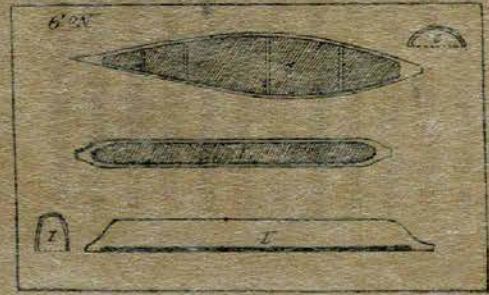
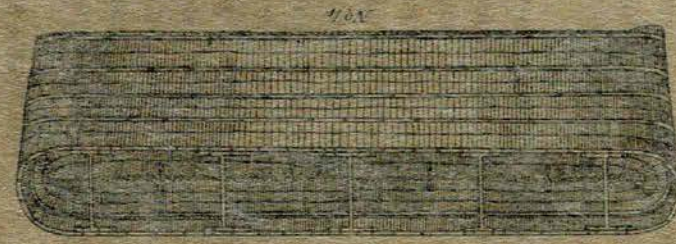
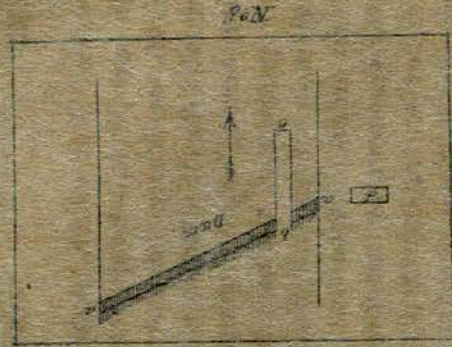


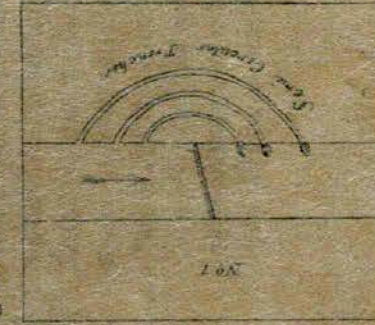
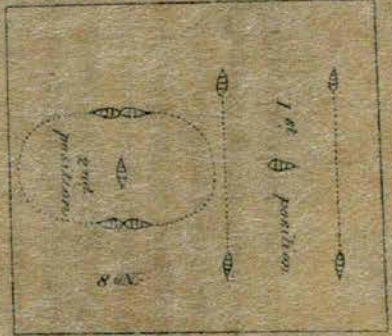
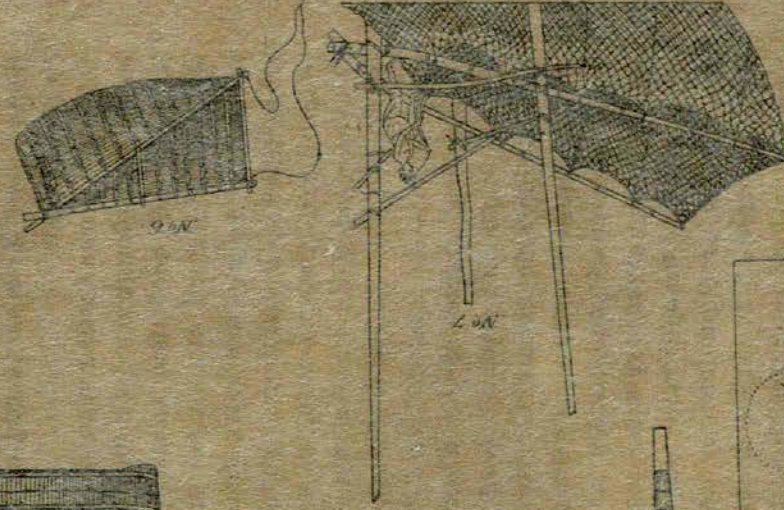


CSL

London 1848 W. H. Allen & Co. 7 Ludlow St. E.C. 4



Method of catching fish
 1. Impetuous called *Tharaka* (see accompanying fish)
 2. Another kind called *Dungu*
 3. Another called *Dhenge*
 4. A net for catching fish
 5. An impetuous called *Tharaka*
 6. Another called *Tharaka*





made of twisted ribs of the plantain tree leaves, the sides of which hang down like a fringe, and alarm the fish as the rope approaches.

The most improved method on a plan analogous to these is practised by the fishermen in the smaller rivers of the eastern part of the district. A dam is constructed, obliquely across the river, of bamboos, sticks, and mats, not so as to contain all the water, but so as to raise it about a foot higher than the level below the dam. Near the lower end of the dam is left an opening about two feet wide and below this is a channel about 20 feet long. The sides are secured by posts and mats; and the floor, which consists of bamboos laid close to each other, is raised a little higher than the level of the river below; and a little lower than its level above the dam. All fish attempting to go down the river follow the current through the opening in the dam; but the channel is so full of crevices, that the fish immediately after entering it are left dry, and by their own exertions are always carried to the lower end where they are caught by the fishermen, who watch in a hut. This kind of weir, it must be observed, is not fitted for a variable climate; a sudden shower that raised the water a foot would destroy it.

The manner of catching fish by collecting them among the branches of trees, thrown into stagnant water, is still more practised here than in Dinajpoor, both by farmers and professed fishermen; and by far the greater part of the fish taken in Chilmari, and other parts near the Brohmoputro is caught in this manner. The fishing, in old channels that contain much water, continues from the middle of October until the middle of March. Large quantities of branches are thrown in until they reach the surface, and are held down by weights. After they have remained from five to seven days, stakes of bamboo are driven all round, and to these is fastened a net deep enough to go from the surface to the bottom, and long enough to surround the branches. The branches are then thrown out and the fish are drawn on shore. At one watercourse I found 11 men at work in this manner. They seemed to draw one heap almost every day, and did no other work, the fish being bought from them on the spot by those who retail in the market.

In this district I nowhere saw the kind of trap called Onta, which I have described in my account of Dinajpoor; but I understood that in some parts it is used to form the kind of weir called Band, which it would be superfluous to describe again. I also understood that these traps are used by farmers planted near the edges of rivers. In this district this implement is called Ghoni.

The Polo and Jakoyi, also formerly described, are in constant use among the farmers. The fishermen of Goyalpara have improved the Polo, so much as to render it useful for their purpose; and it is then called Chak. The frame consists of a loop, to which four bamboos are fixed in form of a cone. A conical net is fastened to the hoop, and its corner to the angle where the bamboos unite. When this net has been placed on the mud over a fish, the fisher drops the corner, and instead of groping about until he can catch the fish, he secures it at once by the net, which prevents the animal from moving. By this means they catch large fish.

Nearly allied to the Jakoyi, but somewhat more perfect, is a trap made of split bamboos, and called Jholongga. Two boys generally drag the corners by two ropes, and the splashing which they make towards each side, contributes to drive the fish into the trap, which is held like a plough by the fisherman, and raised occasionally to take out the fish. This is one of the methods much in use among the farmers.

Nearly of the same form is the most simple net used by the fishermen, consisting of a net stretched between two bamboos, which meet at an acute angle behind. This I have already described in my account of Dinajpoor, and there are many kinds. At Goyalpara there are four.

1. When a man wades and pushes this net before him, it is called Phutki, and the bamboos are from four to seven cubits in length. Such are used in all places, and at all seasons, for catching small fish, and cost from two anas to two and a-half.
2. The Paha has bamboos of 11 or 12 cubits in length with a large mesh, and is used for catching large fish. The fishermen of Goyalpara have not the art of fixing this net to the gunwale of a boat, as I described in Dinajpoor; but the man who sits at the head of the canoe, lowers and raises it entirely by his hands. The rower sits at



the stern. The fish are divided equally between them. 3. The Angtha is of the same size, and is used in the same manner; but the mesh is small. Both nets can be used at all seasons, and in every part of the great river. Each may cost a rupee. 4. The Janta is an implement with a frame of bamboos, which raises a large net of this kind. One man can fish with it, and the whole costs from five to five and a-half rupees. The net lasts two years, but the apparatus must be renewed each season, which lasts from the middle of August to the middle of December, that is from the time when the inundation begins to subside until the country is dry. The mouth of the net is placed so as to receive the water, which drains from the fields into a marsh, creek, or river.

The still more complicated machine, which I described in my account of Dinajpoor, is also used here. At Goyalpara it is called Khora, and on the Mahanonda it is named Chak. The Chak described in my account of Dinajpoor is used here, both by the farmers and fishermen, and at Goyalpara is called Phoronggi; while the improved Polo used there, as I have above described, is called Chak. The Phoronggi is employed from the middle of August until the middle of November.

Of the casting nets there are three descriptions. 1st. A small net six or seven feet radius with a small mesh and iron sinkers. In the Brohmoputro and in large pieces of water it is always used from a canoe, one man paddling and the other throwing the net. The two men divide the fish equally. In marshes and old water-courses it is thrown from the bank. It usually costs 5 rs. of which the iron amounts to one-half. The fish taken by this means are small; and the net may be used at all seasons. At Goyalpara it is called Khyeyuyal. 2nd. A net with a wide mesh and 15 or 16 feet in radius. It is used only in the river from a boat, which is managed in the same manner as with the first kind. Its sinkers are not heavier, and its cost is nearly the same. At Goyalpara, this net is called Rek. Both kinds at Toborong are called Naojal, or nets used with a boat. 3d. The large net which is cast by means of a boat, and which I have described in Dinajpoor by the name of Othar, is used also here, but not so commonly as in that district.

Seins or drag nets of various kinds are also in use. At

Goyalpara the fishermen use a sein, usually composed of nine pieces, each 30 feet long and about 4 feet wide. The floats are made of the reed called Khagra, and the sinkers of baked clay. These pieces are separately called Tonalanggi, but when joined into one sein that is called Ber. Three men are usually employed, and each brings three portions. They unite in paying the hire of the canoe, which carries them from one part to another, and contains the fish that have been caught. One man manages the canoe, a second holds one end of the net, while the third takes a sweep with the other end, and then the net is drawn on shore. Of course the net is only employed on the shallow sides of the river, or in shallow marshes or lakes, and is used between the middle of September and middle of December while the waters are fast decreasing.

In some parts as Olipoor, a still smaller sein is used, and is called Gondhla. It is about 30 cubits long and 4 broad, and is used by one man. He fastens one end to a stake, and takes the sweep with the other. It is never used where there is a greater depth of water than two or three feet. The Raulagi is a net which is much used, especially in Toborong lakes, in the smaller rivers of the eastern divisions such as the Jijiram, and in many large water courses. The net is like a large deep sein from 45 to 80 yards long and four or five deep, with floats and sinkers, and a wide mesh. It is used sometimes merely as a setting net, being stretched from side to side of a river or water-course. The fishers then go to a distance on both sides, and while they paddle towards the net in their canoes, make all the noise that they can by splashing in the water. The fish stick in the meshes.

At other times, where the water is too wide for the net to reach from bank to bank, two nets are used with five canoes. One at each end of each net, and one that remains unconnected between the two. One-half of each net is stowed on the stern of the canoe by which it is held, and the two sets go about 40 or 50 yards from each other. They then throw out their nets, the canoes belonging to each rowing straight from each other, so as to leave the nets in two parallel straight lines, with the fifth canoe in the centre. The canoes then begin to paddle, so as to form their nets into semicircles,



while not only the one in the centre, but those that hold the nets make all the splashing in their power. The two boats belonging to each net then row towards each other, splashing all the while until they meet. They then lash themselves together, and draw the nets into their sterns, bringing up the head and foot ropes of the net joined together. After the whole is drawn the nets are overhauled, and the fish which are sticking in the meshes are taken out. In rivers it is the upper net that takes by far the greatest quantity of fish, and the middle canoe attends to that alone, and splashes opposite to the opening as the two canoes at its ends paddle towards each other. It would therefore appear, that the fish naturally fly up the stream. This seems to be a good plan of fishing in rivers or lakes, where the banks are too steep for drawing the sein. The fish, that I saw taken in this manner, were of about four pounds weight.

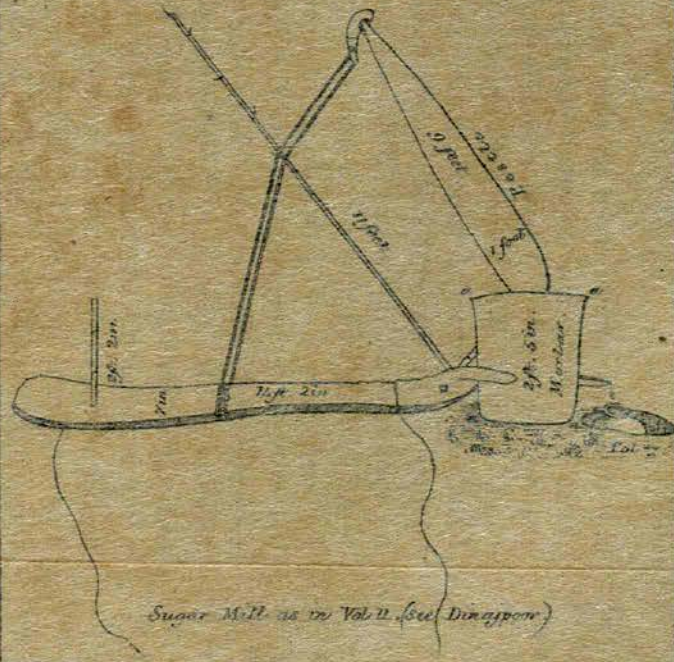
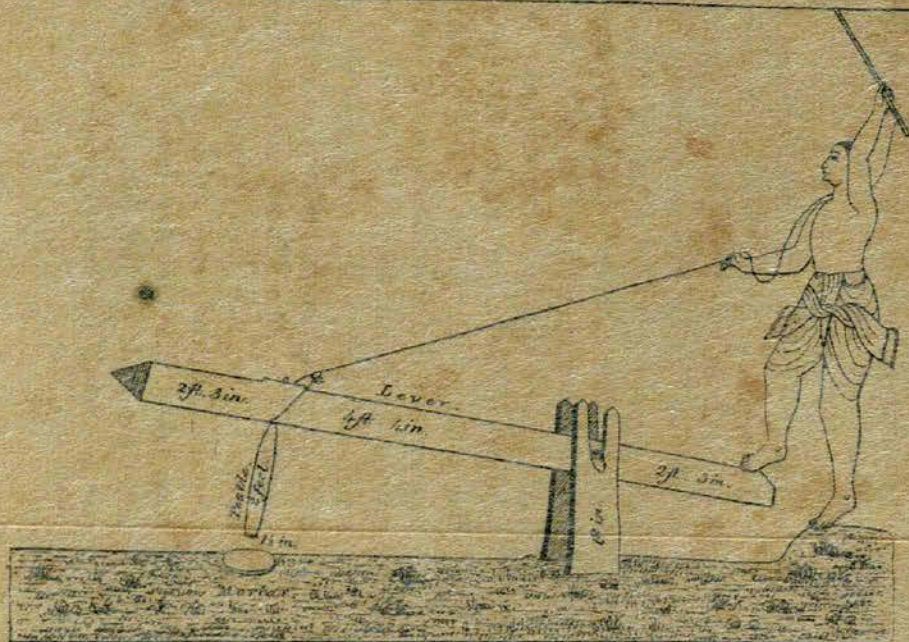
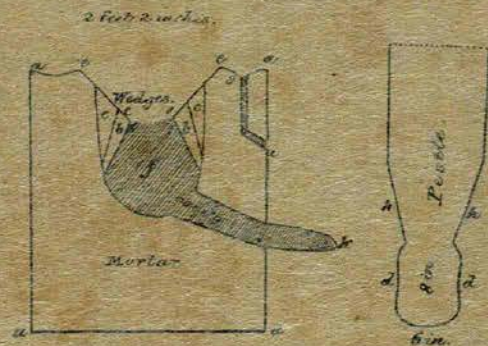
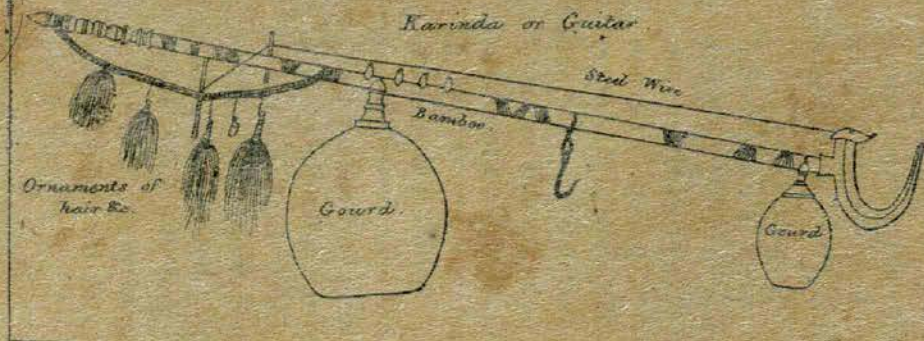
In the Brohmoputro, during the beginning of the rainy season, from the middle of April until the middle of August, a floating net called Ohal is used. It consists of three pieces each 36 yards long and $3\frac{1}{4}$ broad, which are joined so as to be 108 yards long. The mesh is wide. It is paid out from the stern of a canoe, and one side is floated by gourds, while the other sinks by its own weight. It is drawn every hour into the boat, and the fish that are found sticking in the meshes are secured. Two men and one canoe can manage this net, which may cost 9 rs. The nets used in this district are chiefly made of Son (*Crotolaria juncea*); but in the eastern divisions many are made of Kankhura (*Urtica nivea*). These are dear, but are reckoned much better than those made of Son, and last double the time. Some particular classes of fishermen use neither traps nor nets.

The Gangrar, already mentioned as killers of crocodiles, turtle and otters, catch also many fish with the harpoon. With the same kind of harpoon which is used for killing the otter, these men strike the large fishes. In the rainy season they attract these fish to their boats by means of torches. In the dry season they watch near shallow places, where there are many fry; and when a large fish comes to prey, he is struck. The three first kinds are supposed to eat floating or swimming plants (Dol and Pana), and are frequently observed raising their heads among these. The fishermen watch

for this, and strike them as they rise. It is probable, that these fish often rise to catch insects or worms, that may be among the weeds. I have never in India seen a fish rising to catch flies. The same fishermen use a small harpoon with four slender prongs, which floats, and is darted along the surface of the water to kill a small mullett, which swims with its eyes above the water. This is done at all seasons.

All classes of natives fish occasionally with the rod, partly for amusement, and partly for a savoury meal; but there is a low tribe of fishermen, who use the rod for procuring a subsistence, and sell the fish. It is uncertain whether they are Hindus or Moslems, and their profession of fishing does not entirely afford them support. They therefore play on some noisy instruments of music, to which they sing, and go about to beg; and they only have occasional recourse to the rod. The rod used in India for fishing is a bamboo, which has very little flexibility. The line is silk or Kankhura, and is tied to the extremity of the rod without any reel to lengthen or shorten it; and the hook is suspended by a float, and baited with a worm for the cyprini, and with a frog for the larger Siluri or Pimelodes, which are the two most common classes of fish. The use of artificial flies is totally unknown.

In most parts the regular fisherman pays a duty to the proprietor of the land; for the strange anomaly of the right of fishing having been separated from the property of the banks, has not taken place in this district, except in some estates, that formerly belonged to the Rajas of Dinajpoor. There are some rivers however, that are entirely free, as having been the boundary between two powers; and the proprietors of Goyalpara have taken nothing from the numerous fishermen of that place. The various rates and manners of assessment differ in almost every estate, so that it would be endless to detail them. The rent is sometimes levied by so much on each man, sometimes by so much on each extent of fishing, and sometimes by so much on the quantity of fish taken. The two former methods are most usual on great rivers. The two last on marshes, small rivers and water-courses. In the most productive fishery, that of the Toborong lakes, the last has been adopted, and the Vijni Raja takes one-half of the fish. In Bottrishazari the fishermen pay no rent, but supply the landlord and his officers with



Sugar Mill as in Vol. II. (See Dingipon)



whatever fish they want. The landlords very seldom take the rent immediately from the fishermen; but generally rent it to persons for a fixed sum in money, and these collect what is due according to the custom of the estate. In general the duties seem moderate enough, and I heard no complaint on the part of the fishermen; but except at Goyalpara, where they have been long under European protection, they were everywhere remarkably shy, having probably been terrified on purpose by the agents of the Zemindars. I am indeed inclined to imagine, that the profits which these derive from the fisheries are very considerable, although all that is apparently paid by the farmers (Izaradars) as rent, is very trifling, and is kept so on purpose; but I suspect, that considerable presents are made on the granting each lease, and in general these are annually renewed.

The number of fishers who follow no other profession may be near 4000 families; and of those who are also bearers and use traps only, there may be almost 900 families. These not only retail and catch fish, but also hold the plough, and carry the palanquin, which will considerably reduce the number actually employed in the profession of catching fish. Even among the first 4000, many of the men are employed in retailing the fish, and are called Paikars. None of these have a capital of above 100 rs. and many are so poor that they purchase the fish on trust; and, after having sold their fish in the market, go next morning to the actual fisherman, pay him for what fish they received, and take a fresh load on credit. A great proportion of the fish is retailed by the women of fishermen.

Of all the fishers in the district those of Goyalpara are by far the most easy in their circumstances; but this seems in a great measure to be owing to the seducing arts of their wives, by whom the unwary traders of the south are stript of their property. In general the fishermen of this district are very poor, especially towards the west. Near the Brohmoputro they may live like the poorest in Dinajpoor. In other parts a fisher lives no better than those who cultivate for a share of the crop, which seems to be owing to their having multiplied too much; for with a smaller population there are almost double the number here that are to be found in Dinajpoor. There is nothing like a great fishery of any one kind of fish,



and a prodigious variety is taken, as will appear from the list, which I have reason to think is far from being complete.

The Sisor of Vihar is a very ugly fish, which is said to grow to seven or eight feet in length, and which few people will eat. The most remarkable thing about it is the tail, the upper ray of which is longer than the whole head and body. It is quite flexible and tapers to a fine point. I have been able to learn nothing concerning the use of this strange appendage.

Of all the horrid animals of this tribe the Chaka of this district is the most disagreeable to behold. It has the habit of the fishes called by Lacepede Uranoscope and Cotte, that is, it conceals itself among the mud, from which by its lurid appearance, and a number of loose filamentous substances on its skin, it is scarcely distinguishable, and with an immense open mouth it is ready to seize any small prey that is passing along. In order that it may see what is approaching, the eyes are placed on the crown of the head. In its artificial characters it comes nearer the Plotose of Lacepede than any other tribe, but from such a different habit it must be considered as belonging to a genus not yet arranged by naturalists. All persons turn away from it with loathing.*

Insects are not uncommonly troublesome. Bees abound. In a few estates, that belonged to the Dinajpoor family, Mr. Fernandes, of that place, has rented the wax from the Zemindars, and in Patilado some people pay a rent to the landlord. In the other parts of the district the wax and honey do not seem to be considered as property. Everywhere, except in the two eastern divisions, and Patilado, I was told, that 2 or 3 men from Ronggopoor came into each division, with an order from the collector to gather the wax on account of the surgeon, who it seems was also a candle maker. The surgeon received the wax, and the people who gathered it took the honey for their trouble. This account I suspect is not well founded; as the last surgeon, at least, made no candles, and I am assured, that some of the collectors issued no such order. The surgeon who made the candles, probably employed the people to collect the wax, and paid them for what they brought; and they pacified the agents of

* Dr. Buchanan gives a voluminous account of the fish of this district.



the Zemindars by giving them the honey. In the two eastern divisions every person takes the honey that finds it; but no person makes a profession of collecting wax, of which there is a great deal in the woods. The quantity procured is probably about the same as in Dinajpoor; but more would undoubtedly be procured were there regular renters. There are three seasons (bunds) for collecting it, 1st, when the mustard has flowered in the beginning of the cold season; 2nd, when the Nageswor (*Mesua*) has flowered in the end of spring; and 3rd, in the middle of July, after the *convolvuli* have flowered.

In this district the quantity of shells collected for burning into lime is very great, owing partly to the consumption in the manufacture of indigo, and partly to the great quantity chewed with betle. No less than 477 families, were reported to me, in the different divisions, as employing a part of their time in collecting and preparing these shells. The best lime is prepared from two species of muscle (*Mytilus*), which greatly resemble the *Anatinus*, common in the rivers of Europe, but they are much smaller, being little more than two inches long and one broad. The projection of the shell near the hinge appear in the same manner, as if they had been rubbed against some hard body. The one kind is much convexer than the other; both are called by the same name, Jhinuk. The next best lime is prepared from a snail (*Helix*) almost round, and about two inches in diameter. It may probably be the *ampullacea*, and by the natives is called Samuk. The worst lime is prepared from a smaller conical snail, about an inch long, which has a very round aperture. It is called Moratakuya or Gugli, and is never used in lime that is prepared for chewing, that indeed in common is entirely prepared from the muscles.



CHAPTER VII.

VEGETABLE KINGDOM.

The hills and forests of this district produce an exceeding great variety of fine plants, of which a very large proportion has not been introduced into the modern systems of botany; and, during my residence, I added very much to my collection of descriptions, drawings, and specimens; but, as the greater part can only interest the botanist, I shall here content myself with giving an account of the most general produce of waste lands especially the forests, and of such smaller plants as the natives apply to use. The wastes of this country contain a greater variety than those of Dinajpoor, and occupy a much greater proportion of the country.

1st. Of the 900 miles stated to be waste, as occupied by rivers, marshes, old water courses, tanks, ponds, and other receptacles of water, a great part abounds in vegetable productions. The great rivers, and the channels which these occupy in the rainy season, may amount to 300 miles, and in this there is very little vegetation. The floods sweep away every thing, and whenever the rivers fall, the sand of the channels become so dry, that nothing will grow. The remaining 600 miles, occupied chiefly by old courses of rivers which contain water throughout the year, marshes and lakes, or rivers that are quite stagnant, except after very heavy rains, contain almost as much vegetation as the land; and are often entirely hid by it, as I have mentioned in my account of the topography. Even the smaller rivers, that contain a gentle stream, abound with aquatic plants, such as the *Valisneria spiralis*, *Serpicula verticillata*, and several species of *potamogeton* and *chara*. By far the most curious of these plants, however, strongly resembles the *Nymphæa*, but is all over covered with prickles. The leaves are often five and six feet in diameter, and are so brittle, that they can seldom be lifted from the water without breaking. The flower of



this singular plant never rises above water, nor does it expand. The leaves are always drawn closely together, so as to exclude the water from destroying the pollen.

Of the poor sterile land, broken corners, roads, burial grounds, and the like, which occupy about 332 miles, some part is good, and is unavoidably occupied by roads, market places, and burial grounds, and also by angles of fields, which it would be inconvenient to cultivate with the plough. Whenever not too much trodden by men or cattle, this land produces the best pasture that is found in the country; and the smallness of the extent, that is destroyed by the treading of such multitudes, is really astonishing. I am persuaded, that in the smallest county in England, owing to the vast number of horses and wheel carriages, there is a greater extent rendered useless in this manner. Even the market-places in general are entirely covered with fine trees.

Neither is the sterile land without vegetation. Part of it is high, and in the rainy season produces pasture, which in this country is reckoned good; but its most common grass is the species of *Andropogon*, called Chorkangta, Ukuni, Ghengto, and Sorola, by the natives of Bengal, and *Gramen aciculatum* by Rumphius, in whose work there is a good figure, and an account admirably describing its worthless nature. This sterile land is not without a few trees; but these are mostly stunted, and so thinly scattered, that they give no harbour to destructive animals. In the low parts of this sterile land, which are sandy banks near rivers, the most usual vegetable production is a species of Tamarisk, which has not yet been introduced into the systems of botany. It grows to six or eight feet in height, and is almost the first plant that takes root on the lands, formed by deposition from the rivers, which by its creeping roots it tends to consolidate. It is used for fuel, and by the natives is called Jhau; but this name is generic, and is applied not only to another species of Tamarisk, but to the *Casuarina* of Bengal, and to the cone-bearing plants that have been introduced by Europeans.

The waste inundated land also, that has a good soil, in a few parts produces the above-mentioned Tamarisk; but to a very trifling extent. By far the greater part of the 884 miles that I have mentioned, is covered by very coarse grass or



reeds. In some parts, especially such as are inclined to be marshy, the reeds give way to a fine species of wild rose-tree, not yet introduced into the systems of botany, and by the natives called Guja. In Dinajpoor, and farther west, this bush almost creeps on the ground; but in these eastern regions, where it seems to be in its favourite abode, it often rises to be 10 or 12 feet high, and forms large thickets. Some trees also thrive in these inundated lands, although they are always thinly scattered, except the Hijol. It is, however, remarkable, that this tree, although it forms a kind of forest in the inundated lands of Patilado, is very much stunted in its growth, while many other of the trees, which are only thinly scattered on the inundated lands, acquire there a very considerable size.

On the 1175 miles of waste land not inundated, and of a good soil, almost a half is covered with reeds and a coarse grass, having occasionally a few scattered trees and bushes. The remainder is covered with forests; but in these also the reeds grow to an amazing height. The forests seem to be diminishing faster than the progress of cultivation, by the pains that are taken in burning these reeds during the heats of spring. This operation kills many young trees, and checks the growth of all; but it is of vast use in improving the air of the country, by destroying much vegetable matter, that would rot with the first rains, and by keeping the roads somewhat accessible. It would be of still more use, were it able altogether to destroy the thickets of reeds, by which the country is overwhelmed. Some trees, especially the Sal and Amla resist the fire much better than any others.

Of the hills, by far the greatest part is covered with forests, and even the lower of these are overgrown by reeds, but the steeper ones are not infested in this manner. The forests there, however, are rendered, if possible, still more impenetrable by numerous large twining plants, which Rumphius has described under the general name of wood-cables (*funes sylvestres*), which is well fitted to describe their nature, for the term *Clematis* used in Europe is only fitted for the puny productions of a hedge. The natives of this country make little use of these natural cables, which answer so many purposes in the Indian islands (*India aquosa* of Rumphius).

As I have stated in Dinajpoor, it appears to me to be here



also desirable, that the whole of these woods and reeds should be altogether destroyed. The injury which they do by protecting destructive animals, far outbalances the trifling advantages that they yield to the natives, who cannot afford to use timber for any purpose except for canoes, boats, and for a very little coarse furniture, such as stools, boxes, and bedsteads, none of which are polished; and whose wants, should they ever require timber, might be abundantly supplied by trees reared about their villages. The forests, however, here are of some more value than in Dinajpoor. [The further details given of this district are in a great measure similar to the descriptions in the previous volumes and districts; the repetition would therefore be supererogatory. Ed.]



HISTORY, TOPOGRAPHY, ANTIQUITIES, &c.
OF
EASTERN INDIA.

BOOK III.
DISTRICT OF ASAM.*

CHAPTER I.

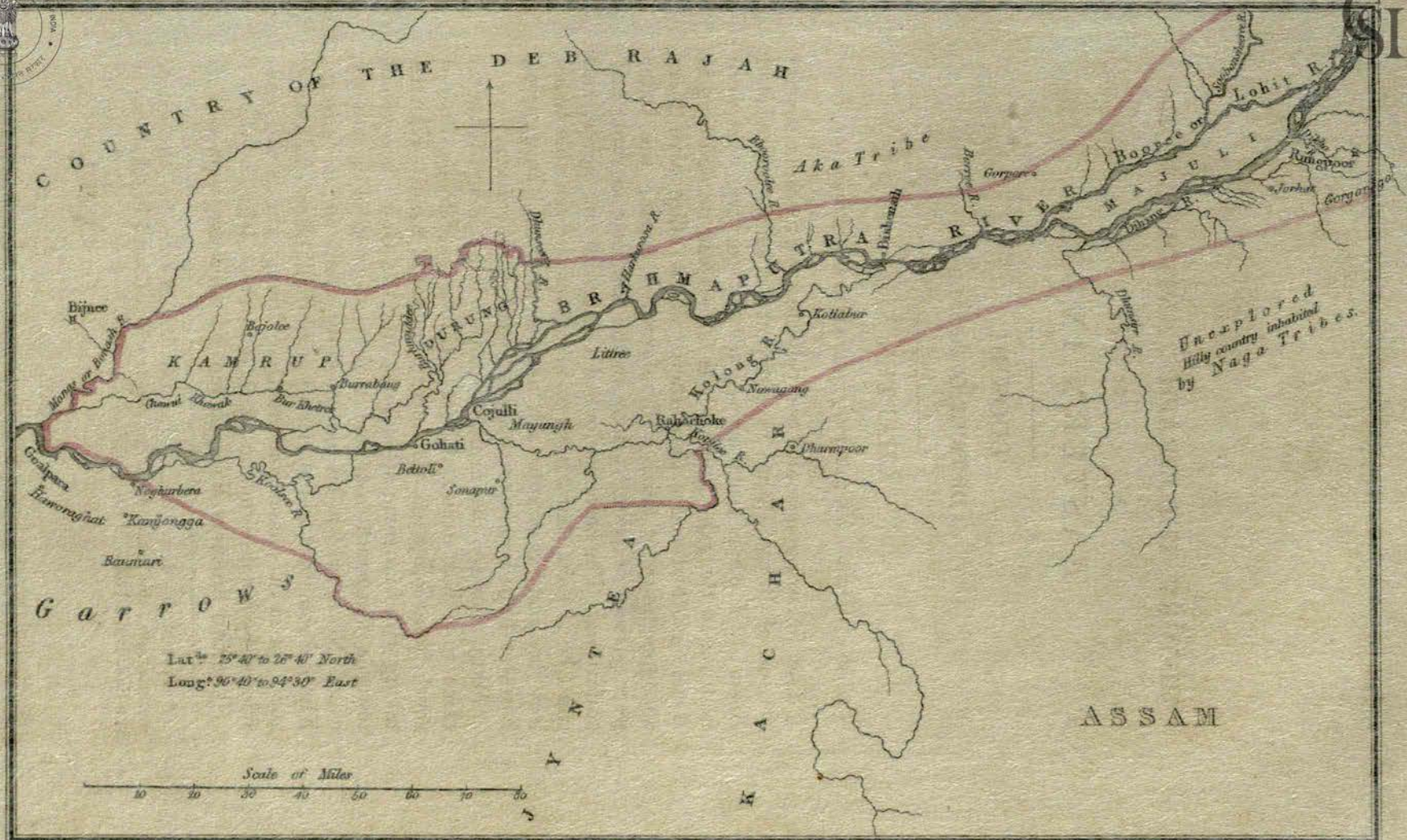
EXTENT, GENERAL APPEARANCE, SOIL, RIVERS, METEOROLOGY, &c.

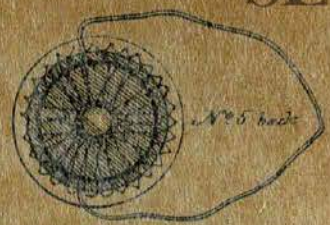
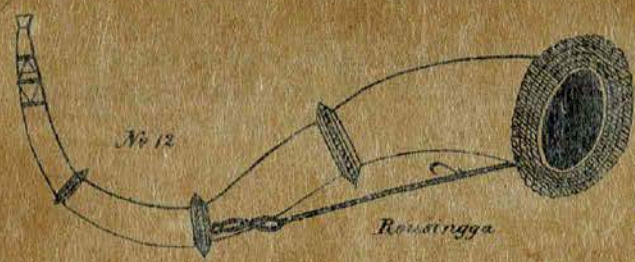
The following account was collected partly from several natives of Bengal, who on different occasions had visited Asam; and partly from natives of that country, who were fugitives in Bengal. Some of the former had resided long in Asam, and had connections there, whose office gave them an opportunity of being well informed. Among the latter were persons inferior to none in the kingdom in rank, and education. The accounts on all points did not agree, nor can I be certain, that I have on all occasions been able to select the parts that approach nearest to truth. In general, however I shall mention the most material differences.

Many ages ago two brothers named Khunlai and Khuntai came to a hill named Chorai Korong, which is situated south from Gorgango, the ancient capital of Asam. Khunlai taking with him some attendants, and the God Cheng went towards the south-east, and took possession of a country called Nora, which his descendants continue to govern. Khuntai remained in the vicinity of the hill Chorai Khorong, and kept in his possession the God Chung, who is still considered by his descendants as their tutelary deity.

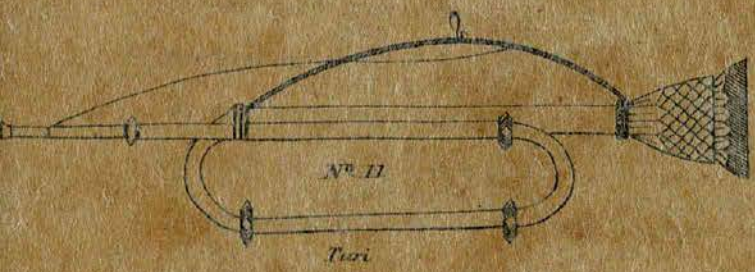
The two brothers Khunlai and Khuntai are supposed to

* Part of this description of Asam is derived from Dr. Buchanan's manuscripts; the remainder from papers which I found in the library of the East India House. [Ed.]

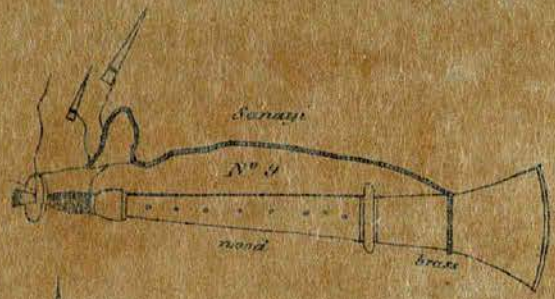




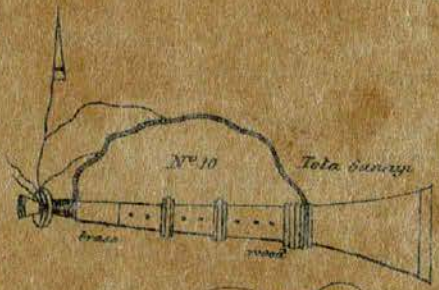
Tasa



Dogar



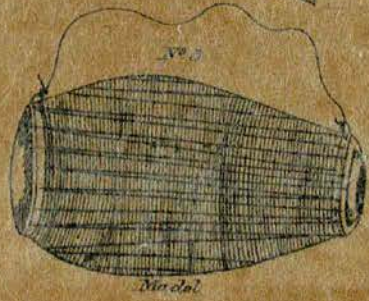
Dhuk



Karu



Dhol



Madal



Tikara



Bareggi



(To face Plate VII. page 601.)

Musical Instruments.—1. Dhak, a long wooden drum, hung with one end foremost, and beaten on this end with two small sticks.

2. Dhol, another long wooden drum, beaten at one end with the hand, and at the other with a stick, and hung before the performer.

3. Madol, a long drum of potter's ware, beaten at the two ends with the two hands, and hung in the same manner.

4. Kara, a conical drum made of potter's ware, beaten at the thick end with a stick in one hand, and with the fingers of the other.

5. Tasa, a flat drum made of potter's ware, which is beaten by two sticks.

6. Dogor, a smaller drum of the same form, and used in the same manner.

7. Tikara, a drum made of potter's ware, and nearly of the same form with a kettle-drum. Two are always used at the same time, the performer beating with a small stick, on one with his right hand, and on the other with his left. It cannot therefore be used in processions.

8. Kangsi is a small plate of bell-metal, somewhat like a Chinese gong. It is beaten with a stick.

9. Sanayi is a kind of hautboy, which is made of wood where the holes are; but both ends are of brass. The reed is made of four cuttings of the Tal leaf (*Borassus*).

10. The Tota Sanayi is another hautboy, which consists entirely of wood, except the mouth-piece, which is of brass. Each instrument has seven holes for the fingers, and the mouth-piece is surrounded by a round plate of brass, like a rupee.

11. Turi, or brass trumpet, which is very thin everywhere except just at the mouth, as will be seen from the section.

12. The Ron Singga, or horn of battle, is in form of a horn, but is made of brass, and has a mouth-piece of the same structure with that of the trumpet. It consists of three pieces, one let into the other, so that it may be turned into a semicircle, or into a curve like an S, as in the figure. It makes a very hideous braying.



have come from heaven. What place that may mean, I cannot say. Since the descendents of the latter have adopted the religion of the Brahmans, the original word is translated Sworgo, the heaven where Indro reigns. Probably this heaven was some part of Thibet bordering on China, as some few traces of Chinese manners may be still observed. Khunlai remained in Nora, and his descendants still govern that country, and by the Hindus are considered as infidels, and monsters of impurity; but a friendly intercourse is still maintained between the descendants of the two brothers.

Khuntai is usually reported to have been accompanied by the Deodhaing his spiritual guide, and by two Danggoriyas, a Duyara, a Dihingga, a Lahon, a Sondike, and 36 Hatimuriyas, in all 43 persons; although this number is disputed, and some allege, that the Hatimuriyas amounted to only 20 persons.

It is supposed, that, when Khuntai arrived, the country now called Asam proper was subject to 12 petty chiefs (Baro Bhungiya), who without force submitted to a person very much their superior in dignity and education. This however seems rather improbable and the Kachharis allege, that the country, previous to the irruption of Khuntai, belonged to their prince. On the other hand, it must be observed, that the descendants of several of the petty chiefs are said still to remain in the country. These differences may be reconciled by the supposition, that these chiefs were tributaries of Kachhar, who had shaken off the authority of their prince, and fallen into a state of anarchy; for it must be observed, that the Bengalese frequently express this state by the term twelve landlords (Baro Bhungiya), just as the people of Karnata use the phrase (Nava Nayaka) nine captains to express the same condition. The improbable part of this story is, that either the Kachhari prince or the petty chiefs should have submitted to the authority of Khuntai with his handful of followers. This however may be explained by a consideration of the account, that is given of these personages. The Danggoriyas were the companions and confidants of Khuntai, the Duyara was his porter, the Dihingga his cook, the Lahon his goatherd, the Sandike his drawer of water and Hatimuriya implies the commander of 1000 men. It is therefore probable, that Khuntai was accompanied by an army consisting of many corps commanded by an equal

number of Hatimuriyas, while his nominal cook, porter, drawer of water and goatherd held the chief offices of state, just as the persons called groom (comes stabuli) and butler (dapifer) in Europe were in possession of the chief commands, while the feudal government remained in vigor. In Asam the descendants of those persons still retain their ancient dignities; and, if the Hatimuriyas ever amounted to 36, they are now reduced to twenty families.

The original territory, occupied by Khuntai, included two very long islands formed by branches of the Brohmoputro, together with some of the lands adjacent, on both banks of that great river. Thirteen princes, in a regular succession from father to son, continued to govern this territory with great success according to the rules of their ancestors. They eat beef, pork, and all other foods that shock the natives of India, and drank wine. The Deodhaings were their spiritual guides, performing the worship of the God Chung with great mystery and secrecy, and possessing some books called Bulongji in a character, which appears on the old coin, and seems to have a strong affinity with that of Ava. These books are said to be composed in a language, which was formerly spoken at the court of Asam, and are said to contain a chronicle of their kings, who were as follows. 1 Khuntai, 2 Chukapha, 3 Chutaupha, 4 Chubinong, 5 Chuinong, 6 Tukophi, 7 Chhachonong, 8 Chupinong, 9 Chhuchong, 10 Churang, 11 Chujang, 12 Chuppuk, 13 Chukum, all names strongly resembling the Chinese.

During the government of these princes three different attempts were made by the Moslems to subdue the country, and all ended in complete disgrace and overthrow. (See Asiatick researches vol. 2. page 171.) In the last, which happened in the reign of Aurungzebe, under the command of Mir Jumleh, his army was so roughly handled by the enterprising and warlike Asamese, that he not only was compelled to make a precipitate retreat; but to yield up a large part of the lands, which had belonged to the Moslems, before the invasion took place, and which now forms the greater part of the western of the three governments, into which Asam is divided.

In the account above referred to, in the Asiatick researches, the king of Asam is called Jeidej Sing, or Jayadhwaja Sinha; but no such name appears in the list of Asamese



princes, nor indeed can it be expected, that it should ; for from the account it would appear, that these princes still retained their original language and customs, and Jawadh-waja Sinha are Sangskrita words, and probably are a translation of the proper title.

Tradition mentions, that the prince then governing, when he attacked the Indian army, dressed a number of low persons like Brahmans, and ordered them to drive a great herd of oxen between the armies, on which the Hindu soldiers retreated, least any injury should happen to the sacred order, and beasts. There is no doubt, that in Asam some persons, now employed in the lowest offices, wear the thread of distinction, and are called Brahmans, on account of their descent from the persons, who were decked out by the victorious king. There is therefore perhaps some foundation for the story ; but we can scarcely suppose, that an army of Aurungzebe's should have been influenced by any respect either for Brahmans or cattle, and the fellows were probably called Brahmans, as a mark of scorn for the doctrine of caste, with which even the Moslems of India are infected, and which led the author, who gives the account of the expedition under Mir Jumleh, to consider the Asamese as mere brutes under a human form.

This contempt for the sacred order did not long continue. The son of Chukum introduced this innovation, took the title of Godahor Singho, and was the 14th prince of the family. The conversion of the royal family seems to have been accomplished by female intrigue. Chukum having been enamoured of a Hindu concubine, departed from the rules of the family, and settled the succession on her son Godadhor, who, according to the law of Asam, was entirely illegitimate. On this account perhaps it was, that he preferred the religion of his mother ; and the Brahmans made a stretch of conscience, in order to receive a sovereign among their followers, who, owing to the conquests of the family, then formed a considerable portion of the nation, and a portion ready to support the authority of a convert however irregular his claim to succession might be. The old priesthood, however, continue to be Purohits (officiating priests) for the king in the worship of the family deity Chung, which is still followed. The Bengalese language also became more common, although

it was not used on the coin, nor in state affairs, until the time of Rudro son of Godadhor. Now it is the common language, even of the court, and the original Asamese, commonly spoken in the reign of Aurungzebe, in all probability will be soon lost, as it is now a dead language, and is only studied by those, who follow the old worship.

The evil of departing from the regular succession soon became evident. Godadhor had two sons, Kana, and Rudro. The two chief officers of government disliking Kana, the eldest son, put out his eyes, and placed his younger brother on the throne. Kana had two sons, one legitimate, and the other by a concubine. Whether or not any descendants of the former still remain, I have not learned; but a descendant of the illegitimate offspring is now called king; although it is generally admitted, that the descendants of Rudro alone are entitled to be called Tungkhunggiya, or to succeed to the government. The oldest coin of Rudro, the son of Godadhor is dated in the year of Sak 1618, corresponding with the year of our Lord 1695; and the latest is dated in 1635 of Sak, or A. D. 1712. Hitherto the Asamese had been a warlike and enterprising race, while their princes had preserved a vigor, that in the east is not commonly retained for so many generations; but their subjection to the Brahmans, which was followed by that of most of the nation, soon produced the usual imbecility, and the nation has sunk into the most abject pusillanimity towards strangers, and into internal confusion and turbulence.

Rudro Singho finding that the sacred order had fallen into contempt, on account of the pretended Brahmans, who were descended from the persons, whom his ancestor, in mockery of caste has decked in the guise of Brahmans, made an investigation into the claims of all the Brahmans in the country, and degraded all those, whose origin could be discovered to be spurious. The whole order, however, then in the country, having been brought into discredit by the uncertainty of their extraction, he was not contented with a Brahman of Kamrup; but adopted as his spiritual guide Ramkrishno Nyayovagis, a Brahman of Bordhoman (Burdwan R), who according to report was a very holy man, and whose descendants enjoy the office. The Guru usually resides with the king, and is accompanied by 12 or 14 of his male relations,



one of whom is Purohit for the king in the worship of the Hindu gods. The families of these Brahmans reside at Nodiyā, and the youth are educated at that seminary of Hindu learning. Some of these, whom the commentator on the account of the expedition of Mir Jumleh had seen, and who of course spoke mere Bengalese, led him to contradict the account, where it states, that the Asamese spoke a language peculiar to themselves; and an idea of Hindu perfection seems to have led him to suppose, that the barbarians (Mlechchhos) of Asam were superior to the Moguls, the most polished and magnificent race, that ever inhabited India. Owing probably to the intercession of the Brahmans, who would naturally be shocked at the barbarity of the custom, Rudro Singho did not disable his younger sons from the succession, by inflicting a personal blemish, according to the custom of the family, and this seems to have been the first mark of decay in the vigor of the descendants of Heaven.

Rudro left four sons, and was succeeded by Sib Singho the eldest. The coin of this prince of the earliest date, that I possess, is in the year of Sak 1644 (A. D. 1721) leaving eight years uncertain between it and the last coin of Rudro. In this reign it was contrived to throw the whole power into the hands of women. Soon after the accession of Sib, a Brahman by his profound skill in the science called Jyotish, discovered that the reign would be very short, and that Sib even before his death would be deprived of his government. It was then suggested, that this prophecy might be evaded, by resigning the government to a wife, in whose fidelity, confidence might safely be placed; and several ladies seem to have enjoyed the royal dignity in succession, and their names appear on the coin. I found coins dated Sak 1646, 1647, 1648, (A. D. 1723, 1724, 1725,) in the name of Phuleswori the wife of Sib Singho. She is said to have governed three years, and to have died in child-bed. I also found coins dated 1652, 1653, (A. D. 1729, 1730,) in the reign of Promoteswori the wife of Sib Singho; also those dated 1655, 1657, 1658, (A. D. 1732, 1734, 1735,) in the reign of Ombika, the wife of Sib Singho; finally those dated in 1661, 1662, 1664, 1665, 1666, (A. D. 1738, 1739, 1741, 1742, 1743,) in the reign of Sorbeswori Devi, wife of Sib Singho. During this long period the name of the poor prince appears only on one coin, that I procured, in the

year 1660, (A. D. 1737), and he is said to have enjoyed no sort of authority. When one queen died, he was merely placed on the throne, in order to marry another, who might assume the government. The eldest son of Sib Singho was killed in war, and left a son named Mohoneswor, who is probably still alive; but Sib Singho was succeeded by his younger brother Promotto, of whom I have coins from the year 1667 to 1672, (A. D. 1744 to 1749), in the former of which he succeeded his brother, or rather his brothers' wife.

Promotto had no son, and was succeeded by his brother Rajeswor, of whom I have many coins between 1674 and 1690 (A. D. 1751, 1767); but he is said to have reigned 20 years, which is not contradicted by any coin that I have seen. This prince seems to have been inclined to adopt the manners of the Moslems, as I have found several of his coins that have Persian legends. Rajeswor had three sons.

I. Kandura, who has died and left a son that from having been marked is incapable of succession.

II. Majujona (this means middle son, his name I do not know) who left four sons, all perhaps still alive; but they all were marked and are incapable of succession. Their names are:—1. Baranati. 2. Kara. 3. Bhakara. 4. Charala.

III. Horujona. This means youngest son. He is dead and has left two sons, both rendered incapable of governing.

I. Boromuri resides at Khaspur in the Hachhar country, in the house of his mother's relations, to which he retired in order to save his children from being maimed. He has had five sons, but one died unmarried. 1. The eldest now alive is Brojonath, who in 1809 was at Calcutta soliciting assistance to place him on the throne. He has three sons. 2. Bobon is with his father. 3. Sindura, who is in Bengal. 4. Indu, who is with his father.

II. The second son of Kandura is Tukor, who has a son, and both reside at Monipoor.

Rajeswor was succeeded by Lokhymi his brother, of whom I have coins between 1692 and 1698 (A. D. 1769, 1775.) This prince, according to the custom of his ancestors, maimed all the males of his family, so as to secure the succession to his son. The kingdom was now, however, hastening to ruin. The power of the spiritual teachers had acquired such force that their insolence became intolerable, and



Lokhymi, as Lord of Heaven (Sworgodev'), could no longer retain his anger, so that to check their pride he burned a splendid building, that contrary to law, had been erected by one of them named the Mahamari, who guided a multitude of the lowest and most ignorant of the people. The inflamed multitude put the chief minister to death; but the prudence of Lokhymi enabled him, although with great difficulty, to smother the rebellion; and he died in peace.

Gaurinath, the son of Lokhymi succeeded his father, and was the twentieth prince and seventeenth generation of the family. The earliest of his coins that I have seen is in 1703, and the latest in 1717 (A. D. 1780, 1794). He seems to have been a weak young man, totally unable to contend with the enthusiastic multitude. The low followers of the Mahamari (mostly fishermen) drove him from this throne, and Pitambor, the spiritual guide of these ruffians appointed Bhorotsingho, his nephew to be king. This person, in a coin dated 1715 (A. D. 1792), claims a descent from Bhogodotto, which had he been successful would have been considered as an indisputable fact. But Gaurinath having thrown himself on the protection of Lord Cornwallis, that nobleman, soon before his departure for Europe in 1793, sent Captain Welsh with 1100 sepoys, who restored Gaurinath to the throne of his ancestors, and after a short stay returned to Bengal, very much to the regret of the prince. During the insurrection of the populace under the Mahamari the most horrid excesses had been committed, and most of the proper Asamese, and men of rank had been compelled to fly for refuge into the large island surrounded by the Brohmoputro and Kolong rivers, and the only person who showed any considerable spirit of enterprise or courage, was one of the great hereditary councillors of state, the Bura Gohaing. On Bhorotsingho and his rabble having been put to flight by Captain Welsh, I do not know what became of that pretender. It is said, that at the intercession of Captain Welsh he received a pardon. He was succeeded in his usurpation by a certain Sorbanondo Singho Norendrosyo, who coined money in 1716 and 1717 (A. D. 1793, 1794), and who resided at Byangmara, three and a-half days journey, south-east from Ronggopoor, in the southern part of the province of Sodiya.

On Captain Welsh's retiring to Bengal, the Bura Gohaing,

before mentioned as a man of enterprise, seized on the whole authority of government, and in fact was the only person among the chiefs of Asam who seems to have had vigour sufficient for the miserable circumstances in which the country was placed. He procured soldiers from the west of India, the Asamese, as I before said, having become dastards, and with these strangers he compelled the followers of the Mahamari to take refuge either in the Company's territory, or in the eastern extremity of the kingdom. He also put to flight a notorious robber, named Merja, who in the confusion, with about 700 Bengalese Burokandaj, the most vile of all rabbles, had been able to spread dismay among the wretched Asamese. This fellow still lurks in the lower parts of Bhotan; but now he only ventures to act as an ordinary robber. Bhorotsingho, unmindful of the clemency that was shown to him, again rebelled, and coined money in the year 1719 (A. D. 1796); but he was taken and put to death by the active Gohaing.

This chief, far from being contented with the power of acting as a councillor, which was vested in him by the laws of his country, seized on the person of Gaurinath, and drove from his presence the great secretary (Boro Boruya), who was the constitutional minister of the country. In fact, Gaurinath became a mere cypher, and did not long survive the restraint in which he was placed.

The Bura Gohaing either could not procure a descendant of Rudro that was free from blemish, no person with such pretensions to authority wishing to trust themselves in his power; or what is more probable, he wished to have a king whose claims were doubtful, as more favourable to his views. He therefore appointed as king a boy named Kinaram, who took the title of Komoleswor, and who is descended of Kana, the eldest son of Gadadhar; but his ancestor, the son of Kana, was illegitimate, so that the title of Kinaram is universally acknowledged to be defective, and the Gohaing has not ventured to propose his coronation. Another cause of disaffection against this poor youth has now been discovered. His forefathers followed the Kolitas, called the Sologuri Mohajons as their spiritual guides, and he refuses to receive instruction (Upodes) from the Brahmans of Bengal, who have long guided the royal family. The most keen advocate



for the sacred order is the mother of this unfortunate prince, who probably will not long be permitted to live, as he is now approaching manhood, and as an infant king will answer better the purposes of the Bura Gohaing, who is in full possession of power, and is still in the vigour of understanding. His government, however, is not without great difficulties, and in a conspiracy, that happened about the year 1802 or 1803, he was under the necessity of putting to death about 500 persons of some rank, among whom was a brother of his own wife. Although the execution was performed with the cruelties usual among the Asamese, and several were put to death by the application of burning hoes, the minds of the people have not been quieted, and they seem ripe for insurrection.

Having thus given such historical matters as have come to my knowledge, I shall proceed to mention the principal persons and officers of the kingdom, in doing which I shall have occasion to detail most of the information concerning its topography that I have received. The accompanying map, drawn by one of my informants, will explain the situation of the places.

The persons descended from Rudho Singho by legitimate marriage, and entitled to continue the succession, are called Tungkhungiva; and all these have a right to succeed to the royal dignity, except such as have on their body some blemish or mark, whether from disease or accident, the scar either of an honourable wound, or of the small pox, being equally a complete bar to the royal dignity. In order probably to prevent the dangers of a disputed succession, it was the maxim of the family to mark every youth that was not intended for being the presumptive heir, so soon as he approached manhood, by a wound on some conspicuous part, such as the nose or ear. This did not prevent him from being considered as a prince, he was called Gohaing Deo, and his children, if without blemish, had a right to succession; although, so far as I can learn, the son of a person who was marked, has never yet succeeded. As a farther precaution all the princes, not sons of the reigning king, and their families were confined on a hill called Tejinamrup, to which there are three ascents, and three strong guards, Chaudang, Dolakakuriya, and Kukura-choya. This hill is situated among forests, about two days journey south east from Gorgango. The number of princes

confined has of late decreased, many having escaped to other countries, and having there had children, which will no doubt tend to hasten the overthrow of the dynasty. Wherever the usual law of the country does not exclusively give the succession to estates and honours to one son, it becomes impossible to secure the right of royal accession undisturbed, even by the most rigorous precautions, such as the Asamese have adopted.

The kings formerly lived at Gorgango, but Sib Singho removed the seat of government to Ronggopoor Nogar (the city the abode of pleasure), which is situated on the Dikho river, that falls into the south side of the Brohmoputro about three hours journey south from the Dihing or southern branch of the Brohmoputro river. Ronggopoor was a large town, and was very probably the place so named, where Bhogodotto had his country residence, although it is not improbable, but that this prince may have had two Ronggopoors, one to the east, and one to the west of his capital, which was at Gohati. The royal palace was surrounded by a wall of brick about three cubits thick and $3\frac{1}{2}$ cubits high. The house in which the throne stood (Changgor) was thatched; but was supported by sal beams, and its walls were constructed of bamboo mats. In the same enclosure was a building of brick (Ronggopoor), in which the Raja sat to view public shows. There was also a small temple composed entirely of copper. In this, as is supposed, the God Chung was kept; but the whole worship of that deity is veiled in the most profound mystery.

Since the disturbances in the reign of Gaurinath, the royal residence has been removed to Jorhat, about 20 miles west from Ronggopoor. It stands on both sides of the Dichoi river (Dessoye Wood), which comes from the mountains on the southern frontier. According to Mr. Wood this river enters the Brohmoputro in lat. $26^{\circ} 48'$ north, and in long. $94^{\circ} 5' 41''$ east from Greenwich. No buildings of brick have been erected, nor is any brick house permitted to a subject.

The kings and nobles live in thatched huts with walls of bamboo mats, supported by sal posts, and built after the fashion of Bengal with arched ridges and mud floors. Each apartment is a separate hut. The king has some gold and silver vessels, and some glass ware and rich furniture, that has been sent as presents by the government of Bengal.



Where the chief nobles sit in their own houses, a heap of earth is raised, and this is covered with mats and cloth. If any person highly respected comes to visit him, the noble orders a blanket for a seat; but in general all his guests sit on the bare ground, as there is no furniture in the hut, where company is received; but very great persons have bedsteads and curtains. Persons of lower rank, who attempted to imitate their superiors in the use of such luxuries, would be severely punished. In courts of justice the judge sits on a low wooden stool, all other persons are seated on the bare ground, as if in the royal presence.

The coronation, or rather enthronement of the king, is performed with much ceremony. The Raja, mounted on a male elephant, and accompanied by his principal wife (Boro Kumari) riding on a female, proceeds to plant a tree (*Ficus religiosa*) on the hill Chorai Khorong, where his ancestor Khuntai first appeared on earth. By the way he takes up the young tree, and pays the proprietor whatever price he chooses to demand. In performing this ceremony, the God Chung is suspended round his neck, he is girt with the sword Kyangdang, he carries in his turban the feathers of the sacred bird Deokukura (*Pavo bicalcaratus*), and he is accompanied by all the principal officers of the kingdom, by a great part of the army, and by a vast multitude of the people.

Having planted the tree, the Raja and his followers descend to three huts, that have been erected for the purpose, and which are called Patghor, Holongghor, and Singgorighor. The Raja and his queen first enter the Patghor, where some water is poured on them from a shell called Dokhyinaborto Songkho, the mouth of which is turned the way contrary to that of the shell, which is usually sounded by the Hindus, in order to attract a little notice from the Gods.

The two royal persons then enter the Holongghor, and sit on a stage made of bamboos, under which is placed one of each species of animal that can be procured, such as a man, an elephant, a horse, a cow, a deer, a hog, a fowl, a duck, a snake, an insect, a fish, &c. The water from nine tirthos, or holy places, is poured over the king and the queen, and falls on the animals.

The water of each holy place is kept in a golden vessel,

and the plants called Sorbaushodhi, and Mohaushodhi have been infused in it.

The royal persons having been bathed, the Raja replaces the feathers in the turban, and advances with his queen to the Singgorighor, having in his hand the sword Hyangdang; and with this, before he enters, he kills a buffalo. The original custom was to kill a man, a criminal having been selected for the purpose; but since the time of Rudho Singho a buffalo has been substituted. The Raja then enters the Singgorighor, and ascends a throne (Singhason) of gold, consisting of seven stages. Having been seated, the queen and the three chief persons of the kingdom, make many presents of gold and jewels, and then lay their hands on the four feet of the throne. These nobles then walk seven times round the sovereign, who orders money to be coined, and gives some presents to the Deodhaing, and to the Brahman who is his spiritual guide. He also orders gratuities (Siropa) to be given to all the principal officers, and to religious mendicants, and some days' provisions are distributed to the multitude who have assembled to see the show. The Raja and his queen then dine with all the Asamese of high rank. Then all the tributary Rajas, landlords, and inferior officers are introduced, and make presents, which occupies a whole month. In all these ceremonies the Chiring Phukon presides, and regulates every thing according to the ancient customs of the kingdom.

There are three great councillors of state, called Gohaing, who have by law no authority to issue orders, but whose duty it is to give advice to the king, when he chooses to require their assistance. Each receives a certain number of men to work for him, and no officer of government is allowed to possess any jurisdiction over these, so that their whole management and superintendence is left with their immediate master, except when the king personally requires their assistance, which he sometimes, but rarely does. These dignified offices are in the hereditary possession of three great families; but the king may appoint any member of these families that he pleases to hold the office, and he may change them at pleasure. The persons holding the office always live at court. The title Gohaing seems to be the highest in the country, and as I have said, is that given to the princes of



the blood royal, who annex to it Deo or Lord. The latter is a Hindu word, but Gohaing is probably an Asamese term.

The Boropatro Gohaing is the highest in rank, and is descended from an illegitimate son of one of the kings. He is allowed 6000 men (Payiks) in constant attendance.

The Boro Gohaing is the second in rank, and is allowed 4000 men. He is descended from one of the Danggoryas who accompanied Khuntai.

The Bura Gohaing is descended from the other Danggoriya, and has legally the same allowance; but the present occupant is in fact the actual sovereign of the country.

The Boro Boruya, or great secretary, is the fourth great officer of state, and in fact he ought to be the prime minister, to whom, of right, the whole executive power, civil and military, is intrusted, and to whose court there is an appeal in all cases, except where the servants of the three great Gohaings are concerned. He must be chosen from among the four families called Duyara, Dihingga, Lahon, and Sondiki. He is only allowed 100 servants, but he has fees on all commissions, and on all cases that come before his court. The present Boruya has been totally deprived of power, and his deputies act under the orders of the Bura Gohaing.

The inferior officers of state at the capital are as follows :— There are six persons called Choruya Phukons, and in general it may be observed, that Phukon is the title next in dignity to that of Gohaing. Each of these six has a separate title, and the whole form the council of the Boro Boruya, although they have also other duties.

1. Naoyaiche, who is allowed 1000 servants with whom he mans the royal boats. 2. Dohikya; 3. Bhitrail; 4. Naiya; 5. Deka; 6. Naisoti; each of these is allowed 20 servants, and their duty seems to be that of purveyors, to procure whatever the king wants. The Porbotya Phukon is a Brahman, manages the affairs of one of the queens, and is allowed a secretary or Boruya. The Raydenggya Phukon is an Asamese, and manages the affairs of another queen. He also is allowed a secretary. The Raja's mother has two officers, the Khonggiya Phukon, and the Khonggiya Boruya; both are Brahmans, and the former is allowed a secretary. The Jolbhari Phukon is a Brahman, and has the charge of

all the servants, that the Raja employs in the Hindu temples. These amount to 1000.

The Tambuli Phukon is also a Brahman, and has the care of the Raja's garden, in which betle-leaf is the chief article of cultivation. The Naosalya Phukon is allowed 1000 men for building the royal boats. The Chholadhora Phukon has the charge of all the Raja's effects. The Chiring Phukon is the master of ceremonies, and has charge of the Deo Dhaings, or priests of the old religion. The Deulya Phukon is a Brahman, who has the charge of repairing and preserving the Hindu temples. The Kharghariya Phukon has the charge of making gunpowder. The Nek Phukon, and the Dihingga Phukon; these have the charge of the king's messengers. All these Phukons, except such as I have mentioned as being Brahmans, must be Asamese legitimately descended from some of the persons, who accompanied Khuntai, and who are called Hatimuriyas.

Boruya seems to be the title next in dignity to Phukon. Of these there are many. The Bhandari Boruya is the king's private treasurer, and is allowed an assistant called Kayastha Bhandari. The Duliya Boruya has the charge of the Raja's palanquins and bearers. The Chaudanggiya Boruya has the superintendency of public executions. The Dolakakuriya Boruya is the chief of the footmen. The Khanikar Boruya is the superintendent of artificers. The Sonadhar Doloyi is mint-master and chief jeweller. The Majumdar Boruya is private secretary, and letter writer to the king, and is allowed four Changkoyatis or assistants. The Bej Boruya is the king's physician. The Changmai Boruya has the superintendency of the royal table. Hati Boruya, the master of elephants, has about 125 of these animals. The Ghora Boruya, or master of horse, has only 50 horses. The Helui Dhari Boruya has charge of the arms, or arsenal. The Devighor Boruya has charge of a private chapel.

The king has 12 Rajkhaoyas, who are under the orders of the Bara Boruya, and are officers of considerable importance, each being supposed to command 3000 men. They attend the court of justice, and are employed as umpires to settle disputes, and to superintend any public work for the king.

There are also attendant on this prince some persons called



Vairagis and Kotokis. The former are sent on messages to a distance; the latter seem to be a kind of interpreters. The kings seldom choose to communicate the most important orders in writing, and the dismissal of a Gohaing, or of a governor of Kamrup, is merely signified to him by a verbal message; but it is communicated by three officers, a Kotoki, a Bora, and a Takla, all persons of low rank. At Jorhat are 300 soldiers from the west of India, and 800 native troops, who are levied indiscriminately from all castes. The whole officers are from the west of India; but have married in Asam, and have had lands allotted for their support. The whole are under the command of a Captain Gohaing. Each company of 100 men is commanded by one Subadar, one Jumar, six Havildars, and one adjutant.

When I have said, that the king grants a certain number of men to such or such an officer, the following must be understood to be the meaning. By far the greater part of the land in Asam is granted to persons called Payiks, each of whom is held bound to work four months in the year without wages or food, either for the king, or for whatever person the royal pleasure directs. These people either work for their lord, in whatever art they are skilled, or pay him a composition, which is regulated by custom; but is very rarely accepted. As each man works only four months in the year, so to complete the constant attendance of one man, three persons are required, and are therefore called a full Payik. It is said, before the country was depopulated by the late disturbances, that the men were only required to work on the royal account for three months in the year, and of course that then four men were called a complete Payik. The men for every complete Payik are allowed 12 purus of land free of rent. The puru being 150 cubits square, the land allotted for paying the constant attendance of one man is very near 14 acres, which the men who are not on service, and their families cultivate. I am told that on one considerable estate, at least, the number of persons, young and old, for each Payik amount to from 12 to 14.

The Payiks are placed under four ranks of officers, who, according to their respective authority, are supposed to command 1000, 100, 20, and 10 men; but these numbers, and the numbers said to be granted to such or such officers, I

am informed, are merely nominal, especially since the disturbances; so that the Hatimuriya, or commander of 1000, has sometimes in fact, not more than 500. All these officers are allowed lands free of rent, which are cultivated by that proportion of the Payiks, that is allowed to work on their account, and each receives presents from the men and officers that are subordinate to his authority. The whole of the Payiks, I believe, may under these officers be compelled to take the field; but this is seldom exacted, for they have become a mere rabble, without courage, discipline or arms. There are two manners in which the king derives an advantage from these Payiks.

He grants a part of them to his officers for their maintenance, and for the support of their dignity, so that there is no issue from the treasury for the pay of any officer, nor indeed to any person except the foreign soldiers, merchants, and mendicants. The officer either accepts of the composition, or employs his Payits to cultivate the farms (Khat), which supply his family with provisions, to build his houses, to make and man his boats, and to make his furniture and clothing, so that his outlay of money is very trifling. He also receives presents from all those under his authority, and is vested with the charge of the police, the punishment of slight offences, and the settling of petty suits in all the lands (Gangs), which his servants occupy. Each of these branches of authority is lucrative, although a considerable proportion, where the number of servants is great, goes to subordinates.

The king, however, employs a vast number of men to work in his farms, gardens, fisheries, mines, arsenals, and manufactories, and to man and construct his vessels, who all labour without any expense to the treasury. The officers whom he employs to superintend these works, usually receive a commission of 5 per cent; that is, allowed to employ on their own business every twentieth man, and they are besides allowed the whole of the profits from presents, from the care of the police, and from the administration of justice, in the lands occupied by their subordinates.

These are the officers and persons employed near the king. Only it must be observed, that each principal officer has a Doyalya or deputy. The central of the three chief provinces



into which the kingdom is divided; and which constitutes Asam proper, ought by the constitution to be under the immediate government of the Bara Boruya, or chief secretary; but its affairs are now managed by his deputy under the controul of the Bura Gobaing.

There are few or no sub-divisions in Asam proper, except into Gangs or manors. Each of the above-mentioned officers receives a certain number of Gangs, to enable him to accommodate the people (Payiks) which are placed under his authority. The only hereditary estates are as follows:—1. Charingga. 2. Tipomiya. 3. Namrup. These three small territories have always been held by some collateral branch of the royal family, and most commonly by the descendants of Kana. They are all in the immediate vicinity of the hill Tejinamrup, where the princes not destined for the succession should be confined. 4. A very considerable estate called Doyang, which reaches to the south-west within 10 or 12 miles of the capital, and belongs to the family of the present governor of Kamrup (Bara Phukon), who sends a fixed number of men to work for the king, and disposes of the remainder as he pleases. 5. Bacha east from Doyang is a small estate on a similar footing, which belongs to one of the Rajkhaoyas or commanders of 3000 men. 6. Chutiyo Kumar is a similar estate, held by a family of Kolitas. It is on the north side of the Brohmoputro.

I shall now proceed to mention the other jurisdictions of the kingdom, and the officers immediately dependent on the crown. The most important is the province of Kamrup, the greater part of which was wrested from the Moslems early in the reign of Aurungzebe. The chief officer has only the title of Phukon; but his rank is considered as next to that of the Boro Boruya, and he must be selected from the same four families, that are entitled to hold that office. The reason of his being called only Phukon, while officers of inferior dignity are called Gohaings, would appear to be, that, until the conquest of Gohati, this officer seems only to have governed the western end of the island, included between the Brohmoputro and Kolong rivers, and even this jurisdiction would seem to have been curtailed by the power of the great military officers stationed in that quarter. He now has not only the management of all the affairs of his extensive province; but is usually

entrusted with transacting all the intercourse with the government of Bengal; but he is not permitted to do anything of importance without the advice and consent of his council, which consists of six Phukons, who assemble in the Dupduyar or council house in Gohati, where the governor resides. The city of Gohati is a very poor place; but it was formerly the capital of all Kamrup, and according to Mr. Wood is placed in $26^{\circ} 9' N.$, and about 70 miles east from Goyalpara. The greatest portion of the lands of the Asamese province of Kamrup has been granted to Payiks for service, and the management of these has been given to the different officers either for their support, or to enable them to perform certain works for the king.

A considerable proportion of the land, however, has been granted to different Rajas, whose dignities are hereditary in certain families; but the king may appoint any person of the family to be Raja, may change the person at pleasure, and appoint another individual of the family in his stead.

Other lands pay a rent in money, and their administration is committed to Zemindars, as under the Mogul princes. Other lands have been appropriated to pious purposes, and have been granted to various temples, and to Brahmans, or other religious men. Finally, other lands which chiefly occupy both banks of the river near Gohati, are reserved to be cultivated on account of the king.

The officers of Kamrup, besides the governor, are as follows:—six Phukons, who constitute the provincial council. 1. The Pani Phukon superintends 6000 Payiks, who are constantly employed cultivating land, in fishing, and in various manufactures, on the king's account. Under him is employed an accountant called Takla Bora Mojumdar. He resides on the north bank of the Brohmoputro. 2. The Daka Phukon superintends 4000 Payiks, employed in the same manner; but is held to be guided by the instructions of the Pani Phukon. He resides about two or three miles higher up than his superior. 3 and 4. The Dihingga and Nek Phukons are the immediate assistants of the Boro Phukon. 5 and 6. The two Chhentya Phukons are subordinate to the former. 12. Rajkhaoyas, who are always in attendance at the court of justice (Boro Choruya), ready to be employed as umpires to settle disputes.



The Bujur Boruya is the collector of revenue, for the whole land of Kamrup, that has not been granted to Rajas, or for pious purposes. He is under the orders and inspection of the governor of the province; but cannot be dismissed from his office without an order from the king. The Boro Kayet is the collector's accountant. Boldi Singho, a native of the west of India, is commander (Subadar) of the regular troops, and instructs them in European tactics. The governor has six companies, and the Pani Phukon has two. Each company contains from 60 to 100 men of different countries and castes. About 100 are from the west of India, and are paid entirely in money. The natives receive 2 rs. a month for subsistence, and land sufficient to support their families.

The Rajas of Kamrup seem to remain nearly on the same footing as during the Mogul government. They are the original petty chiefs of the country, each of whom possesses a certain territory, which is assessed to furnish a certain number of Payiks. The Raja either sends the men to work on the king's account, or remits the commutation money. No other persons, who holds lands for service, reside on the estates of the Rajas, who may cultivate what is not necessary for the support of the Payiks, in whatever manner they please. The Rajas possess every sort of jurisdiction, except the power of very severe, or of capital punishment; and in case of war should take the field at the head of their Payiks. The Rajas are as follows.

1. Baraduyar. The Raja is a Garo, and lives at Bhog-poor, two days' journey south-west from Gohati. It is close to the mountains, inhabited by independent Garos; but these consider the Baraduyar Raja as their chief. It is for his low lands only, that he pays tribute to Asam. In his territory is a market-place, named Kukuriya, to which the independent Garos bring salt, that they purchase at Rajhat in Jaintiya, and at Laur, in the district of Srihatta (Sylhet R). The road from Laur, as I was informed by a Brahman, who had come by it, passes through the territory of a Garo chief, named Koiram, who borders on Susanggo. West from Koiram is the territory of Ganeswar Raja, a nephew of the Raja of Koroyivari. 2. Bholagram is situated east from Boro-duyar. The Raja is a Mech. 3. Mairapoor is situated between Bholagram and Baraduyar. 4. Lukiduyar. This ter-

ritory lies west from Gohati, on the Kailasi river, and is larger than that of any of the former Rajas. It borders on the independent Garos, and nowhere extends to the Brohmoputro. When Mr. Wood accompanied Captain Welsh, and made his valuable survey of that country, this Raja seems to have usurped Chamoriya Pergunah. He is of a Garo family; but has been converted by the Brahmans, and in imitation of his sovereign receives spiritual instruction from the sacred order. He resides at Luki on the side of the Kailasi. 5. Pantan. 6. Bon-gram. These two chiefs are of the same family with the Raja of Lukiduyar, and their territories, which are very petty, are adjacent to his on the west, towards the frontier of Bengal. 7. Vagaduyar is a small territory south from Pantan. Its chief also is a Garo; but he adheres to the customs of his ancestors.

8. Beltolya is of the same family with the Raja of Dorong: that is he is a Koch, claims a descent from the God Sib, and is in fact descended of Raja Sukladhwaj, who was sovereign of the country. On this account he is much respected. He lives at Beltoli (Belletollah, Wood), a few miles east and south from Gohati; but when the country was in confusion, and when Mr. Wood made the survey, he would appear to have retired into a strong hold at some little distance farther from the Mahamaris. 9. Dumuriya (Demooroo, Wood) lives beyond Beltoli, towards the Garo mountains. In fact he is a Garo chief, and the present occupant is supposed to know many powerful incantations, by which he can kill his enemies, or at least render them foolish. On this account he is very much respected, and the governor of the province carefully avoids giving him any manner of offence. I am assured, that neither of these two Rajas possess any territory adjacent to the Brohmoputro; but it would appear, that when Mr. Wood made his survey, each possessed a small portion of its bank. This was probably an usurpation, owing to the confusion of the times.

10. The Raniduyar Raja in the confusion of the Mahamaris insurrection seems to have seized on the country immediately west of Gohati, but in fact his real country is south from that town, at the foot of the Garo mountains, and his residence is among the hills. It is probably at Noghurreah. The Pamohee of Mr. Wood is said to be a market, where the



Garos come to deal with this chief. He is a Garo by birth; but has adopted the worship of Vishnu. An intelligent person, who had been in his service, informed me, that the Raja is bound to furnish constantly to the king 621 Payiks or men, and makes presents annually to the value of about 5000 rs. He ought also, with his countrymen the Garos, to assist in the king's wars. The Raja allows each Payik two ploughs of land, and on these there may be from 12 to 14 people, young and old. One of these is always on service, and no commutation is received. There are only about 2000 ploughs in the whole country; so that the Raja lets 758 to enable him to discharge the 5000 rs., which he makes in presents. His only profit, therefore, is what he receives in presents, and in the management of the police. His principal wealth is derived from his connection with the Nuniya Garos, that frequent his market. They pay him no duties; but, on a certain day every year, he invites all the chiefs and free men of that nation. From 5 to 6000 usually attend, and are feasted. Every one brings a present in cotton or other commodity, which sells for about 4 rs.; so that, after defraying the expense of a feast, the Raja has a profit of about 15,000 rs. The whole of these Garos are willing to assist in war; but when in the field the Raja must give them subsistence. The Garos being more warlike than the present Asamese, the Mahamaris gave the Rani Raja no sort of molestation. After the overthrow of these insurgents, the Governor came with six companies to demand some extraordinary exaction; but he was opposed by 2000 farmers, and 3000 Garos, and an amicable adjustment took place, by which every thing was placed on the former footing.

11. These are all on the south side of the Brohmoputro. On the north side, the only Raja is Dorong, who is by far the most considerable, and most respected. In Asam he is called a Koch, the title of Rajbongsi not being acknowledged. He supplies the king with 6000 men, and no commutation is accepted. The family has divided into two branches, the representative of each of which has 3000 Payiks for his own use, so that the country, besides free land, is estimated at 12,000 farms of a little less than 14 acres each.

The best informed persons, whom I consulted, knew nothing specific concerning the Rajas of Myungh, Koleetal, Bogrut-

teah, Ogooreah, or Goorookeah, whom Mr. Wood found on the island, which lies between the Brohmoputro and Kolong river. The two first are said to be very petty chiefs, who live south from Gohati, and possess a village each. It is probable, that the others are persons of a similar description, who in the confusion of the times had assumed some degree of consequence, and usurped a power to which they were not entitled, and which was instantly dissolved by the vigour of the Buro Gohaing.

The Pergunahs of Kamrup, that had been reduced to the common system of Mogul finance, remain in the same state under the government of Asam. Each Pergunah is let for from one to five years to a Chaudhuri, who agrees to pay a certain rent, one-half in money and one-half in goods, and whose office is in no sort hereditary. He lets all the lands that are not given to Payiks for service, and that have not been granted for pious purposes. His profit ought to arise from the difference between the rent, which he collects, and the revenue that he pays to the collector; but he receives presents not only from the tenants, but from the Payiks, that live on the Pergunah. He also acts as an officer of police, and it is usually alleged, that the Chaudhuris take money to allow rogues to escape. They have no legal authority to inflict any kind of punishment, nor to employ any armed men. Over every four or five manors (Gangs), the Chaudhuri appoints a Taalokdar, who is paid in land. In each manor he also appoints a chief (Thakuri) to collect the rent, and the Thakuri is assisted by a messenger named Tarui. Both are paid in land. It is supposed, that the Chaudhuris, who are on the same footing, with what the Zemindars of Bengal were before the new regulations, do not give government more than two-fifths of what they collect. The revenue of the assessed lands in Kamrup, which reaches the royal treasury, amounts to 32,000 rs. a year.

The Pergunahs on the north side of the Brohmoputro, beginning at the Company's frontier, and going east, are as follows:—1. Bansi. 2. Boronogor. 3. Borobhag. 4. Bojani. 5. Boro Khyotri. 6. Chhota Khyotri. 7. Kongor bhag. 8. Purbopar. 9. Poschimpar. 10. Bongsor. 11. Mohul. 12. Kachhari-Mohul. 13. Pati-Dorong. The Pergunahs on the south side of the Brohmoputro, beginning at



Gohati, and extending to west, are—1. Chhoyani. 2. Baronti. 3. Chamuriya. 4. Nogorbera. The governor has granted to one of his Rajkhaoyas a considerable territory called Ghiladhari, which lies between Dorong and the eastern boundary of his government.

Next to Kamrup, the government of Sodiya is the most important charge in the kingdom, and its governor is called Sodiya Khaoya Gohaing. This country extends along both sides of the Brohmoputro from the boundary of Asam proper to the extremity of the kingdom. The governor may be appointed from any descendant of the persons who accompanied Khuntai. He resides at Sodiya, near Kundilnigor, where the god Krishno is said to have fought with a certain Rukkmoraja. Sodiya is reckoned six days' journey east from Jorhat. I have learned very little concerning this province, nor concerning the manner in which it is governed.

The following governments seem to have been established as military stations to protect the frontier. The Morongkhaoya Gohaing governs a small district, south from Jorhat, near the hills. This person must be of the same family with the Bura Gohaing. He has 1000 Payiks or soldiers, and seems to be stationed in order to protect the frontier towards Khamti.

The Solalbor Gohaing governs another small territory, including the east end of the island between the Brohmoputro and Kolong rivers, and resides at Koliyabor. He also manages about a fourth part of the territory called Charidwar, collects the royal revenue, and administers justice. His force, stationed at Koliyabor, seems intended to check the conduct of the Bhoteas, Miris and Dophlas, when these mountaineers collect their shares of the revenue of Charidwar. A few of his Payiks reside in this territory, but the greater part occupy the east end of the island near Koliyabor. This officer must be selected from the family of Boro Gohaing.

The Kajolimukha Gohaing has 1000 Payiks, and some guns, and lives at Kajolichauki in the west end of the same island, and lands are allotted to his people in that vicinity. The object of this force seems to be to guard against the encroachments of the Kachharis and Jaintiyas. Although surrounded by the territory, that is placed under the Go-



vernor of Gohati, and stationed near that place, both he and his people are entirely independent of that officer.

The Jagil Gohaing lives on the Kolong, and is just such another military officer as the Kajoli Gohaing. He is equally independent of the governor of Kamrup, and his object is to guard against the Kachharis. These two Gohaings may be appointed from any family of the Hatimuriyas. Dhing Du-yar, situated on the same island, and lately made independent of the government of Kamrup, is a military station, established also as a check against the Kachharis. It is under the government of a Raja.

Charidwar is a large territory under a kind of government, which, I presume, must be very disagreeable for the subject. It occupies the whole northern bank of the river, from the eastern boundary of the province of Kamrup to Tikli Potarmukh, where the Brohmoputro divides into two branches, to form the great island called Majuli, a distance said to be about thirteen days journey by land in length. The district is also said to be in general about $1\frac{1}{2}$ days journey in width, although in some parts its width is not more than one day's journey. The day's journey is said to be from 10 to 12 coss, or from 20 to 24 miles. The king of Asam possesses the right of administering justice, and of levying from each plough 1 rupee in money, and a piece of Muga silk cloth, 8 cubits long, and 2 cubits wide, worth from 16 to 20 anas. Three mountain chiefs have each a right to levy a certain sum from each plough; and for this purpose each sends a body of armed men, who in the cool season go through the country, live at free quarters, and plunder those who do not pay the customary dues. These three chiefs govern the Kampo Bhoteas, who occupy the highest ridges of the northern mountains in the quarter; the Miris or Michimis, who occupy the lower hills and some of the plain towards Charidwar; and the Dophlas, who occupy the lower hills and plain adjacent to the eastern parts of the same territory. It must indeed be observed, that the present territory of Asam no where reaches to the northern mountains, and that the Dev' Raja, or prince of Bhotan, has taken possession of all the territory adjacent to the hills, which are west from the Miris. This I know is a recent usurpation, and there is great reason to believe, that the Kampo, Bhoteas, Miris, and



Dolas were subject to Asam; for in the account given of that country in the Asiatick Researches it is mentioned, that the northern mountains belonged to it, and produced musk and horses, which are only the produce of the highest parts. These three countries have not only been able to reject the authority of the king, but levy a share of the revenue from all the low lands on the northern side of the river.

The Kampo Bhoteas resemble in their manners the other tribes of that people, which is spread over the high lands between Kashmir and China. The Miri or Michimi, and Dophlas are said to retain the fierce and warlike spirit of the ancient Asamese, indulge their appetites in eating unclean food, as much as the impure nations of China and Europe, and adhere to their old customs altogether rejecting the instructions of the sacred order of the Hindus, and what is called the purity of its law. [*In order that the Assamese country may be better known, I insert here Dr. Wade's descriptive geography—from papers deposited by the late Sir John Malcolm in the library at the East India House in 1827. I have also in my possession a large MS. vol. containing a translation of an original History of Assam—which was transmitted by Dr. Wade to Lieutenant-Colonel Kirkpatrick (Mil. Sec. to the Marquess Wellesley), on the 20th March, 1800. The MS. is too voluminous for insertion in this Work.—ED.*]



CHAPTER II.

GEOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF ASSAM IN TWO PARTS. FIRST PART CONTAINS THE DIVISIONS OF ASSAM INTO, 1. OUTERPARH. 2. DECANPARH. AND 3. MAJULI OR GREAT ISLAND. SECOND PART. CONTAINS THE RIVERS FLOWING FROM THE 1. NORTHERN MOUNTAINS. 2. SOUTHERN MOUNTAINS. 3. THE BESHAMPOOTER AND ITS BRANCHES.

[The spelling of native names differs materially in Dr. Wade's MSS. from that of Dr. Buchanan, but to prevent mistake no alteration has been made in Dr. Wade's writing.]

The kingdom of Assam * is about seven hundred miles in length, and from sixty to eighty in breadth, in a few places however of upper Assam where the mountainous confines recede farthest, the breadth greatly exceeds the proportion,

Note by Dr. Wade.—The jealous spirit of the Chinese government, accompanied the conquerors of Assam, who have now retained possession of that country, during a period of one thousand years; and must have emigrated originally from the confines of the former kingdom; strangers of every description and country, were scrupulously denied admission into Assam, which does not appear to have been visited even, by the indefatigable footsteps of the missionary.

It is on record that two Europeans have obtained access into the kingdom, one at an early period, who attended the Mogul army, was taken prisoner and conducted to the capital, and afterwards liberated. There is reason to suppose he was a native of Holland, and has published some account of his involuntary travels to the court of the Monarch. The second traveller was a Frenchman whose name will not easily be erased from the memory of many gentlemen of property in Bengal. Chevalier, who at a later period obtained the government of Chandernagore, embarked a considerable property it is said at Dacca on a fleet of boats, and proceeded to the confines of Assam. Permission was obtained from court, and he advanced with his fleet as far as the Capital, Rongpoor Gurgown, under an escort which deprived him of all intercourse with the natives; and confined his personal observations within the limits of his barge. At length he obtained his liberty by a stratagem. He has left some information relative to the Geography of the country; or, more probably, of the banks of the river which lay in his course.

From such sources the Geography of Assam could not receive much improvement. The few hints which Major Rennell seems to have obtained from the conversation of the notes of Chevalier, are marked by such obvious errors, that we cannot regret his information from this quarter, has not proved more copious.

The Persian tract, published and probably translated by Mr. Vanzittart contains a few remarks on the divisions of the country, which are accurate though as usual, involved in much hyperbolical description.

Major Rennell has undoubtedly made the best use of his materials, but



and it will be within a very moderate calculation to consider the surface as containing about sixty thousand square miles; from this computation may be deducted the numerous rivers which every where intersect the country.

I shall not offer a vague conjecture on the sum of this deduction, but it will not be exaggeration, to say that the remainder exhibits a highly fertile soil throughout, for even the great number of hills which are interspersed in every part of Assam are susceptible of cultivation, and increase considerably the superficies of the country fit for culture.

From this computation of square miles are excluded all the dependencies and conquered countries on or beyond the mountainous limits which surround Assam in every direction, as well as several provinces of eastern Bengal, which formerly acknowledged their subjection to the Assamese government. Assam is a valley; it extends between the parallel of 25. 45 and 27. 30 degrees of north latitude, and from 90. 35 to between 98 or 99 degrees of east longitude. This extent to the Eastward beyond the capital Ghurgong is of course con-

little was in his power; his superior talents, his opportunities and his information have not concurred to give any degree of perfection to the geography of the country.

Mr. Wood of the Corps of Engineers an attentive and intelligent gentleman, who accompanied the deputation in the capacity of surveyor, has presented government, with the only correct map of the course of the Berhampooter (Brahmapootra), and of such parts of the country as lay within the limits of his survey, as far as the capital of Rungpoor-Gurgown.—See p. 626.

At the desire of the late Governor General, Lord Teignmouth, captain Colbrooke, the surveyor General obligingly favoured me with a copy of Mr. Wood's map to be prefixed to the history of the reign of Gaurinat Sing late monarch of Assam, which was transmitted to Europe for publication in the year 1796.

As far as my sources of information extend, these are the only public Documents which exist on the subject of Assam. If my personal exertions, during a residence of nearly two years, and my intercourse with the most intelligent and best informed natives, shall enable me to add something to the valuable information contained in Mr. Woods' map, I shall esteem the labour and expense (for neither has been spared) which attended my researches most amply repaid.

Exclusively attached until the period in question, to the study and the practice of my profession, I had not acquired the requisite and scientific accomplishment which might have rendered my opportunities of acquiring geographical knowledge of more utility to government or to the public, yet I shall venture to hope that the general and unscientific sketch of the country contained in the following sheets will not prove entirely unexceptionable when it is considered that no Europeans have ever explored or probably ever will explore the provinces of Assam, with the consent of the government of that country.

tural; for it was not my fortune to meet with a single native who had travelled to the utmost limits of Assam in that quarter. The kingdom is separated by the great stream of the Brahmaputra into three grand divisions called Outercole or Outerparh Dukankoli or Dukauparh and the Majulee or great island.

The first denotes the provinces lying on the north side of the Berhampooter, the second, those on the south. The Majulee is a large island in the middle. It is also divided into upper and lower Assam; the first includes the country above Coliaburh where the river diverges into two considerable streams as far as the mountainous confines to the north and south. This division included the whole of Assam at an earlier period, but the lower provinces to the westward having been afterwards annexed by conquest to the dominions of the Swurge Deo, became a separate government under an officer entitled Burro Fokun with the powers of Viceroy.

The destination of Outrecole and Deccancole were previous to the period in question applicable only to upper Assam, and the more learned among the natives affect to confine those appellations even now to the eastern provinces only. From the confines of Bengal or Bisne, at the Khondor Chokey the valley as well as the river and the mountains preserve a north eastern direction to a considerable distance and decline to the east by north or east-north-east in the upper provinces.

Assam is bounded on the south-west by Bengal and Bisne. On the north by the successive ranges of mountains of Bootan, Anka, Duffala, and Miree; on the south by the Garroo mountains which rise to a greater height in proportion to their progress eastward, and exchange the name of Garroo, for that of Naga above Coliaburh. The valley is divided throughout its whole length by the Berhampooter, into nearly equal parts. The kingdom of Assam, where it is entered from Bengal commences on the north of the Berhampooter, at the Khondor Chokey, nearly opposite to the picturesque estate of the late Mr. Ransh at Goalpara, and at Nagrabaree hill on the south,

The great and famous province of Camroop, Camprist, or Camaroota which formerly gave its name to an extensive kingdom, of which, Rungamettee seems to have been the



capital, extends from the Khondor Chokey in Outercole on the banks of the Berhampooter to the province of Dehrungh. At one period the districts in the neighbourhood of Nagrabaree or Nagurboyra hill were also included in Camroop. Nagurboyra became the western limit of Assam. On the southern bank of the Berhampooter, when the armies of Assam were driven from the vicinity of the Currutia river, which formed the ancient boundaries towards Bengal. These limits will give an high idea of the great extent of the former kingdom, which reaches to Lolbazar in the neighbourhood of Rungpoor and included Tipora or Tripoora with all the intervening provinces. Goalpara however and the Khondor Chokey ought to have been the natural boundaries, for they are in reality the limits of a new and different climate.

Camroop, on the west or towards Bengal is bounded by the Manaha river; on the north by Bootan; on the east by the Burhmuddee, which separates it from Dehrungh; and on the south by the Berhampooter. Formerly Camroop included Dehrungh, and all the provinces west of Kajullimook in Decancole on the southern division. It is intersected in various directions by rivers flowing from the mountains, and by branches of the Berhampooter, which are all navigable for boats of any size in the season of inundation, viz. Seirsa, Bolorlia, Chaulkoa, Bhooradoia rivers.

These arise in the northern mountains flow through Camroop, and join the Manaha. During the inundations the navigation is very convenient through these smaller streams, when the Berhampooter is an irresistible torrent. Looitch is the name of one of these rivers in the maps, but it is merely another appellation for the Berhampooter at this part of the country, and of a large branch of the same river above Koliabur. The breadth of the province from the banks of the Berhampooter to the foot of the mountains is in general about forty miles; its length from the Khondor Chokey to the Burronuddee is nearly one hundred.

The principal Purgunneh of Camroop is Burrabaug, of which Cotta is the chief town. At present there are not any places of force in Camroop, except northern Goahowtee, which is not considered a part of that province. A military causeway extends from Coos Bayhor to the north of this and other districts to the utmost limits of Assam. It served to