The Dúms or Mírásís (3,015), called also Dhádhí, are the musicians and genealogists of the peasants and are in great request on all occasions of feasting, such as a marriage or funeral feast, when they play their musical instruments, sing songs and celebrate the praises of the ancestors, real or imaginary, of their entertainers, from whom they exact large fees. It is strange that almost all Dúms, even those of the Hindú tribes, are Musalmáns. Some of them travel about among their clients, and I once saw a family of Dúms on tour living in a small tent (*chholdári*), an unusual sight in a Bágar village. The Chamárs and Chúhras have Mirásís of their own, who are considered unclean by the ordinary Mirásís. The Bháts (447) are the genealogists of the higher castes, and visit their clients periodically to record all births and other domestic events of importance.

The Báwariyas.

97. The Báwariyas are returned as 3,335 in number, an increase of 40 per cent. on the number returned at the Census of 1868; of these 297 are returned as Sikh and the rest as Hindú. They are divided into four sections—(1) the Bídáwati from Bíkáner territory, claiming connection with the Bídáwat Rájputs and giving Chitor as their place of origin; (2) the Deswálí living in the country about Sirsá; (3) the Kápriya to the east towards Dehli; (4) the Kálkamaliya or black-blanket people, who (especially the women) wear black blankets and are found chiefly among the Sikhs of the Jangal and Málwa country. These four sections do not eat together or intermarry, but say they all came originally from the neighbourhood of Bíkáner. They are most numerous in Rájputána and the districts bordering on it, but extend up the Satlaj to Firozpur and Lahore. The name of the tribe seems to be derived from the *báwar* or snare with which they catch wild animals, but many of them despise this their hereditary occupation, and indeed it seems now to be practised only by the Kálkamaliya or Panjábí section. Their method of hunting, which I have seen, is this: A body of them, men, women and children, go out into the prairie in search of game. When they have sighted a herd of antelope in the distance, they choose a favourable piece of ground and arrange their *báwars*, which are a series of many running-nooses of raw hide tied together and fastened loosely to the ground by pegs; from the *báwars* they rapidly make two lines of bogies by sticking bits of straw with black rags tied to them into the ground at distances of a foot or two apart. These lines widen away from the snares so as to enclose a V-shaped piéce of ground with sides perhaps a mile in length, the unsuspecting herd of antelope being enclosed within the V at the pointed end of which are the snares. All this is arranged in a wonderfully short time, and when all is ready the main body of hunters, who have meanwhile gone round the herd of antelope and formed a line across the open end of the V, suddenly start up and by unearthly yells drive the herd inwards towards the point. The first impulse of the antelope is to rush directly away from their tormentors, but they soon come to the long line of fluttering bits of rag which forms one leg of the V; they think this must be a snare

for them and dash across only to be brought up by the other line of bogies. Thus they are brought in to the point, where they see a blank space undefended by fluttering rags (for the nooses are almost invisible on the light-coloured ground), and in case their suspicions might be aroused, so soon as they approach this spot up jumps a man hitherto concealed and frantically shouts and waves his blanket, pretending to drive them back from this outlet. The simple antelope think this must be a weak point in the lines by which they are enclosed, and that this solitary man is its only defender. They come dashing past him at full speed, and the next moment their feet are entangled in the nooses and they are tumbling over and over in a cloud of dust; and a few men hidden close by rush on them with shouts of savage exultation and despatch them with their clubs. I saw seven antelope caught out of one herd in this way, and have little desire to see the sport again. It is interesting as one of the methods by which an ignorant tribe of hunters with the simplest means can by their superior cunning circumvent the swift antelope on his native prairie. The Báwariyas are seemingly an aboriginal tribe, being of a dark complexion and inferior physique though resembling the Bágrí Játs. Many of them are fond of a jungle life and given to wandering, living in wretched huts and feeding upon lizards, jackals, foxes and other jungle animals; but they say they will not eat fish. In other districts they are known as a criminal tribe, but here many of them are fairly respectable cultivators; some are employed as village watchmen and many of them are skilled in tracking. They are divided into clans (*got* or *nak*) with Rájput names such as Chauhán, Panwár, Bhátí. The Báwariyas who live among the Sikhs (*Kálkamaliya*) wear the hair long (*kes*), and some of them have received the *páhul* and become regular Sikhs. The black-blanket Báwariyas speak Panjábí and the Bídáwatí speak Bágrí, but they have besides a dialect peculiar to themselves, and not understood by the ordinary peasants. Báwariyas consider themselves good Hindús, and say that regular Bráhmans officiate at their marriage ceremonies, the same Bráhmans as officiate for Játs and Banyas. They hold the cow sacred and will not eat beef; they burn their dead and send the ashes to the Ganges. They are said sometimes to admit men of other tribes to their fraternity and an instance is given in which a Banya, for love of a Báwariya woman, became a Báwariya himself.

The Aherís, the Mahtams and other low castes.

98. The Aherís, or Herís as they call themselves, are also called Náik (a sort of honorific title) and Thorí (somewhat in contempt). They are returned as 3,368 in number, all Hindu; of these 527 are returned as Aherí and 2,841 as Thorí, but their leading men told me that these are simply different names for the same tribe. In appearance and physique they resemble the Báwariyas, and like them come from the Bágar. There are many of them about Bíkáner and Jaipur and in Jodhpur, which they give as their place of origin; in the Panjáb they are found chiefly in Hissár and Sirsá. They speak a Bágrí dialect, and have no special dialect of their own. Many of them are given to wandering and gangs of them come north when the harvest is ripe and help to reap it, wandering

off again when it is over, to work on canals or wherever they can find earth or field labour. Some of them however have settled down as cultivators in villages, being generally made to reside outside the village ditch as an inferior caste. They do not keep donkeys, but carry their bundles on their heads, when they wander from village to village with their families. They are divided into clans (*got*) with Rájput names, but form one tribe and all intermarry with each other. They do not eat beef; they burn their dead and send the ashes to the Ganges; and they worship ordinary Hindú deities such as Debí and Mátá of Gurgáon, but chiefly Bábují of Kolumand in Jodhpur and Khetpál of Jodhpur. Their marriage ceremonies are performed by the Gurra or Chamárs' Bráhmans.

The Mahtams (1,988) in this district are found only near the Satlaj. Like the Báwariyas with whom they are ranked, they seem to be originally a tribe of hunters, living chiefly on the river-banks and hunting in the tamarisk (*pilchi*) jungle which grows along the river on land subject to inundation. Their traditional mode of hunting is similar to that of the Báwariyas above described, only instead of making their nooses of hide they make them of *múnj* rope, and call them *vám*, not *báwar*, and instead of setting them in the open prairie they set them in the tamarisk jungle. They catch all sorts of animals in this way, and say they used to snare wild pig and even tigers in their nooses. They also sometimes make a long line of low impenetrable hedge by interweaving the branches of bushes together, so that small animals, such as hare and partridge, running through the jungle, are stopped by this hedge and run along it to the gap near which the hunter lies in wait to get an easy chance of killing them. The Mahtam is very fond of the sarr grass, and one of his chief employments is making rope and other articles out of it. They are considered a low caste and often live apart from the other villagers, but many of them have taken to agriculture, and make very good industrious cultivators especially on lands subject to inundation. Some villages and parts of villages on the Satlaj are owned by them; their huts are often squalid and dirty, but they are as a rule prosperous and somewhat quarrelsome. Their dark complexion and general appearance, as well as their hereditary occupation of hunting, seem to argue them an aboriginal tribe. They speak Panjábí and are classed as Hindú or Sikh. No other tribe intermarries with them.

The Jhabels (987) are a low-caste tribe living on or near the Satlaj. A few of them are engaged in agriculture, but they seem chiefly to live by fishing or boating. Most of the Satlaj boatmen (*Mallâh*) in the Sirsá district are Jhabels. Another river-tribe are the Mors, who sometimes come up the river as far as Fázilká in their boats on fishing excursions. They catch and eat crocodiles. Some Mors showed me a young crocodile they had caught, and it is said that the crocodiles smell them a long way off and flee before them.

The Ods (198) are a wandering tribe who have no fixed place of abode, and whose hereditary occupation is earth-work. They wander

about with their families carrying their grass huts and belongings on the backs of donkeys, and wherever they can get a contract from the villagers to excavate or deepen the village-pond they set up their huts and encamp for a time until the job is finished. Their ordinary rate for such work is a hundred cubic *háth* = nearly 800 cubic feet for a rupee. The men dig, the women carry the earth in baskets and put it into open sacks on the donkeys' backs, and the children drive the donkeys to the spoil-bank. They often take contracts for lengths of earthwork on a canal or railway, and do that kind of work very skilfully and quickly. Ods often have small flocks of sheep and goats which they drive about with them and send out in charge of the children to graze on the village common. At harvest time they work in the fields for wages in money and grain.

Another wandering tribe are the Sánsís (92) who are well known for their pilfering propensities and are ranked very low because they will eat the leavings of almost any tribe. They do not often come to this district, and seldom give much trouble. The Nats (287) and Bázígars also wander about from village to village and perform as tumblers, rope-dancers, jugglers and buffoons. They have no fixed home and carry their grass huts about with them. The Kanjars (265) also wander about the country; their women dance and sing and prostitute themselves, and are said to find their greatest admirers among the Wattus of the Satlaj.

The caste-system in Sirsá.

99. In reviewing the whole system of tribes and castes prevalent in the Sirsá district, the first thing that strikes one is the extraordinary number of classes and sections into which the population is divided and the minuteness of the differences which separate them. In order to realise the mode in which these divisions have been formed it is perhaps best to start with the individual peasant and try to look at the caste-system from his point of view. The enquiry into tribal custom has shown almost conclusively that throughout the whole population the system of relationship is essentially agnatic. The children belong to the family and clan of their father, and a woman on marriage leaves the family of her father and she and her children belong to the family and clan of her husband. Thus the whole population is primarily divided into groups of agnates, and each individual recognises all persons related to him through males as his brothers, as members of his family; persons related to him through his mother or other females are his relations indeed, but they belong to another family. Sometimes these groups of agnates, each descended from some recent male ancestor, are classed together into large groups comprehending all those agnatic families which are descended through males from some more distant (but still recent) ancestor, whose name is remembered as the founder of the branch; for instance the Sukhere and Kalloke (or descendants of Sukha and Kallo) among the Tunwars, the Ládhuke, Saiduke &c., (or descendants of Ládhú and Saidu) among the Wattus, or the Dáduke

(descendants of Dádú) among the Siddhu Barár Sikh Jats. As time goes on the personality of the founder of the agnatic group is forgotten, but the agnatic relationship is remembered, and marked by the name of the clan (generally called *got*). Thus each individual recognises that his immediate agnatic family belongs to a large group connected together by agnatic relationship and can never forget that his clan-brothers, all belonging to his clan, are related to him through males. No one outside his clan is his agnate relation, or if he is, the common agnatic ancestor is so distant that the relationship is practically forgotten or kept in the background. The clan relationship on the other hand has very important effects in the ordinary affairs of life. His property cannot be inherited by any one not belonging to his clan, and (except where Muhammadan law has overridden tribal custom) he must not marry the daughter of his clan-brother, must not marry a woman related to him through agnates only. He must go outside his clan to find a wife. And the number of clans in which he may seek a wife is marked off more or less strictly. Here we have a ground for grouping clans together which is always present to the mind of the ordinary peasant. All clans from which he can take a wife belong to the same tribe or caste, and from this point of view a tribe or caste may be defined as a collection of agnatic groups, the members of which are allowed by custom to intermarry. But it is here too that the minute distinctions begin to make their appearance. When a family or clan aims at social importance, the first step it takes is to limit the number of families or clans to which it will give its daughters in marriage, and the next is to restrict the number of clans whose daughters it will take in marriage. This exclusiveness can be carried furthest by the Musalmáns, whose religion (which has to this extent modified their tribal custom) allows agnatic cousins to intermarry, a thing forbidden by the tribal custom of the Hindús. For instance, the Bodlas and Chishtis give their daughters in marriage to no other clan; the Wattus have a strong prejudice against giving their daughters out of the clan, but sometimes give them to other clans of high rank, such as the Bodla, Chishti and Bhatti. Again, the Bodlas will not marry the daughters of any clan except their own or the four high-class tribes, Bhatti, Joiya, Wattu, Dhúdhí. The Ráins of the Ghaggar will not allow marriage with any one not belonging to their own small section of a tribe. Among the Hindús, the twelve-clan section of the Northern Roras take in marriage the daughters of the fifty-two-clan section, but do not give them their daughters in marriage, and there is a similar division among the Southern Roras; and the Suthárs will hardly intermarry with the other Khátis. These distinctions are simply social and owing to pride of family, and therefore are more or less shifting and elastic. Instances may be seen in which such a distinction has grown up in modern times or has recently been broken down; and in the case of several clans, when attesting their tribal custom before me, doubts were expressed and disputes arose as to the clans with whom intermarriage was allowable. Hence a vagueness as to the limits of the tribe or caste regarded as a group of clans to whom intermarriage is allowed by

custom. The social distinctions however which forbid intermarriage, are extraordinarily minute and are maintained to an absurd degree, even by tribes occupying a very low rank; for instance, the Chándor Chamárs will not intermarry with the Jatiya Chamárs because the latter work in leather made from the hides of horses and camels. Many tribes, which follow the same occupation and are generally considered by their neighbours and even by themselves to be of the same origin, are divided into sections which refuse to intermarry. In some cases it seems probable that the division is due to separation by distance for a considerable period during which each section developed customs and ideas of its own, so that on again coming into contact with each other the sections, though vaguely admitting a common origin, found it difficult to amalgamate again. This may be the cause of the distinction between the Chándor Chamárs of this neighbourhood and the Jatiya Chamárs of Delhi; between the northern and southern sections of the Aroras; between the Bídáwatí Báwariyas of Bíkáner, the Deswálí of Sirsá, the Kápriya of the country towards Delhi, and that Kálkamaliya Báwariyas of the Málwa; between the Aggarwál Banyás from Agroha in Hissár, and the Oswál Banyas from Osanagari in Jodhpur; between the Gaur Bráhmans of the east and the Sársut Bráhmans of the neighbourhood of the Saraswati. (Indeed, the Sásans of the Gaur Bráhmans are said to be named after their different places of origin, and the sections of the Ghaggar Ráins undoubtedly are).

These are instances in which a tribe or caste is divided into distinct endogamous sections, which are still called by the same name, follow very much the same occupation and are generally recognised as being more closely connected with each other than they are with other groups of agnatic clans. And similarly we find that tribes or castes known by totally different names in different parts of the country, and perhaps so different that if we were to compare the physique, language and habits of one with those of the other in a tract of country separated from it by some distance, we should at first sight think it impossible to confound the two, are yet found to merge almost imperceptibly in one another, so that where they meet it is almost impossible to draw a sharp line of distinction between them. For instance, the Aggarwáls and Oswáls both call themselves Banyas, and although they do not intermarry are generally recognised as belonging to the same caste. Again, the Gaurs and Sársuts, though they hold aloof from each other, are considered both to belong to the same caste, *viz*, Bráhmans. Similarly, the Chamár who weaves coarse cloth is hardly to be distinguished from the Juláha, and will sometimes give his caste as Chamár-Juláhá: the same man in the villages on the Satlaj is called Juláhá and Páolí indifferently. The Chamár sometimes calls himself Kúlí, and likes to be called Meghwál; he is sometimes called Dhed and sometimes Bhámbí. The Chamár who makes shoes and other articles of tanned leather, is hardly to be distinguished from the Mochi; and the Chamár, who himself tans leather, closely resembles the Raigar and Khatík, whose proper occupation it is. It is true that these tribes do not ordinarily intermarry, but where they meet as they may be said to do in

Sirsá, they merge in one another so that a hard-and-fast line cannot be drawn between them, and several of these tribal names are actually applied to the same man. Again, the Kahár or burden-carrier is also the water-carrier of the Hindús and is not to be distinguished from the Maira, who carries water for the Sikhs, or from the Jhínwar who sows water-nuts; the Jhínwar, who fishes and works boats on the rivers, is often called Malláh or boatman; the Musalmán water-carrier, Sakka or Bihishti, seems to be often a Jhínwar or Kahár by caste; the Máchhi who bakes and cooks for the Musalmáns on the Satlaj is said to be of the same caste as the Maira; he parches grain and becomes a Bharbhunja; he attends a caravanserai and is called Bhatiyára; he fishes and becomes again connected with the Malláhs or boatmen. Again, the Chhímbá of the Panjáb and the Chhípi of the Bágar country are not to be distinguished; the Chhímbá's proper trade is calico-printing; he washes clothes and is called a Dhobi; he makes clothes and is called a Darzi; he dyes them and becomes a Nílgar, Lílárí or Rangrez. The usual occupation of the Telí is oil-pressing; he scutches cotton and becomes a Dhuniya; he kills butcher-meat and becomes a Qassáb. The same man is called Tarkhán by his Sikh neighbours and Khátí by the Bágrís; the Tarkhán takes to working in iron and becomes a Lohár; some Khátís who have taken to agriculture are called Suthár. The Aroras claim to be Khatris by origin, and both Aroras and Banyas are called Kirár by their Sikh neighbours. A convert to Islám calls himself a Shaikh, and in a few generations his descendants are generally considered to be Shaikhs; a family of Ránghars call themselves Patháns and soon get to be called Patháns by their neighbours; a family of Wattus separate themselves off (the Bodlas) and in a few generations are supposed to be Shaikhs of true Arab descent; the origin of the Chishti and Háns, who also claim Arab descent, may be similar. A Máchhí or Páolí takes to agriculture and his descendants are soon called Jats; a Jat takes to working in iron and is called a Lohár and intermarries with Lohárs; he adopts the barber's trade and becomes a Náí and intermarries with Náís. Some tribes are called Jat in one part of the country and Rájput in another; or Jat by one set of their neighbours and Rájput by another. The Bhátí Rájputs, the Siddhu Barár Sikh Jats, and the Musalmán Wattus and Bhattís are all admitted to be of the same stock, and so again are the Dandiwál Sikh Jats and the Musalmán Bháneke who call themselves Chauhán Rájputs. Many other instances could be given in which tribes seem to merge in one another. In some cases, no doubt, the so-called caste or tribe is merely a sort of trade-guild or an occupation, and all following that occupation are admitted to the guild and called by the name. Thus probably any respectable Musalmán of whatever tribe becoming a barber or a water-carrier would soon be called Náí or Bihishti, admitted to the fraternity of Náis or Bihishtis, and even allowed to intermarry with the families previously composing the guild. A boatman is a Malláh whether he is a Jhínwár or a Jhabel by tribe. Distinctions founded on ties of blood and distinctions founded on occupation thus overlap each other, and aquatic groups are sometimes

divided by diversity of occupation to such an extent that after a few generations the different sections would deny any near relationship with each other; and thus a new caste is formed, or two sections of the same agnatic group merge in two different castes.

While then society is divided by minute distinctions, partly founded on difference of descent, real or supposed, partly on minute differences of occupation, partly on differences in habits and character due to a residence for generations in different parts of the country, the classes, tribes or castes into which it is thus divided are not clearly marked off from each other, but merge one in another so gradually that it is hardly possible to point out the boundary between them. Possibly Sirsá, "the meeting-place of races," affords an unusually large number of instances in which tribes ordinarily considered quite distinct seem to pass gradually the one into the other, but there seems reason to believe that if our researches extended over a sufficiently large tract of country and a sufficiently long period of time, it might almost be possible to connect any one tribe with any other (say the Bráhman with the Bhangi) by a series of steps so gradual that it would be impossible to say at any point that a distinct boundary had been over-passed. It is however possible to throw the Sirsá tribes and castes into groups, the members of which have (except at the extremes of each group) a closer connection with each other than with those of the other groups. They may be classified as follows:—

1. Foreign Races and Races of the Frontier.—Saiyyad, Shaikh, Mughal, Pathán, Biloch, perhaps Chishti and Háns. It must however be remembered that many Shaikhs are converted Hindús, some so-called Patháns are Ránghar by origin, some so-called Biloch seem to be Jat camel-drivers; and probably a considerable proportion of those known by these names are really of indigenous Indian origin.
2. Classes generally devoted to Religious Rites.—Bráhman including the Gaur, Sársut, Párík and other divisions. And perhaps the ascetic classes may be included here, the Bairági, Gosáyan, Faqír, Jogí, Jatí etc., although these are generally admitted to have originated from the secular castes. It is true that in this part of the county the Bráhman seems clearly marked off from the other classes, but it seems probable that in some districts he may be found to merge imperceptibly in the other castes.
3. Trading and Mercantile classes.—Banya, including Aggarwál, Oswál, Mahesri, and other sections, Arora or Rora, both northern and southern sections, Khatrí, Mahájan, Seth Bhábra, Kirár, and Sunár so far as he follows the trade of banker; as a goldsmith he is more closely connected with the artisans.
4. Agricultural and Dominant Tribes.—Rájput, Ját or Jat and all the many tribes which are returned sometimes as Rájput sometimes as Jat, such as Bhatti, Wattu, Joiya, Jhorar, Bodla and perhaps Chishti and Háns, Gújar, Ahír, Dogar, Labána.

5. Market-gardeners.—Málí, Saini, Ráín or Aráín, Kamboh and perhaps Kunjra, the vegetable-seller.
6. Water-carriers, fishermen, cooks and bakers.—Jhínwar, Kahár, Maira, Máchhí, Bharbhunja, Bhatiyára, Sakka, Bihishti.
7. Workers in wood, metals and clay.—Khátí, Tarkhán, Suthár, Lohár, Sunár, Kumhár, Ráj, Mimár, Maniár.
8. Oil-pressers, cotton-scutchers and butchers.—Telí, Dhuniya, Qasáí or Qassáb.
9. Dyers and cleaners of cloth and tailors.—Chhímbá, Chhípí, Nílgar, Lílárí, Rangrez, Dhobi, Darzí, perhaps Náí and Bisáti.
10. Weavers of cloth and workers in skins and leather.—Páoli, Juláhá, Chamár, Mochí, Meghwál, Dhed, Kúlí, Raigar, Khatík.
11. Musicians, dancers and acrobats.—Dúm, Mirásí, Nat, Bázígar, Bhand, Kath, Kanjar.
12. Hunters and jungle tribes.—Od, Báwariya, Thorí, Herí or Aherí, Náik, Mahtam, Jhabel, Maliáh, Mor, Dhának, Sánsí, Chúhra, Bhangí, Díndár, Khoja.

These classes, as I have already said, to some extent overlap and merge in each other, but they are approximately the classes into which in ordinary estimation society is divided, and the order given above is approximately the order in which they take rank in the social scale. The differences in rank are marked as follows: A man considers all his agnates as his equals, and also all clans with whom his clan intermarries on equal terms; when he begins to consider his clan as somewhat superior to another he refuses to give his daughter in marriage to the inferior clan; when the distinction becomes greater, he refuses to take a daughter in marriage from that clan. For instance all the clans of Sikh Jats are approximately equal and intermarry with one another, although the Mahárájke section of the Siddhu Barárs, to which the Mahárája of Pattiála belongs, consider themselves as somewhat above their fellows; the Bodlas on the other hand will not give their daughters in marriage to any other clan nor will they take wives from any but a few high-class clans. Another distinction among the higher tribes is marked by the position of women; the Bágrí Ját makes his wife do hard work in the field; the Sikh Jat thinks she should work chiefly in the house and go out only to take her husband his food or to fetch water from the well, and gives this as one reason why he considers the Bágrí Ját his inferior and will not give him his daughter in marriage; the Bodla and the high-class Bhattí shuts his wife up altogether, makes her *pardahnashín* and thinks he has thus established a claim to higher rank. And again with the remarriage of widows; the Bágrí sells a widow almost to the highest bidder; the Sikh allows her to marry only her husband's near agnate; the Rájput, Banya or Bráhman forbids her marrying at all, and is acknowledged to be on this account entitled to a higher rank. Descent makes another distinction; the Saiyyad occupies a high rank because he is descended from the daughter of the Prophet; the Qoreshi because he

is of Arab descent; the Pathán or Mughal because he is related to former conquerors of India; the Rájput because he is of ancient aristocratic blood. Lower down the social scale, equality of rank is marked by eating or smoking together; thus the Ját, Gújar and Ahír though they cannot intermarry will smoke together, and some Játs say they will eat food made in a Tarkhán's house, but not food made by a Kumhár. Regarding smoking a curious distinction is made; for instance, the Sunárs said they would not smoke from the same mouthpiece as a Ját, but would smoke a Ját's *huqqa* if the mouthpiece were taken out, and fresh water put in. Most of the distinctions of rank, however, are founded on the occupation generally followed, especially with regard to its cleanliness or otherwise. Thus workers in wood, metal and even clay, are considered to rank higher than workers in leather; the stationary village Lohárs look down upon the wandering Gádiya Lohárs because they have no fixed home; workers in cloth and tanned leather rank higher than makers of the raw materials; the Chándor Chamár will not associate with the Jatiya because the Jatiya handles camels' and horses' skins; the washerman ranks low because he handles the dirty clothes of other people; the wandering musicians and actors rank low because of their wandering life, and perhaps because their women often dance or act and sometimes prostitute themselves. The hunters are looked down upon because of their uncertain jungle life; and the Dhának considers himself better than the Chúhra because he does not sweep up night-soil, while the Chúhra does. In this district it is especially worthy of notice how many of the lower castes have taken to agriculture, and despise their former occupation, and try to separate themselves from those who still follow it; for instance the Suthárs who own land keep aloof from the Khátís who still work in wood, and the Kumhárs who have taken to agriculture look down upon their fellows from Jodhpur who still work in clay. But among the lowest classes the distinctions of rank are chiefly founded on the nature of their food. The Báwariya considers himself better than the Chamár because he does not eat beef; the Chamár is better than the Chúhra because he does not eat camel's flesh. The Mor comes low because he eats the crocodile; and the Dhánaks, Sánsís and Chúhras come lowest of all because they not only eat lizards, pigs and all sorts of animals, but eat the leavings of other castes.

It is worthy of note that many of the inferior tribes have clans bearing the same names as those of superior tribes, and especially names the same as those of Rájput clans. For instance, the Mahesri Banyas, the Ráins, the Báwariyas and Aherís and other tribes all have clans called Bhatti, Chauhán etc. Probably in most cases this is due to some connection of the inferior tribes with those clans of Rájputs, which has led the different sections of those tribes to adopt the clan name of their masters and protectors. But in some cases it may originally be due to a real similarity of origin; for instance, some Lohárs and Náís are generally admitted to have been ordinary Jat or Rájput agriculturists a few generations ago and retain the clan names of their Jat or Rájput ancestors.

It seems then that society in Sirsá primarily consists of groups of agnates with limits more or less clearly defined, and that the tribes or castes into which these agnatic families may be further grouped have no clearly defined limits, but seem to pass gradually into one another, the distinctions between them being marked by customs forbidding intermarriage and social intercourse and founded chiefly on vague and often minute differences of descent, recent surroundings, social customs, occupation and habits. Thus the caste system of Sirsá is by no means so rigid as is generally supposed, but society is constantly changing. New castes are now in process of formation; and old ones are amalgamating. Families are rising or falling in the social scale, and passing from one caste into another. A new country like Sirsá perhaps affords more numerous and striking examples of this progress than most other tracts of country, but probably detailed enquiry would show that elsewhere also similar changes are constantly affecting the internal framework of society.

The dialects spoken in the Sirsá district.

100. The languages returned at the Census of 1881 for the Sirsá district were Hindústáni, Bágrí, Panjábí, Pashto, Márwári, Hariána, Púrbi, Bangáli and English. The fifteen persons returned as speaking Bangáli and the 46 who spoke Púrbi were probably immigrants from Bengal and the North-Western Provinces or Oudh; and the 130 Pashto-speakers, only four of whom were females, were probably chiefly traders from the frontier passing through the district. Márwári, the dialect of Jodhpur (741 persons), and the dialect of Hariána (56 persons) are both dialects of Hindí, closely connected with Bágrí. The great mass of the population is returned as speaking either Panjábí, Bágrí or Hindustáni. There are very few persons who speak the Hindustaní or Urdu of Dehli, and almost all who were returned as speaking Hindustáni really use the Bágrí dialect. The only persons who speak Hindustáni are the few educated Government officials, and the descendants of the Sukhlambars in the Sotar valley, many of whom came from Hindustán proper, *i. e.*, the country about Dehli and to the east of it. With these few exceptions all classes, even the comparatively educated Bráhmans and Banyas, speak in dialects which may be classed either with Panjábí or with Bágrí. There is a saying that just as the quality of well-water changes every few miles so the dialect of the peasants changes every 20 miles (12 *kos*); and it is true that, as a rule, the dialects spoken by the people merge almost imperceptibly in one another so that a hard-and-fast line defining their boundaries cannot be drawn; yet in this district, which until lately was a desert forming a complete separation between the peoples of the north and those of the south, the dialects spoken may be divided into two practically distinct classes: (1) the Panjábí spoken by the Musalmáns from the west and the Sikhs and other immigrants from the north; and (2) the Bágrí and cognate dialects spoken by the Hindú immigrants from the south and east. Panjábí is returned as spoken by 144,260 persons or 57 per cent. of the total population; and the number returned as speaking Bágrí or Hindustáni is 108,012 or nearly 43 per cent. The 57 per cent. of

Panjábí-speakers includes the 11 per cent. who are Sikhs, and nearly all the 37 per cent. who are Musalmáns; and the 43 per cent. of Bágrí speakers are nearly all included in the 51 per cent. returned as Hindús. A line drawn along the greatest length of the district from Jodhka through Sirsá and Abohar to Fázilká approximately represents the boundary between Panjábí and Bágrí. Almost all living to the north and east of this line speak Panjábí and most of the population to the south and west of it speak Bágrí; but all along the valleys of the Ghaggar and Satlaj the people are Panjábí-speaking Musalmáns and there are here and there to the south-west of this line a good many villages and scattered families of Panjábí-speakers, while comparatively few Bágrí-speakers have pushed their way north-east of it. South of the Ghaggar valley the people almost without exception speak Bágrí.

Panjábí and Bágrí are not different languages, but different dialects of what has been called the Western Gaudian group of the Indic languages, both closely connected with Sanskrit. The most striking difference between the two dialects is perhaps the difference in accent and in the pronunciation of the vowels which makes the speech of a Ját from the Bágar sound so different from that of a Sikh Jat from the Málwa, even when the words they use are pretty much the same. The difference is similar to that between the broad accent of Glasgow and the sharp accent of Aberdeen. The vowel *a* especially is pronounced differently by the two classes; for instance, the Sikh calls himself Jat with the short *a* pronounced much like the English word "jut" and the Bágrí calls himself Ját with the long *á* pronounced like the *a* in "far" or rather like the *a* in "saw"; and so all through, the Panjábí shortens his *a's* as much as possible, and the Bágrí pronounces them as broadly as possible. Even the *á* which is the termination of so many words is pronounced by the Bágrí more like *o* or *aw*, *e.g.*, the word "*káká*" = "father's younger brother" is pronounced "cawcaw," and the people themselves in writing Bágrí words often spell this sound with *o* and not *á*. Similarly in pronouncing the other vowels the Bágrí makes them as broad as he can, and the Panjábí cuts them short, at the same time often doubling the following consonant, *e.g.*, Bágrí "*tábar*" (child), Panjábí "*tabbar*" (wife); Bágrí *tibá* (sandhill), Panjábí *tibba;* Bágrí *kút* (bruise), Panjábí "*kutt.*" Bágrí is very free from nasal sounds which are common in Panjábí, and especially in the Panjábí of the Satlaj Musalmáns who seem to speak every word through the nose. In many words Bágrí has dropped the *r* which has been maintained by the Panjábí of the Satlaj, *e.g.*, Bágrí '*gám*' (village), Panjábí '*girámw;*' Bágrí *pota* (grandson), Panjábí *potra;* Bágri often has *b* for the sound pronounced *v* or *w* by Panjábí, *e.g.*, Bágrí *bánt* (divide) Panjábí *vand.* Bágrí has a greater tendency than Panjábí to adopt words with cerebral letters, *e.g.*, Bágrí '*kathe*' (where), Panjábí '*kitthe.*' Bágrí pronounces some of its surds like sonants, *e.g.*, the Urdu affix '*ká*' is pronounced and even written "*go.*" A similar tendency is sometimes seen in Panjábí, *e.g.*, the participial termination '*dá*' for '*tá,*' but aspirated sonants are often pronounced like surds, *e.g.*, '*ghar*' (house) sounds very like *khar*, *Bhatti* like *Patti*, and "*Dháríwál*" (the name of a clan of Sikh Jats) like

"*Thálíwál.*" The result of these differences is that Bágrí is distinguished by its broadness and coarseness, Sikh Panjábí by its sharpness, and Musalmán Panjábí by its nasal sound. Bágrí seems to be spoken from the back of the head, Sikh Panjábí from the front part of the mouth, and Musalmán Panjábí through the nose.

There is a great difference in the vocabulary of the two dialects, many of the commonest objects being called by totally different names. Indeed, there is an extraordinary variety of words within each dialect for the objects and operations of a peasant's every-day life, for domestic animals in all stages and conditions, for clothing of every kind, for utensils and implements, articles of food and ordinary operations in the house or in the field. Even the prepositions and conjunctions differ in the different dialects. I have given in an appendix a vocabulary of words I have come across, distinguishing between those used by the Bágrís and those used by the Panjábís. Some of the words there given are Hindustání or even Persian or Arabic, and have been put into the vocabulary because used in some peculiar sense by the peasants, but most of them are pure Bágrí or Panjábí and will give an idea of the difference between the two dialects. They are only a very few of the many local terms used by the peasants in different parts of the district.

Notwithstanding these differences the structure of both dialects is essentially the same. Yet there are also great differences in the inflections. The Hindustání affixes of the possessive case *ká kí ké* become in Bágrí *go gí ge* or rather *ro ri re* and in Panjábí *dá dí de* fem. pl. *diyán*; the dative affix in Hindustání *ko* becomes in Bágrí *ne*, in Panjábí *nun*. The affix denoting the agent of a past act, in Hindustání *ne*, is often dropped in Bágrí and almost always in Panjábí. The ablative affix instead of the Urdu *se*, is in Bágrí *sún* and in Panjábí *thon* or simply *on*. The plural base in both dialects generally ends in *án* instead of the Urdu *on* and is often retained in the nominative of a masculine noun ending in a consonant where the Urdu drops it. The pronouns and their oblique cases are expressed very differently. In Bágrí the tense which in Urdu is the subjunctive is used for the present, while in Panjábí as in Urdu the present tense is expressed by a participle with some form of the verb '*hai*', *e.g.*, Urdu '*kartá ňai*,' Bágrí '*kare*,' Panjábí '*kardá hai*' (he is doing). The present tense of the auxiliary verb is much the same in Panjábí as in Urdu, but in Bágrí the *h* gives place to *s*, *e.g.*, Urdu '*hai*' (is), Bágrí '*se*,' Panjábí '*hai*.' The past tense differs in all three, Urdu '*thá*' (was), Bágrí '*há*,' Panjábí '*sá*' or '*sí*'. The gerund which in Urdu ends in *ná*, ends in *an* in Panjabi and in *bo* in Bágrí, *e.g.*, Urdu *kháná* (eating), Bágrí *khábo*, and Panjábí *kháwan*. Their very interjections are different, *e. g.*, instead of the Urdu *hán* for 'yes,' the Bágrí says *hambe* and the Sikh *dho*. There are numerous other differences, some of which will be found stated in the appendix. The syntax of both dialects is very much the same, the most noticeable difference being the peculiar use made in Bágrí of the phrase *ko nín* = the Urdu *kol nahín* ('not at all'), *e. g.*, *dána ko hoiyá nín*, with the emphasis very much on the *ko*, meaning "no grain was produced," or *ko gaya nín* = 'he did not

go.' The vocabulary and notes in the appendix with the verses, ballads and proverbs will show how different the Bágrí and Panjábí dialects are practically, although structurally they belong to the same group.

I have said that all the many varieties of speech in the district may be grouped into these two classes, and that it is possible in this district to draw a sharper line between the two dialects than in most cases where two closely-related dialects meet each other; and yet it must be remembered that all the dialects of this part of the country, whether classed as Panjábí, Bágrí, Hindí, Márwári or Jatki, belong to the same family, and if the field of inquiry be made sufficiently wide, will be found to merge almost imperceptibly in one another. For instance, the dialect of the Bahníwál Játs south of Sirsá about Darba is neither pure Bágrí nor pure Hindí (applying that term especially to the dialect of Hariána); the Ghaggar Ráins use the Panjábí and Hindustání inflections indiscriminately, the Sikhs talk a Panjábí which more closely resembles ordinary Hindí than does the Panjábí of the Satlaj Musalmáns, and even Panjábí and Bágrí have affinities with each other which they do not possess with the Hindí of Hariána, *e.g.*, the future which in Urdu and Hindí is *milega* (he will meet), is in Sikh Panjábí *milegá* or *milú*, in Musalmán Panjábí *milsi* and in Bágrí *milshi*; the dative affix *nun* of Panjábí is more like the *ne* of Bágrí and Hindí than the *ko* of Urdu; and Panjábí and Bágrí resemble each other in dropping the instrumental affix *ne* which is expressed in Urdu and Hindí. It is the same with the vocabulary. Almost every single word has its own range of country throughout which it is commonly used, and it is only gradually that it is displaced by another word of the same meaning. This classification of dialects therefore is only a rough one, and is rendered possible only by disregarding minor differences and taking account of the most important and striking.

As the different varieties of speech so closely resemble each other it is easy for the one to pass into the other even in the case of an individual family. For instance, a Bágrí family settles in a Panjábí village and in its constant intercourse with its neighbours it gradually drops its Bágrí words and inflections and adopts those of the Panjábí dialect. The change is not a sudden one, as it would be in adopting a totally different language: it is gradual and imperceptible; and in the course of a generation or two, the Bágrí family is found talking almost pure Panjábí. The change is greatly hastened if they have changed their religion, for instance, if they have become Sikh or Musalmán. A Panjábí is less likely to change his dialect for Bágrí, for he looks down on the Bágrís and makes constant efforts to keep up his connection with his own people. If the difference of dialect be great or the body of colonists numerous, it takes longer for the change of dialect to take full effect; and we find, for instance, villages of Márwári Játs among the Bágrí Játs south of Sirsá who still speak their own Márwári dialect.

The Báwariyas have a dialect of their own which has sometimes been considered a sort of thieves' slang, kept up to facilitate their combination

for purposes of crime; but the great mass of the Báwariyas in this district are not at all given to crime and have no desire to conceal their dialect; moreover, it is spoken most commonly by the women and children, while the men, at all events in their intercourse with their neighbours, speak in ordinary Bágrí or Panjábí. It seems probable that it is simply the dialect of the country of their origin kept up by them in their wanderings. I had not time to make much enquiry about it, but was given the following as their names for the numbers by their leading men; *ek*, *bai*, *tren*, *chár*, *pánch*, *chhau*, *hát*, *áth*, *nau*, *daukh*, *vikh* (20,) and the following words *khakhra* for *susra* (father-in-law), *khákhú* for *sású* (mother-in-law), *hándo* for *sánda* (lizard), *manakh* (man), *cháro* (antelope), *háru* (snake), *laukra* (fox), *nauri* (jackal), *jamna* (right hand), *dáva* (left hand). Some of these words may be Bágrí, and they are not much to go upon, but the use of *h* for *s* and the peculiar *kh* for the Sanskrit palatal sibilant should afford some clue to the origin of the dialect, for this *kh* sound, like the Arabic *kh* in "*kháwind*," is not found in any dialect indigenous to this part of India. The Nats and some others of the wandering tribes are also said to have dialects of their own.

Characters used in writing.

101. In writing the vernacular, the Persian character is used in the Courts and in all official correspondence and is taught in the Government schools, but except among officials and persons closely connected with Government offices, such as patwáris and petition-writers, it is almost unknown in the district. The characters indigenous to the tract, which are still ordinarily employed by all private persons in their every-day transactions, are all founded on the Devánágarí alphabet ordinarily used in printing Sanskrit books. A considerable number of persons of all classes, peasants, Bráhmans, Banyas and Aroras employ the pure Nágarí or Shástrí character, the letters and vowel-marks being made almost exactly as they are printed in our Sanskrit books, so that any one who has learned the Nágarí characters of books printed in English presses can easily follow their hand-writing. This character cannot be written quickly if each letter be completely formed, and different styles of writing have grown into use due to the attempts made, by omitting portions of some Nágarí letters and modifying others, to write more rapidly. The first thing to be dropped seems to be the horizontal stroke which forms the upper part of most Nágarí letters, but an intermediate stage perhaps is the drawing a continuous horizontal line and hanging the letters from it. The next thing is to drop the vowel marks above and below the line. And we then have a hand-writing consisting of unconnected letters, almost all consonants. This is called Hindí or Mahájaní because commonly used by Hindú Mahájans or Banyas, and sometimes Moda or Munde Akhar (with shaven letters) or Lande Akhar (with tailless letters)—the last three names seem to refer to its bare appearance as compared with the Nágarí characters with their horizontal lines and vowel marks, as *Munda* means shaven, *Moda* is applied to a shaven mendicant, and *Landa* means an animal which has lost

its tail. These contractions and simplifications have been gradually worked out in somewhat different ways in different parts of the country and among different sets of people and consequently we have different Hindí characters known as Hissári, Bíkáneri, Márwári or Aggarwáli, Maheśri, Aroránwáli; but they are all very similar in their nature, and each letter is represented in the different kinds of writing by characters more or less resembling each other and the original Nágarí letters from which they have been developed. It is true that the total result is so different that a man who knows one style of writing often cannot read his neighbour's hand-writing because of the differences in the forms of the letters, but any one who knew the Nágarí characters well would not take long to master any of the Hindí or Lande styles of writing which have originated from that alphabet. The commercial classes generally, both Banyas and Aroras, employ these characters in keeping their accounts and writing their letters, but they do not seem in this district to have developed a running hand in which the letters are all joined together; almost every letter stands by itself without any connection with its neighbours. The want of vowel marks and of spaces between the words adds greatly to the difficulty of deciphering such hand-writing. A few Bráhmans and peasants have also adopted one or other of these styles. Another character, also founded on the Nágarí alphabet, or on an older alphabet from which the Nágarí itself is derived, but developed from it in another part of the country and in a different way, is the Gurmukhi, which is employed by some of the Sikh Jats and their religious teachers and sometimes by traders living among the Sikhs. The character employed is almost exactly the same as that ordinarily used by English presses for printing Panjábí books in the Gurmukhi character. Some of the Lande characters resemble Gurmukhi characters more closely than they do the original Nágarí, and seem to have developed from the Nágarí through the Gurmukhi. But of all these different characters it may be said that they are all evidently of one origin, and as in the case of the dialects, they gradually shade off into one another, and no clear line can be drawn between any two of them. Some of them differ no more from each other than do different styles of hand-writing in English; others differ as much as ordinary English hand-writing differs from ordinary German hand-writing, both differing from Nágarí much as English and German hand-writing differ from printed Roman letters; except that, as already said, the Hindí styles employed in the Sirsá district do not run the letters together.

Literature—Verses and Proverbs.

102. There are few written books in the district, as the people are not much given to reading. There are of course the lithographed law-books and school-books introduced by Government officials, but these are to be found only in the hands of officials and pupils of Government schools. In the towns too there are a few lithographed books imported from Delhi, Lahore, &c., but the number of people who read them is very small. With these exceptions almost all the books in use in the district are written by the hand and they nearly all deal with religious

subjects or traditions regarding the ancestors of their readers. Thus the Musalmáns have their Qurán written in the Persian character, which they are taught to learn by heart in the village mosque; the Sikhs have their Gurmukhi Granth Sáhib; and the Hindú Bráhmans and ascetics have their religious writings in the Nágarí character. The Bodlas are said to have in Khái their place of origin a book called Intisáb-ul-mubárak, giving an account of the origin and history of the tribe. The Ráins of Mangála have two lithographed books in the Persian character representing the opposite sides of a religious discussion which has divided the thinking Musalmáns of the neighbourhood into two parties; they are interesting because they are composed in the dialect of the Sotar, a form of Panjábí. The Bahní-wal Játs of Jamál have a book in the Nágarí character and the Bágrí dialect as spoken about Darba, giving an account of their early history when their ancestors formerly held this part of the country. The Bishnois have a book in the Nágarí character, written in verse seemingly in a Márwári dialect, giving an account of Jhámbají the founder of their religion and of its principal tenets.

Although the written literature is very meagre, there is as usual among illiterate peasants, a wealth of proverbs, ballads, verses, songs and stories which are committed to memory and passed on from one generation to another. The Mirásís and Bháts on festive occasions recite the praises of the ancestors of their host; professional story-tellers repeat long-winded stories for the benefit of their rustic audiences; many of the older peasants have learned by heart old ballads or snatches out of the Granth Sáhib or some other religious or moral composition and repeat them for the edification of their fellows. I have given in an appendix a number of the proverbs and sayings, both in Panjábí and Bágrí, which are current among the people, as well as some longer verses which seem to have been passed from mouth to mouth, and some which were composed while I was in the district with reference to the operations of the Settlement. I regret that I had not time to make the collection more complete, for these proverbs and current sayings, while they are good specimens of the language, give us perhaps the best available evidence of the real thoughts and feelings of the people.

Education.

103. As might be expected in a new district where the people have recently settled and where land is plentiful, education is rather backward in Sirsá. So late as 1856 the Superintendent reported that there was not a single school in the whole district, and according to the Census Returns of 1881 the only districts in the Panjáb in which the proportion of the male population who can read and write is so small are Bannu, Kohát, Hissár and Hazára. The proportion however is not very much below the average for the Province, for in Sirsá 56 out of every thousand males can read and write, while the proportion for the Province is only 61. Of the 138,691 males in the district only 7,813, or 1 in 18, can read and write or are under instruction; of these 6,158 are returned as able to read and write, and

1,655 as under instruction. Half of the boys under instruction are in the towns, although the population of the towns is only about one-eighth of that of the villages, and the number of males who can read and write is almost as many in the towns as in the villages ; and while one male out of every five in the towns can read and write, only one in every 30 of the village population can. The number who could read and write was returned in 1868 as 6,461 males and 99 females; the number returned in 1881 including those under instruction was 7,813 males and 91 females ; so that, if allowance be made for the increase of population, the improvement in education would seem to have been very small.

Of the 588 Saráogí males 235 or nearly half can write. The Saráogís are nearly all well-to-do traders of the Banya class, and almost all their boys learn to write the Nágarí or more commonly the Lande character. Of the Hindú male population one in 13 can write ; these belong chiefly to the Banya and Arora trading-classes, many of whom take advantage of the Government schools to have their boys taught Urdu, while others send their boys to some old Pandit who teaches them to write the Nágarí or Lande character, and to make simple calculations, but little else. Of the Musalmán males only 1 in 36 can read and write; and probably many so returned have only been taught in the village mosque to learn the Qurán by rote. According to the figures, the Sikhs are most backward of all in education, for only one male in 38 can write ; they are especially devoted to agriculture and live mostly in the villages where there is less opportunity and less inducement to learn than in the towns ; many of them know only the Gurmukhi character.

The standard of education too is very low, as may be judged from the nature of the instruction now given. There are in the district two Anglo-vernacular Middle Schools, one at Sirsá and the other at Fázilká, but very few boys attending those schools are above the Lower Primary classes ; and there are 19 Vernacular Primary Schools with 590 boys on the rolls, four of them teaching Nágarí only and the rest Urdu. The total number of boys attending these Government schools in 1881 was 622 and in 1883 the number had risen to about 750. There are besides 105 indigenous schools with 814 pupils. In 88 of these so-called schools with 650 pupils the teaching is given in the Persian character ; they are mostly village mosques, where the attendant, himself an illiterate man, teaches the Musalmán boys of the village to recite passages in Arabic from the Qurán without any understanding of their meaning ; writing is taught in only one such school, but in 37 of them lessons are said to be given in religion, morality and Arabic grammar ; arithmetic is not taught in these Musalmán schools. The teacher is the mosque attendant and gives these lessons as part of his religious duties, for which he is paid in mosque-fees usually given in kind at harvest-time, or in customary fees at marriages and funerals ; the amount he thus realises is generally small, and he often ekes it out by engaging in agriculture. In seven schools with 52 boys Gurmukhi is the medium of instruction ; the pupils are taught by the village Sádh to read and

write Gurmukhi and learn something of the Granth, the sacred book of the Sikhs. In eight schools with 42 pupils the Nágarí or Shástrí character is taught and in two schools with 70 boys Lande Mahájaní; these schools are chiefly in Sirsá and Fázilká, and are taught by Bráhmans and attended by the sons of Bráhmans, Banyas and Aroras; in a few of them religion and astrology are taught; but the usual subject of instruction is mental arithmetic with a little writing, which the boys practise at home. It is noted as interesting that one of these schools is taught by a man of the Chúhra (sweeper) caste and attended by boys of all classes. In all schools the attendance is often irregular and the boys are rarely kept at them for any length of time. It is evident then that the school-education given to most of those returned as under instruction is of the most elementary nature, and that it is by a stretch of language that even the small number returned as able to read and write can be said to be educated at all. What education there is is almost confined to the trading-classes, and the number of peasants who can write more than their own names is exceedingly small. Low as the standard of education is among males, it is lower still among females. Only 91 females in the whole district were returned as under instruction or able to read and write, and the only female school in the district has just been closed because of the poor results it gave.

Muhammadanism in Sirsá.

104. In discussing the religions of the Sirsá population it will be best to take first the Musalmáns, partly because in the modern history of the district they are its oldest inhabitants, but chiefly because it is easier to distinguish between the Musalmáns and all other religions and sects than it is to distinguish the latter among themselves. A Musalmán believes in one God, whom he calls Alláh, follows Muhammad as the prophet of God, undergoes circumcision, learns the Qurán, says his prayers (*namáz*) with his face towards Mecca, worships in a mosque (*masít*), marries by the Muhammadan ceremony of *Nikáh*, and buries his dead; he abhors the pig, but will eat beef and the flesh of most other clean animals, only they must be killed in the Muhammadan fashion (*halál*), that is, they must be bled by having their throats cut before death with the phrase "in the name of God" (*bismilláh*); he is allowed to smoke tobacco or eat opium, but not to drink wine or spirits; he is not so particular about his food as the Hindú, nor does he consider ablution a religious duty, except the washing of his mouth, hands and feet before formal prayer in the mosque; he allows his beard to grow, but often shaves the lower edge of his moustache, and when he shaves his head he leaves no scalp-lock; his characteristic dress in this district is the loin cloth (*lúngi*), worn like a kilt; only the few Muhammadans of Hindustáni origin wear drawers (*páejáma*). The total number of Musalmáns is returned as 93,289 or 37 per cent. of the total population, an increase of only 14 per cent. on the number returned in 1868, when they amounted to 39 per cent. of the whole, so that the increase of the Muhammadan population is not quite keeping pace with that of the total population, which has increased by 20 per cent. since 1868. Of

the number now returned 42,919 or 46 per cent. are Rájput and 2,798 are Jats, but as I have already pointed out in describing caste and tribe, it is, in the case of the Musalmáns, almost impossible to distinguish between Jats and Rájputs. All the Biloch, Pathán, Saiyyad, Shaikh and Mughal are Musalmán, and so are all the Ráins. Of the inferior tribes all the Juláhá, Telí, Qassáb and Jhabel are Musalmán, most of the Máchhí, Lohár, Mochí and Dúm, and a considerable number of Faqír, Gújar, Kumhár, Khátí, Súnar, Náí, Chhípí, Khatík and Chúhra. As a rule in villages where the proprietary body is Musalmán the cultivators and lower classes are also Musalmán, as they have more in common with the proprietors than Hindús or Sikhs would have. In this district the Musalmáns are mostly either Bhattís, Joiyas, Chauháns, Tunwars and Ráins, who have lived for some time in and near the Ghaggar valley, or Wattus, Bodlas, Chishtis, Panwárs, Kharrals and other tribes who came from the Satlaj and the rivers farther west, bringing with them their inferior Musalmán followers, or Hindustání Musalmáns settled on the Ghaggar by the British Government; while the Sikhs came from the dry Málwa tract to the north and the Hindús from the dry Rájputána country to the south. Almost the whole of the population along the Ghaggar and Satlaj are Musalmán, and there is a band of Musalmán villages stretching across the Dry Tract from the one river to the other between the Sikhs and Bágrís, where the pastoral Musalmáns were found roaming in the waste with their herds of cattle, and were confined within circumscribed boundaries when the prairie was parcelled out by British officers. With the exception of the Hindustánís from across the Jamna, almost all the Musalmáns speak Panjábí.

Of the Muhammadan population only 131 are returned as Shiáhs and 28 as unspecified, so that practically they are all returned as Sunnís. The fact is that the peasants ordinarily do not know anything of sects, or trouble themselves about minute differences of creed. There is a small sect on the Ghaggar about Ránia and Mangála, the disciples of a teacher named Núr Muhammad of Fathábád who died in Mangála in 1864 and left a book, which has been lithographed, in the local dialect of Panjábí with many Arabic and Persian words intermixed, on the subject of his special tenets. His followers are called Núrias after their teacher and Takfirís because they insist strongly on the spiritual nature of the deity and call those heathens (Káfir) who speak of God as if he had eyes and hands and a bodily presence. The sect however is unimportant. An interesting process of conversion to Islám is now going on among the Chúhras (sweepers) in the Musalmán villages on the Satlaj and in the Dry Tract towards Fázilká. It is said that some Qází near Pákpattan began a few years ago to proselytize among this the lowest caste of all, and every year sees new converts join Islám. Such converted Chúhras are called Díndár (holders of the faith) and nicknamed Khoja (eunuch) which is sometimes interpreted to mean "one who searches after truth" (*khojná*=to search). They undergo circumcision, say *namáz*, keep fasts and otherwise act as Musalmáns; and the Wattus and other high-class Musalmáns of the neighbourhood treat them with consideration as new converts, and sometimes even

smoke with them. "Otherwise," say the Chúhras, "what good would it be to be converted!" Except among the Chúhras Islám does not seem to be spreading in the district, although in Musalmán villages a family of some inferior caste perhaps now and then yields to the inducement to become Musalmán, especially when its relatives and caste-fellows in the village and neighbourhood are mostly Muhammadan; and although Islám has this advantage that once a man has become Musalmán, his descendants must remain Musalmán and cannot revert to Hindúism. The Musalmáns are not, as a rule, at all bigoted in this district, nor are they ordinarily very particular about conforming to all the rules of their religion. Almost every Musalmán village has its mosque (*masít*), sometimes a pretentious erection of brick and plaster, conspicuous from afar with its three white domes and two tall mínárs, but more often a humble building of unburnt clay plastered over with mud with three mud pinnacles to do duty for domes and a mud enclosure strewn with grass, where there are generally some jars of water standing, and sometimes a fireplace for heating it for the ablutions of the worshippers before they begin their prayers. Here the sons of the more pious villagers come to learn verses of the Qurán by rote from the mosque-attendant (*masítwála*), who is sometimes dignified by the title of Mulláh or Qází, and here on rare occasions the villagers themselves come to public prayers. Few of the peasants trouble much to keep the prescribed fasts (*roza*), and it is only the more particular among them who make a point of saying prayers (*namáz*) daily at the times appointed. According to the Ráins, who are by far the most intelligent of the Musalmáns, these times are as follows:—

Fajar ...	...	a little before sunrise.
Peshí or zohar	...	about 2 P. M.
'Asar or dígar	...	just before sunset.
Maghrib ...	...	after sunset.
'Isha or Sota	...	about 8 or 9 P. M.

These are the five times at which it is the duty (*farz*) of a good Musalmán to pray. The *tahajjad* or prayer after midnight is not a necessary duty, but a desirable act of devotion (*wájib*). The Bodlas and Wattus of the Satlaj are most particular, or at least most ostentations, about saying their prayers at the proper time, especially in the early morning (*namáz welá*) and after sunset. The Musalmáns seldom exhibit any feeling of religious bigotry towards their Hindú neighbours, and notwithstanding the great differences between them, they manage to live together with very little friction. Like the Hindús, they are very superstitious, and notwithstanding their monotheism they are much given to the worship of saints (*pír*); they also treat with great respect the sacred families, such as the Bodlas and Chishtis who are given the best places and the first helpings of food at their feasts, and are credited with miraculous powers. The Musalmán peasants generally however have no such fear of these holy men as the frontier Musalmans have for their Saiyyads and Mullábs, and are quite ready to oppose them when their demands seem too exacting.

Conversion to Islám seems to have a wonderful effect upon the character of Hindú tribes, which is best seen where, as in this district, members of the same clan related to each other within a few generations are found living side by side, some of them Sikhs or Hindús and some of them Musalmáns. The chief characteristics of the Hindú peasant are perhaps thrift and quiet contented industry; those of his Musalmán relative pride, extravagance and restless discontent. The Hindú and Sikh are especially devoted to agriculture; the Musalmáns until lately lived a roaming pastoral life. The Hindús generally are less given to quarrelling than their Musalmán neighbours. But it is especially in want of thrift and forethought that the Musalmán differs from the Hindú. The Sikhs are frugal and saving but not miserly; the Bágrís are often so very thrifty as to deserve the name of misers; but the Musalmáns take no thought for the morrow; they waste their substance in feasting, in fine clothing, in lavish presents, and when hard times come they are forced to borrow from their Hindú neighbours often at ruinous interest. One consequence of this want of thrift is that the land is fast passing out of their hands into those of Hindús. A large area of land, the proprietary rights in which were held to belong to Musalmáns when rights were first created fifty years ago, has already passed by compulsory or voluntary sale into the hands of Sikh and Bágrí Játs or Hindú Banyas and Ároras; and the process is still going on, though more slowly than before. Another consequence is that very generally throughout the district Musalmán peasants pay their rents in kind, while, as a rule, Hindús and Sikhs pay their rent in cash; and there are not a few villages in which the same owners take rent in cash from their Hindú tenants and in kind from the Musalmáns. It seems that both landlord and tenant find it hopeless to expect a Musalmán to save in good years in order to provide against bad years, as the Hindú will. It is difficult to explain this effect of Islám on the character of the peasant. Perhaps it is partly due to the stronger belief of the Musalmán in the resistless power of fate, so that when any difficulty meets him he exclaims: "Well! it was so fated" (*Khair! Sálí nasíb!* or *qismat!*) and succumbs to it. It is true that religion does not alone form the character of a tribe; for instance Hindú Rájputs are often proud, lazy and thriftless; and on the other hand, few Hindús are more thrifty and industrious than the Musalmán Ráins; but there can be no doubt that the tendency of Islám is to deteriorate the character of the peasant and make him thriftless and discontented.

Hindúism in Sirsá.

105. With the exception of the Musalmáns and the 17 persons returned as Christians, all the other inhabitants of the district may be classed as Hindús; for Sikhism, Jainism and the Bishnoi religion are but sects of Hindúism, and the religions of the lowest classes, though admitting of practices which are abhorred by the high-caste Hindú, have much the same general character as other Hindú religions, and cannot be marked off from them by any clear definition. Indeed, Hindúism in its widest

sense embraces such a vast number of deities, doctrines and practices that it seems almost hopeless to attempt to distinguish them. It is true that a high-caste Hindú, such as a Bráhman or Banya, will deny the right of the many low-caste tribes to the name of Hindú, but when we go a little lower down the social scale we find the definition less rigid and many of these lower castes claim to be Hindús and give some reason for their claim. It is however possible to separate off a number of castes which, from the impure nature of their food or their occupation, are generally considered to be beyond the pale of Hindúism. Such are the tribes which eat carrion, or the leavings of other tribes, or the animals of the river and prairie thought to be impure feeders, such as lizards, snakes, crocodiles and turtles, for instance the Chúhra, Sánsí, Dhának, Báwariya, Mor, Mahtam. So also the tribes which eat the flesh of the sacred cow and work in leather, such as the Chamár, Khatík, Raigar. Perhaps from the point of view of the higher castes, a Hindú might be defined as a man who venerates the cow, will not eat beef or the flesh of unclean animals, will not engage in an impure occupation and is ministered to in matters of religion by Bráhmans of acknowledged caste. Yet this definition is by no means satisfactory, for the idea of uncleanness in animals and impurity in occupation varies greatly; for instance some consider the wild pig to be clean enough for men of undoubted good caste to eat, while others abominate it. If however we separate off on the one hand the lower castes who are generally considered unworthy of the name of Hindú, and on the other the sects which have become so distinct as to be ordinarily known by a name of their own, such as Sikhism or the religions of the Saráogís and Bishnois, we have left the great mass of the Játs, Rájputs, Bráhmans, Banyas, Aroras, Ahírs, Gújars, Mális, Khátis, Kumhárs and other castes who rank fairly high in the social scale, except of course those of them who have been converted to Islám. Of these, the Hindús in the stricter sense of the term, it may be said that they venerate the Bráhman and the cow, perform worship (*púja*) and present offerings in their temples (*thákurdwára* or *shivála*), revere the names of Rám, Hari, Shiv and other well known gods of the Hindú Pantheon, mutter set prayers, perform ablutions as a religious duty, will not eat beef or the flesh of any animals that do not chew the cud and divide the hoof, perform the marriage ceremony by moving round the sacred fire, burn their dead and send the ashes to the Ganges. The men generally wear a loin-cloth tucked up between the legs (*dhoti*), and usually shave the head leaving only a scalp-lock (*bodí* or *chotí*); sometimes they allow the beard to grow, but more commonly shave the whole face, or all but the moustache. They are very particular about the purity of cooked food and will not eat out of an earthen vessel which has already been used for the purpose; nor will they drink water from the hands of any but men of certain pure castes. They are allowed to smoke tobacco or opium and to drink spirits. The chief characteristics of the Hindú are mild tolerance and contented thrift; his religion seeks no proselytes and rarely bursts out into fanaticism; when it does, it is usually in defence of the sacred cow. Some practical inconvenience is caused by their observance

of caste, which prevents members of one tribe from intermarrying, eating, smoking or having much intercourse with those of another; but these rules are social rather than religious, and are observed by the Musalmáns and by the lower castes as well as by the strict Hindús, though not quite to the same extent. The idea of personal defilement from contact with persons of other castes, especially of the inferior castes, must often be troublesome and fixes a great gulf between man and man. It is wonderful however how little friction these multifarious rules cause between the different classes. Each caste respects the prejudices of its neighbours and is almost unconsciously careful to avoid offending them. For instance, a Chamár or Chúhra will not approach unless specially invited, and sometimes takes care to announce that he belongs to one of the castes whose touch is defilement. The rules of caste are not so strict in Sirsá as they are farther east, and they are so generally recognised and obeyed by all classes of the community that they rarely attract notice; and restrictions which would seem intolerable to a European, and prejudices which would be constantly offended in European society, seem only natural to a native, and form an unnoticed part of his every-day life.

It is difficult to make out exactly the religious beliefs of the ordinary Hindú peasant. He has practically no belief in the transmigration of souls, but has a vague idea that there is a future life, in which those who are good in this world will be happy in a heaven (*surg*) while those who are bad will be wretched in a hell (*narak*). His devotional offerings to demons, saints and godlings are meant rather to avert temporal evils or secure temporal blessings than to improve his prospects of the life to come. He has an idea that sin (*páp*) will bring evil on him and his fellows in this life as well as after death. His instincts as to good and evil are much the same as the ordinary European moral distinctions, only they do not take so wide a range; instead of extending to the whole human race, or to the whole nation or sect, they extend only to his own tribe, or village, or family. He thinks it wrong to tell a lie unless perhaps to benefit a relative or friend; he thinks it wicked to injure a man unless he has been injured by him; or to cheat another unless he thinks that that other would cheat him if he got the chance; or to take a bribe without giving the promised consideration for it. He believes vaguely that it is good for him to meditate on the deity, and to show that he is not forgetting him, he mutters "Rám Rám Rám" or repeats the name of some other Hindú god when he gets up in the morning, and if he is piously inclined, at other times also, in season and out of season. Notwithstanding all the numerous saints and deities whom he endeavours to propitiate he has a vague belief that above all there is one supreme God whom he calls Naráyan or Parmeshar, who knows all things and by whom all things were made, and who will reward the good and punish the bad both in this life and in the life to come. There are of course particular sects of Hindús who have developed one phase of these beliefs more strongly than another, some who believe in transmigration of souls, some who have devoted themselves to the worship of one

godling more than that of the others; but so far as my experience goes, the moral and religious ideas of the great mass of the Hindú peasantry are as I have above described.

The Sikh religion.

106. Hindúism, in its widest sense, embraces innumerable sects, some of them of little importance, either because of the small number of their followers or because of the insignificant effect which the peculiar tenets of the sect have upon their daily life. The most important development of Hindúism in this neighbourhood is the Sikh religion, professed by 28,303 persons, or 11 per cent. of the total population of the district, which thus ranks sixth of the districts of the Province in proportion of Sikhs to total population, although, owing to the smallness of its population, it contains only one-sixtieth of the total number of Sikhs in the Province. A distinction must be made however between the true Singhs, the followers of the tenth Guru, Govind Singh, and the Nánakpanthís or followers of the first Guru, Bába Nának. The latter are often denied the right of calling themselves Sikh, and indeed they often call themselves Hindú only, and it seems probable that in the Census of 1881 some of them returned themselves as Sikh, and others simply as Hindú. The Nánakpanthís have little to distinguish them from ordinary Hindús. They dress like them and shave the head with the exception of the scalp-lock (*bodí* or *chotí*), whence they are sometimes called *munna* or shaven Sikhs, or *bodíwála*. They are allowed the use of tobacco and are not required to wear any distinguishing marks; they venerate Bráhmans and the cow, and indeed the only difference between them and the ordinary Hindús is that they follow the tolerant quietist doctrines of Bába Nának and are less trammelled by caste rules and ceremonial observances, especially in the matter of food. Many of the Aroras are Nánakpanthís. The true Singh is a follower of the warlike Guru Govind Singh, and is distinguished by five outward marks, the names of which begin with the letter *K*,—(1) the *kes* or uncut hair and unshaven beard, (2) the *kachch* or short drawers ending above the knee, (3) the *karáa* or iron bangle on the wrist, (4) the *kangá* or comb, (5) the *kard* or steel knife. They are initiated by *páhul* or baptism, follow the Granth, and are forbidden the use of tobacco, but allowed to indulge in spirits and drugs; they venerate the cow and object to cow-killing even more vehemently than the ordinary Hindú does, but are more given to eating the flesh of other animals which chew the cud and divide the hoof, the proper method of killing them being by *jhatká* or decapitation; they are not supposed to follow the teachings of Bráhmans or to be bound by caste rules and ceremonial observances, except those connected with personal cleanliness. The Sikhs in this district however are not particular in obeying all these precepts to the letter. They do wear the *kes* (whence they are called *kesadhárí*) and allow their beards to grow uncut, but often dress in the ordinary Hindú loin-cloth (*dhotí*) instead of the *kachch*, and omit to carry the *karáa*, the *kanga*, and the *kard* except when it suits their personal convenience; they do hear the Granth read some-

times and a few learn passages out of it, and they have Gurus of their own and do not revere the Bráhman quite so much as do other Hindús ; they would not allow cows to be killed if they could help it, but make little objection to cow-killing by their Musalmán neighbours so long as it is not too ostentatious. Many of them smoke tobacco, and few in this district are given to excessive indulgence in spirits, opium or drugs. They are more lax in caste observances than is the ordinary Hindú, but still keep the lower castes at a distance. This makes it impossible to draw a line between Singhs, Nánakpanthís and Hindús, and there are some, for instance the Jhorar Jats of Bani, who are considered Sikhs by some and by others Bágrí Hindús. Of the 28,303 persons returned as Sikh, 21,855 or 77 per cent. are Jats, and most of the others belong to the Arora, Tarkhán, Kumhár and Chúhra tribes, while a few are Báwariya, Chamár, Chhípí, Sunár, Mahtam, Náí or Lohár by caste. Most of those who are not Jat by tribe have adopted the Sikh religion owing to some connection with Sikh Jats and are generally found living in villages owned by Sikh Jats. The Sikhs all speak Panjábí and have come south within the last 60 years from Pattiála, Nábha, Firozpur and the rest of the Málwa country Cis-Satlaj. Their villages lie along the north-east border of the district in the Dry Tract between the valleys of the Ghaggar and Satlaj, and are for the most part separated by a band of Musalmán villages from the Hindú Bágrís along the south-west border ; but the Sikh immigration from the north is still going on, and they are gradually dispossessing the less thrifty and industrious Musalmáns, several of whose villages have passed within the last few years by sale into the hands of Sikhs. Some of them have even pushed across into Bíkáner territory and taken up land there. The Bágrí Játs show some tendency to adopt the Sikh religion. They are admitted to belong to the same race as the Sikh Jats who take their daughters in marriage, and it is easy for a Bágrí Ját to make the changes necessary to entitle him to be considered a Sikh ; indeed, it is said that a Bágrí has only to let his hair grow and speak Panjábí to become a Sikh. Several Bágrí Játs, as well as men of inferior castes, have professed the Sikh religion within recent years. And thus by immigration and conversion, Sikhism is making way in the district, and according to the Census figures the increase of Sikhs since 1868 has been 31 per cent., while the increase of total population has been only 20 per cent. This is matter for congratulation, for the Sikh religion and its associations greatly improve the character of the Hindú peasant, and the Sikh Jats are far and away the finest peasantry we have. They are industrious and thrifty yet not miserly, manly and independent yet not aggressive, intelligent and tolerant and as free from prejudices and caste restrictions as it is possible for a Hindú to be, and if only we could teach the hand that has wielded the sword and now holds the plough so well to handle the pen to as good purpose, the problem of self-government would be solved.

There are in the district a few followers of the Carpenter Rám Singh known as Kúkas or Howlers, and one of his immediate followers belonged

to Thiráj in the Dabwálí tahsíl and is said to have brought away the treasure of the party when they were suppressed after their outbreak at Maler Kotla in 1872. They are of little importance in this neighbourhood and seem to be looked upon with some contempt as harmless fanatics by their Sikh neighbours, who however give them credit for a purer morality and a stricter regard for truth than most people. Some of them gather at the annual fair held at Bará Tírath or Haripura near Abohar, which is described below.

The Bishnoí religion.

107. The next most important development of Hindúism in this district is the Bishnoí sect, which is of Bágrí or Márwárí origin. The name Bishnoí is evidently derived from the prominence they give in their creed and worship to the god Vishnu, though they themselves say it is derived from the twenty-nine (*Bís-nau*) articles of their creed as prescribed by the founder of the sect. They own sixteen villages in this district, chiefly about Sítoganno and to the south of Abohar, and are numerous in the Hissár district and in Bíkáner. It is said that any member of the higher Hindú castes can become a Bishnoí, but in this district at least they are almost all Ját or Khátí by tribe, and retain the language, dress and other characteristics of the Bágrís; but they try to sink their tribe in their religion and give their caste as Bishnoí merely. The account they give of the founder of their sect is as follows:—At Pínpásar, a village south of Bíkáner in the Jodhpur tegritory, there lived a Rájput Panwár named Laut who had attained the age of sixty years and had no son. One day a neighbour going out to sow his field met Laut, and deeming it a bad omen to meet a childless man, turned back from his purpose. This cut Laut to the quick, and he went out to the jungle and bewailed his childlessness until evening, when a faqír appeared to him and told him that in nine months he should have a son, and after showing his miraculous power by drawing milk from a calf, vanished from his sight. At the time named a child miraculously appeared in Laut's house and was miraculously suckled by his wife Hánsá. This happened in Sambat 1508 (A. D. 1451). For seven years the boy, who was an incarnation (*autár*) of Vishnu, played with his fellows, and then for 27 years he tended cattle, but all this time he spoke no word. His miraculous powers were shown in various ways, such as producing sweets from nothing for the delectation of his companions, and he became known as *Achamba* (the Wonder), whence his name of Jhámba by which he is generally known. After 34 years a Bráhman was sent for to get him to speak, and on his confessing his failure Jhámbájí again showed his power by lighting a lamp by simply snapping his fingers, and uttered his first word. He then adopted the life of a teacher and went to reside on a sandhill some 30 miles south of Bíkáner, where after 51 years he died and was buried instead of being burnt like an ordinary Hindú. He did not marry but devoted himself to the life of an ascetic teacher. His sayings (*sabd*) to the number of 120 were written down by his disciples, and have been handed down in a book (*pothi*) which is written in the Nágarí character

and in a Hindú dialect similar to Bágrí, seemingly a Márwárí dialect. The "twenty-nine" precepts given by him for the guidance of his followers are as follows :—

Tís din sútak—pánch roz ratwanti nárí
Será karo shnán—síl—santokh—suchh pyárí
Páni—báni—ídhní—itná líjyo chhán.
Dayá—dharm hirde dharo—garu batáí ján
Chori—nindya—jhúth—barjya bád na kariyo koe
Amal—tamákú—bhang—líl dúr hí tyágo
Mad—más se dekhke dúr hí bhágo.
Amar rakháo thát—bail tani ná báho
Amáshya barat—rúnkh lílo ná gháo.
Hom jap samádh pújá—básh baikunthí páo
Untís dharm kí ákhrí garu batáí soe
Páhal deo par chávya jisko nám Bishnoí hoe

which is thus interpreted :—"For thirty days after child-birth and five days after a menstrual discharge a woman must not cook food. Bathe in the morning. Commit not adultery. Be content. Be abstemious and pure. Strain your drinking-water. Be careful of your speech. Examine your fuel in case any living creature be burnt with it. Show pity to living creatures. Keep duty present to your mind as the Teacher bade. Do not steal. Do not speak evil of others. Do not tell lies. Never quarrel. Avoid opium, tobacco, *bhang* and blue clothing. Flee from spirits and flesh. See that your goats are kept alive (not sold to Musalmáns who will kill them for food). Do not plough with bullocks. Keep a fast on the day before the new moon. Do not cut green trees. Sacrifice with fire. Say prayers. Meditate. Perform worship and attain heaven. And the last of the twenty-nine duties prescribed by the Teacher—Baptize your children, if you would be called a true Bishnoí."

Some of these precepts are not strictly obeyed ; for instance, although ordinarily they allow no blue in their clothing, yet a Bishnoí, if he is a servant of the British Government, is allowed to wear a blue uniform; and Bishnoís do use bullocks, though most of their farming is done with camels. They also seem to be unusually quarrelsome (in words) and given to use bad language. But they abstain from tobacco, drugs and spirits, and are noted for their regard for animal life which is such that not only will they not themselves kill any living creature, but they do their utmost to prevent others from doing so. Consequently their villages are generally swarming with antelope and other animals, and they forbid their Musalmán neighbours to kill them and try to dissuade European sportsmen from interfering with them. They wanted it made a condition of their Settlement that no one should be allowed to shoot on their land, but at the same time they asked that they might be assessed at lower rates than their neighbours on the ground that the antelope being thus left undisturbed do more damage to their crops; but I told them this would lessen the merit (*pun*) of their good actions in protecting the animals and they must be treated just as the surrounding villages were. They consider it a good deed to scatter grain (chiefly bájra and moth) to pigeons and other birds, and often have a large number of half-tame birds about their villages. The day before the new moon they observe as a Sabbath and fast-day, doing no work in the fields or in the house.

They bathe and pray three times a day, in the morning, afternoon and in the evening, saying "Bishno Bishno," instead of the ordinary Hindú "Rám Rám." Their clothing is the same as that of other Bágrís, except that their women do not allow the waist to be seen, and are fond of wearing black woollen clothing. They are more particular about ceremonial purity than ordinary Hindús are, and it is a common saying that if a Bishnoí's food is on the first of a string of 20 camels and a man of another caste touches the last camel of the string, the Bishnoí will consider his food defiled and throw it away. The ceremony of initiation (*páhal*) is as follows:—A number of representative Bishnoís assemble, and before them a Sádh or Bishnoí priest after lighting a sacrificial fire (*hom*) instructs the novice in the duties of the faith. He then takes some water in a new earthen vessel, over which he prays in a set form (*Bishnogáyatri*), stirring it the while with his string of beads (*málá*) and after asking the consent of the assembled Bishnoís, he pours the water three times into the hands of the novice who drinks it off. The novice's scalp-lock (*chotí*) is then cut off and his head shaved, for the Bishnoís shave the whole head and do not leave a scalp-lock like the Hindús; but they allow the beard to grow, only shaving the chin on the father's death. Infant-baptism is also practised, and thirty days after birth the child, whether boy or girl, is baptised by the priest (Sádh) in much the same way as an adult; only the set form of prayer is different (*Garbh-gáyatri*), and the priest pours a few drops of water into the child's mouth, and gives the child's relatives each three handfuls of the consecrated water to drink; at the same time, the barber clips off the child's hair. This baptismal ceremony also has the effect of purifying the house which has been made impure by the birth (*sútak*). The Bishnoís intermarry among themselves only, and by a ceremony of their own in which it seems the circumambulation of the sacred fire, which is the binding ceremony among the Hindús generally, is omitted. They do not revere Bráhmans, but have priests (Sádh) of their own chosen from among the laity. They do not burn their dead, but bury them below the cattle-stall or in a place frequented by cattle, such as a cattle-pen. They observe the Holi in a different way from other Hindús. After sunset on that day they fast till the next forenoon, when after hearing read the account of how Pahlád was tortured by his infidel father Harnákash for believing in the god Vishnu until he was delivered by the god himself in his incarnation of the Lion-man, and mourning over Pahlád's sufferings, they light a sacrificial fire and partake of consecrated water, and after distributing unpurified sugar (*gur*) in commemoration of Pahlád's delivery from the fire into which he was thrown, they break their fast. Bishnoís go on pilgrimage to the place where Jhámbají is buried, south of Bíkáner, where there is a tomb (*mat* over his remains and a temple (*mandir*) with regular attendants (*pujárí*). A festival takes place here every six months in Asanj and Phágan, when the pilgrims go to the sandhill on which Jhámbají lived and there light sacrificial fires (*hom*) of *jandi*, wood in vessels of stone and offer a burnt-offering of barley, til, ghi and sugar, at the same time muttering

set prayers. They also make presents to the attendants of the temple and distribute *moth* and other grain for the peacocks and pigeons which live there in numbers. Should any one have committed an offence, such as having killed an animal, or sold a cow or goat to a Musalmán, or allowed an animal to be killed when he could have prevented it, he is fined by the assembled Bishnoís for the good of the temple and the animals kept there. Another place of pilgrimage is a tomb called Chhámbola in the Jodhpur country, where a festival is held once a year in Chait. There the pilgrims bathe in the tank and help to deepen it, and sing and play musical instruments and scatter grain to peacocks and pigeons.

The religions of the Jains, ascetics and low castes.

108. Another development of Hindúism is Jainism or the religion of the Saráogís, as they are more generally called in this neighbourhood. The number in this district is only 1,084, a very small increase on 1,015, the number returned at the Census of 1868. They are almost all Banyas by caste, speak Hindí, and have immigrated from the south and east. Almost all the Oswál Banyas are Saráogí, and some of the Aggarwáls. The Saráogís are chiefly distinguished from the Vaishnavi or orthodox Banyas by their excessive tenderness for animal life, and by their worship of Párasnáth, but no such prominence has been given to the difference in this district as was given to it in Delhi and elsewhere by the disputes about the Saráogí procession and other matters. There are in the district a few Jatis or Saráogí ascetics, the best-known of whom holds a garden revenue-free at Sirsá.

No other sect of Hinduism has attained any prominence in this district, but the different classes of ascetics and devotees may be considered in a sense to belong to different sects. Some of them, such as the Gosáyans and Bairágis, are hardly to be distinguished from ordinary peasants; they marry and have families, eat flesh and drink spirits and engage in ordinary agricultural work, and although at first they seem to have given up their original caste, they have come to form a sort of caste of their own. Others, such as the Nirmala faqírs, followers of Guru Gobind Singh, who allow their hair to grow uncut like the Singhs, or the Udásí faqirs followers of Bábá Nának, who shave their heads and wear magenta-coloured clothes, or the Charndásí faqírs, followers of the Dhúsar Charndás, who wear light yellow clothes, or the Kánphátte faqírs, followers of Gorakhnáth, whose chief monastery in the neighbourhood is at Bohar in the Rohtak district, and whose outward mark is the great hole which they make in the lobe of the ear by hanging heavy weights to it, are not allowed to marry, and propagate their class by adopting disciples (*chelá*) from among the laity. Such men are called Sádh (pure) and are supposed to live a life devoted to religion and supported on the alms of the peasantry. Some of them are true ascetics or priests, and devote themselves to religious duties, such as ministering in the temples, reading the Granth, assisting at religious ceremonies, teaching the peasants and their children; while others live a licentious and self-indulgent life, whose influence is all for

evil. As a rule any ordinary Hindú can become a Sádh, and often a young lad religiously inclined, or a childless old man, or even sometimes the father of a family, gives up the world and leaves his home and family to adopt an ascetic life. He is then considered to be dead to the world, and his heirs take possession of his land and property as if he had died, and his wife even may marry again as if she had become a widow.

Most of these sects seem to have been partly originated by a desire to shake off the yoke of the Bráhmans or the trammels of caste. For instance, the Bishnoís have ministers of their own, not Bráhmans, and the Sikhs are guided by their own Sádhs more than by the Bráhmans; the Bishnoís have indeed elaborated the ceremonies and restrictions binding on the ordinary Hindús, but they have to a certain extent substituted sect for caste; the Sikhs have got rid of some of the most irksome of the ceremonial caste rules; and the ascetics generally ignore caste and pay no special reverence to Bráhmans. And yet caste has often been too strong for these tendencies; for instance the Bishnoís, Gosáyans and Bairágis now form separate castes of their own, and even the sects of devotees rarely admit into their ranks men of the lower castes, such as Chamárs and Chúhras, who have ascetic orders of their own generally quite distinct from those of the higher castes. In attesting the tribal custom of these lower castes, I took the opportunity of enquiring from their leading men the nature of their different religions, and found it to resemble closely that of the higher-caste Hindús. The Chamárs have no special deity of their own, but worship the ordinary Hindú gods, and make pilgrimages to shrines commonly held sacred, such as those of Rámdeo Gosáyan of Rúnícha in the Bágar, Mairí Ká Pír or Gúgá Pir, not far from Sirsá in Bíkáner territory, Masáni of Gurgaon, Debi of Nagarkot near Kángra, and Bhairon of Ahror near Rewárí. Their marriage ceremonies are performed under the guidance of the Gurra or Chamarwa Bráhmans by the ordinary Hindu form of walking round the sacred fire. It is worthy of note that among the Chamárs the dead are either buried or burnt as is most convenient; neither custom is binding. Towards Bíkáner it is more usual to bury the dead; towards the Panjáb both customs are common, even in the same family. In either case the relics (*rhúl*) are taken to the sacred Ganges, *i.e.*, the ashes, if the corpse was burnt; the nails, if it was buried. They say they have no belief in transmigration, but believe the good are happy after death in heaven (*surg*), and the bad are wretched in hell (*narak*). At funerals the women remain at home and weep, while the men go out with the corpse mourning somewhat as follows:—"*Tú há hai: tainne paidá kiya aur tainne márliyá*"="Thou alone art: thou madest, and thou hast struck down." The Chúhras bury their dead, and do not send any remains to the Ganges; they seem to adopt the ceremonies of their masters to some extent, and those living in Hindu villages have the marriage ceremony performed under the guidance of Bráhmans of their own, by walking round the sacred fire, while the Chúhras living in Musalmán villages have the Muhammadan form of *nikáh* performed by a Chúhra faqír who is not a Musalmán; and Chúhras living in Sikh

villages often leave their hair uncut and sometimes are regularly initiated by the Sikh baptism (*páhul*), when they are known as Mazhabí Sikhs. Their special deity is Lálbeg or Lálguru, whom their leading men described to me as the supreme and only god without form or dwelling-place. The worshipper makes a small shrine of earth and puts up over it a stick with a piece of cloth making a small flag, offers a little *ghi* or grain as a sacrifice, bows down before the shrine and prays to be saved from illness and trouble. They do not believe in transmigration of souls, but say the good go to heaven after death, where they bathe and sit in ease and happiness, while the bad go to hell where they are tormented by wounds and fire until the deity is pleased to relieve them. The Báwariyas hold the cow sacred, marry by circumambulation of the sacred fire, burn their dead and send the ashes to the Ganges. So do the Aherís or Thoris, but besides the ordinary Hindú deities, they worship especially Bábújí of Kolumand in Jodhpur and Khetpál of Jodhpur.

Places of pilgrimage.

109. Such are the religions of the people; but all of them, Musalmán, Hindú, Sikh and low-caste, are very superstitious, and perform many rites and ceremonies not exactly recognised by their religious teachers, intended to propitiate minor and local deities, good and evil spirits, saints and ancestors. Certain shrines are considered especially sacred, and long pilgrimages are made at fixed times to them by persons anxious to gain the favour of the local god or saint. Some of them are especially attended by persons of certain religions or sects, such as the pilgrimage to Jhámbájí's burial-place made by Bishnoís, or that to Bará Tírath made especially by Kúka Sikhs; but others are attended by all sects and classes without distinction, Hindús, Musalmáns, Chamárs and Chúhras all making the pilgrimage and presenting their offerings at the shrine. Some go out of mere curiosity to see the place and the gathering, but almost all have an idea that to go on the pilgrimage is a work of merit, likely to bring them good in this world, if not in the world to come. I have given a description of the pilgrimage undertaken by Bishnoís to the place where the founder of their sect lived and taught and was buried, and I need only refer to the distant shrines of Masání the small-pox goddess at Gurgáon, Hardwára on the sacred Ganges, the temple of Debí at Nagarkot, the tomb of Bábá Faríd and the Gate of Paradise at Pákpattan, and other wellknown places of pilgrimage, which attract numbers of people from this district as well as from other distant parts of the country. The only place of any note in this district itself to which people go on pilgrimage is Bará Tírath or Haripura west of Abohar, which has only lately acquired sanctity, and some account of the origin of the pilgrimage to that place may be interesting as showing how such fame arises. Haripura was a Bishnoí village, some ten miles west of Abohar in the prairie, and Charndás, an ordinary Udásí Sádh, lived on the bank of the village-pond. In 1876 it is said that a Mirásí woman had died, and her people had gathered to the funeral feast. That they might not defile the water of the tank, the Bishnoí villagers dug a hole some little distance off to

pour water into for the use of the Mirásís, and came upon an iron box some three feet below the surface. This was opened by the Sádh, and inside it were found three rusty arrow-heads, a sword-blade, a quoit (*chakkar*), two seals (*chhápa*), a trident (*tirsúl*), a stone image of the Lion-man incarnation of Vishnu, two footmarks (*charanpád*) of Nának and Debi, three written orders (*hukmnámá*) and a document in book-form (*pothí*) consisting of 24 leaves. These were the relics shown me by the Sádh, but it seems they were not all there at first, and Mr. Wakefield, Deputy Commissioner, had some of the original relics taken away and deposited in the Gurdwára at Sirsá, but duplicates of them miraculously appeared at the place where they were found. They were said in the documents to have been buried there in 1699 A. D. to mark the place where Guru Gobind Singh had rested on his flight into the Bágar country. The Sádh noised his discovery abroad, and on the authority of the written orders he had found, he established the fame of the tank as a place of pilgrimage, and called it Bará Tírath. Many of the people of the neighbourhood considered the whole thing an imposture, but notwithstanding the discouragement given by the district authorities, it has become usual to go on pilgrimage there twice a year in March and November, and a small fair has sprung up, which is attended by numbers of the country-people and by shopkeepers who establish booths to supply their wants. Many go simply out of curiosity, while the pilgrims proper make a point of bathing before day-break in the tank, of helping to deepen it, and of making an offering at the small shrine which has been erected for his relics by the Sádh, who as shrine-attendant (*pujárí*) appropriates the offerings and thus makes a good thing out of his find. The fair has become a meeting place for the Kúka Sikhs, and the attendance was estimated in March 1882 as nearly 7,000 and in November 1882 nearly 9,000, including 52 Kúkas each time. It is as yet a very unimportant fair, and may soon be neglected altogether; and no doubt many similar attempts to establish places of pilgrimage have proved abortive, but it is probable that the well-established shrines gradually acquired their present fame from similar small beginnings, perhaps aided by some judicious imposture. Such may have been the origin of the annual pilgrimage to the shrine of Gúga Pír near Bahádra in the Bíkáner territory, some 25 miles south-west of Sirsá, which brings sometimes 20,000 pilgrims of all castes, both Hindú and Musalmán, from great distances, especially from the north, south and east, in Sáwan and Bhádon every year. He is known also as Záhir Pír, Bágarwála and Mairí ká Pír, or the saint of the Bágar or Dry Country, and is very generally worshipped in the south-east Panjáb, where his standard (*jhandá* or *chhari*) consisting of a bamboo surmounted by a few peacock feathers and otherwise adorned is carried round at certain times of the year by Chúhras asking for alms. Gúga is said to have been a Chauhán Hindú, son of a Thákur of Bahádra, who killed some relative of his own in a quarrel about the succession, and in order to escape the reproaches of his mother desired the earth to swallow him up. He was told by a faqír that as he was a Hindú he must be burnt

not buried, and thereupon he became a Musalmán, and was swallowed alive with his white horse and spear by Mother Earth. Until a few years ago his turban and the points of his spear and of his horse's ears were visible above the ground ; but as the pilgrims irreverently touched the turban, these signs are now concealed from view. A tomb *(khánkah)* has been built over the place, and here the pilgrims present their offerings. There is often great trouble about water, which is only to be got from ponds or from villages some miles off, and the pilgrims undergo some hardship, having to lie about on the bare ground ; but they bathe in the sacred pond, and carry away some of its clay which is a cure for snake-bite, and having fulfilled their vows by presenting an offering at the sacred shrine, they return to their homes satisfied that they have gained the favour of the saint who will help to protect them from evil.

Fasts and Festivals.

110. There are certain anniversaries which are kept by the villagers as days of rejoicing or of mourning, and as they break the monotony of the peasant's life, he uses them as dates to mark the divisions of the year. The Musalmáns observe the days prescribed by their religion which are determined by the Muhammadan lunar year, while those observed by the Hindús and Sikhs are determined by the solar year. Comparatively few of the villagers think of the event which the day is intended to commemorate. It is to them a day of fasting and mourning or a day of feasting and rejoicing, when they and their womankind put on their best clothes, and indulge in some dainty dish generally composed of flour and coarse sugar and melted butter. Each festival has its own peculiar dish which is prepared and eaten and distributed to relations and to the poor by all who can afford it, and many festivals seem to present themselves to the peasant's mind simply as the day on which a certain dish is eaten. On fast days the strict Muhammadans refrain from eating and drinking altogether until after the sun has set, but the Hindús are allowed on their fast days to eat fruits and the seeds of certain grasses and to drink milk. The most noteworthy anniversaries among the Musalmáns are (1) the Muharram, the first nine days of which are observed as days of mourning, during which no one changes his clothes or washes his head, while on the tenth the villagers exchange sweetmeats and *sharbat*, and give some to the poor in the name of the Imáms Hasn and Hussain ; (2) the whole month of Ramzán is observed as a fast, and strict Muhammadans neither eat nor drink from sunrise to sunset. The new moon of the next month, whose appearance ends the fast, is anxiously looked for, and when it has been seen the fast is broken with rejoicing and distribution of food to the poor. (3) *Id-ul-fitr*—on this day after formally breaking fast, the men attired in their best go to the outskirts of the village or to the mosque and join in public prayer ; (4) *Id-uz-zuhá*—on this day after fasting in the morning and joining in public prayers, the richer villagers sacrifice a lamb, goat or cow, whose flesh they cook and eat together, giving a share to the poor. The chief anniversaries kept by both Sikhs and Bágrís are (1) *Basíro* or *Basíhra*, in the beginning of Chait—the women dress in their

best and worship Sítlá, the goddess of small-pox ; no food is cooked on this day, but food cooked the previous evening (*bási*) is eaten ; (2) *Tíj*, on the 3rd of Sáwan—the women dress in their best, eat sweetmeats and erect swings on the trees, in which they swing each other ; (3) *Gúga Pír*, the feast of Saint Gúgá, already mentioned—on the 8th of Bhádua a fast is kept until the moon rises when she is worshipped and the fast is broken; next day the Dhánaks carry about the standard of Gúga Pír, and beg alms from house to house ; (4) *Diwáli*, the feast of lamps—on the last day of Kátik, numbers of little lamps (*díwá*) are lit, and a general illumination made. The lamps are sometimes put in a frame (*hathrá*) made of mud and straw, something like a cage. Anniversaries specially kept by the Bágrís are (1) *Kanágat*—the first 15 days of Asauj are kept as days of mourning for near relations ; on the day corresponding to the day of the month on which a relation died Bráhmans are formally feasted in his name ; (2) *Holi*, the spring festival at the end of Phágan is observed as a time of boisterous rejoicing in the villages, and decency is thrown aside for the time. The youths of the village dance and sing and play, and when the women come and look on, both parties indulge in the most obscene abuse and finally they come to throwing dust and dirt and cowdung at each other, and the women pursue the men with sticks and whips, sometimes beating them severely. Days specially kept by the Sikhs are (1) *Namáni*—the last day of Jeth is kept as a fast which is broken next morning after first feeding a Bráhman, or a daughter, or daughter's child ; (2) *Lorhi*—on the first day of Máh the Sikh villagers bathe and distribute food in charity, and the little girls go round and beg some *gur* from every man in whose house a son has been born or a daughter married within the year. It is often difficult to discover any reasonable origin for these time-honoured customs, but the people never trouble their heads about that, only as the day comes round they do as their fathers did before them, and swing on trees, or dance and sing, or send their little girls round to beg *gur*, without asking why.

Superstitions, omens and charms.

111. The usual idea of prayer among the more ignorant peasants seems to be to make a bargain with the god or saint ; for instance I saw in one village a small mud representation of the temple (*thán*) of Rámdeo of Runícha, made by Chamárs who told me they lit a lamp inside it twice a month, and that when they were ill or in trouble they would come to this shrine and bow down before it and promise that if their trouble were removed or their wish gratified, they would present (*chárhná*) some offering such as bread or a cocoanut or a flag. If the saint fulfilled his part of the bargain, the worshipper fulfilled his vow ; if not, the vow was void ; thus I was told that a small flag waving over the shrine had been presented by a Chamár who had been ill and who had vowed to offer a flag on his recovery. Often a small shrine may be seen outside the village to the village-god or the small-pox goddess or some other deity, where at set times the women make offerings of water or grain ; and a small lamp may often be seen burning on a Thursday night at the tomb of a Musalmán saint. These practices are said to be forbidden in

the Qurán, but the women especially place some faith in them, and a Ráín is said to have divorced his wife because she persisted in lighting lamps at a faqír's tomb in hope of being blessed with a son. As an instance of the higher form of worship among the Hindús I may quote the account given by a wealthy and intelligent Suthár peasant of Risáliya who told me he believed in one God only—call him Naráyan, Parmeshar, Khudá, Thákurjí, Rám, Bishn, or what you will—and that twice a day he went to the small mud temple (*Thákurdwára*), distinguished from other houses only by a flag and a sort of altar inside, to view the shrine of of the deity (*darsan karná*) and bow before it saying "Naráyan Naráyan, Thákurji, Thákurji" and every day he sent an offering (*petí*) of flour, ghí and sweets which was eaten by the Bairágí faqir who attended the shrine. The peasants often wear armlets as a protection against disease, the evil eye and bad spirits. The Musalmáns on the Satlaj get the mosque-attendant to come and bless the heap of grain on the threshing-floor before it is divided, and he gets a regularly recognised share for doing so; this saves the grain from being carried off by evil spirits. As a precaution against such depredations the Hindú peasant traces a circle of ashes round his heap of grain. The common cure for cattle-disease when it breaks out in a village is to tie a string across the gateway with a potsherd hanging to it on which some holy man has traced characters supposed to represent a verse from the Shástars or the Qurán and to have the effect of protecting from the disease the cattle who pass below it. A Banya in counting measures of grain does not begin to count with 'one' but with "*barkat*" (a blessing.) Odd numbers are considered to be lucky. The door of a house or the gateway of a village must not face the south. A woman must not mention her husband's name or he will die; nor should a man mention his wife's name. One should not speak of one's father-in-law, but call him 'uncle.' Should a Hindú kill a cow by accident he must take her tail to the Ganges, there to be purified at considerable expense, and on the road he bears the tail aloft tied to a stick that all may know he is impure. An interesting account of trial by ordeal was given me at Rori, and I was assured by the Sikh Jats there that it used to be practised quite recently in doubtful cases while Rori was under the rule of the Rájá of Nábha. In the ordeal by water the parties were made to dive into a deep pond, and the man who came first to the surface was held to be the liar. In more serious cases recourse was had to the ordeal by fire. A pípal leaf was placed on the hand of each of the parties, and both were made to grasp a red hot ploughshare (*pháli*); the first man who let go was declared false and the dispute was decided against him.

A true Hindú thinks he can best please the Deity by propitiating the Bráhmans, and it is common to feed a number of Bráhmans by way of sacrifice. Should the worshipper wish to make an offering of cows (*gáopun*) or of land, it is done by a formal ceremony (*sankalp*) which is also used in giving away a daughter in marriage. The giver takes in his hand a copper coin (*paisá*) and some grains of bájra on which the Bráhman pours water; he then places them in the Bráhman's hand saying, "I have given to you for the sake of God (*Naráyan nimitt*) five

cows or two bighas of land," in return for which the Bráhman gives him his blessing. Sometimes the giver rocks the Bráhman to sleep and puts sweets in his mouth. The Musalmáns also sometimes give land to a holy man and consider it pleasing to Alláh to give alms to the poor (*barák-i-khudá* or *Rabb de wáste*); thus a Musalmán when dying often distributes alms to the poor or gives money to the mosque-attendant "to buy Quráns."

The Bodlas are credited with miraculous powers; for instance, the other day a man had stolen a Bodla's buffalo, and a committee (*melá*) of Bodlas went to him and required him to give it up. He refused, and they cursed him and all his house. A few days after his son died. But it is chiefly for the cure of the bite of mad dogs that they are famed, and men of all castes and classes, both Hindú and Musalmán, come to them to be cured. The venom is exorcised in this way. The patient is made to sit down and a circle consisting of six boys and a Bodla is formed round him. The Bodla takes some moist earth, blows on it and recites over it a formula containing the name of Alláh. He then passes it round the circle of boys, each of whom works it up into a ball (*golá*) and passes it on. This is done seven times. Then the Bodla takes the seven balls and works them up into one which he strikes on the wound reciting all the time, and then gives to the patient telling him to follow certain minute directions for two and a half months; such as, to eat nothing cooked in iron, not to go near water at night, to take care not to see the reflection of the sun or moon in water, &c., and should the man die, his death is ascribed not to the failure of the charm, but to his neglect of these instructions. The usual rate for a cure is Re. 1-4.

Age and conjugal condition.

112. The returns of the Census of 1881 showed that in the Sirsá district, as in the whole Province and indeed in the whole of Northern India, the fecundity of the population is liable to extraordinary variations, and is affected to a wonderful degree by changes in the climatic conditions, and more especially by periods of plenty and of scarcity. The numbers of children of both sexes were returned as follows for the Sirsá district:—

Age.	Year in which born.	Number.	
Under one year ...	1880	10,551	
Between one and two ...	1879	6,346	
Between two and three ...	1878	6,031	
Between three and four ...	1877	7,919	
Between four and five ...	1876	7,770	
Between five and ten ...	1870-75	33,266	of which one-fifth is 6,653.
Between ten and fifteen ...	1865-70	27,438	of which one-fifth is 5,488.

There has been no such unusual mortality among young children of late years as to make any marked difference in the numbers of those of any particular age, and after making every allowance for wrong returns, there can be no doubt that the number of children born in the district in 1878 and 1879 was much less than the average number born in one year, and less than the number born in 1876, 1877, or 1880. The harvests of 1875-76 were bumper harvests, and those of 1876-77 were about average; the rains of 1877 failed, and the harvests of 1877-78 were so poor that the people suffered severely from scarcity, though not so bad as to be called famine, and did not fully recover prosperity until the bumper rabí crop of 1879. Thus a period of scarcity was closely followed by a period of few births, and there can be no doubt that, as in the other parts of the Province, the scarcity was the cause of the fewness of the births. It would seem that the effect of scarcity upon fecundity is much greater than is commonly imagined, for the scarcity in Sirsá, though somewhat severe for more than a year, was not so bad as to cause any deaths from starvation, or to permanently injure by emaciation the constitution of any large proportion of the population, and yet the decrease in the number of births is very marked.

The Census Report for the Province shows that the proportion of children to adults in the Panjáb is considerably greater than in England, and it appears that the proportion is even greater in Sirsá than in the Panjáb as a whole, 39·4 per cent. of the total Sirsá population being returned as under fifteen years of age, while the proportion of males for the whole Panjáb is only 38·1 per cent. and for England 36·7 per cent. This is no doubt chiefly due, as pointed out by Mr. Ibbetson, to the custom of universal marriage of women. The greater proportion in Sirsá than in the rest of the Panjáb may be partly due to the fact that the present generation of children have less actual hardship to encounter than the past generation had in the earlier years of colonisation of the district, and thus their rate of mortality is lower than it was among the present generation of adults when they were children.

According to the Census figures the number of unmarried males in the district is greatly in excess of that of single females, being 77,830 to 46,334. Thus ten males in every 18 are unmarried, while only ten women in 24 are single; and taking both together almost exactly half the total population are married, while in England the proportion is only 35 per cent. Very few females fail to get married before the age of twenty, and only 605 women above that age in the whole population were returned as single. There is a very general idea that it is disgraceful for a family to have a grown-up daughter unmarried, and great efforts are made to have all the daughters married early, so that even a girl who is blind or lame is married either by giving her into the bargain along with her sister, or by bribing some one to marry her. But ordinarily in most tribes a daughter is a valuable piece of property, and can be disposed of readily at a price. It is common to require the bridegroom's family to give something in exchange for the bride; and as in a newly-colonised country like Sirsá women are comparatively scarce, they

fetch a good price as a rule. The people say this practice is spreading, and that tribes and families who would formerly have given their daughters in marriage without an equivalent now exact something in exchange for them. There are some Musalmán tribes who do not think it necessary to get their daughters married at a very early age, and grown-up single women are not uncommon in their villages. Other castes again, such as the Bodlas, do not give their daughters in marriage to any tribe except their own, and thus sometimes find difficulty in disposing of their girls in marriage. The most common age for marriage is from twelve to fifteen for girls and from fifteen to eighteen for boys, but it is not unusual, especially among the Banyas and Bráhmans, for children to be married at a much more tender age. It must be remembered, however, that the marriage ceremony is more like the betrothal ceremony of Europe than the marriage, and that except where the parties are already adult, the girl, after the marriage, still lives in her father's house until she attains puberty, and it is only after a second ceremony, called the *mukláwa*, that she leaves her parents and goes to reside with her husband. The *mukláwa* generally takes place some odd number of years after the marriage, such as three, five, or seven years, and the husband is considered to have the right to demand the custody of his wife when she has attained puberty; but it is often delayed by the reluctance of the parents to let their daughter leave them, especially where she is, as among most agricultural tribes, a useful member of the family, able to help greatly in the work of the household. Thus although 149 boys and 395 girls below the age of ten are returned as married, and there are five widowers and fourteen widows of that tender age, this really only means that they have been betrothed, though with ceremonies which are considered indissoluble, and probably the girls have never left their parents' house, except for a visit of a day or two to the house of their future husband. And although 23 females out of every 24 above the age of fifteen are married, few women bear their first child before the age of sixteen; probably the majority of women become mothers at the age of seventeen or eighteen, and many are even older than this before their first child is born.

While only one female in 96 who reach the age of 20 fails to get married before that age, one male in every five above 20 years of age is still single. Again, in the whole population there are only 143 unmarried females above the age of 30, while there are 5,138 unmarried males above that age. While few women fail to get married before they are past the age of girlhood, a considerable number of men either never marry at all, or do not marry until a much later period of life. It is not that it is thought better that a man should grow up unmarried, but the difficulty and expense of getting a wife often delay the marriage of a youth for some time. Few men who can afford it fail to obtain wives for their sons before they reach the age of 20. Possibly prudential considerations, such as the consideration that the family holding cannot support more mouths in comfort, have some weight in preventing early marriages of males.

The number of widows is considerably larger than the number of widowers, being 15,409 to 6,940; so that, while only 5 per cent. of the males are widowers, 13 per cent. of the females are widows, and of females above the age of 40, no fewer than 52 per cent. are widows. This is no doubt partly due to the prejudice against the remarriage of widows which is strongest amongst the Hindús, but also prevails among the high-caste Musalmáns. Among Bráhmans, Banyas, Aroras and Rájputs remarriage of widows is strictly forbidden, and the Musalmán Bodlas, Chishtis and some other exclusive tribes forbid their widows to remarry, as this rule is thought a sign of high caste and social superiority. But all Jats and lower castes allow their widows to remarry, and unless the widow is too old and ugly to be worth marrying, or is herself averse to it, she generally soon finds another husband. There is no rule in any caste or religion forbidding a widower to remarry, and if a man can afford it, he generally gets another wife if his first wife dies while he is still young. Polyandry is nowhere openly practised in this district, and I do not believe that the custom exists even in its highest form of two or more brothers having one wife in common; such a practice would be universally condemned by the Sirsá peasants. Polygamy is not very common, except when a man already married marries the young widow of his deceased brother or cousin. In no tribe or caste is polygamy prohibited, but it is not considered right for a Hindú to marry a second wife while his first wife is alive unless when she is barren and he, generally with her consent, marries again in hope of getting children. The richer Musalmáns, especially on the Satlaj, often have more than one wife, but that is a question of luxury. On the whole the proportion of married men having more than one wife must be small. Indeed, according to the returns, there are more married males in the district than married females in the proportion of 53,921 to 52,841. This is due to the recent colonisation of the district. Many immigrants, such as traders in Fázilká, or wandering labourers on the canal or elsewhere, leave their wives in their former homes until they determine on finally settling down in the district, or until they can save enough to enable them to return to the homes they have temporarily quitted. In a new country like this too, many have to get wives from a distance, and the number of married women from older-settled districts who had not yet joined their husbands or who had gone temporarily to revisit their parents would be greater than the number of such wives who had similarly come into or remained in the district away from their husbands, especially in a season of comparative scarcity such as prevailed in some parts of the district at the time of the Census.

Disparity of the sexes.

113. For every thousand males in the district there are only 826 females. At the Census of 1868 the proportion was only 802 females to a thousand males; the females are thus increasing in a faster proportion than are the males, but still their proportion is smaller than it is in most other parts of the Province, for the proportion for the whole Panjáb is

843 females to every thousand males. This disproportion is no doubt due, as above noted in the case of married persons, to the recent colonisation of the district and to the greater number of males than females among the immigrants—a cause which is gradually having less effect as the tide of immigration slackens. That it has had great effect is shown by the figures of the Census, from which it appears that the net gain to the district by immigration within the present generation has been 39,762 males and only 27,515 females, *i.e.*, only 691 females to every thousand males. But there can be little doubt that the number of male births normally exceeds the number of female births. The Census returns show a larger number of males than of females at every age, and there is no reason to believe that female infanticide is practised anywhere in the district. There is indeed no inducement. A girl is a valuable member of the family; she helps in the household work while she remains with her parents, and there are very few families in which there is any difficulty in disposing of a girl in marriage; indeed, the parents are generally able to exact some equivalent for their daughter from the family of the bridegroon. Girls seem to be treated by their parents in every respect as well as boys, and are protected as tenderly and carefully from disease and trouble as the boys are.

Health, Infirmities and Insanity.

114. The district appears to be unusually healthy, for according to the mortality returns, the average death-rate per thousand per annum for the last five years has been only twenty-two. The following statement shows the number of deaths and their causes:—

Year.	Cholera.	Small-pox.	Fever.	Bowel complaints.	Injuries.	Other causes.	Total deaths.	Death-rate per thousand.
1878 ...	0	304	3,263	257	48	823	4,695	18
1879 ...	1,053	617	4,980	324	44	1,052	8,070	32
1880 ...	2	24	2,979	135	56	1,203	4,399	17
1881 ...	1	76	4,178	208	58	1,189	5,710	23
1882 ...	0	25	3,428	201	61	1,251	4,966	20
Average ...	211	209	3,766	225	53	1,104	5,568	22

In 1879, the most unhealthy year of the five, the death-rate rose to thirty-two per thousand per annum, and of the 8,070 deaths which occurred in that year 1,053 were ascribed to cholera, 617 to small-pox, and 4,980 to fever. Cholera rarely visits the district in a serious form, and for eleven years before 1879 there had not been more than a hundred deaths from cholera in any one year. The Sirsá district has suffered less from epidemics of fever and cholera than have the districts farther east, and in the famines and scarcities which have visited it in common with the whole tract between the Satlaj and the Jamna comparatively few inhabitants have died of starvation or had their

constitution impaired by want of food. Ordinarily the rainfall is small and the climate excessively dry, except for a short time after a fall of rain, and it is no doubt owing to this dryness of the climate that there is so little fever, especially in the high-lying parts of the district where the water level is generally more than a hundred feet below the surface. When an epidemic of fever does visit the district after an unusually wet season, as it did in 1881, it is generally in the valley of the Satlaj and still more in that of the Ghaggar that it is most prevalent, and perhaps Ellenábád and the neighbouring villages round which water often stands for months are most subject to malarious fever. Although the harvests fluctuate greatly and often a bumper crop is succeeded by an exceedingly poor one, few of the people, except the very lowest of the village labourers and some of the wandering tribes, are subject to periods of semi-starvation, for they are mostly well enough off and provident enough to store up the surplus of good years against the bad years which they know are likely to follow. No doubt when one of the periodical scarcities comes round, the food of many of the lower classes must become so much reduced in quantity and quality as to weaken their stamina for the time and render them more liable to succumb to disease, but not so generally or to such an extent as seriously to shorten the average duration of life of the population. It is astonishing how healthy the people are when one considers their almost universal habit of drinking pond-water, which has drained into the pond off the dirty ground round the village, in which they wash and bathe, and in which their cattle stand and wallow, often voiding urine and excrement as they drink; and when one sees this filthy water, which looks and smells like a solution of mud and ordure, full of decomposing animal matter and often covered with a fungus scum, used for bathing, drinking and cooking purposes by the people seemingly with impunity, one's ideas of hygiene undergo a change. It must be seen to be believed, and it seems impossible that such habits should not affect the health and longevity of the people; yet their open-air life keeps them strong and healthy. It does seem that the use of this filthy water is the cause of the prevalence of skin diseases in a more aggravated form and of parasites, such as *chigoe*, which chiefly attacks the foot and sometimes lames a man for life or even makes it necessary to resort to amputation, while guinea-worm (*naháŕwa*) is perhaps more common in this district than in any other and is ascribed to the habit of bathing in dirty ponds from the water of which the thread-like worm finds its way into the skin. Cases of guinea-worm are very numerous, especially in the hot and rainy seasons, and not unfrequently a neglected guinea-worm lames a man permanently, but although the health and comfort must be greatly affected by the presence of two or three worms twenty inches long under the skin, death is seldom directly caused by the disease.

Blindness is unusually common in this district, 7·2 persons in every thousand being returned as blind, while the proportion for the Province is 5·1 only, and only in Ludhiána and Karnál is the proportion of blind to total population so high. Blindness developes with age, and while

in the total population below 60 years of age, only one in every 209 is blind, the proportion among those above 60 years of age is one in 21, or about ten times as great. In early life blindness is chiefly due to small-pox; in later life it is, according to the people, due to the general use of *rábrí* which is the daily food of the greater part of the population. This diet is said to bring on blindness gradually, first in the form of night-blindness (*rátaunda* or *andhráta*) and then total blindness. Probably however the real causes of the prevalence of blindness in Sirsá are the glare of the sun on the treeless plains and the scorching sandstorms which are so frequent in the hot weather.

The number of deaf-mutes is only 247, or one per thousand of total population, which is about the average for the province. The infirmity is chiefly congenital, and the number of males so afflicted is twice as many as that of females. Only thirty-five males and ten females are returned as lepers, the proportion being only half that for the province. Leprosy does not develope until comparatively late in life, and there are no lepers under twenty years of age, while more than half the total number are over fifty years of age.

Of the whole population only 109 are returned as insane, the proportion being slightly below the average for the province. Few are born idiots, and insanity is said by the people to be generally caused by fever mounting to the head, or by grief for the loss of relatives or property.

Food and drink.

115. The Bágrí residents of the Dry Tract live from year's end to year's end chiefly on *bájra*, *moth* and milk. Their bread consists of scones or bannocks (*roti*) of *bájra* flour, and their two chief dishes are *rábrí* and *khichrí*. To make *rábri*, which is a sort of thin gruel, steep *bájra* flour in butter-milk and water and place the mixture in sun till evening that it may ferment, add more butter-milk and a little salt and cook over a fire for a time, allow it to cool and then it is ready to be drunk or supped. *Khichrí* is a thick porridge made by pounding (*kútna*) *bájra* so as to remove the husk (*chilká*) and boiling the whole grain with the pulse of *moth* in water with a little salt added. These are ordinarily eaten with butter-milk (*lassí* or *chhách*h) which is made by heating the milk gently in a sort of oven (*hárá*), over which is placed an earthen cover (*khopra*) to keep in the heat, and placing it in an earthen vessel with a little curd, so that the whole of the milk curdles and coagulates (*dahi*). Next morning a little water is mixed with the *dahi* and the whole is churned (*bilonâ*) until the butter (*makhan*) comes to the surface. The butter is melted over a fire and becomes *ghi* which is kept in a liquid state for great occasions or sold to richer people; and the remaining liquid which is sour and more like whey than butter-milk is the *lassi* or *chhách*h which is set aside to be drunk with the *rábrí* or *khichrí*. Any fresh green vegetable food, such as the green pods of *moth* or *gwár*, or gourds and melons, is much prized as adding a relish to this food; and when these are not in season, itinerant vegetable-sellers from the river-valleys

travel long distances among the villages of the Dry Tract bringing turnips, carrots and other vegetables to be exchanged for grain. A light meal is eaten early in the morning consisting of *bájra* scones and greens or the *rábrí* left over from last night's supper; this breakfast is called *kalewá*. A similar meal is eaten about noon; but the principal meal of the day is the supper or evening-meal eaten after the day's work is done, and consisting of *rábri* or *khichri* with *bájra* scones and greens or vegetables when they can be got. The poorer classes who cannot afford butter-milk have to be content with *rábri* and *khichri* made with water only, but except in times of scarcity all classes are generally able to eat as much grain as they care for, and it is estimated that an average family of five, father, mother and three children, eat four *sers* of grain a day. An ordinary labourer, man or woman, eats a full ser of grain in a day (2lbs), and this is the allowance made to adult labourers at harvest-time when they get their food from their employer.

The Sikhs live somewhat better and have a greater variety in their food. Their morning meal is much the same as that of the Bágrís. In the afternoon they often appease their hunger by munching parched barley or gram; and their supper consists in the cold weather of *bájra* and *moth* porridge (*khichri*), and in the hot weather of scones made of gram and husked barley (*ghát*) with split gram or *múng* and butter-milk (*lassi*) and in the season the leaves of young gram or sarson by way of greens. The Musalmáns of the Dry Tract indulge in still better food. They breakfast on the remains of the supper of the night before (*bási tukra*) and before noon make a meal of barley-scones or *bájra* scones and butter-milk (*bhela* or *lassi*); in the afternoon they munch parched barley or *jawár*, and the supper consists of barley-scones with split gram or *moth*, or porridge (*khichri*) of *bájra* and moth; while the richer or more extravagant peasants sup on wheaten cakes and milk, and on great occasions a kid or lamb, or even a cow, is killed and eaten; but the great majority of Musalmán peasants only rarely taste butcher-meat. The Musalmáns of the Ghaggar valley live in much the same way, except that they can more easily get vegetables to eat with their scones and porridge, and are more generally able to afford to drink butter-milk with them. The Musalmáns of the Satlaj live most luxuriously of all. Their breakfast consists as with the others of the remains of the evening-meal (*beha*); before noon they dine on wheaten scones, sometimes weighing a pound each, and butter-milk; in the afternoon they munch parched *jawár*, gram or wheat; and in the evening they sup on wheaten scones with split gram or *moth* or *múng*, and cooked onions, turnips, radishes or other vegetables, while the more extravagant drink milk instead of butter-milk. In these Musalmán villages it is a pleasant sight in the afternoon to see the Máchhin or grain-parcher seated over her fire (*chúla*) with her bowl-shaped iron pan, while the village children bring their lapfuls of grain to be parched. She throws in a few handfuls of grain and keeps stirring it in the pan over the fire with a small brush made of grass, and in a few minutes the grain cracks and each half turns over and shows

a beautiful white. The Máchhin keeps a little for her trouble and returns the rest ready parched to the child who runs off home with it to be munched with great gusto by the family. Another lively sight in the Satlaj villages is the village-oven (*tanúr*) on the summer evenings, presided over by the Máchhi or Máchhin who acts as village baker, when the women have brought their thick wheaten scones to be baked and stand gossiping round the oven until they are ready. The baker claps the scones on the inside of his oven, which is simply a hole in the ground with the fire inside, and as each is ready he returns it to the housewife who hurries off with it for the family supper. The baker pays himself (*bhára*) by keeping a scone or two every now and then according to some recognised rule, sometimes a tenth or a twelfth of the bread brought to him to be baked.

When a guest comes, a better meal is served according to the means of the family; etiquette requires that the best meal of all should be given on the occasion of a son-in-law's visit. On such occasions rice or wheat takes the place of *bájrá* or barley, milk is drunk instead of butter-milk, and the scones or porridge are enriched with *ghi* or sweetened with sugar. On festival-days, too, sweet and toothsome cakes and messes are prepared, each festival having its own time-honoured dish. But it is on occasions of family celebrations, and especially at the feasts given after the death of some honoured relation, that eating is to be seen in all its glory. I saw the preparations being made for such a feast given by a Bágrí Kumhár in honour of his father who had died three months before. A trench had been dug in the ground in the courtyard of one of the houses in the village, and in this trench a strong fire was kept burning. At one end of the trench simmered a small cauldron of *sharbat* made of coarse sugar and water, and at the other end was a large cauldron (*karáu*) containing (I was told) 80lbs. of wheaten flour, 100lbs. of coarse sugar (*gur*) and 50lbs. of melted butter (*ghí*) which, as it boiled over the fire, was being well stirred by three men with long poles. The *sharbat* was to be poured in when the mixture was well cooked, and the resulting sweet pudding which they called *sírá*, *karáh* or *halwá* would be eaten by the 150 Kumhár guests who sat about chatting with their mouths watering for the feast. Sometimes extraordinary sums are spent by the Bágrís on these funeral festivities. Gangárám Bishnoí of Sitoganno is said to have spent Rs. 8,000 on one occasion; and a Bishnoí of Gumjál, not seeing why he should lose the pleasure of it, gave his own funeral feast in anticipation the other day. Motí Suthár of Risálya when he came back from seeing his old father Jálu die at Káshíjí (Banáras) spent Rs. 2,500 in feasting the whole country-side for three days. A boat-load of coarse sugar (*gur*) on its way to the feast sank in the Ghaggar, a mishap which nearly caused a failure of the banquet. It is considered a great disgrace if there is not enough at such a feast for all the guests that come, and sometimes people having a grudge against the host, or wishing to play a practical joke on him, make up a "surprise party" and come in a body to try and eat him up.

The ordinary drink of the peasant is the filthy water of the village pond, or the cleaner but still muddy water of the well. All but the poorest classes are generally able to drink butter-milk with their meals, and the well-to-do have fresh milk as a luxury. In rich Sikh families the younger boys, and sometimes the girls, are given fresh-drawn milk to drink in the morning, and the growing lads from 10 to 20 suck the milk directly from the buffalo's udder like a calf, as it is thought especially strengthening when taken thus. On great occasions the favourite drink is a *sharbat* made of sugar and water, and very little spirit (*sharáb*) is drunk anywhere in the district. The Musalmáns and Bishnoís are forbidden by their religion to indulge in spirits, and even the Sikhs, to whom it is allowed, very rarely drink to excess. Opium and other drugs are sometimes consumed by the Sikhs and the Hindú Rájputs, but intoxication from the excessive use either of spirits or drugs is almost unknown in the district. The Musalmáns and Bágrís are fond of smoking tobacco, and a group of them may often be seen passing round the *huqqa*, from which each man takes a long pull before handing it on to his neighbour. The Bishnoís are forbidden to smoke as well as to drink, and the strict Sikhs are also supposed to avoid tobacco, but many Sikhs in this district ignore this rule of their Guru, and smoke like their Hindú neighbours.

Dress and Ornaments.

116. Small children of both sexes are allowed to play about in the dust without any clothing to bother them. A little boy may be seen sometimes with nothing in the way of clothing but a string (*tágrí*) tied round his waist; as he grows older a small cloth between the legs is added (*langotí.*) A grown-up man among the Bágrís wears a broad loin-cloth (*dhotí*) tucked up between the legs, a wrap (*chádar*) thrown over the shoulder, a turban (*págrí* or *potiya*) on his head and shoes on his feet. These clothes are generally made of coarse unbleached country cotton-cloth (*gádá*), and are often worn until they are filthy rags. Richer men wear a vest (*kurti*), or long coat (*bugtarí* or *angarkha*) also of cotton; the sleeves of the latter are sometimes very long and wide so that they hang down from the wrists in a peculiar way. Sometimes the *págrí* is of red or coloured cloth but it is often carelessly put on. In the cold weather most of them carry comfortable woollen blankets (*kamal* or *lohí*). Bágrí women wear a petticoat (*sáriyá* or *ghágra*) of coloured, striped or printed cotton, and a wrap (*orhna*) worn over the head shawlwise, of cotton generally striped or coloured (*chunrí*). Sometimes the wrap is of a bright colour (*phulkárí*) ornamented with bits of looking-glass which flash in the sun. A married woman wears a boddice (*kánchli* or *ángí*) often richly embroidered, covering her breasts only and leaving the waist naked, but Bishnoí women lengthen it so as to cover the waist also. In the cold weather a woollen petticoat (*dhábla*) and woollen shawl (*lonkáriya*) are worn instead of cotton, the shawl being often of a dull red colour, and embroidered in wool in pretty patterns (*lohiyá*); indeed, some of them are very

tastefully ornamented and quite works of art worthy of being displayed in an English drawing-room. The presents exchanged between families at betrothal and marriage often take the form of a suit of clothes (*tíwal*), consisting of an *orhna*, *ángí* and *ghágra*.

The characteristic dress of the true Sikh is the *kachch* or short drawers ending above the knee which may often be seen among the Sikhs of Sirsá; but most of them wear the loin-cloth *dhotí*-fashion like their Hindú neighbours. On their heads they wear a *pagri* generally longer, of better quality, and more neatly put on than that of the Bágrís, and most men wear a vest (*kurta*) with or without sleeves, and carry a wrap (*chaddar*) over the shoulder. These clothes are ordinarily of unbleached cotton (*khaddar*), but sometimes of English calico. In the cold weather they carry a woollen blanket (*loií*) or a wrap of double cotton (*dutahí*,) or a thick wrap (*khes*) which may almost be called a cotton blanket, checked with a dull red and having bright-coloured stripes of silk forming a border. Sometimes the young men wear a red or yellow turban. The Sikh women wear dark-blue trowsers (*suthan*) down to the ankles, and after marriage wear over them a short petticoat or rather kilt (*ghagra*) generally of blue with some ornamentation, and above that a loose coat (*kurti*) covering the whole of the body, while over the head is thrown a cotton wrap (*utla* or *dopatta*) generally dyed or printed. The wrap is often of a dark colour ornamented with silk embroidery (*phulkárí*), and sometimes very handsome. A Sikh woman's full dress is very becoming and they evidently take a pride in being neat and clean and well-dressed.

The Musalmán's characteristic dress is the *lungi* or loin-cloth worn kilt-fashion and only tucked up between the legs when the wearer is going to ride or otherwise exert himself. It is ordinarily of cotton striped or checked with dark blue and sometimes having a border of coloured silk and costing from Rs. 5 to 10. His sheet (*chaddar*) is often striped with blue, and he wears on his head a rudely arranged turban (*pagrí*) of white or red cotton. The women very rarely wear the wide drawers (*páejáma*) affected by the Musalmán women of the towns; their common dress is the petticoat (*ghagra*, *lahinga*, or *dáwan*) generally dyed or printed in dark colours, and a loose boddice (*kurti*) often of a bright red colour covering the body, while over the head is thrown a wrap (*dopatta* or *chunní*) of printed cotton cloth generally of a dark colour. A suit of clothes for a woman consisting of the three garments, *ghagra*, *kurti* and *dopatta* is called *trewar*, and as among the Bágrís and Sikhs is often presented to the women of a family at the betrothal or marriage of a relative.

The Sikh allows his hair to grow untouched by scissors or razor. Small boys have their hair carefully braided and tied firmly over the head, and grown-up men twist their hair (*kes*) into a knot under the turban. They are very particular about combing it and keeping it clean. The ordinary Hindú shaves his head all but the scalplock (*chotí* or *bodí*) on the crown and the Bishnoí shaves this off also. Musalmáns sometimes shave the head, but the Satlaj Musalmáns often

let their black hair hang down over the neck below the *pagri*, giving them a wild appearance. Sikhs are not allowed to shave the beard, and many of the older men have fine long white beards, generally allowed to hang naturally downwards except when tied up by a beard-cloth (*dhántá*) round the chin to protect them from the dust. Musalmáns do not shave the beard, but some of them shave the lower edge of the moustache. Some Bágrís shave the beard and others do not. A woman's hair is generally put up in braids (*chúndá*), and to judge from the frequency with which in the villages one woman may be seen enjoying the pleasure of having her hair hunted through by another, it is not always kept so clean as the Sikh Jat keeps his *kes*.

Among the Musalmáns men rarely wear any ornaments, but sometimes a boy wears earrings until his beard appears. Bágrí men very commonly wear gold and silver ornaments (*túm*), such as silver bracelets (*karáa*), or gold earrings (*murki*), with a chain (*sánklí*) fastened to them and turned over the ear, or a necklace of gold (*tora* or *kathla*) or beads (*múngon kí kanthi*) ; or a silver chain round the waist (*tágrí*) or a small image of some god or saint (*múrat*) of gold or silver worn like a locket round the neck. Sikh men do not wear ornaments so commonly as the Bágrís, but sometimes have earrings (*tungal*), bracelets (*kangan*) and rings (*chháp*). All three classes of men, Hindú, Sikh and Musalmán, often carry strings of beads (*málá*) sometimes of wood or iron, to help them in counting their prayers, and a man may be seen, even when in conversation with others, working his beads round and at the same time, it is to be supposed, praying inwardly. Women of all classes are fond of ornaments (*tum* or *gáhne*), and when they cannot get them of gold or silver wear bangles or armlets of coarse glass (*káchi*). Musalmán women wear earrings (*báliyan* or *pattar*) and necklaces (*hamel* or *hasli*), armlets (*bhutta*) above the elbow and bangles (*churi*) on the wrists. Bágrí women wear nose-rings (*náth*), earrings (*báliyán*), necklaces (*hasli*), anklets (*kariyán*), bangles (*churi*), armlets (*tád*). Sikh women wear earrings (*dandiyán*) sometimes as many as twelve at a time, nose-rings (*laung*), necklaces (*hasli*), bracelets (*kangan*), bangles (*chura*), anklets (*bánk*), mostly of silver.

Houses and Furniture.

117. The most primitive kind of dwelling is that used by the Ods, Kanjars and other wandering tribes who carry about with them, generally on the backs of donkeys, their mats (*pankhí*) made of the thin stalks of the *sar* grass (*sirki*) and put them up in a row as some shelter against sun and rain wherever they camp for a time. Some of these wanderers do not even take the trouble to provide so much shelter as this, but camp out in the open : while the wandering Lohárs make their cart their home. Many of the poorer immigrants from the Bágar prairies, even when they settle down permanently in a village, are content with the rudest of huts. A common dwelling in Bágrí villages is the *jhúmpá* or *jhomprá*, a round hovel with walls made by interweaving branches of the *ák*, *jál* or *kair* bush and filling up the interstices with mud,

and with a thatch of *bájra* straw (*karbi*). Another Bágrí dwelling is the *chaunrá* or *dúndá*, a round hovel with mud walls (*bhínt*) and a roof of *bájra* thatch, and only one opening to serve as door, window and chimney closed by a wicket. When the Bágrí peasant rises in the world he makes a *parwá* or *chhappar*, an oblong house with mud walls and thatched roof; or better still a *sál* or *kothá*, an oblong house with walls of sun-dried brick plastered over with mud and a flat roof of rafters and branches covered with clay. The richer men enclose a courtyard (*ángan*) in front of the *kothá* and build a sort of ante-room (*páulí*) or an imposing entrance (*darwáza*) often of burnt brick and high enough to admit a camel. The Sikhs almost always have good flat-roofed houses (*kothá*) kept clean and in good repair, with a courtyard (*sahan*) in front and an entrance gateway. The poorer Musalmáns on the Satlaj make primitive huts (*jhuggi* or *khuddi*) by putting up screens (*kamána*) of interwoven branches of tamarisk (*pilchi*) and several of their hamlets consist wholly of temporary huts of this nature thatched with grass and not even plastered with mud. These are common near the river-bank, where the chances of diluvion are too great to make it worth while to build better houses. Their more permanent houses (*kothá*) are made with walls (*kand*) of sun-dried brick and roofs thatched with the thick stalk (*kána*) of *sarr* grass. The best houses in the district, out of the towns, are those of the Ráins on the Ghaggar, which are often built substantially and neatly of *pakka* brick taken from the numerous old *thehs* in the neighbourhood, with open verandahs and a clean well-kept court-yard (*sahan*) and gateway.

In the courtyard of almost every house, and even at the side of wretched hovels may generally be seen a cylinder made of mud for containing grain. It has a lid made of mud and fastened on with clay, and a hole below stuffed with a rag, the removal of which allows the grain to run out, and is generally raised above the ground on a sort of stand to be out of reach of the white ants. When made of mud it is called *kothi* or *kothliyá* by the Bágrís, and *bharola* by the Musalmáns, and when made of *kána* or *sarr* stalks plastered over with mud, as it generally is in the Musalmán villages of the Satlaj, it is called *palla*.* Some of the richer men have large bee-hive-shaped receptacles (*búrj*) built of sun-dried brick in a circular form with a pointed dome-shaped roof, capable of containing several hundred maunds of grain. In most villages, and indeed in most houses, except after a succession of bad harvests, there is a store of grain kept in these receptacles for consumption until the next harvest. The cattle and camels are often tied for the night in the open court-yard, but sometimes a shed (*táp*) is erected for them by putting up stakes and making a roof of branches over them by leaning it against the wall of the house; and the Sikhs generally have good byres made for them and keep them tied up inside and well-sheltered from the weather. In the court-yard may be seen the earthen fire-place (*chúla*) where the food of the family is cooked; the round earthen oven (*kárá*) where the milk is heated over a fire of cakes of dried cowdung (*goha*); the churn-

stick (*rai* or *mandhani*) for making butter; and an array of earthen and metal dishes (*bhándá*) for use in the work of the household. These are of different shapes and sizes, from the large earthen jar (*gharú*) used for bringing water from the well to the small earthen mug (*matkana*) used for ladling out the water from the *gharú* for drinking; or from the metal pot (*bhartiya*) in which liquids are cooked to the small metal cup (*chhaná* or *bátká*) out of which milk, water, &c, are drunk. The spinning-wheel (*charkhi*) stands in a corner, and one or two sleeping-cots (*manji*) stand about. Most of the furniture and utensils are made in the village and are very cheap and simple, but the metal vessels are imported from a distance and are comparatively expensive.

Family Life and Etiquette.

118. A good Sikh housewife has a hard day's work to do. She must get up at the dawn of day and grind the flour (*átá*) for the day's consumption at the hand-mill (*chakki*). Then she gets out the scones and butter-milk left over from last night's supper for her husband to breakfast on before he goes out to his work. Perhaps she has to milk the cows and buffaloes; at all events she must warm the milk of the morning and churn the milk of the previous day. She has to fetch water from the village well and sweep her house and court-yard, cook her husband's dinner and take it out to him in the field, take a turn at the spinning-wheel (*charkhi*), or do some embroidery work, and in the evening prepare the family supper and heat the evening's milk. Sikh women are not allowed to work in the field, and some of them are not even allowed to take out their husband's food; but all of them go out to bring water from the well, or to wash the clothes of the family. They make capital housewives and keep their persons and their houses neat and clean. The Bágrí women are not so particular about their houses, and often have to work in the fields along with their husbands, helping them to sow and reap, and indeed in everything except holding the plough. Often at harvest time the whole family go out and camp for the time in the fields under a temporary shelter of thatch, taking with them their cattle and utensils; so that during harvest a Bágrí village is sometimes almost deserted for days together. Except the Bodla and Chishti women, who are *pardahnashín*, and are not allowed to go outside the house, the Musalmán women do the household work and sometimes help in the field as openly as do those of the Hindús. Among the Bágrí Játs the milking of the cows is done by the women of the family; among the Musalmáns, and generally among the Sikhs, it is done by the men.

The Sikh peasant rises some time before daybreak, washes and says his prayers by memory from the *granth*; and after eating a scone and taking a drink of butter-milk he takes his cattle out to the field and works there until his wife comes out with his dinner of scones and butter-milk before noon. After dinner he works again for a time, and then gives himself and his cattle an hour's rest in the afternoon; then has another spell of work until sunset, when he takes his cattle home; and after washing has his supper of porridge and milk in the evening and goes to

bed soon after dark. His life is regulated by the sun, and there is little midnight-oil burnt; unless when some festivity is in progress the whole village is dark and quiet by nine o'clock. In the hot weather, unless it is cloudy, he does not work much in the heat of the day, and makes up for it by working earlier in the morning or later at night. The Bágrís, whose camels feel the heat even more than bullocks, often plough all night long instead of working in the daytime; and in irrigating tobacco in the hot weather the Musalmáns sometimes work their wells by night and rest by day. At harvest time when the crops are standing ripe and there is fear of hail, the peasant sometimes reaps both night and day, taking just as much sleep and rest as is absolutely needful. The Panjábi names for the different parts of the day are—

		About		
Tarká	...	3 or 4 A. M.	...	Some time before dawn; time to get up (Bágri *parbhát*).
Sawer	...	5 or 6 A. M.	...	Dawn.
Rotivelá	...	9 or 10 A. M.	...	Dinner-time, when the dinner is brought to the field.
Dopahar	...	Noon.		
Táorivela	...	5 P. M.	...	When it is time to put the porridge-pot (*táori*) on the fire.
Sánjh	...	7 P. M.	...	Evening—Supper-time.
Sotá	...	8 or 9 P. M.	...	Bed-time.
Adhí rát	...	Midnight.		

As the children of a family grow up and marry, the daughters go to their husbands' homes, and the married sons are given a separate hut within the same enclosure as their parents. Sometimes the whole family continue to have their meals in common, but this often leads to quarrels among the women, and the married sons often start separate fire-places (*chúlá*) and have separate arrangements for food, while they all work together on the family land and share its produce in common. Sometimes the sons continue this arrangement after the father's death, but they generally after a short time effect a permanent partition of the moveable property, and sometimes also of the land. If the mother be still alive, sometimes a share of the estate is set apart for her maintenance for her life-time, and on her death is divided among the sons. It is not uncommon for the father, in his life-time, to make a more or less complete partition of the family estate. Ordinarily, in that case, he keeps all the land still recorded in his own name, and as each son grows up and marries, he gives him a separate house and a separate share of the cattle and moveable property, and separate possession of a share of the family holding, keeping for himself and his wife a share equal to the share of one son. Each son then cultivates separately the share of the family land made over to him, and keeps for his own use, and that of his wife and children, the produce of his share of the land and of the moveable property. On the death of the parents, the share they had reserved for themselves is equally divided among the sons, who also share among them the debts of the family and join in defraying the funeral expenses of their parents and the expenses of marrying their sisters. Thus one often finds a number of brothers

and agnate cousins, each with his wife and children forming a distinct family (*ghar, gwárí*) but all living in the same enclosure, surrounded by a common wall and having one common entrance; each having a separate hearth (*chúlá, dhwán*) but all perhaps so far joint, that they share the produce of part of the ancestral holding in common. The family thus defined is the basis of the social system, and these groups each eating food cooked at a separate hearth, are the units of which native society is composed. The number of such families was returned at the Census as 51,596, and the average number of persons to a family in the villages was almost exactly five. A typical peasant's family may be taken as consisting of father and mother, two children and grandmother. The distribution by enclosures is not so well-defined as that by families. An enclosure ordinarily consists of an assemblage of families closely related to each other, and a new enclosure is formed by a new family settling in the village, or an old family either overflowing the limits of the old enclosure or developing into a number of families so distinct in their interests as to separate off their dwellings by distinct enclosures with different entrances. But sometimes a new-comer, though not nearly related to the old inhabitants, is allowed to settle in their enclosure, or a number of families, not related closely to each other but generally of the same caste, make a common wall round their dwellings with one entrance, and thus form one enclosure. The number of enclosures returned was 34,276, of which 3,741 were unoccupied on the night of the Census. And in the village the average number of families per occupied enclosure was 1·7 and of persons 8·6. In all these respects, number of persons per family, number of families and of persons per occupied house, the average for Sirsá is considerably above the average for the Panjáb, and when the number of individual immigrants and the unsettled habits of many of the population are considered, this is strong evidence that the joint-family system has been less affected by tendencies towards severalty in Sirsá than in the Panjáb generally. The number of unoccupied houses in the villages on the night of the Census was only 10 per cent., while for the Province generally it was 28 per cent. In Sirsá it would have been still smaller had not scarcity caused a number of families to emigrate temporarily at the time of the Census. The comparatively small number of unoccupied houses is due partly to the prosperity of the population, and partly to the recent colonisation of the district.

The Sirsá peasants are not by nature polite, and the Bágrís especially are often unintentionally rude and boorish in manner. Hindús when they meet generally content themselves with putting the right hand to the forehead and saying "*Rám Rám*" to each other, while Musalmáns say "*salám*"; or sometimes they enquire after each other's health (*tu rází haí*), replying "quite well" (*rází khushí*). Women are generally treated as the inferior sex, and when a husband and wife are walking together, she follows at a respectful distance behind. A woman must not mention the name of her husband or of his agnates older than he by generation, and she should veil her face before them. Words denoting connection by marriage have become so commonly used as terms of

abuse that they are not often used in their proper sense; and a man generally speaks of his father-in-law (*súsrá*) as his uncle (*táyá*). It is shameful for a man to go to his married daughter's house or take anything from her or her relations; so much so that when on the occasion of a death in the family, the wife's relations come to join in the mourning, they bring their own food with them and are not feasted by the deceased's family like the other mourners. On the other hand, a son-in-law is an honoured guest in his father-in-law's house, and is treated to the best of toothsome sweets. When a married woman goes to visit her mother, it is proper for the women of the family, both on her arrival and departure, to make a great lamentation, and lift up the voice and weep. On all occasions of domestic ceremony the relatives are feasted, and the host must see that the provisions do not run short; while the guests are expected to subscribe towards the cost of the feast.

Towards superiors, and especially towards a "Ruler" (*hákim*), the people are as polite as they know how, and in such circumstances their politeness generally takes the form of most fulsome flattery and extravagant gestures. They address the Ruler as "your majesty" and liken him to all the heroes and sages of antiquity and even to the deity; and a man anxious for some favour will grovel on the ground, and put dust on his head, or take off his turban and cast it on the ground, or twist his wrap round his neck like a rope and hold out the end of it, or in short do anything that he thinks will please the superior from whom he is asking a favour. It is thought a great honour to be allowed to sit on a European chair before a Ruler, and great anxiety is shown by the leading men to be placed on the list of chair-sitters (*Kursí nashín*) who alone have that privilege. A man must of course take off his shoes before he comes into the presence, and he must not sit down or take his leave until he is given permission; he must not laugh before the Ruler but he may yawn without any attempt to conceal it. A man meeting a Sáhib on the road will sometimes step out of his shoes and stand barefooted on the road until the Sáhib passes by; a horseman will dismount and a woman veil her face when passing the great man. To a European all these absurdities are at first amusing, then disgusting; but after a time they come to be matters of course and excite no particular attention.

Domestic ceremonies at Birth, Betrothal, Marriage and Death.

119. Among all tribes there are certain ceremonies which are always performed in connection with domestic events, such as the birth, marriage or death of a member of the family. Many of these ceremonies are exceedingly elaborate, and great importance is attached to their performance at the proper time and place and by the proper persons, although no reason can now be given for the origin of the custom. These ceremonies are very much the same among all Hindú castes, both high and low, but have been considerably affected by a change of religion, for instance conversion to Islám or to the doctrines of the Bishnois.

The ceremonies connected with the birth of a child among the Bágrí Játs are as follows:—The mid-wife (*dái*) is given a fee of two annas and some food if the child be a boy, but only one anna if it be a girl. On the sixth day after the birth, the mother (*jachá*) is formally bathed and dressed in new clothes, her old clothes being given to the barber's wife (*náin*) who plaits (*gúndná*) her hair for her and gets a fee of four annas and some food. A ceremony called *chúnchí khulái* is performed by the mother's sister-in-law (*nanad*) who washes her breasts (*chúnchí*) and is presented with a suit of clothes (*tíyal*) in return for the service. When the child is a month old its father's sister or niece brings it a present of a cap (*topi*) or silver bangles (*kara*) and blesses the child (*baláen lení*) by making a pass with the hands over it and then cracking the fingers against the temples, so as to take on herself any evil that may threaten the child, and in return is presented with a suit of clothes (*tíyal*), or a cow, buffalo or young camel. The *tíyal* consists of a sheet (*orhná*), boddice (*ángí*) and petticoat (*ghágrá*). If the child be a boy the family menials (*karú* or *lágí*) bring him toys representative of their respective trades and wish him luck (*badhái*); thus the Kumhár brings him a little earthen pot (*kalsa*), the Khátí brings a toy-cart, the Lohár a pair of small pincers (*chimta*), the Chamár a pair of shoes, and the Nái does something to please the child; in return they are given a rupee each. A Bráhman comes to give the child his name, and gets a fee of four annas and a meal; and sometimes the relatives are invited to a feast and each leaves a rupee for the child. No such ceremonies are performed on the birth of a daughter. When the mother is able to begin her household duties again, some twenty days after the birth, she puts an empty water-pot and *lota* on her head and goes in procession with the women of the village to the well or pond, and there distributes sweetmeats to the children of the village before she brings back water to her house.

The ceremonies connected with birth are very similar among other Hindú tribes with unimportant differences. For instance, among the Sikhs the ceremony of washing the mother's breasts is performed by the barber's wife, the Tarkhán brings the baby-boy a toy bow and arrow, the Lohár an iron bangle, and the Mochí a leather horse. Among the Kumhárs the uncle's wife of the child (*kákí* or *tái*) announces his birth by beating a tray (*thálí*) outside the door. A woman is considered impure after child-birth, and any other woman who comes to see her must wash her hands in cow's urine to purify them before she does any household work. On the day on which a boy is born, the father or some agnate relation goes to the family Bráhman, and asks him on what day the child's name will be made known (*nikalegá*). He makes his calculation and names a certain odd number of days, from 3 to 27, the luckiest number being nine; and if the number of days be more than nine the parents must give certain clothing to a Dakaut, or low-caste Bráhman, to take away the bad luck. On the day fixed for giving the boy his name, his mother washes her head with cow's urine (*gáo mútr*), and is washed and dressed by the barber's wife, while the women of the family sing around her. The house too is purified by being smeared with mud and sprinkled with cow's urine. The Bráhman then comes and

looks at his almanac (*patra*), and reads out five names beginning with the same letter, one of which is chosen by the parents, and thereafter considered the boy's name for purposes of religious ceremonies, but the parents give him any name they think fit, and by that he is generally known. The Bráhman then lights the sacred fire (*hom*) with twigs of the *jand* tree and puts in it clarified butter, coarse sugar, barley and sesamum, reciting verses the while. He then puts some of the fire into a vessel of water, in which also are put some cow's urine and Ganges water, and a copper coin (*paisá*) or silver ring (*chhalla*), and sprinkles all the persons present and the walls of the house with this consecrated water. The Bráhman is then fed and feasted and the neighbours are entertained. This ceremony which is called *mangalá mukhí* seems to correspond to the baptism of the Sikhs and Bishnoís. The boy is often vowed to some god, such as Hanúmán, Mátá or Kálí, and when the period of the vow has expired he is taken to some place sacred to his tutelar divinity, and there his hair is cut off (*chharola*). A girl is named with much the same ceremony as a boy, but none of the other ceremonies is considered necessary. A child is often not weaned for three years, unless another child be born in the interval. His cradle (*pálná*) is swung from a tree or rafter. Among the Báwariyas and Naths, the mother on the ninth day after the birth washes herself and the child, and comes out to a feast in which the women of the tribe join her.

Children are generally betrothed (*sagáí, mangewá*), while still of a tender age. Among the Bágrí Játs, when the parties have privately agreed about the betrothal, the girl's father sends his family barber (Náí) or Bráhman to the boy's house, where, before the assembled brotherhood, the boy is placed on a stool (*chauki*) and the girl's Náí or Bráhman puts in his lap a rupee and a cocoanut (*náriyal*), and puts a lump of sugar in his mouth. The Náí is then feasted on sweet things, and dismissed with a present which he is allowed to choose from Rs. 2 and four annas and a wrap (*khes*) placed before him. If the families are already connected by marriage, the wife of that marriage brings the signs of betrothal in place of the Náí, and gets a suit of clothes for her trouble. Sometimes a man simply sells his daughter for money; in that case he goes himself to betroth the girl and fetch her price. Among the Kumhárs sometimes the boy's father sends some jewels and Rs. 16 in cash by his Náí to the girl's house or takes it himself, and if the girl's father approves of the betrothal, he accepts the ornaments and money and returns Rs. 5, of which Rs. 2 are for a suit of clothes for the boy's mother, Rs. 2 for a blanket for his father, and Re. 1 for the boy himself; or the girl's father sends a rupee and a cocoanut to the boy's father as among the Jats. Among the Báwariyas the boy's father goes to the girl's house and gives her father from Rs. 10 to Rs. 30 for the girl before her relatives. Among the Thoris the usual price is Rs. 14, and among the Chamárs Rs. 12, of which Re. 1 is given back to the boy's father for the boy, and a wrap (*khes*) for himself. Sweetmeats are ordinarily distributed to the relatives, and the women of the family sing in honour of the occasion.

At marriage among the Bágrí Játs, the girl's father first gets the Bráhman to fix a lucky day, and sends his family Náí or Bráhman to the boy's father to inform him of the date fixed. Seven days before the wedding, the bridegroom is feasted with the boys of his family, and a red string is tied round his right wrist, and an iron rod placed in his hand to keep off the evil eye (*phitora*). He is then placed on a stool (*chauki*) and rubbed over by the barber or his wife with a mixture (*ubatna*) of barley-flour, turmeric and oil, while the women of the family sing round him. This ceremony is called the *bán*; and after it until the wedding the bridegroom does no work. At night his hands and feet are coloured with henna, and in the morning the relatives assemble, and the boy's mother's brother brings the wedding presents (*bhát*) sent by his maternal relatives, which include a suit of clothes for the mother and a wrap (*khes*) for the father of the bridegroom. When the wedding-party (*janet*) is ready to start, the Náí again rubs the boy over with ointment and washes his head, in return for which he gets a rupee and the boy's old clothes; the Sunár fastens a coloured string (*kángná*) on the boy's right foot, and gets an anna and some rice and sugar; the Bráhman fastens on a cap (*sera*) on the boy's head. A cloth is spread on the ground, and the bridegroom is seated on it with a tray (*thálí*) before him, in which a yellow cross is drawn with turmeric (*haldi*), and on this are placed some rice, a lump of sugar, and a rupee dotted round with turmeric. Then all the friends and relatives place in the tray their subscriptions (*naundá*) towards the expenses of the wedding, while a Banya writes out a list of the subscribers and the amount they give, and a Sunár tests each rupee to see that it is all right. For this service the Banya and Sunár get a fixed fee. Sometimes these subscriptions amount to a large sum, such as Rs. 1,000, and it is considered binding on a family to return them by subscribing on similar occasions in the families of the subscribers, whether they be of the same caste or not. The bridegroom's father takes with him ornaments, clothes, dates, almonds, sugar, raisins, cocoanut, &c., to present to the bride. The wedding-party (*janet*) with the bridegroom then start for the village of the bride, often a long distance off, on camels and horses, and when they get near (*dhukna*) the village, they announce their approach by firing off guns and beating drums. The party halts outside the village, until certain ceremonies have been performed. The bride's family barber (Náí) brings out some water and gives them to drink, and after getting a fee of five *paise* from the bridegroom's father, goes back again into the village. The Dhának also comes out with fire and gets an anna. The bridegroom and his party then advance into the village, and are met by the bride's father with his family priest (*purohit*) who makes the forehead-mark (*tilak*) on the bridegroom's forehead, and gets a rupee from the boy's father, who also gives a rupee to each of the family menials of the bride. The bride's father and his priest then retire, but the former soon returns with his relatives and greets the bridegroom's party, formally presenting the boy's father with a wrap and the boy's musician

(Dúm) with a rupee, while the boy's father gives a rupee to the girl's family Dúm, and a rupee to the headman of the village (*gwáreká haq*). The whole of the bridegroom's party then go to a house specially set apart for them (*janwása* or *dándalwása*) and the bridegroom and some of his party go with the bride's father to the bride's house, over the door of which has been placed a small wooden framework (*toran*) often ornamented with carved birds' heads, and strikes this framework with a twig of green *beri*. The actual marriage ceremony (*phere*) always takes place at night. The bridegroom and his party go to the bride's house and sit down opposite the bride's party, while between them squares are traced out on the ground. The bridegroom's father presents a pair of earrings, a nose ring and a pair of shoes for the bride, and when she has been washed and dressed she is brought out and seated on a stool (*pídá*) while the bridegroom is seated beside her on another. The family priests (*purohit*) of both parties light a sacred fire (*hom*) of *jandi* wood, and the bride's priest fastens the end of the bridegroom's wrap (*dopatta*) to the end of the girl's wrap (*orhna*) tying five *paise* into the knot. Thus tied, the boy goes round the fire three times followed by the girl, and then she goes round once followed by him. They then sit down each on the other's stool, and the priests fasten on wedding caps (*mor* and *sira*) on the heads of the bride and bridegroom and take them into the house. The bridegroom is given rice and sugar to eat, and after taking off the wedding-cap, he returns to the *janwása* leaving his wrap (*dopatta*) with the bride. The boy's priest gets a fee of Rs. 2 and the girl's priest Rs. 6 for their share in the ceremony. Next day the bridegroom's party are feasted morning and evening at the bride's house on rice, sugar and clarified butter. On the third day the bridegroom's father gives the bride (*bíndhní*) the presents (*bari*) he had brought with him. A sleeping-cot (*palang*) is brought out and over it a coloured cloth is stretched, and on this the bride's family put 11 or 21, or 31, or 41 suits of clothes for the bride, and under it five brass vessels (*bhánde*), *viz.*, a tray (*thálí*,) two jugs of different shapes (*katora* and *lota*), a jar (*tokni*) and a ladle (*kurchhi*). The bridegroom is seated on the cot, and before both parties the bride's father puts some money in a tray and announces that he has given away his daughter with this dowry (*dán*) to the bridegroom's father, who takes the money and distributes some copper to the village menials, giving four annas to the Lohár, four annas to the Khátí, a rupee to the Náí, a rupee to the Purohit, and a rupee to the Mírásí, as well as Rs. 5 to the headman of the village, and a rupee to each of the faqirs of the place; and if the boy's father has kettle-drums (*dhol*) beaten, he pays a rupee to the Dúm of the village, 5 *take* to the drummer and Rs. 2 to the headman of the village as drum-fee. The bridegroom takes leave of his mother-in-law and the party go off with the bride on a cart or camel. When the bridegroom's party with the bride get back to their own village, they halt outside it until the girls of the village come out singing and take the bride in with them to her husband's house, where her mother-in-law receives her, and after waving (*wár pher*) water over her head takes her into the house.

The bridegroom's sister makes a pretence of stopping the doorway, and has to be appeased by a present of an ornament or a cow. When the bride gets inside the house, her mother-in-law and the wives of her husband's uncles each give her a rupee to show her face. The bridegroom's father then feasts the wedding-party on rice and sugar and dismisses them. Next day in a ceremony called *got kúndála* the women of the family all eat rice, sugar and ghí out of the same dish (*parát*) with the bride, and thus admit her into the family or clan (*got*). On the third day the bride and bridegroom are seated on opposite sides of a dish (*parát*) into which water and various articles are put, and the bride unfastens the strings on the wrist and ankle (*kangna*) of the bridegroom, while he does the same for her, and the bridegroom's brother's wife takes them and throws them into the water. Then the bride and bridegroom dip their hands into the dish and take out what they can find, and the brother's wife takes the articles and throws them into the water again. This game (*kágan dora khelna*) goes on for some time. Then the bride's brother takes her away home to her father's house again, with some presents such as a fine suit of clothes given the bride by her mother-in-law, and Rs. 2 and a suit of clothes to the barber's wife who came in attendance on the bride. She stays in her father's house until she grows up, and then goes to live with her husband after a separate ceremony called the *mukláwa*. If she was already grown-up at the time of the marriage, her husband sometimes accompanies her and her brother back to her father's house, and the *mukláwa* takes place at once; more generally it takes place after a delay of a year or an odd number of years. The bridegroom goes with his father or brother and family barber, and after a day or two's stay at the bride's house brings her away with him. With her, her father gives a spinning-wheel (*charkha*), a stool (*pída*), a sleeping-cot (*palang*), bedding (*saur sauriya*), some wraps (*khes*), metal vessels (*bhánde*), ornaments and sometimes camels or ponies.

Among the Sikh Jats and other Hindu tribes the customs at marriage are very much the same as among the Bágrí Játs. Among the Sikhs, when the bridegroom first goes to the bride's house, he strikes with a sword or hatchet (*takwa*) the *tatti*, which consists of four earthen jars (*thuti*) pierced and tied together and hung up by a string in the bride's court-yard. Among the Kumhárs, when the wedding procession is about to start for the bride's house, the bridegroom's sister seizes the rein of his camel and will not let him go until she has been appeased by the gift of a rupee; at the wedding ceremony some moist henna is placed in the girl's right hand which is clasped by the boy's right hand, and the girl leads the boy round the fire three times, and then he leads her round once. Among the Báwariyas, before the bridegroom's party start for the wedding, a basket (*khára*) is placed on the ground with four copper coins (*paise*) under it, and on this the bridegroom is seated and washed, and then his elder sister or his maternal aunt gives him a rupee and lifts him off the basket, and he crushes with his feet four earthen jars which have been placed there for the purpose, while his sister takes the copper coins which were under

the basket. When the wedding party starts the women of the family go outside the village with them to a *jand* tree, and there the bridegroom (*lára*) and a lad of the family (*shahbála*) go round the tree seven times, and then cut off a branch with an axe; the bridegroom's sister or maternal aunt gives the boys some coarse sugar to eat, and the bridegroom gives his sister a rupee. The bridegroom's sister goes with the party to the bride's house. At the wedding the bride and bridegroom are seated on two baskets, and after the bride's sister has tied the bridegroom's turban and the bride's sheet together, and the Bráhman has made nine images of gods and worshipped them, the bride and the bridegroom go round the baskets seven times. The bride's father formally hands over a dowry with his daughter, but is paid for it in money by the bridegroom's father who also pays him the price of the girl, which is usually Rs. 29. In this tribe the bride does not return to her father's house after the wedding, but remains with her husband. Among the Thoris when the bridegroom goes to the bride's door and touches the wooden frame (*toran*) the bride's mother comes out, and measures the bridegroom with her wrap (*orhná*), and puts some sugar in his mouth, and is given a rupee for this ceremony. At the wedding-ceremony, instead of the ordinary *hom*, the Thori Bráhman lights four wicks inside a cocoanut, and the bride and bridegroom walk round this. The bridegroom's father pays the bride's father a price for the bride, ordinarily Rs. 40. Among the Nats the wedding ceremony is performed by wrapping the bride in a blanket, and making her go round the bridegroom three times, while a Bráhman repeats some formulæ. The bride does not go back to her father's house after the wedding, and so there is no *mukláwa* proper, but a year after the wedding the bride's father sends a present of a donkey, which is understood to represent the *mukláwa*.

Among the Bágrí Játs, when a small child under seven years old dies, no particular ceremonies are performed. The body is taken outside the village and buried, not burnt; and the period of mourning lasts for only a few days. When an adult dies the relatives are called together, and the son or brother of the deceased washes the body and wraps it in the dead-clothes (*kafn*) consisting of a loin-cloth, turban and white sheet. A bier (*sídí* or *arthi*) is then made of two long sticks and three short ones fastened like a ladder, and covered with a white cloth; on this the body is placed and a coloured wrap (*khes*) thrown over it. The bier is then carried out by the relatives and followed by the weeping women to the door of the house, while the men repeat the name of God (*Parmeshur* or *Rám Rám sat hai* = "God is true.") At first the body is carried head foremost, but when the procession gets outside the village, the bier is placed on the ground, and the son of the deceased or other near agnate who acts as chief mourner (*karm karne wála*) puts four balls (*pind*) of barley-flour on the ground round it, and sprinkles round it water from an earthen jar which he then breaks. Then the bier is again raised and carried, this time feet foremost, to the burning place, or sometimes the bearers simply change places without turning the corpse round. Arrived at the burning-place

they put the corpse on the pyre (*chitá*), and anoint the breast and head with clarified butter. The son then applies a light (*lámpá*) to the pyre, and they wait until the corpse is nearly consumed, when the son knocks a hole in the skull (*kapál*). When the fire has burned down, the funeral-party return to the village after bathing in the pond; and the barber (Náí) awaits them outside the village-gate (*phalsa*) with a vessel of water with which he sprinkles each man. The dead-clothes are buried with the corpse, but the clothes on the bier above and below the corpse are given to the sweeper (Chúhra), and musician (Mirásí.) For eleven days after the death all the relatives, male and female, of the deceased sleep on the ground; on the third day after the funeral, the bearers of the bier with the son of the deceased and a Bráhman go to gather the relics (*phúl chugná*) *i.e.*, the teeth and the nails of the hands and feet, which are placed in a small earthen urn (*kúlhariya*), and either sent at once to the Ganges or buried for the time until an opportunity of sending them occurs. They are then thrown into the river after some further ceremony has been performed, and some fees paid to the Bráhmans. If the family is rich they have the full funeral obsequies (*kiryá karm*) performed by Bráhmans, but ordinarily it is thought sufficient on the eleventh day (*ikádasha*) to give the old clothes of the deceased to the Acháraj Bráhman with some grain, a bed, a vessel, and some sugar. On the twelfth or thirteenth day, if the deceased was a married man, eleven jars are filled with water (only one for a bachelor,) and covered with clean cloth fastened on with raw thread; Bráhmans are fed and given presents (*dakshina*). If the deceased was a young man, the women of the family meet for three days, and mourn together, covering their faces and beating their breasts. If the relations of the wife of the deceased come to join in the mourning, they supply their own food, and do not, like the other mourners, partake of food supplied by the deceased's family. Only the near relatives mourn for an old man. Every month for a year a jar is filled with water, and given to a Bráhman who is formally feasted (*rasoí jamáí játí hai*); and in the next *kanágat* (the first fifteen days of Asauj) a Bráhman is feasted on the day corresponding to the day of the month (*tith*) on which the deceased died.

Among the Sikh Jats when the bier is placed on the ground half-way to the burning-place, the wife or near female relatives of the deceased bow down to the corpse by touching the ground with their foreheads (*máthá tek kar*), and place on the ground some silver or copper coins which are the perquisite of the Náí. For three days after the death the men of the family sleep on the ground with the chief mourner in the village guest-house. Among the Kumhárs when a man is about to die, some *dáb* grass is spread on the ground, and he is lifted off his bed and placed on it, as it is considered unlucky to die on a bed. When the bier is being carried to the burning-place, four balls (*pind*) of bájra-flour with a copper coin in each are taken with it, one of which is left outside the village gate, one at the half-way place (*bichhla bása*), and the other two are burnt with the corpse. At the half-way place

water is poured on the ground by a man walking towards the corpse, and when he gets near the corpse he breaks the jar. On the way back from the funeral a green bough is torn off some tree, and each man steps on it. For eleven days after the death the son of the deceased goes every morning to the place where the body was burnt, and places on a three-legged stand an earthen vessel full of milk and water, which drops out through a hole made in the bottom of the vessel. Among the Báwariyas the cloth spread over the bier of a man is white, and over a woman's bier red. Among the Nats the bier is made of a screen of twigs covered with straw, and the body is burnt in the clothes it wore when alive; and the head of the corpse is shaved when it is laid out. Among the Chamárs the head of the son of the deceased is shaved. Among the Aroras a young child is not burnt, but thrown into the river or buried in a sitting position. When a man is about to die, a lighted lamp is placed near his head, and he salutes it with joined hands before he dies. This lamp is kept burning for ten days, and then put in a fresh earthen jar and set swimming on the river or pond, or sometimes it is thrown into the burning pyre.

The Bishnoís have many ceremonies similar to those of the Bágrí Játs, but several of their religious ceremonies are peculiar to themselves. On the 30th day after birth the mother and child are washed and bathed, and the Náí cuts off the child's hair. The mother then sits down in a clean place with the child, and her husband or his father sits opposite her with the priest (*sádh*) who lights a fire in an earthen vessel and puts clarified butter on it. The child's father takes a rupee in his hand and holds it over an earthen jar (*kalas*) full of water, until the priest has finished lighting up the fire (*hom*) and repeating his formulæ, when he drops the rupee into the vessel, and scatters some grain for the birds. The priest gives the father and mother each three handfuls of water and drops water three times into the child's mouth. This baptismal ceremony makes the child a Bishnoí, and purifies the mother. At the marriage ceremony, which takes place after dark, the bride and bridegroom are seated on two planks (*patra*) the bride being seated at the bridegroom's right hand, and the bride's family priest ties the clothes of the bride and bridegroom together, and lights up the sacred fire (*hom*) repeating some formulæ. When he has finished certain phrases he makes the bride and bridegroom change places, so that the bride sits on the bridegroom's left hand which is considered the wife's place. He then unlooses the knot and calls on the girl's relatives to give the dowry. When this has been done, a cup (*kalas*) of water is set down and the bride's father holds a rupee over it while the priest recites some formulæ and then drops it in. The priest then gives the bride's father, the bridegroom and the others present each three handfuls of water, and each salutes the cup as he goes away. The Bishnoís bury their dead instead of burning them. A woman's corpse is dressed in woollen clothes for the grave. The grave is dug by Bishnoís themselves, and the corpse is carried out on the hands of the bearers not on a bier. After the earth has been filled in over the corpse the handle of the spade is washed and grain

is scattered over the grave for the birds. Three days after the death a funeral feast (*káj*) is given to the neighbours. Sometimes this is followed by a greater feast to which all the brotherhood are invited ; such a feast lasts for three days and often costs a large sum of money, but sometimes the guests give subscriptions (*nauta*) towards the expense.

Among the Musalmáns the usual ceremonies on the occasion of a birth are as follows :—The mid-wife (*dái*) who is generally a Máchhin by caste is given a fixed fee, and the Mulláh is sent for from the mosque to utter the call to prayer (*báng* or *azán*) into the child's ear. Within ten days the child's hair is cut off by the barber, and when the mother and child are formally bathed some 21 days after the birth the women of the family are summoned together and feasted. If the child is a boy he is circumcised (*khutna*) at about the age of five before the assembled relatives by the family barber (Náí). At betrothal after exchanging messages through the Náí the boy's father and relatives go to the girl's house and go through certain ceremonies, the chief of which consists in the payment of money by the boy's father for the girl. Sometimes the girl's Náí formally presents a dish of sweetened milk to the boy's father and the men who have come with him, and they drink the milk and put the ornaments they have brought as presents into the vessel. At marriage many of the same ceremonies are performed as at the marriage of Hindus ; for instance, the bridegroom is anointed by the Náí in preparation for the marriage, and is seated on a basket to be bathed and jumps off it on to some earthen vessel which he smashes beneath his feet. When the wedding-party starts the women of the village go with them outside the village to some *jand* tree, where the bridegroom's mother or sister ties a string to a twig ; the bridegroom then goes seven times round the tree with a sword or knife in his hand, and finally cuts the twig off the tree ; it is carried back into the village in a tray by the women, while the wedding-party goes off to the girl's village. They are there stopped by the village Bhangi (sweeper) who shuts the village gate and will not let them in until they give him a rupee. When they get in, the girls of the village pretend to drive them back by beating them with twigs, but they force their way through to the bride's door, where the bride's Náí and Máchhin bring them *sharbat* to drink and the village cow-herd brings milk for the bridegroom only. When the time for the marriage arrives, the Mulláh is summoned from the mosque and performs the marriage ceremony (*nikáh*) as prescribed in the Muhammadan Law. After feasting and exchange of presents, the wedding party carry off the bride to the bridegroom's house, where the ceremonies of getting her to show her face, making her dip into a vessel of water with the bridegroom, and introducing her into the family by eating out of the same dish with her, are performed much as among Hindús. After three days her brother takes her back to her father's house where she remains until puberty, when her husband comes and takes her home to live with him. When a man dies he is washed and wrapped in a white winding-sheet (*kafn*) and the men of the

family assemble with the Mulláh from the mosque who recites the appropriate verses from the Qurán, and accompany the body to the grave where it is buried as prescribed by the Muhammadan religion. A period of mourning of forty days (*chahal*) is observed, and during this time the relatives of the deceased do not sleep on beds but on the ground. If the deceased have left a widow she does not wash or change her clothes for forty days after the death.

The first thing that strikes the observer of these domestic ceremonies is the astonishing number of elaborate formalities which are performed in all tribes and even in the poorest families on the occasion of domestic events, and especially in connection with marriage. For many of these formalities no reasonable origin can be assigned by the people themselves: they perform them merely because their fathers did before them, and yet wherever it is possible great care is taken to go through the most minute portions of these irksome and expensive ceremonies. Another characteristic of them is the number of persons required to take part in them and the duties assigned to each. Every minute ceremony must be performed by some one standing in a certain relation to the parties. Not only are the agnates of the bride and bridegroom required to take part in the wedding-ceremonies, but parts are assigned to the sister, and mother, the maternal aunt and the brother's wife; not only must the family priest and the family barber be present, but the potter, the musician, the sweeper and other menials of the family all take a share in the formalities. Another remarkable characteristic of the ceremonies is the amount of money and other valuables that exchanges hands and the number of customary fees and presents that have to be given, not only to the principal assistants at the ceremony, such as the priest and barber, but to all the menials and dependents, not only to the bride and bridegroom and their families collectively but to the sister, mother and other relatives individually; in fact, every little ceremony has to be paid for, every ceremonial duty carries with it the right of receiving a customary fee. In most cases these fees are actually paid and make marriages very costly, for when added together they amount to a large sum; but sometimes the money changes hands as a form only, and is not actually expended, but returns to the giver. Again it is noticeable that, notwithstanding the mercenary nature of most of the ceremonies connected with marriage, there are a number of customs which seem to support the theory that marriage formerly was effected by capture of the bride; for instance, the preparatory anointing of the bridegroom and his resting from work for some days before the marriage, his formally cutting a branch off a *jand* tree before starting for the bride's house, his sister's attempt to stop him by seizing his rein, the halting of the party outside the bride's village, the pretence of shutting the village gate in their faces and of driving them back with blows, and the ceremony in which the bridegroom strikes with an axe or twig a frame hung up at the girl's door. It is also very remarkable how similar in their general character are the ceremonies performed by all sorts of tribes, high-caste and low-caste,

Hindú, Sikh and Musalmán. It is true that there are certain ceremonies which appear to be peculiar to certain tribes, and that there are small differences in the particular ceremonies as practised by different tribes, but as a rule these differences are insignificant in comparison with the general resemblance. Probably some of the inferior tribes, whose origin is almost certainly quite different from that of the higher races, may have simply imitated the ceremonies of their masters, but even after making full allowance for possible imitation, there remains an extraordinary similarity in the elaborate and seemingly meaningless ceremonies so carefully performed. It is also extraordinary how little difference a change of religion makes in the character of the ceremonies; of course some of them have been supplanted by new forms necessitated by the essential doctrines of the religion; thus a Bishnoí child must be baptised, a Musalmán boy must be circumcised; the Musalmán performs the actual wedding contract by the Muhammadan form of *nikáh* instead of the circumambulation round the sacred fire; the Hindu burns his dead while the Musalmán and the Bishnoi buries his dead; but all of them have besides these different ceremonies, a number of other elaborate formalities performed with almost equal care, and having much the same character among the followers of all religions. It may also be noticed that only some of the ceremonies can be called religious, and require the attendance of ministers of religion; the Hindu Bráhman must name the child, must light the sacred fire and perform the marriage ceremony; the Bishnoi Sádh must baptise the child; the Musalmán mosque-attendant must perform the Nikáh and read the Qurán at the funeral; but there are many elaborate ceremonies which require the presence of no minister of religion, and are performed by the relatives themselves with the aid of their servants and dependants; and may therefore be considered to be tribal or family ceremonies as distinguished from religious formalities.

Tribal Custom.

120. As a Code of Tribal Custom in Sirsá has been published separately I need not here do more than give a very brief account of the prevalent customs. I have already described the system of agnatic relationship and of tribe, caste and clan on which society is organised. The whole body of custom which regulates the rights of individuals and of families is founded on this system. A man must marry within his caste, and sometimes within a certain section of his caste, but, except where Muhammadan law has so far overridden custom as to make marriage of cousins lawful, he must not marry in his own agnatic group (*got*), for all females of his own generation related to him through agnates only are considered to be his sisters. He must not marry any one nearly related to him through his mother; some tribes extend the prohibition still further, and forbid a man to marry in his mother's clan or village, or even in his grandmother's clan. A girl is a valuable piece of property, and betrothal is a contract by which the girl's family bind themselves, often for a money consideration, to transfer the ownership of the girl to the boy's family on her reaching a marriageable age.

The ceremony of marriage actually transfers the ownership of the girl from her agnates to those of the boy. The actual possession is transferred afterwards at the *mukláwa*; and thenceforth she belongs to her husband's agnates. If she on her husband's death marries his brother no formal transfer is required, as she already belongs to the family. If the husband's agnates give the widow in marriage to an outsider, she is simply sold without any formal ceremony. The father of a family has full control over the whole family estate during his life-time, but he cannot deprive the sons of their right to share the immoveable property equally after his death. There is no custom of primogeniture, except in the succession to the office of headman of the village, and it is only rarely that the sons divide the land according to the number of mothers. Almost always the sons all share alike. If a man die without sons leaving a widow, she is entitled to remain in possession of his whole estate until her death or remarriage, when it reverts to his agnates. Daughters have no right to inherit; they are only entitled to be suitably maintained and suitably married; on marriage they enter into the clan of the husband and have no further claim on their own families. Only agnates and the widows of sonless agnates have the right to inherit. Where there are several agnates of the same class they share equally, and no heir excludes the agnatic heirs or the sonless widow of another heir of the same class. Wills are quite unknown, and a proprietor cannot interfere with the distribution of his property after his death. He has almost full power to distribute the moveable property as he pleases in his lifetime, but he cannot alienate the immoveable property from the agnates without their consent. If he has no son, he may adopt an agnate nephew who then succeeds to him as a son; and if he dies without sons, his widow may adopt one of his agnate nephews who succeeds to the whole estate. The fundamental principles of the whole body of tribal custom are that a man must marry in his own caste or tribe, but he must not marry an agnate; and that the land must not be alienated from the agnates.

Except in social matters, the tribal organisation is not very strong. Often when any caste question, especially some question connected with marriage, requires to be decided, the parties interested summon a *panchâyat* of the tribe, which is attended by tribesmen from the neighbouring villages, but no particular person or family has a special right to be present. There are no definite rules as to the persons who are to attend the *panchâyat*, or as to the mode in which the business before it is to be discussed and decided. Everything is vague and indefinite. But the *panchâyat*, guided generally by the opinions of the older and more respectable tribesmen present, usually comes to a decision which is acquiesced in by all. The only way in which a *panchâyat* can enforce its decision is to excommunicate a disobedient tribesman (*huqqa pání band karná*) refusing to eat, drink or smoke with him or to intermarry with his family, until he obeys the order of the *panchâyat* and pays the penalty they impose. The power of the *panchâyat* is not strong, and it is a common saying that, now that such