BENGAL


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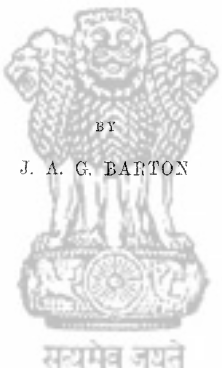
BENGAL

AN ACCOUNT OF THE COUNTRY FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES

WITH FULL INFORMATION WITH REGARD TO THE MANNERS CUSTOMS, RELIGION, &C., OF THE INHABITANTS; AND THE EFFECTS OF BRITISH RULE THERE



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CONTENTS.

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS,	1
II.	PRODUCTS: CULTIVATED AND NATURAL,	25
III.	TRADITIONS OF THE HINDU PERIOD,	49
IV.	REMINISCENCES OF THE MAHOMEDAN ERA,	74
V.	ANTIQUARIAN RELICS,	96
VI.	CLASSIFICATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE PEOPLE,	121
VII.	CONDITION AND DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PEOPLE,	144
VIII.	RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND FESTIVALS,	171
IX.	BRITISH RULE: ITS EFFECTS,	198
X.	PROGRESS OF EDUCATION,	228


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BENGAL.

CHAPTER I.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS.

THERE is no readable account of Bengal that we know of. This is rather curious, as Bengal is one of the earliest English possessions in India, and also the field where the pagoda-tree has thriven best from the commencement. It is, moreover, the cradle of much intelligence, and, at this moment, happens to be the focus from which all the political aspirations felt by the Hindus are radiating. No apology is therefore necessary for drawing particular attention to the country now, and for endeavouring to give such an account of it as will make its past and present condition generally understood.

The Presidency of Bengal (it is so styled) consists of five large provinces, named Bengal Proper, Behar, Orissa, Chota Nagpore, and Assam;* and of two native states—namely, those of Hill Tipperah and Cooch Behar. It extends from longitude 82° to 97° east, and from latitude 19° 18′ to 28° 15′ north, and comprises an area of about 250,000 square miles, with a population of about 67 millions, and yielding an annual revenue of about £17,000,000.

The boundaries of this territory are as follows: From the Champarun district, which forms the north-west corner, as far eastward as the Bootan Doars, the Himalayan range, running through the independent states of Nepal, Sikkim, and Bootan, limits it on the north. Further east, along the northern frontier of Assam, are the tracts inhabited by the Akhas, Duflas, Murees, Mishmees, and other wild tribes. Along the eastern frontier lies a part of the independent province of Burmah; lower down are the Munipore state, and the various hill-tribes

* Assam is just being formed into a separate administration; but as it has hitherto been treated as a part of Bengal, it will perhaps be best to notice it as such in this account.

known as the Looshais, Khyens, Meekirs, &c.; while the extreme south-east is bounded by British Burmah. The southern boundary of the Presidency is the bay which bears its name. On the south-west is the province of Orissa, bounded on the south by the Madras Presidency. On the west are the North-Western Provinces, the native state of Rewah, in the Indore Agency, the tributary states attached to Chota Nagpore and Cuttack, the Central Provinces, and the Madras Presidency.

Except where Behar marches with the frontier of the North-Western Provinces, and where Bengal Proper and Orissa are bounded by the sea, the entire Presidency is fringed on every side with a belt of native states, either wholly or partially independent, with which questions of boundary and extradition are constantly cropping up, and from which raids of the wild tribes are by no means unfrequent. On the northern frontier the most important state is Nepal, which is wholly independent. After it comes the semi-independent state of Sikkim, and the wholly independent state of Bootan, the latter of which is so weak as to be unable

to control the outrages constantly perpetrated by its subjects on our frontier. Then comes the dependent state of Cooch Behar, now managed by a British commissioner, owing to the Rajah being a minor. The remaining portion of the boundary on the north, and the whole of our eastern boundary, bring us in contact with a succession of wild tribes, whose raiding propensities are ungovernable, and whose forbearance it has been found necessary in several places to purchase by the payment of a subsidy, dependent on good behaviour, which partakes somewhat of the character of black-mail. On the east, between Sylhet and Chittagong, is the little principality of Hill Tipperah, held by a semi-independent chieftain, who also owns zemindaries in British territory, by means of which only his good behaviour is secured. The tributary states on the western frontier are less troublesome now than they have been in the past, as the theatre of many revolts and rebellions.

The whole of the Presidency as above defined is, for administrative purposes, partitioned into eleven primary divisions, each division

being subdivided into districts varying in number from three to nine. The total number of districts in Bengal is 53, or, including the native state of Cooch Behar, 54, and these are classified as follows :—

Province.	Division.	Districts.
Bengal Proper	Burdwan	Burdwan
		Bancoorah
		Beerbhoom
		Midnapore
		Hooghly
	Presidency	24 Pergunnahs
		Nuddea
		Jessore
	Rajshahye	Moorshedabad
		Dinajepore
		Maldah
		Rajshahye
		Rungpore
		Bograh
		Pubna
	Cooch Behar	Darjeeling
		Julpigoorie
		Cooch Behar (Native State)

Province.	Division.	Districts.
Bengal Proper (*concluded*)	Dacca	Dacca
		Furreedpore
		Backergunge
		Mymensing
		Sylhet
		Cachar
	Chittagong	Chittagong
		Noakhally
		Tipperah
		Hill Tracts of Chittagong
Behar	Patna	Patna
		Gyah
		Shahabad
		Tirhoot
		Sarun
		Champarun
	Bhangulpore	Monghyr
		Bhangulpore
		Purneah
		Sonthal Pergunnahs
Orissa	Orissa	Cuttack
		Pooree
		Balasore
Chota Nagpore	Chota Nagpore	Hazareebagh
		Lohardduggah
		Singbhoom
		Manbhoom

Province.	Division.	Districts.
Assam	Assam	Gonalparah Kamroop Durrung Nowgong Seebsagar Luckimpore Naga Hills Khasiah Hills Garo Hills

The province of Bengal Proper, which forms the largest portion of the entire Presidency, may be divided into three distinct parts—namely, (1) the Western, consisting of the five districts lying west of the Bhagirutty (Hooghly) river, which comprise the Burdwan division; (2) the Central, consisting of the Presidency, Rajshahye, and Cooch Behar divisions; and (3) the Eastern, consisting of the Dacca and Chittagong divisions. The name of Behar appertains to that part of the Gangetic plain between the Himalayas and the plateau of Central India which is terminated at one end by the north-west districts of Ghazeepore and Goruckpore, and at the other by the passes of the Raj-

mehal hills. The table-land lying south of Behar, and which under the Hindu and Mahomedan rulers of India was recognised as a part of it, is called Chota Nagpore. Orissa is the strip of country running down between the hills and the west coast of the Bay of Bengal. Assam is the valley of the Brahmapootra, from the point where it debouches through the Himalayas to where it escapes round the Garo hills, to run downwards to the sea.

The divisions and districts above described are very similar to each other in many respects—notably in all their physical characteristics, and also in the peculiarities and institutions of their inhabitants. Broadly speaking, the most conspicuous physical peculiarities of the entire Presidency are rivers of remarkable size, the two largest of which, the Ganges and the Brahmapootra, coming from different directions, unite just before they roll down to the sea, forming a delta covered with a network of minor streams; hills placed in significant positions and surmounted with any amount of timber and jungle; and vast alluvial plains

intersected by mighty streams and overspread with an abundance of crops and vegetation.

The diversities of soil, products, and climate are extremely great. As a general description of it, the climate of the entire Presidency may be characterised as damp, hot, and chiefly unhealthy; but of several districts the climate is excellent, and that of the highlands of Chota Nagpore is superior to the climate of any other part of India except the hills. In several places, again, the climate varies according to the season. Thus, in Calcutta, the metropolis of the Presidency and of the whole English empire in the East, the climate is excellent during the cold weather, but is unhealthy both during and after the rains, when the east winds sweep over the salt-water lakes, and the south winds over the wet jungles of the Soonderbuns, bringing with them malaria and fever.

In consequence of its high elevation, the climate of Chota Nagpore is very dry and wholesome; and nearly akin to it is that of the Behar districts, which is also considered very salubrious, and, so far as a tropical one can be

said to be so, agreeable. Till recently the climate of the districts of the Burdwan division, too, had a good name, having borne a greater resemblance to the climate of Behar than to that of the rest of Bengal; but for some years past it has changed for the worse (except in the higher elevations towards the west), owing to the virulence of an epidemic fever which is depopulating this part of the country. Of the Orissa districts the climate is very uncertain, the country being liable to long-continued drought and to excessive rainfall; and hence the constant danger to Orissa from famine and inundations. The climate of the rest of the Presidency may be set down generally as damp, malarious, and hot; though in certain districts, as in Backergunge, the strong south-west monsoon coming up from the bay renders the atmosphere cool and tolerable.

Throughout all Bengal the year is divided into three seasons—the hot, the rainy, and the cold, the second being decidedly the worst. The hot weather extends from March to June, the rainy from July to September or the middle of October, and the cold weather from November

to February. The average temperature during the cold season ranges from 55° to 75°; during the rains from 75° to 85°; and in the hot season from 85° to 100°, occasionally rising still higher during part of the hottest days. Europeans everywhere consider the cold weather the most agreeable; while the natives as generally regard the months when the hot winds are blowing as by far the healthiest. The heat of the western districts is generally most intense; but that of Lower Bengal, though less so, is considered to be more enervating. It is so great in all places that it dries up tanks, swamps, and jheels; reduces the size of small rivers; makes headlong torrents fordable. The rains which follow the hot weather are brought up by the monsoons from the bay. They are preceded by frequent storms of thunder and lightning, of which no adequate idea can be conveyed to those who have no personal knowledge of them. The rains themselves are also inconceivably intense. The wet season embraces about three and a half months, sometimes four; and for a good portion of this period the pouring may be said to be incessant, though, of

course, there are days in every month, and hours in every day, when it does not rain. We have said that the rainy season is considered to be the most unhealthy. The principal diseases of Bengal are fever, diarrhœa, dysentery, and cholera, all of which are more or less rife at all times of the year, but, with the exception of the last, especially so during the rains. Cholera is particularly fatal during the cold weather, though it rages most in April and May.

Commencing from the west, the prevailing soil of the districts of the Patna division may be described as sandy, with loam in part, and not unproductive. The soil of the Bhangulpore districts is similar—that is, composed of sand and clay, and fairly productive. The highlands of the Chota Nagpore division are rocky generally and barren, the rocks being of igneous origin and generally of gneiss formation; but the lowlands may be called fertile, though not in the same sense as the lands of Lower Bengal. In Orissa the prevailing soil of the delta is alluvial, being sandy only towards the coast, where it is also impregnated with salt.

As a rule, Bengal Proper—a great portion of which is within the delta formed by the numerous channels of the Ganges and the Brahmapootra—is exceedingly fertile. Of the Burdwan division, which is outside of the delta, the prevailing soil is alluvial deposit, and mixed sand, clay, and kunkur, except to the westward in Bancoorah, where the country is dry and undulating, and more impregnated with the gravelly *detritus* of laterite rock, the elevated portion in the extreme west being exclusively laterite and rocky. The soil of the Presidency division is entirely alluvial, with no surface-deposit of pebble or gravel, or anything coarser than sand, and it is very fertile. In the Rajshahye division, which forms one of the great rice-producing plains of Bengal, the soil is alluvial, chiefly sandy, but in parts stiff clay—except in the northern and western parts of Moorshedabad, which are more elevated, the soil of which is grey, red, and hard; while in Pubna, on the contrary, the soil is chiefly arable land, with extensive tracts of first-rate pasture and paddy ground. The soil of the Cooch Behar

division is of all kinds, from rich loam to gravel and sand; that of Darjeeling being slate and clay.

On the east, Assam has a great variety of soil, from stiff red clay in the Khasiah and Jynteah hills, and sandstone, shell, and slate in the Naga hills, to the inundated lowland soil on the banks of the Brahmapootra, which is eminently favourable to cultivation. In the Dacca division, the soil is in general a rich alluvial sand, deposited by the streams, except where the country is not subject to inundations, where the soil is ferruginous kunkur, covered with a thin layer of vegetable mould. The soil of Cachar, in the plains, is a mixture of sand and clay, while brimstone is found in the hills; and of Sylhet, clay mixed with sand and sandstone. Of the Chittagong districts, the soil of the plains is generally a very rich dark earth, and the banks of the rivers and khalls are cultivated all the year round; but in some places in Noakhally the soil is impregnated with salt.

Briefly, the whole of the eastern districts may be characterised as being the most mala-

rious and best productive part of the Presidency. The Dacca districts are especially spoken of as the granary of Bengal; and those of the Rajshahye and Presidency divisions are almost equally fertile. It is said that no substance so coarse as gravel is to be found anywhere in the delta of the Ganges, or nearer the sea than four hundred miles; and this description of the country is certainly true for the entire area up to the Hooghly river on the west. The whole of this tract is subject to inundations, which very much conduces to its fertility.

The general impression of foreigners is, that Bengal is altogether a plain country, without any elevations in the way of rocks and hills; but the fact is otherwise, many districts being more or less hilly, though none are mountainous. The hilly districts are—Champarun, Gyah, Shahabad, Bhangulpore, Monghyr, the Chota Nagpore and Orissa districts, Darjeeling and Julpigoorie, the Khasiah and Jynteah hills, the Naga hills, the Garo hills, Sylhet, Cachar, and all the Chittagong districts. In Champarun are the Soomessur and Doon ranges of

hills, occupying about 360 square miles. In Gyah there is one prominent hill, named Mohair, 1620 feet above the level of the sea, with rocky elevations all around it. In Shahabad is the Kymore range, with the Rhotas hills, of which the highest point is 1000 feet above the sea-level. The area of the Khurruckpore hill-range, in Bhangulpore, is about 1200 square miles; of the Rajmehal range, about 50 square miles; and of the Kojhee and Kutooriah hills, about 60 square miles. In Monghyr the area of the whole hill-tract is about 233 square miles, the hills being generally composed of granite rocks. The Chota Nagpore districts are all dotted with hills, of which the highest are in Hazareebagh, Parasnath being 4700 feet above the sea, and Mohabeer 4100 feet. The greater part of Orissa is occupied by a succession of hill-ranges, the seaboard only being a level plain. In the Burdwan Division there are no hills; but there is an elevated tract known as the Jungle Mehals, situated in the western part of Midnapore, and having an area of 1912 square miles. The hill territory of Darjeeling has an area of about 477 square

miles, and that of Julpigoorie an area of about 50 square miles, the highest peak in the latter being Rine Gangoo, about 6222 feet high. The districts of the Khasiah and Jynteah hills, the Naga hills, and the Garo hills, are throughout more or less hilly; and the other districts of Assam are also dotted with elevated tracts, most of which have not yet been investigated. In Cachar are the Borail range, the Telain range, the Rengtipar range, and the Soorispore hills. Sylhet is full of elevated tracts of minor importance. In Chittagong are the Sitakoond range, the Goleasee range, the Salkanga range, and the Teknaaf range; in Noakhally is the Raghoonundun hill; and in Tipperah the Lalmye hills.

The highest of the elevations in Bengal are those in and about Darjeeling, the principal sanitarium of the Presidency, which also commands the most magnificent view of the Snowy range—the peak of Kunchinjinga, 28,000 feet above the sea-level, being clearly visible from it. The Rajmehal hills, in Behar, are very pleasing to the eye of the traveller ascending the Ganges or running up the East Indian

Railway. The only other elevation that requires distinct mention is Parasnath, which rises out of the plateau of Chota Nagpore in the shape of an almost perfect cone, and is surmounted by the sacred temple of the Jains. A few years ago the Jains claimed an exclusive right to the use of this hill under a firman granted to them by the Great Mogul; but this claim was rejected by the Government, possibly because the site may be required hereafter for a sanitarium, the air of Parasnath being very salubrious.

The higher hills throughout Bengal are covered with forests, or with lofty and dense jungle; but the area of these tracts has not yet been correctly ascertained. The more extensive and valuable forests are all in the Assam and Cooch Behar divisions, the Cachar district, and the hill-tracts of Chittagong. Patches of scant jungle are also to be found in the Bhangulpore, Chota Nagpore, and Orissa divisions, with remains of more extensive forests in the two latter divisions especially. In the immediate neighbourhood of Calcutta is a large, unsurveyed wilderness of malarious jungle (measuring

about 7300 square miles, and covering the mouths of the Ganges from east to west over the three districts of 24 Pergunnahs, Jessore, and Backergunge), which delights in the name of "Soonderbuns," or the beautiful forests. This supplies firewood to a great portion of Lower Bengal, the supply in other places being almost equally plentiful from the scrub jungles, which are abundant everywhere, except in the Behar districts, where the use of dried cow-dung as fuel is therefore very extensive. The forests of the Assam and Cooch Behar divisions contain many valuable woods of different kinds, including *sâl*, *sissoo*, and *chelawni*; and there are some india-rubber forests in Assam and Cachar. All over the country are to be found the banian, mango, jack, tamarind, bamboo, *babul* (gum-arabic), *mohowa*, cocoa-nut, palm, and areca-nut trees, every one of which is useful for household purposes. The supply of large timber, however, comes generally from the *sâl* forests of Nepal and the teak forests of Burmah, with such clearings from the Chittagong hill-tracts and Upper Assam as can be floated down without difficulty.

The number of rivers in Bengal is very considerable, and they could not all be conveniently named. Among the great rivers which water the province of Behar are the Ganges, the Gogra, the Gunduck, the Kumla, the Koosi, the Mahananda, the Soane, and the Kurumnassa. The table-land of Chota Nagpore gives rise to a large number of streams, among which are the Sooburnarekha, the Damoodar, the Darkessur (which elsewhere becomes the Roopnarain), and the Adjai. Orissa has the Mahanuddy, the Brahmini, and the Byturni. The western districts of Bengal Proper have, besides the Damoodar, the Roopnarain, and the Adjai, already named, the Selye, the Cossye, and the More. Cooch Behar has the Brahmapootra for about 125 miles, and the Godadhur and the Teesta. Through the Rajshahye division, besides the Ganges and the Teesta, run the Mahananda, the Jamoona, the Gorai, the Bhagirutty, the Jellingy, and the Schamutti. In the Presidency division are the Hooghly and an immense number of small rivers, with all the openings on the sea-coast of the delta, among which are the Roy Mungul, the Mirttah, the

Burra Panga, the Passur, the Horingottah, the Beeskhallee, and the Megna. The great rivers of Assam are the Brahmapootra, the Monass, the Noanuddee, the Bornuddee, the Debang, the Debroo, the Desang, and the Difloo. In the Dacca division are the Brahmapootra, the Pudwa, the Soorma (which afterwards becomes the Megna), the Booreegunga, the Lukhya, the Dhullessury, and the Bansee. In the Chittagong division are the Fenny, the Kurnofoolie, the Sungoo, the Bogkhalie, and the Dakatea.

Throughout the Behar districts the broad stream of the Ganges runs almost due west and east, dividing the country into two nearly equal portions, and receiving the tribute of all the rivers which rise in the Himalaya Mountains, as well as of those which convey the drainage of the southern highlands. The outfall of the rivers which take their rise in the Chota Nagpore hills is to the Hooghly river. Of the districts north of the Ganges, and of the whole of the central districts of Bengal Proper, the drainage is from north to south—all the rivers rising from the northern mountains emptying them-

selves into the main stream of the Ganges; while all the streams which branch off from the Ganges are carried down by direct routes of their own to the sea. Of eastern Bengal and Assam the outflow is by the Brahmapootra, the Pudwa, and the Megna, to which all the smaller streams bring their waters from almost every direction. The Chittagong rivers, and those of Orissa, have no connection with the drainage system described above. They are all isolated rivers, and empty themselves directly into the sea. In almost all parts of the country, and especially in eastern Bengal, the rivers and creeks are the highroads of commerce throughout the best part of the year; and at the rainy season, when the whole of eastern Bengal is inundated, the eye wanders over a vast expanse of waters, broken only here and there by artificially-raised village sites, which stand out against the horizon like so many islands.

It should be here mentioned that the rivers of Bengal generally, and particularly those of the eastern districts, are subject to constant changes, which renders it difficult to trace them

correctly, and produces a perplexing confusion of names. The soil is so light, and the waters in descending from the mountains acquire such force, that the rivers not only change their places by wearing out different portions of their banks, but are often altogether swept away from one place to reappear in another—several small channels sometimes combining to form one wide channel, or one wide channel splitting up into a number of small ones, each of which, of course, goes by a different name. This has been the source of great trouble to geographers, but the difficulty has only to be mentioned to be understood.

There are, also, numerous beels, jheels, and marshes all over Bengal, especially in the districts of the Rajshahye division and in Assam; but very few of these can properly be called lakes, a designation which carries with it an idea of beauty and poetry which they do not possess. There is one lake, called Brahmakoond, in Luckimpore; two lakes in Monghyr; and a few in Champarun and Sarun, being the former bed of an extensive river which seems to have flowed at some remote period through

those districts. There are, also, the salt-water "lakes" (a misnomer for the most pestilential swamps we know of) in 24 Pergunnahs, near Calcutta; and there is the great Chilka lake in Pooree.

CHAPTER II.

PRODUCTS: CULTIVATED AND NATURAL.

BENGAL has long had the credit of embracing the richest and most populous districts of India —their riches consisting equally of natural productions and the fertility of the soil. In general terms, the agricultural products of Bengal may be said to comprise the three main divisions of (1) culmiferous plants, producing a stock or stem, such as rice, wheat, barley, millet, and *murrooah* (*eleusine corocanus*); (2) leguminous grains, consisting of pulse, bearing the euphonic names of *kulye, khesari, moosur, moog, urbur, multur, chola,* &c.; and (3) oilseeds, such as mustard, sesamum, linseed, castor, &c. Besides these, there are the plants cultivated as vegetables for the table, of which the name is legion;

those used as *masalas* or condiments; those cultivated for their saccharine juice; others for their fibres; others for extracting dyes; and others for being chewed or smoked. Of fruits, the variety is very great and the produce abundant, especially in Lower Bengal. The mineral products are coal, lime, iron, copper, slate, sandstone, laterite blocks, petroleum, and saltpetre. Of these, coal and lime only have been largely developed. Iron is found in several places, but is only produced in moderate quantities. Copper is known, and used to be worked in earlier times, but is not worked at present. Saltpetre is found in Behar; and every nation, European and Asiatic, that has learnt to respect the thunder of the British artillery, well knows what it is worth.

The principal rice-producing districts of Bengal are Backergunge, Mymensing, Dacca, Furreedpore, and Sylhet, in the Dacca division; Dwagipore, Rungpore, and Pubna, in the Rajshahye division; Jessore and 24 Pergunnahs in the Presidency division; Burdwan and Midnapore in the Burdwan division; Shahabad and Champarun in the Patna division; and

Purneah in the Bhangulpore division. The chief wheat-producing districts are Shahabad, Sarun, and Champarun, in the Patna division; Monghyr and Purneah in the Bhangulpore division; Midnapore in the Burdwan division; and Dinajepore in the Rajshahye division. Oilseeds grow most plentifully in Dinajepore and Purneah, and in all the districts of the Chota Nagpore and Cooch Behar divisions; sugar in Champarun, Shahabad, Monghyr, Midnapore, and Jessore; cotton in Manbhoom, Singbhoom, and Julpigoorie; opium in Champarun, Sarun, and Shahabad; tea in the Assam districts, and in Sylhet, Cachar, and Darjeeling; and indigo in Sarun, Champarun, Purneah, Nuddea, and Jessore.

It will be more convenient, perhaps, to notice the staple products of each province separately, with such explanatory details as may seem necessary. We would state here, in passing, that in some places the harvests are three in number, and in all others not less than two; that rice and some other grains are sown almost everywhere at the beginning of the rains, and reaped at the end of them; while wheat, barley,

and the pulses generally, with a few particular kinds of rice, ripen during the winter, and are cut in the spring; and that the vegetation generally, principally in Lower Bengal, is so quick that the rice crop rises as fast as the water of the rains, so that the ear is never immersed—a single stalk sometimes growing nearly three or four inches in one night. The main divisions of the rice crop are two,—*aous*, or the early rice—and *awan*, or the winter rice; but the names vary in different places, being called *bhodoi* and *aghani* in Behar, *beali* and *sarud* in Orissa, and *ahoo* and *sali* in Assam.

Rice everywhere is by far the most important crop even in Behar, and much attention is bestowed there on its cultivation. In husking, two different processes are used, the rice consumed by the higher castes being beaten out from the husk, while that used by the lower classes is cleaned out by boiling. Next to rice, the most important crop is (*gum*) wheat, and after it (*job*) barley. Wheat and barley are often sown intermixed, and reaped together. The barley is not unfrequently eaten in the form of an unboiled pudding, seasoned with

(*goor*) treacle. In some places *murrooah* is reared, and maize and *janera* are grown largely in the districts bordering on the Ganges. The only other important crops of Behar are grain, oats, peas, minor pulses of different kinds—for many of which we have no English names—oilseeds, including *tisi* or linseed, *til* or sesamum, and *rehri* or castor: and condiments, such as onion, *jira* (a carminative seed), *dhaniya* or coriander, and the like. The vegetables cultivated are potatoes, pumpkins, brinjals, gourds, and *seem* or beans. The plants cultivated for making thread are cotton and flax. The plants and trees reared for saccharine juice are the palm and *mohowa* trees, and the sugar-cane. The *mohowa* yields good timber, and produces a fleshy flower, from which spirit is distilled. It is also used as an article of food by the hill tribes. The cultivation of sugar-cane is very extensive, it being used both fresh and for the extraction of sugar. *Kussum* or safflower, betel-leaf, tobacco, and opium, are also cultivated—the last to a considerable extent, under the auspices of a Christian Government, for the demoralisation of a heathen nation. The betel-

leaf grown in Behar is considered to be very superior, and is much liked by the exquisites of Calcutta, Lucknow, and Benares.

In Bengal Proper rice is the chief article of food alike of rich and poor; and is necessarily the principal crop in almost every district—the varieties being multifarious. The most important are *aous*, *awan*, and *roah*; while in tidal districts there is a fourth large crop called *boro*. The coarsest kinds are those which grow in very low lands. These do not keep well long, acquiring a bad flavour by age; while the finer kinds remain in perfection for three or four years. As a rule, rice is always kept in the husk until it is required for use, or to be carried to market. The operation of cleaning it is performed by women, with the aid of a wooden lever, called the *dhenki*, which has a wooden pestle surrounded by an iron hoop for beating out the grain. All the coarser kinds of rice are cleared out by boiling; but, as in Behar, the process is considered impure: and it is not lawful for a Brahman, or a widow of any of the higher castes, to eat rice so cleaned; nor can it be offered to idols, or made any use of in reli-

gious ceremonies. Boiled rice is called *siddo;* unboiled rice, *alo.* The ordinary way of taking rice is after boiling it, the water being thrown away; but there are some dry preparations of it also, named *mooree* and *cheera,* which are much used by the poorer classes,—being sometimes eaten with the addition of a little oil and salt—oftener without either.

Wheat in the Bengal districts is but a small crop, and, unlike rice, which is always a full one, it is scanty. Along with wheat are sown mustard and (*moosur*) lentils. Barley is also cultivated in the same manner as wheat, but the yield is very inconsiderable. The pulses grow better, and are of the kinds known as *moog, kulye, maskulye, muttur, khesari,* and *chola* or grain. They are all thrashed with a stick, as the native has no flail. The oil-producing plants grown are mustard, sesamum, and linseed; and, in some districts, castor also. The oilcake is used as food for cattle, and for manure.

Bengal is particularly rich in vegetables and fruits. The first go by the name of *torkari,* and besides the potato, pumpkin, gourd, and brin-

jal, named among the products of Behar, comprise the sweet potato, *potole* or *pumal, moola, kochoo, mankochoo, woorchay, korola, koomra, kankoor, jingay, dhoontool, kanchkola, taitool* or tamarind, and a variety of greens and succulent roots, for all of which there are no English names. The fruits are mangoes, jacks, plantains, melons, water-melons, cocoa-nuts, guavas, almonds, wood-apples, custard-apples, star-apples, lichees, loquats, palms, areca-nuts, and dates. Of these the mango is decidedly the best; but the cocoa and areca nuts are the most useful. The milk and kernel of the cocoa-nut are used as food; the former, when not very thick or pungent, being both cooling and digestive. The kernel, when it becomes hard, yields an oil in extensive use. The shell makes cups, and hookas for smoking tobacco. The bark is composed of fibres, from which valuable cordage and cable are manufactured. The whole fruit, in fact, is so valuable, that a legend attributes its creation to the sage Visnamitra, who, finding that the gods would create nothing better than man, tried his own hand at the work, desiring to form a being of a superior

kind, who, he intended, should live on trees. The head only was formed, when the gods, getting alarmed, begged the sage to desist—agreeing to which, he converted what he had made into a fruit. The story is childish, but shows how the usefulness of the fruit is appreciated. The areca or betel-nut is almost nearly as useful, being much valued for its narcotic qualities. It produces a sense of exhilaration, accompanied with something like insensibility, and, together with spices, catechu, and lime, is chewed with the betel-leaf, which is pungent and aromatic. Bengal also produces spices and condiments—such as ginger, turmeric, chili, capsicum, onion, garlic, coriander, and aniseed—all of which are indispensable for the curry with which the boiled rice is eaten.

The plants cultivated for producing thread and cordage are jute and flax; the cultivation of cotton is very partial. Sugar-cane is cultivated extensively; and in some districts great pains are taken in manufacturing date-sugar. The sugar-cane, besides yielding sugar, also gives to the Bengali an ardent spirit called rum, which the Shastras very conveniently prohibit

the twice-born (Brahman) from using, leaving the rest at liberty, apparently, to do as they like. The other products of Bengal Proper are tobacco, hemp (*ganga*), betel-leaf, indigo, saf-flower, and mulberry. *Ganga* is chiefly grown in the Rajshahye division. The cultivation of mul-berry for the support of silkworms is not quite so considerable now as it used to be in past times, when the manufacture of silk was every-where encouraged by the Mahomedans; but it is still carried on successfully in several dis-tricts, particularly in Moorshedabad.

Of Darjeeling, in the Cooch Behar division, the products of the highlands in the hills are tea, maize or Indian corn, millet, and pulses; of the lowlands, rice. In the terai the produce consists of rice, tobacco, pulses, mustard, cotton, and tea. The adjoining district of Julpigoorie produces betel-nuts, barley, cotton, maize, rice, pulses, and sugar-cane.

The principal products of the table-land of Chota Nagpore are maize, barley, oil-seeds, lac, *dhoona* or resin, silk, cotton, and tobacco. Sugar-cane is also raised, but in quantities barely sufficient for local consumption. Hemp

and indigo are grown in Manbhoom. As to other articles, it may be generally remarked, both of the districts of the Chota Nagpore division and of the western districts of Bengal, named Bancoorah, Beerbhoom, and Midnapore, including the Jungle Mehals, that the products approximate to those of the districts of Behar.

The main products of Cuttack, in the Orissa division, are paddy, grains of various sorts, castor-seed, mustard, linseed, coriander, turmeric, garlic, tobacco, fibres, and cotton. Pooree produces rice, *murrooah*, tobacco, pulses, and oil-seeds. Balasore has paddy, pulses, tobacco, cotton, sugar-cane, and flax. In all the Orissa districts the rice grown is large and coarse ; and they have little to boast of in the way of garden produce beyond fruits of the commonest kinds, such as mango, jack, wood-apple, date, and guava. But the Utcal-desa (the old name of Orissa) has been famous in all times for its abundant produce of *keora* (*Pandanus odoratissimus*), from which the lower orders distil an intoxicating spirit.

In the north-eastern corner, Assam produces rice of four different descriptions, of which

salidhan, or the transplanted winter rice, forms three-fourths of the crops. Next to rice, the most considerable crop is a kind of mustard called *vibar*; the quantity of sesamum grown is very inconsiderable; castor is grown to some extent in Gonalparah. Wheat, barley, and millet are little used in this province, and are not grown. Of pulses very little was formerly used; but some are now used and reared, the most common being called *matimas*. Black pepper is reared to a great extent, a great deal of it finding its way to countries further east. Long pepper, ginger, turmeric, capsicum, onion, and garlic are also raised. Betel-leaf is grown all over the province, and every Assamese has always got his mouth stuffed with it. Sugar-cane thrives, but most part of it is eaten fresh. Cotton is grown by the hill tribes. The other products are tea, silk, lac, caoutchouc, and opium. The last is reared only for local consumption, and is much used. No less than four different kinds of silkworms are reared, and the different silks produced form the greater part of the clothing of the people. Of the Naga hills rice and tea are the chief products, and also

cotton and sugar. The Khasiah hills produce bees-wax, betel-nuts, cinnamon, caoutchouc, cotton, and stick-lac.

The details above given, in regard to the variety of its products, prove incontestably that the whole of Bengal — barring its jungles, swamps, and waste lands—is exceedingly well cultivated, notwithstanding that the implements of agriculture used are yet of the rudest description. This is corroborated by a reference to the maritime trade returns, which show to what extent the products, after meeting all the requirements of the country itself, are exported for the benefit of other countries. The statistics of the custom-house show that the most important commercial staple of the Presidency now is jute, which is entirely the produce of Bengal Proper, growing, it is believed, in no other part of the world. The value exported yearly is about five millions sterling. The export of cotton is also very great—amounting nearly to four millions; but this article comes by rail to Calcutta from places beyond the limits of Bengal, the quantity produced in which is scarcely sufficient to meet its own

wants. The real *bona fide* exports of Bengal, besides jute, are rice and indigo, each of which is exported to the value of about two and a half millions sterling; and also tea, sugar, saltpetre, tobacco, and raw silks. Of manufactures Bengal has none to send out. The eastern portion of the country—namely, that long known by the name of Bangga—was famous from the most ancient times for its fine cotton cloths, which, some nineteen hundred years ago, used to find their way to Rome, where they were highly prized as "karpas," the Bengali name for cotton. But the looms there have long ceased to work. The silk manufactures of Bengal were prized by the Mahomedan princesses of Delhi and Agra: the silk is yet produced, but the manufactories are now few in number. Absolutely, Bengal sends out nothing now but raw materials; her only manufactured exports consist of gunny-bags!

The mineral productions of Bengal are easily named, being everywhere very few in number. The rocks of Behar consist mainly of quartz, jasper, and hornstone; but in some places the stones are schistose or slaty—especially in

Bhangulpore and Shahabad. The minerals are mica, nodular limestones, glauber-salt, and saltpetre. In some places iron-ore is found in small masses lying loose at the bottom of the hills; and in the plains soda effloresces on the surface of the earth in the neighbourhood of Nowada, Sahebgunge, Daoodnugger, and Jehanabad. Potters' clay is also found in several places—especially at Colgong—which makes strong, rough, unglazed vessels. There are also mines of alum and saline wells; and in Bhangulpore are hot springs, of which those at Sitakoond, near Monghyr, are well known.

The following story about the hot springs is related by the inhabitants in their neighbourhood with great unction and earnestness. Sita, the wife of Rama, having been carried off by Ravana, king of Lanca or Mahalanca (by some identified with Ceylon, by others with Malacca), Rama besieged Lanca, and succeeding in defeating and slaying the ravisher and in recovering his wife. But Ravana was a Brahman, and the law required that the crime of Brahman murder should be expiated. The sages advised Rama to apply to the gods for purification, and

he started in search of them, carrying his wife and brothers with him. The gods were met with at the site of the hot springs, and the offerings made to them by Rama and his brothers were accepted; but those made by Sita were rejected, because they suspected that she had lost her virtue with Ravana. To allay a similar suspicion on the part of her husband, Sita had already undergone a fiery ordeal; but the gods now demanded another, and the heroic lady at once threw herself into a pit of fire, from which she came forth unscathed, a spring of hot water coming out, as it does now, in her wake. The evidence is so clear and conclusive, that there can possibly be no demur on the part of our readers to accept the story. The other springs in the neighbourhood are named after Rama and his brothers.

Bengal Proper, generally, is not a very interesting province for a mineralogist; but the Burdwan district forms a signal exception, almost all the coal procurable in Bengal being from the mines at Raneegunge. The total number of coal-mines at work there is about fifty, the outturn of coal amounting to about

two million tons. A little iron is also found in Burdwan and Midnapore—in the hills to the west of that district; more of it is found in Darjeeling, where there are also mines of copper. In minute quantities gold has also been found in the river-sands in Midnapore; and in Cachar there is a tradition that the Sonai, which falls into the Barak between Silchar and Luckimpore, used to wash down gold-dust from the hills, though none has been found within the memory of any man now living. The other minerals of Bengal are: lime-quarries in Sylhet and Darjeeling; ghooting lime in the districts of the Burdwan division; and petroleum springs in Sylhet.

The mineral products of the Chota Nagpore division are coal in Manbhoom, iron in Hazareebagh, and copper in Singbhoom. Gold is found in small quantities in the deposits broken up by the action of the Sank, Karoo, and other small rivers; but the outturn of the washings does not repay the cost of labour. In Orissa, limestone is found in Cuttack; while the low laterite hills of Pooree furnish good building-stones. Assam has plenty of lime and coal in

the Khasiah and Jynteah hills; iron is also to be found in Kamroop, and petroleum in Luckimpore.

Among the natural productions of Bengal may be enumerated the animals and birds which abound in the several provinces, but any notice of them here must be simply episodical and very brief. In Behar, among the bare rocky hills, is to be found the black bear, which climbs trees with the greatest facility, drinks palm-wine, and eats mangoes and sugar-cane—of course, in every case, destroying more than it consumes. The badger, the ichneumon, the mouse-cat, and the otter, also commit much injury in the same way, and are to be found everywhere. The tiger is seldom seen, but exists in the wilds of Nowada. Hares and deer of different kinds are numerous, and also the lively striped squirrel. Wild hogs are occasionally seen, and monkeys — being about equally mischievous in the devastation of crops. Wild elephants, which are still more dreaded, are only found in the neighbourhood of the Rajmehal hills. Of birds of prey there are several kinds, but they do little harm. A great

variety of excellent waterfowl abounds in the reservoirs and pools of Behar, but they are very little sought after. The most destructive birds to the crops are the several species of cranes which abound in the cold season.

In the Chota Nagpore division the wild animals are nearly the same as those in Behar. The bear is more frequent, and leopards and hyenas abound. There are also several species of deer, and honey-bees are numerous. In Orissa are fine buffaloes, and these are in many places domesticated for their milk. In the hill-tracts are to be found leopards, bears, deer, and hogs, and also the wild ox denominated *gyal*, a ferocious beast of immense size.

Bengal is the home of the royal tiger, which lives in the Soonderbuns and in the Darjeeling terai. In the eastern districts, including Assam, the wild elephant and the rhinoceros are known—both quite resistless to a people unaccustomed to the use of firearms; but fortunately these animals, for the most part, prefer to live in very sequestered places, far from the haunts of men. The wild hog, the monkey—both of the short and the tall species

—and the wild buffalo, are also common; and the jackal abounds all over Bengal, being more numerous and noisy in it than in any other part of the world. According to native notions, the jackal howls at the end of every watch of the night. This wretched animal is said to be the second cousin of the tiger; but how the relationship is established is not explained. At night, a native of the poorer classes hearing the tiger's growl will only speak of the animal by the name of *siyal* (jackal), being afraid that if mentioned by his own name the tiger will find him out and devour him. The jackal is supposed to follow in the wake of the tiger; he is also accused of thieving, and of carrying off clothes, money, and several other things which can be of no use to him. The zoology of Bengal includes, further, the hare, porcupine, ichneumon, otter, and several species of antelope. The domestic animals throughout the Presidency are: horses, or rather ponies, of indigenous breed, used for the purposes of locomotion; asses, employed as beasts of burden, especially by washermen; buffaloes and bullocks, utilised as draught-cattle,—elephants being also used

by rich people for carrying heavy baggage; and cows and buffaloes, kept for milk and butter. There is no country in the world where the cattle of the cow kind are of more value; but farming is little understood, and the sale of cows is considered to be very shameful by men of rank and caste. Goat and sheep count prominently among the domestic animals reared by the lower classes, but the higher classes generally have nothing to do with them: the shepherds weave blankets from the wool. By the very lowest castes swine also are reared.

The birds of Bengal Proper comprise an immense variety of vultures, kites, and hawks. The peacocks are beautiful to look at, but are a great nuisance, and do considerable damage to crops—the Italian proverb about the bird being quite correct, that "it has the plumage of an angel, the voice of the devil, and the stomach of a thief." There are also cranes, paroquets, partridges, quails, and snipes, and swarms of waterfowl. The domestic birds are pigeons of different kinds, which are much petted, being sacred as birds of good luck; also sparrows and crows.

We now come to fishes, inquiry regarding which is now being made by the Government. In the Behar districts, porpoises are numerous in the Ganges, but no one pursues them either for meat or oil. Tortoises also abound, but are scarcely saleable, as none of the castes living near the river will eat them. Crocodiles are common; but fish during the greater part of the year is scarce, and mostly of very poor quality—and this remark is equally applicable to the districts of the Chota Nagpore division. The fish of the Soane river is of the best flavour, but very difficult to catch. In the rainy season the violence of the current is too great for the fisherman to breast it, and in the dry season the stream is so shallow and clear that the imperfect methods of capture used by him are quite inadequate. Most of the other rivers are mere torrents, and the supply they furnish is trifling. There are fisheries, however, in the pools and reaches of the rivers in the interior, and in reservoirs and beels; but the trade is not a thriving one, and very few fishermen live the whole year by their profession.

In Bengal Proper, fish forms by far the

greater part of the animal food consumed in the country. The demand is very considerable, and the supply barely equal to it, except in the neighbourhood of the larger rivers, where it is abundant. Fish is also abundant in Assam. In both provinces the whole of the fish caught is consumed in the country. No methods of curing are known besides salting, and salted fish is not eaten by all castes in Bengal. The varieties of fish are too many to be named; but there is nothing like an extensive fishery of any kind, except for the capture of the *hilsa* in the great rivers. The principal fresh-water fishes of Bengal Proper are the *rome*, the *hilsa*, and the mango fish; the last being the most agreeable. In inland pools and reservoirs are found the *bheckty* or cockup (commonly called the salmon of the East), and a lot of other small fishes not wanting in flavour. Crabs also are plentiful, but are considered impure by several classes. In Moorshedabad, pearl-shells of a trifling value are found in a beel named Bhandardah, which is the only pearl-fishery in Bengal, and the pearls taken out are sold in the bazaars. The Soonderbun creeks, as well as

many other rivers elsewhere, which teem with fish, also swarm with sharks and alligators; and serpents in Bengal are more numerous and dangerous than, perhaps, in any other part of the world.

In Orissa, the sea all along the coast yields abundance of fine fish, including the mango fish, the sable fish, the mullet, and the whiting; and also turtles, oysters, crabs, and prawns; and very good *bheckty* is found in the Chilka lake. The great season for fishing on the sea-coast is in the winter months, when the winds and surf are both moderate. The nets are set up in the form of triangles, and the quantity of fish obtained at each haul is prodigious.

CHAPTER III.

TRADITIONS OF THE HINDU PERIOD.

In most of the old Hindu accounts the province of Bengal is described as consisting of five distinct divisions, named respectively, Angga, Bangga, Mithila, Magadha, and Gour.* Mithila corresponds with modern Tirhoot, and included all the country north of the Ganges which lies between the mouth of the Gogra and the Koosi river, and adjoined to the dominions of the Goorkha, possibly extending over a portion of what is now comprised therein. Angga adjoined to Thibet, and apparently included both Sikkim and Bootan, and all the Bengal districts

* This division does not agree with another equally well known, according to which the several parts of Bengal are named Angga, Bangga, Calinga, Pandra, and Utcala. But we cannot stop to reconcile these discrepancies at the outset.

lying between the Koosi and the Brahmapootra. All the country south of the Ganges, from Mithila to the Vindya mountains, was Magadha. Gour comprehended the well-known city of that name, and all the country south of Angga to the sea. Beyond these four divisions, on the east of the Brahmapootra and the Pudwa, was the country called Bangga, from which Bengal derives its name, and which seems to have included the districts of Gonalparah and Kamroop, though not the rest of Assam. Some authorities make Gonalparah and Kamroop a part of Angga, but apparently by mistake.

Bengal has no historical records of the olden times, any more than any other part of India. The war celebrated in the Mahabharut is the one great standpoint from which we start; and, after all, that has only a poem for its basis, of great merit certainly, but of very doubtful historic authority. The traditions which follow give us the names of a great many princes, and possibly, in some cases, the history of their amours and their crimes; but there is nothing in them which the historic student would care to remember, and they scarcely throw any light on the

real character of the ages to which they refer. We must, however, make the most of them we can, as we have absolutely no better materials to work upon.

The country named Mithila was founded by a king of that name, who was the grandson of Ikshwaku; but the name of Javaka, the son of Mithila, eclipsed that of the founder, and became the patronymic of this branch of the solar race. This celebrity Javaka acquired as the father of Sita, the wife of Rama, the most favourite heroine of Hindu story. After the battle of Kuru-kshetra, Bhrem, the second of the Pandavas, is said to have become sovereign of both Mithila and Nepal; but the tales regarding the Pandavas are contradictory, and another account says that all the Pandavas except the eldest, Yudisthera, perished in the snow. The tradition current in Mithila itself, and still more so in Nepal, is that Bhrem, in proceeding towards the snowy mountains, was benumbed with cold, upon which a pious Jogi, named Gorucknath, sheltered and saved him, and afterwards helped him to the sovereignty of the hills. But Bhrem left no heirs, and after

his death the kingdom split up into petty principalities. At a subsequent date the Pal rajahs of Delhi possessed the whole of Mithila, but no records of their rule are now extant. Still later the country appears to have been ruled over by a king named Hari Singha, a Rajpoot, in whose time the Brahmans in it were classified into four ranks, named Suti, Majrote, Jogya, and Grihastha, the distinctions being founded on merit and profession, though they have now become hereditary. After this Mithila was annexed to Gnu, in the twelfth century of the Christian era, under the dynasty of Adisoor. In Mithila the names of Adisoor and his successors are little known—probably because the country remained immediately subject to petty chiefs or local governors originally appointed by the dynasty which preceded that of Adisoor.

Angga, or Anggadesa, was founded by Angga, a son of Budha, the son of Soma and grandson of Atri. This country, therefore, belonged to the lunar race. Lompada, a prince of Anggadesa, is mentioned in the Ramayana; and the Mahabbarut alludes to Prithu Sen, of Angga, as one

of the actors and survivors of the battle of Kuru-kshetra. Of its subsequent sovereigns the traditions are few and unaccordant. Virbat Rajah of the Mahabbarut, Bali Rajah, a *daitya*, and his son Bari Rajah, appear all, at some time or other, to have ruled over the lower portion of it, which in time came to be annexed to the kingdom of Gour, in common with the other kingdoms which were absorbed by it. This portion would comprise the districts of Purneah, Dinajepore, and Rungpore. With Dinajepore are connected some tales of Rama and his wife, the latter having retired to this district on being discarded by her husband. Here she dwelt with the sage Valmiki, the author of the Ramayana, and was delivered of her son Nobb, the saint giving her a second, named Kush, when the first, who had hid himself, was not forthcoming. Dinajepore is also famous as the country over which ruled Bali, the *daitya* aforesaid, who, having opposed the worship of the gods, was by them sent to hell. This Bali was the father of Rajah Ban, or Banasur, who worshipped Siva and introduced the Charak festival. As a worshipper of Siva, Ban was opposed to Krishna, whose

grandson, Oniroddha, wooed his daughter Oosha. The angry father having captured the lover, placed him in confinement; whereupon Krishna waged a war, the result of which was that Oniroddha was released and married to his sweetheart. Dinajepore is again famous as the country of Virbat Rajah, who assisted the Pandavas in the great fight. The mother of Virbat, says the fable, was impregnated by a fish, on which account the country he ruled over was called Matsyadesa, or the country of the fish king. Rungpore is the place where Virbat Rajah kept his horses, from which circumstance it derives its name of Ghoraghat, or the place for horses.

The whole of modern Behar, *minus* the districts north of the Ganges, with nearly the whole of the Chota Nagpore division, were included in the ancient kingdom of Magadha. This extensive dominion belonged to Jarasandha, of the lunar race, who is represented as an *asoor* or *daitya*, descended from the *asoors* who warred with the gods. He was so vast in size that when he stood on two hills, with a foot on each, he could from Magadha descry

the wives of Krishna bathing naked on the sea-coast of Guzerat. Nor were the ladies simply overlooked; they were also insulted and pelted at; which forced Krishna to send Bhrem, the Ajax of the Pandavas, to fight with Jarasandha, who was vanquished and killed. One account makes Jarasandha the founder of the Magadha throne, while another asserts that his ancestors reigned on it from the time of Vrihadratha, after whom the dynasty was named. The real cause of the enmity between Krishna and Jarasandha was that the former had dethroned and killed the son-in-law of the latter—namely Kangsa, king of Mathura. Krishna was at first obliged to fly before the avenging army of old Sandha, and it was only by afterwards making common cause with the Pandavas that he was able to get the better of him. Jarasandha was succeeded by his son Sabadeva, the direct line terminating in twenty-three descents, with Ripunjaya, who was murdered. It is said of this last-named prince that he assumed the title of *Vivasphurji*, the thunder of the world, and that he exterminated the barons from his empire, on their becoming very troublesome, and

filled their places with people of the lowest classes. He also drove away the Brahmans, and raised to the priesthood men of the lowest castes, such as boatmen and fishermen. He is on all hands admitted to have been a great and powerful ruler; but the changes effected by him were not liked, and he had to pay the usual penalty for such dislike in the East.

The traditions above noticed do not account for the name of Magadha, which does not appear to have been derived either from Vrihadratha, Jarasandha, or any of their successors, or from Krishna or Bhrem. The original name of the country was Cicata. It was called Mogadha after the Mogas, or Sakadorissa Brahmans (the same as the Magi of Persia), who were persuaded by Krishna to settle in it. By Sakadorissa is understood Scythia, Jambudorissa being the classical name of India. The first Sakadorissa Brahman was brought to Jambudorissa accidentally on the back of Vishnu's eagle (Garura), and ever after a great *penchant* for these Brahmans was the foible of all Hindu kings. The Ramayana says that Dasaratha, the father of Rama, invited the Sakadorissa Brah-

mans to a great feast where many Munis and persons of the sacred order were assembled, and then sent them home—that is, back to Scythia —loaded with presents. Krishna invited them on one of his sons, Samba, being afflicted with leprosy,—it being foretold that he could only be cured by drinking the water in which the Sakadorissa Brahmans had washed their feet. The cure was effected, and the holy men were persuaded to stay; and to the present day it is not unusual to see Hindu sinners, and those afflicted with stubborn disorders, drinking the water in which devout Brahmans have dipped their toes. Another account says that Samba himself brought over the Mogas to officiate as priests of the sun,—there being no fit priests in his day in Jambudorissa. The descendants of the Sakadorissa Brahmans now in Behar include several men of learning, and their customs entirely resemble those related of the pure learned Brahmans who, in later times, were brought by Adisoor from Kanong.

Approximately the Vrihadrathas, or the family of Jarasandha, reigned in Mogadha from B.C. 1370 to B.C. 700, or a little short of seven hun-

dred years. They were followed first by the family of Pradyota (the son of Sunaka, the murderer of Ripunjaya), which reigned for about three hundred years, and then by that of Nanda, or Mahananda, who ascended the throne in B.C. 355, and was contemporaneous with Alexander the Great, who respected him. The reign of Nanda was cut short by his minister Sacatara, the paramour of his second wife Mura ; but the succession was secured by the nine sons of the murdered king, who were all named Nanda, and who fixed their seat of government at Padwavate, since called Patna. Eventually all these brother-princes were overthrown by Chundragupta, the bastard son of Mura and Sacatara, who ascended the throne in B.C. 315, the name of his capital being at the same time altered to Palibothra, or Patahputra, which seems to be identical with Padwavate or Patna. Chundragupta is admitted on all hands to have been one of the greatest sovereigns that ever ruled in India. It was in his reign that Seleucus Nicator attempted an invasion of the country, but gave up the idea subsequently, concluding an alliance with the king of Mo-

gadha, to whom he gave one of his daughters in marriage, while he sent Megapenthes as an ambassador to his court. The third in succession to Chundragupta was Asoca, who is held in great repute by the Buddhas of all countries as having been one of the most zealous promoters of their religion.

About two hundred years after Christ, the Gangetic provinces were governed by the Andhras, several of whom resided chiefly in the Bhangulpore district, though considerable monuments of their power are to be traced among the ruins of Baragoon in the vicinity of Behar. This dynasty was very powerful, and reigned for about eight hundred years. It was divided into three distinct branches of (1) the pure and genuine Andhras; (2) the Andhra Laticas, a spurious branch of the family; and (3) the Andhra Bhrityas, or servants of the Andhras, who divided the kingdom among themselves on the extinction of the royal line. The first branch was terminated in A.D. 436, and the second in A.D. 648; upon which the third, better known as the Pal dynasty, stepped in. The usual residence of the last branch of the Andhra

race was beyond the limits of Bengal, though several inscriptions acknowledging their power have been found in different parts of the Presidency. The latest Hindu prince of any consequence in Behar was one named Indradyamna, who, unable to contend with the Mahomedans, fled to Orissa; but this was not the Indradyamna who founded the worship of Juggernath. From this period till the English obtained the government of Magadha, the greater part of the province was in a constant state of anarchy. Indeed, some of the aboriginal tribes seem never to have been completely reduced even in the time of the Hindu rajahs; and it is certain that the Mahomedans never obtained in Behar any but a precarious and irregular obedience.

The kings of Magadha, from Jarasandha down to the end of the Andhra dynasty, were, according to some accounts, the lords paramount of all India; but of this there is no clear proof. It is only certain that they were lords paramount over the eastern portion of India—that is, over all Bengal; and this explains why several of the Andhra kings, and

among them, notably, the king named Karna Dabarya, are also named as kings of Angga.

We would here notice, as very remarkable, that, of the dynasties we have named, the first only (namely, that of Jarasandha) was of the Kshatriya caste; the second (that of Pradyota), and the third (that of Nanda) being Sudra; the fourth (that of Chundragupta) being Barnasankar, or casteless; and the fifth and subsequent ones all Sudras again. The common notion that the Sudras and Barnasankars are born only to serve, was therefore, apparently, even in the ages we are speaking of, not always honoured in the observance. The fact is, the book-theory of the Shastras was never anywhere current in practice; and besides that, Magadha was for ages the seat of the Buddhas, whereas caste is an institution of the Brahmans. Prakreta or Magadhi was the language of Magadha, and is still the language of the sacred literature of the Buddhas and the Jains.

Among the traditions connected with Magadha may be mentioned those relating to the districts of Bhangulpore and Monghyr. The

former derives its name from Bhogadatta, King of Kamroop, who encamped in it when on his way to the assistance of Durgodhun, whose side he took in the battle of Kuru-kshetra. Some accounts mention that Jarasandha gave this district (then called Mahiri) to Karna, the son of Kunti and half-brother of the Pandavas, and that it remained for many generations in the possession of his descendants. Possibly the Andhra kings, who were also called Karnas, were descendants of *the* Karna of the Mahabharut; but of this there is no proof. The supposition is also open to this objection, that the Pandavas were Kshatriyas, to which race their half-brother must also have belonged, while the Andhra rajahs were Sudras.

Monghyr or Mudgulgurh derives its name from Mudgul, one of the five sons of Niseramitra, who was contemporaneous with Jarasandha, and is said to have held this part of the country independent of his authority, probably as a free gift, like that of Bhangulpore to Karna. No further accounts of Mudgul are, however, available; and in other accounts we read that Monghyr was the seat of Jarasandha's

strongest fort or jail; so that, after all, Mudgul perhaps only held the office of jailor under the old *daitya* king.

Gour appears on the historical board just after Magadha disappears from it. Of its earlier history we have no account; but the city of Gour is supposed to have been the most ancient in all Bengal, and one of the most magnificent in all India. Tradition speaks of a Buddha Sing, who was king of Gour and also of Benares. Another great king of Gour was named Bhoopal, whose sons, Sthiropal and Basantopal, erected sumptuous monuments in Benares, of which the ruins are still shown; and there are vague surmises of the Pal rajahs of Gour having at some time or other conquered all the Gangetic provinces up to Benares. If the Pal rajahs of Gour and the Andhra Bhrityas of Magadha were identical, as appears to be not unlikely, it would not be altogether wrong to infer that Gour was, at least from A.D. 200, a dependency of the Magadha empire. This certainly was its position after the extinction of the Pal dynasty, when Gour seems to have paid tribute to Magadha. But Gour was

also the only part of Magadha that survived its extinction; and under the Adisoor dynasty it certainly became the largest and most powerful of the divisions of Bengal.

The reign of Adisoor corresponds with the tenth century of the Christian era; but precise dates, as in the case of the Magadha kings, are not available. The capital of Adisoor was Soobornopam (commonly called Sovargong) or the city of gold, which stood some thirteen miles to the south-west of the present site of Dacca. Gour was also one of his chief seats, and of great importance from its position near the western boundary of his dominions, and as having been the capital of his predecessors; and to it one of his successors, Luckmun Sen, seems to have again removed the seat of government. A third city, also on the west, but nearer to the sea, was Satgong or Saptagram, which means seven villages, of which, doubtless, the city was originally composed. This place was near Hooghly. The site sill exists; it is a pretty village now, but was famous in ancient times as the great port of Bengal. All these circumstances indicate that Adisoor was

a king of great power; but he has, nevertheless, been principally remembered only for having imported fine pure Brahmans from Kanyar, Kubja, or Kanonj, when he found the stock in Bengal to have deteriorated.

The names of the immediate successors of Adisoor are not known. One of them, probably the third or fourth, was Bejay Sen, whose wife had a son named Bullal Sen, who was said to have been begotten by a Brahman, or, as the legend has it, by the river Brahmapootra in the form of a Brahman. It was this Bullal Sen who regulated the different castes of Bengal, including the descendants of the Brahmans whom Adisoor had brought over from Kanonj, who seem to have multiplied immensely within the hiatus of three or four reigns of which no information has come down to us. Bullal was succeeded by Luchmun Sen, who appears to have reigned with great vigour, and to have annexed Mithila, the lower part of Angga, and a great part of Bangga, to his dominions. At the end of his reign the kingdom of Gour is said to have consisted of five parts, named (1) Barendro, (2) Bangga, (3) Bajree, (4) Rarh,

and (5) Mithila. The names Mithila and Bangga will be remembered as those of two of the old divisions to which we have referred—though Bangga, as a part of Gour, did not include the Assam districts of Gonalparah and Kamroop. Barendro appears as a new name for Angga, *minus* Sikkim and Bootan. Bajree was that portion of Gour proper which was bounded on the west by the Bhagirutty river, on the north and east by the Pudwa, and on the south by the sea. Rarh formed the remaining portion of Gour, and extended from the Bhagirutty to the borders of Magadha. At this time, therefore, the family of the Sens ruled not only over Gour proper, but over the whole of Bengal, with the exception of Magadha and such outlying extremities as Assam and Chittagong. But this greatness was exceedingly short-lived. Luchmun Sen was succeeded by Mudoo Sen, he by Kessub Sen, he by Su Sen, he by another Luchmun Sen, with whom the dynasty terminated, the empire passing into the hands of the Mahomedans.

Gour included Rajmahal, which was a place of note in great antiquity — Balarama, the

brother of Krishna, having, after his wars with Banasur, here built his *rajagriha*, which is distinct from the *rajagriha* of Jarasandha in Patna. The place was thence called Rajmahal; but there are no further traditions about it, or of the hero referred to in connection with it. In after-times, Rajah Mann Sing, governor of Bengal, selected the site for his residence, but fearing the intolerance of the emperor, called the new town which he constructed Akbarnugger, after his sovereign liege lord, till time restored to the ruins their old Hindu name.

Of Bangga, the historical and traditional reminiscences are few. Of the lower portion—namely, that forming the Dacca division of the present day—there are no accounts distinct from those of Gour, with which it was incorporated in the days of Adisoor and his descendants. The upper portion comprised the districts of Gonalparah and Kamroop, which were never conquered by the Sens. The old accounts represent this territory, which was then known by the name of Kamikheya, as divided into four *piths* or portions, named respectively *Karma Pith, Ratna Ptth, Moni Pith,* and *Joni*

Pith. Further explanation in regard to them is not necessary beyond this, that the Hindus to this day consider the country the principal seat of amorous pleasures, where Siva had spent his honeymoon with Parvati. It was given by Krishna to Naraka, whose son Bhagadatta has been already mentioned as one of the heroes on the losing side in the battle of Kuru-kshetra. Bhagadatta fell by the hand of Arjuna, the Achilles of the Pandavas, but twenty-three princes of the family continued to govern Kamroop in succession after his death. About the end of the first century after Christ, a Sudra dynasty came into power, the first rajah bearing the name of Deviswara, and being of the Kybasta caste. He won great renown by introducing the worship of Kameswari, the goddess of sexual love! One of his successors was named Prithu, and is said to have been a very holy personage. In his reign there was an irruption of kichoks, or gypsies, of whose impurity he was so afraid that he threw himself into a tank and was drowned.

In the western parts of Kamikheya—*i.e.*, in Gonalparah—a branch of the Pal family is said

to have reigned at the time when that family was dominant all over India. The first of the dynasty in Gonalparah was Dharma Pal. He was succeeded by his nephew Gopi Chandra, who for some time gave himself up entirely to pleasures, to enjoy which fully he married a hundred wives. He was, however, soon satiated, and dedicating the remainder of his life to religion, abdicated in favour of his son, the celebrated Hobo Chandra, who had Gobo Chandra for his minister—stories regarding the stupidity of which twain are rife all over Bengal. The family of the Pals was succeeded by that of the Khyens, who adopted Hindu names and the title of Komoteswar; but the power of the dynasty was of brief duration, as both Gonalparah and Kamroop passed under the Mahomedan yoke from the hands of the third rajah, named Nilambar, who, having suspected his wife of infidelity, and detecting her lover in a young Brahman, the son of his prime minister, had him killed and dressed up for his father's table. To revenge this, the minister invited over the Mahomedans, who took the country at about the middle of the eighteenth century after Christ.

The eastern districts of Assam were from very ancient times held by a race of hill-men known by the name of Chutras, who were reduced by the Shans in A.D. 777. The first Shan king was Sambongfa; but a regular kingdom was not formed till the reign of Chutoofa, who in 1228 first assumed for himself and his people the name of Abom, or the peerless, which has been since corrupted into Assam. In 1554, the then king of the country, Chatomba, adopted the Hindu religion, and with it the name of Jaydhay Sing, and this precedent was followed by all his successors. The subsequent history of the country is a history of constant internal feuds and dissensions, notwithstanding which the Aboms were always sufficiently powerful to be able to repel the Mahomedan invasions of their country from time to time. The Abom districts of Assam never became Mahomedan. They maintained their independence till 1810, when, the internal quarrels having reached their culminating point, one of the parties invited the Burmese to their aid. The result was, that the Burmese took possession of the country on their own account, and kept it till they came into

collision with the English, when, at the end of the Burmese war that followed, Assam became a province of the British empire.

The division that we have recognised at the outset does not include Orissa as a part of Bengal, probably because at the time when it was laid down Orissa formed a part of Central India; but we have referred to another division in a footnote which distinctly names Utcala-desu as belonging to Bengal, and Orissa is too important a portion of it now to be ignored. Its pretensions to antiquity are very great, as it has for ages been regarded as the holy land of the Hindus, to which year after year thousands of pilgrims flock from all parts of India. The Mahabharut alludes to it as a kingdom of power, which sent assistance to Durgodhun in the great war. The traditions of the country count four ancient dynasties of rulers, named respectively *Narapatis, Asnapatis, Chatrapatis,* and *Gajapatis;* but of three of these no details are known. Among the older kings is named one Kramaditya, a son of Vikramaditya, King of Avanti (Oujein); and shortly after his reign, an invasion of Javanas is mentioned, and the

flight of Juggernath, which probably refers to the wars between the followers of Brahma and Buddha, as no records exist of any outside invasion at this time. In the wars of Prithu Raj, King of Delhi, a king of Udyadesa, named Bhoja, is said to have taken part; and it does appear, from diverse accounts, that just before the advent of the Mahomedans, and for some time after it, the Ooryah rajahs were unusually powerful. Of the *Gajapati* line there were apparently different branches, two of which, the *Kesaribangsa* and the *Gungabangsa*, are mentioned by name. The most illustrious prince of the latter race was Anang Bheem Deo, who is reported to have extended his conquests in every direction, and to have consolidated his empire with great ability and vigour. After the decline of the Mogadha empire, the kings of Orissa extended their conquests on the north so as to encroach on the districts of Midnapore and Hooghly; and we know that Orissa retained its independence long after the other provinces of Bengal had succumbed to the Mahomedan power. The last independent king of Orissa was Telinga Mokoond Deo, the northern

limit of whose dominion was Trebany, on the banks of the Hooghly. It was in his reign, in 1568, that Lobinan, King of Bengal, sent his general Kalapabar to conquer Orissa. Kalapabar was by birth a Brahman, but was enticed away from his faith by the endearments of a Mahomedan princess, whom he had inflamed with a violent passion for him. He eventually married her; and then, taking service under the Afghan king, proceeded to Orissa, to wage a war of extermination against idols. The whole of Orissa was overrun by him, and the idols destroyed, Juggernath himself being only rescued after having been set on fire. The race of the *Gajapatis* was now dethroned, and has since dwindled down to a petty zemindar, the Rajah of Khoordah.

CHAPTER IV.

REMINISCENCES OF THE MAHOMEDAN ERA.

THE Mahomedan conquest of Bengal dates from the time of Buktyar Khiliji, a soldier of fortune, who was so ill-favoured that he had the greatest difficulty in getting into service. He was at last, in A.D. 1199, appointed by the Emperor Kootuboodeen to the command of an army collected for the conquest of Behar. In this undertaking he was successful, upon which he was appointed governor of Behar in 1202, with orders to extend his conquest over all the neighbouring territories. The dynasty of Ballal Sen still occupied the throne of Gour; but the proximity of the Mahomedans not being very agreeable, the seat of government was removed to Nuddea. Here the rajah, named Luchmun

II., or Luchmuneya, was attacked by the intrepid Khiliji, but succeeded in eluding him and in escaping to Juggernath, leaving his kingdom at the mercy of the conqueror.

Bengal was entirely subdued by Buktyar in the course of a year, and the seat of government removed back to Gour. The distance of Gour from Delhi emboldened the conqueror to declare himself independent, and he ordered the *koothba* to be read in his own name, and the lands of the Hindus to be distributed among his own Khiliji chiefs, which gives a clear insight into the character of the Mahomedan rule from its very commencement. In 1204, Buktyar proceeded to conquer Assam, but was there defeated and killed. Fifteen viceroys ruled after him in Bengal up to 1343, of whom four, besides Buktyar, expressly disowned the emperor's authority—namely, Aby Merdan, Ghyasoodeen, Muliti Oozbeg, and Togril. This should be remembered as an important feature of the Mahomedan rule in Bengal—namely, the constant revolt of those in power. When Toghan Khan was governor, a rival started up in the person of Timar Khan, who had been sent by

the emperor to assist the governor against the Hindus; and the two Mahomedans fought out their differences, much to the amusement of their Hindu subjects, till one of them (Toghan Khan) was slain. Here, again, is an additional feature of the anarchy and confusion that were frequent. Of all the governors of the first period of dependence, Ghyasoodeen was the only one who ruled well. He is said to have made no distinction between the Hindus and the Mahomedans, and to have been a great benefactor to the country. He was also very powerful, for he made the rajahs of Assam, Tirhoot, and Tipperah pay tribute. The last governor of the first period was Bukarra Khan, otherwise called Nazirodeen, whose son Keikobod was Emperor of Delhi.

In 1293, Keikobod was murdered, and a new dynasty ascended the imperial throne; and six years after, in 1299, a separate capital for the south-eastern districts of Bengal was selected in Sonargong, the old city of Adisoor. The court of Delhi, by thus dividing Bengal into two parts, hoped to render it more subservient to the imperial government than it had hitherto

been; but this expectation was not realised. Up to 1340, Bengal continued under two governors, one located at Gour, and the other at Sonargong—the latter being almost always in revolt. In 1343, one Fakiroodeen usurped the government of Sonargong, and gaining over the troops to his side, declared himself independent sovereign of all Bengal. But he was not successful in mastering the whole country; nor did he enjoy his power long, being, shortly after his declaration of independence, taken prisoner before Gour and put to death. He was succeeded by Mobarik Ally, and he by Shumsoodeen, by whom he was assassinated. The assassin proved to be a vigorous ruler, and became really the first independent king of Bengal. The era of the first line of Mahomedan viceroys extended from 1203 to 1343, or over a hundred and forty years. The independent kings after them ruled from 1343 to 1538, or for nearly two hundred years—Bengal being reconquered by Shere Shah in the last-mentioned year. Its final subjugation by the Moguls was, however, not effected till 1576, or some thirty-eight years after, in the time of the Emperor Akbar, when Daood—

the last of the independent kings—was defeated and slain.

The number of independent kings was twenty. They were mostly of the Afghan race, but of different dynasties—the family or tribal changes being frequent. One of the number was a Hindu, whose son and grandson, who succeeded him, became Mahomedans. The dominion of the kings comprehended North Behar at intervals, but not at all times. Sonargong was ordinarily its limit on the south-east, but Tipperah paid tribute; and on the east and north-east, Sylhet and Assam were occasionally plundered. A formal acknowledgment of the independence of Bengal was made by the Court of Delhi in 1357; but the attempts to bring it back under allegiance were nevertheless constant, though unsuccessful—and this was the principal cause of that serious maladministration from which the kingdom suffered so excessively and so long. Almost throughout the entire era of the independent kings, the administration was one constant scramble for power between the emperors and the kings, both sides being aided and abetted by rebel officers, new aspirants, and

Hindu noblemen, who joined the *mêlée*. Intermediately, military expeditions were undertaken to Kamroop, Tirhoot, or Juggernath—that is, in every direction as occasion arose; but, after victory gained and tribute imposed, it was all anarchy and confusion again.

The really great princes among the independent kings were Shumsoodeen, who established that independence, his grandson Ghyasoodeen, and Hossein Khan, who ascended the throne in 1489. Of these, the reign of the last was particularly vigorous. He put the machinery of government into order, ruled with justice himself, and compelled his subordinates to do the same; extended encouragement to the learned, and overran Orissa and Assam. The weak princes of the line were many, and the general character of the Afghan rule was rude and arbitrary, even under the best sovereigns. The lands all belonged to the king, who first selected certain districts for his own maintenance, after which the rest were partitioned among his followers—the inferior chiefs holding under those who were superior to them. All the chiefs were bound to maintain a certain

number of troops for the royal service, to realise the king's revenue, and, after deducting a stipulated proportion for their own support, to remit the rest to the royal treasury. The Hindus of the upper classes were, as a rule, nowhere; though, as exceptions to the rule, many were allowed to manage the estates of the Mahomedan chiefs. The Hindus of the lower classes could not altogether be kept out, because the Mahomedans did not cultivate the soil themselves; but even for these the arrangement was not one calculated to elevate their condition. Among the kings, we have said, was a Hindu, differently named Kansa or Ganesa, a chief of Betouria, probably identical with Bithoor. He succeeded Shumsoodeen II., a youth of very inferior talent, whom he dethroned. It is pleasing to see that he did try to restore his own race to eminence and power; but to enjoy a quiet and peaceful reign, he was obliged to make many concessions to the Mahomedans also—so many, in fact, that, on his death, they disputed with the Hindus whether his remains should not be buried as those of a Mahomedan, instead of being burnt as those of a Hindu. His son

Chemulit also governed with great equity, but he forsook the Hindu religion for that of Islam. This dynasty terminated with Ahmed Shah, the son of Chemulit, who left no heir.

The reign of Shere Shah (1538-1544) was a vigorous one, and left traces in every part of the empire. His wars with Huwayun require no notice in this place. He rendered important service to Bengal by subdividing the country into distinct provinces, and placing a separate lieutenant-governor over each, with one officer over all to supervise the whole administration. This secured a state of tranquillity and happiness which Bengal had never enjoyed before; but its duration was very brief, as Shere lost his life within a few years after, and the prudential system introduced by the father was soon abrogated by his son.

After the death of Shere Shah, Bengal revolted from Sultan Adili before the return of Huwayun, and remained unsubdued till the time of Akbar, when it taxed the energies of two of his best generals, Torur Mul and Azein Khan, to reduce it. Intermediately, Orissa was conquered by Soliman in 1568, and thither the

bulk of the Afghans repaired when their power in Bengal was broken. The Mogul officers then took possession of the Afghan estates; but Bengal was now for the first time destined to know the forms of a regular administration, and all these lands were enrolled and their rents fixed before Akbar would recognise any partition of them. The Moguls ruled in Bengal from 1576 to 1756, or for one hundred and eighty years; and throughout the whole period the forms of good government, if not the substance itself, were religiously observed. The total number of governors was thirty, of whom two only were Hindus, namely—Torur Mul and Man Sing. To the former, Bengal was indebted for the first revenue settlement made by the Moguls, which continued in force for many years. Her obligations to the latter were still greater. The Afghans, ousted by the Moguls, had settled in different parts of the country, where, having neither lands nor rents, they lived mostly by rapine. All these were brought under control by Man Sing with a vigorous hand, and forced to find remunerative employment for themselves. Still larger bodies of the

Afghans had proceeded to Orissa, and held it, with all the country to the north of it up to the Damoodar river, as an independent colony. Man Sing compelled these to acknowledge the emperor's supremacy, and to give up to the Hindus the custody of the temple of Juggernath, which they had usurped. The old fortress of Rhotas, which had fallen into ruins, was by him put in complete repair; and he removed the seat of government to Rajmahal, the *rajagriha* of Balarama, which he rebuilt.

In connection with the name of Man Sing may be mentioned that of Pratapaditya, a refractory middleman of Jessore. The father of this man, named Vicramaditya, was the chief native counsellor of Daood, the last king of Bengal, and endeavoured to dissuade him from revolting against Akbar. Finding that his counsels did not prevail, he determined, with the characteristic pusillanimity and foresight of his race, to establish a city in the Soonderbuns, sufficiently remote and difficult of access to elude the emperor's vengeance. This city was named Jessore; and here, in the hour of need, Daood himself was glad to secrete

his wealth. Eventually, Daood was obliged to fly to Orissa; and Pratapaditya, the son of Vikram, having got possession of all the riches left in Jessore, fancied that he had become powerful enough to disclaim the emperor's allegiance. He accordingly declared himself independent of the Mogul, and assumed so much importance that Man Sing had to be sent down to chastise him. Jessore was stormed by Man Sing, and Pratapa made a prisoner. He was sent in an iron cage to Delhi, but never reached it, dying on the way at Benares. The whole affair was a petty one. Squabbles of this kind with pugnacious middle-men were of constant occurrence in India. We have noticed it simply because the Bengali fables try to convert Pratapa into a hero.

It would take too much space to attempt to give any detailed account of the Mogul administration in Bengal. We must confine ourselves, therefore, to noticing a few salient points of it only. We read of the depredations of Portuguese pirates on the coast of Arracan and Chittagong so early as 1607,

and of the conquest of the island of Sundeep by Gonzales in 1609. Sundeep belonged then to the Rajah of Arracan, who ruled over the Mughs. Taking advantage of circumstances, he concluded a treaty of peace with the pirates, and with their assistance attempted to overrun Bengal, but was unsuccessful. This led to the seat of government being removed from Rajmahal to Dacca, the latter being nearer to the quarter where mischief was brewing. The Portuguese and the Mughs afterwards fell out, and Sundeep was reconquered by the latter, who thence frequently invaded and plundered the lower parts of Bengal.

Bengal was thrown into a ferment during the rebellion of Shah Jehan, who, having succeeded in entering it, made it the theatre of his desperate struggles with the emperor. The Portuguese had already established themselves in various parts of Bengal, especially at Hooghly, which was their headquarters; but, as they did not join the side of Shah Jehan, he ordered their expulsion in 1631, after he came to the throne—and this order was literally enforced. But the Portuguese only went out to make room

for the English, who were following in their wake.

One of the most melancholy episodes of the history of Bengal of this period is the tale of the misfortunes of Sooltan Soojah, one of the sons of Shah Jehan. He was made governor of Bengal in 1639, and ruled over it with great fairness for nearly twenty years; but when Aurungzebe usurped the imperial throne, there was no more rest for Soojah, he being one of the competitors for that post. He fought well for his rights, but was defeated in several engagements by Meer Jumla, the general of Aurungzebe, and was at last obliged to fly through the jungles of Tipperah to Chittagong. Failing to get a vessel there to carry him to Mecca, he threw himself on the generosity of the Rajah of Arracan; but the Mugh had no kind feelings to waste on a Mahomedan, though he affected much sympathy at first. The mask was soon dropped by the rajah asking the fugitive to give him his daughter in marriage. This the haughty descendant of Timour refused; upon which he was attacked, beaten down, and stunned, and then placed on a canoe and

drowned. Criminal advances were next made by the rajah to the wife of the deceased, named Peari Banoo, who answered them by stabbing herself to death. Her example was followed by two of her daughters. The third and youngest was forced by the barbarian, and pined away and died.

Sooltan Soojah was succeeded in the viceroyalty by his enemy Meer Jumla, who, having effected the conquest of Cooch Behar, was so elated with his good fortune that he invaded Assam, with the avowed object of passing on to China, and planting the Mahomedan flag on the ramparts of Pekin. The idea delighted Aurungzebe; but the expedition failed, and Meer Jumla died of chagrin at Dacca. Then followed the rule of Shaista Khan, who was twice appointed governor. He was himself of a very mild disposition; but his orders from Aurungzebe were to persecute the Hindus, and he was obliged to carry them into execution. Notwithstanding this, his memory was cherished by the natives for many years with great affection and respect. During his administration grain was sold very cheap; and they built him

a gate at Dacca in commemoration of the event, with an inscription on it forbiding any nabob to pass through it who did not make grain as cheap. It was during his administration that Chittagong was annexed, in 1666.

The successors of Shaista Khan require no notice till we come to the time of Moorshed Kooly, the founder of Moorshedabad, who was appointed governor in 1718, and proved one of the ablest administrators of the country. He was by birth a Hindu, the son of a Brahman, but was purchased in early life and brought up by a Mahomedan, who gave him a good education. He carried out many important and beneficial changes. The first revenue assessment had been made by Rajah Torur Mul in 1582; a revision of it was effected by Sooltan Soojah in 1657; a further revision was now made by Moorshed Kooly, who took the opportunity to remove the old jagheredars, hitherto employed in the collection of rents, and to appoint zemindars in their places—preferring Hindus to Mahomedans, for their better knowledge of accounts. The rajah *families* of Dinajepore, Nuddea, Rajshahye, and others,

were thus created by him. In his time these men were simply employed as collectors of the Government dues within their respective *chuklas*, as the revenue divisions into which the country was divided were called; but they gradually became rich and powerful, and made their offices hereditary: and thus was founded the so-called territorial aristocracy of Bengal. The revenue of Bengal, as revised by Moorshed Kooly, amounted to £1,430,000, against £17,000,000 of the present day; and the expenditure was £340,000, against the present expenditure of £5,000,000, leaving a surplus of £1,090,000, which was annually remitted in bullion to the imperial treasury. The general character of Moorshed Kooly's administration was orderly and methodical; but this did not prevent great cruelties being exercised on the people, particularly when their rents fell into arrears. We read that the Hindus, for gross derelictions, were forced to become Mahomedans; and for smaller offences, were embedded in a pool of ordure and filth: but in the administration of justice between man and man, the courts were impartial.

Moorshed Kooly was succeeded by his son-in-law Soojaoodeen, during whose administration the Ooryahs, taking offence at the proceedings of the deputy-governor at Khoordah, carried off the image of Juggernath across the Chilka Lake, beyond the limits of Orissa. The consequence was, that the pilgrim tax fell in amount, which caused a considerable loss of revenue; and this obliged the governor to redress the oppressions complained of, and recall the idol and re-establish it in Pooree. This shows how the times had altered, not only since the days of Mahmood of Ghizni, and other old conquerors, who would take no bribe of any amount to spare an idol, but even as compared with the immediately preceding days of Aurungzebe, whose most stringent orders of persecution had special reference to the destruction of images.

The only other governor whom it is necessary to name is Aly Verdy Khan, during whose administration, in 1742, occurred the first irruption of the Mahrattas into Bengal. The misrule of the Mahomedans had, even under the best kings and viceroys, been very great; but no

calamity had ever befallen the country equal to that which now burst upon it so unexpectedly. In their first expedition the Mahrattas carried off no less than £2,000,000 from the house of one man, Juggut Sett of Moorshedabad, the national banker of the day, besides laying the whole country, from Balasore to Rajmahal, under contribution. After great exertions they were driven back; but while one party was re-crossing the Chilka Lake, another was entering Bengal from a different direction, and met Aly Verdy face to face at Bhangulpore; and this game went on for ten years, cities being plundered, villages burnt, harvests destroyed, and the people slain, till, weary and dispirited, Aly Verdy came to a compromise, and gave up Orissa to the freebooters, besides promising an annual subsidy of twelve lakhs of rupees, which was represented to be the *chout*, or a fourth part of the revenues of Bengal.

Aly Verdy was succeeded by his grandson Sooraja Dowlah, the hero of Black-hole notoriety. It is useless to recall any farther reminiscences of the Mahomedan era. The battle of Plassey was fought in 1757, and terminated the Ma-

homedan power, after a continuous rule of 550 years.

We have avoided mixing up with the history of the Mahomedans any account of the rise and development of the English power in Bengal, but perhaps a very brief allusion to it in this place is necessary to complete our narrative of the Mahomedan reign. The formation of the East India Company in 1600, under a charter conceded by Queen Elizabeth, is well known. Their first factory was established at Surat, whence they proceeded to trade to Agra, the residence of the emperor. There the surgeon of the factory, Mr Houghton, was successful in curing a daughter of Shah Jehan, who was severely burnt. He was shortly after equally successful in curing a daughter of Sooltan Soojah who was afflicted with some inveterate disorder. For these services he was allowed to name his own reward, and asked for and obtained permission, on behalf of the Company, to erect factories in Bengal. The first factory was erected at Pipley, near Balasore, the next at Balasore itself, and the third at Hooghly. In 1681 the factories in Bengal were made independent of

Madras, where the English had already established themselves in power; and soon after, an application was made by the Company for permission to erect a fort for the protection of their interests at the mouth of the Hooghly. This was refused. Then followed dissensions between the English and the Governor of Bengal (Shaista Khan), which led to the abandonment of Hooghly by the former, and their occupation of Sootanooty, on the spot on which Calcutta now stands. Even this retreat they were at one time obliged to give up; but the capture of a few Mahomedan vessels bound for Mecca soon compelled the Moguls to make up their differences with a nation so powerful at sea, and the possession of Sootanooty was resumed in 1690. In the mean time the Dutch had finished their fort in Chinsurah in 1687, and the English naturally became jealous of their good fortune. At this juncture the soobadar (governor) fell out with one of his zemindars, and disturbances followed, which gave the Company the long-wished-for opportunity of erecting a fort. The first was built in 1695, and occupied a site near Dalhousie Square of the present day, in Calcutta.

The settlement thus established grew and prospered, and many wealthy Hindus were induced to come and live in it. The Mahomedan rulers were of course very jealous, but found no means to avert the danger they foresaw. Moorshed Kooly opposed the English tooth and nail, but circumstances helped them in spite of his enmity. Mr Hamilton, an English surgeon, cured the Emperor Ferokesere of a sharp disease, which had delayed his marriage with the daughter of Ajeet Sing, and obtained for the service several concessions of great importance in favour of the Company. Many of these were disallowed by the local governor, but he could not refuse them all, and those that were yielded did not fail to improve the importance and prosperity of Calcutta. Aly Verdy Khan was also inimical to the English; but his days were days of trouble, and he had enough on his hands in dealing with the Mahrattas, who gave him no respite. The irruption of those freebooters was viewed even by the English with dismay; and to keep off the enemy they dug a ditch round their settlement, called the Mahratta ditch, traces of which are to be seen to this day. It is said that Aly

Verdy foretold that after his death the English would become masters of Bengal. But matters would not have been so hurried to that end except for the inconsiderate conduct of Sooraja Dowlah. An unprovoked attack on Calcutta, and the massacre of the Black-hole, left the English no alternative but to fight for their security in earnest; and the battle was fought and won. After the battle of Plassey, the English, being still averse to come forward as kings, raised a puppet nabob to act the royal part; but it was not found necessary to keep on the mask long. In 1765 the Company asked for and obtained from the reigning emperor a grant in perpetuity of the provinces of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa; and from that date they openly assumed the sovereign power.

CHAPTER V.

ANTIQUARIAN RELICS.

THIS chapter must be read as supplementary to the two preceding ones, in connection with which only it can have any interest. Of real history of the olden times, the reminiscences in Bengal are very indefinite; but such as they are, they will be best understood with the aid afforded by the antiquarian remains still extant: and the two together may enable the general reader to form some precise idea of the amount of civilisation which was attained, and which has now gone by. In the third chapter it was found convenient to arrange the narrative according to the divisions of the country given in the old Hindu account. We propose in this chapter to revert to the arrangement of divisions

as it obtains at this moment, which will be found better adapted to our present purpose.

Beginning with the Patna division, we find several relics in it, of which those in Gyah are held to be the most sacred. Gyah is well known as the place to which the pious Hindu repairs for securing the immediate admission of his ancestors into heaven. The story about it is, that in the Satya Jug there was an infidel of the name of Gyah, who, by his sanctity and mortifications, obtained power over the gods, and compelled Vishnu to grant him the boon of being able to send up every enfranchised soul to heaven, on devout application being made to him for its redemption. As this very materially reduced the authority of Jama, the king of Hades, a complaint was filed by him before Burhma, who, having determined to outwit Gyah, besought him to allow a great feast to be given on his pure body, the touch of which secured salvation. The giant agreed, and lay down at the place now called after him. The feast was given; but the infidel was never allowed to get up again. All the gods, with the assistance of large rocks, held him

down; and he is believed to be so held down still, the rocks placed above him being only visible to mortal men. The old virtue of touching his body still remains; and offerings made by votaries for the relief of their ancestors at once throw open to them the portals of heaven.

The places of worship at Gyah are all of great antiquity; but many of the buildings to be now seen there have been reconstructed in comparatively modern times. The most celebrated and elegant building extant is known by the name of Vishnupad, and was erected by Abalya Bye, a Mahratta princess, who also rebuilt the temple of Benares. The *mandir* (shrine) over the object of worship (namely, the footmark left on stone by Vishnu in his struggle to hold down Gyah) is an octagonal pyramid about 100 feet high. It has a *nat-mandir* (porch), which is a very neat and airy work. The masonry of the dome is exceedingly curious, and has always received the approbation of connoisseurs. Next in importance is the temple of Godadhar, which is built of granite, but very rudely set up. In the area

are scattered a great many images. The rock of *pretsila* (that is, of the ghost) is also a place of great sanctity, but it has no relics of any kind.

At Baramay, about ten miles from Tikari, is a tank and heap of ruins, regarding which even tradition is silent; but the remains are believed to be of very great antiquity. There are traces of ruins also on a plain of great extent on the west of the Nilajan river, which some years ago are said to have included the skeleton of a large castle or palace, all the marks of which have now been obliterated. Immediately south of the palace are the ruins of a temple, the entire extent of which is about 800 feet east and west, and 480 feet north and south. Here it is believed stood the shrine and tomb of Sakhya Muni (or Buddha), erected by Basantapal, a prince of Gour. A large tree which has sprung out of the ruins now marks the site, and at its foot have been placed a confused multitude of images—namely, all those belonging to the temple which time has spared.

In the subdivision of Nowada is the Geriyak hill, the ruins on which are yet to be seen.

Here, according to the Bhagabat Gita, stood the house, or *rajagriha*, of Jarasandha, the great ruler of Magadha. Of the *griha*, or palace, not a vestige remains. The foundations of a *mandir* and a *natmandir*, or shrine with porch, are traceable. In the centre of one building quite in ruins stands a solid column of brick, and round about are the usual attendant representations of idols, male and female; but beyond the memory of Jarasandha, with whose name the ruins are connected, there is nothing very peculiar about them. There is also a cave here cut in the solid rock, which is nearly 12 or 13 feet high. The chamber contains a stone goddess, and is believed to be of great antiquity.

Rhotasgarh is in Shahabad. It derives its name from Rohitaswa, the grandson of Trisangka, whose sins polluted the Karamnassa river, as we shall notice elsewhere. The grandson was a great and pious king, and came to be worshipped as the presiding deity of the fortress, until his image was destroyed by Aurungzebe. Of the old ruins very little traces remain. The existing relics are all of works of a compara-

tively modern date, many of them having been erected by Rajah Man Sing. At Uphroul there is a monolith called Bheem Singh's *lathee*, supporting a lion carved in stone. Its depth below ground has not been ascertained, but is believed to be great. The height of the pedestal is 21 feet, or, including the top of the lion's head, 30 feet above ground. At Baragoon are the remains of a temple of Buddha, built by Rajah Baladitya, the walls of which are built of bricks of mud, but are of great thickness, and apparently sound at the base. The idols which occupied the temples have been elsewhere removed; but the platform on which they were placed can be traced. The ruins are considered to be of great age, most of the buildings having been erected at the time of the Andhra rajahs. At Sowrya, near Bettiah, there is one of Asoka's edict or boundary pillars. It is of granite, 40 feet high, and 9 feet in circumference at the base, and has an entablature at the top surmounted by a couchant lion. A similar column exists at Koolooah, near Mozuffirpore.

Of the works erected by the Mahomedans, several are extant and in good preservation; but

two only require notice—namely, the magnificent monuments over the remains of Shere Shah and his son Selim, both of which are at Sasseram (Shahasram). The design of both structures is the same, but the tomb of Selim was never completed. That of Shere Shah, which was finished, may be described as an island in an artificial lake, which rises for some way with very rude steps, above which is a terrace faced with stone, with four octagonal buildings at the corners of it, and eight little balconies. The tomb is in the middle of the terrace, and consists of a great hall, surrounded by an arcade, which forms an extensive gallery.

The place of greatest antiquity in the Bhangulpore division is Karnagurh, the chief residence of the Karna or Andhra rajahs. Some assert that this was the residence of Karna, the half-brother of the Pandavas; and the style of the ruin is favourable to any hypothesis that gives it an extreme old age, as nothing—not even the general design of the building—can now be made out. Between Ratnagunj and Amerpore are the traces of a Kshatriya fort of considerable size; but it retains no mark of

strength or splendour at present. At Mayagunj are a cave and subterraneous galleries overhanging the Ganges, which to this day are pointed out as having been the abode of Kasyafa Muni, who was the father of gods, *daityas*, and *rakshases*. The cave in itself is very small, but the galleries under ground lead to other small chambers at a distance. The sanctity of the place has been profaned in modern times by robbers and murderers.

The ruins of Rajmahal have an old story, the site being best known as the *rajagriha* of Balarawa. Of that *griha*, however, no traces remain. The ruins which were latest to be seen consisted mainly of the works constructed by Man Sing, and his great rival Futteh Sing, both governors of Bengal. The great temple called *Somma Musped* was the work of the latter; while the former contributed many highly ornamental buildings of smaller size, of which no fragments are extant. A few of the best buildings here were raised by Sooltan Soojah. The building named *Singadallan*, or stone-hall, was erected by him; and, even in the days of Heber, exhibited traces of the greatest magnificence. The

phulbari, or flower-garden, was also his work. Besides these, several other monuments were added by other Mahomedan rulers of later date, all of which are now buried in deep jungle, or have been displaced by railway works.

Near Monghyr is a ruined heap, about 500 yards square, which is believed to be the remains of a large palace built by Parikshet, the second prince of the Pandava family. Here, also, are the ruins of a fort, in which Jarasandha is said to have held 80,000 princes in confinement, intending to sacrifice them to the gods, but who were released by Bheem when Jarasandha was slain. The old castle of Gidhaur, too, is in this district, and has the reputation of having been built in the days of Indradyamna, or before the Mahomedan era, though the more common account attributes it to Shere Shah. At Colgong are the remains of a mud fort, the history of which is totally unknown. In Purneah are the ruins of the house of Kichok, one of the actors in the great war of the Mahabharut. The place is now called *Asoorgurh*, or the fort of an *asoor*.

The relics in the Chota Nagpore division

are not many, except in the neighbourhood of Pachete, where there are the ruins of several temples, tanks, and fortified gateways and towers—some of them in excellent preservation. The fort, which was the main seat of the Pachete rajahs, is now full of dense low jungle. It was protected by a deep moat, which also led off the torrents coming down from the sides of the hill. The temples were all built of brick, while the gateways were of stone. One fine large temple still stands intact, and a large gathering of people takes place in it annually.

The only other remains in the division worth mention are at Telcoopy, on the banks of the Damoodar. The ruins are of temples, which are superb even in their present condition. All of them were built of stone, cut with great care and set with fine points. They seem to have been originally built by the Jains, but subsequently fell into the hands of the Brahmans, which accounts for their having been plastered over to obliterate the original carving on the stone and substitute a different one. There are also Jain temples at the top of Parasnath hill, but these are of modern date.

In Orissa the most important monument is the temple of Juggernath, the site of which, says the fable, was indicated by a holy crow, as being the place most highly favoured of heaven. The temple has the reputation of having been originally erected in the Satya Jug, or golden age, by Rajah Indradyamna, a king of Oujein. At a subsequent era it was entirely buried in sand by a terrific storm, but was restored by Rajah Anang Bheem Deo in A.D. 1198. As the edifice now stands, it has an imposing appearance from the sea, but does not gain by closer inspection, neither the materials nor the architecture having anything remarkable in them. It is an immense quadrangular structure, with its chief tower nearly 200 feet high. Like almost every other notable structure in Orissa, it is built throughout of stone, and it is enclosed by a high stone wall with gates in the middle of each face, and looking towards the cardinal points. The whole structure is surmounted by flags and pennons, as having a living deity within.

The next most important memorial of the Ooryahs is the black pagoda at Kavarack, which was built by Rajah Narasingha Deo, for

the worship of the sun, in 1241. The size of the temple inside is 60 feet square, with walls nearly 50 feet high and 8 feet in thickness. Only one quarter of the building is still erect, the other three quarters being already in ruins. This edifice was intended as the vestibule or entrance of a large temple, which was partly constructed, and then allowed to decay; and the large piles of stones in the neighbourhood are standing proofs of the original intent. No part of the building was consecrated. It is now occupied by bears, and overrun with jungle.

At Bhuvaneswara are the ruins of a great pagoda, with many adjoining temples, all of which were dedicated to the worship of Mahadeva. These were erected by a rajah of the *Kesari bangsa*, and the natives assert that the number of temples originally was 7000; but the vestiges of some forty or fifty towers only are now traceable. All the edifices stand within a square area enclosed by a wall of stone, the great pagoda being in the centre. They were all adorned with a profusion of sculptured work, of which the remains are still extant.

Besides the above, at the village of Kopari are the ruins of a Mahratta temple, situated at the foot of the Gazna hill of the Nilgiri range. The body of the temple is about 30 feet long by 30 broad; but nothing remains of it now except some pillars lying prostrate on the ground. To the west of the ruins is a large tank, on the banks of which there is what is called a *padmapad* or footprint of a goddess on stone. At Jeypore, at a place called Santamadhub, are the remains of a colossal figure of stone half buried in the ground, the upper half only being exposed. This half is 9 feet high; so that the whole figure, including the portion under ground, would probably measure about 18 or 20 feet. At Chundeshwar there is a monolith about 22 feet high, standing on a pedestal of enormous blocks of stone. The image of a *garuda* surmounted the column, but was removed by Kalapahar, who endeavoured to destroy the column itself, but was unsuccessful. There are three large stone images of Kali, Varahi, and Indrani, at Jeypore, which have long been objects of interest.

They lie with their heels uppermost, in precisely the same position they assumed when tumbled from their thrones by their Mahomedan desecrators. Seven large figures of the female divinities, called *Matris*, are also to be seen in their neighbourhood, and also excellent representations of the Narasingha avatar and of Ravana. It is supposed that all these figures were constructed in the twelfth century, during the reign of Asaree Bheem Deo.

On the banks of the Byturnee there is an old Hindu temple of Borranath, with two figures of lions rampant. At Khundgiri, on the summit of a rock, is a neat stone temple, raised to the worship of Parasnath. Not far from Jeypore, at Totulamul, there is a peculiar eleven-arched stone bridge, about 240 feet long and 32 broad, which, if not very old, bears evidence of having been constructed before the Mogul conquest of Orissa. Another good bridge, built by Narasingha Deo, is that over the Attharah nullah on the Pooree road. It is made of laterite and sandstone, and is not arched, the openings being closed over by corbelling. The mosque of Abu Nasar Khan and the tomb of

Syud Bokbari are two Mahomedan buildings of note in Jeypore.

Of the remains in the Burdwan division the most ancient apparently is the Menara at Pandooah, a very old structure, originally raised by a Hindu rajah of the name of Pandu, but afterwards used by the Mahomedans as a place of worship. The building is very high, but broken on the top by violent storms. The remains of a fort of considerable extent exist at Bishenpore, the ramparts of which are still visible, and one handsome gateway is in a fair state of preservation. Within the fort are three ancient temples, built of brick and covered with curious sculpture. Near Hooghly are the remains of the ancient town and port named *Saptagram* or Satgong, which declined as Hooghly rose into importance under the Portuguese; but it has few vestiges of any importance to exhibit. Near Dantun, on the west bank of the Soobornorekha (the streak of gold), are a cluster of stone buildings called *gurhs*, or forts, which probably did good service at the time of the Mahratta disturbances. There is also a *linga* temple there built of stone, and

another temple or serai, also of stone, which is now used as a mosque. The other Mahomedan remains in the division are the tomb of Pir Bhiram Lukka in the town of Burdwan, and Ghazee Durga at Treebany, Shibpore, the latter a very ancient Mussulman building, with extracts from the Koran engraved on the stones.

The Rajshahye division has got some of the oldest memorials extant. There is a pillar near Jeypore called Bheesmpantee, covered with inscriptions which have not yet been deciphered. Buried in impenetrable jungle is the site of the house and stables of Virat Rajah in Ghoraghat. The ruins are extensive, but there are no whole bricks now, either in the ramparts or mounds—no evidence, in fact, to contradict the tradition of their remote antiquity or the purpose to which they were applied. In Dinajepore, on the east bank of the Panabhoba, are the ruins of a fort and town called Bangurh, or the fort of Ban Rajah. Some outlines of the citadel can still be traced, but of the palace or its outlines the only vestiges are heaps of bricks. A tank of very large dimensions exists named Kalladiggee, after Kalla Rani, the favourite wife of

Banasur; but others regard it as a monument of the Pal family, and call it the Mahipal diggee. Of more modern works the temple of Gopal, in Gopalgunge, is now surrounded by jungle, and is fast falling into decay. The brickwork of it is curious—each brick being moulded or ornamented with some device. A Hindu temple at Kantonugger stands amid the ruins of a fort, and contains the image of Kanto or Vishnu. The temple of Govinda, at Govindnugger or Thakoorgiam, is almost a ruin, and is surrounded by dense jungle.

The ruins of Gour and Pernah are well known; but the remains which still exist are of the Mahomedan buildings—not of the older Hindu edifices, which have all gone to decay. A vast number of stones on the Mahomedan buildings bear carvings which are evidently Hindu, and which indirectly attest to the greatness of the Hindu structures which have ceased to exist. Subsequently the Mahomedans removed the seat of government to Pernah, beyond the Mahananda, and Gour was plundered of everything that could be removed. At a later period Gour was again reoccupied, but for a short time only.

The existing ruins in both places are so overgrown with jungle, that it is impossible to effect a clearance without endangering the stability of the buildings, the roots of trees having become fairly interwoven with the masonry.

In Gungarampore are the ruins of a mosque and monument called Malla Ata, after a saint of that name. The buildings are in ruins, but are still frequented as a place of worship. At Hemtabad are the ruins of the tomb of a Mahomedan saint and of several mosques, one of which is still in good preservation. The monument of Moorshed Kooly Khan stands on the east bank of the Bhagirutty, at Kuttra, and is already covered with rank vegetation, and falling fast into decay. A mosque at Baga, built by an old hermit in 1583, still stands, having been kept in repair from the proceeds of the lands which were given to him by the Emperor of Delhi for its support. There is also an old mosque at Kasumsha, near Nooroolabad, built by one Sahar Khan, who was originally a Brahman, but became a Mahomedan on securing the love of a begum of Moorshedabad, with whom he eloped.

Of the Presidency division the most remarkable relics are the buildings which have been found in the Soonderbuns, most of which are temples and mosques. On the banks of the Kobaduk river (Kapatàksha, or the dove's eye*) there stands a temple of Kapil Muni, a devotee, but believed to be distinct from Kapila, the sage who in Hindu mythology is spoken of as having destroyed the hundred sons of King Sagara by the flames which, in his anger, were exhaled from his eyes. The present temple is a modern structure, said to have been erected by an Englishman on the site where the old temple stood. The ruins of another temple, or what is believed to have been the house of the devotee, are also to be seen in the same place, but within dense impenetrable forest, at the foot of a large tree, which, growing in the brickwork, has torn the whole structure asunder. There is next the Machooar Dhaool, an immense column, said to have been erected by fishermen, but for what purpose is not known. It is now in a ruinous state. Immense old embankments and the ruins of a large *rajharee*, or royal residence,

* How very poetical some of these Hindu names are !

have also been found in the heart of the forest; also two or three *muspeds*, which are in very ruinous condition. In the Bagubàt subdivision there is the tomb of one Khan Jehan Ali, a man unknown to fame, but who seems to have made plenty of money in the neighbourhood, and to have died in 1458, leaving no heirs. The building stands on the north of a large tank, having a ghat of masonry. The design of the tomb is simple; it is called *shatgumbooj*, as having sixty domes, and it is throughout made of brick. The ruins of a mosque at Masjidkar are also allied with the Ali's name.

In the Dacca division are many ruins, principally testifying to the power of the Mahomedans. Perhaps the most important of all the relics there is the ruin of a Hindu temple named Dhakeshwari, said to have been erected by Bullal Sen. The building is buried in jungle, and mouldering in decay; but it is still held in much reverence by the people, and religious ceremonies are to this day performed within its precincts, though its ancient glories have long passed away. There was a time when so many as ten buffaloes and fifty goats were daily sacri-

ficed at that shrine. The ruins of Sonargong are next in importance, but are only of structures of the Mahomedan era, there being no vestige now of any building of the days of Adisoor. It is doubtful even if the Sonargong of Adisoor exists at all. The tradition is, that it has been swept away entirely by the Brahmapootra river, and that the Sonargong of the Mahomedans, of which the ruins survive, is altogether on a different site. At Rajnugger are two fine *mutts* (temples with spires), one of which is called "Pancho ratna," and the other "Ekais ratna," the five and twenty-one gems respectively. A *mutt* at Rajparee is a building of greater antiquity.

The ruined fort and palace at Lalbagh have a picturesque appearance, with romantic old walls and battlements, and a beautiful mausoleum, erected by Shaista Khan to the memory of his daughter, Beebi Pari. The great *kuttra* (pavilion) is a pile of grand and beautiful architecture. It is situated near the centre of the city of Dacca, and is divided into a vast number of apartments for the accommodation of all classes of people. The *chowk*, or market-place, with a

large mosque on one side, is likewise a prominent relic. Throughout the division the ruins of Mahomedan forts are also to be seen, and those of mosques of very imposing appearance—the latter of which have been preserved more or less with care. There is a very old and curious diagonal temple, situated on a low hill about two miles east of Sylhet, which is called the Zeelogurh temple; and in the same district are also a *durga* and some bath-houses worthy of attention. Of bridges two are remarkable—namely, the Tengi bridge, a solid structure of masonry and stonework, which has a most picturesque appearance, and is still in full use; and the Pugla bridge, on the Naraingunje road, which is also picturesque, but is now in ruins. The one great fact observable in all the existing monuments in this division is, that they are, either wholly or in great part, made of brick, the reason being that in the neighbourhood of Dacca stone in any quantity is not easily procurable.

The remains in Assam worth mention are those of three temples upon the bund of a fine artificial lake in Seebsogar; those of a fort and palace belonging to the old kings of Assam, the

whole of which is a mere mass of ruins; the *runghur*, or assembly-room of the old kings, which has been purchased and repaired by the present Government; the Ghengang fort and palace; the Namdang bridge, built of stone, over a very deep and muddy-bottomed river; several temples, one of which at one time had a golden-covered ball at the top; and the Tamba Serai, or copper temple, which was at one time a very notorious place for human sacrifices.

A review of the details given above reminds us that the most ancient and interesting relics now extant are those to be seen in the Patna and Orissa divisions, where the materials used having been of the more durable kind, traces are still found on the ground of many structures which cannot now be recognised by the eye, and of which the information forthcoming is incoherent and loose. The relics of the Rajshahye division are almost equally old and interesting; but the materials there used were less solid; the brickwork has crumbled into dust; and tradition only records the purposes for which the buildings were raised. In the

other divisions the remains are generally of more recent date, and therefore less interesting to the general reader, even though they have been better preserved. The remark made by one observer does occur, that the Hindu has left few vestiges of his ancient greatness, while the Mahomedan is to be traced everywhere in his ruins. But the conclusion arrived at, which concedes to the Mahomedan the palm of superiority, is scarcely correct. The vestiges of Hindu greatness were many, perhaps quite as many as, if not more numerous than, those left by the Mahomedans. But most of them have already disappeared from age, and the rest are now disappearing before our own eyes; while those of Mahomedan greatness, being of more recent date, are yet in a better state of preservation. Possibly being in better condition, the latter may by some observers be more prized; though the greater number of visitors will probably still prefer to seek the undistinguishable fragments of an older time. The Mahomedan buildings, as the productions of a later age, are also much better specimens of architecture than the clumsy structures

which the Hindus have handed down to us. But relics are scarcely prized merely on architectural grounds, their principal charm being in the associations connected with their names. Of the Hindu ruins, several are of palaces and forts, a few of triumphal monuments and bridges, while the rest are all of temples, and of the gods which were worshipped in them, or of caves and underground chambers with sculptures, indicating their Buddhistic origin. The Mahomedan ruins are mostly of mosques and monuments over the dead, with a fair sprinkling of buildings that partook of practical usefulness—such as halls, bridges, markets, and serais.

CHAPTER VI.

CLASSIFICATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE PEOPLE.

THE nationality of the inhabitants of Bengal is of the most heterogeneous kind. The two main divisions of Hindus and Mahomedans are well known; and they are generally understood to imply a distinction as well of race as of religion. The total number of Hindus amounts to about forty-three millions, and of Mahomedans to about twenty millions. Within these divisions there are an indefinite number of subdivisions, with numerous aboriginal tribes and castes besides, who do not come under either classification. The proportion of Mahomedans to Hindus is comparatively inconsiderable in Behar, Chota Nagpore, Orissa, and Assam.

In the first, it is about two and a half against sixteen and a half millions; in the second, 169,000 against two and a half millions; in the third 74,000 only, against a little short of four millions; and in the fourth, 176,000 against about one and three-quarter millions. This result is rather curious, particularly as regards Behar, which is almost contiguous to those places where the Mahomedans retained their sovereign authority longest. But the explanation is, that the existence of Mahomedans in Bengal is not due so much to the introduction of Afghan and Mogul blood into the country as to the conversion of the conquered races to the creed of the conquerors; and that the sword-in-hand proselytism of the conquerors found more numerous converts among the timid races of Lower Bengal than among the people of Behar and Chota Nagpore, who were able to repel it.

The great mass of the people in Behar are Hindus—the Mahomedans mustering strong only in the principal towns of Patna, Barh, and Behar. The Hindus generally are good-looking, and of a moderately powerful build. They are also generally good-tempered, and amenable to

authority, though amongst themselves they are to some extent turbulent. Education is not much sought after by them; and no partiality whatever is shown for English education, which is rather avoided as one of the principal causes of irreligion, they being strongly attached to the old-fashioned religion and worship of their ancestors. The general name borne by them is that of Hindustanis, the language spoken being the Hindi, which is also the language of Upper India.

The people of Bengal Proper—both Hindus and Mahomedans—are for the most part of a less manlier make, though in one sense hardier, being able to endure a larger amount of exposure in the sun and rain. They are both smaller in stature and weaker in constitution—results which are mainly due to the enervating climate in which they live. But with these disadvantages, they (the Hindus especially) have the advantages of being more intelligent and subtle, and of possessing great perseverance in the pursuit of occupations of a sedentary nature; and hence their marked superiority in literary attainments, not only over all other people in

Bengal, but over the people of every other part of India. Again, as a political community, they are quiet, peaceable, and inoffensive, with the exception of that portion of the Mahomedan element which is represented by the Terazees. On the other hand, they are all, Hindus and Mahomedans alike, generally characterised by cunning and deceit, and have for ages retained a name for untruthfulness. The general name they go by is that of Bengalis; and they have a language and literature of their own, which have been cultivated with great care within the past few years.

The Ooryahs, or people of Orissa, are allied to the Bengalis by language and descent, but have marked peculiarities which distinguish them from all other races. Physically, they are apparently not weaker than the Bengalis, but they are more timid and submissive, and so conservative as to hold almost an isolated position. They will adopt no change, however convenient; and even to the present day use date-leaves as writing-tablets, and write on them with a sharp iron style—ignoring the use of pen, ink, and paper. In a land where almost every race is

bigoted and priest-ridden, they have always held the post of pre-eminence.

The people of Assam are a mixed race, with a considerable sprinkling of the Indo-Chinese element. They are mostly Hindus in religion, and speak a dialect closely allied to the Bengali; but they are very lax in religious observances, and would not be accepted as orthodox Hindus beyond the valley of the Brahmapootra. Their physical characteristics are also peculiar —consisting of a middle stature, heavy jaws, prominent cheek-bones, small and unevenly-set eyes, and large ears. They are proud and indolent, and much addicted to opium.

Besides the above, the Bengal Presidency contains a vast number of aboriginal tribes—especially in the western and eastern districts—a complete record of whom will be found in Colonel Dalton's work, named 'Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal.' The table-lands of Chota Nagpore are mainly inhabited by aborigines, bearing the generic name of Kole—a term originally applied to them abusively by the Brahmans when the two races first came in contact with each other. The prevailing classes are the

Moondas, Ooraons (better known as Dhangurs), Bhoomajees, and Sonthals,—the last of whom principally occupy the wide and sparsely populated country named after them—the Sonthal Pergunnahs—but are also to be found in many other places. All these races are rather below the middle stature, and most of them are of dark complexion, with a somewhat angular contour of face, but having diversities of eyes, lips, nose, and cheek-bones peculiar to each. The forehead of most of them is low and receding, and the hair scanty. They are all mild, contented, and good-tempered; passionately fond of dancing, and great lovers of sport.

Of the eastern aborigines, the principal races are the Kochs or Rajbunsis, Mechs or Cacharese, Aboms, Akbas, Duflas, Miris, Meekirs, Abors, Mishmees, Nagas, Singphoos, Khamptees, Khasiahs, Garos, Lushais, and other frontier tribes. The Kochs or Rajbunsis are of a dark colour; but their cognates—the Mechs or Cacharese—are yellow or light brown. The Aboms are the aborigines of Assam—short, dark, lazy, apathetic, and ignorant. The Khasiahs are a hardy race, stoutly made and muscular;

but, as a rule, short-lived. All the rest are frontier hill-tribes, most of them brave and warlike; but, like all savages, treacherous, revengeful, and untrustworthy. Might is right with them; and war, murder, and rapine their delight. But they have many good qualities, and are susceptible of improvement.

All the aborigines, eastern and western, taken together, do not give us in round numbers a population of quite four millions. When we speak, therefore, of the people of Bengal, it must be understood that our remarks are confined to the general population of the Presidency, without including the aboriginal tribes, who do not share in many of their peculiarities. Even with this reservation, the difficulty of classifying the various tribes and castes of Bengal is very considerable, and many old-fashioned distinctions have to be ignored. We have all heard of the ancient story of the Hindu castes being divided into four primary sections of Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras. The story remains, but the distinctions have long become a myth, as three out of the four divisions named do not exist at all, the Brahman alone having retained

his vitality to the present times. There are now no Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, or Sudras anywhere, though caste distinctions dominate with all their pristine vigour and restrictions, at least in Bengal. We must likewise give up another fanciful division to which we have been much accustomed of late—namely, that of Aryan and non-Aryan races, between which really no hard-and-fast line can be drawn. With these preliminary remarks, we will now review the distinctions as we actually find them at this moment.

The principal Hindu tribes and races in Behar are—(1) Brahmans, (2) Rajpoots or Chuttrees, (3) Babhuns, (4) Bhats, (5) Kayasths, (6) Bunneahs, (7) Aheers, and (8) Jats, with other minor castes engaged in the preparation of cooked food, in agricultural labours, and in personal services, whom it would take too much space especially to define. The Brahmans are most numerous in Tirhoot, and are generally well off and esteemed. They are cultivators or zemindars, and are priests also. In Gyah are the Gyawal Brahmans, proprietors of the Gyah places of pilgrimage. They are reputed to be

very rich, but are very bad as landlords. The Rajpoots or Chuttrees abound most in Shahabad and Sarun. They are principally landowners and cultivators, and even their women superintend the cultivation at home. The men also seek service in the army and the police, and as *dumans,* or festival attendants, on the rich. The Babhuns are a mixture of the Brahmans and the Chuttrees, and form a fine manly race. They are numerous throughout the Patna division, and only a little less so in Bhangulpore. They are generally respectable and thriving, but are very quarrelsome. Their chief occupation is cultivation. The Bhats are poets, heralds, and genealogists. They are not very numerous, but are much respected. They are now chiefly employed as cultivators, and also keep the family pedigrees of noblemen, and recite the deeds of their ancestors at festivals and funerals. The Kayasths or Kyets form the writer class of Behar, as of every other place in the Presidency. They are very much esteemed both by the natives and Europeans, and were hitherto generally well off, as they had a monopoly of all the Government offices, but are now

beginning to feel the advance of education (slow as it is) among the other classes. The Kayasths follow no other profession but that of letters; and even their women can write, some being also able to manage their own zemindaries. Under the general term Bunneah come in most of the trading classes, who are numerous, thriving, and respectable. The Aheers or Goalahs form the herdsman class. They are turbulent and dishonest, and are regularly retained as *lattials* by the rich. The Jats are another pastoral tribe, but not settled in Behar to any great extent. In common with the Aheers, they still retain the old custom of marrying an elder brother's widow; and our orientalists conclude from this that both these tribes are of Scythic descent. The minor castes in Behar are many in number, and are all important elements in Hindu society. Some provide the only food that orthodox Hindus can take from other hands without pollution; others are palkee-bearers and house servants; others, again, vegetable growers and sellers,—and so on, all having some particular functions to perform which nobody else can discharge.

The Mahomedans of Behar are, as elsewhere, divided into the two primary sects of Sheas and Soonies; and these, again, are subdivided into Sheiks, Syuds, Moguls, and Pathans. Physically, the Mahomedans are superior to the Hindus, being a more active race in every respect; but morally they are intriguing, treacherous, and disloyal. Every one will remember that the Wahabee movement originated in Patna.

The main body of the population of the Chota Nagpore division consists of the aborigines of the Kolarian type, and the Hindu tribes and castes that have settled in the border districts of the table-land. An enumeration of them would include the Brahmans, Rajpoots, Kayasths, Goalahs, Shatnals, Bhogtas, Moondas, Ooraons, Bhoongas, Koormees, Korris, Jolahs, Bhoomajees, and Sonthals. We have described the Kolarian races already in the brief notice taken of the western aborigines; and the Hindu tribes of Chota Nagpore do not materially differ from those of Behar and Bengal, the former of whom have already been delineated, and the latter will be. The Jolahs named above profess the Mahomedan religion, but in practice are

as much Hindus as the other castes. All the tribes are equally ignorant and illiterate, with morals on a par with their knowledge—even the generally truth-loving Sonthal having very much deteriorated of late years. The habits of the aboriginal tribes are, however, simultaneously improving; they clothe themselves now much more than they used to do before, attend more to personal cleanliness, and their domestic occupations have become a little more refined—sufficiently so for the cynic to remark that truth and refinement are not friends.

Of the Orissa population the aboriginal tribes form the principal element, together with the usual Hindu castes. The principal Hindu castes are the Brahmans, Khundaits, Chassas, and Goars or Goalahs; while among the aborigines are the Khoonds, Sabars, and Sonthals. The Brahmans are either *Vaidik*, professing to know the Veds and the Shastras; or *Lowkiks*—that is, following worldly pursuits and occupations: but there are very few really high-caste men among them—the Mahapatras, Pandas, and others, belonging actually to very inferior castes. The Khundaits are a very numerous class, and

call themselves Kshatriyas or Rajpoots, but without any real claim to either title. They exhibit every variety of type, and follow almost every sort of profession, being cultivators, messengers, constables, and doorkeepers. The people of the Chassa class are the most numerous of all, and live solely by cultivation. Next to them in respect to numbers are the Goalahs or Goars, which means herdsmen. Besides these are the menial castes and the aborigines, all rude and boorish in their manners, and averse to imbibe any new ideas. Of the aborigines the most important are the Khoonds, who are mainly found in the highlands in the south of Orissa, and on the confines of the Madras Presidency. These are well known to British readers in connection with the Goomsur war of 1836-37, and the suppression of the Menah sacrifices some twenty-three years ago. The Sonthals have been already described. The Sabars are numerous in all the districts of Orissa, and especially in the tributary states, and closely resemble the Ooraons of Chota Nagpore. All the Ooryah races, whether aborigines or otherwise, are slow and unintelligent,

and most of them effeminate and submissive also; but there is a sprinkling of Mahomedans in the province, descendants of the Afghans who settled in it, to whom these remarks do not apply.

Of the population of Assam the greater portion is nominally Hindu, but really the different races are converts from various forms of devil-worship and Buddhism. The prevailing castes are Brahmans, Gouocks, Kayasths, Kolitas, Kochs, Aboms, Domes, and the aboriginal hill-tribes, whom we have already noticed. The Brahmans, as priests, are to be found in all parts of Bengal; and the specimens in Assam, as elsewhere, are more intelligent than the surrounding tribes. The Gouocks are astrologers, intelligent but not laborious. The Kayasths pretend to derive their descent from the Sudras, who originally came to Bengal with the five Brahmans who were imported from Kanonj by Adisoor. They are very few in number, and are chiefly employed as *mohunts,* or priests. The exact position of the Kolitas has not been defined. Some authorities maintain that they are allied to the Kayasths, though somewhat

inferior to them, not being required to observe all the religious formalities enjoined on the Kayasths; but others affirm that the Kolita is altogether a distinct caste, and next in dignity to the Brahman, as springing from the family of the Chuttrees, who concealed their caste when Parusram was waging a war of extermination against them, whence the name of Kolita, or *koolliptu*, meaning "caste concealed." The Kochs, Aboms, and Domes are semi-Hinduised aborigines. Koch, although now the designation of a caste, is really a tribal name. We have spoken of this division before; and also of the Aboms, to which class the rajahs of Assam belonged. The Domes are fishermen, whom the upper classes in the province cannot touch without pollution. Speaking in general terms, the Assamese are a weak and effeminate race, whom the use of opium has still further degenerated. Morality amongst them is very low; lying and dishonesty of all kinds prevail to a great extent; and the women are devoid of that delicacy and seclusion which prevail among the sex in other parts of Bengal.

We have reserved the castes and tribes of

Bengal Proper last for enumeration, as being by far the most important. Here, as elsewhere, the population consists of Hindus and Mahomedans; but the proportion between them, unlike what it is in other places, is nearly equal—being eighteen to seventeen millions respectively. The principal Hindu castes, in the order of precedence, are: (1.) Brahmans, (2.) Kayasths, (3.) Vaidyas. It is said that Rajah Adisoor, finding the Brahmans of the country engaged in low-caste occupations, and incapable of performing religious ceremonies from ignorance, invited to his kingdom five learned Brahmans from Kanonj, named respectively Bhalta Narayana, of the Sandilya family; Daksha, of the Kasyapa family; Vedagarba, of the family of Batsya; Sribarsha, of the family of Bharadnaja; and Chandra, of the Savarnya family. These came down with their wives and children, amounting to fifty-nine persons in number. Villages and lands were assigned for their maintenance; and their descendants were divided into classes, and constitute the high-caste Brahmans of the country—the low-caste or original Brahmans in it being distinguished from them

by the name of Saptasati Brahmans. The classification was made in the age of Bullal Sen, the fourth or fifth in descent from Adisoor. The high-caste Brahmans were divided into the three divisions of Rarhi, Barendra, and Vaidik—the divisions of Rarhi and Barendra being so named after the tracts of land in which those Brahmans had respectively settled. The Rarhis were subdivided into Kulins, Srotriyas, and Bangshajes ; and the Barendras into Kulins, Srotriyas, and Kanps. The Vaidiks were originally priests or readers of the Veds to the Kanonj Brahmans. Some say that they came from Kanonj at a later time, on the invitation of Aditya Subhadhi Narayana, a rajah of Sylhet. In the classification of Bullal Sen, they retained the duties of pundits and astronomers ; and it was not found necessary to subdivide them, as none of the class had in any way degraded themselves. Of this tribe was Chaitanya, the greatest of the modern reformers of Bengal.

The Kayasths, the second class in the order of precedence, are reported to have descended from the Sudras, who accompanied the Brahmans from

Kanonj in the capacity of servants. This origin is, however, scouted by the Kayasths themselves, who claim a higher rank, and of whom frequent mention is made in the old sacred books of the country known by the name of Smritis. They, like the Brahmans, had also settled in Rarh, the western division of Gour, and were divided into two tribes, named respectively Uther Rarhis and Dakshin Rarhis, or north and south Rarhis. There were also two other divisions, of Bangaj and Sudra Kayasths, who occupied the eastern districts of Dacca and Assam, and were considered to be less pure. The pure Kayasths were divided into classes of Kulins and Mowlihs, the former comprising the three subdivisions of Ghose, Bose, and Mitter; and the latter the eight subdivisions of Dey, Dutt, Kerr, Paht, Sen, Singhee, Dass, and Goho. Besides these there are a great many other subdivisions (seventy-two in number) of inferior rank. The Kayasths throughout the country are numerically very strong, and are intelligent and respectable, and chiefly employed as clerks, *mohurers*, and accountants—reading and writing

having been their only pursuits from generation to generation.

The Vaidyas rank next to the Kayasths, but protest strongly against the classification. They are the first of the Varnasankars, or the impure and casteless tribes, deriving their origin from a mixture of the Brahman with the Vaisya blood; and, assuming that the Kayasths also are Varnasankars, they claim the first place for themselves. Rajah Bullal Sen belonged to this order himself, and conceded the position thus claimed; but subsequent generations have upset his award, though the Vaidyas themselves adhere to it with great pertinacity. The Vaidyas are a wealthy class, the profession of a physician followed by them being in all countries a thriving one; but they have been always regarded as crafty and miserly.

After the three primary classes come in the Nabasaks, or nine pure castes, from whose hands a Brahman will receive water to drink. They pretend to be all pure Sudras, though in reality pure Sudras do not exist any more than pure Kshatriyas and Vaisyas. They are—(1.) Tantees,

or weavers; (2.) Shankaries, or shell-cutters; (3.) Sonars or Sacras, workers in gold and silver; (4.) Kawars, or blacksmiths; (5.) Kansaries, or braziers; (6.) Koomars, or potters; (7.) Sudgopes or *goalahs* (milkmen); (8.) Malakars, comprising gardeners and flower-sellers; and (9.) Napits, or barbers, who are also surgeons!

As for the impure castes, they are too many to be named, and, moreover, differ widely in different districts. The more important among them are, first, degraded Brahmans, such as Gouocks and Achargyas—that is, genealogists and astrologers; and Agrodain Brahmans, who attend on funeral ceremonies. Next are the Chuttrees, who call themselves Kshatriyas, and are scattered through several districts in small numbers. After these come the Bunneahs of both classes—namely, dealers in money and spices respectively; Soories, or wine merchants; Korburtoes,* or ploughmen; Dhobas, or washermen; Chooturs, or carpenters; Koloos, or oilmen; and all the labouring castes of fishermen, tanners, sweepers, jugglers, &c., including

* Some authorities include these among the Nabasaks, along with gardeners, flower-sellers, &c.

Mughs, descendants of the freebooting buccaneers who devastated the Backergunge Soonderbuns in days of yore.

Among the lower castes of Bengal must also be enumerated the Vysnubs, who, theoretically speaking, recognise no caste at all. The word Vysnub simply means a follower of Vishnu; and a large number of men belonging to all castes follow the religion, retaining their respective castes. But the fundamental teachings of the sect ignore the distinctions of caste—any one can become a Vysnub. There are stories extant of two Mahomedans, named Rup and Sooatun, having been converted, and of their afterwards becoming heads of the Vysnub church; and there are ceremonies of initiation whereby caste is expressly and formally renounced by them. The theory of the thing is good; and Chaitanya, who preached the doctrine, had the very highest objects in view—namely, breaking down caste and priestly tyranny. But in reality the Vysnub class does not rank high; of men it only gets the refuse of society, and of women prostitutes.

We have already said that the population

of Bengal Proper consists almost equally of Hindus and Mahomedans. The Mussulmans abound in the northern and eastern districts, and constitute the principal body of the inhabitants in several places, especially about the mouth of the Megna. The majority of them are descendants of converts from the lower castes of Hinduism, and may be said to have no religion or rule of life, being completely ignorant of even the elementary doctrines of the Koran. They are divided into communities, according to the occupations they follow, many of the divisions being quite as exclusive as the Hindu castes in regard to marrying and eating with each other. The different classes may be enumerated as—(1.) Kussyes, or butchers; (2.) Koloos, or oilmen; (3.) Jolahs, or weavers; (4.) Malees, or gardeners; (5.) Hajams, or barbers; (6.) Dhobies, or washermen; (7.) Doolie and palkee bearers; (8.) jugglers and snake-charmers; (9.) Bajikurs, rope-dancers, &c. The idle vagabonds among the Mahomedans are many. Within the last forty years a new sect has sprung up, called Ferazees, which has already spread over the Dacca, Furreedpore,

Backergunge, and Mymensing districts, and is characterised by intolerance and bigotry, and the most open contempt of authority. As a rule, the Mahomedans are somewhat more robust and healthy than the Hindus, mainly on account of the more nourishing diet to which they are accustomed. They are, if possible, still more given to lying and chicanery than the Hindu Bengalis. Of "bhudar lòk," or respectable people, the proportion among them is very small. They are always unquiet neighbours, and not like the Hindus, peaceful, temperate, and fond of order. The annual police returns show that while the Hindus furnish criminals at the rate of 1.4 per cent, the Mahomedan rate is as high as 3.1 per cent.

CHAPTER VII.

CONDITION AND DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PEOPLE.

No one who has had much experience in Bengal can have failed to remark two facts which are peculiarly striking—namely, the richness of the country and the poverty of its inhabitants. It is useless speculating now what the condition of the people possibly was under the ancient Hindu kings. We have no authentic account of those ages, nor any data to help us in forming a correct conclusion on the subject. The fables of antiquity depict the Hindu period as akin to the golden age, when the country abounded in gold and silver, and every inch of it was cultivated, and the people were swarming and happy. Even of the Mahomedan

period, which was undeniably one of oppression and anarchy, we have the most fabulous accounts of rural prosperity—the conquerors, who were their own historians, having recorded their achievements in whatever terms pleased them best. One thing, however, is certain, that the causes which have conduced to the results which now everywhere stare us in the face, must have been very long in operation.

The accounts that have come down to us go a great way to prove that throughout the Hindu period Bengal was subdivided into a number of petty sovereignties and states; that in these states the succession of dynasties was by no means unfrequent; and that each change of dynasty brought with it a new principle of government, sometimes including a change also of religion. This state of things could not but have been oppressive to the people. The most independent and thriving tenantry cannot long remain so in a state of such unrest; and unrest is, we fear, the word which best expresses the character of the rule which prevailed generally throughout the land. We read that Magadha Ripoonjya, on finding his barons trouble-

some, exterminated them, and filled up their places from the lowest grades. We may easily imagine how often the barons in their turn found their tenants unaccommodating, and swept them away from the face of the country, replacing them by others more compliant. There was nothing to prevent them from doing this —except, perhaps, the vigour of a king like Ripoonjya, which was not always found. The same story also shows that there was no intermediate class between the barons and the lowest grades of society, since the king found it necessary to replace the former out of the latter. So circumstanced, the barons could not but have been all-powerful within their respective estates, and necessarily all-oppressive when not held down by a tight hand. Intermediate classes are absolutely indispensable as buffers between the highest and lowest classes in every well-regulated state.

The Mahomedan era was far worse than the Hindu period. Even in ordinary times it was one of anarchy and confusion; and in extraordinary times, which was its most frequent phase, there was no end of troubles. The quar-

rels between the Afghans and the Moguls were incessant; the changes of dynasties were even more rapid than during the Hindu period; and to crown all, the barons and chiefs had now for the first time no sympathy with the people on their estates. After the Afghans were displaced from the throne, they settled in different parts of the country, almost as independent colonists. The supremacy of the Moguls was gall and wormwood to them, and their revolts were constant. In Orissa these revolts continued up to 1611. To the poor ryot the whole period was uniformly one of the greatest insecurity and unrest.

Nor was this all. Almost throughout the entire period of Mahomedan misrule there was no police in Bengal worthy of that name. The barons or chiefs were the heads of their own police. Where they governed well the people were protected—very well protected—for no *budwash* was ever powerful enough to defy their authority. But it was the rule of might, not of right; and where they governed ill, they taught their own underlings to extort and oppress—the lessons thus learnt being always illustrated with

fearful effect. Dacoity was a thing almost unknown when the chief was a man of iron will, and the king at the head of the Government opposed to oppression. But where the king was indifferent, and the immediate head of the state wanted money in the easiest manner possible, dacoits went about the land in gangs: no boat could pass a much-frequented river after dark; traffic on the imperial roads had to be protected as in an enemy's country. Towards the close of the Mogul power things became still worse, owing to the irruption of the Mahrattas, who scoured over all the western districts from Orissa to Bhangulpore, spreading fire and ruin wherever they went. To read of their rapacity and violence even now, makes the blood run cold.

With all these elements of unrest, was it possible for the people to be anything but poor? Accustomed to all sorts of oppression, liable to be deprived of their hard earnings almost by anybody who considered it worth their while to rob them, was there any inducement for the ryot to work to lay by? All he cared for was to provide himself with the immediate necessities of everyday life. Capital he dared not

accumulate, for to do that would have been to court his own destruction. Even the surplus of his raw produce he could not lay by without exciting the cupidity of evil men, against whose outrages he had no protection. Scarcities and famines were of constant occurrence, happening whenever there was a deficiency of crops by inundation or drought; the poor had no surplus either of store or money to tide over the day of trouble: the consequence was, that when the crops suffered the people died.

The state of unrest has now ceased, and the condition of the people is improving rapidly. It did not do so earlier; because for a long time, as we shall explain more fully hereafter, the English administration of the country was not an unmitigated boon. Up to 1790 that administration was as bad as it possibly could have been, for it was in truth worse even than that which had immediately preceded it. All the evils culminated during the first days of the English rule. The officers of the Government were corrupt, and their perquisites exceeded the booty of highway robbers; the zemindars followed the profession of robbers by choice, and

levied a sort of black-mail from the ryots; even the ryots themselves were obliged to turn plunderers, and fell upon those of themselves who were least able to resist. Dacoits went about in gangs of from three hundred to five hundred men, and even bodies of a thousand men were not unknown. Towns were plundered, manufactories burnt; and there was no police, no courts of justice, civil or criminal, to protect or afford redress. When we remember that this was actually the state of things for years, do we not find the poverty of the people, in the midst of milk and honey, accounted for? That poverty is so great that the lower classes in many places even now reckon all their accounts in *cowries*—a small white shell, which serves as a sufficient medium for all their dealings with each other. Till recently, an authorised traffic in slaves existed in the country; and the poorer classes, particularly widows, actually sold their children to procure food.

Among the other extraneous causes which may have assisted in producing the result we have noticed are mentioned,—(1.) the law regarding the subdivision of property as it oper-

ates in Bengal; and (2.) the inordinate expenses the people of all classes unnecessarily incur in *poojahs*, marriages, and funerals. As regards the first, it must be observed that the laws of primogeniture being unjust in principle, their absence in Bengal is not to be regretted, even though the equal division of property among all children may have contributed in some degree to the gradual impoverishment of the nation. The second statement, if not wholly correct, is so to this extent, that the expenses incurred on account of marriages are very great, and do constitute one of the principal causes of indebtedness among the humbler classes, the only excuses for them being the inordinate fondness of the people for their children, and their equally inordinate love for shows, pageants, and festive amusements. As for expenses on account of funerals and *poojahs*, they are heavy only among the rich, who, it may be presumed, are able to afford them, and who, apart from these expenses, are extremely parsimonious, except in their fondness for equipage and a retinue, which borders on insanity even among those whose living in private is close

almost to meanness. Relatively speaking, the expenses of the rich are not in proportion to those of the poor.

Compared against each other, the ryots of Behar seem, as a rule, to be better off than those of Bengal. Both are always more or less in debt; but the debts of the former are generally petty, while those of the latter are often very considerable, the interest they have to pay to the money-lender eating up their substance. The former being more robust than the latter, and addicted to the use of arms, are also less troubled with illegal exactions, against which the latter have perpetually to contend. An illegal tax can, of course, be contested in a court of justice: but the zemindar has the power of enhancing the rents; and this, which would be perfectly legal, would be felt by the ryot as far more oppressive. In Behar the landlord is afraid to do either one or other, as he knows that the demand is sure to be refused and contested, not in a court of justice, but by force. But in Bengal the zemindar is able to enforce almost anything that he has a mind to, and the ryot has no refuge except in

his forbearance. There is not much love lost between the parties in either place; but in Behar the zemindars and their tenants respect each other—a feeling which is not inimicable to mutual attachment, and a confederation of interests in case of need, which accounts for the devotion the people of Jugdespore evinced for Korr Sing and Umur Sing during the mutiny of 1857, the like of which it would be very difficult to evoke from the ryots of Bengal, whose feeling towards their zemindars is one of unmitigated distrust.

The people of the Behar district are also naturally more honest than those of Lower Bengal, and by their better condition exemplify the truth of the adage, that honesty is the best policy after all. Somehow or other they manage to live better in all respects, as they eat better, dress better, and are better housed. In the interior of the country, houses of brick are rare, equally throughout Bengal and Behar, most of the buildings being made only of bamboos and mud. No one under the degree of a talookdar would think of having a *pucca* (masonry) house. But in Behar there are more

tiled huts than in Bengal; and even those which are thatched, though not so pretty-looking as the cottages in Bengal, are more commodious, and safer as protections against the sun and weather, and altogether more convenient. Similarly, of furniture there is very little available to either; yet the little that belongs to the ryot of Behar is, as a rule, better and more substantial than what the Bengal ryot can boast of. All the furniture that the latter possesses is a mat of split bamboos to sit upon, a *machan* (or stage formed of bamboos) covered with a mat to sleep upon, and a few earthen pots and cooking utensils. The *khatteah*, or couch, of the up-country ryot, is more convenient than the Bengali *machan;* and oftentimes his cottage can also produce a wooden stool to sit upon, and brass plates and drinking-vessels, besides the usual earthen pots used for culinary purposes.

We do not know whether it is mainly on account of their poverty, or on account of the peculiarity of their climate, that greater nakedness prevails among the people of Bengal than among those of Behar. The ordinary female

dress in Lower Bengal is the *saree*—one piece of cloth between nine and ten cubits long, and two and a half cubits broad, which is worn round the waist, one end covering the shoulders and head. This is also the dress used in Orissa and Assam; but in Orissa the cloth is worn less delicately than in Bengal, as it never goes below the knees, and is so fastened round the waist as to display much of the person above. The women in Behar dress better, wearing in some places a petticoat (*ghagra*), a bodice (*anga*), and a veil (*wina*); and in other places, a petticoat, and a wrapper which covers the head and body without covering the face. The gown (*peishway*) is also worn, but only by the Mahomedan ladies and by dancing-girls. Of men the ordinary dress everywhere is the *dhootie*, which is wrapped round the middle of the body and tucked up between the legs, while a part of it hangs down in front a good deal below the knees. A *chadur* is also used by people who can afford to have one, and is worn over the shoulders, and occasionally stretched over the head, which has no other covering. The full dress of men is the *jora*, consisting of trou-

sers (*ijar*), shirt (*korta*), outer coat (*jama*), sash (*kumurbund*), and turban (*pugree*). This is more largely worn by the Hindustanis than by the Bengalis. The Mahomedan full dress is similar; in fact, the Hindu full dress is borrowed mainly from the Mahomedans, neither Bengal nor Behar having originally had any dress beyond the primeval *dhootie* and *chadur* which we have spoken of.

Mahomedans—both men and women—wear shoes. The Hindu ladies of Behar wear sandals or gaudy slippers, but those of Bengal (including Orissa and Assam) have generally no sort of protection for their feet. The poorer classes—both men and women—go barefooted, especially in Bengal, where the people cannot afford to have what they consider a luxury, though elsewhere a pair of shoes is regarded as an absolute necessary of life. In the matter of ornaments the people are more reckless; and the man who cannot afford to buy shoes for himself, willingly pays for what he considers indispensable for decking out his wife or daughter. The ornaments of course differ according to circumstances, the poorer classes having everything

made of brass, bell-metal, pewter, or glass; while the rich are decorated with gold and silver, corals, pearls, and gems. The jewels worn by Mahomedan ladies of rank differ from those used by Hindu ladies. In general terms it may be remarked that the Hindu ladies are fond of gold and silver, and the Mahomedan ladies of pearls and diamonds. In some districts, among the Hindus of the lower classes, tattooing the body like an Otaheitan, though in a lesser degree, is in fashion; nay, there are places in which no pure Hindu will drink water out of a girl's hand who is not thus adorned. The marks are the *oolkee* on the forehead, and some flourishes on the arms, shoulders, and breast.

The manners of the women in Behar are generally very strict, but the men are exceedingly jealous notwithstanding. The conduct of Bengali and Ooryah women is also exemplary, and they have both for the most part the felicity of not having jealous bedfellows. The ethics of Assam in this respect are rather peculiar; the women have not a very good name, but the men are not jealous. The marriages

in Bengal and Behar (and as a general rule in Orissa also) take place before puberty—generally when the girls are between eight and eleven years old; but notwithstanding this, the people of Behar at least are strong and tall. It has been the fashion of late years to attribute all the evils of life in Bengal to early marriages. Doubtless an early marriage is, as a rule, much to be condemned; but it seems somewhat absurd to impute to it every evil under the sun. It is true that the Bengali is not so robust as the European, or as an up-country native of India; but similarly, the Bengali bull is not equal in strength and size to an English or a Hurrianah bull—nor the sheep and goats of Bengal, or cats either, equal to those of England or Upper India. Why, then, in the first case only, should the imperfection be attributed to early marriages, and not, as in the other cases, to climate alone? We do not advocate early matrimony; though we cannot deny that it has certain advantages which should not be ignored —one of which is, that the husband gets an uncontaminated wife to start with, which cannot be said to be the case in fifty per cent of the

marriages contracted later in life, if the evidence furnished by the books on prostitution is to be trusted. In Bengal itself, or rather in certain places in Assam, marriages do not take place till after the attainment of puberty; and the consequence is, that bastard children are often born before wedlock. This exposes the unmarried mother to censure, but does not render her unmarriageable for life. Notwithstanding such *contretemps*, however, we accept the general verdict that the continuance of early marriages in Bengal is not desirable. Prostitution is not very extensive in the country at present, and it may be hoped that morality will not suffer to any considerable degree by the extension of the marriageable age beyond its present limit. The prostitute classes are now mainly replenished from the ranks of the Mahomedans, Koohu Brahmans, and widows of all classes; and will probably continue to be drawn from those sources only, without trenching on virgin ground.

The diet of the people requires notice. Ordinarily it is exceedingly simple and light,—the food consisting mainly of rice, wheat, or other

grains, and fish; and the drink, of water and milk. The quantity of butcher's meat and poultry consumed is very small, and is confined to the Mahomedans. The high-caste people in Behar do not take even fish. This prejudice against meat has arisen probably from a conviction that butcher's meat is not the food best adapted to the climate. On this point opinions are at conflict. We, for ourselves, accept the impression of the majority, that vegetable food well seasoned, with the addition of fish, and water for drink, comprise the diet best adapted to the climate; but we do not condemn the adverse conclusion of those who recommend a diet including animal food and strong liquor in moderate quantities, as necessary for resisting the influence of malaria and the sudden changes of the atmosphere, to both of which the country is so much exposed.

The only meat the Hindus use is that of goats and deer, and most Hindus will not use the first except when the animal has been sacrificed before an idol. Venison being more hard to get, is held to be sanctified whether the animal is sacrificed before an idol or not; but,

unfortunately, no one makes a profession of deer-hunting; and so, practically, deer's flesh is in little use. Snipes, plover, and water-fowl abound, but are not eaten by the higher castes; and fowls and swine are not used by any classes except the very lowest, though Young Bengal is breaking through these prejudices very fast, and with sturdy goodwill.

The common fare of the poorer classes consists of rice and *dal* (pulses), seasoned with a few wild herbs. In some places, as in Orissa, the rice is steeped in cold water after being boiled, and is not eaten till the second day, when it becomes slightly acid. In a country where the supply of fish is abundant, and where oil-seeds of all descriptions are plentiful, there are districts where the poor can only occasionally procure the luxuries of oil or fish. Onions and garlics are used to make the food savoury; but some classes of Hindus will not have them. Milk is abundant everywhere, but still the poor get little of it. The luxury of a daily use of *ghee*, or butter, falls only to the lot of the very highest classes. There are men even so poor that they cannot pay for their salt, and

substitute the ashes of plants and herbs to season their food with. Fruits are plentiful and cheap in the country, and are largely eaten.

The use of tobacco is almost universal among the men; as also is the luxury of chewing *pawn* among all, men and women, who can pay for it. The *pawn* comprises a pungent leaf known as betel, the areca-nut, spices, lime, and catechu, some of the ingredients having narcotic qualities, while they all together produce an exhilaration of spirits, which accounts for the fondness shown for the compound by all classes of the people, more especially in Assam. Women nowhere smoke, except those of the lowest classes; but there is no prohibition against chewing tobacco and its preparations. The practice of drinking distilled spirituous liquors has become rather extensive, and was not unknown in olden times; but the race of drunkards is confined to the metropolitan cities. Of intoxicating drugs the *gunga* is the cheapest, and therefore the one most extensively used.

The manners and customs of the people have been largely written upon, and may be dis-

missed with a few words. The Shastras inculcate a great respect for parents; and for ages the injunctions on this point have been loyally observed, though a slight departure from them has already begun to be observed on the part of Young Bengal, which, correctly or incorrectly, is attributed to his English education. Parents, also, are well attached to their children, and discharge their duties to them with much affection, though possibly not with as much discretion as could be wished. The attachment of wives for husbands, and, in a lesser degree, of husbands for wives, is pretty much the same as in most other countries; and if the lot of women is not a very happy one, this is not so much owing to want of affection on the part of their liege lords as to conventional restrictions, many of which are fast dying out. The hardship of the widow's lot is great; but the remarriage of widows is now authorised by law, and nothing more can be done for their relief by extraneous aid. In their dealings with each other, all classes of men are uncommonly civil. Women do not join the society of men, but no complete seclusion is observed except among the higher

classes. Of marriages we have spoken already; the ceremonies observed are many, but are generally very puerile, and few of them require to be recapitulated. The hands of the bride and bridegroom are joined with a blade of sacred (*kusa*) grass; the bride's father says to the bridegroom that he gives away his daughter to him; the bridegroom is then asked if he accepts the bride for good; garlands are next exchanged, and the marriage is declared to be indissoluble. Although early married, the women generally do not get their first child before the sixteenth or seventeenth year; though there are, of course, exceptional cases of earlier maternity, the first child having been delivered so early as in the thirteenth year.

Children generally go to school when five or six years old, and are at the same time instructed to read and write. The course of tuition commences by writing on the floor with a white crayon (*khurimati*); then on palm-leaves with ink; then on plantain-leaves; and, finally, on paper, which concludes the course. Bengali children are much more intelligent than those of Behar, Orissa, and Assam—nay, even more so

than European children; but much is not done to cultivate this intelligence, and it is rarely indeed that traces of it remain in after-years. In general, parents are quite satisfied if their children are found apt in understanding figures.

The *patsala* only teaches them a little of accounts and letter-writing. The pen is made of reed or bamboo twigs. The Bengali ink, which is made of the cheapest materials, is better than the best ink made in Europe, preserving its colour unaltered for centuries. English MS. papers of a hundred years old are scarcely readable. The writings of the Bengalis of twice that age appear as fresh as if they had been written within the year. Of books, the Bengalis had none some thirty years ago; but, as we have stated elsewhere, they have since created a language and literature of their own. The language and literature of the people of Behar are the same as those of the provinces further to the north-west, and both are of long standing. The schools in all places are cheap; and often the schoolmaster is paid in kind—that is, with grain and uncooked vegetables. This, we mean, is the form of tuition for the

mass. Schools on a more methodical plan have now been established everywhere, both by the Government and by the people themselves, but these are not resorted to by the poorer classes.

Generally it is considered highly improper to bestow any literary education on women; and no man would marry a girl who was known to be capable of reading or writing, it being believed that the knowledge of the wife would shorten the life of her husband. This prejudice, in the nature of things, could not last, and is fast wearing out. In the metropolitan cities the tables have been turned already, and girls that have received some sort of education are more sedulously sought for than those who have received none. Such education as the ladies have received has not been unproductive of advantages. When the mistress of the house understands accounts, the rascality of servants is checkmated at once. For some reason or other, men are nowhere able to make time to look after their expenses; a good housewife is therefore indispensable, since good servants are not plentiful in any part of the world. Speaking of servants, we may mention that it is becoming

more and more difficult now to get them in Bengal than it used to be. The agricultural ryots, or small farmers, are a more numerous class in most districts than labourers for hire; and in metropolitan cities good female servants are scarcely to be had, while the male servants available come either from the North-Western Provinces or from Orissa. The conclusion is inevitable that the people of Bengal Proper now get more lucrative employment than service, and the result must be to improve their condition in a few years.

The distribution of the people into classes has been already noticed. The rigours of caste are now nowhere very strong, except in Bengal Proper, *minus* its metropolitan towns. In Behar, except Brahmans, none of the other castes create any difficulties about sweetmeats, *pawn*, the *chillum*, or water being polluted. The Ooryahs are very conservative in all respects, but never cared much for the restrictions of caste; and it is a principle with them that all castes can eat together in the temples and other sacred places. Assam is, if possible, still more liberal, as many articles are there used for food which would

outcast any man in Behar or Orissa. In Bengal Proper all the innovation hitherto made has emanated from Young Bengal, but it is permeating effectually through every nook and corner of the country.

An account of the condition of the people will scarcely be complete without some reference to their amusements; but there is not much to say on the subject. Active games there are none anywhere, except among the Mahomedans of the lower classes. The outdoor amusements of the people generally are confined to those at fairs and festivals. Of sedentary amusements there are many—such as chess, the game of *puchcesi*, cards, *chutooranga*, and the like. The wild tribes and aborigines on the eastern and western frontiers are passionately fond of dancing and singing; and so, to some extent, are all men of the lower orders everywhere, the use of musical instruments, as accompaniments to the dance or song, being also common. In Behar women of all ranks sing at marriages and festivals, but never play on instruments; the men, on the other hand, do not even sing, and no person of character, either male or female, will dance. In

Bengal these amusements are altogether vetoed, and neither men nor women will sing or dance, or perform on musical instruments, except those who live a dissipated life. A man of learning or gravity will not even honour convivial parties of this description with his presence, except when they are celebrated on festive occasions, or in connection with religious rites and ceremonies.

The treatment of the dead requires no lengthy notice. The Hindus burn their dead; the Mahomedans bury them. Of the Hindus some religious orders bury their dead, but in a sitting posture—cross-legged. In all places along the banks of sacred rivers the dying Hindus are carried to the river-side, but not so elsewhere, as a general rule. After death the body is bathed, perfumed, decked with flowers, and placed on the funeral pyre, which is then lighted by a son or other near relative. The Mahomedan practice of burial is too well known to require particular illustration.

The character of the people varies in different places, and cannot be very accurately delineated in general terms. The people inhabiting the

mountainous and unfertile regions are hardy and laborious; while those in the moist climates, with their double crops of rice and infinite variety of pulses, are indolent and effeminate. As to distinctive characteristics, the people of Behar may in the main be described as naturally more honest than those of Bengal; but they are also more quarrelsome, and there are races still amongst them who live by violence. The people of the Chota Nagpore division may similarly be characterised as simple, honest, and truthful; but they are ignorant and illiterate in the extreme. The Ooryahs are, at the same time, unintelligent and boorish. The Assamese are weak, effeminate, and dishonest. In Bengal Proper the principal vices of the people are untruthfulness, cunning, and, in the metropolitan towns, litigiousness also; but they have the counterbalancing virtues of quiet and orderly habits, faithfulness in service, and freedom from gross excesses of every description.

CHAPTER VIII.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND FESTIVALS.

MANY good books have been written on the subject of the Hindu and Mahomedan religions; and these contain detailed information regarding the deities and saints worshipped or revered, which it would have been comparatively easy for us to epitomise for the purposes of this section. But the religion, as described in books, is not the religion of the people, and the religion of one province is not quite akin to the religion of another. It will not suffice, therefore, to recapitulate what is to be found in books, which only give the theory of the thing, and not the thing as it actually exists in practice at this moment.

In general terms, the prevalent Hindu religion

of Bengal (apart from the monotheism of students and philosophers) may be described as an idol-worship of the most extravagant kind, the objects adored being the powers of nature expressed in a variety of forms, and occasionally in a manner too gross to answer the purposes of morality. The Mahomedan religion may similarly be described as a standing protest against idolatry, enjoining emphatically the worship of one God, and of Him alone, and explicitly commanding the wholesale destruction of idols and unbelievers. The general conclusion, therefore, is correct, that the two religions are diametrically opposed to each other. They were so opposed at the outset, and that led to the conquest of India by the Mahomedans. They were so opposed for centuries after, which gave occasion to bloody wars and grinding oppression. In theory they are equally antagonistic at this moment, and considerable ill-will boils up at times in the minds of their respective followers, which is only prevented from breaking out into actual mischief by the fear of an indifferent arbitrator superior to both parties in power.

Notwithstanding all this apparent hostility,

however, we assert advisedly that, in the Bengal Presidency at least, the two religions are at this moment actually on very amicable terms, and that this amity promises to be still more cordial in time, and possibly may become lasting. The Hindu is exceedingly tolerant; the Mahomedan of Bengal, who was originally one by conversion only, has long ceased to be fanatical: and advances and concessions on both sides are gradually lessening the distance that existed between them. The Hindu visits all the *pirasthans* of the Mahomedans to do honour to the saints, and the Mahomedan applies to all the Hindu deities and saints for favour and protection when supplications to his own are found to be ineffectual. Nay, the two peoples have managed between them to set up one common object of worship, who is called by the Hindus, Satya-narayan, the true Lord—and by the Mahomedans, Satya-pir, or the true saint; and they have mutually adopted many of each other's religious prejudices.

Of course each party still adheres to its own religion loyally, and would repel any charge of disaffection with great indignation; but the articles of their faith, as now understood and

maintained, will not bear the test of any close comparison with the strict injunctions of their respective creeds. The Koran has no reverence except for the living God, abominates idols, and admits no sort of religious service apart from fasts and prayers. The Mahomedans accordingly profess no adoration except for the God of the Koran, and observe faithfully the fasts of the Ramzan, Eed, and Mohurrum; but, over and above all this, they also worship saints, or revere them rather, that being the more convenient word. These saints are as plentiful in number as the gods of the Hindus; they have monuments dedicated to them, and offerings called *Srini* are made to them to conciliate their favour. Apart from these monuments, there are also mosques all over the land for the adoration of God; but it is a difficult question to settle whether in the mosques or in the monuments the adoration is more fervent. Similarly, the Hindu is constant in his devotion to his own gods, of whom the number is uncountable; but not a week passes in which the anxious housewife does not pay her dole to *Mooshkillasban*, or other Mahomedan *pir*, to tide

the family over all their little difficulties; and who shall say that her faith in the latter is less stanch than in the former?

The chief agents of the Mahomedan religion are the Kazis, and after them the Moolahs, or priests. But the religious persons most respected throughout the country are the mendicants, called *fakirs*, who have charge of the monuments dedicated to the saints. These monuments are generally of two kinds — namely, *durgahs* or cenotaphs, and *kuburs* or tombs. At both indiscriminately offerings are made; and often, very often, in imitation of the idolatrous practices of the Hindus, rude images of horses are placed prominently in view as tangible objects of reverence. Besides this, offerings are also made to the pagan gods in their own temples, to coax out what the Mahomedan saints may seem averse to concede. This, then, we say, is the aspect of religion in Bengal: the Hindus, in addition to their own gods, pay homage to the saints of the Mahomedans; and the Mahomedans, departing from the strict letter of the Koran, not only worship saints of their own making, but also venerate, if they do

not expressly worship, all the gods and saints which the Hindus have set up.

In the Behar district the worship of *pirs*, or saints, is not much known; and the higher ranks of the Mahomedans abstain from making offerings to the pagan gods in their own temples, though the lower ranks in all their distresses have recourse to them. The only occasions when this is expressly avoided by the latter also, are those of the three great festivals—the Ramzan, Eed, and Mohurrum—when, for the time only, the Mahomedans of all classes affect to be inveterate haters of idolatry. The fast of the Ramzan is generally kept inviolate, though few fast every day throughout the month, as they are required to do; and both during this festival and the Eed, the people of the lower orders, who are usually much addicted to the use of spirituous liquors and palm-wine, eschew them, to resume them again when the festivals are over. Abstinence to the same extent is not ordinarily observed during the Mohurrum, but no sort of concession to idolatry is then made. The fact is, these great festivals give the guinea's stamp to a man's reputation for religion; and

all men, therefore, are, during their continuance, naturally most anxious to exhibit their orthodoxy in the best light. But that orthodoxy is generally as short-lived as the show, and will not repay any search made for it after the show is at an end. The *tazeahs* during the Mohurrum are numerous in Behar. They are paraded through the streets with the usual amount of tumult and violence, after which they are kept by, not thrown away ; and the same *tazeah* thus answers from year to year. The Hindus often join these processions for fun's sake, and there used to be fights from fun between them and the Mahomedans in the olden times. The contests were more violent between the *Sheas* and the *Soonies*; but the Government has now put down these disturbances everywhere with a strong hand.

The laxity in Bengal Proper is much greater than in Behar. In Bengal the Hindus send offerings to *Satyapir*, and the Mahomedans to *Satya-narayan*, daily, without stint and without any effort at concealment ; and the same personage is worshipped by the two races, almost in the same manner—though the services read are

different. The number of monuments to the saints idolised are also considerably greater in Behar, and the images of horses figure more largely in all the monuments throughout the country. The songs relating to the saints are sung by all classes; they attribute to them the power of curing all sorts of diseases, and of helping in all sorts of difficulties. The temptation to adore them is therefore irresistible, and is not resisted.

The five grand points of the Mahomedan law are prayer, ablution, study of the Koran, pilgrimage, and fasting. The Bengal Mahomedans do not even pretend to follow the law in all these essentials. The third and the fourth are very little regarded—the pilgrimage falling entirely to the share of the *fakirs*, who naturally wander about much in their begging. The first two are observed by all, because they are so easy of observance that it would be wanton folly not to attend to them. The last is also generally heeded, but in the same sense as in Behar—that is, the fasts are not very strictly kept throughout the month; nay, in Bengal it

is considered sufficient if they are observed for two or three days only.

The celebration of the Mohurrum in Bengal is a grander affair than in Behar—the approach to idolatry being nearer. The *tazeahs* are less in number, but much larger in size, and also more showy. In several districts the Hindus not only join, but take part in the processions, which are always noisy and ostentatious. Unlike the practice observed in Behar, the *tazeahs* in Bengal, like the Hindu idols, are thrown away when the festival is over.

The Mahomedans of Bengal are also imitating the Hindus in other matters. We have noticed in a previous chapter that they are adopting distinctions somewhat similar to those of caste. No Bengal Mahomedan will eat with infidels, or intermarry with tribes which follow disagreeable professions; and many tribes, such as *kussyes, dooryahs,* and *bajams,* are condemned to perpetual exclusion from rank and respectability. A good many of the Mahomedans have also commenced to hold birds and animals in veneration; and the tiger especially

is respected by them as the chosen agent of their saints. They are also abandoning their faith in pilgrimages, though this is not in imitation of the Hindus, as the latter are very fond of them. The most celebrated Mahomedan pilgrimage in Bengal is to Pernah, near Gour; but few take the trouble to go there now: and a journey to Mecca is, of course, out of the question. The Ferazees, the puritans among the Mahomedans, belong to Bengal. But their puritanism consists all in outward show. They dress differently from the other Mahomedans, wrap their *dhootie* round the body without crossing it between the legs, love falsehood with an uncompromising love, and are troublesome as often as they can conveniently manage to be so. But in other respects they are not distinguishable from the Mussulman population of Bengal at large.

In Assam the Mahomedans have departed still more from the strictness prescribed by their religion; so much so, that they are considered by the Mahomedans of Bengal, lax as the latter are themselves, to be totally unworthy of the Moslem name. Any further notice of

them, therefore, is unnecessary. The number of Mahomedans in Orissa is too small to require particular attention.

The above is all the account we have to give of the Mahomedan religion as we find it in Bengal. Our representation of the Hindu religion will be nearly as brief. Its principal feature, apart from the theoretical ordinances of the Shastras, is the worship of *gram-devatas* (village-gods), *ganas*, or whatever they are called in different places. There are no temples now for Brahma, Vishnu, Druga, Ganesa, Kartika, or Indra. Of the book-gods—if we may so call them—Siva, Kali, and Lakshmi alone still retain their hold on the popular mind. For the rest there are set festivals to be performed at particular times, in which they are all remembered by name; but nothing more is required to be done, the deities for everyday worship now being the *gram-devatas*, who are universally applied to in all cases of danger and distress. The people of rank pretend not to attach much importance to these divinities; but offerings are always made by them and their families to propitiate their favour: and

the lower orders follow the lead of the higher classes in this as in other respects with greater devotion. *Griha*, or family *devatas*, are also common, each man worshipping a particular divinity in his own house; and in the Behar districts the worship of the *bhut-devatas*, or ghosts, is exceedingly widespread — and probably much of the observances in Gyah owes its origin to this superstition. The actual religious ceremony, called *poojah*, is nearly the same in all cases. If performed at night, there are plenty of lamps blazing with consecrated butter, which give a charm to the scene. Many pleasing perfumes are burnt, which destroy the unpleasant smell of the burning butter. The tinkling of bells and the shrill strain of the conch serve to scare away evil spirits that, the Shastras tell us, are ever jealous of the honours paid to the gods, and crowd round the altars to pollute the offerings; while the deep sound of gongs and cymbals makes up the rest of the parade.

The *gram-devatas* are too numerous for all of them being separately named—since, as the term indicates, there is generally a separate *devata* for each *gram* or village; and not unfrequently

he is an anonymous deity altogether, having neither name nor form, and being represented only by a lump of clay or cow-dung. Some of the most celebrated of these *devatas* in Behar (and we include *bhut-devatas* in the enumeration) are at this moment (they are constantly changing) Ram Thakoor, Tulsibar, Bishohari, Tiladana, Parusram, Dharmadas, Kanudas, and Mulik Beyo—the last being the name of a Mahomedan who was connected with the conquest of the province, whom, with a degree of toleration of which the Hindu only is capable, the priests have canonised and converted into a *devata*. The worship of all these deities takes the form of daily *poojahs* and sacrifices.

The other religious manifestations among the Behar Hindus which require notice are the festivals named *Holi*, *Dewali*, and *Dasabara*. Of these, the *Holi* is the most important. It is held in honour of the spring, when, on the full moon of *Falgron* (March), burnt-offerings are made to the gods with a view to bespeak their protection from Dhunda Rakshasi, who revives with the breath of spring, and is apt to become mischievous. This is the legend current in Be-

har, but that which obtains in Bengal is totally different. The great sport of the festival consists in squirting red liquid through syringes, and throwing red powder against each other, and in singing obscene songs continuously for about a week before and a week after the day of offering. All, except very old men, join in these obscenities; and while the men indulge in this manner outside their houses, the women do so within, singing and abusing each other with even greater indecency than the men, whom, however, they, for obvious reasons, don't admit to their parties. The *Holi* is a personification of nature wantoning in her prime, or rather in the renovation of her powers in spring; and this accounts for the licentious mirth that accompanies its celebration.

The next important festival of Behar, the *Dewali*, is observed in a manner peculiar to the Hindustanis, the cattle being allowed to take part in the ceremony, with their horns painted and adorned with flowers. Apart from the religious rites, the accompaniments of the festival are feasting and the lighting of lamps, to both of which full justice is done by all classes. On

the day following is held the *Goheidhoue Poojah*, or *Anakutjatra*, when the women collect together and pray to a lump of boiled rice or a mass of cow-dung, made in somewhat of the human form.

The *Dasabara*, or the *Gunga Poojah*, consists in, as the name implies, the worship of the sacred river Gunga or Ganges, and is celebrated in the Behar districts with much acclamation. A worship of the sun is also celebrated in them with great pomp in the month of *Kartick*—the worshippers being women, who fast twenty-four hours before making their offerings to the luminary. This ceremony is called *Chatka Bharat;* it is unknown in Bengal. A third festival, the *Janma Astami*, held in honour of the birth of Krishna, is observed with much music and glee.

In Behar the *Charak Poojah* is unknown; and the *Doorga Poojah* is not celebrated anywhere, except in Tirhoot, where it is unaccompanied by sacrifices, the ceremony consisting merely of fasting and prayer. The only other religious ceremonies which prevail in the province are bathing in holy places and rivers, and pilgrimages. Bath-

ing the body is necessarily more largely indulged in in a warm country like Bengal than in colder climates, and bathing in particular places only combines the luxury with religion—though the luxury ceases to be one when the bathing is in herds, as the Hindus practise it. The pilgrimages of greatest sanctity observed by the people of Behar are to Baidyanath, in Beerbhoom; Harihar Chatra, at the junction of the Gunduck and the Ganges; Kangragola, at the junction of the Koosi with the Ganges; and Gyah,—exclusive of those to Benares, *Prayas* (Allahabad), and Juggernath, which are sacred to Hindus in all parts of India. The number of pilgrims to all these places is always very large.

Large meetings are also held occasionally at particular places, for particular purposes, which are sometimes inexplicable, though slenderly connected with religion. One case of this kind is narrated in the Bengal Administration Report for 1865-66, which says that a Tiyar fisherman named Baiju having given out that Pamiraj, the god of his caste, had manifested himself to him in visions, and ordered the Tiyars to discontinue their trade of fish-catching, the story

spread like wildfire, and all the Tiyars of Ghazepore, Benares, Mirzapore, Monghyr, Bhangulpore, Tirhoot, Sarun, and other districts, assembled at Gogra, in Purneah, and offered holy water to the *griba-devata* of Baiju, and sacrificed some three thousand goats before they separated. The local authorities being unable to understand the object of the gathering, kept Baiju Tiyar under surveillance for some time; but no criminality of any kind was proved against him, or against anybody else. The movement was simply a superstitious one; and the Administration Report very naïvely records that a precisely similar commotion occurred among the Dosads of Behar in 1863.

The great festivals of Bengal Proper are the *Doorga Poojah*, the *Holi*, and the *Charak*,—with many minor festivals, such as the *poojahs* of *Lakshmi*, *Kali*, *Jagadhatri*, *Kartika*, and *Serasnate*, none of which require any notice in detail; the *Siboratri* and the *Ramnavami*, which also can be similarly silently passed over; and the *Dewali*, *Dasabara*, and *Janma Astami*, which we have noticed in speaking of the ceremonies observed in Behar. The festival named *Doorga*

Poojah commemorates the destruction of the minotaur by Doorga, the champion of the gods. It is altogether a quiet and decent affair, its only objectionable part being the sacrifice of goats and buffaloes in large numbers. All faces are on this occasion lighted with a smile; every man, woman, and child has got some new clothes or new ornaments to put on; and throughout, the festival is enjoyed with bright faces and great good-humour. The *Holi* is, as elsewhere, a rude sport, accompanied by a great deal of indecency; but the disgusting features of the rite are dying out in Bengal, even though it is there celebrated in remembrance of the loves of Krishna for Radha and his other innumerable mistresses. Of the *Charak*, the barbarities have been already put down by the Government; and even the swinging on the pole is now nowhere permitted,—so that in a few years this will cease altogether to be numbered with the religious observances extant. The day is now held sacred rather as Chyte or *Maha Bisam Sankranti*—that is, the last day of the year, which the Hindus celebrate in the same manner as the Europeans celebrate their

New Year's Day—friends interchanging civilities with each other, masters and servants exchanging kindly remembrances, and every one accosting his neighbour with a good word and a smile. Of the other festivals, we shall only notice that the *Dewali* is celebrated in Bengal by general illumination, every house and temple being lighted by rows of little lamps along the roofs, windows, and cornices, and often also on bamboo frames; and that during the *Janma Astami* the Bysnubs go mad, but after their own quiet way—that is, over *bhang, sidhi,* and *charas,* and not over spirituous liquors.

The *griha-devatas* and *gram-devatas* of Bengal are not very few in number; but, unlike the state of things in Behar, the worship of the *gram-devatas* is considered by the higher classes to be unorthodox, though, to appease the fears of the women, it is quite openly connived at. The names most feared are those of *Sitala, Sideswari, Mangolchandi, Bishabari, Babathakoor,* and *Ola Bibi;* but there are a great many others, and a hideous face painted at the foot of a tree will always bring together many worshippers from among those who may be passing by.

Of the house divinities the little stone named *Shalgaram*, consecrated to Vishnu, is the most important. It is found in the Gunduck and Koosi rivers, is very heavy, oval or circular in form, and in colour is often black, but sometimes lighter or approaching to violet. Only a small cavity appears on the outside of the stone, but within it is hollow and almost concave, being furnished in the interior coats with spiral lines which terminate in a point towards the centre. The hollow is the habitation of Vishnu. This little stone is tended as a god; it is anointed, bathed, worshipped, fed, and actually laid in bed to sleep.

Bathing in sacred rivers and going on pilgrimages are both devout occupations in Bengal as in Behar. We need not stop here to name all the bathing-places which have an odour of sanctity, particularly as they are very numerous. The following story regarding one of them will explain how very efficacious these places generally are. The river Brahmapootra is, as the fable has it, the son of Brahma, by Owega, the wife of Santanu. The particulars of the wooing will not bear recital; the affair ended in

the production of a holy pool or lake, which was named Brahmakoond, or the pool of Brahma. This for ages remained in obscurity, till Parusram, the great champion of the Brahmans, passed by it after having exterminated the Kshatriya race. For a while he rested by the lake, leaning on his battle-axe, and thinking regretfully of the carnage which surrounded him. Just when his conscience smote him for the mischief he had done, he saw a white cow with a black calf at her side, and listened to the mother upbraiding her child for its blackness, which it had acquired from having accidentally killed a Brahman. "Go," said the mother, "and bathe yourself in the holy pool, and see if it will not restore your purity." The calf did so, and instantly regained its white colour; whereupon Parusram followed the example, and was purified.

As it happens that nearly all the rivers and lakes in the country are quite as sacred as the *koond* above alluded to, the opportunities of getting purified like Parusram are constant; but there are a few streams which have to be avoided, having been deliberately pronounced

by the Shastras to be impure. Of this character is the river Karamnassa,* in Behar, the story about which is as follows: A certain rajah of the Solar race, named Trisangku, was a great sinner, having murdered a Brahman and married his own stepmother. These sins were not to be easily expiated; but a good-natured saint undertook to purify him. For this purpose he collected water from all the sacred streams in the world, and the sinner being washed therewith was cleansed. The water, however, was for ever deprived of its virtue; and flowing down, formed the Karamnassa, the impurest of all rivers, though it looks as clear as crystal.

The places of pilgrimage for the Bengal Hindu are Juggernath, *Kasi* (Benares), Gyah, Allahabad, and Kamroop. Of the first and third, detailed accounts have been given, and one of them will be further noticed shortly; the

* The rivers thus condemned are four in number, of which three belong to Bengal. They are the Karamnassa, the waters of which cannot be touched without pollution; the Curatoya, bathing in which is forbidden; the Gunduck, in which swimming is prohibited; and the Indus, which is not to be crossed.

second and fourth are beyond the limits of Bengal, and do not require any notice here; the fifth is sacred as the place where Siva spent his honeymoon with Parvati. The Hindus of Bengal are also partial to the observance of fasts, which are mainly of four kinds,—namely, (1.) those in which the devotee does not eat or drink at all within twenty-four hours; (2.) those in which he fasts during the day only, and eats at night; (3.) when he consumes nothing but fruits, milk, and water; and (4.) when he eats once only during the day and night. Of these the first, as the strictest, is most in fashion.

We now come to Orissa and the great festivals of Juggernath. From the beginning of things, says the fable, Parmessur, or Juggernath, dwelt in Utkaladesa in the form of Nilwadava. In the Satya Jug, Indradyamna, a rajah of Avante (Oujein), having proceeded to worship him, the image disappeared from the face of the earth. The rajah was overwhelmed with disappointment; but it was soon after reported that the god had reappeared in the form of a log of *Nim* wood, adorned with the emblems of Vishnu,—namely, *sankha, chakra, gadha, padma;*

or conch, discus, mace, and lotus. The sacred axe of Viswakarma, the architect of the gods, was now besought, and converted the log into the image of Juggernath; and the rajah to whom the god was so complaisant, built a temple to house him on the very site on which the present temple stands.

The great festival of Orissa is the *Ruth Jatra*, which is also observed in all parts of Bengal Proper with much pomp and ostentation. It commences with what is called the *Suan Jatra*, or the bathing of Juggernath. The god falls sick immediately after, is laid up with burning fever, and remains in confinement for some fifteen or sixteen days, which gives the Pandas ample time to repaint him. As soon as he is convalescent, he goes out for a change; and this drive in his car is the festival of great celebrity. Eight days after, he comes back to his own residence; and the return tour is also celebrated with great pomp. None of the other idols worshipped at Orissa receives the same veneration as Juggernath. There are temples dedicated to Mahadeva at Bhunauessar, but these are all nearly in ruins. The worship of Juggernath is

the great festival of the country now, having variations within itself called the *Chandan Jatra,* or the festival of sweet scents; the *Suan Jatra* and *Ruth Jatra,* noticed above; the *Jhoolna Jatra,* or the swinging festival; and the *Dole Jatra,* or the *Holi.* In Pooree it is held sinful to place a pot on the fire for cooking. Every pilgrim must eat the *Mahaprasad,* a food consecrated to Juggernath—a most abominable stuff, unfit for human consumption. Nor is there any pilgrimage from Orissa anywhere—Juggernath being itself the Jerusalem and Mecca of the Hindus.

The religion of the Buddhas will require no detailed notice in this place. It was for a long time prevalent in Magadha and Assam, and in fact, in a greater or less degree, all over the Presidency; but it is now observed only by a small section of the community known by the name of Jains. The date of its first establishment cannot now be determined. Gautama, or Sakhya Moni, was, it has been assumed, born in B.C. 542; but the proofs are abundant that Buddhism was understood in several parts of Bengal long before that time. Even conceding

that Brahmanism was the original religion of the country, it is clearly evident that all the kings of the western districts made their first appearance in history as Buddhists; and this in itself gives their religion an earlier date than the sixth century before Christ. Probably the religion started with—as it assumed the name of—Buddha, the son of Soma and grandson of Atri, Sakhya Moni distinguishing himself in a later age only by giving it a stable foundation in Bengal, which it retained till it was rooted out by the wars of Parusram. It was peculiar as a protest against superstition and the tyranny of priestcraft. It denied the authority of the Veds, and repudiated the institution of caste; believed in God, but declared Him to be above the cares and concerns of life; and contended that the chief motive for good works was the hope of obtaining *Mookti*, or salvation by absorption into the Deity. This is mainly the belief also of the Jains, though they have got some additional dogmas of their own. The head-quarters of the Jains are at Parasnath, with some religious outposts in other places.

We should, perhaps, here refer to the religion

of the Brahmors, which is based on the tenets of the Upanishads, and unites with a refined conception of the Deity a good ethical code for general observance. This religion is essentially the same as that known to the students and philosophers of India from the age of Vyasa under the name of the Vedánta; but to the Brahmors belongs the credit of having so modified it as to make it accord with the present state of knowledge and civilisation. It cannot be said, however, that the religion has secured a strong hold on the country yet; and a lengthened notice of it here is therefore unnecessary. It is at present only confined to a section of the Calcutta Baboos, and their agents or representatives in the interior of the country, and these are making as much of it as they can.

CHAPTER IX.

BRITISH RULE: ITS EFFECTS.

We have referred to the origin of the British power in India. It came in opportunely, just when the Mahomedan and Hindu powers had broken their forces against each other, the Mahrattas having broken down the Moguls, and the Afghans broken down the Mahrattas. The last triumph was with the Afghans, who defeated the Mahrattas in the battle of Paniput; but they had not the stamina to grasp at empire, and the authority contended for quietly passed into other hands.

The history of the wars and intrigues by which the British power was established in India does not concern us. We shall confine ourselves to a short account of the internal

administration of Bengal by the English after they got possession of it. Their first exercise of kingly power was in 1757, when they set up a nabob of their own in Bengal; and the authority was formally conceded to them by the Emperor of Delhi in 1765, when the entire fiscal administration of the province, together with the administration of civil justice, was made over to them, the criminal and police administrations only being left in the hands of the nabob, who was made a pensioner of the Company. It was a long time, however, before the English were able to do justice to the charge they took upon themselves; and the nabob, in the mean time, did nothing beyond drawing his stipend. The fact is, the English authorities at the outset looked upon Bengal simply in the light of a warehouse for carrying on a lucrative business, and regarded the existence of a native population that required to be cared for as a matter of secondary importance, which did not in any way affect the question of profits. The consequence was, that their first efforts at internal administration smelt only of money, and did not contribute in the smallest

degree to mitigate the long-protracted sufferings of the people. Even the revenue which they had undertaken to administer was not well administered. They did not understand the subject, and were obliged to delegate their powers to those who did—namely, to the native zemindars, who had hitherto acted simply as the collecting *sucars* of the Mahomedans, which was their recognised position from the time of Moorshed Kooly Khan. The zemindars, of course, came forward with great alacrity to receive the increased trust, since they had nothing to lose but everything to gain by the powers now assigned to them. They contracted not for the land revenue only, but for every kind of revenue, undertaking to manage the excise and to regulate the internal trade of the country. The duties of the police, which the nabob had not taken up, were also left in their hands, together with the adjudication of cases which neither the English officials nor the nabob had assumed. These arrangements continued in full force till 1772, and in a lesser degree till 1790.

In 1770 there was a great famine in Bengal, but no efforts were made to arrest its virulence.

The Company expected the zemindars to look after the matter; the zemindars could do nothing. A whole generation of zemindars was reduced to poverty, and some of the greatest men among them were imprisoned on account of their inability to pay the arrears due from them; a whole generation of ryots was swept away from the face of the earth—almost unnoticed, certainly without the slightest exertion being made for the preservation of the sufferers.

The maladministration of the police was attended with consequences still more fearful. Not only was there no police in the land, but, worse than that, the country swarmed with men who assumed the authority of the police to extort and oppress. Dacoities were of constant occurrence: the zemindars themselves were dacoits, and levied black-mail; their followers were only too eager to follow in the wake of their lords. The people of the nabob, who did not assist in the administration of the laws, would not suffer themselves to be outdone in extortion and oppression by the people of the zemindars; even the ryots were only too anxious to prey on each other whenever they found

it convenient to do so. There was no law in the country, or rather no one to administer the law. The remembrance of the old troubles is now fast dying out, and men scarcely believe in these days in the extent of the misrule and anarchy which immediately followed the assumption of the government by the English.

This was the state of things till 1790. Intermediately there were many good men noting upon what they saw, and attempting to work out many salutary reforms. It was Warren Hastings who insisted on the nabob doing something for his pension; but the result was a wretched misrule, in which the chief actors were eunuchs and concubines. In 1772 a few provincial courts were constituted; and in 1781 the number of these courts was increased, and the judges vested with the powers of a magistrate. But it was not till 1790, or the administration of the Marquess of Cornwallis, that any real reform was made. In that year the nabob was expressly deprived of his authority, though his pension was left intact; the Calcutta Supreme Court was established, and also a Chief Criminal Court for all Bengal, with four

Criminal Courts of Circuit. A regular police was started at the same time; and by 1793 a methodical system of administration was introduced, which, with modifications and improvements, has been handed down to the present times.

We have not yet named the greatest of Lord Cornwallis's achievements, which was the permanent settlement of the land revenue. Up to this time the zemindars were only contractors for the collection of the rent due from the ryots. The English Government now conceived the idea of giving them such an interest in the soil as would induce them to improve it by reclaiming the jungles and swamps. With this view a settlement of the revenue was made with them, first for ten years, and afterwards as a permanent arrangement, a proprietory right in the soil being conceded to them. This arrangement has been for a long time the bone of contention between those who have praised and those who have assailed it; but it is scarcely possible to deny that, on the whole, it has worked pretty fairly up to the present day. Of course it was a bargain for the zemin-

dars—it was meant to be so; but the rights of the ryots were not unprotected. Since then the matter has been sifted every time that questions between zemindars and their ryots have arisen, and all the little grievances on either side have been removed or redressed by after-legislation. It may be argued that, notwithstanding everything that has been done in his favour, the ryot's share in the produce of the soil amounts at this moment to no more than what is barely sufficient to support his existence. This is too true; but that is more or less the condition of the husbandman all over the world. The only telling argument against the settlement is, that it was concluded hastily, with men who did not represent the ancient gentry of the province, whom alone it was intended to benefit. This, doubtless, was the case; for (such had been the misrule of previous years) there was actually no old gentry in existence when the settlement was made; and all that the English Government could possibly do, was to create a new gentry with such materials as were at hand. After all, the concession to the zemindars does not appear to have been anything so great as it

is generally supposed. It is only eighty years now since the settlement was made; within this short period almost all the families with which it was originally concluded have disappeared as insolvents, their properties having passed into other hands, while the few that remain are generally in evil plight. With some notable exceptions, it is the Government security-holder, and not the zemindar, who is the millionaire of the day!

It is scarcely necessary to trace the administrative changes in the order in which they were made. Improvements in all departments were effected year after year, as soon as the Government began to understand its work, and perceive its way through the difficulties by which it was surrounded. Of course the revenue continued to receive the greatest share of attention; it continues to do so to the present hour. The permanent settlement of the revenue left very little to be done in the way of augmenting it; but what little was left, has been since well worked up. All the tracts not included in the original settlement have now been settled, or resettled, with large increases of revenue; and

the work is still going on in every nook and corner to which it can be extended. The recent resettlement of Assam, which is a Government estate, has doubled the revenue hitherto derived from it; some portions of the Midnapore district have been settled afresh with like success; Palamow, in the table-land of the Chota Nagpore division, has been similarly dealt with at an advance of sixty per cent on the former demand; and the Bootan Dooars have been settled at more than double the revenue that the Booteahs ever made out of them.

Besides increasing the revenue, the Government has been doing a great deal of other work also. In connection with the revenue settlements, the whole of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa has been surveyed. This has been done for revenue purposes only, and in a somewhat perfunctory manner; so that no permanent boundary-marks of villages and properties have anywhere been laid down. But it is still a great thing that something has been done in a matter so important. The bulk of the area which yet remains to be dealt with is in Assam. The district of Midnapore has also to be resurveyed,

the previous survey having proved to be worthless. All this work, it is expected, will be completed in about five years more. The question of boundary-marks has not yet been determined, the great difficulty to be got over being the cost. The Government is unwilling to incur the expense, as the main advantage to be derived from it will fall to the share of the zemindar; but it is rather curious that, having done so much already, the Government should now be straining at a gnat.

Another great work undertaken in connection with the collection of revenue is the irrigation of parched districts. The irrigation-works in Bengal consist as yet only of (1.) the Orissa canals, and (2.) the Soane canals. The first is subdivided into two parts—namely, one designed for the irrigation of the delta of the Mahanuddy and the Brahmini rivers in Orissa, and the other for the irrigation of the district of Midnapore, which is also to be connected with the tidal waters of the Hooghly. The works required for these purposes were commenced by a private company (the East India Irrigation Company) in 1864, from whom they were pur-

chased by the Government. Those on the Soane were also originally projected by the same Company. What the Government has done at either place up to this time is very little; as yet, the works do not promise to be very successful in a short time.

For a long series of years the Government had a salt-monopoly which has since been thrown up. The manufacture, as it was carried on by the Government, yielded a large revenue, but was not founded on the goodwill of the people engaged in it. The Government officials intrusted with the work contracted with persons called Molunghees for the engagement of people as salt-coolies. Large advances were made through these men, of which a small fraction only found its way to the ryots,—just as much, in fact, as was necessary to force them to engage in the work—the conditions implied being, that they were to leave their homes and families, and go to work at the salt-pans, whenever they were required to do so. The advances were not taken willingly, often not taken at all; but the ryots had to work all the same, as complaints from them only lay to the salt-officers,

who (we are speaking of the old days of the Company) always sided with the Molunghees. Sometimes the officers intrusted with the judicial administration of the country attempted to interfere; but this only led to affrays between the two departments of the public service, and to the eventual triumph of the salt-department, the loss of revenue being in those days more dreaded by the Government than any little failure of justice. An effort was made to regulate the system of impressment, and much honesty of purpose on the part of certain excellent administrators was brought to bear on the matter; but the evils did not abate materially till the monopoly was given up. Some salt is still manufactured by the Government; but the manufacture is now open to everybody, and does not, therefore, admit of impressment. Altogether, very little salt is at present manufactured in the country, the whole supply required being met by the imports from Liverpool. The interest of the Government is now limited to the realisation of a duty imposed at an equal rate on all salt sold; and it is a matter of little importance to them, so far as the revenue is

concerned, whether the salt thus sold is imported or home-manufactured. A large revenue is derived from the duty levied on the imported salt, so that there has been no loss whatever by the abandonment of the manufacturing monopoly. The tax realised is on one of the necessaries of life, and may appear somewhat iniquitous on that ground; but the natives of all classes prefer it as it stands, and have themselves often proposed the abolition of all direct imposts, with an increase of the salt-rate. Propose a direct tax of any kind, and they are sure to object to it; but indirectly, they are willing to make up quite as much as the Government may require of them. An abstinence from all direct taxation would, without doubt, give their conquerors the strongest hold on their faithfulness.

The English Government also kept up for a long time a number of cloth manufactories in Bengal, which were the foci of much oppression. The system of this manufacture, like that of salt, was based on advances given to the weavers, by which they were bound to give up their woven cloths to the factory. The story

is the same: the advances were forced on the ryots, never accepted by them willingly; the full price of the articles taken was never paid; no complaints against the oppression of the factory servants were listened to—the officers of the commercial department, before whom such complaints had to be preferred, always siding with their own subordinates; and the Government of the day being unprepared to forego the profits realised, the cry of the oppressed never found a listening ear.

The contests about the cultivation of indigo are well known; but these have been between the private speculator and the ryot. The oppressions at times were very great, and they have not ceased altogether yet. The subject has been often legislated upon, and oftener still specially inquired into; but the sympathy with the oppressed has not at all times been so great as it ought to have been. The dispute, before as now, was about the right to the plant. Not only did the planters claim what the ryots cultivated for themselves, but also what they cultivated for others. Here also advances were forced, seldom taken willingly, the whole object

being to get a hold on the ryot, however slight —to insert the thin end of the wedge. The history of the affrays and oppressions connected with the cultivation would fill volumes. One little Bengali novel was written on the subject by a Bengali, for translating which the Rev. Mr Long was imprisoned.

We have noticed the subject of pilgrimages in a previous chapter. The pilgrims were always many, and had to undergo great hardships on the road, the means of locomotion being very barbarous in those days, and the roads infested by dacoits and robbers. But what they complained of most was a pilgrimage-tax, which, petty in itself, was, in its realisation, attended with much violence and wrong. The Mahomedans made as much as they could of this tax, as a matter of course. Their first idea was altogether to abolish pilgrimages to sites held sacred by idolaters; but the wiser heads among them devised the better plan of making the Hindus pay for the privilege they clamoured for. The English Government continued the tax. The benefit to the treasury was so inconsiderable, that it is a

matter of surprise to us that an impost so iniquitous was retained so late as 1840. The subordinate officers intrusted with its realisation, of course, feathered their own nests by levying their own rates; but though this was well known, no attempts were ever made to check it.

The other sources of revenue from the commencement of the English rule have been opium and the intoxicating liquors. The revenue on the first is realised from the Chinese nation, who consume the drug. The amount raised is very large (£7,000,000), and could not be made up in any way without imposing a heavy burden on our own subjects. When we have said this, however, we have said all that can be urged in favour of the sale of opium, as it is still carried on. The justice of supplying a friendly nation with a poisonous drug is hardly defensible. If the Chinese had exported to England anything equally ruinous to the health and morals of the British nation, they would perhaps by this time have been blown out of home and country, and entombed under the depths of the Pacific Ocean. The

gain to the finances of Bengal is, however, too palpable to be gainsaid. The cultivation of the drug is a Government monopoly, and is carefully superintended by Government officers. It is carried on under contract with the Government, which, through its agents, obtains the quantity it requires for sale. The public at large are not allowed to cultivate direct, nor to appropriate any portion of what is prepared for the Government, except as purchasers, under precautions laid down by the law. The article is very little used by the people of Bengal; and the prohibition, therefore, is not a grievance.

The revenue derived from the intoxicating liquors amounts to about £750,000. It admits of further development; and a vigorous Government regrets that the policy of so developing it is cried down as unjustifiable by fault-finding missionaries and hypercritical natives. The fact of the increase of drunkenness in the land is not disputed. The Government is only anxious to explain that it is not responsible for the result, which is not attributable to the system in force; and that all its efforts have been directed to the prevention of drunkenness

by the establishment of a monopoly. There is no question, however, that, provided the duties imposed by the Government are paid, there is no check whatever on the manufacture of spirits and liquors, which, when they are manufactured, are of course consumed. The Act which regulates the realisation of the duties is, with great simplicity, called an Act for better securing the Abkaree Revenue. It certainly does secure the revenue well enough; but another Act, for better protecting the morals of a dependent people, seems to be as urgently called for. A Christian Government might also note that both opium and excise were small sources of revenue to the native governments, whose duties were prohibitive, with a view to discourage consumption.

The total revenue of Bengal from all sources amounts, at this moment, to about £17,000,000,*

* Derived from Land Revenue, . £4,000,000
" " Customs, . . 1,100,000
" " Salt, . . . 2,580,000
" " Opium, . . . 7,000,000
" " Excise, . . . 750,000
" " all other sources, . 1,570,000

£17,000,000

while the total expenditure is about £5,000,000, leaving a splendid surplus of £12,000,000. Omitting the revenue from opium, which is not derived from Bengal, and may at any time cease to be available, the surplus still stands at the magnificent sum of £5,000,000; so that the revenue of one year in Bengal is equal to the amount expended in it in two years. These figures, however, represent the results in one province of the Indian Empire only, the surplus in which has to make up for deficiencies elsewhere, and is thus rendered unavailable for improving the condition of the paying Presidency itself. To effect the improvements required in it, direct taxes are now being imposed, much to the dissatisfaction of the people. We particularly refer to the road-cess, the incidence of which on the ryot cannot but be oppressive; and it has come into operation just after the income-tax (another equally irritating and unnecessary imposition) has been given up as a failure.

We have dwelt at some length on revenue and taxes, because "Money, money," was at one time the watchword of the English rule in

Bengal, though it has ceased to be so now. The administration of the police is, to the people at least, a question of even greater importance. It was, we have mentioned, intrusted by the English at the outset to the zemindars, who in a very short time showed that they were not equal to the trust. Notwithstanding this, the obligation of appointing, providing, and maintaining watchmen remained with them for a long time, and to a great extent remains with them to this moment. The police establishments now are of five kinds: (1.) the regular district police, which includes the road and river patrols, the salt preventive establishments, and the police employed in guarding the frontiers; (2.) the municipal police, which is paid partly by the Government and partly by the municipality under which it is employed; (3.) the railway police, especially entertained for putting a stop to malpractices on the railway; (4.) the village police, appointed either by the zemindars or the village community, and paid either in money or in kind, or by the assignment of lands held on condition of service; and (5.) the detective police, a special

establishment retained in the place of a dacoity department which existed before, but has since been abolished. Of these, the fourth is the establishment distributed all over the country, and employed in keeping the peace, watching and apprehending criminals, and giving information; while the first is distributed in *thannah* circles, and only acts on receiving information. The popular opinion of the regular police is a very unfavourable one; and there is no doubt that with most cases of burglaries and robberies the members of this police especially are found in some way or other mixed up: but the obligations of the country to the police are nevertheless too great to be denied. The present crime statistics show that the number of offences, compared with the population, is not greater than in most other countries; but the tale in times past was very different. The offences most rife even now are dacoities on land and water, fables regarding the more extensive prevalence of which in earlier times are still current throughout the land; while the measures taken by the Legislature on different occasions to check them, prove incontestably

that those stories are well founded. The country swarmed before with wandering gangs of burglars and robbers; we owe it to the police that these have been put down. General security of life, limb, and property has now been afforded to the people everywhere; and nothing has been so widely or gratefully appreciated as this.

The next thing to notice are the courts for the administration of justice—civil and criminal. The responsibility of administering civil justice was undertaken simultaneously with the fiscal administration of the country in 1765; while that of administering criminal justice was taken up in 1793, when the Nabob of Moorshedabad was deprived of his powers. The first shifts and expedients of the Company to discharge these duties were exceedingly clumsy and inefficient, and necessarily unpopular; but, as they were from the commencement bent on performing the work honestly, the machinery, to give effect to their wishes, was elaborated in time, with no more mistakes and mischances than, under the circumstances of their position, were to have been expected. The judicial

machinery was not perfected till 1831, or the time of Lord William Bentinck, with whom originated the bright idea of utilising native agency in the work on a large scale. This idea was at once carried out in connection with the administration of civil justice, which at the present day rests almost entirely in the hands of native judges. The more extensive employment of natives in criminal work was of tardier growth, being determined upon in 1843, since which time all attempts at improvement have taken the same direction. The courts for the administration of civil justice now are—(1.) the High Court, (2.) the courts of district judges, (3.) those of subordinate judges, (4.) Moonsiffs' courts, and (5.) small cause courts. The courts for the administration of criminal justice are—(1.) the High Court, (2.) the courts of sessions, and (3.) the magistrates' courts of different classes. The general progress in both branches of the administration has been such as to command the respect and secure the confidence of the entire nation.

In the earlier days of its sovereignty the Company had to wage perpetual war against

adventurers and interlopers. No European in those days was allowed to land in Bengal without a pass from the Court of Directors in his pocket. This precaution was necessary at the time, as the parties who did go out never failed either to embarrass the Government with foreign states, or to oppress the people. But the adoption of a contrary policy afterwards—that is, as soon as the Government was out of leading-strings—also had its advantages. The English settler, taken by himself, has frequently been an evil of great magnitude to the ryot; but he has always carried with him roads, railways, and canals; and more moonsiffs and more magistrates were at once found necessary wherever the energy of the planter developed itself. In this way have the interlopers been of great service to the people.

What, then, has been the effect of English rule on the destinies of Bengal? What, briefly, are the benefits the people have derived from it? What are the benefits which it ought to have conferred, but has not? The answer to these questions may be summed up in very few words. The English rule has been an un-

mitigated blessing to the people, and this is fully acknowledged by them all. If the people are not positively happy, they are far happier than they ever were before. Leaving aside the first few years of the Company's existence, when there was necessarily much misrule and confusion, the whole of the subsequent period, notwithstanding the distraction of struggles maintained for existence and waged for conquests and expansion, has been one of peace and rest to the people, or at least of freedom from external attacks and aggressions. No enemy from without has come and knocked at the gate for admission within. The Mahrattas had been troublesome for years in the west; their power was shattered, and they devastated the fields of Bengal no more. The piratic excursions of the Arracanese had been almost equally persistent and hurtful in the east; they were vigorously hunted down, and they ceased to trouble. Revolts and internal rebellions had been constant in the country throughout the Mahomedan reign; but there have been none since, with the sole exception of the great Mutiny of 1857, which did not affect Bengal,

except in particular districts. The roads had been before infested by thugs and dacoits; the former were rooted out, and the latter put down. The times had been when neither life, nor property, nor honour was secure: but now the rich man finds no necessity for hiding his gold and his silver under ground; the merchant is not afraid to convey his wealth and goods from one extremity of the country to the other unattended by an armed escort; the artisan does not conceal his skill from fear of impressment; the ryot does not curse the beauty of his wife, lest it should make her the victim of arbitrary power; the murderer of a governor-general, taken red-handed in the act, was lawfully tried and convicted before he was executed, nor did one voice dare to suggest that he should either be burnt, or trampled under an elephant, or quartered alive.

Then, again, a great many of the social evils of the country have been removed. First of all, the horrible practice of widow-burning has ceased. We hardly believe now, and our grandchildren will scout the idea, that there ever was a time when the living were actually burnt

with the dead; and yet throughout the whole of the Mahomedan era this was tolerated by the sovereign power, to whom generally it was indifferent how the Hindus lived or died. Instances of personal interference are on record; but in such cases it was the beauty of the victim, not the horror of the crime, that suggested the rescue. A more recent law has sanctioned the remarriage of widows; the traffic in slaves has been authoritatively abolished; and other little enactments have removed many minor evils, such as gambling and the like. In Sir Cecil Beadon's time, it was proposed to regulate the practice of taking sick people to the river-side to die, and to restrain the abuses attending the practice of polygamy; though nothing was done then, because the Government of India and the Secretary of State did not consider any interference in those matters necessary, notwithstanding that the more advanced section of the native community sided with the local government, especially on the second question. A whole lot of other good laws have been given to the country, like the

penal code, the civil and criminal procedure codes, the sale and rent laws, and the Acts regulating the police. The jails have been improved, to alleviate the miseries of imprisonment. Railways have been opened out, primarily for political purposes, and also for affording facilities to traffic and to the passenger public. Hospitals have been opened to extend the aid of European science in affording medical relief. Schools have been set up in all parts of the country for the education of the people. And lastly, perfect freedom of thought and speech has been accorded to the governed, who never before could speak out their grievances freely, but now daily ventilate sentiments the expression of which under any Asiatic Government would have cost them their heads.

Of course a great deal more remains yet to be done; but we cannot say that any improvement which could have been effected has been purposely left unaccomplished. The years of peaceful administration have been few, and as much has been done within that brief period as the most sanguine had a right to expect; and there

is no doubt that the good work so earnestly begun will be zealously continued, since every reasonable effort is being made at this moment to continue it.

The urgent requirements of the country now are : (1.) the establishment of more cordial relations between the governors and the governed than have yet sprung up ; (2.) the further extension of native agency in the administration of the country, without any reservation of rights and appointments on behalf of Englishmen merely for the sake of their birth ; (3.) the rapid completion of the irrigation-works ; (4.) a thorough fumigation of the public works department, and the construction of good roads in every direction not accessible to the railways ; (5.) the opening of many more hospitals and dispensaries than there are at present ; and (6.) the opening of more schools everywhere for both vernacular and English education. To this end, as Bengal leaves a surplus of £12,000,000 annually in the hands of the Government, we are decidedly of opinion that at least half of that money should be utilised for its improve-

ment, the other half only going to the credit of the general profit and loss account of the empire. Justice must not be altogether sacrificed to expediency, as it is at this moment under existing arrangements.

CHAPTER X.

PROGRESS OF EDUCATION.

WE have mentioned what the British Government has done for the welfare of the people of Bengal. We now come to notice what the people, with or without the assistance of the Government, must do for themselves. A foreign Government can never interfere successfully with the social evils dominant among a subject race. In this, the subject race must put their own shoulders to the wheel. The great prevailing evils of Bengal now are the social evils—such as polytheism, caste, polygamy, ghat-murders (*antarjali*), and a host of other bad habits and customs to which the doctoring hitherto has been very partial, and which cannot be thoroughly eradicated without a wider

extension of a really sound education. The Government has done something to this end; the people in their way have done more. But it is the people that must proceed still further in the matter, as, without great efforts on their part, no exertion on the part of the Government is likely to be very successful.

The aptitude of the people to learn is great; and the glimpses that we can obtain of the past, show that from the remotest times they were educated, though within a limited degree. The education was general, but, as a rule, of a very inferior order, which accounts for the long existence of so many social evils in the country. Every village had a schoolmaster, perhaps more, who formed a constituent part of the community, just as much as the priest or the barber; but he taught nothing beyond letter-writing, arithmetic, and the songs relating to the gods. Only in certain places, the seats of learning, were there establishments for scholastic instruction; and these were accessible only to Brahmans, among whom, accordingly, were confined all the greatest scholars of the olden times. All this, inadequate as the provision was, disappeared during the

long periods of war and anarchy we have noticed; the village schools, the race of distinguished learned men, even the books which they read and taught, were lost together. The result was so deplorable, that only thirty years ago Bengal had no language worth speaking of; there were no books of any sort in the country beyond those of inane songs in praise of the gods, and of lewd stories, related in most indecent jargon.

The boards have now been rearranged; the people are most anxious to learn, and each village has again got its schoolmaster or schoolmasters, and the Bengali language has been recultivated—we may say reconstructed. All this the natives have done for themselves. The restoration of peace to the country soon brought them back to their old predilections, and of their own accord they have come back to occupy the old position from which they were forcibly thrust out. This praise is exclusively their own. The Government has aided them since by the establishment of schools in every direction, but their number as yet is very inconsiderable. The wars between the Anglicists and the Vernacularists have contributed much to hamper the

exertions of the Government; and recently the Government of Sir George Campbell* has itself assumed the character of a partisan. After a long-protracted contention, the two opposing parties found out, in Lord Auckland's time, that they did not really entertain any very divergent opinions: and it was then settled that, for the higher classes—namely, those who sought education for the enlargement of their minds—an English education was indispensable; but that, for the lower classes, a good practical vernacular education was all that was desired. The question thus determined has been most unnecessarily reopened, and even the paltry trick of raising an objection to demolish it has been resorted to. No one ever seriously proposed to make the English language the *lingua franca* of the country; and yet much indignation has been exhausted in combating that Utopian idea.

The discussion now reopened was, we have said, quite unnecessary. The masses ought most assuredly to be educated to the largest

* This essay was written in the last year of Sir George Campbell's administration. Its publication has been unavoidably delayed.

extent possible in reading, writing, arithmetic, and the mechanical sciences; the education grant of the Government is not yet so large as not to require further expansion; the obligation of the Government to educate the people is not a new theory in politics; the question of cutting down the expenditure under one head to assign the saving to another did not arise. What was wanted was an extensive enlargement of the educational grant, that the additional money might be appropriated to mass or vernacular education. If the education of the masses is highly necessary, equally necessary is the education of the higher classes in the higher walks of literature and science—since it is only in the power of those higher classes to give that to the country which it is not in the power of the Government to confer. It does not become a man in Sir George Campbell's position, then, to sneer at those Bengalis who read Bacon and Milton, and possibly appreciate them as well as he does. Leaving out such venerated names from the controversy altogether (there being no reason why they should be unnecessarily profaned), we ask if it is not desirable

that the natives should be able to understand the laws and edicts of the Government as they are passed, instead of having to depend on the emasculated version of the Government translator? Is it not necessary that they should read and understand what is going on in Europe? Is it not necessary to the very stability of the empire that the leading newspapers and periodicals of Great Britain should be as accessible to them as to their chief at Belvedere? We say emphatically, then, that the grant to higher education should not be curtailed. We assert with equal emphasis that the grant for lower education should be increased,—village schools for the masses; district schools for the middle classes; colleges of science, jurisprudence, medicine, engineering, arts, and manufactures, for the higher classes,—all these are equally wanted; and this want is not to be tided over by mere minute-writing, but must be candidly and straightforwardly met by a larger contribution for education.

But the people must also do a great deal themselves—very much more than they have yet done, and considerably more than they have

a right to expect from the Government. We do not accept the parrot-cry that they have done nothing. They have done a great deal already; but this is not a matter in which they can say, We have done enough. What they have done as yet merely satisfies the first and most peremptory claims of the country upon them. But they can, and must, do more. If we remember aright, it was the natives who started the Hindu College in 1817. The idea was that of an Englishman, of course—namely, of David Hare, a name to this day venerated by the Hindus of Calcutta as that of one of their *griha-devatas*, or household gods. It was worked out also by Englishmen—by Sir Hyde East, Mr Harrington, and other influential members of the public service. But the best portion of the funds for carrying out the idea came from the natives themselves. A few years after, in 1823, was established the Oriental Seminary, which has up to the present day retained an excellent reputation. It owed its origin to the energy of one private individual, and has throughout been unaided except by natives. The country wants ten, twenty, fifty

schools like these; and it would be a crying shame if the natives are unable to establish them without the sustaining hand of the Government.

It is scarcely necessary in this place to name all the educational institutions which were established in Calcutta at the outset. But some of the more prominent ones, as the first promises of a nation's enlightenment, ought to be remembered. The first we have mentioned was the Hindu College, now called the Presidency College, for which the natives found the money, but which was only sustained through its infancy by the untiring exertions of Mr Hare. That worthy gentleman also established a private school of his own, called Hare's School, which still passes by his name, and has been affiliated to the Presidency College. The Oriental Seminary was established by Baboo Gour Mohun Auddy, and has given, we believe, two judges to the High Court of Calcutta. The General Assembly's Institution was established in 1830 by Dr Duff, the well-known minister of the Free Church of Scotland, whose name is much respected by the people. The Sanskrit College, and the Madrassa or Maho-

medan College, have both been throughout maintained at the expense of the Government. The Medical College was also founded by the Government of Lord William Bentinck in 1834. It was one of the last acts of that illustrious nobleman, and one of the most useful. Here the Hindu, whom the tomb of a dead body ought, according to the Shastras, to defile, receives his lessons on anatomy in the dissecting-hall; and from the time of its first establishment to this day, it has sent out a large staff of cheap medical practitioners, who have proved of inestimable benefit to the poor. The only other institution that need be named is the Bishop's College, established by Dr Middleton for the education of Christian youths in sacred and general knowledge, which is munificently endowed.

We now come down to present times. The latest educational statistics show the following results: So far as information has been collected, it is reported in the last Administration Report of the Government (for 1871-72) that there are 13,557 indigenous village schools in Bengal supported entirely by the people; but the Government educational officers themselves

admit that this total does not include a very large number of the smaller *patsalas*, at each of which from four to eight boys are taught. By indigenous schools are meant all the contrivances originating with the people by means of which instruction in the elements of knowledge is communicated. Mr Adam, in his education report, dated 1835, after a long and patient inquiry, gave the then number of these institutions in Bengal Proper alone at about 100,000; and it cannot have lessened, though possibly it has not much increased, since then. The accurate number, including the schools in Behar and Orissa, will probably be about 150,000. The Government figures are therefore simply misleading; they do not convey any correct idea of the efforts the people are making to educate themselves.

These indigenous primary schools are either *patsalas*, which teach in Bengali, Hindi, Ooryah, or Assamese; or they they are *Muktabs* or Mahomedan schools, where the Koran is read. The languages employed in the *patsalas* are chiefly Bengali in Bengal and Assam—Assamese being used only in particular establishments in the

latter province—Hindi in Behar, and Ooryah in Orissa. Bengali was largely used in Orissa till recently; but under late orders of the Government, Ooryah has become the medium of instruction, which change has also been adopted in most of the schools supported by the people. In Orissa, Behar, and Assam, the institutions are altogether few in number. Everywhere the schools for Hindu instruction are considerably greater in number than those for Mahomedan instruction; but the latter are usually of a more comprehensive character.

Apart from these primary schools, there is a description of higher schools called "roles," in some of which are taught grammar, general literature, and rhetoric; in others, logic and philosophy; and in others, again, law,—all as they are contained in the old Sanskrit books, the great mythological poems being also read. These establishments are now few in number, and are mainly to be found in Nuddea, Rajshahye, and Tirhoot. In connection with them, Lord Minto proposed to establish Sanskrit colleges in Nuddea and Tirhoot; but the idea was abandoned on a Sanskrit college

being established in Calcutta, though it would probably have been much better if the original intention had been carried out, as the demand for purely Sanskrit instruction has not proved to be very great in the metropolis. The students of the "roles" prosecute their studies often up to their thirty-fifth or fortieth year. They are supported either by the learned men who instruct them, or by the presents they receive on occasions of invitation to religious festivals and domestic celebrations, or out of funds especially assigned by rich people for the purpose, or by begging as religious mendicants when every other means proves inadequate. The tuition is almost exclusively confined to Brahmans, the Kayasths and Vaidyas being only permitted to study such portions of Sanskrit literature as do not profess to be of divine origin.

There is no connection or dependence between the two descriptions of indigenous schools referred to. The primary schools are not preparatory to the "roles;" nor do the "roles" profess to complete what is begun in the primary schools. The one, in fact, is for children—the other for men; the one is for trading, agricul-

tural, and industrial classes generally—the other for the religious and learned classes. But they are both *bonâ fide* indigenous institutions, and owe nothing whatever to the Government. In the "roles," after completion of education, titles are conferred by an assembly of *pundits*, indicating the branch of study in which the student has distinguished himself. The titles, as usual all over the East, are very high-sounding—as the "gem of logic," "the ocean of knowledge," and the like; but the recipients are generally distinguished by great humbleness and simplicity of character, and live a very poor life as compared with their really extensive acquirements. In this respect, at least, Young Bengal has a great deal to learn from them.

Now, let us see what the Government educational establishments are. The number of primary schools paid for wholly or aided by the Government is 2451; the number of middle schools, 1462; and the number of higher and special schools (including colleges), 540: so that the total number of institutions wholly or partially supported by the Government is 4453. Of these 4453 schools, the total expenditure

amounts to Rs. 3,187,059, of which the Government contributes Rs. 1,814,037, or a little above a moiety of the charge — the smaller moiety being, in some shape or other, paid by the people. The cost of the schools wholly paid for by the people is not shown in the statistics available, nor any mention made of the large amount expended in domestic instruction. We are not able to supply the desideratum ; but it is sufficiently clear, from the facts above stated, that it is simply absurd to maintain, what has been asserted over and over, that the Government pays more than the people for their education.

In Calcutta, the Government higher schools are all of them entirely self-supporting—that is, the fees paid by the students more than cover the current expenses incurred. The private higher schools in the city also support themselves; so that no Government aid is given to higher schools of any kind in Calcutta. That aid is restricted to the interior of the country, where, for obvious reasons, the progress of enlightenment has been tardy, which in itself would seem to indicate that the aid of

the Government there was all the more needed; but the Government thinks otherwise, and the grants hitherto made have therefore been "revised"—*i.e.*, reduced. The clipping-scissors have also been applied to some of the colleges which were considered to be more than usually expensive, with a view to provide funds for primary education. This has provoked the charge that the administrators of the present day are afraid of natives who talk English and oppose the crotchets of their rulers with arguments, who actually go to England to complete their education, and who threaten to swamp both the Civil Service and the Bar. The charge, however, has no real foundation. The present head of the local government is crotchety, but not illiberal; the view taken by him is wrong, but not dishonest. One thing is certain, that even if he were really inimical to them, the natives would continue to learn English, go to England, and overwhelm the Civil Service and the Bar in spite of any and every opposition that he or his evil advisers could set up. The impetus has been given, and cannot now be recalled.

The education of the Mahomedan community has for years been very backward. It is therefore a matter of relief to us that it is now receiving the particular attention of the Government. The Mahomedans hate to send their children to the English schools, for reasons which the following anecdote, told by a Government educational officer, very naïvely explains: A well-to-do Mahomedan sent one of his sons to a Government school; the boy did well, and the father was urged to send his second son also to the school. To this he demurred, saying that it was enough to make an infidel of one of them; there was no reason why they should both go to the bad. This is the feeling of every Mahomedan in the country, be he of high or low degree. The teaching of the giaour upsets all the beliefs cherished by the faithful, which is of course also the case as regards the Hindu. The Hindu can tolerate this, but the Mahomedan cannot; and he will not willingly come forward to learn for all the piping that it is in the power of the Government to administer. Notwithstanding this, a good strenuous effort to bring round the Mahomedans should be made:

it is necessary on political, if not on higher grounds,—the best way, the only way, to make the Mahomedans loyal being to educate them —that is, if you can.

The study of Sanskrit, which received much encouragement from the English Government at the outset, has since fallen into great disfavour. It must be said that the people themselves have ceased to be partial to their classics —so much so, that for a long time it has been found impossible to keep together a Sanskrit college in Calcutta without giving the students the benefit of an English course as well. But even this should not have evoked a crusade against the study of Sanskrit everywhere. The teaching of it has now been authoritatively restricted in all but the highest schools, so that it has been virtually tabooed. We trust that the old "roles" will still send out good scholars from time to time, if only to put to shame the Vandalism that is endeavouring so persistently to shut up for ever the riches of ancient lore.

But we must not be altogether disloyal to Sir George Campbell's Government. A move in the right direction has been made by the introduc-

tion of gymnastic exercises in connection with some of the principal colleges and schools. The Bengalis are a nation of dyspeptics, and something was urgently needed to give them active habits. A riding-school has also been established. This is all right; but will the Government be liberal enough to go a step further and establish a military academy? Possibly the Bengalis will never make soldiers of any sort—good, bad, or indifferent; but an enlightened Government should give them every facility to prove their usefulness. No one need fear much disloyalty from them; they may talk treason, but are too shrewd to act it. At all events, we should not rest content with having made them parrots only, if we can make them men.

As practical education is now the rage, we would here prominently draw attention to a letter written by a Bengali some thirteen years ago, and published in the 'Hindu Patriot,' a weekly newspaper of Calcutta. We reprint nearly the whole of the letter, that the suggestions contained in it may be clearly understood. It was addressed to the British Indian Associa-

tion, which, however, does not appear to have taken any action on it :—

"GENTLEMEN,—Not being a member of your Association, I take the liberty of addressing you through the columns of the 'Patriot.'

"You are no doubt aware that Mr Hodgson Pratt has published a book entitled 'University Education in England for the Natives of India.' In that work he has proposed the adoption of measures for conveying to England a small number of young natives (four or five at the outset) every year, for the purpose of giving them a university education.

"Mr Pratt's scheme contemplates, by giving these youths a higher standard of education, to introduce gradually a higher standard of life in India, and so secure a body of qualified men for the Civil Service. The project is a good one; but it appears to me that it only goes half-way, or even less, in the right direction.

"I have long had in mind another, which I think is better calculated to raise my countrymen in the scale of nations; and I take this opportunity to solicit your consideration of the subject, in the hope that, if you approve of my plan, you may find means to carry it out.

"I am not going to write an essay, and shall therefore simply note down the main points, to show what I think should, and how it might, be done. The native community—assisted by such Europeans as may choose to join them—might, it appears to me, raise a fund sufficient perpetually to maintain one hundred native youths, whom I would propose to distribute all over England, France, and Germany, for the purpose of learning all that is really useful, and likely to be most beneficial to their country. A university education is a very good thing; but in our present circumstances it is not *the* thing we absolutely require. We can do without good literary men for some time to come; and it appears to me that we can afford still longer to be without barristers and doctors educated on the English model. To be great as a nation, we require, first, a knowledge of the manufactures and arts of England, of her steamboats, railroads, and electric telegraphs. Our young men must learn to cast guns and manufacture gunpowder, to make Norton shells, build ships—plain and iron-plated—manufacture cutlery, convert our cotton into linen without having to send it out of the country; and, in fact, everything else on

which we see that the greatness of other nations is based. They may become good scholars in addition if they choose, but that is of less than secondary importance; and besides, something in that way can be, and has been, achieved in the country itself.

"If my plan can be carried out, we may, under the blessing of Providence, hope some future day to be prepared for self-government —that is, for that occasion which has long been talked of, and may yet come, when the English people shall, with a greatness of which they alone are capable, gracefully and smilingly relinquish their dominion in the East. Now, if they desert us, are we not perfectly helpless?

"Mr Pratt estimates the expense of living in England at £200 a-year per man. Living in the other European countries will probably be cheaper; but, calculating the whole expenditure at one uniform rate, we shall have to provide a fund yielding £20,000 a-year. Is it hopeless to think of raising a subscription of say forty lakhs of rupees for the object I have explained? This is the point which I submit for your earnest consideration."

Some of the suggestions above seem to us to be intelligent and worthy of adoption; and they can be adopted now with greater ease than when they were first proposed. A large fund for maintaining a number of scholars in Europe would now seem to be unnecessary. Such a fund could nowhere be easily raised, and certainly not in Bengal. But many Bengalis now come to England at their own cost; and they may be induced to submit to special training of the sort indicated by the payment of some stipulated scholarship or bonus. Nor is it necessary that so many as one hundred youths should be perpetually maintained in the way mentioned. There is no great hurry in realising the fruits of the experiment, as England is not likely to give up India immediately, for all that Russia or any other Power may have to say to her; and half the number of learners, or even a fourth, would be quite enough to commence with. We also have wondered why the Bengalis come to England only for passing the Civil Service examination, and to get enrolled as barristers. There is a much better future open for those who should

master England's manufactures and arts, and then set up their own manufactories in their native country. Casting guns or building iron-clads are not acquirements immediately necessary, for the reason we have mentioned; and the natives may well defer acquiring them for the present, as they cannot be immediately remunerative. But there is no reason why, as the writer of the letter remarks, they should not be able to manufacture cloths out of their own silk, cotton, flax, and jute—make their own knives and razors, their own foolscap and other writing paper, and their own glassware and crockery.

We now proceed to notice what the progress of education in Bengal now consists in. It is represented, first, by the number of Masters of Art and Bachelors of Art turned out by the Calcutta University. There are already nearly one hundred and fifty of the former, and some seven hundred of the latter—not, perhaps, a very large number, taken in the abstract, but nevertheless promising, with its annual increases, to become very embarrassing in a short time, considering that all these degree-holders

are, for want of other useful occupation, constantly scrambling for official employment. If their energies could be diverted in the way we have mentioned, they would become real blessings to their country; but the prospect at present is not very hopeful.

The important special colleges in operation are those for teaching law, medicine, and civil engineering, and the school of arts. The first has passed about four hundred bachelors of law; but for the higher degrees there have as yet been no candidates. Nor does the country want any. The law market is glutted already; the cry everywhere is, "Hold! no more." The medical college has passed four doctors of medicine and about thirty bachelors of first and second degree, besides a very large number of sub-assistant surgeons and native doctors, who are quietly displacing the indigenous medical practitioners, who know nothing whatever of medicine as a science, and possess an exceedingly inconsiderable share of general knowledge. This institution has enabled the Government to prohibit inoculation with the cow-pox officially, and to extend vaccination

in every direction. It has also given a new class of midwives, trained in its wards, to take the places of those who hitherto followed the profession without knowing anything about it, by simply making a mystery of what they did not understand; and it has made the native doctor so rampant that, even in the remotest corners of the country, conjurers and charmers are losing their practice. The civil engineering college is an institution of comparatively recent date, and has as yet produced only one bachelor and about fifty licentiates. The profession, just at this moment, is more lucrative than either law or medicine, owing to the Public Works Department being able to find employment for all passed students at once; but the work of that department is not much coveted by natives of intelligence and honesty, and young men of the present generation are averse to come in contact with old sinners, to be made their scapegoats. The school of arts promises to be very useful, but requires further time to develop itself.

The progress of female education in Bengal has been very inconsiderable. The Government

and aided female schools are two hundred and ninety-four in number, and all of these are in the central and western districts of Bengal Proper and in Calcutta. There are forty-seven other private female schools, distributed all over the country, which receive no pecuniary aid from the Government. In the interior of the country, the old superstitious notion that a girl taught to read and write soon becomes a widow has still great force. This is the objection urged by the Hindu; that urged by the Mahomedan is, that a knowledge of letters gives greater facilities to intrigues and corruption. Neither of these objections has any force in the more important towns and cities; but there, again, the people greatly prefer a home to out-door education for their wives and daughters. The consequence is, that the public-school system has been unsuccessful everywhere; while a scheme of house and zenana teaching is being worked out with considerable success in Calcutta, under the auspices, not of the Government, but of the energetic American mission. Outside the metropolitan towns, one paramount difficulty to combat with is the

poverty of the people, which prevents them from allowing any portion of the time of their women being devoted to any but domestic duties.

The progress of education in the country is more fairly represented by political and literary societies like the Bengal British Indian Association, the Social Science Association, and the Bethune Society. We name a few only out of many such associations in Calcutta; and there are a good many others also in the interior of the country, all working, each according to its light, for the welfare of the country. It is in these societies and associations that the Bengali learns to talk treason; but that is an evil which the English Government can well afford to tolerate.

THE END.

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