has been of recent date. The second class is made up of all tenants who have obtained a right of occupancy under the provisions of Act X of 1859. The third class includes all cultivators who hold their land subject to the sole pleasure of the landlord. It is very clear, however, that the number of tenants of the second class may be reinforced by members of the third class obtaining a right of occupancy by a holding of twelve years. While, therefore, the number of tenants in the first class cannot increase, the number of those in the second class may do so.

21. The numbers of the various kinds of proprietors and tenants in the district are shown by Mr. Ramsay in his Appendix No. XV, and are as follows :—

Number of villages in which proprietary right has been declared.	Number of persons on whom absolute proprietary right has been conferred in entire or portions of village.	Number of superior proprietors declared.	Number of sub-proprietors declared.	Number of proprietors of holdings declared.	Number of hereditary cultivators recorded absolute.	Number of hereditary cultivators recorded conditional.	Number of tenants-at-will.
1,435	2,788	22	29	456	6,110	3,764	13,002

22. Mr. Ramsay has given a very full explanation of the manner in which he proceeded to assess the district. He shows, first of all, that when the district came under British management, it was over-assessed, remissions had to be made, and the Settlement had to be revised. The last Settlement was made at 80 per cent. of the assets. There was no great extent of land lying waste which could be brought under cultivation, and Mr. Ramsay finally concluded that, although a rise in prices might be expected and improvement in agri-



culture looked for during the course of a 30 years' Settlement, still, if a settlement on the half-asset principle were to be made, it would be necessary to reduce the existing demand.

23. For some years past, however, it appears that no enhancement of rents had taken place; and, as prices had greatly risen, it was anticipated that a considerable enhancement would take place, and that therefore it would not be necessary to reduce the Government demand by so very much after all. The result of the assessment has been that the Government demand has been reduced from Rs. 2,45,353 to Rs. 2,22,922, or by about 9 per cent.

24. Mr. Ramsay's Report shows that in dealing with this portion of the Settlement of the district, he has acted with great caution, and has sought to obtain all available information bearing on the capabilities of the district, the nature of the soils and the profits of agriculture. His assessment, though it may appear extremely moderate, is, I believe, quite as high as could safely be imposed, and his rates on the land have been worked out with much care.

25. In addition, however, to the land revenue, Government now draws a considerable sum annually from the leasing out of the waste lands, which have been reserved as Government property. More than 780,000 acres have in this manner been reserved. Of this land, not more than 48,000 acres are shown as culturable. These waste lands are valuable for the forest produce which they yield, and as grazing grounds. Although at present the income from them is not considerable, it will increase year by year. While in this manner the interests of Government have been fairly considered in reserving these waste lands, every village has received an ample amount of land over and above the cultivated area.

26. In Chapter XI, Mr. Ramsay gives an interesting description of the Chindwara Jagheerdarees, of the forms of tenure existing there, and the customs of the people. He also very clearly shows the nature of the simple Settlement effected with them. It seems, however, unnecessary to go into any detailed examination of the matters treated of in the Chapter, as a special report on this subject, with detailed proposals

regarding the tribute demandable from the Chindwara Jagheerdars, their future status, &c., is now under preparation, and will shortly be submitted for the consideration and orders of Government.

27. I have now touched upon most of the important points connected with the Settlement of the district, and I only desire to express, in conclusion, my appreciation of the zeal, ability, and care which Mr. Ramsay has evinced in the conduct of his duties, and of the clear and interesting account which he has given of his proceedings and of the Chindwara district.

28. Finally, I would solicit the sanction of Government to the confirmation of this Settlement for 30 years from the date on which it came into effect. A fair and equitable Government demand has now been fixed, and all that is now necessary to enable the people to reap the full benefits accruing therefrom, will be its confirmation for the period above-mentioned.

J. H. MORRIS,

*Offg. Chief Commissioner,*

*Central Provinces*

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## CHAPTER I.

### • PAST HISTORY.

1. The Chindwara district previous to the conquest by the Maharattas of the country of Nagpore formed a portion of the ancient Gond Kingdom of Deogurh ; its early history is involved in much obscurity, and but little reliable information can be obtained on the subject.

Early history very obscure.

2. Local tradition points to a Gowlee dynasty having been seated at Deogurh previous to the period of the Gond Rajas ; the present Jagheerdars of Hurrye, Son-poor and others ascribe the original grant of their lands to that period, but nothing exists beyond tradition. The early history also of the Gowlee dynasty is much wrapped in obscurity.

Traditions of the Gowlee Raj.

3. At a very remote period Gond dynasties were established at Kherla near Baitool and Gurra Mundla ; there appear also to have been a number of inferior Gond Rajas more or less in dependance upon the above rulers ; ultimately the Rajas of Deogurh overran and subdued not only all the country in their vicinity above the ghats, but also the lower country of Nagpore and Chutteesgurh, though the former name was then unknown. The first Gond Raja of whom anything certain is known was Bukht Boolund, a contemporary of Aurungzebe, who invited the co-operation of the Mussulmans to secure himself in his dominions ; even previous, however, to his time it would seem that the Gond Rajas had paid a nominal tribute to the Court of Delhi in return for countenance and support.

Dynasties of Kherla and Gurra Mundla.

Bukht Boolund.

4. Bukht Boolund appears to have resided chiefly at Deogurh, but his successor Chand Sultan resided chiefly at Nagpore of which he would seem to have been the founder.

Chand Shah.

5. Family dissensions followed the death of Chand which resulted finally in his two sons Boorhan Shah and Akbur Shah being driven out by the Maharattas under the great Rughojee, the founder of the Bhonsla dynasty ; the style and title, however, of the Gond Rajas was allowed to exist and descend in the family as it has done to the present day, the Gond Raja being main-

Dissensions among his successors.

Conquest by the Bhonslas.

tained as a state pensioner for a long time after all power had been taken away. The semblance of the authority of the Gond Rajas was maintained for purposes of policy, and acts were passed and appointments made nominally under the seal of their authority.

6. It is curious to observe that Bukht Boolund became a Mahomedan, and since his time each succeeding head of the house has been so brought up although marrying with women of pure so-called Raj Gond descent; these latter have been generally selected from the Chindwara district.

7. Since about the middle of the last century the lands of Chindwara formed a portion of the Nagpore state, though doubtless the territories held by the petty Gond chiefs of the Jagheer tracts owed only a nominal obedience to Nagpore, and owing to the difficult nature of the country, it was not easy to reduce them to complete subjection and their virtual independence must have been connived at subject to the payment of a small tribute.

8. It is to this source we must ascribe the great general misery and devastation to which all the portions of Chindwara above the ghats were subjected during the earlier portion of the present century. The losses of the Rajas of Berar during the great war which was closed by the peace of Deogaon in 1802, had so crippled them that they were but little able to maintain order in their own dominions, even curtailed as they were, while they set an example by an indiscriminate system of rack-renting with a view to supply the deficiency of the exchequer. The Gonds of the hills were not slow to follow the example so set them, and issuing from their mountain fastnesses pillaged and harassed the country in all directions. Some attempts were made to keep these raids in check by establishing fortified outposts, the sites of which are pointed out to the present day, but these efforts were unavailing to stem the tide of rapine that kept ever surging backwards and forwards between the plains and the hills.

9. The Gonds however were not unmindful of their allegiance to Nagpore, and on the fall of Appa Sahib after the celebrated battle of Nagpore he found a welcome and a shelter among the Jagheerdars until he was finally expelled by British arms, not without great difficulty owing to the wild nature of the country. Chain Stah the grand father of the present Jagheerdar of Sonpoor was after an obstinate resistance finally captured by the troops under Major O'Brien and with him collapsed the fortunes of Appa Sahib.

10. The country then came temporarily under British management, and Captain Montgomery the Superintendent as he was termed of Chindwara had the difficult task before him of restoring order and confidence among the people after

years of anarchy and misrule accompanied by general emigration and abandonment of cultivation.

11. So successful were his efforts that the district speedily returned to its former condition and but little has since occurred calling for any notice on the part of the historian.

12. The country came finally under British rule on the death of the late Raja of Nagpore in 1854.

13. The only memorial now remaining of the old dynasty of Deogurh besides the ruined old fort of that name, consists in two pieces of land situate in Chindwara and Mohkhair held rent-free in the name of the Saostanik or Gond royalty.

## CHAPTER II.

### TOPOGRAPHY.

14. The "Khalsa" part of the Chindwara district formerly comprised 1657 villages measuring in all 2,703,702 acres or about 4,224 square miles. There were besides the Jagheer estates which have not been measured but whose area may be roughly computed at about 1,400 square miles, giving a total area to the district of 5,624 square miles.

Area.

15. Politically the district was divided into four Tehseels, but by recent arrangements the number of Tehseels has been reduced to two, one comprising the whole of the country below the ghats, and the small Pergunnah of Khumarpanee, and the Chindwara Tehseel embracing the rest of the district. To effect these changes and for greater compactness of outline a number of villages have been transferred to the surrounding districts. Thus 42 have been transferred to the Seonee district and 9 to Nagpore, one being received from that district in return, 136 villages to Baitool and 38 to Hoshungabad, which leaves the number of Khalsa villages at 1,433. The old Maharatta subdivision was into nine Pergunnahs and four Tehseels.

Piscal subdivisions.

16. The district lies between the 21st and 22nd parallels of North latitude and the 78th and 80th parallels of East longitude, and is naturally divided into two portions, that above the ghats or high table land separating the plains of Nagpore from the valley of the Nerbudda, and that below the ghats. Practically however it may be said to consist of three different portions each varying in outward appearance in geological character, population and agriculture.

Situation.

17. The Khalsa lands form two very different tracts viz. that below and that above the ghats. While the Jagheer-daree estates above referred to form a third portion quite distinct from the other two in most respects, my present remarks will be confined to the Khalsa lands which alone have come under the regular settlement. The description of the Jagheers and the nature of the settlement therein introduced will form the subject of a separate branch of this report.

District partly above and below the ghats.

18. To commence then with the tract below the ghats; this formerly formed part of the great Gond dynasty of Deogurh below the ghats and is now distinguished by the term "Zerghat" just as the upper portion of the Chindwara district is known as the "Balaghat." It is by far the best populated

The Zerghat.

and most highly cultivated part of the district, and in fact as regards agriculture the crops raised and the expenditure and appliances brought to bear upon the land is second to no portion of India that I have yet seen either in the Bombay Presidency, Berar, or the Central Provinces.

19. It comprises many varieties of soil but the general feature is that of plains intersected by ranges of hills running out as spurs from the main line of ghats, the same being occasionally of trap and occasionally of sandstone formation, while elsewhere metamorphic rocks and schists prevail. The general surface however is flat or merely undulating except where the spurs come down from the hills; on the immediate edge of the ghats the country is very wild and broken and population is very sparse.

20. The river Kunhan, one of the affluents of the Wyne Gunga, flows through the richest portion of the basin, and there is another large stream, the Jam, flowing from the westward which joins the Kunhan about the junction of the Chindwara with the Nagpore district: there are numerous other plentiful streams but the above two are the only ones of any size which traverse this part of the district.

21. The Wurda River from Baitool forms the western boundary of the district, the opposite bank of the stream being the Province of Berar.

22. The Zerghat of Chindwara merges insensibly into the Nagpore district, it has about the same average height above the sea, viz. about 1,000 feet, and possesses a very similar climate, the heat during the summer months being very intense, while the cold during the winter months is never very great, and for this reason it is held to be generally salubrious by the natives; on the borders of the ghats however, fever is very prevalent after the rains.

23. The villages are large but not well built and often dirty as is commonly the case in Mahratta districts, and though there are occasional groves of mango and other trees yet on the whole the country is thinly wooded except of course the jungles on the slopes of the Ghats.

24. The Balaghat or part of the Chindwara district above the ghats has a totally different outward appearance, and again different portions of it vary much both in outward feature, nature of the soil, population and agriculture. The central and eastern portion consists of a succession of undulating valleys of black soil producing fine autumn crops and separated by long lines of trap hills some utterly barren, while in others the top lands admit of some sort of cultivation varying of course very much in quality. The richest part however lies immediately to the east on the borders of the Seonee district where the Hawelee Pergunnah, as it is termed, of Chorye



presents to the eye during the cold season an almost unbroken sheet of wheat cultivation stretching away for miles as far the sight can reach.

25. Towards the edge of the ghats again, to the south and south-east, the land is more broken and intersected by ravines, but there are in places patches of excellent soil.

26. To the west again the country is of sandstone and occasionally schistose and metamorphic formation, and here there is a large tract of very wild country sparsely inhabited with but little regular cultivation and clothed in places by dense Forest.

27. It is intersected by the Kunhan river which, forcing its way through a rocky gorge in the line of Ghats, makes its way through the Zerghat as above stated.

28. The only other rivers of any size are the Bail which forms the south-western boundary between the Baitool and Chindwara districts, and the Pench river which rising in the Jagheer tract near the sanatorium of Mohtoor runs through the eastern portion of the district and escaping from the hill country by a very narrow and rocky passage dotted with small waterfalls at last joins the Kunhan near the station of Kamptee.

29. The Tawa also, a large river joining the Nerbudda a little above Hoshungabad, takes its rise not far from that of the Kunhan, flowing due west into the Baitool district but in its course through the Chindwara district, it is but a sandy channel dry for the greater portion of the year.

30. Besides the above there are a number of small streams which can be made available for irrigation.

31. There are but few towns of any importance in the district, those of Mohgaon, Pandoorna and Lodheekhara below the ghats are the only ones rising beyond the category of mere agricultural communities. At Lodheekhara a very considerable trade is carried on in weaving and the manufacture of brass utensils.

32. Above the ghats the town of Chindwara is the only one having any pretensions to be ranked as a town and it is not distinguished by any particular art or manufacture.

33. The general appearance of the villages is poor in the extreme. The ways are narrow and irregular, the houses mostly consist of a sort of wattle and dab or else of mere mud, while a thin thatch kept down in its place by poles in the form of roof is most commonly adopted. Few

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even of the better off among the class of landholders have more pretentious dwellings: below the ghats some few of the villages have rather better houses but even here also where the agricultural community, or in other words, the bulk of the population are so well off one cannot help being struck with the almost total absence of bricks, tiles and lime mortar in the construction of their dwellings.

34. The jungle villages inhabited by the Gond population are in general much neater and cleaner than those of the more open country, consisting generally of one long street, and each house having at the back a patch of garden land usually under cultivation with Mukka or Indian corn-beans, or tobacco, and as these are generally highly manured they are most productive.

35. Similarly round almost all the villages in the district there exist these patches of garden land which, as they have been hitherto almost totally exempt from all assessment, have formed the chief source of livelihood of many of their occupiers.

36. The Chindwara district must be pronounced to be very badly off as regards means of communication. There is only one regular road deserving the name of such viz., that leading from Chindwara to Nagpore, this has been under construction for some years past but not much has been completed within the limits of the district. Another road to lead from Chindwara to Seonee was projected some years ago but the scheme has now fallen into abeyance. The other ways are mere country tracks passable or otherwise during the monsoon months just as the quality of the soil happens to be over the granite and sandstone the surface remains firm and even under the action of the rains, but the black soil plains become deep swamps utterly impassable to wheel carriage.

37. Though the district is essentially a mountainous one and clothed in places with forests comprising great varieties of trees and shrubs, yet there is but little that can be dignified with the name of scenery in its true sense, saving only the tract of country comprising the Puchmuree or Mahadeo line of hills and these form part of the Jagheerdaries. I shall reserve the mention of them for another place.

38. Nor on the other hand is the district in spite of its numerous jungles rich in the number of its wild animals: variety there is certainly, comprising the Tiger, Panther, Leopard, and other beasts of prey, the Bear, the Bison, the Sambur, the twelve-horned Deer, the spotted Deer, the Nilgae and various varieties of Antelopes. Still none of these are anywhere numerous and the sportsman may toil for days and days through the jungles without being rewarded with the sight even of a quarry.

39. There are but few objects of interest in the district. The old Fort of Deogurh, situate on a small hill about midway between the upper and lower country, still remains as a monument of the fallen Gond dynasty, the representative of which still lives as a state pensioner in Nagpore. In Chindwara itself there are still standing the mud walls of an old fort said to date from the time of the Gowlee Raj, a period to which the people frequently refer when questions are asked concerning the past but of which they are utterly unable to give any account whatsoever. Further, beyond a few old fallen temples of which no account can be derived from the villagers there are no ancient objects of interest whatsoever.

40. Other old forts there are or "Gurhs" as they are termed, such as Assairgurh, Hurryagurh, Gurgujgurh, and others, but these now are mere hill tops possessing the name only without any material evidences of their having been fortified structures.

41. A person coming from some other parts of India would perhaps be struck by the almost entire absence of Tanks. This is to be accounted for, partially I think, by the fact of their being so many small streams which serve to water the village cattle while almost everywhere wells can be sunk to supply the wants of the population, partly also it may be accounted for by the long years of misrule under the Mahratta Government when the people were fleeced and rackrented and when there was little or no money left among the village community to devote to building tanks or such like works not of immediate necessity, and even now when better days have come upon the people there seems to prevail a general apathy upon this and other such subjects which I suppose it will take the experience of another generation to see thoroughly eradicated.

42. I have mentioned the climate of the "Zerghat" of Chindwara as being similar to that of Nagpore: above the ghats a temperate climate is enjoyed similar to that of the adjoining districts of Baitool and Seonee. The hot winds only last for two months, April and May, and nights are always cool and pleasant. The average range of the thermometer is not high, and in the cold season frost is experienced for days and sometimes as I can aver from personal experience, for weeks in succession during the early hours of the morning when the temperature is the lowest.

43. The average range of height above the sea for the Balaghat is about 2000 feet, Chindwara itself being I believe over 2,200 feet. Mohtoor the spot chosen for the sanatorium and situate in one of the Jagheers is about 1000 feet higher than Chindwara, and the Puchmurree plateau possesses a similar elevation, but the climate of Chindwara itself is so temperate (for India) and the change to that place has been found so beneficial to the invalid soldiery at Kamptee that it is a question how far any better sanatorium is required than the Civil station itself.

44. Last May (1866) at Mohtoor in a thatched house, kept open to the air the mercury ranged as high as 97 daily, while I was there, and at Chindwarra itself in an ordinary house I do not believe that the glass ranged any higher.

45. The climate of Chindwara should be very healthy and I believe it is generally considered so; fever of course does prevail in places but on the whole not of so malignant a type as that prevailing in the Baitool district. Here of course I am speaking only of the results of my own experience during the years that I have passed in those two districts.

46. Thus then I have attempted briefly to describe the outward physical features of the district; it will be seen to present many broad contrasts and to possess many varieties of outward form and feature which are reflected back in the nature of the population and the mode of agriculture. These points will be more fully brought out when I come to touch upon the agriculture of the district and the various races which combine to form its population.

47. I may observe in conclusion of this branch of the subject that the three different portions of the district to which I have above referred may be likened to three successive steps leading upwards it is true, in the literal sense, but in reality as they ascend going downwards in point of prosperity and industry. The rich country below the ghat has its ample population and its teeming grain yards, the adjoining portion of the Khalsa land above the ghat is still rich in its agricultural resources but there is a marked difference for the worse as regards the industry, ingenuity and capital brought to bear on the land, and lastly to the north come the wild Jagheerdaree tracts with their hills comprising the highest points in the district, their landowners indolent and overwhelmed with debt, their population of Gonds more inclined to drink than to labour for a maintenance and as a consequence much good land even in such a poor wild country, now lying idle but only requiring the hand of industry to bring forth its store of corn and oil for the service of man.

48. To time only can we look for any improvement in these respects, but standing isolated as the Gonds do from the rest of the population by their language and religion, their manners and customs, and slow as they are to receive any impressions from without it is impossible to feel very sanguine as to any material progress in the immediate future.

49. Further details as to soils and Geological formation will be found elsewhere under the head of Agriculture.

50. The geological formation of the northern portion of the district embracing the group known as the Mahadeo sandstones forms a highly interesting study to the geologist, but as a full account of these is to be found in the published

records of the Geological Survey of India it is needless for me to dilate upon them in this place.

51. Similarly as regards the coal measures which are now known to extend over a large portion of the district; special reports having been submitted on the subject, nothing that I could add would be of any value or interest.

52. Thus much however I may say that I believe the Chindwara district to be as rich in the natural resources of its soil as any in the Central Provinces. Its coal is now well known; there is abundance of sandstone of excellent quality well adapted for many purposes, and limestone of various sorts: clay well adapted for bricks, tiles and all kinds of pottery is abundant, iron has not been found but there can be little doubt that it exists; small particles of gold have been discovered. This is a mere outline of the gifts of nature made but little account of at present but they will be capable of great development when the means of communication are better opened out.



## CHAPTER III.

### POPULATION.

53. I now proceed to give a slight sketch of the different races composing the population of which a return is appended being the result of the census taken in November of last year (Appendix No. V.)

Census return.

54. It is well known that there exist a number of sub-divisions of this caste, all however assuming the generic name of Brahman. The majority however of those found in the Chindwara district are Mahratta Brahmins whose original country is the Deccan, they are generally the descendants of men who followed the old Mahratta invaders to the conquest of Central India and who found employments in all branches of the political and civil Administration in every capacity from the Prime Minister down to the mere Mootsuddie or Writer. These men have never in any way intermingled with the other Brahmins of Northern and Central India, but have ever kept up their ancient traditions and their connection with their old home the Deccan. They are a clever intriguing race but as regards their intelligence and ability generally they must be pronounced to have degenerated considerably from the ancient type.

Brahmins.

55. They are not found in large numbers in this district but they occupy almost every position in the social scale from the well to do village Proprietor down to the meanest solicitor of alms at the house door. Some are employed as agents or writers, some have land which however they never till with their own hand, and generally they fill all situations where some sort of education is required. With the exception of Kayuts and a few of the mercantile classes they are the only body of men having any pretence to education of any sort. Nearly the whole of the village Putwarees belong to this caste. These men are not much looked up to by the races from upper and northern India but are chiefly held in honor by the Mahratta Sudras.

Their number small.

56. The great body of the Agriculturists below the ghats are Mahratta Sudras known as Koonbees of whom again there are various subdivisions, such as the Tirolee, Lonara, Levo, Dholewars and others. These are essentially a Mahratta race, the same that formed the bulk of the armies that were led to conquest by Sivajee and his warlike descendants. Time however has almost entirely obliterated the military element in their nature and they now are among the most peaceful of cultivators though sturdy and independant at times in the prosecution of what they may consider their rights. These men are the real Mahrattas, the same as are now found all over Berar, Kandeish and the Deccan, but the term "Mahratta"

Koonbees.

seems to have been specially appropriated by a few families who claim to themselves special distinction and high lineage.

57. The Koonbees below the ghats are good cultivators taking much pains in the preparation and manuring of the land, and in weeding and otherwise securing the crop afterwards. In the matter of irrigation however they are rather behind hand owing no doubt to the force of ancestral custom. There are comparatively few Koonbees above the ghats and only a few Koormees speaking the Hindee language.

58. This class is pretty numerous represented in the Pandoorna Pergunnah below the ghats: and in Pergunnah Mohkhair chiefly above the ghats: they are not able to give any very distinct account of themselves, but it is supposed that they originally came down from Northern India whence they were driven by the tides of foreign invasion. They are a very hard working and industrious race ever ready to avail themselves of any means of irrigation. They may be pronounced to be the best class of cultivators in the district. They are, however, very much addicted to drink which has led many of them into debt and difficulties; their own language is Hindee but from contact with the Mahrattas most of them can speak that language as well.

59. Another chief branch of the agricultural community are the Lodees, one of the classes of kshutree cultivators, who are said to have emigrated Northern India about the time of Aurungzebe. They are found chiefly in the Amurwara Pergunnah the most northerly part of the district and from thence they are found extending down the valley of the Pench river for some distance to the South; nowhere else are they found in any numbers and they would thus seem to have occupied the first lands they could find unoccupied in their southward journey and there remained. They now form large brotherhoods, but the tenure of their villages has remained in simple zemindaree in the hands of one or more of the heads of a family, the various collaterals being quite content to remain in the position of tenants. They are generally considered good and enterprising cultivators but I do not think them equal to the Bhoysers in this respect.

60. There are but few Rajpoots in the district and so much has been written concerning them that it is needless to say much in the present instance. We know that they claim celestial origin, and that as far as is known they originally came from the province of Oude, and in course of centuries have been broken up into numerous sub-divisions losing much of their former high character and purity of blood, in fact there are but few left of the original race and those of this district are but degenerate representatives.

61. There are one or two families calling themselves "Puar Takoors" and claiming high lineage, but they can give no further details of their family or how it first came into the district.

62. There are no entire communities but they exist only as a few scattered individuals among the rest of the community. In fact the Rajpoot race in these parts is chiefly known under some one or other of the subordinate races into which they have come by process of time to be sub-divided; amongst whom are the following.

63. These are originally of Rajpoot origin and to this day pride themselves on the antiquity and purity of their descent, but they are looked down upon by so-called pure Rajpoots as having demeaned themselves by putting their hands to the plough and occasionally eating stale bread when out at work in their fields. They are said by the Rajpoots to be the illegitimate descendants of some former chief by a woman of low caste. They are not a very numerous class but there are some large brotherhoods of them holding villages in Byacharee tenure; chief among them are the Chowdrees of Chindwara a family having many branches settled in the district; they are fair cultivators but difficult to deal with, they are ignorant and obstinate and proud besides, and have given more trouble in the various stages of settlement operations than any other class of the community owing to their family feuds and dissensions. Among them are some of the very oldest settlers in the district dating back from many generations; having occupied only the more central portions of the district they would seem to have escaped from the raids of the Pindarees and Gonds by which the other parts of the district were depopulated.

64. This race is found more or less all over the district and they are chiefly engaged in garden cultivation though they carry on ordinary cultivation as well; they also raise sugar-cane and occasionally opium, but their chief gains are derived from the growth of miscellaneous produce, such as, onions, garlic, turmeric, coriander and various vegetables, which taking but a short time to arrive at maturity enable the land to be cropped several times in succession during the year. There are again sub-divisions of the malees like as is the case with all other tribes of the Hindoos, Malees of each particular division generally confining themselves to some one particular branch of cultivation.

65. The above are the chief representatives of the agricultural community, but there are also the following castes engaged in the culture of the land, Kachees allied to the Malees, and similarly engaged in Garden and other irrigated cultivation. Kirars an inferior caste but industrious, Murars found chiefly in the Mohkhair Pergunnah, Alkarees growers of Al, said to be of Rajpoot descent and found only in the Pandoorna Pergunnah on the borders of the Nagpore district.

66. The Gowlees are naturally an important class in a district possessing such large tracts of waste land adapted for pasturing cattle. They claim a very high origin and pride themselves on the purity of their descent. Not much is known of their former history, but it is the custom in this district to refer all ancient monuments for which no other history is forthcoming to the period of the "Gowlee Raj," which is said to have existed in days gone by. The story told by the present Rukbunsee chowdrees of Chindwara is that their ancestors were retainers of the Gond Raja while the Town and Fort of Chindwara were held by a ruling family of Gowlees; that their ancestors were duly empowered by the Gond Raja to possess themselves of Chindwara which they accordingly did by driving out the Gowlees and there they have remained to the present day.

67. There are said to be several divisions of the Gowlee race and these again are sub-divided into numerous got's and families; many of the Gowlees are engaged in agriculture especially among the poorer ones, but their chief occupation is cattle breeding. The milk of their cows furnishes ghee which is exported to the nearest market, and the young steers also are sold off, the cows only being retained. I have made mention elsewhere of the Khumarpanee breed of cattle, in that Pergunnah there are some wealthy Gowlees possessing very large herds from which they derive a large profit.

68. The wild Pergunnah of Assair is also another of their strongholds from the amount of pasture found there, and generally they are found all along the valleys of the Pench, the Kunhan, and other smaller streams. During the hot months they migrate elsewhere in search of water and pasture returning to their villages by the monsoon when they proceed to cultivate the small patches of garden land attached to their houses.

69. The cattle of Khumarpanee are invariably driven off to the upland of Mundla and Raegurh Bichia during the hot months.

70. The Gowlees inhabiting the district belong to the following different classes each of which is said to be divided into twelve and a half got's or families. The different classes of course do not intermarry nor do they eat together.

71. These engage as much in agriculture as in cattle keeping and very many of them are Proprietors of villages. They are found chiefly along the valley of the Pench river in the more open part of the country.



72. Dholya and Malay Gowlees engage but little in agriculture ; the former occupy the Khumarpanee Pergunnah, the latter are found chiefly in Assair, and in some of the Jagheer tracts.

Dholya and Malay Gowlees.

73. The Bhais Gowlees as their name imports chiefly rear Buffaloes and engage but seldom in cultivation. The Khetarey Gowlees on the other hand live chiefly by agriculture ; the majority of them are settled in the Assair Pergunnah.

Bhais Gowlees.

74. The Telees are engaged in a variety of pursuits and form an important class of the community. Their primary occupation as their name denotes is the manufacture and sale of oil, and they are divided into different classes according to the particular oil which they may be specially engaged in manufacturing. They are also engaged in agriculture but their chief source of gain is the carrying miscellaneous produce, such as Mowha, and other spontaneous fruits of the forests and also grain and miscellaneous articles. They manage to realise large profits by this trade and they are generally well off, some of them possess villages and cultivate land, but they never in person put their hand to the plough.

Telees.

75. There are only a few of this caste in the district chiefly in the Chowrye Pergunnah, but they are found occupying all situations as landholders, cultivators, writers, agents, and some times Putwarees. The Kayuts, as is well known, are a low class of the Hindoos, but they are all more or less educated and prefer depending on their intellects and pen for subsistence to engaging in manual labour. They are a clever versatile race, but not very remarkable for honesty or morality. They appear to have been chiefly advanced by the Mahomedan conquerors of Central India, who found them more pliant and subservient as agents and servants than other castes of Hindoos. They have but few religious or ceremonial prejudices and are much addicted to drink. This caste furnishes the greatest number of writers and other Government servants.

Kayuts.

76. These persons also carry on a similar trade to that of the Telees exporting produce of various sorts and importing in return salt, cocoanuts and "kirana" as it is termed or miscellaneous wares ; their natural vocation, however, is the distilling and selling the liquor produced from the flowers of the Mohwa tree. These men have frequently realised large profits by supplying the Gonds with liquor in return for which they had to furnish Mohwa on very cheap terms and timber when required. As the Kular kept the accounts of these transactions and managed to keep the Gonds perpetually in his debt, it can readily be imagined that the latter had to pay very dear indeed for their liquor.

Kulars.



77. At present the Kulars are chiefly found in the Assair Pergunnah where the Mohwa is plentiful and the drinking classes preponderate but there is a sprinkling of them all over the district more especially in the jungly tracts.

Kulars chiefly confined  
Pergunnah Assair.

78. Bunias form but a small portion of the population being found only in the towns and larger villages. Less necessity exists for this class of persons owing to the custom of holding weekly bazaars or markets on different days of the work at the chief villages of each Pergunnah where the people bring their grain or other commodities for sale, and exchange them for coarse cloth or whatever article they may require and vice versa.

Bunias.

79. In a simple agricultural district these bazaars seem to supply all the ordinary daily wants of the community.

Weekly Bazaar.

80. These persons keep sheep and goats and weave coarse blankets from their wool; the breed both of sheep and goats in this district is poor in the extreme.

Gadrees.

81. These men represent the class elsewhere known as cahars, they are fishermen by trade and bearers also. They further cultivate melons in the beds of rivers and grow Singaras in the beds of tanks. They very seldom engage in regular agriculture; they are a very independant class of the community.

Dheemars.

82. Bunjaras come more properly under the head of wandering tribes but they have in places fixed homesteads where they remain together during the rains. The wives and families are also occasionally left behind when the men have proceeded on a trip. They occasionally cultivate rice in the immediate vicinity of their dwellings. There are several of these Bunjara colonies in the Chowrye Pergunnah whither they were attracted by the abundant pasture of the waste lands; two of their Naiks or head men are men of large possessions and now occupying the position of landholders.

Bunjaras.

83. These are the chief of the Hindoo races calling for any separate notice.

84. The Mussulmans of this district are very few in number and are not of any long standing in the district. The chief among them are some few retainers of the old Nagpore state to whom were given villages by way of pensions.

Mussulmans.

85. These form a large and not unimportant class of the community. They are divided into two distinct branches viz., the Kutyas and the Meheras or Mhars; both of these furnish the very useful village official known as the Kotwar.

Dhers.

The members of the family not so employed are generally engaged in spinning and weaving coarse cloth which they dispose of at the nearest weekly bazaar in return for grain or other necessities of life. They have seldom the means to engage in regular agriculture, but they cultivate patches of garden land adjoining their houses. Further as being free from all social prejudices, they are enabled to eke out their livelihood in many ways that are not open to their Hindoo neighbours. They are as a rule very hard working and industrious but like all of the lower classes much addicted to drink.

86. I have before given a brief sketch of the Gonds in my report upon the Baitool Settlement and it seems needless for me to go over the ground again, the more so

Gonds.

that since then reports have been submitted from all the districts upon this as well as other tribes. Much diversity of opinion exists as to their manners and customs as in fact these vary more or less in every district and as they cannot boast of a single man of any education among their ranks, it is very difficult to ascertain anything authentic concerning them.

87. Gonds are found more or less all over the district, but chiefly in the jungle villages along the line of ghats in the wild Pergunnah of Assair, and all over the Jagheerdarees of which they form almost the sole population with the exception of a few Gowlees and Koorkoos.—The latter are also a wild jungle tribe claiming to be of Rajpoot origin. In appearance customs and language they are totally distinct from the Gonds though their mode of livelihood is very similar but on the whole they are better cultivators and occasionally expend a good deal of labour in raising rice and other grains.

Distributions of the Gonds over the District.

88. The village communities were no doubt originally constituted on the old Maharatta system of the "Bara Bulotay" or complement of twelve village officers but owing to the many vicissitudes that the country has gone through, no traces now remain of any of these establishments in perfection, though some of the members exist in every village and all almost are represented in some village or another.

Village communities.

89. The headman of the village was the Patel described elsewhere, and who under the present order of affairs has merged into the village Proprietor. After him comes the Havildar or steward who is more properly the private servant or agent of the Patel, looking after his seer land, collecting the rents, and generally carrying on the little business concerns of the community.

The Patel.

90. The next most important personage is the Kotwar or village drudge who is made useful on all possible occasions. He has to do the Patel's bidding on all occasions.

The Kotwar.

sions, reports crime or accidents to the Police, collects the tenants at rent time and generally is the chief executive officer of the village. He is also supposed to know all about the village concerns, is the referee in many cases of dispute and is the custodian of the village boundaries. He was remunerated in times past either by money payment or a grant of land from the Malgoozar, by certain perquisites such as the flesh and hide of cattle dying within the village, and certain allowances from the tenants at harvest and on certain festivals and ceremonies occurring.

91. Formerly the Kotwar was looked upon quite as much as a Government as a mere village, servant, but it has now been ruled that he is purely and simply the servant of the Proprietors, and that the latter will be held responsible for the due reporting of crime and management of the village concerns. In the settlement papers therefore no notice has been taken of the Kotwar beyond merely recording his name and also such remuneration as may have been agreed upon between him and the Proprietors by mutual arrangement, in case of future litigation between the parties.

92. The Putwaree or village accountant next claims our attention. Under the former Maharatta Government he was to all intents and purposes a mere private servant of the Patel; he was indeed recognized by the Government as the medium for the preparation of the village accounts and for the submission of all returns that might be called for, but the appointment and dismissal and the mode of their remuneration was left almost entirely to the head of the village community.

In some cases the office descended from father to son, but it did so by sufferance and not by any right inherent in the office. Similarly certain dues of grain from the cultivators at time of harvest came to form one of the perquisites of the office. On the annexation of the country it was attempted to make the Putwarees into regular servants of the Government and fixed rates of remuneration were allowed.

93. The question however has been again taken up during the course of the settlement and it has been finally ruled that the Putwarees are to revert to their ancient position as servants of the village Proprietors. The appointment of them or otherwise and the amount and mode of their remuneration are to be left entirely to them, and such of them as are capable of giving in their own returns are exempt from the necessity of maintaining any such functionary. The only condition imposed by Government is that the annual papers shall be duly and faithfully rendered at the proper time and that all matters connected with the management of the village shall be carried on to the satisfaction of the District Officers.

94. The Joshee is the village astrologer who is in all cases a Maharatta Brahmin. He is supported partly by grants of land rent-free (these will, however, be resumed on

death of present incumbents) and partly by charity. He is consulted on all occasions of marriages and other ceremonies being supposed to be able to point out lucky days and seasons, as also as to sinking wells and setting in hand farm operations of every sort.

95. The Bhoomuk is a Gond, he is only found in a few villages. He is supposed to possess the power of scaring away tigers and also of exercising evil spirits; he is also supposed to know all about the village boundaries and is a referee in cases of dispute.

96. The Garpugaree is a sort of mendicant who is said to have the power of averting storms of hail. He is paid by allowances of grain from the cultivators which are, however, withheld in seasons when hail actually falls.

97. Other village officers are the Lohar and Burhaee, the blacksmith and carpenter who mend and keep in repair all the agricultural implements of the community receiving allowances of grain as remuneration, the chumar or cobbler who repairs the leather bags used in irrigation the Naee or Barber the Dhoby or washerman and the Durzee or Tailor, all these are likewise remunerated for their services by gifts of grain, sugar-cane, or other produce.

98. These constitute the village community as it should be in theory, but no one village can boast of the full complement; as a rule one artificer has to supply the wants of several villages.

99. In former times under the native Government the people were doubtless rackrented and reduced to much poverty but for the last twelve years their circumstances have been gradually improving and the agricultural body now must be pronounced to be in a very comfortable condition especially below the ghats where large sums have been realised by the growth of cotton. The Proprietors with but some exceptions are but little raised either in appearance, dress, or resources above the better class of cultivators; they must all be pronounced as ignorant in the extreme and with all difficult to deal with. This must be chiefly attributed to the effects of former misgovernment, and to their not having as yet gained full confidence in our good intentions towards them. Their manners are to say the least churlish in the extreme. As a fact during my inspections I have experienced in many cases actual difficulty in getting a Malgoozar to come outside his house to speak to me and on my leaving the village he would consider it a great stretch of courtesy to accompany me for a few hundred yards: it may be readily imagined how difficult a task it has been to obtain any reliable information from such persons, and how little they have facilitated the various operations of the settlement.



100. This ignorance as I must term it, and stupidity seem to prevail in all classes of the community, and is strangely illustrated by their apparent apathy even as to their own rights. Even now years after the disposal of the proprietary right cases, collaterals and other claimants to villages are coming forward without being able to assign any valid cause for not having appeared sooner in the field.

Their ignorance and apathy.

101. And similarly as regards the attestation of rents and record of rights in the tenantry : months and even years after the settlement of the question claims are being preferred in a most vexatious manner involving much waste of time in references before they can be disposed of.

Vexatious claims preferred.

102. Below the ghats the people are naturally much shrewder and more alive to their own interests, but they are not less wanting in civility being like most Mah-rattas uncouth though not ill-disposed at heart.

Different character of the population below the ghats.

103. The population generally are peaceful and orderly and there is but little crime. There are few resident tribes of the professionally criminal class, and but few of the wandering races of beggars and thieves find the district. Where dacoities have occurred they have generally been the work of Bunjaras or of Gonds suffering possibly from the pangs of hunger.

People generally peaceful and well-disposed.

their way through

Dacoity.

Imp 15510 Dated 21.12.09





## CHAPTER IV.

### AGRICULTURE.

104. As much as the portions of the Chindwara district above and below the ghats vary in outward physical appearance, so much do they differ in the system of agriculture and in the crops raised.

Different style of agriculture above and below the ghats.

105. First then I will proceed to describe the nature of the soils and the mode of cultivation in vogue below the ghats with some account of the crops raised.

Below the ghats.

Soils.

106. The soils may be divided into four classes viz., Kalee, Moorund, Khurdee and Burdee.

107. The Kalee is the well known black soil vulgarly termed by some Cotton soil ; it is a light friable earth supposed to have been formed out of the detritus of decomposed basalt, it is a fine rich soil and capable of raising almost any crop.

Kalee.

108. The Moorund is no doubt the same soil originally, but the surface having been much washed away by the constant action of the rains there is a greater admixture of nodular limestone and other stony particles. With the aid of manure, however, this land can be rendered quite as productive as the Kalee and even more so during seasons when the rain is very heavy and continuous, for being lighter and more porous it allows the water to percolate freely without drowning the crop as is sometimes the case in the more heavy soil.

Moorund.

109. Khurdee again is a more gravelly soil having some of the qualities of Moorund but in less quantity, and is altogether a much more hungry soil requiring much manure to render it productive.

Khurdee.

110. The last quality of soil Burdee is a poor red earth consisting as much of stones as of ought else, and in it only the very poorest crops are raised, although occasionally by force of manure or by the help of irrigation even this poor land is made to yield valuable crops, such as Opium or Cotton, the former only being irrigated.

Burdee.

111. There is also another variety of soil known as "Seearoot," this is merely a sandy alluvium found on the sides of rivers formed by the action of the floods : it is one of the most naturally productive soils and requires little or no manure, but is only found in a few places.

Seearoot.

112. The staple crop below the ghats is the Khureef or Seearee as it is termed which is put down at the commencement of the rainy season and reaped at the commencement of the cold weather. The chief article of produce so sown is the Jowaree which forms the chief food of the cultivating class, rice and wheat being alike but little used by them. It is sown at the beginning of the rains in June and ripens towards the end of November. The land is prepared for some time before the sowing during the hot months, and manure is generally applied by those who have it. The stalks known by the name of "Kurbree" form the chief food of the cattle during the months when pasture is not to be had. Cotton now occupies even a greater breadth of land than Jowaree, but this state of things, I conceive can only be temporary and even now the fall in price of cotton has led the cultivators in many places to revert to the growing of cereals instead. Cotton is generally sown along with Toor in alternate patches or strips and the land is prepared for it very much in the same way as it is for Jowaree. There is no doubt that both crops more or less suffer from being thus sown in immediate juxtaposition, but so strong is the force of ancient custom that the cultivators while themselves acknowledging the disadvantages of the system yet seem to entertain no idea of following out any better one.

113. These three staples above mentioned are raised on almost all the soils, when sown in the black soil they require less or even no manure, but in seasons of heavy and continuous rain they are apt to be swamped and choked in the heavy mud that is formed. The best crops are raised in the better qualities of the Khurdee soil when manure is fully applied.

114. None of these crops are ever irrigated, as the monsoon rains are quite sufficient for the purpose of ripening them. The Cotton picking should commence in November and go on for several months until the plants become dried up and exhausted. As yet the cultivators have not learnt to use any but the ordinary indigenous seed but efforts have been made to show them the superiority of other and foreign sorts, and it is to be hoped that these will be hereafter permanently introduced, as much labour and skill is expended in the cultivation of the plant and in places excellent returns are realised. Even if the cultivators could be induced to procure their supplies of seed from another village the result would be apparent in the increased yield of the crop, but as it is, year after year the seed of the last crop is again committed perhaps to the very same soil, and it is a well known principle in agriculture that such seed always goes on deteriorating whereas if removed to a new soil it would develop all its latent pristine fertility.

115. The great bulk of the land below the ghats, is under cultivation with the above crops, the breadth under Rubee cultivation being very inconsiderable. After these I may mention the Erundee or Castor Oil plant as occupying the

most prominent place, it is sown towards the end of the rains in poor soils; it never reaches any great size in consequence, but it is supposed to give the land a rest. The oil is said to be used in cooking as well as for lighting purposes.

116. These are the only crops that are raised in any quantities; there is a little land under cultivation with the Al from whence a beautiful dye is obtained. This plant lies three years in the ground and at the end the roots have to be extracted at great labour and expense by means of trenching, but this latter operation is most beneficial to the land. Also some small amount of Tillee, and other oil seeds are raised but not in any large quantity.

117. The amount of land under irrigation is very small, and in fact considering how industrious the majority of the cultivators are it is quite surprising that they have had so little recourse to well cultivation, but it is only in comparatively few villages that it exists and by means of it some excellent crops are raised; Sugarcane is not much grown, but garden vegetables and miscellaneous produce such as Ginger, Turmeric, &c. is raised, but this forms a very small branch of the industry of the population.

118. I now turn to the cultivation above the ghats; the same qualities of soil prevail but they are known by different names. Thus the Kalee is popularly termed Dol, while the Khurdee and Burdee are frequently classed as one. Both above and below the ghats however the soils have been registered in the settlement papers under six classes in accordance with the classification adopted in the Nagpore district, they are as follows:—

Soils.	Kalee 1st Class.		Khurdee.
	Kalee 2nd Class.		Raitaree or sandy.
	Moorund.		Burdee.

119. There is also a species of land called Kharee, it is manured by all the sweepings of the village and in other ways. This land is generally in the hands of the Zemindar himself or is let at a very high rent, it will grow crops of any description, but where there are means of irrigation it is reserved for sugar-cane or opium. This quality of soil is not separately recorded in the Khusra.

120. Except in the poor jungle villages tenanted chiefly by Gonds and where the soil is too poor to raise any thing except during the rainy season and where also there is neither capital nor industry to start irrigation, the Rubee crops is the great stand by of the cultivator the Khurreeff crop being taken little account of; much more irrigation also prevails than is the case below the ghats and the main crop raised is sugar-cane. The modes of cultivation both as regards the sugar-cane and the

Rubee crops are almost precisely similar to those employed in the adjoining district of Baitool, and I would beg leave to quote my remarks from the settlement report made on that district previously submitted by me.

121. "The great staple of the district is the Rubee crop to which more than three fourths of the land in the open parts is devoted.

Area so cultivated.

122. "In theory the preparation of the soil should be commenced in the hot weather the land receiving one or two dressings with the Bukur or paring plough before the setting in of the rains. In point of fact however this essential item of good husbandry whereby the seeds of grass and other weeds are exposed to die and the ground opened for the reception of the rain is very generally neglected, the reason alleged being the scarcity of bullocks, those cultivators who have irrigated land not being able to spare their bullocks from the well until after the commencement of the rains. After that the land should receive from three to four dressings of the plough from time to time during intervals of rain until the ground has been properly pulverised and all weeds eradicated. When the rains however are heavy and incessant it often happens that the fields have to lie untouched until the conclusion of the monsoon when they receive a hasty preparation immediately preparatory to the seed being put in.

Preparation of the land.

123. "Early in October the cultivators begin to sow the Mahsoor and Teora or Lakh, pulses which serve as food both for man and bullock, after that gram is sown and last of all the wheat, which should not be put down until after the heats of October have passed away. None of these crops receive any manure whatsoever, and it is very seldom that a cultivator even when possessing a well ever thinks of saving his crop from the effects of drought by irrigation.

Sowing operations.

124. "The general method of sowing and reaping the crops is so similar to that pursued in other parts of India that it is needless for me to enter into any details on the subject.

Reaping.

125. "The Khureef crop generally is considered of but little importance except in the hill villages where it is the staple crop. The most valuable of the Khureef crops at the present moment is cotton, but its cultivation is but little understood or practised above the ghats. In the more open villages it is said not to succeed but I am inclined to lay this to the part of want of skill or knowledge in the cultivators rather than to any inherent quality in the soil. Of late years naturally owing to the great rise in the price of cotton some more attention has been paid to the cultivation of it, but still it cannot be reckoned among one of the staple articles of produce.

The Khureef crop but little accounted of.



126. "Jowaree also is but little sown in the more open parts and then chiefly for the sake of the stalks which serve as food for cattle. In the poorer villages it is grown in low lands near rivers, what would be termed Khadur land in upper India, and also in land newly taken up after a fallow; a very little rice and other inferior grains are also grown occasionally in the better villages but not to any appreciable extent.

Jowaree.  
127. "The poor burdee soil is generally sown with the oil plant termed Jugnee, which will grow almost anywhere and is said to improve the soil for any crop that may follow, hence it is often sown in exhausted soil by way of retrieving its quality; very little Tilee is grown anywhere. In the hilly parts of the district of course the Khureef is the staple crop but there are few villages in which there is not some land capable of raising either wheat or gram. The method of cultivation is the same as that above detailed, but from the fact of the cultivators being chiefly Gonds, and possessed of but little capital and few bullocks the land is not generally so well prepared as it should be, but it has this advantage that from the habit the Gonds have of frequently migrating villages become deserted and the lands obtain the benefit of a fallow.

Other inferior Crops.  
128. "The staple crops in the poor villages are Koothee a species of inferior rice, Kodo a sort of Rye or grass, Rala, Kungne, Sema and other poor grains. Kootkee and Kodo are the chief staples, and the land so sown gets but little preparation. There are two times for sowing, first in June when the crop ripens in August. The second towards the end of July, the crop ripening in October. Another great crop is the Oil plant termed Jugnee which has the merit of growing in any soil. This also is sown at two different times; first in June, second in August. The later crop produces less stalk and leaf but more seed, but then it is more precarious, as it depends entirely on a fall of rain late in the season. In all these villages a little rice is grown but it is not irrigated and but little labour or skill is expended on its cultivation."

Rice.  
129. To the east of the district in some poor villages bordering on the Seonee district there is some attempt made at rice cultivation by raising small dams across the fields to keep in the water; this is generally confined to small patches of land near the village site, and the quantity of grain so grown is very inconsiderable.

Dhya cultivation of the Gonds.  
130. "The favorite cultivation of the Gonds is that known by the name of Dhya; it requires neither capital nor skill, neither bullock nor plough; the felling axe and the strong arm are all that is needed. A new piece of ground, generally on a hill slope or edge of a stream is selected and cleared of all jungle. The surface is then covered over with logs of wood of varying size and these again with smaller brushwood. This



work goes on during the hot weather to let the new cut wood get properly dry ; just before the rains the wood is set fire to and thoroughly burned to the ground, and after the first fall the seed is scattered among the ashes ; where the ground is steep it is generally thrown in a lump along the top of the plot and is left to be washed to its place by the rains. Heavy crops are sometimes raised this way when the rains are favorable, Rice, Kootkee, Kodo and Jugnee being the crops chiefly grown there ; though but little skill is required, yet a vast deal of manual labour is entailed, but from the force of ancient habit the Gonds much prefer this to regular cultivation. One rupee is the rent usually paid for a Dhya irrespective of the amount of land or nature of the crop ; sometimes the rent is assessed on the axe ; in the main from one to two acres is the extent of a plot so cultivated by one person. This is which has proved so destructive to our Forests, splendid teak trees having been felled year after year for no other purpose than to enrich the soil with their ashes, not to mention saplings which were felled by thousands."

131. "The nature of the cultivation and the soil accounts for the migratory habit of the Gonds above alluded to by me. Dhya cultivation can only be carried on for one year in the same spot after which years of fallow are required. The light soils also cultivated in the ordinary manner yield good crops for two or at most three years in succession : consequently at the end of a few years the cultivators have used up the soil in the immediate neighbourhood of the village and they then remove to some village that has been waste for some time past and in which the soil is fresh, and thus in regular succession villages are occupied and again deserted,"

132. "Having thus briefly described the mode employed in cultivating the dry crops I proceed to explain the methods employed in raising irrigated crops."

133. "The chief crop raised by irrigation is sugar-cane ; of the plant there are several varieties ; the otahitee cane so commonly grown in the Baitool district is almost unknown in Chindwara. The cultivators aver that it does not suit the soil, but the real reason doubtless is the force of ancient custom combined with an utter want of enterprise on their part. The kinds commonly grown are the "Puchrung" or red colored cane and that termed "Surarhee" a small thin cane yielding but little juice : the only thing to commend it is that it requires but little water and less preparation of the soil than the superior kinds."

134. "A cultivator who raises sugar-cane generally divides the land devoted to this crop into three portions, so as to raise cane on the same ground once in three years only. Of the remaining two parts one enjoys a years fallow while

the other is cultivated with some ordinary grain crop. The land is being prepared for about six months previous to being sown, and is repeatedly ploughed backwards and forwards and as deeply as possible until all weeds are eradicated and the soil well pulverised.

Preparation of the soil.

135. "Sowing takes place from the middle of January to the end of February. The field is divided into a number

Method of sowing.

of little square or rectangular beds for the convenience of watering and these are again subdivided into rows; the ground having been well watered pieces of cane each containing about three joints or eyes are laid down at short intervals and pressed into the ground with the foot. Manure is afterwards scattered on the top and left to be washed in by the water: of course the best plan is to mix the manure with the soil previous to sowing but the former is the more common practice, less manure being in that case required: Irrigation then continues until the rains, each plant being watered once in about four days, several weedings have also to be given; by the setting in of the rains the plants have reached a certain height, irrigation is then discontinued, another weeding given and the earth heaped up round the roots of the plants. After the rains irrigation to a less extent is again resorted to until December when the plant should be ripe. The

Varieties of cane.

Otahitee cane usually comes to flower; the indigenous sorts rarely do so, and when it does occur superstition frequently prompts the cultivator to set fire to his crop to avert some unknown calamity. Cases of this sort have come under my observation.

136. "When the crop is ready the mill is set up in a convenient spot.

It consists of two upright cylinders of some hard wood terminating at top in two endless screws fitted into each other: the one is fixed while the other is turned by a bar worked by two pairs of bullocks. The canes are passed through the cylinders as they revolve, the juice falling into a trough from which it runs into a large pan set in the ground. When full the contents of the pan are put into a large shallow iron called a "Kurhaee," which is set over a furnace and the juice boiled for some hours until it attains a certain consistency, when it is poured into a wooden trough to cool after which it is put into cloth bags termed "Belas" when it is ready for exportation as Goor.

The sugar mill.

137. "No sugar is manufactured in the district. Besides the expenses of cultivation, the preparation of the juice entails a considerable outlay. When a cultivator

Cost of preparation.

does not possess a mill or boiling pot he has to hire them at twelve annas and eight annas per diem respectively. The mill is kept going day and night in consequence, and extra bullocks have to be hired for each of which one seer of Goor per day is paid. The men employed in

passing the canes through the mill are paid as much as eight annas per day and other labourers four annas besides half a seer of Goor per day, it is calculated that about one fifth of the yield thus goes in the process of preparation."

138. Opium is grown in such small quantities that it can hardly be taken into account as among the staples of the district.

Opium.

139. Potatoe cultivation was long ago introduced into the district and some of the sandy soils above the ghats suit its growth remarkably well, but from the constant use of the seed grown ever in the same ground or at least the same village the tuber has much deteriorated both in size and quality, it is sown generally in October and taken up in February or March, and is planted out in rows for convenience of irrigation very much after the manner of sugar-cane, once sown the rows are not any more earthed up as is the case in England.

Potatoes.

140. The other irrigated Crops in the district consist of vegetables raised in a few villages only by Malees. These comprise onions, garlic, turmeric, pepper, various kinds of spinage, and other sundries.

Other irrigated Crops.

141. Irrigation is chiefly carried on from wells by means of a leather bag termed a "Mot" which is let down by a rope over a wheel, and drawn up by a pair of bullocks proceeding down an inclined plane until the bag reaches the top and its contents are discharged into a trough leading into the water channel. The bullocks are then walked backwards up the incline until the bag again reaches the water and is filled. The same plan is also adopted in drawing water out of streams dammed up for the purpose. This arrangement is termed Boorka. Persian wheels are quite unknown.

Method of irrigation.

142. I subjoin a list of the articles grown within the district. See Appendix No.

Crops raised in the district.

143. Besides the plants cultivated for the sake of Oil, such as Tilee, Erundee (Castor oil) Jugnee and Koosum, (the latter yielding a dye from its flower and an oil from its seeds) oil is extracted from the seeds of the cotton and also from the kernels of the Mohwa nut, called "Goolee katel," and various other oils are extracted from trees and jungle shrubs.

Oils.

144. The Melons are generally grown in the sandy beds of rivers during the hot months. These beds are termed Dungras and are cultivated by men of the Dheemur caste only.

Melons.

145. Sugar, Opium and Potatoes are grown by agriculturists of all castes, but the other miscellaneous garden products are as a rule grown only by Malees and Kachees.

Castes employing irrigation.

Kachees.

146. Hemp is only grown by Gonds or persons of low castes, while Al is generally grown by a sub-division of the Rajpoot caste termed Alkurees.

Hemp, Al.

147. With these exceptions all the other crops are raised by all the various castes of the community alike.

Crops raised by all classes.

148. The agricultural implements in use are, for the most part, very rude. The plough or hul generally consists of two pieces of wood, one forming the tail the other the share, the latter is pointed and simply tipped with a piece of iron; then there is the bukker, a species of bullock hoe, being a flat piece of iron designed simply to scratch up the face of the soil and free it from surface weeds. In some soils this is the only implement used in their preparation.

Agricultural Implements.

149. The Dowrun is somewhat similar to the bukker only smaller, it is used for turning up and loosening the soil between the rows of cotton or other crops after they have sprung up. The Pas or spade is used to clear the hul or the bukker from accumulations of soil.

The Dowrun.

150. These are the sole implements used in preparing the land; sowing is accomplished by what is termed the "Teefun" being a hollow bamboo with half a cocoanut shell at top for convenience of filling which is passed through a hole in the plough share, so as to let the seed drop as the plough advances and prepares the furrow. Women are generally employed to drop the seed while a man drives the bullocks. Occasionally Jowaree and other seeds are sown broad-cast but not so commonly as by the Teefun.

The Teefun for sowing.

Reaping.

151. For reaping there is a small hook or sickle and this work is chiefly done by women.

Mode of Reaping.

152. Gram, Muhsoor and Teora are usually torn up by the roots, wheat alone being cut.

153. Carts are pretty generally used all over the district except of course by the Gonds who have but little use for them. Those used below the ghats are the best, but generally speaking they are all much of the same fashion as those prevailing in Nagpore, poor rickety concerns with small narrow wheels carrying but little and terribly destructive to the roads. For travelling purposes ponies are chiefly used; these are very small and no care whatsoever is taken in the breeding of them, but they seem to satisfy the wants of the people which happily for them are very small.

Means of transport.

154. The general breed of cattle throughout the district is small and poor, but in the jungles of the Khumarpanee Pergunnah, to the South-east of the district and lying just above the ghats, there is a very celebrated breed of cattle

Breeds of Cattle.



which has been kept from admixture with the poorer cattle of the rest of the district. They are mostly white and of a large size: they are kept by Gowlees and other land-holders for the sake of the young steers which they sell annually for large prices: their own jungles suffice only for the grazing during the monsoon and cold weather months; during the hot months, they are driven off to the high lands of Mundla, the Raegurh Bichia tract and the Chilpee ghat, whence they only return when the monsoon has fairly set in.

155. The breeds of sheep and goats throughout the district are poor in the extreme and call for no further mention.

156. Briefly then, in conclusion of this branch of the subject, it may be stated that below the ghats considerable skill and industry is brought to bear on the land, as also a considerable outlay of capital, while but little is done in the way of irrigation except in a few exceptional cases.

157. Above the ghats some amount of industry is brought to bear on the culture of sugar-cane and potatoe, but not equal to that seen in the adjoining district of Baitool, while as regards the preparation of the dry land and the management of the crops it must be stated that the science of farming is at a very low ebb, and as a consequence a much smaller return is obtained from the land than should be the case. As a general rule the soil above the ghats is of a richer quality than that in the "Zerghat," but simply owing to defective treatment it yields much less and as a consequence can only afford to pay much lower rents.

158. One cause doubtless of the apathy and want of thrift evinced by the cultivators is the almost universal custom of their depending upon the village Proprietors for advances of seed grain (Bij) and of grain for subsistence during the months immediately preceding the harvest, the latter being termed "Porga" or "Khawae." This habit of dependence on the Malgozars leads them to be improvident and to take but little heed for the future. These advances of grain have to be repaid at harvest time with interest in kind at the rate of twenty five per cent. and this makes a serious inroad upon the profits of husbandry.

159. Agricultural statistics must always be matter of uncertainty, and even with all the machinery of a settlement to derive information, calculations as to the profits of agriculture can hardly be expected to be more than approximate at best, I however append a table prepared by me of the yields of the different kinds of crop for one acre of land, premising that the money value attached thereto has been calculated at the average prices prevailing for the ten years preceding the settlement, and upon these calculations my produce rates were chiefly grounded, it must also be



borne in mind that the estimate of productiveness is intended to embrace a series of years, taking good, bad and indifferent seasons so as to show an average return only.

160. I also append a table showing the prices of agricultural products prevailing for the ten years preceding the settlement with those of the present year.

Prices of produce.

161. While on this subject I would remark that my estimates of produce are in excess of those calculated for the rich district of Nursingpoor, but I believe them myself to be well below the mark, an average return of four-fold of the seed sown would not in my opinion in the case of wheat repay the cost of production. I must confess that I am not in a position to bring forward the results of actual experience. Experiments made by myself as regards produce have failed owing to imperfect supervision; I have however paid very great attention to the subject in the course of my tours through the district and never lost an opportunity of learning the opinions of those who are qualified to give one, and I feel confident that all our calculations are below the mark as regards the profits of agriculture. Otherwise it would be quite impossible in my opinion to account for the really prosperous condition of the agricultural classes.

Produce Estimates.

162. It may not be out of place here to make some mention of the prevailing rates of agricultural wages. In former years until the recent sudden rise in prices, wages were exceedingly low and they continued so until comparatively recently. But the sad effects of high prices were to a great extent neutralised by the custom of paying wages in kind, which prevails largely in this district.

Agricultural wages.

163. Below the ghats agricultural operations are chiefly carried out by hired servants termed "Bursalees" engaged for the whole year; they receive eight Kooros or sixty four seers of grain per month with an annual allowance of Rupees two for clothes. Boys are usually employed for herding the cattle and these receive half the wages of adults. Occasional labourers employed in weeding and so forth receive two annas per diem, and women half that amount. At harvest time men employed as reapers receive generally four seers of grain per diem, women getting about two and a half seers. Cotton pickers receive  $2\frac{1}{2}$  annas per maund of cotton picked. Sometimes they are paid in kind and receive  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a seer of Kupas or uncleaned cotton per diem.

System below the ghats.

164. Above the ghats the system is different and varies more over in different Pergunnahs. Usually "Hurwaees" or Ploughmen receive one-fifth of the gross produce of the land; when they are hired as regular servants or "Bursalees" by the year, they receive from Rupees 15 to Rupees 25: in some cases they receive grain and a smaller amount in money.

Above the ghats.

165. Cattle herders are paid at the rate of one Khundie per annum for two pairs of bullocks: casual labourers get two annas per day. Reapers at harvest get two seers of grain a day; women less: watching fields at night is sometimes part of the duty of the regular farm servants. Where special men are so employed they receive Rupees 2 or 3 per mensem.

166. Almost all these persons however come in for extra perquisites at times of festivals or other occasions and are by these means enabled to eke out their scanty means. In the poor jungle villages also they receive a proportion of the produce of the Mohwa trees.

167. At present it can be safely stated of the population dependant on agriculture that they are all of them above want, while the upper classes are in a state of unprecedented prosperity which will not be diminished by the fact of the Government demand having now been reduced.

168. In concluding this branch of the subject I would give a few statistics which may be thought not without interest: of the entire Khalsa area about one-fifth only is under cultivation, and of the latter about one-seventh is under irrigation. After making a liberal allowance of waste to the Landholders there have been demarcated 7,89,000 acres as state property. The average size of a holding for the whole district is 26 acres, the averages of different Pergunnahs varying very much from 44 acres as the highest in the open wheat growing Pergunnah of Chorye to 18 acres as the lowest in the poor Pergunnah of Oomrait.

I find also that on an average one plough gives employment to four persons, while the revenue now falls at the rate of about 2 Rupees per head on the purely agricultural population.