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VOLUME V

BENGAL & SIKKIM

PART I

REPORT

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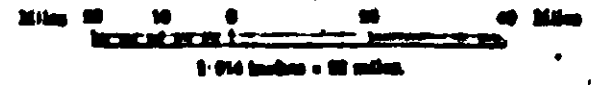
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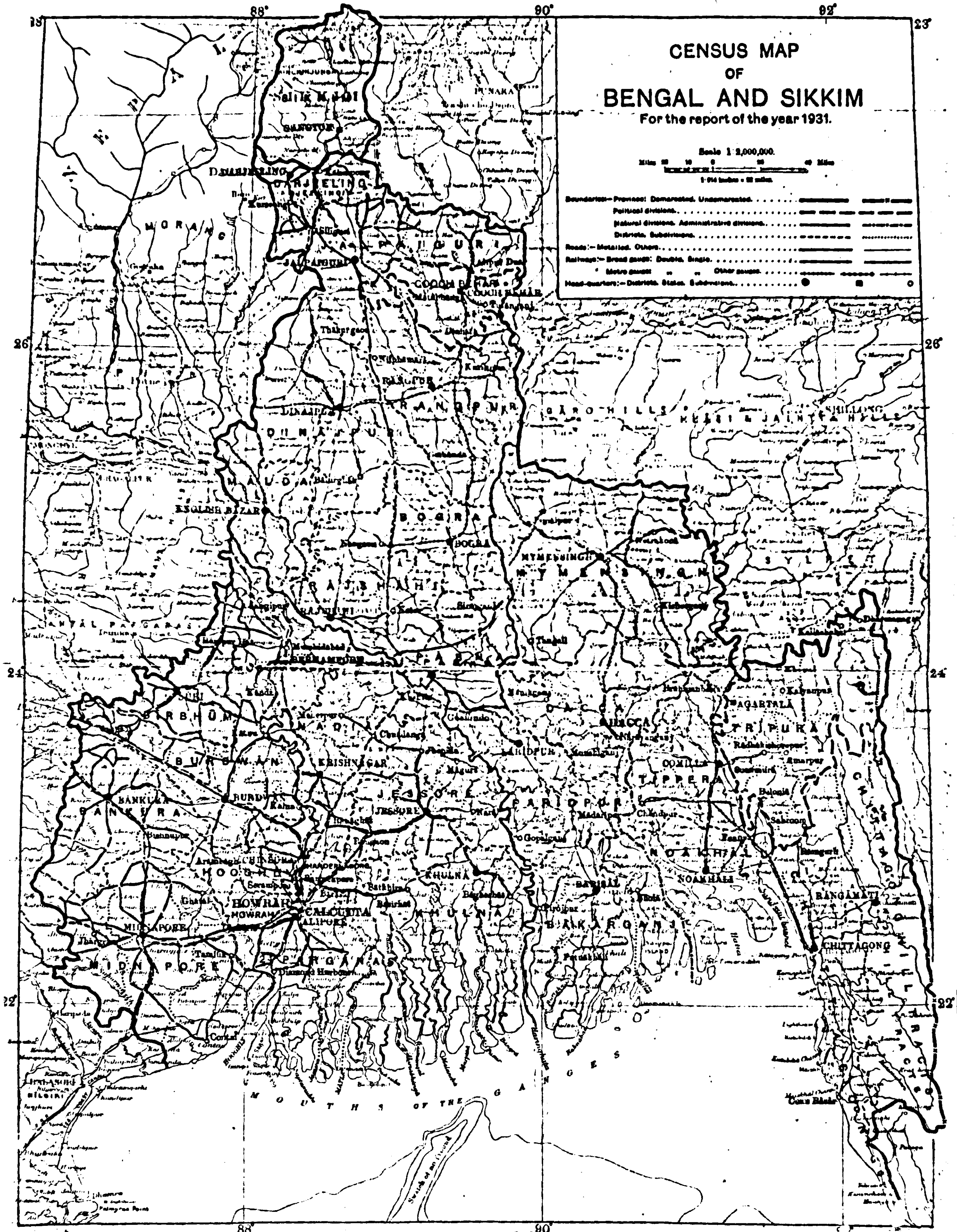
CENSUS MAP OF BENGAL AND SIKKIM

For the report of the year 1931.

Scale 1:2,000,000.



- Boundaries—Provinces: Demarcated, Undemarcated.
- Political divisions.
- Natural divisions, Administrative divisions.
- Districts, Subdivisions.
- Roads:—Metalled, Others.
- Railways:—Broad gauge: Double, Single.
- Metre gauge.
- Other gauges.
- Head-quarters:—Districts, States, Subdivisions.



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ERRATA

- Page 62.—In paragraph 86, seven lines from the end, for " comparisons " read " comparison ".
- Page 65.—Substitute the following for the last 12 lines :—
 " in the death rate is invariably followed at some period by a corresponding decrease in the birth rate. It is clear also that fertility in western countries decreases with the increase of wealth and intellectual interests. There is therefore reason to hold that in Bengal also a reduction in the death rate will not in the long run result in a persistent acceleration of the rate of population increase, but that improved measures of public health intended to decrease the death rate, if accompanied by an improvement in the standard of living, the wider diffusion of education and an enlargement of interests in all sections of society will result in at least such a reduction of the birth rate as will be commensurate with any improvement effected in the death rate. In securing this end perhaps the greatest contribution will be made by the further enlightenment and emancipation of women and their introduction to spheres of interest, activity and usefulness from which they are now in Bengal generally debarred by social custom, tradition and the institution of purdah."
- Page 71.—In line 8 for " Town " and that those " read " Town " and those ".
- Page 107.—In column 1 for " Barisal—Barisal " read " Barisal—Bakarganj ".
- Page 108.—In the heading to columns 14, 15 and 16 for " Gibraltar " read " Gibraltar ".
- Page 121.—In the note below the heading of statement No. IV-5 for " in tables 20 and 21 " read " in pages 20 and 21 ".
- Page 122.—In line 3 from the top for " 0 to 5 ", read " 0, 5, "
- Page 127.—In line 28 from the top for " births " read " deaths ", and in the following line for " from " read " using ", and for " deaths ", read " births ".
- Page 129.—In lines 27, 28 and 29—

for	1921 E31 1931 E 31 C. H. Tracts AP	read	1921 E 21 1931 E 31 C. H. Tracts AP
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- Page 129.—In line 9 from bottom for the second word instead of " than " read " that ".
- Page 129.—In the second line of paragraph 152 for " very much " read " rather ".
- Page 143.—In line 19 from bottom, last word, for " Expectations " read " Expectation ".
- Page 146.—In line 7 from the top, first word, for " earlier " read " later " : and for " much the same tendencies as that " read " tendencies similar but opposite to those ".
- Page 149.—In paragraph 169, line 32 from the top of page, for " 33 " read " 30 ".
- Page 149.—In line 3 from the bottom for " death " read " birth ", and add after end of paragraph :—" The observed decline of population in areas where malaria is endemic is presumably due to the combined effects of an increased death rate and the natural emigration of population rather than to a decrease in the birth rate ".
- Page 162.—In line 8 from the end of page for " 13 years of age " read " 13 years ago ".
- Page 178.—In the note below the heading of table I—
 for " then the standard deviation (S.D.) = $\sqrt{\frac{S(x-M)^2}{S(f)}}$ "
 read " then the standard deviation (S.D.) = $\sqrt{\frac{S(x-M)^2}{S(f)}}$ "
- Page 254.—In line 29 from the bottom for " felt that that it " read " felt that it ".
- Page 317.—In line 14 from the top for " variation to " read " variation of ".
- Page 318.—In line 10 from the bottom for " prepage " read " page 317 ".
- Page 336.—In line 5 from the top for " education of " read " education in " : and in line 6 from the bottom for " begun " read " began ".
- Page 358.—In line 3 from the bottom for " Nepali " read " Naipali ".
- Page 397.—In line 15 from the top for " form " read " provide ".
- Page 398.—In line 22 from the top for " no Hindu " read " no practising Hindu ".
- Page 399.—In line 1 for " every " read " very ".
- Page 400.—Delete in paragraph 420 the whole of the second sentence which runs as follows : " The extent to which they are actually doing this has been noted elsewhere ".
- Page 400.—In the first line of paragraph 419 for " of Hindu " read " of the Hindu " : and in the same paragraph two lines after the extract quoted for " enthusiasm in " read " enthusiasm for ".
- Page 401.—In line 3 from top for " teaching medicine " read " teaching, medicine " : and in line 11 from the bottom for " type of widow " read " type of Hindu widow ".
- Page 422.—In the last line before the Persian couplet for " ridicule popular " read " popular ridicule ".
- Page 430.—In line 33 from top for " the Doms " read " Doms ".
- Page 431.—In line 13 from top for " possible that " read " possible, that ".
- Page 437.—Footnote No. 16 for " un " read " Un " : and in footnote 14 for " danel " read " dani " , also for " Prá-Aryan " read " Prá-aryan ".
- Page 439.—In line 16 from the top for " the 'royal' " read " the local royal " : and in line 21 for " continuity or conquest " read " continuity on conquest ".
- Page 461.—In line 16 from the bottom of the page for " some castes included in Bengal " read " castes not included in Bengal ".
- Page 473.—In line 3 from the bottom for " the south-west " read " south-west ".
- Page 481.—In line 21 from the bottom for " me that it is in any case ridiculous " read " me and it is in any case ridiculous ".
- Page 485.—In line 35 from top for " In High Court " read " In a High Court " and two lines above the statement for " of Purbba-Banga " read " of the Purbba-Banga ".
- Page 496.—For the last word but four in paragraph 8 for " jalavyahariya " read " jalavyavahariya ".
- Page 498.—In line 23 for " Marches " read " marches ".
- Page 499.—In line 6 from the end of paragraph 15 for " initate " read " initiate " : and three lines from the bottom of the page for " barbars " read " barbers ".
- Page 500.—In line 4 of paragraph 17 for " who have been overlooked previously owing to the small " read " which have been overlooked previously owing to their small ".
- Page 501.—In line 2 from the top for " barna " read " varna ".
- Page 501.—In line 22 from the top—the words " and the totals including them " are not now correct. It was intended that statement No. XII-g, columns 11, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19, 23, 24 and 25 on page 503 would be in italics. As these columns are in doric or roman the words mentioned should be deleted.
- Page 501.—In lines 24 and 25 from the top for " the accompanying diagram No. XII-11 " read " diagram No. XII-11 on page 488 ".

INTRODUCTION

The census forming the subject of this report was the seventh taken in Bengal and was conducted on the night of the 26th February 1931.

There was no important innovation in the census procedure which has been fully described in previous reports and will consequently be given here only a brief notice. The Indian Census Act (X of 1929) passed by the Indian legislature received the assent of the Governor-General on the 1st October and provided the legal basis for the census. Preliminary arrangements were initiated by the Government of Bengal as early as the 22nd February 1930 by orders under which a "census mauza register" was prepared to account for the whole area in each district and a preliminary estimate was made of the number of houses in each mauza with names of the individuals likely to constitute a satisfactory census agency. Upon the basis of this register the whole province was parcelled out into census divisions. Within the district the largest of these was the "charge", ordinarily formed by a municipality or rural police-station and containing an average of 9,864 inhabited houses under a "charge superintendent". The charge was again divided into some 20 to 22 "circles" each comprising on an average 400 to 450 houses in charge of a "supervisor". Circles were again divided into compact "blocks" numbering between 10 and 12 and containing about 40 houses each for which an "enumerator" was responsible. During October and November each house in a block was given a serial number to ensure its being accounted for in the enumeration and in the succeeding months the enumerating agency was trained and a preliminary enumeration made and checked. In some few areas mentioned in chapter I, the details thus recorded and checked formed the final record owing to the impossibility of conducting a synchronous check on the final census night. Elsewhere however they were checked between 7 p. m. and midnight of the 26th February 1931. During this time each enumerator went round his block, checked the entries in his preliminary record, struck out those for persons no longer present and added details of those who had subsequently arrived. Preliminary totals were at once prepared for each district and were telegraphed from Bogra and Bankura districts as early as 12-35 p. m. and 4 p. m. on the 28th February. Figures for the whole province were published within 9 days of the census and the difference between these totals (50,969,667) and the figures on final counting (51,087,338) amounted for the whole province to 117,671 or 2·3 per thousand of population. This does not approach the accuracy of the provisional figures for the census of England and Wales in 1921 which differed only by ·0038 per thousand of population from the final figures, and it compares unfavourably with the corresponding discrepancy in Bengal in 1921 which was ·9 per thousand. In some districts however the approach to the final figures was very close. In Rajshahi for instance figures for which were telegraphed by Babu Anathbandhu Ray within 4 days of the final census the discrepancy was only ·07 per thousand.

The procedure subsequent to the enumeration consisted of three stages. A copy of the form of schedule on which the information required was collected is included in the pocket inside the back cover of this volume. From this the information recorded for each individual (with the exception of the name) was first copied out on to a separate slip. The slips were next given to sorters who dealt them successively into heaps according to the particulars to be shown in each of the tables: the heaps were counted and the numbers entered on "sorters' tickets" for each table. The figures in these tickets were then compiled to give statistics for each police-station, census town and district and were finally tabulated for the whole province. Slip-copying was ordinarily done at district headquarters under the district census officer. Sorting and compilation were conducted at five central offices under deputy superintendents of census at Konnagar in the district of

Hooghly, at Berhampore, at Rajshahi, at Dacca and at Barisal. At these offices was also done the slip-copying for the districts of Burdwan, 24-Parganas, Khulna, Rangpur, the Siliguri subdivision of Darjeeling, Faridpur, Noakhali, Chittagong and Chittagong Hill Tracts and for the city of Calcutta where no local arrangements could be made. The final tabulation was effected by my personal assistant in Calcutta, and the tables before publication were submitted for check and correction to the Census Commissioner.

The necessity for stringent economy has led to a restriction of the scope of the report and has made it impossible to make use of some part of the information recorded in the schedules. No tables have been prepared to show Infirmities by Selected Castes (No. XII-A of 1921), Occupations subsidiary to Agriculture (No. XVIII of 1921), Combined Occupations (No. XIX of 1921), Occupation by Religion (No. XX of 1921) or Christians by Race and Sect (No. XV of 1921). Moreover the table showing industries (No. XXII of 1921, prepared from a special industrial return) has been abandoned although a fresh column (No. 12) was introduced into the schedule for the collection of material from a wider range than in previous years. On the other hand the tables showing Bi- and Multi-lingualism (No. XV, part ii) and Comparative Figures for Selected Tribes (No. XVIII) are new, and the report contains in chapter VIII a summary of the details obtained from a voluntary return of educated unemployment.

It is not easy to make with confidence an estimate of the accuracy of the results thus obtained. At every stage errors can be introduced by malice or inadvertence or ignorance. Comment on the figures of Calcutta city will be found in the volume in which they are analysed and what follows refers to the figures for the rest of the province. The supervisors and enumerators, numbering 298,522 in all, were a voluntary agency: there was therefore very little choice and whatever material was available had to be employed. It will appear from the account given in subsequent chapters that the instructions for filling in some columns of the schedule were necessarily somewhat complicated, and particularly in the remoter parts district census officers found it sometimes difficult to make enumerators understand them. This difficulty was felt especially in respect of details not elicited at a previous census such as the return of industry and of subsidiary languages, and of particulars where a difference was introduced as in the return of "earners" and "working dependents" in place of the simple classification "workers" previously adopted. For many years previously Government had been subjected to a campaign of misrepresentation the object of which was to bring Government under contempt and suspicion, and there is no doubt that the prestige of Government officers had suffered thereby. Moreover the census operations took place at a time of "civil disobedience" and obstruction to the census was a plank in the Congress platform. Civil disobedience and the diminished prestige of Government, however, are not likely to have effected the results to any considerable extent. Seriously organised opposition was encountered only in one union in Baraset (24-Parganas) and in the Bishnupur subdivision of Bankura district and was overcome. In Bengal as a whole the question of communal representation in the revised constitution was too important for either of the main communities to allow its numerical strength to be reduced by the omission of its members from the census figures. On the other hand allegations were made by both Hindus and Muslims that enumerators of the other community had swelled the numbers of their own co-religionists by fictitious entries and had wilfully suppressed details of those professing the other faith. Most of these statements were indefinite and incapable of investigation: those which were specific were examined and proved to be without foundation. The claim that aborigines are "fundamentally" Hindus has quite probably resulted to some extent in their being returned as Hindus by Hindu enumerators with very little justification in their actual beliefs and practices, but even so there is no reason to believe that the errors of enumeration in the schedules were considerable. During slip-copying and sorting the rules provided for very careful supervision and check. Midnapore and Mymensingh are the

only districts in which there is reason to think that there was some relaxation in the strictness of check and doubtful slips of these districts were checked and corrected during sorting. The later processes of sorting and compilation gave comparatively little scope for mistakes to remain undetected and it may be confidently said that no appreciable errors are likely to have been introduced at these stages. The figures for 1921 were estimated to be correct to within one per thousand and there is no reason to believe that the general figures of the population and its distribution by sex and religion are less accurate than this on the present occasion. As regards the other details tabulated the probable error naturally differs from one particular to another and comment upon the estimated accuracy of individual tables will be found in the chapters in which they are discussed.

Up to the date of printing this report the total cost debited to the census budget was Rs. 5,44,017-0-5. This sum excludes the cost of the volumes of the report which are for sale. Against this is to be set off the amount of Rs. 48,142-1-3 recovered or recoverable by the sale of equipment or from municipalities or other administrations. Some of this has been recovered or is recoverable from municipalities, the state of Sikkim and the Tripura state. The net cost debited is therefore Rs. 4,95,874-15-2 which averages Rs. 9-11-2 per thousand of the population. The total net cost is less than that incurred in 1921-23, which was shown as being Rs. 4,97,370-10-11 or Rs. 10 per thousand of population. It also compares very favourably with the rate per thousand (£9 5s. 6d. or Rs. 120-4) for the census of England and Wales in 1921. The English figure excludes the cost of printing, stationery, maps, cards and hire of machines. The charge for Bengal corresponding to the first four of these items was Rs. 64,494-0-7; and even excluding for the English estimate the hire of machines, which probably corresponds to a considerable portion of the charges in Bengal for slip-copying, sorting and compilation, the figure for Bengal, which is comparable to that for the English census, is only Rs. 8-7 per thousand of population.

It is impossible to acknowledge adequately the services of all those who contributed to the success of the census. District officers were preoccupied with the political situation and an effort was made by dealing direct with the district census officers to worry them as little as possible with routine details. The Deputy Commissioner of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, however, himself conducted the census of his district and in no district would it have been possible to conduct a census at all without the assistance of the district officers. Nearly all branches of the public services were laid under contribution for voluntary work in addition to their duties. The names of those specially commended for good service have been brought to the notice of the departments with whom their advancement lies. A general expression of appreciation is also owing to the members of the Bengal Junior Civil Service who as circle officers in almost all districts rendered indispensable service. During the period before the final enumeration extended touring was necessary and it was owing to the special facilities accorded to me by the Assam Bengal and Eastern Bengal Railways that I was able to visit each district headquarters twice and some of the subdivisions also in addition without considerable waste of time: I have to express my indebtedness for these facilities to the Agents of the railways. But perhaps the most astonishing feature of the census is the fact that under the direction of a very few officials almost the whole enumeration was carried out by a voluntary agency. More than 302,600 voluntary workers not only received no remuneration but in almost all cases were put to some personal expense in the conduct of the enumeration. Some expression of appreciation is due to these workers for their public spirit and to the officers of the Bengal Civil Service and other services who were able by their tact and personal influence to keep up to scratch over so long a period as 5 months or more a body of men held together by no self-interest or hope of reward. Finally, my special thanks are due to Messrs. Durga Pada Banarji, Saiyid Abdul Majid, Sudhir Kumar Sen, Mizanur Rahman and Sailendra Nath Mitra, the five officers in charge of the central offices at Konnagar, Rajshahi, Berhampore, Dacca and Barisal, and

to my personal assistant, Babu Bhupendrakrishna Sinha, B.C.S. All these officers co-operated in bringing the post enumeration proceedings and the tabulation of the results to a conclusion somewhat earlier than before and a tribute is due to their energy and to the tact with which they handled large establishments of casual employees most of whom were unaccustomed to discipline and continuous hard work. In the preparation of the report I have been indebted to almost every department of Government for either information and material or more specific assistance. Dr. C. A. Bentley, C.I.E., D.P.H., lent me a number of statistical books and computing machines, and his successor Dr. Khambata permitted my access to unpublished public health statistics. At the request of the Surgeon-General with the Government of Bengal the Director of the Tropical School of Medicine placed an excellent biostatistical library at my disposal, and to Dr. D. B. Meek, O.B.E., Director-General of Commercial Intelligence, I am indebted for constant help with books of reference and with advice on statistical questions. In particular instances I have endeavoured to make my indebtedness clear by acknowledgments in the text but I cannot hope to have acknowledged all my obligations.

The report contains some features which are new. Many of the diagrams are plotted upon a "logarithmic" section, in which the vertical intervals are proportionate not to the differences between the figures represented by them but to the differences between the logarithms of these figures. In these diagrams an equal proportionate change is represented by an equal vertical interval; e.g., the distance between 2 and 4, 3 and 6, 4 and 8, 20 and 40, etc., is exactly the same. This type of diagram has consequently been used wherever rates of change may be of interest. The practical advantage is that not only the numerical but also the proportionate change can thus be estimated from the same diagram. It is the figures which are indicated but in reading them it must be remembered that the intervals are not regularly proportionate to the figures. In each case a guide to the rate of change has been given and with a little practice it should not be difficult to recognise by eye equal angles of slope which indicate equal rates of change. The diagrams are not offered to replace the figures which they illustrate. They are a short cut to investigating the salient features of the statistics but no deductions should be based on them which are not verified by reference to the tables. This is a general limitation in the use of graphic presentations of fact, and it is particularly important when, as in the following pages there is a possibility that errors in drafting have escaped detection. Such as have been discovered have in most cases been indicated in the text.

In some few instances also statistical expressions have been used which will not be familiar to the general reader. These are mainly the "standard deviation" and the "probable error". If in a series the difference of the observed figure from the mean or arithmetical average be computed and squared, and the squares totalled and divided by the number of instances in the series the result is known as the "variance" of the series. The standard deviation is the square root of the variance. From it the "probable error" is calculated. For comprehension of the few instances in which these constants have been employed it is unnecessary to consider their mathematical basis and sufficient to state that they give an indication of the normal distribution of the observations forming the series. The standard deviation provides a universal scale by which to measure differences between the mean and the observed quantities since it is so calculated that an equal proportion of the observations in any two series may be expected to fall within a difference from the mean which is the same when expressed in terms of the appropriate standard deviation. If any series be treated as a sample from a larger universe of similar items, the probable error provides a means of estimating within what limits the average of the series is likely to differ from the true average which would be obtained if all the items in the universe had been included in its calculation, and statisticians consider that the chances are exactly equal that the real mean of the whole universe will be within a range running from once the probable error less to once the probable error greater than the calculated average. The probable error is also used as a test whether differences in the averages of two series are due to chance sampling from the

same universe. In this case the difference is considered to be "significant", (i.e., probably not the result of random sampling) if it is three or more times its own probable error, since the odds against the entirely fortuitous occurrence of a difference so great as three times the probable error are 22 to 1: in other words a difference as great as or greater than this might be expected from chance only in 43 out of 1,000 instances. The odds against the chance occurrence of a difference as great as four times the probable error are as many as 142 to 1. Such use as has been made of these concepts is infrequent in the report and they have been resorted to with diffidence. Calculations have been worked out against time and under the limitations of a crippling economy. It is unlikely that no error of calculation or deduction has escaped elimination, and certain that the possibilities of significant analysis have in no case been exhausted. But it has been the object to give the data from which results are deduced in such detail that the reader may have before him all the materials necessary for the detection of mistakes, miscalculations and statistical fallacies and for pursuing scientific analysis further than my own ignorance of mathematics has permitted me to follow it.

APPENDIX I

The depressed classes

1. **Introduction.**—The notification of the Government of India in which the taking of the census was prescribed contained the following directions :—

“ The Government of India also desire that attention should be paid to the collection of information conducive to a better knowledge of the backward and depressed classes and of the problem involved in their present and future welfare.”

In accordance with this direction the Census Commissioner instructed Census Superintendents as follows :—

“ For this purpose it will be necessary to have a list of castes to be included in depressed classes and all provinces are asked to frame a list applicable to the province. There are very great difficulties in framing a list of this kind and there are insuperable difficulties in framing a list of depressed classes which will be applicable to India as a whole.”

The Government of Bengal was accordingly consulted, but no decision was reached before it became necessary to lay down what classes should be treated as depressed for the purposes of extracting the census figures and it is not yet known whether any list has been adopted as final by the local Government. The classification appearing therefore throughout the census report may differ in some respects from any which may be subsequently adopted by the Government of Bengal.

2 **Meaning of the term “ Depressed classes.”**—The expression “ depressed classes ” is of comparatively recent coinage and is in many respects unfortunate. It does not translate any actual vernacular term in common use in Bengal, nor does it describe any class the members of which can be defined with accuracy. It is a term in itself indefinite. In European countries it is applied to the chronically indigent portion of the population and connotes an economic condition. It can be applied anthropologically in a psychological sense to describe that state of mind engendered in a primitive people when it finds itself in contact with a dominant society based upon principles entirely different from and disregarding the traditionally accepted sanctions of tribal life. This psychological condition has been convincingly put forward as one at least of the elements leading to the depopulation of Melonesia and it has an interesting counterpart in the “ discouragement ” from which Mr. George Bernard Shaw makes visitors to the island die off in contact with the civilization of the ancients in “ Back to Methuselah.” In general use, however, the term in India though not applying to exactly similar strata of population in different parts, is used to describe those members of the community who in common social estimation are considered to be inferior, degraded, outcaste or not fit in any way for social and religious intercourse on reasonably equal terms with members of the clean or higher castes. It represents a problem which arises only within the fold of Hinduism, namely the problem of those Hindu groups who by the accident of birth are denied and never can by any individual merit achieve social consideration or spiritual benefits which are the birthright without consideration of personal merit equally of all persons born into the higher castes.

3. **The criterion of the depressed classes.**—It is, however, by no means a simple matter to devise a satisfactory criterion by which to distinguish the depressed classes. The problem itself being essentially social and religious, the criteria, which have been at various times suggested, themselves depend upon social observance or social precedence. During the census of 1901 the castes in Bengal were distinguished into seven groups upon an elaborate classification. The first group contained Brahmans only as the acknowledged superiors of all other classes in the caste hierarchy. In the second group were placed castes whose respectability was never in question and who are either twice-born or were held to be superior to all other Sudra castes. The third group consisted of the so-called *navasakha*, or nine branches, now indeed containing more than nine groups but all characterised by being held worthy to offer water the drinking of which would not pollute the higher classes. Below this third group were distinguished a fourth containing clean castes with degraded Brahmans; a fifth containing castes lower than group 4 whose water is not usually accepted, a sixth comprised of low castes abstaining from beef, pork and fowls and seventh embracing castes by whom forbidden foods were eaten and who pursue the most degraded occupation as scavengers, etc. In 1911 the Census Commissioner for India directed provincial superintendents to enumerate castes and tribes returned as Hindus who do not conform to certain standards or are subject to certain disabilities, “ leaving the reader to draw his own inferences.” They were asked to prepare a list of all but the minor castes which *quâ castes* :—

- (1) deny the supremacy of the Brahmans ;
- (2) do not receive the *mantra* from a Brahman or other recognised Hindu *guru* ;
- (3) deny the authority of the Vedas ;
- (4) do not worship the great Hindu gods ;
- (5) are not served by good Brahmans as family priests ;
- (6) have no Brahman priests at all ;
- (7) are denied access to the interior of Hindu temples ;
- (8) cause pollution (a) by touch ; (b) within a certain distance ;
- (9) bury their dead ; or
- (10) eat beef and do not do reverence to cow.

The enquiry was intended to furnish material, if possible, from which an answer could be given to the difficult question "who is a Hindu". Up to 1916 in Bengal at least the expression "depressed classes" was unknown. In 1916 however the Bengal Government was invited to prepare a list of the depressed classes and submitted a list including certain criminal tribes and aboriginals and amounting in all to 31 groups. This list was used by the Commissioner for Education in writing his quinquennial report on the progress of education in India for the years 1912-1917. The term thus introduced remained and both the Calcutta University Commission (1917-1919) and the census report for 1921 contained lists of the depressed classes. In neither of these last instances, however, was any clear criterion set forth to show on what grounds the groups were included. The Indian Statutory Commission without giving any definite criterion, referred to them as the

"lowest castes recognised as being within the Hindu religious and social system..... Their essential characteristic is that according to the tenets of orthodox Hinduism, they are, though within the Hindu system, untouchable—that is to say, that for all other Hindus they cause pollution by touch and defile food and water. They are denied access to the interior of an ordinary Hindu temple (though this is also true of some who would not be classed as 'untouchable'). They are not only the lowest in the Hindu social and religious system, but with few individual exceptions are also at the bottom of the economic scale and are generally quite uneducated. In the villages they are normally segregated in a separate quarter and not unfrequently eat food which would not be touched by any section of the Hindu community."

At a later date the franchise Committee, driven to lay down simple criteria, adopted No. 7 and 8 of the distinctions made in the census report of 1911. For Bengal these distinctions have been elaborated on behalf of the Depressed Classes Association as follows :

- (a) castes from whose hands the three high castes or even the *navashaka* (that is, the caste-Hindus) would not accept water and whose presence either in the kitchen or in the room where water and cooked food are kept would pollute the same according to their estimation ;
- (b) castes who would not be allowed into any public temple and whose presence there would defile articles of worship ;
- (c) castes who would not be allowed to enter or to have their meals inside the dining room of an hotel or eating house run by caste Hindus ;
- (d) castes at whose socio-religious functions Srotriya Brahmans (that is the priests) officiating in such functions in the house of the caste-Hindus would not officiate ; and
- (e) castes who would not be served by the Srotriya Napit (that is the Barber) whose services are necessary in various socio-religious functions, of the Hindus.

4. **Defects of the criteria suggested.**—The difficulty of applying any or all of these criteria is very considerable. They reduce themselves naturally to religious or social disabilities and in not a single instance is there any criterion put forward which *prima facie* ought to attract the attention of the administration on the ground that some incident of citizenship in a free and democratic country is thereby denied to any class of persons. The existence of such disabilities is not denied and will be discussed later but at this stage what is emphasised is the fact that all the criteria hitherto mentioned are entirely matters of social and religious consideration and that, if they involved no civic disabilities, they would be entirely irrelevant to any consideration by Government of the problem of the depressed classes.

5. **Temple entry.**—As regards the prohibition of temple entry, it is at the outset clear that those castes to whom temple entry is denied, in many cases, would have no desire or opportunity to enter them. In many cases indeed by no stretch of the imagination could they be considered to have any claim to enter them, for many places of worship are private or family temples endowed for specific purposes. Entry to the majority of the great public temples in Bengal such as those at Kalighat and Tarakeswar is closed to a very small proportion indeed of the Hindu population. Secondly, during recent years at least, there has been a strong agitation, not uncoloured by political considerations, for a relaxation of the exclusiveness of temple entry. In Khulna, Dacca and Jessore, movements have been successfully instigated for securing the privilege of temple entry in certain cases to groups to whom it had been previously denied and on more than one occasion during the past five years instances have occurred in which *sarvajanan pujas* have been celebrated with the express purpose of including all classes of the community in a common worship. There still apparently exists on the statute book a regulation (No. IV of 1809) section 7 of which prohibits by law entry into the temple of Jagannath at Puri of a number of castes ; but the regulation is almost a century and a quarter old and what is of importance is not the actual regulation but the extent to which public opinion enforces it and upon this point there appears to be no recorded up-to-date information. Vaishnavism, particularly popular in Bengal, has done much to obliterate a rigid insistence upon caste distinctions and in this same temple one of the conditions of worship is that pilgrims may not refuse to accept from the hands of any castes, whatever, the food offered to the diety. In short, disabilities regarding the right to worship or enter into temples are largely conventional or not immune from change and in any case do not properly constitute a title to special consideration in the body politic, so long as they are confined purely to the social and religious life of the community.

6. **Service of Brahmans and Barbers.**—A similar argument holds in respect of the grievance made of the fact that the services of high class brahmans and *srotriya* napits cannot be obtained by some of the lower castes. It does not even follow that these castes are denied the consolation of religion or must go unshorn and unshaved, for if they have no Brahmans of their own these

castes are ready to supply priests from their own ranks and they also obtain the services of barbers and washermen, the other two classes of essential servants in the Hindu polity, even if these are not of the same position as those serving the higher castes. Moreover, here too the disability is one which is not irremovable. The agitation for temple entry and for the abolition of untouchability actually resulted recently in a resolution passed by the provincial Hindu Sabha that a priest, barber and washerman should be attached to each branch association for the specific service of members of the untouchable classes; and it is probably true to say that a sufficiently cultured and wealthy member of any of the untouchable classes, or a sufficiently wealthy and influential group of them can secure the services of a rather superior priest, barber and washerman according to their wealth.

7. Pollution by touch.—There is a similar conventionality and flexibility about the very idea of uncleanness and pollution. In Bengal there are no groups which pollute the higher castes by mere propinquity. By touch it is admitted on all hands that members of the higher castes can be rendered ceremonially impure, but the strictness with which this sentiment is observed is definitely being relaxed. It is becoming more a question of personal cleanliness and the character of a man's occupation which decides whether one of the higher castes shall consider himself polluted sufficiently by contact with him to require ceremonial purification. Moreover the exigencies of modern life make it impossible for the highest castes to enquire too narrowly into the caste of persons with whom travel in trains, trams and buses and occupation in cities bring them into contact. Amongst even the higher castes, indeed, it is generally only pollution when engaged in some religious ceremony which is considered to be important and to require expiation. Finally the extent to which members of the higher castes feel themselves polluted differs in respect of the same group from place to place.

8. Food and drink tabus.—There is an even greater divergence in different places as regards the food and drink tabus of the higher classes. It is clearly a little unreasonable for anyone to make a grievance of the fact that his presence in the kitchen of a Brahman will spoil the food and pollute the utensils therein if he has no right to be there at all and no title to demand that he should be admitted there. Similarly it is only in social estimation and not in a practical way that those castes suffer, which are not considered fit to offer drinking water to the higher classes, whilst this privilege is far from uniform throughout Bengal. The convenience of the higher castes also results in the existence of a host of exceptions and legal fictions, by which in certain circumstances food or drink can be accepted from inferior castes upon the ground, for instance, that it is not the kind of cooked food which can be polluted or that it does not fall within the class of article which the higher castes may not take at the hands of a lower caste. Amongst the more educated Hindus food and drink tabus are becoming more and more a matter of personal taste. Dining together on public occasions is increasing and in most cases it is probably only on ceremonial occasions that the prohibitions are strictly observed. The prohibitions themselves are no less unsuitable for acceptance as a criterion of social condition from the fact that they are entirely irrational. It is, for instance, an entirely irrational convention which places groups like the wealthy and cultured Subarnabaniks amongst the *jalavyavahariya* classes from whom the higher castes may not accept water. All non-Hindus are in the same position and even members of progressive, cultured and liberal Hindu sects, such as the Brahmos are equally *jalavyavahariya* with the lowest classes.

9. Civic disabilities.—These religious and social disabilities, therefore, as such are all first indefinite, secondly, conventional, thirdly, liable to modification in different places, at different times and with different members of the same community and, fourthly, in any case (so far as they are purely social and religious disabilities) in themselves of no interest whatever to the administration. They are properly the object of reform within the community and stress of political interest if nothing else will most probably lead to their amelioration. During 1931 the principal Hindu association passed a resolution in Bengal in which it

“recognises the complete social equality of all castes and emphatically declares that there is no inherent superiority of one caste over the other and supports all efforts to remove inequalities.”

The same association adopted as one of its principles that no caste should be *jalavyavahariya*. These are still probably more the expression of abstract principles than practical rules of conduct, but it is significant that they should have been affirmed. Social and religious disabilities become of interest to the administration only when they are accompanied by a disability to take advantage of administrative conveniences provided not for a class of the community only but for the community at large. In Madras there are groups to whom the use of public roads, public wells, public markets and public burial grounds are all denied. The extent to which the lowest classes in Bengal suffer from similar disabilities is extremely small. They may be considered under three aspects, namely, exclusion from (a) roads, (b) wells and (c) schools.

10. Exclusion from public roads, wells and schools.—In Bengal nowhere is any caste excluded from a public road merely on account of the position of the caste. In certain areas the very lowest classes of scavengers, sweepers, etc., are not allowed, as in Malda and Hooghly, to use the public wells, but in most cases the restriction does not exist at all, and where it exists, it is either dependent upon the size or nature of the well or is overcome by some form of adjustment between the classes. In some districts, for instance, members of the sweeper classes are not allowed to use *kacha* wells but may use masonry wells, or they are excluded from wells with a diameter less than a certain distance (say 6 feet) but are permitted to use larger wells than these. In some cases the higher castes, in a manner of speaking take the disability upon themselves and voluntarily leave certain wells exclusively to the lower castes; or the lower castes, when they wish to draw water, will not let down their own vessels or touch the vessel used for drawing

the water by higher castes but will wait beside the well till one of the higher castes fills their vessels. As regards schools the Calcutta University Commission (Chapter X, section viii, page 221) came to the conclusion more than ten years ago that

"although children may belong to the lowest classes of the Hindu social system or be outside the pale of caste altogether there is no difficulty of their being admitted to primary schools."

In Malda, it is reported that, children of the untouchable classes would not be allowed to attend schools; and some difficulty is reported from Nadia in getting their children admitted. In schools founded by institutions for a particular purpose it is of course possible that the conditions of entry may restrict admission to members of the higher castes. Elsewhere, however, if any disabilities exist at all, they are generally confined, as in parts of Rajshahi and Jessore to the requirements that a child of the untouchable classes shall sit on a separate seat from the higher caste boys. In most cases children of a sweeper caste would be admitted into a *pathsala* or a primary school as a matter of course and, as was reported in Howrah district, no caste could object to sitting with them and learning lessons. In Bankura district, indeed, boys of the Muchi and Dom castes have carried through their course of education without any objection whatever being raised by the higher castes with whom they received instruction. Moreover a society for the improvement of the backward classes has for many years done much for the depressed and educationally backward classes by the establishment of a large number of schools intended for them. The Depressed Classes' Association also maintains a very large number of schools, principally for their own members to which, however, there is no exclusive restriction of admission. These schools are both primary and secondary and are to be found in many districts throughout the province.

11. **The problem of political representation.**—As a social question, therefore, the problem of the depressed classes is primarily one for Hindu society to tackle for itself. As an administrative problem demanding the cognisance of Government, social and religious disabilities are unsatisfactory as a test of the classes to be included whilst the extent to which the depressed classes are denied participation in the advantages and conveniences maintained by the administration is so small as to be negligible. For the administration, in fact, the problem of the depressed classes in Bengal practically does not exist, save in so far as special measures are necessary to improve their economic condition and standard of education. The prominence which it acquires is largely due to the questions raised in comparatively recent years as regards separate representation in the legislatures for members of these classes. For Bengal at least, therefore, the attempt to treat any social usage or any civic disability as a clear criterion by which to distinguish the depressed classes is bound to fail and some other distinction must be sought. It is necessary to retain the untouchables since the Census Commissioner has explained depressed classes as

"castes contact with whom entails purification on the part of the high-caste Hindus."

He added

"it is not intended that the term should have any reference to occupation as such but to those castes which by reason of their traditional position in Hindu society are denied access to temples for instance, or have to use separate wells or are not allowed to sit in schools but have to remain outside or have to suffer similar social disabilities."

The question of preparing lists of the depressed classes for each province was discussed at a meeting of the Superintendents of Census Operations in January 1931. As a result of this discussion the Census Commissioner announced

"for the purposes of the census of India I propose at present to retain the term depressed classes to indicate untouchables, whether of the milder or of the more severe degree of untouchability."

It was decided also that Muslims and Christians should be excluded and that generally speaking the hill and forest tribes who had not become Hindu but whose religion was returned as tribal should also be excluded.

12. **A. Untouchables: (i) Sweeper and scavenging castes.**—As to the sweepers and scavenging castes there would be general agreement. In statement No. XII-a shown in the

Name of caste.	STATEMENT NO. XII-a.					
	Sweepers and scavenging castes.			Bengal States.		
	Bengal, British districts.			Bengal States.		
	Both sexes.	Males.	Females.	Both sexes.	Males.	Females.
All castes below	477,199	247,589	229,610	5,094	2,507	2,587
Bhuiwalli ..	69,903	35,314	34,489	3,001	1,460	1,541
Dom ..	138,926	70,773	68,153	1,141	511	630
Halalkhor ..	870	502	374	..	..	..
Hari ..	131,652	67,213	64,639	541	311	230
Kaora ..	107,967	56,901	50,966	41	36	5
Kichak ..	2	2	..	..	..	..
Lalbegi ..	4,965	3,489	1,476	..	..	..
Mehtor ..	22,908	13,895	9,518	370	189	181

margin their names are given with their total numbers in Bengal (British Territory) and Bengal States. The detailed notes on caste distribution contain a reference to the accounts in Risley's "Tribes and Castes" and in previous census reports in which these castes are described. The total number of persons recorded in British Bengal under names of scavenging castes is 477,199, of whom 247,589 are males and 229,610 females. In Bengal States their number is 5,094 (male 2,507, female 2,587). All these castes pursue degraded occupations and so far as is known it has never been suggested on any view that, if a separate category of depressed classes is formed, they have not the first claim to inclusion within it.

13. (ii) **Other untouchables.**—The sweeper castes, however, are not the only groups which would be covered in Bengal by the definition of the Census Commissioner. The castes shown in statement No. XII-b would certainly be included. This statement contains a number of

STATEMENT NO. XII-b.

Name of caste.	Bengal, British districts.			Bengal States.		
	Both sexes.	Males.	Females.	Both sexes.	Males.	Females.
All castes below	5,654,653	2,919,171	2,735,482	22,376	12,771	9,605
Bagdi ..	987,333	498,675	490,658	237	117	120
Bahella ..	4,449	2,214	2,235	..	..	..
Bauri ..	330,993	164,040	166,953	245	105	80
Bhuiya ..	49,226	27,539	21,687	144	72	72
Bind ..	19,160	10,365	8,795	358	201	157
Bhujbia ..	203	102	101	114	55	59
Chamar ..	148,661	98,439	55,222	1,797	1,063	734
Dalu ..	..	(Not extracted.)	..	..	..	..
Dhenuar ..	44	21	23	..	..	..
Dhobi ..	228,667	120,316	108,351	1,005	541	464
Doal ..	1,073	552	521	887	438	449
Dosadh ..	35,928	24,238	11,690	492	373	119
Ghasi ..	5,222	2,822	2,400	90	71	19
Hadi ..	14,334	8,154	6,180	..	..	..
Hajang ..	19,693	10,056	9,637	..	..	..
Kadar ..	1,078	619	459	..	..	..
Kau ..	28	24	4	38	13	25
Kandh ..	850	598	252	675	404	271
Kochh ..	80,002	41,030	38,972	1,297	674	623
Konwar ..	133	78	55	..	..	..
Kotal ..	7,651	3,852	3,799	..	..	..
Kurariar ..	..	(Not extracted.)	..	..	..	..
Lohar ..	49,953	25,928	24,025	214	138	76
Mahli ..	16,262	8,211	8,051	..	..	..
Mal ..	111,154	54,078	57,076	13	13	..
Mallah ..	25,901	16,085	9,216	351	257	94
Malpahariya ..	11,781	6,081	5,700	1	1	..
Muchi ..	411,819	220,103	191,716	2,400	1,570	830
Musahar ..	11,515	6,379	5,136	199	93	106
Naiya ..	3	3	..	37	17	20
Namasudra ..	2,086,213	1,062,612	1,023,601	8,744	4,791	3,953
Paliya ..	43,160	22,862	20,298	..	..	..
Pan ..	791	530	261	1,064	731	333
Pasi ..	18,628	12,051	5,977	297	153	144
Patni ..	39,209	20,115	19,175	1,476	714	762
Pod ..	667,731	339,072	328,659	..	..	..
Pundari ..	31,255	17,354	13,901	..	..	..
Rajwar ..	21,315	11,274	10,041	22	13	9
Suiri ..	76,779	39,914	36,865	141	86	55
Tiyar ..	96,376	48,685	47,790	38	7	31

Rajwars are all similarly to be found originating in Chota Nagpur and Bihar, and the term Lohar is intended to refer not to the Kamars or Karmakars of either Bengal or Bihar but to members of aboriginal groups from these regions who have taken to iron work and often even call themselves Kamars or Karmakars. Bahelias, Dosadhs, Ghasis, Kadars, and Pans also come from Bihar and the origin of the Kandhs is to be sought in Orissa. Groups like the Kotals, Mals, Naiyas and Pasis are described as "non-Aryan" or "Dravidian" by Risley. Many of these groups are found in comparatively small numbers in Bengal and their small numbers have resulted in their being omitted when previous lists of "depressed classes" have been under preparation. The total number of groups included in this statement amounts in British districts to 5,654,653 of whom 2,919,171 are males and 2,735,482 are females. Added to the numbers in statement No. XII-a they give totals for the untouchables of 6,131,852 in all or 3,166,760 males and 2,965,092 females. In Bengal States the number of this group is 22,376 (male 12,771, female 9,605).

14. **An ad hoc criterion for the depressed classes.**—An attempt has been made to show that untouchability itself does not involve disabilities of a nature to attract the special interest of the administration. The position would, perhaps, be more clearly stated if it were put somewhat differently. The untouchables claim the special consideration of Government not *quâ* untouchable, and governmental responsibility for them arises not from their social and religious disabilities, but from other conditions. These conditions would remain even if untouchability were removed. If it were possible to imagine caste Hindu society undergoing a universal change of heart and effectively admitting untouchables to all the privileges which are now denied them on religious grounds, they would still remain in poverty and ignorance and both their conditions of life and their mental outlook would still be deplorable. If every untouchable were forthwith invested with the sacred thread and given the status of a Brahman it would be a very long time before the class unaided could derive any benefit from its elevation. A spectacular removal of untouchability, if it were effective, would still leave the ex-untouchables in conditions entitling them to special consideration. In the terms of His Majesty's Instrument of Instructions to the Governor of the Province it would still be true that

"from their lack of educational and material advantages they rely specially upon the protection of government and cannot as yet fully rely for their welfare upon joint political action."

Moreover they would not be and are not now the only classes "relying specially upon the protection of Government" for the same reasons. Other groups also, from poverty, ignorance, apathy, inertness and lack of ambition induced by generations of inferiority and the suppression of initiative or from tradition and environment or from the primitive level of their general development and the stress of contact with a different culture are not in a position to avail themselves on equal terms of the advantages offered by the administration and are in danger of having their interests neglected or subordinated to those of classes more fortunately situated.

For these also Government has a special responsibility and that responsibility becomes more prominent if the form of government is increasingly democratic unless it provides some safeguard that these interests will not be overlooked. The list of depressed classes has consequently been extended to include such groups as appear at the present time to be included on these grounds. The criterion is incidentally identical with that suggested in a memorandum to the Franchise Committee by the Hon. Mr. E. A. B. Blunt, O.B.E., C.I.E., I.O.S. He offered the following *ad hoc* definition as a standard of decision:

"A depressed class is one whose social, economic and other circumstances are such that it will be unable to secure adequate representation of its political views or adequate protection of its interests without some form of special franchise concession."

The remaining classes included in the list thus extended may be divided into two: one containing the Hindus of groups of aboriginal derivation (amongst whom Christians and Buddhists also may be found as well as persons professing tribal religions) and the other comprising such groups as on the criterion suggested appear to be entitled to have special franchise concessions.

15. **B. Aboriginal tribes.**—The groups of aboriginal derivation shown in the accompanying statement No. XII-c are those given in subsidiary table I to chapter XII as primitive peoples with the exception of the Hill Tribes. No entirely satisfactory justification can be offered for

STATEMENT NO. XII-c.

Groups of aboriginal derivation not included in statement No. XII-b.

Name of group.	Bengal, British districts.			Bengal States.		
	Both sexes.	Males.	Females.	Both sexes.	Males.	Females.
All groups below	867,109	445,255	421,854	169,200	87,909	81,291
Agaria ..	230	159	71	..	..	..
Asur ..	..	(Not extracted.)	..	..	..	..
Bhumij ..	83,995	41,700	42,295	452	240	212
Birhor ..	..	(Not extracted.)	..	..	..	..
Garo ..	35,519	18,478	17,043	2,393	1,161	1,232
Ho ..	19	15	4	4	..	4
Kaur ..	1,864	887	777	117	1	116
Koda (Kora) ..	48,617	28,778	22,839	172	131	41
Korwa ..	..	(Not extracted.)	..	..	..	..
Lodha ..	10,964	5,736	5,228	37	24	13
Mech ..	4,798	2,694	2,104	77	52	25
Munda ..	61,043	32,086	28,957	2,064	1,190	874
Nagesia ..	2,017	1,177	840	71	38	33
Oraon ..	135,412	72,641	62,771	1,016	646	369
Rabha ..	1,138	660	478	638	483	455
Santal ..	432,761	218,920	213,841	741	395	346
Tipara ..	34,876	17,950	16,926	160,976	83,498	77,481
Turi ..	16,058	8,379	7,680	140	50	90

putting some groups with a claim to come into this category within the class shown in statement No. XII-b, and comment has already been made on those groups shown within the earlier statement which might as well or almost as well have been included in statement No. XII-c with others to which they are allied. If a distinction is required it must be twofold—first that in general the numbers of the groups shown in statement No. XII-b are smaller and secondly that the groups are on the whole more extensively hinduised than those shown in this statement, and have consequently been more completely absorbed in

the general body of Hinduism. Amongst the Hadis and Hajangs, for instance, hinduisation has gone so far as to result in a claim to Kshatriya status and the same is true of the Kochh. It may be said of all primitive peoples that in general no question of the depressed classes arises amongst them so long as they remain under their own tribal beliefs and customs, but we are concerned now only with the Hindu members of the tribes and there is no doubt that, although they are now-a-days given conventionally the status of Kshatriyas by the Hindu missionaries who convert and initiate them, the Hindu converts of these groups of aboriginal derivation do not step into the social position associated with the Kshatriya status and that both before conversion and afterwards in contact with other Hindus a pronounced sense of social inferiority is developed. The list here given includes the majority of the Mundari and Oraon peoples, viz., the Agaria, Asur, Bhumij, Birhor, Ho, Koda, Korwa, Munda, Santhali and Turi and the Oraons; the allied Nagesias; the Garos; the Bodo groups, Mechh and Rabha; and the Tiparas.

16. **C. Other depressed classes.**—Statement No. XII-d contains a number of castes which may not be definitely or universally untouchable but are of very low status in Hindu society. The term Bediya includes a number of wandering gypsy-like tribes some with criminal proclivities. The Kharwar Nats and the Kapurias also have criminal leanings. Kandras who have now adopted the name Kodma were at one time a group with criminal leanings and originated in Orissa. Dhamis, Gonrhis, Kalwars, Karengas, Khatiks and Nagars, also are not indigenous to Bengal. The Bhatiyas are mendicants. Some of the groups given, such as the Jhalo-Malos who are boatmen and fishermen and the Kapalis whose traditional function is jute-weaving are able to secure the services of washermen and barbers and these as well as the Jalia Kai-barttas who are fishermen

STATEMENT No. XII-d.

Other depressed classes not included in statements Nos. XII-a to XII-c.

Name.	Bengal, British districts.			Bengal States.		
	Both sexes.	Males.	Females.	Both sexes.	Males.	Females.
Total	1,198,044	623,235	574,809	7,267	3,888	3,384
Battl ..	8,888	4,766	4,122	..	..	..
Bediya ..	6,891	3,529	3,362	352	169	183
Reidar ..	3,139	1,828	1,311	..	..	..
Berua ..	387	177	190	..	..	..
Bhatiya ..	322	147	175	..	..	..
Damal ..	6,022	3,034	2,988	17	17	..
Gonrhi ..	5,149	1,778	3,371	..	..	..
Jalya Kalbarta ..	348,859	181,830	168,529	2,213	1,176	1,037
Jhalo, Malo ..	197,789	101,846	95,943	310	262	48
Kalu and Tejl ..	293,224	150,161	134,063	2,682	1,204	878
Kalwar ..	13,383	8,877	4,506	148	87	61
Kandra ..	4,890	2,453	2,237	34	14	20
Kapal ..	193,880	85,866	78,314	1,903	876	1,027
Kapuris ..	170	98	72	..	..	..
Karenga ..	8,855	4,949	4,906	..	..	..
Khatik ..	1,157	762	395	..	..	..
Konal ..	41,958	20,922	20,136	..	..	..
Mahar ..	1,791	938	853	195	65	130
Nagar ..	16,151	8,004	8,147	13	13	..
Nat ..	7,348	3,796	3,552	..	..	..
Raju ..	86,778	29,318	27,460	..	..	..
Shagirdpeha ..	333	156	177	..	..	..

aspire to a caste nomenclature pronouncing them to be of the twice-born classes. A similar claim is made for the second group, found principally in Dacca, which is included with the Kharwar Nats amongst those shown as Nats. The total number of persons in British districts included in this category is 1,188,044 of whom 623,235 are males and 564,809 females. In Bengal States the number is 7,267 (male 3,883, female 3,384). In spite of social ambitions their present position in society and in some cases their small numbers entitle them to special consideration.

17. **Comparison with previous lists.**—A comparison with the groups included in the various lists at any time prepared in Bengal is afforded by statement No. XII-f printed at the end of this appendix. Groups included for the first time in 1931 are in general castes or tribes who have been overlooked previously owing to the small numbers or the fact that they are not indigenous in Bengal. The accompanying statement No. XII-e shows the principal groups, included in 1921 and now omitted, regarding whom some controversy may arise. The entry Kaira in the list of 1921 appears to be a mistake. No figures were given for the group anywhere in the report for that year and it does not appear to be mentioned in any ethnographic book of reference. After the census was held an enquiry was made in Midnapore where they are stated to be found but none were discovered. The entry is probably a misprint for Khaira and this group is given in Risley's *Caste's and Tribes of Bengal* as (a) a cultivating sub-caste of Bagdis

and (b) a synonym of Koras. In the census report for 1901, vol. VI, part I, page 392, comment is made on the difficulty of distinguishing between Kora, Kharia and Kharwar. It is probable that they should have been included in the number of some one or other of the depressed classes and that their appearance under a separate name is an omission of classification. In any case they are entitled to be included as depressed classes but the omission was not detected until it was too late to alter the list. Similarly Nuniyas and Suklis should be included: the Nuniyas may not offer water to higher castes and their Brahmans are said to be degraded but they are not excluded from the courtyards of temples. On the other hand they appear in the classification of 1901 in the same group as Sunris and Tiyars who are shown as depressed on the present occasion. In the same classification Suklis, similarly, come with the Bagdis and Namasudras. The Mahishyas or Chasi Kaibarttas have themselves protested against inclusion. A demand to be included should not be admitted without careful examination, since the object of admitting a group is that it may be in position to get its interests considered and this object would be jeopardised for other groups by the admission of a numerous caste with interests different from those of other depressed classes. On the other hand no caste should be included which prefers to be excluded. Khandaits, the swordsmen of Orissa and now a cultivating class, rank with the Karans as being of twice-born rank. Kurmis are "clean sudras" and were ranked in 1901 (Census Report, vol. VI, part I, pages 373-374) in the higher sub-group in that class in which also the Koiris appear. There is some difficulty about the Kurmis since the same transliteration covers both an aboriginal group and a caste of Bihar spelt with an almost indistinguishable difference of one letter. The aboriginal group probably predominates in Bengal, but in 1929 they were reported to be not untouchable and after the census those in Bankura and such as could be found in Midnapore were consulted and declined to be included with the depressed classes. Khandaits in Midnapore and Koiris both in Midnapore and the 24-Parganas when consulted after the census similarly declined inclusion. The Kasthas were shown in 1901 in the same group as the *navasakh* and they also prefer exclusion. The Kalitas (Khens or Khyans) are a respectable cultivating caste although in 1901 it was reported that their position with the *navasakh* is not assured. They claim to be Kayasthas and enquiries during the census enumeration showed that they are generally regarded as such by other castes for instance in Rangpur and Jalpaiguri. There seem therefore to be good grounds for excluding all these groups.

18. **Exclusion of the Rajbangshis.**—The Rajbangshis present a more difficult problem. The Franchise Committee (1931) noted in their report that this caste had asked for exclusion from the depressed classes, but the name is claimed by what are several distinct castes and it is not certain to which the persons really belong who made this request. The name should be restricted to the group with racial affinities to the Kochh and Paliya castes and the leaders of this group have claimed inclusion. They could point with reason to their racial identity with these other two depressed groups, but this is probably the last thing they would do, for they claim to be very much superior to them and to have established their position in the Kshattriya *varna*. Their claim to inclusion confers no title to be included for the reason which has already been noted, viz., that inclusions must be scrutinised to prevent the danger that they may swamp the general interests of the genuine depressed classes. As early as 1901 they were reported as being "to some extent *jal-chal*", i.e., considered of sufficiently elevated social status to offer water to the higher castes and their position has by no means deteriorated since then. It does not follow that all the *jalavyavahariya* castes are depressed, but it is certain that no caste can be depressed which is *jal chal* or *jalacharaniya*. The claim to be included within the depressed

STATEMENT No. XII-e.

Some castes included in the list of depressed classes in 1921 but not in 1931.

NOTE.—Figures for those castes marked with an asterisk are not for all districts.

Name of caste.	Bengal, British districts.			Bengal States.		
	Both sexes.	Males.	Females.	Both sexes.	Males.	Females.
All castes below	1,801,712	957,529	844,183	321,260	167,546	153,714
*Kastha ..	2,600	1,366	1,234	1	1	..
*Khaira ..	38,154	18,763	19,391	133	114	19
*Khandait ..	34,328	26,602	7,666	752	596	156
*Koiri ..	16,021	11,407	4,614	..	..	..
Kurmi ..	193,176	106,278	86,898	1,476	1,090	386
*Nuniya ..	28,100	17,499	10,601	..	..	..
Rajbangsh ..	1,485,473	773,651	711,822	318,898	165,745	153,153
*Sukli ..	3,660	1,903	1,957	..	..	..

classes is indeed clearly incompatible with an insistent demand to be given the consideration of the second twice-born *barna* and can only be interpreted as evincing a desire to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. In the Rajshahi Division where they are most numerous it will be seen from statement No. XII-10 in the body of the chapter that they form more than a third of the total Hindu population and in the districts where they are chiefly found (Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri and Rangpur) their proportions are between 45 and 60 per cent. These figures are probably an underestimate owing to the success with which it is claimed by the caste that they contrived to get themselves recorded as Kshatriya without any qualification. Both their present social position and their numbers in the areas to which they are practically confined justify their exclusion.

19. **Distribution of the depressed classes by districts, etc.**—The necessity of compiling the list of depressed classes before any decision of Government was reached upon the castes to be included makes it doubtful to what extent the list shown in this report will be of use. Any list, however compiled, is bound to become out of date, and the more rapidly the object of recognising a special group of depressed classes is achieved the more rapidly will the list be antiquated. The object of recognition is not to perpetuate differences but to give the depressed classes a chance of surmounting them and taking a place on equal terms with others of the community, and as each caste progresses it must be withdrawn from the list and throw in its lot with the rest of the Hindu community. In the statements printed at the end of this appendix and numbered XII-g and XII-h figures are given both for groups in the list prepared for the report and so far as they are available for castes shown in statement No. XII-e. Groups not shown in the list for this report and the totals including them are shown in italics. The tables show both the numbers and also the proportion of the depressed classes in the total population and amongst Hindus. The district distribution as a proportion of the whole population is shown in the accompanying diagram No. XII-11 where the same scale is used as in the similar diagrams (Nos. XII-1 and XII-4) in the body of the chapter illustrating the distribution of the primitive tribes and the upper classes. As a proportion of the total population the depressed classes are most numerous in the districts of Western and Central Bengal and in the two Bengal States. It is, however, a proportion of the Hindu community that their numbers are of most interest. They form 37 per cent. of the Hindus throughout Bengal. They are more than half the Hindus in six districts (Burdwan, Birbhum, Khulna, Faridpur, Bakarganj and the Chittagong Hill Tracts) and in Tripura. They are less than a quarter only in 6 districts (Calcutta, Dinajpur, Darjeeling, Rangpur, Noakhali and Chittagong) and in Cooch Behar. They consequently form between a quarter and a half of the Hindu population in nearly 60 per cent. of the districts of the province. They are most numerous in the Dacca Division. Here are mainly concentrated the Namasudras who contribute more than a fourth of the total number of the depressed classes. A comparison between the relative strength of the depressed classes and the Brahmans, Baidyas and Kayasthas who form the upper classes of the community is facilitated by the two diagrams giving their proportionate strength in each district but is perhaps most easily effected by comparing statements No. XII-7 and No. XII-8 in the body of the chapter with statements Nos. XII-g and XII-h at the end of this appendix. Only in Calcutta (where literates and the upper classes tend to gravitate) and in the predominantly Muslim districts of Noakhali and Chittagong are there more of the upper classes than of the depressed classes and in most districts the discrepancy is very considerable. Where aborigines are found in numbers the excess is particularly marked. Thus there are more than ten times as many of the depressed classes as of the upper classes in Jalpaiguri and Malda, more than nine times as many in Dinajpur and more than six times as many in Birbhum. The excess of more than fifteen times as many in Tripura is due to the numbers of Tiparas, and it is doubtful whether in the State in which they are indigenous it is proper to consider them depressed in the sense in which the word can be applied to them in British districts.

STATEMENT

Groups shown as depressed classes in the—				Groups shown as depressed classes in the—			
Census Report of 1931.	Census Report of 1921.	Calcutta University Report, 1917-19.	List of Bengal Government, 1916.	Census Report of 1931.	Census Report of 1921.	Calcutta University Report, 1917-19.	List of Bengal Government, 1916.
A.—Untouchables.				A.—Untouchables.			
(i) Sweepers and scavengers.				(ii) Other untouchables.			
Bhainmall Dom	Bhainmall Dom	Bhainmall Dom	Bhainmall Dom	Kadar	..	..	..
Halalkhor	..	..	..	Kan	..	..	..
Hari	Hari	Hari	Hari	Kandh	..	..	..
Kaora	Kaora	Kaora	Kaora	Koch	Koch	Koch	Koch
Kichak	..	..	..	Konwar	..	..	..
Lalbegi	..	..	..	Kotal	..	..	..
Mehtar	..	..	..	Kurariar	..	..	..
				Lohar	Lohar	..	..
				Mahli	..	..	..
				Mal	Mal	Mal	Mal
				Mallah	..	..	..
				Malpahariya	..	..	..
				Muchi	Muchi	Muchi	Muchi
				Musahar	..	..	..
				Naiya	..	..	..
				Namasudra	Namasudra	Namasudra	Namasudra
				Patiya	..	..	..
				Pan	..	..	..
				Pasi	..	..	..
				Patni	Patni	..	..
				Pod	..	..	..
				Pundari	Pod Pundari	Pod	Pod
				Rajwar	..	..	..
				Sunri	..	Sunri	Sunri
				Tiyar	Tiyar	Tiyar	Tiyar

STATEMENT

Aggregate numbers and proportions of the

Division, district or state.	Numbers of depressed								
	Total population.			Total Hindu population.			List of 1931.		
	Both sex.	Male.	Female.	Both sex.	Male.	Female.	Both sex.	Male.	Female.
BENGAL	51,087,338	26,557,860	24,529,478	22,212,069	11,639,285	10,572,784	8,390,942	4,342,320	4,048,622
BRITISH TERRITORY	50,114,002	26,041,698	24,072,304	21,570,407	11,299,914	10,270,493	8,187,005	4,235,250	3,951,755
Burdwan Division	8,647,188	4,452,882	4,194,307	7,164,441	3,884,470	3,479,971	2,699,911	1,374,737	1,324,874
Burdwan	1,575,899	814,891	760,898	1,238,872	630,304	599,568	626,950	321,150	305,800
Birbhum	847,554	472,687	474,867	636,425	317,380	319,095	362,689	178,822	183,867
Bankura	1,111,721	557,074	554,647	1,011,654	506,326	505,328	445,064	222,068	222,996
Midnapore	2,799,093	1,417,026	1,382,068	2,492,989	1,282,749	1,230,240	688,185	345,689	342,476
Hooghly	1,114,256	592,130	522,125	924,081	489,398	484,663	343,243	179,954	163,289
Howrah	1,098,857	599,075	499,792	860,440	469,368	391,077	233,500	127,054	106,446
Presidency Division	10,108,229	5,475,366	4,832,863	5,179,127	2,835,998	2,343,129	2,201,082	1,167,960	1,033,122
24-Parganas	2,713,874	1,464,953	1,248,921	1,742,387	945,206	797,181	631,785	439,643	392,142
Calcutta	1,196,734	814,948	381,786	822,293	547,846	274,447	123,061	85,743	37,318
Nadia	1,525,622	788,886	740,747	574,046	294,404	279,642	183,639	94,750	88,889
Murshidabad	1,370,677	689,449	687,194	689,551	294,703	294,848	194,183	95,559	96,624
Jessore	1,671,164	871,446	799,718	634,230	328,807	307,423	334,461	172,944	161,477
Khulna	1,626,148	851,651	774,497	818,620	427,032	389,588	533,953	279,281	264,672
Rajshahi Division	10,668,066	5,549,437	5,118,629	3,721,726	1,961,799	1,759,929	979,750	510,148	489,604
Rajshahi	1,429,018	741,205	687,723	326,018	171,347	154,071	118,391	62,274	56,117
Dinajpur	1,755,432	924,092	831,340	793,832	422,240	371,592	196,659	103,494	93,165
Jalpaiguri	983,357	533,819	449,538	664,015	360,721	303,294	185,371	98,580	86,791
Darjeeling	319,835	170,131	149,504	236,913	126,585	110,328	28,611	16,290	12,315
Rangpur	2,594,765	1,356,594	1,238,191	746,546	394,730	361,816	94,328	50,439	43,889
Bogra	1,086,419	557,174	529,245	177,629	94,526	83,103	72,445	37,793	34,652
Pabna	1,445,656	739,027	706,627	332,367	168,030	164,337	122,098	60,293	61,805
Malda	1,053,766	527,305	526,461	444,406	223,619	220,787	161,847	80,977	80,870
Dacca Division	13,884,104	7,122,397	6,741,707	3,856,870	2,030,613	1,928,257	1,883,950	964,529	918,430
Dacca	3,432,577	1,743,517	1,689,060	1,124,893	569,529	556,364	469,829	235,780	234,019
Mymensingh	6,130,282	2,867,194	2,463,068	1,174,328	619,114	555,214	478,980	254,688	224,292
Faridpur	2,382,215	1,206,348	1,155,867	847,064	426,748	420,316	509,523	257,686	251,937
Bakarganj	2,939,050	1,505,338	1,438,712	812,585	416,222	399,363	425,627	216,475	209,152
Chittagong Division	6,826,414	3,441,616	3,384,798	1,549,243	787,035	759,208	422,603	217,878	204,725
Tippera	3,109,735	1,595,640	1,514,095	750,724	384,341	366,383	242,712	125,793	116,929
Noakhali	1,705,719	858,818	847,901	366,391	187,188	179,203	84,918	44,000	40,918
Chittagong	1,767,038	872,888	824,150	392,352	195,407	196,945	62,427	31,255	31,172
Chittagong Hill Tracts	212,922	114,270	98,652	36,776	20,999	16,677	32,546	16,840	15,706
BENGAL STATES	973,336	516,162	457,174	641,662	339,371	302,291	203,937	107,070	96,867
Cooch Behar	599,886	313,230	277,656	389,073	201,513	178,560	17,707	10,175	7,532
Tripura	382,460	202,932	179,518	261,589	137,858	123,731	186,230	96,896	89,335

STATEMENT

Number of the depressed classes

Serial No.	Division, district or state.	A.—Untouchables.									
		(ii) Other untouchables (continued).									
		Doodh.		Ghaal.		Hadl.		Hajang.		Kadar.	
		Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.
1		47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56
1	BENGAL	24,611	11,809	2,893	2,419	8,154	6,180	10,056	9,637	619	459
2	BRITISH TERRITORY	24,238	11,690	2,822	2,400	8,154	6,180	10,056	9,637	619	459
3	Burdwan Division	5,846	2,497	138	88	..	..	..	..	87	68
4	Burdwan	1,878	1,073	..	..	..	..	..	..	5	16
5	Birbhum	80	69	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
6	Bankura	4	2	12	7	..	..	..	..	..	..
7	Midnapore	35	31	24	16	..	..	..	..	82	52
8	Hooghly	1,770	645	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
9	Howrah	2,079	677	102	62	..	..	..	..	..	..
10	Presidency Division	11,142	4,240	1,074	1,044	..	..	..	..	..	..
11	24-Parganas	4,898	2,020	601	616	..	..	..	..	..	..
12	Calcutta	4,789	1,635	118	39	..	..	..	..	..	..
13	Nadia	384	46	355	389	..	..	..	..	..	..
14	Murshidabad	947	624	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
15	Jessore	51	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
16	Khulna	73	8	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
17	Rajshahi Division	5,032	3,339	1,584	1,227	..	..	51	2	529	391
18	Rajshahi	885	280	..	..	..	..	..	..	58	57
19	Dinajpur	607	169	82	115	..	..	10	..	471	334
20	Jalpaiguri	475	185	1,228	869	..	..	..	..	..	..
21	Darjeeling	106	64	84	86	..	..	28	2	..	..
22	Rangpur	1,398	691	..	..	..	..	13	..	..	..
23	Bogra	237	186	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
24	Pabna	374	231	68	58	..	..	..	..	..	..
25	Malda	1,452	1,533	102	99	..	..	..	..	..	..
26	Dacca Division	2,029	1,600	..	..	8,154	6,158	9,989	9,634	3	..
27	Dacca	520	298	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
28	Mymensingh	1,316	1,220	..	..	8,154	6,158	9,989	9,634	3	..
29	Faridpur	96	82	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
30	Bakarganj	88	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
31	Chittagong Division	148	14	48	44	..	22	16	1	..	..
32	Tippura	140	7	..	..	..	..	16	1	..	..
33	Noakhali	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
34	Chittagong	8	7	46	44	..	..	..	..	..	..
35	Chittagong Hill Tracts	..	..	..	..	..	22	..	..	..	..
36	BENGAL STATES	373	119	71	19	..	..	..	..	..	..
37	Cooch Behar	878	93	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
38	Tripura	..	26	71	19	..	..	..	..	..	..

Serial No.	Division, district or state.	A.—Untouchables.									
		(ii) Other untouchables (continued).									
		Mal.		Mallah.		Malpahariya.		Muehl.		Musnhar.	
		Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.
1		71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
1	BENGAL	54,091	57,076	16,942	9,310	6,082	5,700	221,673	192,546	6,472	5,242
2	BRITISH TERRITORY	54,078	57,076	16,685	9,216	6,081	5,700	220,103	191,716	6,379	5,136
3	Burdwan Division	32,816	34,185	2,301	757	128	82	78,842	74,669	915	555
4	Burdwan	804	598	353	87	120	55	33,218	30,637	270	313
5	Birbhum	19,579	21,367	5	1	..	..	22,432	22,943	128	112
6	Bankura	6,116	6,629	..	..	..	..	5,981	5,617	..	..
7	Midnapore	4,204	4,158	10	10	8	7	4,287	4,165	..	..
8	Hooghly	1,768	1,321	1,353	525	..	..	9,045	8,701	244	32
9	Howrah	346	112	670	134	..	..	3,829	2,906	273	98
10	Presidency Division	9,954	9,688	6,888	1,717	179	351	86,136	71,843	612	475
11	24-Parganas	227	137	2,773	1,262	..	..	18,216	15,188	267	40
12	Calcutta	326	38	2,282	40	..	..	10,422	2,521	37	29
13	Nadia	616	672	450	157	8	..	15,602	14,859	62	54
14	Murshidabad	8,498	8,315	266	230	170	351	11,093	11,385	208	323
15	Jessore	62	190	21	8	..	..	19,565	17,593	33	29
16	Khulna	230	226	94	20	..	..	11,238	10,197	5	..
17	Rajshahi Division	3,140	2,873	4,098	2,978	5,774	5,287	22,768	17,149	4,604	3,919
18	Rajshahi	217	199	551	303	2,452	2,271	4,261	4,436	91	85
19	Dinajpur	1,010	833	1,244	910	506	686	4,211	2,579	1,573	1,343
20	Jalpaiguri	222	96	339	54	1,295	991	1,315	509	235	66
21	Darjeeling	48	..	39	30	1,004	701	137	19	141	93
22	Rangpur	109	234	758	444	85	35	5,431	3,657	707	500
23	Bogra	..	..	352	366	75	80	1,697	1,293	169	134
24	Pabna	..	..	502	195	..	..	2,964	2,698	121	120
25	Malda	1,534	1,511	918	766	407	523	2,082	1,958	1,597	1,578
26	Dacca Division	6,673	6,867	3,509	3,733	..	..	28,529	24,864	54	30
27	Dacca	..	..	18	..	..	..	11,790	11,884	..	..
28	Mymensingh	6,585	6,684	3,518	3,733	..	..	13,303	10,738	44	21
29	Faridpur	..	..	..	..	..	..	2,182	1,570	..	..
30	Bakarganj	88	173	68	..	..	..	1,254	672	10	9
31	Chittagong Division	1,495	3,473	121	31	..	..	3,798	3,701	194	157
32	Tippura	1,480	3,454	111	14	..	..	3,219	2,837	26	12
33	Noakhali	..	..	..	..	..	..	235	139	..	..
34	Chittagong	15	19	10	17	..	..	339	163	162	139
35	Chittagong Hill Tracts	..	..	..	..	..	..	5	2	6	6
36	BENGAL STATES	13	..	257	94	1	..	1,570	830	93	106
37	Cooch Behar	..	13	..	231	58	1	..	1,328	530	44
38	Tripura	..	..	..	26	86	..	..	242	291	49

STATEMENT

Number of the depressed classes

A.—Untouchables.

(H) Other untouchables (concluded).

Serial No.	Division, district or state.	A.—Untouchables.							
		(H) Other untouchables (concluded).							
		Pundari.		Rajwar.		Sunri.		Tiyar.	
		Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.
	1	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102
1	BENGAL	17,354	13,901	11,287	10,050	40,000	36,920	48,592	47,821
2	BRITISH TERRITORY	17,354	13,901	11,274	10,041	39,914	36,865	48,585	47,790
3	Burdwan Division	..	..	4,156	3,623	31,079	29,818	10,640	11,562
4	Burdwan	..	..	1,195	872	6,337	5,618	275	323
5	Birbhum	..	..	170	199	7,003	7,223	191	229
6	Bankura	..	..	246	174	12,713	12,155	902	907
7	Midnapore	..	..	2,336	2,225	2,707	2,724	2,117	2,321
8	Hooghly	..	..	97	82	1,201	950	1,813	1,486
9	Howrah	..	..	112	71	1,068	848	5,342	6,236
10	Presidency Division	13,050	10,204	3,948	3,879	8,660	8,213	22,016	20,463
11	24-Parganas	8,560	6,028	980	750	1,970	1,370	17,964	16,456
12	Calcutta	..	..	751	117	1,486	750	133	142
13	Nadia	339	211	1,550	1,768	949	844	266	478
14	Murshidabad	3,893	3,663	425	1,198	1,489	1,024	1,696	1,576
15	Jessore	251	302	242	46	148	98	217	249
16	Khulna	4	..	..	..	648	527	1,740	1,582
17	Rajshahi Division	4,077	3,502	2,354	2,037	1,776	1,499	6,540	7,144
18	Rajshahi	1,936	1,498	686	703	291	184	992	1,097
19	Dinaipur	..	..	109	27	345	243	192	188
20	Jalpaiguri	..	..	26	3	199	119	13	..
21	Darjeeling	..	..	..	..	26	26	..	..
22	Rangpur	..	..	828	573	64	25	48	20
23	Bogra	..	..	46	30	52	41	50	43
24	Pabna	54	37	35	129	23	3	366	361
25	Malda	2,037	1,967	624	567	776	868	4,879	5,435
26	Dacca Division	221	195	811	497	366	336	9,389	8,601
27	Dacca	4	..	219	178	304	310	1,537	1,677
28	Mymensingh	217	195	592	319	52	25	7,639	6,755
29	Faridpur	..	..	..	..	..	..	180	155
30	Bakarganj	..	..	..	..	..	..	33	14
31	Chittagong Division	..	..	8	5	13	..	..	..
32	Tippera	..	..	..	..	4	..	..	..
33	Noakhali	..	..	..	..	3	..	..	..
34	Chittagong	..	..	5	5	6	..	..	..
35	Chittagong Hill Tracts	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
36	BENGAL STATES	..	..	13	9	86	55	7	31
37	Cooch Behar	..	..	..	..	27	..	..	..
38	Tripura	..	..	18	9	59	55	7	31

B.—Classes of aboriginal derivation.

Serial No.	Division, district or state.	B.—Classes of aboriginal derivation.							
		Koda (Kora).		Lodha.		Mech.		Munda.	
		Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.
	1	116	117	118	119	120	121	122	123
1	BENGAL	23,909	22,880	5,760	5,241	2,746	2,129	33,276	29,831
2	BRITISH TERRITORY	23,778	22,839	5,736	5,228	2,694	2,104	32,086	28,957
3	Burdwan Division	20,640	19,700	5,067	5,213	..	..	1,994	1,461
4	Burdwan	7,580	6,430	21	8	..	..	156	100
5	Birbhum	3,932	4,028	..	..	..	..	81	82
6	Bankura	2,665	2,664	..	..	..	..	128	137
7	Midnapore	4,813	4,870	4,952	4,863	..	..	730	890
8	Hooghly	1,453	1,675	634	329	..	..	359	120
9	Howrah	197	33	60	8	..	..	540	152
10	Presidency Division	415	399	65	15	15	..	3,415	3,307
11	24-Parganas	34	52	17	10	..	..	1,485	1,416
12	Calcutta	23	25	46	4	15	..	232	42
13	Nadia	14	..	2	1	..	..	778	909
14	Murshidabad	293	265	..	..	..	..	190	268
15	Jessore	51	57	..	..	..	..	668	590
16	Khulna	..	..	..	..	..	..	62	82
17	Rajshahi Division	2,719	2,700	..	..	2,679	2,104	25,162	23,428
18	Rajshahi	105	99	..	..	..	..	3,494	3,456
19	Dinaipur	964	871	..	..	..	..	2,159	2,436
20	Jalpaiguri	..	..	..	..	2,495	1,939	14,341	18,442
21	Darjeeling	..	..	..	..	181	165	2,218	1,559
22	Rangpur	..	..	..	..	3	..	217	178
23	Bogra	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,564	1,418
24	Pabna	..	..	..	..	..	..	230	218
25	Malda	1,041	1,730	..	..	..	..	939	721
26	Dacca Division	3	..	..	..	..	..	1,366	598
27	Dacca	..	..	..	..	..	..	828	319
28	Mymensingh	3	..	..	..	..	..	356	139
29	Faridpur	..	..	..	..	..	..	138	80
30	Bakarganj	..	..	..	..	..	..	44	60
31	Chittagong Division	10	40	4	..	..	..	149	163
32	Tippera	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..
33	Noakhali	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
34	Chittagong	10	40	3	..	..	..	146	163
35	Chittagong Hill Tracts	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	..
36	BENGAL STATES	131	41	24	13	52	25	1,190	874
37	Cooch Behar	..	..	..	..	52	25	6	2
38	Tripura	181	41	24	13	..	..	1,185	872

No. XII-h (continued).

by categories, by districts.

B.—Classes of aboriginal derivation.

Total, Castes of aboriginal derivation.			Agaria.		Bhumij.		Garo.		Ho.		Kaur.		Serial No.
Both sex.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	
108	104	105	106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	
1,036,309	533,164	503,145	159	71	41,940	42,507	19,034	18,275	15	8	888	893	1
867,109	445,255	421,854	159	71	41,700	42,295	18,473	17,043	15	4	867	777	2
388,758	199,619	192,142	49	19	33,938	35,154	9	8	15	4	..	..	3
82,528	43,696	38,832	..	..	1,059	1,396	..	6	..	..	..	..	4
18,924	8,450	8,374	..	..	63	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	5
91,198	45,176	46,022	..	..	9,008	9,098	..	..	..	..	..	..	6
152,179	74,196	77,983	44	5	21,928	22,925	9	2	15	4	..	..	7
41,848	21,908	19,945	5	..	1,794	1,715	..	..	..	..	..	..	8
4,181	3,195	986	..	5	84	20	..	..	..	..	..	..	9
39,484	19,997	19,487	49	..	5,949	5,497	122	10	..	..	87	83	10
15,929	8,876	7,553	..	..	4,987	4,521	103	12	..	..	..	..	11
989	804	185	49	..	17	14	4	2	..	..	87	23	12
7,802	3,781	4,021	..	..	285	263	..	..	..	..	..	..	13
9,143	4,690	4,463	..	..	35	36	..	..	..	..	..	..	14
4,417	2,258	2,164	..	..	625	663	15	1	..	..	..	..	15
204	103	101	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	16
363,881	189,029	174,861	13	17	1,591	1,451	622	434	..	..	99	143	17
37,998	19,989	17,917	..	..	786	725	..	..	..	..	..	..	18
94,178	47,962	46,216	..	9	..	..	2	..	..	..	44	92	19
144,928	75,975	68,953	..	..	192	105	606	424	..	..	..	..	20
15,451	8,736	6,715	18	8	2	1	..	..	..	..	..	51	21
8,013	3,183	2,850	..	..	..	..	14	10	..	..	..	41	22
10,947	5,696	5,251	..	..	142	131	..	..	..	..	..	..	23
4,797	2,529	2,268	..	..	519	489	..	..	..	..	..	11	24
49,861	24,970	24,691	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	25
39,054	20,600	18,454	..	..	247	175	17,718	16,588	..	..	988	871	26
1,786	1,185	601	..	..	125	80	15	..	..	..	..	..	27
36,421	18,941	17,480	..	..	66	53	17,701	16,585	..	..	658	571	28
711	399	312	..	..	56	42	..	..	..	..	..	..	29
136	75	61	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	80	..	30
36,932	19,022	17,910	51	44	7	18	4	..	..	..	18	49	31
1,429	742	687	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	16	36	32
3,400	1,777	1,623	47	40	7	18	4	..	..	..	..	4	34
32,193	16,593	15,600	4	4	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	35
169,200	87,909	81,291	..	..	240	212	1,161	1,232	..	4	1	116	36
1,364	723	641	..	..	..	..	125	125	..	..	..	..	37
167,836	87,186	80,650	..	..	240	212	1,036	1,107	..	4	1	116	38

B.—Classes of aboriginal derivation.

Nagesia.		Oraon.		Rabha.		Santal.		Tipara.		Turi.		Serial No.
Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	
124	125	126	127	128	129	130	131	132	133	134	135	
1,215	873	73,287	63,140	1,143	933	219,315	214,187	101,448	94,407	8,429	7,770	1
1,177	840	72,641	62,771	860	478	218,920	213,841	17,950	16,926	8,378	7,686	2
85	27	5,218	1,400	..	..	128,837	128,806	..	..	228	359	3
..	..	341	287	..	..	34,366	30,312	..	..	173	293	4
..	..	37	31	..	..	4,329	4,230	..	..	8	23	5
..	..	5	2	..	..	33,370	34,121	..	..	..	..	6
..	..	277	331	..	..	41,410	44,078	..	..	18	10	7
..	..	2,939	547	..	..	14,647	15,527	..	..	22	32	8
25	27	1,569	202	..	..	715	588	..	..	5	1	9
5	4	4,583	4,248	1	..	4,543	4,441	..	..	781	539	10
..	..	1,172	795	..	..	189	371	..	..	389	376	11
..	..	72	13	..	..	41	..	..	..	221	61	12
..	..	2,069	2,254	1	..	632	594	..	..	102	67	13
5	4	945	878	..	..	3,110	2,945	..	..	86	35	14
..	..	825	306	..	..	533	512	..	..	8	..	15
..	..	..	..	..	..	88	19	..	..	..	..	16
1,147	599	82,589	56,809	828	468	84,677	80,915	..	..	7,139	6,493	17
..	..	4,504	8,974	..	..	10,656	9,207	..	..	404	456	18
..	..	2,609	2,600	..	..	39,782	37,903	..	..	2,402	2,305	19
918	598	40,333	42,583	626	468	9,241	8,508	..	..	1,256	686	20
184	169	4,629	3,496	..	..	1,446	1,212	..	..	63	54	21
..	..	666	544	..	..	1,958	1,923	..	..	264	195	22
60	42	1,231	1,173	..	..	2,221	2,117	..	..	488	370	23
..	..	1,637	1,407	..	..	84	125	..	..	48	29	24
..	..	930	1,032	..	..	19,239	19,020	..	..	2,171	2,188	25
..	..	160	134	..	..	305	286	115	105	..	..	26
..	..	127	107	..	..	90	95	..	..	..	..	27
..	..	33	27	..	..	9	..	115	105	..	..	28
..	..	..	..	..	..	205	190	..	..	..	..	29
..	..	..	..	..	..	1	1	..	..	..	..	30
..	..	91	182	31	10	658	293	17,835	16,821	286	299	31
..	..	8	12	31	10	..	..	686	629	..	..	32
..	..	83	170	..	..	399	216	822	673	266	299	33
..	..	..	..	..	..	169	77	16,827	15,519	..	..	34
..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	35
38	33	646	369	483	455	395	346	83,498	77,481	59	90	36
84	15	19	17	438	455	4	2	..	..	1	..	37
4	18	627	352	..	..	391	344	83,498	77,481	49	90	38

Number of the depressed classes

C.—Other depressed classes.

(1) In the list for 1931.

Serial No.	Division, district or state.	Total, list of 1931.								
		Total, list of 1931.			Bairi.		Bodiya.		Beldar.	
		Both sex.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.
1		196	137	138	139	140	141	142	143	144
1	BENGAL	1,195,311	627,118	568,193	4,766	4,122	3,698	3,545	1,828	1,311
2	BRITISH TERRITORY	1,188,044	623,235	564,809	4,766	4,122	3,529	3,362	1,828	1,311
3	Burdwan Division	349,338	181,234	168,104	2,309	2,090	887	862	161	46
4	Burdwan	45,824	23,828	21,996	686	686	190	239	76	12
5	Birbhum	39,040	19,500	18,540	114	121	169	171	..	..
6	Bankura	37,381	19,542	17,839	157	172	198	140	..	..
7	Midnapore	166,921	79,774	77,147	448	453	280	202	14	..
8	Hooghly	30,677	16,904	13,773	418	291	68	50	28	29
9	Howrah	39,495	21,686	17,809	486	367	75	50	43	4
10	Presidency Division	281,478	152,670	128,808	1,624	1,364	670	638	305	218
11	24-Parganas	59,119	35,277	23,842	260	175	514	498	6	6
12	Calcutta	26,037	17,101	8,956	28	2	49	12	179	205
13	Nadia	41,845	22,236	19,009	513	463	109	90	8	7
14	Murshidabad	40,056	19,165	20,891	352	324	85	82	18	..
15	Jessore	73,765	37,489	36,276	372	303	106	156	..	..
16	Khulna	40,656	21,402	19,254	99	87	7	..	..	..
17	Rajshahi Division	141,596	71,076	70,520	610	436	1,750	1,649	1,466	1,048
18	Rajshahi	13,202	7,046	6,156	68	53	105	46	..	..
19	Dinajpur	12,144	6,718	5,428	15	13	123	86	742	433
20	Jalpaiguri	6,566	3,216	3,850	..	..	289	272	6	..
21	Darjeeling	6,210	3,309	2,901	12	..	..	..	..	..
22	Rangpur	10,709	5,984	4,725	13	3	489	475	4	1
23	Bogra	13,540	6,779	6,761	8	..	440	629	..	..
24	Pabna	47,154	21,815	25,339	233	208	286	235	..	..
25	Malda	32,071	16,209	16,862	266	159	13	16	708	614
26	Dacca Division	305,705	160,618	145,087	30	36	22	23	2	..
27	Dacca	103,677	53,274	50,403	30	36	6	..	2	..
28	Mymensingh	113,558	61,294	52,264	..	..	..	..	..	..
29	Fariapur	54,460	28,222	26,258	..	..	..	..	..	..
30	Bakarganj	33,980	17,828	16,162	..	..	16	23	..	..
31	Chittagong Division	109,927	57,637	52,290	193	206	..	..	..	..
32	Tippera	66,551	34,901	31,650	193	206	..	..	..	..
33	Nonkhall	17,725	9,721	8,004	..	..	..	..	..	..
34	Chittagong	25,440	12,833	12,607	..	..	..	..	..	..
35	Chittagong Hill Tracts	211	182	29	..	..	..	..	..	..
36	BENGAL STATES	7,267	3,883	3,384	..	..	169	183	..	..
37	Cooch Behar	2,860	1,560	1,300	..	..	169	180	..	..
38	Tripura	4,407	2,323	2,084	..	..	..	3	..	..

C.—Other depressed classes.

(1) In the list for 1931 (continued.)

Serial No.	Division, district or state.	Total, list of 1931.							
		Kalwar.		Kandra.		Kapali.		Kapuria.	
		Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.
1		159	160	161	162	163	164	165	166
1	BENGAL	8,964	4,567	2,467	2,257	86,242	79,341	98	72
2	BRITISH TERRITORY	8,877	4,506	2,453	2,237	85,366	78,314	98	72
3	Burdwan Division	2,542	1,301	2,120	2,199	2,478	2,157	51	38
4	Burdwan	200	81	4	9	514	506	4	..
5	Birbhum	405	342	..	..	1	..	..	..
6	Bankura	4	1	..	..	1	..	..	..
7	Midnapore	80	51	2,116	2,190	164	143	47	38
8	Hooghly	630	384	..	..	..	..	..	..
9	Howrah	1,173	442	..	..	1,798	1,508	..	..
10	Presidency Division	4,470	2,160	333	38	33,282	30,061	47	34
11	24-Parganas	1,771	806	333	38	8,087	7,168	7	30
12	Calcutta	2,478	1,205	..	..	289	164	40	4
13	Nadia	4	1	..	..	3,183	3,617	..	..
14	Murshidabad	211	129	..	..	6	6	..	..
15	Jessore	6	9	..	..	10,237	9,462	..	..
16	Khulna	..	..	..	..	11,480	10,244	..	..
17	Rajshahi Division	1,650	872	..	..	5,121	5,354	..	..
18	Rajshahi	134	79	..	..	1,335	1,130	..	..
19	Dinajpur	350	237	..	..	116	118	..	..
20	Jalpaiguri	361	100	..	..	276	652	..	..
21	Darjeeling	101	34	..	..	21	14	..	..
22	Rangpur	251	84	..	..	374	617	..	..
23	Bogra	124	65	..	..	631	618	..	..
24	Pabna	45	35	..	..	2,309	2,167	..	..
25	Malda	284	238	..	..	59	38	..	..
26	Dacca Division	215	163	..	..	36,377	33,976	..	..
27	Dacca	10	..	..	..	15,365	14,853	..	..
28	Mymensingh	205	183	..	..	8,132	6,942	..	..
29	Fariapur	..	..	..	..	8,068	7,654	..	..
30	Bakarganj	..	..	..	..	4,812	4,527	..	..
31	Chittagong Division	..	..	..	..	8,108	6,766	..	..
32	Tippera	..	..	..	..	7,748	6,472	..	..
33	Nonkhall	..	..	..	..	360	294	..	..
34	Chittagong	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
35	Chittagong Hill Tracts	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
36	BENGAL STATES	87	61	14	20	876	1,027	..	..
37	Cooch Behar	87	61	..	..	53	46	..	..
38	Tripura	..	..	14	20	823	981	..	..

No. XII-b (continued).

by categories, by districts,

C.—Other depressed classes.

(1) In the list for 1931 (concluded).

Table with 17 columns: Districts (Barua, Bhatiya, Damal, Gonrhl, Jalia Kaibarta, Jhalo, Malo, Kalu and Tell) and Serial No. Each district is split into Male and Female columns. Data rows follow with population counts for each category.

C.—Other depressed classes.

(1) In the list for 1931 (concluded).

Table with 17 columns: Districts (Karenga, Khatik, Konal, Mahar, Nagar, Nat, Raju, Shagirdpesha) and Serial No. Each district is split into Male and Female columns. Data rows follow with population counts for each category.

STATEMENT

Number of the depressed classes

C.—Other depressed classes.

(H) Included in the list of 1921 but not in 1931.

Serial No.	Division, district or state.	Total, including those of 1921 not included in 1931.						
		Total, including those of 1921 not included in 1931.			*Kastha.		*Khaira.	
		Both sex.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.
1	183	184	185	186	187	188	189	
1	BENGAL	2,122,972	1,125,075	997,897	1,367	1,234	18,877	19,410
2	BRITISH TERRITORY	1,801,712	957,529	844,183	1,366	1,234	18,763	19,391
3	Burdwan Division	237,571	125,441	112,130	1,366	1,234	18,709	19,366
4	Burdwan	14,527	8,743	5,784	..	..	1,341	1,310
5	Birbhum	5,029	2,547	2,482	..	..	..	..
6	Bankura	64,532	26,380	23,452	..	..	12,793	14,165
7	Midnapore	111,615	64,572	57,043	1,366	1,234	2,065	2,234
8	Hooghly	20,371	12,752	7,819	..	..	2,503	1,657
9	Howrah	30,997	20,447	10,550	..	..	..	..
10	Presidency Division	188,000	110,432	77,568	..	..	61	25
11	24-Parganas	77,998	47,295	30,703	..	..	..	..
12	Calcutta	23,843	19,102	4,741	..	..	..	..
13	Nadia	19,541	10,592	8,949	..	..	39	..
14	Murshidabad	30,109	14,290	15,819	..	..	..	..
15	Jessore	11,303	6,120	5,183	..	..	22	25
16	Khulna	25,206	13,033	12,173	..	..	..	..
17	Rajshahi Division	1,294,626	679,031	615,595	..	..	..	..
18	Rajshahi	33,334	17,006	16,328	..	..	..	..
19	Dinajpur	368,080	192,298	175,782	..	..	..	..
20	Jalpaiguri	332,918	179,306	153,612	..	..	..	..
21	Darjeeling	27,602	15,106	12,496	..	..	..	..
22	Rangpur	448,666	232,339	216,327	..	..	..	..
23	Bogra	12,381	6,497	5,884	..	..	..	..
24	Pabna	17,203	9,010	8,193	..	..	..	..
25	Malda	54,412	27,469	26,973	..	..	..	..
26	Dacca Division	78,564	41,201	37,463	..	..	..	..
27	Dacca	28,438	14,857	13,581	..	..	..	..
28	Mymensingh	34,029	17,765	16,264	..	..	..	..
29	Faridpur	14,960	7,738	7,222	..	..	..	..
30	Bakarganj	1,237	841	396	..	..	..	..
31	Chittagong Division	2,851	1,424	1,427	..	..	..	..
32	Tippera	1,685	894	791	..	..	..	..
33	Noakhali	257	97	160	..	..	..	..
34	Chittagong	909	433	476	..	..	..	..
35	Chittagong Hill Tracts	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
36	BENGAL STATES	321,260	167,546	153,714	1	..	114	19
37	Cooch Behar	319,984	166,590	153,394	..	..	..	..
38	Tripura	1,276	956	320	1	..	114	19

N. B.—Figures for Asur, Birhor, Dalu, Korwa and

THE DEPRESSED CLASSES.

No. XII-h (concluded).

by categories, by districts.

C.—Other depressed classes.

(ii) Included in the list of 1921 but not in 1931 (concluded).

*Khandait.		*Kolri.		Kurmi.		*Nuniya.		Rajbangahl.		*Sukti.		Serial No.
Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	
190	191	192	193	194	195	196	197	198	199	200	201	
27,258	7,822	11,407	4,614	107,368	87,284	17,499	10,601	939,396	864,975	1,903	1,957	1
26,662	7,666	11,407	4,614	106,278	86,898	17,499	10,601	773,651	711,822	1,903	1,957	2
10,235	8,820	4,348	1,456	60,244	57,874	4,231	1,992	24,561	24,626	1,704	1,763	3
136	23	1,432	597	2,606	1,555	1,299	766	1,929	1,533	..	..	4
3	1	39	34	300	199	93	18	2,112	2,240	..	..	5
3	..	6	3	10,113	10,451	..	..	3,465	3,833	..	..	6
3,257	3,011	185	19	41,679	44,032	75	54	4,241	4,698	1,704	1,763	7
1,304	150	1,344	475	2,231	604	1,537	774	3,393	4,159	..	..	8
6,032	635	1,402	338	3,315	1,033	1,277	380	2,421	2,164	..	..	9
16,422	3,846	7,051	3,155	20,631	11,162	10,297	5,753	56,771	53,433	199	194	10
9,886	2,782	3,249	1,729	9,463	5,981	3,468	1,255	21,274	18,773	155	163	11
6,085	996	2,552	309	7,392	2,336	1,860	348	1,173	841	40	11	12
..	..	122	73	2,274	1,681	492	209	7,665	6,986	..	..	13
..	..	1,033	1,044	848	845	1,002	923	11,347	13,007	1	..	14
363	47	14	..	863	183	3,475	3,018	1,378	1,910	3	..	15
282	21	26	..	291	236	..	..	12,434	11,916	..	..	16
..	..	8	3	20,530	13,903	2,921	2,856	665,372	698,833	..	..	17
..	..	..	..	3,808	2,997	..	..	13,108	13,331	..	..	18
..	..	..	..	4,811	2,901	..	..	187,487	172,881	..	..	19
..	..	8	3	1,342	351	37	9	177,919	153,249	..	..	20
..	..	..	..	465	167	1	..	14,640	12,329	..	..	21
..	..	..	..	2,669	1,023	..	..	229,670	216,304	..	..	22
..	..	..	..	1,538	1,356	33	41	4,926	4,487	..	..	23
..	..	..	..	2,433	1,795	..	..	6,577	6,398	..	..	24
..	..	..	..	3,464	3,313	2,850	2,806	21,155	20,854	..	..	25
..	..	..	..	4,449	3,359	..	..	36,747	34,104	..	..	26
5	..	..	..	1,003	488	..	..	13,854	13,093	..	..	27
..	..	..	..	2,311	1,978	..	..	15,449	14,286	..	..	28
..	..	..	..	1,049	892	..	..	6,689	6,330	..	..	29
..	..	..	..	86	1	..	..	755	395	..	..	30
..	..	..	..	424	600	..	..	1,000	827	..	..	31
..	..	..	..	186	997	..	..	708	494	..	..	32
..	..	..	..	10	68	..	..	87	92	..	..	33
..	..	..	..	228	235	..	..	306	341	..	..	34
..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	35
596	156	..	..	1,090	386	..	..	165,745	153,153	..	..	36
696	156	..	..	895	243	..	..	166,695	153,151	..	..	37
..	..	..	..	195	143	..	..	50	2	..	..	38

Kurariar have not been extracted.

APPENDIX II

Notes on the Peoples of the Chittagong Hill Tracts

The essay here printed is by Mr. J. P. Mills, I.C.S., now Honorary Director of Ethnography in Assam, and is based on the notes which he made during a short stay in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in 1926. Mr. H. R. Wilkinson, C.I.E., I.C.S., at one time Deputy Commissioner of the Hill Tracts, makes the following comments :—

My recollections date from the years 1920-1922 and must be regarded merely as the impressions of a layman. Where they differ from Mr. Mills' statements, the latter should for obvious reasons be preferred.

The district known as the Chittagong Hill Tracts has more in common with the neighbouring Lushai Hills than with the Chittagong District. But its generous river system provides natural means of communication with Chittagong and the sea. The tendency therefore has been for these hill people, especially those living anywhere near the big rivers, to come more and more into contact with and thus assimilate the customs of the people of the Regulation District. This tendency has been aggravated and accelerated by the inclusion of the district in Bengal; the Commissioner is at Chittagong and for administrative purposes the people look to Chittagong. Although pleaders are not allowed in the Hill Tracts, the people have easy access to the legal profession at Chittagong and the influence of the litigious spirit which prevails in Chittagong District cannot but begin to make itself felt among the hitherto unsophisticated people of the Hills. This is particularly the case with the Chakmas, partly because of their geographical situation but also because the Chief himself would appear to have encouraged the imitation of Bengali habits.

Originally the Chiefs were tribal and not territorial but now they exercise whatever power they have over the Circles called after their names and corresponding now to the three subdivisions. The Chakma Circle is served by the Karnaphuli and its tributaries, which are navigable to the small boats in use in most parts of the Circle. Motor boats now ply regularly between Chittagong and Rangamati and can go a good way beyond that. The Chakma Chief has house property in Chittagong Town and, like the other Chiefs, and in the district. The natural approach to the Hill Tracts is through the Collectorate.

The Chakmas are fair of complexion and to me show distinct traces of Mongolian origin. I am surprised at what Mr. Mills says about their language and religion. I thought that they had a definite language of their own but that it was gradually merging itself into Bengali—Chittagonian Bengali. Similarly I should have said that they were officially Buddhists though with decided animistic tendencies and had always been so and that contact with the people of the plains and the efforts of the Chief to ape the manners of the educated Bengali had resulted in a certain tinge of Hinduism being noticeable in their attitude. The establishment of a High School in Rangamati has created a demand for professional employment.

In times of famine and distress they are extremely reluctant to take up any relief work and for the ordinary Public Works Department road work a staff of Sonthal coolies has to be regularly employed. I think it is pride rather than laziness, which prevents them from taking to this kind of work. Similarly, I think I am right in saying that the Forest Department find it very difficult to obtain the services of Chakmas in Forest villages. My impression also is that it is the Chakmas who have taken most kindly to the imported plough cultivation in place of the indigenous system of *ghuming*; but this of course is due in part at least to the fact that they are more likely to occupy land suitable for plough cultivation.

I came across the Mros very little as I was not long enough in the Hill Tracts to visit their area in the south-east of the district and they themselves are very retiring and clannish. They show very little effect of the influence of the plains.

Mr. C. G. B. Stevens, I.C.S., who succeeded Mr. Wilkinson was assassinated before Mr. Mills' essay was shown to him, and it is consequently impossible to give his comments. Some notes are added however, which were put together by Babu S. S. Chaudhuri, B.J.C.S., and footnotes marked A.S.H. are details supplied by Mr. A. S. Hands, I.C.S., who succeeded Mr. Stevens.

Notes on a tour in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in 1926 by J. P. Mills, I.C.S.

The Chittagong Hill Tracts form the hinterland of the District of Chittagong, the long boundary between the two districts following the base of the hills. Marching with the Hill Tracts to the North is the State of Tripura, and to the East of and behind them are the Lushai Hills and the Arakan District of Burma. Even since the days of the Mogal conquest the inhabitants of the Hill Tracts have paid tribute, first in cotton and later in money to the paramount power which held the coastal belt of plains. Indolent and unwarlike however they were never able to protect themselves from Lushai and Kuki raiders and in order to safeguard those from whom we received tribute we took on and administered this hinterland from 1862. It now forms a district of the province of Bengal. Its administration has always presented peculiar problems and it was while on deputation in connection with one of them that I was able to record the notes on which this paper is based.

Save where it borders on the Lushai Hills and Arakan the district contains no hills of even a respectable height, and the bulk of its inhabitants are valley folk, hugging the rivers which provide their chief means of communication. The ranges which run through the district are low and remarkably straight, often only a few hundred feet in height and rarely exceeding two thousand. All are of soft sandstone and laterite and there is no supply of stone such as could be put to any cultural use. Many of the valleys are so broad and flat that as one looks across the rice fields one might almost imagine oneself in the plains of Bengal. Others are a mere jumble of laterite and sandstone hillocks, with here and there a few plots of ground level enough for the plough. The rivers, save where they emerge from the higher ranges, meander over sandy

beds. The Karnaphuli, for instance, the main river of the district, is navigable for Bengali boats for 85 miles from Chittagong up to Subalong. Here some short rapids where the river runs over a low outcrop of rock form an obstacle. Above them again the stream is navigable for many miles. The scenery, as one travels by river, is varied. Sometimes high banks of mud are all one sees on either side. In other places steep, heavily wooded cliffs of sandstone run down to the water. The rainfall is heavy and the climate exceedingly unhealthy for much of the year.

In this area the Lushai-Kuki tribes from the North and races of Burmese origin from the South have met face to face. The result has been continual contact and intermingling, and the consequent culture-borrowing has resulted in great uniformity throughout the area. Besides this the long plains border and the rivers which have always given the Bengali trader easy access to the very heart of the district have laid a thick layer of foreign culture over the Indonesian substratum. Yet each tribe still presents its own peculiarities if one looks for them. When I entered a Kuki or Mro house I could imagine myself in the Naga Hills; in the house of an educated Chakma I was in Bengal; in the house of a Southern Magh I was in Burma.

Few areas offer a richer field to the ethnologist but we still await the detailed accounts we long for. Such accounts can only come from those who have lived among the people. A casual visitor like myself can only record what the eye sees; beliefs and social systems must remain hidden from him. It is in this area that the cultures of Assam and Burma meet and such monographs as those published by the Government of Assam would supply many invaluable links. Two officials at any rate, Captain Lewin and Mr. Sneyd Hutchinson, have in the past gained some knowledge of the people by long residence among them, but the books of both only leave us asking for more. Dr. Reibeck is the only trained ethnologist who has ever visited the people of the Hill Tracts and he lacked both knowledge of the language and capable interpreters and did little more than collect specimens of handicraft.

Save the Lusheis, Chaks and Kukis I saw a little of all the tribes inhabiting the Chittagong Hill Tracts. For the sake of brevity I will confine myself to my own observation and refrain from quoting information already available in the few books on this area. For the paucity of the information I can give I am not entirely responsible. Partly, it is true, it is due to the hurried way in which I had to tour. But partly one can justly blame the goods of the Bengali trader which, brought by river almost to the doors of the Hill Tracts folk, have ousted almost every indigenous article. This process is aided by the almost unbelievable indolence of the people. The cotton crop is an unfailing source of cash and even I have known hillmen buy baskets from Bengalis rather than make them from the countless bamboos near at hand; while the highest ambition of a Chakma is to obtain a grant of land and immediately sublet it to a plains man, living himself in complete idleness on a slave of the crop. As the Maghs and Chakmas are the most numerous of the Hill Tracts tribes I will describe them first.

Maghs.—These are essentially valley folk and I saw no village which was not on the bank of a stream. They are almost certainly of Tai origin, their ancestors being the Tai Long (Greater Tai) who were driven out of China towards the south and south-west.* The earliest home, however, of which they have any definite traditions is Arakan, whence they migrated early in the 17th century into what is now Cox's Bazar subdivision. There they split up. Some migrated further into Bengal proper, while two bodies entered the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The first to arrive were the Southern Maghs, under the leadership of the Chief of the Phru family of the Ragretsa clan. They occupied the territory drained by the Sangu and its tributaries in the south of the Chittagong Hill Tracts District. Later the Northern Maghs, under the Chiefs of several clans of which the Palangsa was the most important, moved north along the coast, and settled for a long time on the Sitakund range, to the north of Chittagong. Having *jhumed* that country out they turned east, and crossing a narrow belt of plains, entered the low hills along the Tripura border in the north of the Chittagong Hill Tracts District. There they settled, finding the country empty save for a scattered Tippera population. This migration did not come to an end till early in the 19th century, and the longer sojourn of the Northern Maghs on the coast of Bengal has caused them to lose many of the Burmese characteristics which the Southern Maghs still retain.

Magh villages usually contain from about 10 to fifty houses, but are generally small. They are invariably built on the banks of streams. The houses are flimsy structures of bamboo on bamboo piles and consist of two main rooms, each with a separate door opening out on to the big sitting-out platform, and a small store room at the back. The climate is too hot for a fire even to be necessary for warmth, and for cooking a hearth is built in the corner of one of the main rooms. It consists of a bed of clay and three clay cylinders on which the cooking pot rests. These are obviously substitutes for hearth stones in a country where nothing but laterite or soft sandstone is to be found. The eaves of the house are low and stretch far out over the sitting-out platform, which invariably faces the East. It is under these eaves that the family sits during the day, retiring inside at night to sleep on mats in the breeze which blows through the thin bamboo matting walls of the house. The sitting-out platform is railed round and the only approach to it and so to the house is up a notched log, which is either pulled up or reversed at night.

In villages in which the houses are arranged to form a street there is often at one end of it a roofed platform on which the men sit and talk. This is probably a survival of the *morung* found in Assam. In one Northern Magh village (Maischari) I saw on the ground near one or

* Vide *Le May An Asian Arcady*, page 4.

two of the houses rough, low, strongly built huts, just high enough for a man to crawl into. I was told that they were used as shelters during hurricanes. Most villages boast a little Buddhist temple, which is always built well apart from the other houses.

On the site on which it is proposed to build a new house a pole is set up, and to the top of it is fixed a model of a bow with an arrow on the string and pointing skywards, the idea being that evil spirits are thereby frightened off.

Though the Maghs are now Buddhists they admit that they were once head hunters. Only faint memories of those days remain and I could learn no details. They say that after the heads were brought in they were welcomed by the women and were then buried, but where and in what position I could not ascertain.

The tribe is divided into endogamous clans (*Osa* or *Sa*) with descent in the male line. A clan is usually named after the stream or place near which the original ancestor is said to have lived. The Northern and Southern Maghs each contain their own group of clans, and a village, unless big, is usually inhabited by the members of one clan only. A man may marry any woman of his own clan who is not a near blood relation. Marriage outside the clan used to be strictly forbidden and I was told that members of different clans would not even eat together in the old days. Now, however, these restrictions have been greatly relaxed and marriage outside the clan is by no means uncommon.

The language is Arakanese, a dialect of Burmese. There are slight differences of dialect between the Northern and Southern Maghs. Burmese characters are used. In figures the Magh is short and sturdy. The face is broad and rather Mongolian and the complexion a sallow brown. The men usually have a straggling moustache and occasionally a beard.

By the men of the Northern Maghs Bengali *dhoties* are now worn, but most of the Southern Maghs wear Burmese dress—a silk *lungi*, a jacket and a white *puggaree*. Often instead of a *puggaree* a man will twist a jaunty piece of coloured silk round his head. The dress of a woman varies little throughout the tribe. She wears a long silk skirt, striped horizontally, of which the predominating colour is usually red. When there are no strangers about this is often the only garment of both young and old, but in public a piece of lined, home woven silk is bound over the breast or tucked into a black string tied round the body about them. A dark coloured jacket is also worn by some. A white *puggaree* is worn, sometimes with embroidered ends.

Many individuals of both sexes have the teeth blackened with a certain sap but the custom is not universal. Tattooing is commoner among the Southern Maghs than among the Northern. Men are tattooed on their arms and women on the backs of their shoulders and of their hands. The only "patterns" I saw were words in Burmese characters. The operation is done by Maghs learned in the art who come up from Cox's Bazar in the cold weather, and the instrument used, I was told, is a little bamboo holder into which three ordinary needles are fitted like a nib. The word to be tattooed is marked on the skin and pricked over with the tattooing instrument. This is operated by the right hand and guided against the side of the forefinger of the left. The sap of a certain tree is finally rubbed into the perforated skin.

Popular though the recently introduced plough is among the Maghs *jhuming* is still carried on. The method, which is the same among all the tribes I saw in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, differs somewhat from that with which I am familiar in Assam. The jungle is cut in the early spring and is burnt as soon as it is dry. Three crops are then sown simultaneously in drills—vegetables, rice and cotton. These come to maturity in that order and are gathered in turn. Land is only sown once and is then abandoned for a term of years, instead of being sown twice as in Assam. During the hot weather the villages of the valley tribes are abandoned and the whole population moves up to the *jhums* till after the rice harvest. The grain is stored in round matting bins in the houses and not in separate granaries. For hoeing little adze-shaped hoes of Bengali manufacture are used. Nearly all Maghs use the Bengali husker, which is worked with the foot. Only in one or two villages did I see rice being husked by hand with a pounding pole in a cavity hollowed out in the end of a short log, bobbin shaped and set up on end on the ground near the house. A single Bengali pounder is usually shared by several households and is kept in a shed specially built for it. The houses are too flimsy for any pounding to be done in them. The winnowing fan is a circular tray of bamboo matting.

Lungis and jackets are usually bought, but skirts and head cloths are woven at home. Silk thread is bought but cotton thread is home-spun. The cotton is seeded in a machine with little rollers working reverse ways, identical with that used by Thado and other Kukis in Assam. It is then ginned with a bow, the string of which they twang not with the finger, as Nagas do, but with a smooth piece of wood shaped like a penholder with a blunt end. This bow-twanger I found used by all the tribes I saw in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. In Assam I have only seen it among the old Kukis. After being ginned the cotton is rolled into "sausages" round another thin piece of wood and the thread spun with a simple spinning machine. This machine, too, I found throughout the Hill Tracts, save among the Mrsos. The loom is of the simple tension type, and boat-shaped shuttles of wood or horn are used.

Though no Magh blacksmith was at work in any village I visited I was told that *daos* and knives are still made in a few places. The bellows, my informant told me, are of the type found in the Naga Hills, and consist of a pair of upright bamboo cylinders, with pistons padded with feathers laid with their tips downwards. Handsome silver pipes are made by Maghs. Wood-carving appears to be a lost art. The only good specimen I saw was an old musical instrument called a "crocodile harp", which was carved in the shape of that reptile.

When matches are not used fire is produced by the method used by the Kacharis and Old Kukis in Assam and all the other tribes I saw in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. A piece of bamboo about a foot long is split in two. On the outside and near the middle of the half used a notch is cut deep enough to perforate it. A thong of bamboo or cane is pulled backwards and forwards across this notch by the operator, who meanwhile holds the piece of bamboo firmly on the ground with his foot. The friction against the edge of the hole scrapes a fine dust off the thong. This dust is forced through the hole and lies in the trough of the inner side of the bamboos. As the heat increases it smokes and finally glows.

The Maghs nowadays have no weapons save guns and *daos*. Tradition definitely states however that they used to have both crossbows and upright bows, as well as spears. I was also shown an ancient square leather shield. For killing birds pellet bows are used and long blow guns. Nooses are used for snaring. Fish traps are generally of the Bengali pattern but conical traps lined with cane thorns are still occasionally to be seen. The only toys I saw were stilts, used by little boys.

The feathers of the Great Indian Hornbill were used as fans and ornaments in the old days. I never saw any carving of this bird. The earth from its nesting hole is, however, used as a medicine. Another medicine one sees in houses is a species of fungus which is dried and ground up and made into an ointment for sore nipples.

The official religion is Buddhism and yellowrobed priests are to be seen everywhere especially among the Southern Maghs. But many primitive elements remain. The belief in evil spirits is strong and charms are plentiful. On the outer walls of houses are put little saucers inscribed with texts in Burmese. Inside the houses, over and on either side of the inner doors, are pointed pieces of bamboo marked with transverse black lines. These are known as "crocodile teeth." Exactly similar charms are put outside their doors by the Nagas of the unique village of Sembhor in the North Cachar Hills, and very similar wooden ones by Kachha Nagas of the Maruonngmai group in the same area.

When a man falls ill it is often thought that an evil spirit has captured his soul and is holding it to ransom. A small offering to appease the spirit and buy the soul's release is then made on the path, as among Nagas. To cure headache a little grid of bamboo strips is set up on a stick outside the village.

When a child is born the navel string is cut with a bamboo knife. Steel may on no account be used. Nor may the mother, during the days of her uncleanness, use any spoon other than a gourd one. The afterbirth is buried in the clay of the hearth and dug up again after three days. A small portion is then kept in a hollow bamboo and the rest thrown away. These customs are most strictly observed even in the household of the Bohmaung, the Chief of the Ragretsa clan and leading Magh of the district. Nor the least enthusiastic followers of ancient ways are his sons, graduates of Calcutta University.

The bodies of the dead are burned on the banks of streams. For their spirits lamps are lighted under pipal trees and offerings made for seven days. These offerings are made on the anniversary of the death till the heirs get careless. All offerings to the dead must be made with the left hand. I saw two types of what might be called funeral monuments. One, of which I saw several examples, is a mound of earth in tiers, like a wedding cake, revetted with bamboo matting. On the top are placed some pots and a lamp. Another type I saw at Patag in the Northern Magh country. In a field in front of a little Buddhist temple was an area of beaten earth fourteen yards square and fenced round. In this were set up thirty high poles, each of which was surmounted by a pagoda-like ornament of paper with hanging decorations of pith. There was a lamp at the foot of each pole and another at the top attached to a pulley by which it could be lowered to be lighted. Above the pulley was a roughly carved wooden bird, which I was told was a paddy-bird but which looked remarkably like a hornbill. The lamps are lighted in honour of the dead, to whom offerings of rice, milk, etc., are made for a period of thirty days while the crops are ripening—clearly a fertility rite.

The bulk of the property of a dead man goes to his sons. One-half goes to his eldest son, one-eighth to his daughters and the rest to his other sons equally.

Chakmas.—All the tribes of this area resemble each other so closely in many points of culture that having dealt with the Maghs at some length I shall be able to describe the other tribes more briefly.

If a Chakma be asked the origin of his tribe he either denies all knowledge of the matter or repeats like a parrot an incredible and purely modern story of descent from an ancient and noble Hindu race. Kalindi Rani, the great chieftainess who flourished in Lewin's time, knew only of some half-dozen previous chiefs. The present chief, second in succession after her, signs himself "45th Chakma Raja", so greatly has the length of his ancestry increased in recent years. To describe how the Raja reached his present position would be of no interest from the ethnological point of view. Suffice it to say that a supreme chief has no place in the ancient polity of the tribe, and that he is nothing but the descendant of tax farmers aggrandized by the paramount power.

The name "Chakma" is derived from the Maghi word *chaok*, meaning "of mixed origin", and the Chakmas are undoubtedly in the main the descendants of Maghi women and Mogal soldiers. There is a small tribe known as Chaks in the southern portion of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Unfortunately I had no opportunity of visiting them and of ascertaining how they are related to the Chakmas proper.

Despite their mixed origin the tribe is now very uniform and presents several features that merit description. They migrated from what is now Cox's Bazar subdivision in Chittagong towards the end of the 18th century and now inhabit the middle reaches of the Karnaphuli. They are by far the most bengalised tribe in the district. Even their language is a dialect of Bengali, though one section of the tribe is said to have spoken Maghi till recently. The script in common use is Bengali, but the ancient script, which is still used by the more conservative members of the tribe, is of the Burmese type and is considered by Sir George Grierson to be closely allied to the ancient Khmer script.

In appearance they resemble Bengalis and their features show little trace of their partially Mongol origin. The dress of the well-to-do men is Bengali, but the poor men often merely wear a rag pulled between the legs and tucked into a string round the waist in front and behind. The dress of the women is distinctive. They wear a long dark blue skirt to the ankles, with a broad red band near the edge. Till puberty the upper part of the body is bare. Later a broad strip of embroidered silk is usually worn over the breasts. Bengali ornaments are worn in the nose and ears, and silver rings on the ankles. A flat silver band is worn round the neck. The hair is done in a bun at the back.

All the villages I saw were on the banks of streams. A few rich men have brick houses after the Bengali style, but the ordinary houses are exactly like those of the Maghs, with the platforms similarly facing east. The villages are small and often contain members of more than one of the many clans (*goza*) into which the tribe is divided. In the old days each *goza* was endogamous and was under the control of a headman, called in the modern dialect a *dewan*. In order to increase their own power however the chiefs set out, about a hundred years ago, to lessen that of the *dewans*, by making all relations of *dewans* into *dewans* and so turning an office into a class. This tended to break up the clan system, a tendency which was accelerated when Government, for purposes of administration, divided the country into *mauzas* with fixed boundaries, each under a headman. These headmen have been steadily acquiring the power which the *dewans* used to have, and the tendency is for an endogamous *mauza* to be substituted for an endogamous clan. That is to say a man may nowadays marry any girl of his own *mauza* not nearly related to him, but is expected to provide an extra lavish marriage feast by way of a fine if he marries a girl of another *mauza**.

In so far as they can be said to have a religion at all the Chakmas are now Buddhists. In the 18th century many of them adopted the religion of the Moguls to whom they paid tribute and the chiefs of that time had Muhammadan names. Then a reaction towards Hinduism seems to have set in, bringing with it the Hindu names which are now almost universally adopted. The Hinduism prevalent was however of a very half-hearted type, and Kalindi Rani decided that something definite must be done. After considering the advantages and disadvantages of various creeds she is said to have given orders that the tribe was to adopt Buddhism. Buddhists they therefore are to this day, though I must confess that I only once saw a priest in their country.

The chief's womenfolk and those of one or two other families are kept purdah. This custom only originated in the time of Kalindi Rani, who went purdah one day herself in order to avoid an interview with Lewin on the morrow. It is not in accordance with Chakma tradition and is much disliked by the better elements among the people.

Underlying their Buddhism is a belief in animism. One often sees offerings to spirits on little platforms, and on one such platform at Toyichakma I noticed little squares of thread exactly like those placed on Angami women's graves. They also release scape-goat chickens for illness, just as the Semas and other Nagas do. They swear on a tiger's tooth, a stream or withering leaves, and they told me that they sometimes settle disputes by the diving test.

Their method of cultivating and preparing rice is exactly similar to that of the Maghs, save that I never saw a rice husker other than of the Bengali pattern. The women weave their own skirts and breast cloths on an ordinary Indonesian tension loom. Shuttles are rarely used. The only one I saw was of a type found both among the Tipperas of the Chittagong Hill Tracts and the Kolang Kukis of the North Cachar Hills. It consisted of a piece of bamboo prettily ornamented with a pattern scratched on it and open at one end only. In the side was a small hole for the thread to pass through. At first sight the problem of getting the thread through this small hole from the inside is a difficult one. In reality it is quite simple. You unwind about a foot of thread and put the bobbin with this loose end into the shuttle. Then you blow hard in the open end and the pressure of air forces the thread through the hole. All the other instruments of spinning and weaving are exactly similar to those of the Maghs.

The children play a game with the seeds of the sword *bean* similar to the Naga game, and pellet bows are very popular.

Tipperas.—At least two very different sub-tribes of the district are classed under the general name of Tipperas. Many inhabit the Mong Raja's circle, which marches with Hill Tripura. It is a country of low hills and sluggish streams, and until the Maghs came the Tipperas were apparently the only occupants. They are very Bengalised, the men wearing *dhotis* and

*At Nauyarchar, 20-7-28.—System of marriage by which a Chakma who cannot pay the price of a wife, gets another man to buy one for him agreeing that after marriage they will live at the benefactor's house and serve for a period of years. This case was an agreement to work for five years to repay marriage expense of Rs. 300, i.e., one month's work equals Rs. 5. The period and the rate may vary in different cases. The price of the girl in this case was Rs. 60, ornaments Rs. 90 odd, drummers Rs. 8 and the balance for clothes for the girl and a general feast. It is analogous to the *ghar jamai* system, but I could not find that it had any special name. The married couple have broken this agreement by bolting after doing 6 months' work.

puggarees, and the women dressing exactly like Chakma women. I saw very few in the old fashioned dress—a piece of cloth pulled through a string round the waist, long hair and leaves in the ears. A home-spun cotton cloth, with broad white and dark blue stripes is occasionally worn. The houses are exactly like Chakma houses, and the villages, which are small, are sometimes on the top of the ranges and sometimes in the valleys. The religion is Hinduism and no stranger may enter their houses unless he removes his boots. A conspicuous feature inside is the main post with bunches of ears of rice, tied to it, being the first fruits of successive years. In every way their material culture appears to be identical with that of the Chakmas. They seem to know few folk tales, but they believe that the marks on the moon are trees.

A more primitive and interesting section of the tribe is scattered about the Banderban circle in the South of the district. They are said to be the descendants of Tippera slaves taken to Arakan long ago. The men wear white waist clothes of which the black embroidered ends are left hanging down at the side. The corners are decorated with cowries. Above they wear white home-spun jackets. Their heads are shaved at the sides and back like those of Nagas and small *puggarees* are worn, with the ends hanging down over their right ears. In the lobes of the ears are cylinders of bamboo, from which hang crescent-shaped ornaments of silver. Small blue and white beads are immensely popular, and both men and women load their necks with strings of them. The *dao* is carried pushed through the waist-cloth at the back.

The women wear a skirt of black and grey, with brown and black edges. Before marriage they usually cover their breasts with a narrow, tight strip of red and brown cloth, with cowries at the corners. The hair is worn in a big bun at the back. Armlets of black beads are often worn above the elbow. Through the top of the ear a spiked ornament of silver is worn, and through the lobe a crescent-shaped ornament.

Though nominally Hindus they readily admit strangers to their houses, which resemble those of Kukis. A house consists of one big room, with sliding doors and a narrow verandah at either end.

Their methods of cultivation and their industries are identical with those of the Maghs. For weaving they sometimes use a tubular shuttle of the Chakma pattern. Birds are shot with a short blow-gun.

The Khyengs.—The chief home of the Khyengs is in Arakan, and of the few there are in the Chittagong Hill Tracts I was only able to see the two small villages of Arachhari and Kukiyachhari, close together on low, steep hills at the Northern end of the Bandarban Circle. I was very much struck by the negroid features and curly hair of some of the men, but from such scanty evidence it would be unfair to draw any inference. They claim to have inhabited the country from time immemorial. Those whom I saw had long been under Magh and Chakma influence and their culture presented few distinctive features. *Dhotis* are now common, but the more conservative men still wear a narrow white cloth with red ends, pulled through a string round the waist. The hair is done after the Mro fashion, that is to say in a bun on the left side of the head, with a bone pin stuck in it. The women wear a skirt and breast cloth of white with narrow red lines, and a large white *puggaree*, with red embroidered ends. The houses are on piles, and each consists of one large room with a kitchen at the back. By religion they are Buddhists and, unlike Chakmas and Maghs, are divided into exogamous clans. All property goes to sons, the youngest of whom gets the greatest share. Their relationship terms seem to show traces of a former dual division.

Kukis.—In the Southern portion of the district only Bonjugi Kukis appear to be found, but in the Northern portion the majority are Pankhos, with a few Bonjugis. As their villages are invariably on the top of the ranges, where my work did not take me I was unable to see nearly as much of them as I could have wished.

Mr. Rowlands in a private note, says that the Bonjugis came from a village called Daun on the Koladan, while the Pankhos came from Pankhua, three miles from where the Lunglet-Thaka track crosses the Koladan. Some figured memorial stones are said still to exist there, which would probably well repay investigation. The two tribes are closely akin and will inter-marry, often even inhabiting the same villages. They speak slightly different dialects.

The Bonjugi men wear a narrow white waist-cloth, a white jacket, and a very narrow white home-spun *puggaree* with embroidered ends. The hair is done in a tight bun on the top of the head and ornamented with a metal pin. Strings of small cornelian beads are worn and also enormous beads—sometimes dark red, and sometimes yellow—of a very light substance which is said to be amber. The women wear a white skirt with red lines in it, and, when strangers are about, a cloth of similar pattern thrown over the upper part of the body.

I was able to visit Basanta, a Pankho village containing a few Bonjugi houses, near Subalong in the Northern portion of the district. The men wear a small white apron and a white coat ornamented with a little embroidery round the bottom at the back. Some men do their hair in a bun at the back, while others—usually young men—pile it up over the forehead into a sort of horn. Into this horn a well-dressed man pushes, base down, a small triangular ornament of steel pins, embellished with a red tassel at the "apex." The beads worn are similar to those of the Bonjugis. Women wear a white skirt with narrow red lines and usually leave the upper part of the body bare. Round the waist they wear strings of beads and rings of brass wire. The latter may once have been their sole dress, as very small girls wear such rings as their only garment. Large plugs of bone or bamboo are worn in the ears.

The houses are on piles and are big and well built. There is one main room, with an open porch in front and a sitting-put platform at the back. A man who has sacrificed *mithan* (*gayal*) sets up in front of his house a large forked post with a *mithan* head carved on it. The skulls of animals sacrificed are exhibited on a rack propped up against the centre post of the living room.

The loom is of the ordinary Indonesian type, and for a shuttle a stick with an enlarged conical head is used. Both Pankhos and Bonjugis have bamboo flutes, but not, apparently, the gourd "bagpipes" found among Thados and other Kuki tribes in Assam.

The Mrs.—Of all the tribes I saw the Mrs interested me most. They are often spoken of as Mrungs, a term which is not only erroneous, but liable to lead to serious confusion, as it is properly applicable to one of the Tippera clans.

The Mrs say they are immigrants from Arakan. Those I saw inhabit the Southern portion of the Bandarban Circle in the South of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, where their villages are hidden away in a tangle of low steep hills drained by the Sangu and its tributaries, some situated on low spurs just above the streams and others on the tops of ridges. The people, especially the women, have the reputation of being very shy, but I found no difficulty in taking such photographs as I wanted. Certainly they are suspicious of strangers and keep themselves very much to themselves, and to this and an innate conservatism may be attributed the remarkable way in which they have retained their primitive characteristics, in spite of their proximity to their plains and their constant contact with Bengali traders.

They are of medium height and light build and one is struck by the almost entire absence of Mongolian traits in their features. Their costume is of the lightest. The men wear a narrow white or red cloth, which is wound round the waist, pulled between the legs from the front and tucked in at the back. In addition a home-spun coat is sometimes worn. The hair is done in a bun on the left side of the head and through the bun a bone pin is stuck. A *puggaree* is sometimes worn. Large rings of white metal are worn through the lobes of the ears. Young men often wear round the waist a narrow girdle of beads very prettily worked in a flower pattern. The teeth are often stained black. The women wear nothing by day but a very short dark blue skirt, edged with white beads. This reaches half way down the thigh and is open down the left side. It is tucked into a narrow silver girdle, and over it a belt of scarlet beads is worn. At night both sexes wear very thick cotton cloths.

All clothes are removed for bathing, and both sexes bathe together unembarrassed and with perfect propriety, the left hand providing such covering as is required.

The villages usually contain between ten and twenty houses.* These are large and well built. The roofs are slightly log-backed. They are on piles and the only approach is up a notched log. Inside they consist of one large room and a store room at the end. This latter is regarded as the women's room and no stranger may enter it. There is a sitting-out platform at the end of the house.

A man who has given the full series of feasts of merit may build an extra large house and may set up by the side of it four or five long bamboos. Forked posts are not put up. The series of feasts is (1) fowls, (2) a pig, (3) a dog and (4) bulls, buffaloes or *mithan* (*gayal*) up to three in number. A plain upright post in the middle of the village marks the place of sacrifice. In some villages, but not in all, a small pointed stone is set up at the foot of the post for every animal sacrificed. In one village I passed through the sacrificial post was very high, and was surrounded at a distance of some feet by a circle of lower posts notched at the top. When a feast is to be given rafters are fitted from these side posts to the centre post and the whole roofed over, so that the ceremonies can take place under cover.

A Mro if asked his religion will say he is a Buddhist, but to the observer the only traces of Buddhism visible are charms occasionally placed on houses and the practice of burning the dead. Their real religion is animism. The religious affairs of a village are run by an old man called a *sera*, who may be of any clan and who also acts as exorcist. For epidemics a pig and a dog are sacrificed and a series of sabbaths called *to-ung* observed, for the nine days of which no one may descend to the ground from the verandah of his house.†

Hutchinson (Account of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, page 165) says the tribe is divided into five "septs," the Dengua, the Premsang, the Kongloi, the Naizar and the Gharoo Gnar, meaning respectively the cultivated plantain tree, the cockscomb plant, the wild plantain tree, the jack tree, and the mango tree. I am afraid I omitted to make enquiries on this precise point, but I was told that the tribe was divided into a number of clans—evidently subdivisions of Hutchinson's septs. They are exogamous, but not mutually so. For instance in Bali village I found the following clans—Shimlung, Chingnao, Nirincha and Shitnma. All are exogamous, but, though a Shimlung man may marry a Chingnao woman, a Chingnao man may not marry a Shimlung woman. For this I could obtain no explanation at all. Large clans are divided

*6-12-28—*Tain valley*.—I found some Mro forest houses at Amtoli (Tain valley). The Mrs call them *liku*. They are put up for taking refuge in when there is a storm. They do not appear to be kept up permanently, but are put up when it looks as though there is dirty weather coming. The ones I saw were made two months ago. This strikes me as curious because the Mro houses are the most solidly built of all, the support being of stout logs instead of bamboos and much of this fencing being made of whole bamboos. Of course the Mro village is usually perched on an exposed ridge, but then so are *jhum* houses very often. The peculiarity of Amtoli para (Lengsa Karbari) is that it is right down on the level bank of the Tain. The *liku* were out in a sheltered grass space outside the villages. They say that for villages on the hills, the *liku* are erected in a sheltered place at the foot of the hill. (A. S. H.)

†The Mrs do not do puja at the funeral house of a woman who has died before her child is 3 years old. The Khumis make no such distinctions. (A. S. H.)

into sub-clans, called *kuchis*. In such cases a man may marry a woman of his own clan provided she is of a different *kuchi*. Property descends to the sons, the youngest getting the largest share.

At birth the navel cord is cut with a steel knife and hewn with a piece of bamboo. The baby is immediately laid on a plaintain leaf. The funeral customs show clearly, exactly as they do at Semkhor in the North Cachar Hills, that the practice of burning the dead is a comparatively modern one. Every village has its burning place near a stream and usually close to pipal tree. The body is burned and the calcined bones are removed and placed in a little house on piles a few yards further back from the stream. To the sides of the house are fastened bamboos festooned with tassels of bamboo shavings, and in the house are put with the bones food, drink, pots, and bits of rag for clothes. All vessels, whether of pottery or brass, are broken. The finer ashes, left where the man was burned, are also treated as if the spirit of the dead man were there too. Over them is laid a piece of cloth. This is pegged down at the edges and on it are laid a *dao*, a hoe, etc. Over this another cloth is laid and by them are placed pots of food and drink. Finally a little lean-to shelter is built over the heap, with the open side towards the east.

As far as I know the method of cultivation is identical with that of the other tribes of this area. The winnowing fan, however, is of the sugar scoop type that Nagas use and not of the round type used by all the other tribes I saw in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. I saw no Bengali *dhan*-pounders. All were of the primitive round type.

The loom is identical with that found among the other tribes of the district, but the Mros alone spin against the right thigh after the Naga fashion.

The tribe must take a heavy toll of jungle animals and birds. For leopards and tigers box-traps with drop doors are made, identical in pattern with those found in the Naga Hills. Very long fences are built across the line which rats must take going backwards and forwards between the cleared fields and the jungle. These fences are impenetrable save at the gaps which are left every few yards. In each gap there is a fall trap. Birds are both speared with nooses and caught in nets stretched between bamboo poles on saddles which they are in the habit of crossing.

The Mros are a musical race and use both bamboo flutes and "banjos" made by cutting out and lifting thin strips of the outer layer of a piece of bamboo. The favourite instrument however is a gourd "mouth-organ" which closely resembles that made by Thado Kukis in Assam. The instruments are made in pairs, of which the two harmonise. The players walk at the head of a procession of dancers. The step is very slow and solemn and the feet are pointed as they touch the ground. This is the only dance the tribe has, and there is only one tune for it, and that a singularly monotonous one.

Notes on the Chaks, compiled by Babu S. S. Chaudhuri, B.J.C.S.

The Chaks trace their previous abode at Chakyandong in Koladain hill in Arakan, where there were, it is said, about 11,000 families who lived under a chief of their own. There were signs of 10,000 houses made of bamboo and 1,000 houses made of wood at Chakyandong for a long time. When the Chakmas, another hill tribe, migrated to Chittagong Hill Tracts from Burma, they also came with them and settled in Nakhyongchhari side of this district (Chittagong Hill Tracts). The Chakmas advanced further towards the north and they were left behind in these places. Little is known of their migration previous to this. There is a story as to how the Chaks were left behind by the Chakmas which runs as follows :—

When the Chaks began to cook their curry with *Chingri* fish they were asked to follow the Chakmas who were ready beforehand. But as the *Chingri* fish, which turns red by cooking, could not be made white, they thought that the cooking was not complete as the fish still contained blood, so they cooked the curry on and on but the fish did not turn bloodless, i. e., white. The Chakmas seeing their delay left them behind and they settled in these places.

At present there are only a small number of Chaks, not more than 100 families in the district, who are found in Nakhyongchhari, Baisari, Pagali (near Reju) and Bakkhali mauzas. Thus it appears that the Chaks came from the south to this area.

The following are stories current amongst the Chaks :—

Earthquakes.—There were 4 disciples under a priest who used to cook their food. These disciples were so selfish that they always took the best curries for themselves while the priest was supplied with all the remaining bad things. After their death the 4 disciples went into hell and as punishment they had to bear the earth on bamboo poles on their shoulder. They were placed on the four directions north, south, east and west. As they cannot bear the earth on the same shoulder for a long time they are required to change their shoulder. And it is at the time of changing their shoulders that earthquake begins.

Rainbows.—Once there was no water in the locality anywhere except in the house of a blacksmith. A brother and a sister being very thirsty went to the house of the blacksmith to drink water. When they asked for some water, the blacksmith told them that if they could live like a husband and wife he could give them water. In order to quench their thirst they were compelled to live as husband and wife and then drank water and died soon afterwards. After their death they became rainbows and appear in the sky occasionally. Still now two rainbows are seen at the same time. The bright one is the sister and the faint one is the brother.

Eclipses.—Tha-O the great Snake gave a half-pice to the sun. As the sun did not repay it the great snake began to devour him and when the sun promised to repay it he was allowed to go. Hence the origin of the eclipse of the sun.

Note on the Maghs of Cox's Bazar.

Regarding the Maghs of the Cox's Bazar subdivision, Babu Manindra Kumar Sen, district census officer, Chittagong, has furnished the following notes for information supplied by Rai Sahib Bipin Bihari Rakshit :—

They live in raised huts or wooden houses built very close to one another. Groups of houses form one *mahalla* with one elected *mahalladar* at its head. This *mahalladar* is an aged and respectable person and wields autocratic powers and his wish is regarded as law by every one residing in his *mahalla*. All disputes between themselves are decided by *mahalladars* and they hardly resort to the law courts, except at the express direction of the *mahalladar*. Inter-*mahalla* affairs are settled by the *mahalladars* of different *mahals* concerned. By nature they are meek, peaceful and ease-loving and are terribly afraid of the law and its agencies. All of them belong to the same sect, with Buddhism as their common religion. They maintain several *Keyangs* (temples of Buddha) which are occupied by celibate priests and their disciples who live on cooked food, sent to them by the villagers. Each *Keyang* situated in a solitary place contains a good many images of Lord Buddha. Some of the images are adorned with costly ornaments. The celibate priests are recruited from the villagers after the performance of a ceremony called the *Maishang* ceremony. The family feels proud and happy if it can supply a *Maishang* in the *Keyang*.

Polyandry or polygamy is not in existence. Widow-remarriage is in vogue. Divorce is rare and its incidents are governed by the Burmese Buddhist law which is in force in Lower and Upper Burma. No sexual indulgence with outsiders is allowed before or after marriage. System of courtship is unknown. Marriage is generally settled by the parents of the parties in consultation with their relations (numbering on each side not less than 7 persons). Consent of the bridegroom or the bride is not essential. The marriage ceremony is simple and does not entail much expenditure. The bridegroom's party will visit the bride's house with some ornaments and sweets and in presence of the invited gentlemen of both the sides, the guardians of the bridegroom will make them over to the guardians of the bride; this will mean an engagement or preliminary contract for marriage. On the day of marriage the priest will go to the bridegroom's house and bless him with some *mantras*. The same priest will then visit the bride's house and bless her with similar *mantras*, and on the same day the priest will again bless the couple in the house of the bride in presence of their grand-father or grand-mother or grand-uncle or grand-aunt. This being over the bridegroom and the bride will take a meal from the same dish. After the meal the wife will walk round the husband seven times saluting him as her husband on each round. They will then live in the bride's house for seven days as husband and wife and on each of those seven days the husband will present flowers to the wife. On the eighth day the newly-married couple will visit the *Keyang* and there they will take a vow before the priest that they will never separate. Thus the marriage is completed. No document of any kind is required.

A note on some of their festivals and social customs is given below :—

(a) *Boat festival*.—This takes place on the full-moon night in the month of Aswin. They make religious offerings in the *Keyang* during the daytime and at dusk they flock to the bank of the river. They prepare small toy boats with pieces of wood and cloth and paper and gorgeously decorate them with lace and coloured papers. Inside the boat they carefully place lit candles and get them afloat in the water. They shout, sing and clap their hands as those toy boats float down the stream with the current. It is Lord Buddha, they say, sailing through the dark world with light.

(b) *Water festival*.—This takes place on the last day of Chaitra. It is a gala day for the youths and children. They (both male and female) come out in the street in batches with buckets and syringes and throw water at one another; one batch fights the other with water, running, chasing, retreating, attacking; shouts of joy and loud laughter ring through the air. Other people than the Maghs are also attacked with water when passing along the street. Every one takes it in good spirit. This resembles to certain extent the *dol jatra* of the Hindus. Seniors rarely take part in this festival.

(c) *Buha Chakra*.—This comes off on the full-moon day in the month of Magh. Of all the festivals this seems to be enjoyed most by the Maghs. It lasts for 3 or 4 days. A *buha* (labyrinth) is constructed of bamboo fencing on fairly large block of land, with two gates, one of entrance and the other of exit. Once you enter the labyrinth, you have to go round and round by several ziz-zag ways laid between bamboo fences and the labyrinth is so skilfully constructed that you cannot come out of it unless you have traversed the whole area of the land enclosed. Inside the labyrinth there are 4 or 5 pedestals on which are placed beautiful images of Lord Buddha. In course of moving along the labyrinth the people halt before each image and salute it and place a lighted candle at the foot of the image invoking the Lord's blessings. The gate of entrance is dark and the gate of exit is well lighted. During this festival there are pantomime and puppet shows, and *watcha* dances (dance of the Buddhist professional girls) are also performed.

(d) *Phungyi burning ceremony*.—This is perhaps the most expensive ceremony of the Maghs. When a Phungyi dies (a priest of high class) they preserve the dead body in a bier in the *Keyang* for a period of one year. During this time all the *mahallas* contribute money and big wooden cannons are prepared and loaded with gunpowder. On the appointed day all the Maghs of all the *mahallas* flock to the cremation ground and arrange the cannons in a row with a flag of each *mahalla* flying over its cannon. With pomp and ceremony, in a well-adorned

bier, the dead body is brought into the cremation ground in procession, followed by the Magh musical concert party. The bier is then placed on a well decorated hut built high up in air like the Persian tower of silence. Cannons are then discharged from a distance of about 400 yards towards that hut amidst shouts and uproar. The cannon-ball that touches the hut or passes very close to it receives tremendous cheers and the fortunate *mahalla* to which that cannon belongs, feels itself proud and happy. They run up to the cannon and bring the empty cannon back dancing and singing round it all the while. After all the cannons have been discharged one after the other, the hut is set on fire with various combustible substance and with the bier is soon burnt into ashes.

The Maghs, except the poor and children, are burnt with pomp and ceremony. The corpse is placed in a beautiful coffin and is carried along the street in a big procession of both sexes followed by a musical party.

The Maghs have very little contact with the people of other religions. They live secluded among themselves. They are very conservative in manners and habits and are still unaffected by Western civilisation. The males often take to trading and brokery. The poor Maghs catch fish in the sea and live on fishing. Some of them, like so many drônes, live idly at home upon the income of their wives who earn a good deal by weaving silk cloths and *lungis* which they send to various trade centres through brokers. The women are active and industrious like ants and work from morning till night, weaving, cooking and doing sundry other works. They do not like cultivation of any kind.

Most of the Maghs, males and females, learn the Maghi language. Very few are reading in high English schools and colleges and they do not seem very anxious for English education. By nature they are truthful, simple and sincere and seldom litigate against one another. They distrust other communities and resent outsiders' meddling with their affairs.

APPENDIX III

Notes on the Kayasthas, Namasudras, Baidyas, Vyasa or Gaudadya Brahmans, Kaivarttas and Mahishyas, Patnis, Shahas and Telis and Tilis by N. K. Dutt, M.A., Ph.D., Professor, Sanskrit College, Calcutta.

Káyastha.—Káyastha is a comparatively new word in the Sanskrit language. It cannot be traced earlier than the third century A. D. The Vishnusmriti is such a mixture of old and new writings that the occurrence of the word once (VII, 3) in that book does not help us to determine the age of its first appearance. It was unknown in the days of the grammarians Páñini and Patanjali as otherwise such a peculiar word would not have been left unnoticed by them. Kautilya's Arthashástra and the Inscriptions of Asoka which give a detailed account of the administrative system of the Maurya period do not mention Káyastha. The earlier Smriti works down to the time of Manu's Dharmashástra which was compiled in its present shape some time between B. C. 200 and A. D. 200 do not contain any reference to Káyastha either as an officer or as a caste. Probably the first mention of the word occurs in the Yájnavalkyasamhitá (I, 336), which may be dated in the third century A. D. But in that book, too, it occurs only once and is not mentioned in the list of castes formed by crosses and degradation from the four original *varṇas*. Amara, who wrote his famous lexicon in the fifth century A. D., is entirely silent about it.

Secondly, the Indian pandits were apparently in difficulty in finding a derivative meaning of the word Káyastha. Various fanciful derivations are given, the most popular one being from the root *Káya*, body. Ignoring the very old and widely current story of Brahmá having created the whole of mankind, divided into four *varṇas*, from the four different parts of his body. Some of the more recent writers in order to derive the word and the caste Káyastha put Him again to work and make Him create a new being from his *Káya* or body (Padma Purána, Srishtikhanda). Others not liking to interfere with the traditional story of creation got hold of the fables of Parasuráma and obtained the birth of Káyastha from the body of a fugitive Kshatriya queen, who was spared by the all-killing Bráhmaṇa warrior at the intercession of a Bráhmaṇa sage on condition that the new born child should give up the professions of his Kshatriya parents (Skanda Purána Renukámáhátmyam). The Káyastha seems to be an incongruous element in the social structure of the Hindus as based on the writings of the Dharmashástras and the earlier Puránas and it required a good deal of ingenuity on the part of later writers to give a plausible derivation both to the name and the caste.

Thirdly, the Káyasthas have from the beginning been systematically abused in the most scathing language such as has fallen to the lot of no other class of officers anywhere in the world. The very first mention of the word in the Yájnavalkyasamhitá associates the Káyasthas with rogues, thieves, and robbers, from whom the king should always protect his subjects. This sentiment runs throughout the whole later Smriti and Pauránic literature and is echoed not only in some of the well known dramas but also in the historical work of Rájatarangiṇi where Kalhana uses even stronger language to describe the cruel, deceitful and perfidious character of the Káyasthas (IV, 90 ; 629 ; VIII, 131). Of course the occupations of a Káyastha whether as a revenue collector or as a scribe had something to do with their unpopularity, but that is only a part of the explanation. Moreover, from the inscriptions of the Gupta and later times we find the Káyasthas to be respectable and useful members of society, quite unlike their portraiture in the pages of contemporary literature. It reminds us of the Jews in mediæval Europe who were portrayed in the darkest colours not always because of their conduct but often because of their alien race. In India, too, we find a parallel in the Sákadvipi Bráhmaṇas, who owed not a little of their degraded status in society to their foreign origin. Káyasthas, like Bráhmaṇas, were often the recipients of grants of land from kings, as we learn, for instance, from the Gurmah plate of Jayádityadeva.

The abovementioned facts raise a strong suspicion that the early Káyasthas were non-Indian in origin and that it was just before the time of the Imperial Guptas that they obtained a permanent place in the body-politic of India. The two or three centuries immediately preceding the first appearance of Káyastha in Indian literature witnessed a succession of foreign invasions of India after the downfall of the Maurya Power and the rule of a considerable part of Northern India by Greek, Scythian, Parthian, and then Kushan Kings. The Scythians and the Kushans were steeped in Hellenico-Iranian culture before they finally succumbed to Indian influences. It was at this period of contact between Persia and India that several highly trained revenue officials from Persia and Hellenic lands may have been employed by these Indo-Parthian and Kushan monarchs, as by the Moghul Emperors in later times, for administering their Indian territories, and that all these high officials may have been known to the common people as Khsháyathiyas, meaning rulers in old Persian. Soon that word was adapted to the Indian tongue and sanskritized into Káyastha. That trained and efficient officers from Persia and Hellenic lands were employed by Indian rulers even in earlier day is

evidenced by the presence of a Persianized Greek, Tushápha the "Yavana", as governor of Surástra under Asoka Maurya, as is known from the Girnar inscriptions of Rudradamana. How quickly these foreigners were Indianized is proved from the names of the later Kushan and Saka rulers as also from the conversion of Dharmarakshita the Greek who according to the Chronicles of Ceylon, was sent by Asoka as a Buddhist missionary to Aparántaka, in Western India, of Menander or Milinda, King of Kabul, and of Helicdorus the Greek who as a devout follower of Vishnu set up a Garuda pillar in about B. C. 140. When the cultured Greeks and Persians were Indianized those who continued as princes and soldiers were merged in the Kshatriya community, while those in the civil service became Káyasthas. The civil servants of Asoka's government were known as Rajukas, Purusas and Yuktas, but we do not know whether they formed any community of their own. Very likely not Chandragupta's chief officer in Surástra was a Vaisya, Pushyagupta. The existence of a Káyastha clan called Sakasena lends colour to the suspicion of foreign elements in the Káyastha community. Recruitment from all classes, particularly from Bráhmaṇa and Kshatriya castes, swelled the number of Káyastha officers to meet the growing demands in all parts of Northern and Western India, and the group which was at first functional became gradually solidified into a caste. Southern India lay too far away from these influences and did not develop a well-marked Káyastha caste.

This caste, however, was recruited from diverse sources, at different times and in different circumstances in different parts of India and consequently was never homogeneous. Barring the name and function, there is very little of community between the different branches of the caste in different parts of India. It cannot be shown that the Káyastha caste originated in one place and then migrated in different directions. The foreign and aboriginal origin of a large number of castes and sub-castes of modern India need not surprise the reader. If we remember how vast India is, how well-peopled it was at the time of the Aryan invasions, how certain sections of the pre-Aryans had arrived at a fairly high degree of culture, how impossible it was for the Aryans to come in very large bodies through the difficult routes from Central Asia or beyond, and how India has received even within the last three thousand years successive streams of invaders who have permanently settled in the country, the wonder is that so much, and not so little, of present day India in population and culture can be traced to the Rigvedic Aryan*.

A good deal of confusion has arisen on account of the identification of the Káyasthas with the Karaṇas in more recent writings. Karaṇa is an old word in the Sanskrit language dating from Vedic times when it meant clever, skilled (adjective) and an assistant (noun). Karaṇika is mentioned in Kautilya's Arthashástra. In the Smṛiti literature Karaṇa represents a mixed caste produced by the union of a Vaisya father and a Sudra mother. Amara, the lexicographer, also gives this meaning to the word. Karaṇa also meant a legal document, as in Manu VIII, 51-52, and Karaṇika, a keeper of records or accounts. Finally Karaṇa came to mean a clerk, and when Káyastha also finally assumed the meaning of a writer (*aksharajivi*, as in Hemachandra) it was naturally sought to make the two synonymous, though the original difference was not entirely forgotten. Thus according to Medini Karaṇa in the neuter gender means Káyastha, but in the masculine gender the issue of a Vaisya-Sudra union. Curiously, although Karaṇa is the older of the two words and more frequently mentioned in the Smṛiti literature, all the abuses and vilifications are in most cases reserved for the Káyastha and seldom for the Karaṇa. The occurrence of the designation Karaṇa-Káyastha in several inscriptions proves that the two were not identical. The Ajayagarh Rock Inscription of the Chandella King Bhojavarman also mentions a Káyastha family, Vástavya, which had been pursuing the occupation of a Karaṇa. A distinction is made between a Káyastha and a Karaṇádhyaaksha (accountant) and an Akshapatalika (record-keeper) in the Rámganj copper-plate inscription in Bengal. From inscriptions like the Nidhanpur charter of Bháskaravaman in the 7th century A. D. and that of Dhod in Rajputana in the 12th century we come across Karaṇikas who are definitely stated to be Bráhmaṇas by caste.

Now what were the functions of the Káyastha caste? Formerly the Káyasthas formed what is nowadays known as the Civil Service. Thus they were to be found as collectors of revenue, settlement and survey officers, bench-clerks, accountants and auditors, secretaries to the king, particularly as ministers of peace and war (*Sandhibigrahika*), and sometimes as chief administrator of a Division (*Uparika*) and judges. It was an account of such wide functions and powers and not because merely of their profession as writers that they were so much dreaded by the people. The Káyastha is found as a bench-clerk in Vishnumṛiti VII, 3, as well as in the court-scene of the drama Mrichchhakatika Act IX. In Aparárka's commentary of the Yájñavalkyasamhita Káyastha is explained as a tax collector (*Karádhikṛita*). From the Dámodarapur copper-plates of the Imperial Gupta times, the copper-plate inscriptions of the Kings Dharmáditya and Gopachandra and of the prince Vainyagupta in Eastern Bengal, and the Khálimpur grant of Dharmapála it is known that the Káyasthas formed the majority in the superior cadre of the district and divisional officers without whose knowledge and permission no transfer of landed property could take place. In the Rájataranginī the civil officers were mostly Káyasthas, who were sometimes appointed as prime ministers and even military commanders. "With his mind merged in greed the King took for friends the Káyasthas who carried off all property of the subjects while delivering only the smallest fraction of what they realised" (IV, 629). "At that time the Mahattama Sahela, the Káyastha, was Commander-in-chief of the King's army, as well as lord of the Gate" (VII, 1319). "The King then made the Káyastha Gauraka prime minister" (VIII, 560).

*Professor D. R. Bhandarkar seeks to connect the Kayasthas, especially of Bengal, with a tribe or race called Nagar coming from the districts near the Manasa lake in Tibet.

Kshemendra, too, refers to the Káyasthas of Kasmir in the 11th century as officials only and never as a caste. Káyasthas are described as occupying the posts of prime minister and minister of peace and war (Narmamálá I, 6-8 ; II, 143) and of chief-justice (Kalá-Vilása V, 5).

What are then the component elements of the Káyastha caste ? Besides the descendants of many Greek, Iranian and Saka rulers and administrators many Indian Kshatriyas must have entered the civil service by giving up their military profession as it was not possible, except rarely, to unite the qualifications of the two branches of government, military and civil, when the administrative system had become very much developed and complicated.* The author of the Udayasundari Kathá, Sodhdhal by name, who was a member of Balava-Káyastha clan and lived in the 11th century, traces his descent from Káláditya, brother of the Balavi King Siláditya. The Balavis ranked as Kshatriyas in the 7th century as we know from the accounts of Hiuen Tsang. But probably a larger percentage of recruits to the Káyastha caste was contributed by the Bráhmaṇas, who with their superior intellectual equipment could easily excel in the work of manipulation of figures and drafting of documents and who were sometimes preferred by the Kings even to Kshatriyas because being generally dissociated from feudalism and military service. They could not easily assume independent power. In Mediæval Europe, too, the Church supplied a large percentage of officers in the Civil Service. Many of the Dhárma and Niti-shástras direct that the responsible posts in the state should be given mainly to Brahmanas and then to Kshatriyas and Vaisyas, but never to Sudras (Manu VII and VIII ; Sukraniti II).

At a time when the Káyastha community had not crystallised into a hide-bound caste, a Kshatriya or a Brahmana could become a Káyastha without losing his original caste, though some blemish would be attached to him on account of his profession. It is probably with reference to this state of things that the Saurapurána, Ch. 19, forbids the invitation to a funeral feast of those Bráhmaṇas who are engaged in the duties of a Káyastha, astrologer, physician and professional soldier. This flow of Bráhmaṇa recruits continued even when the Káyastha caste was definitely formed but they no longer retained their original caste. The Nidhánpur charters of Bháskaravarman in the 7th century contains the names of several revenue and accounts officers in Bengal who were Bráhmaṇas by caste. In the Rájatarangini we meet with numerous instances of Bráhmaṇas engaged in the duties of a Káyastha. "About that time there died by strangulation that rogue of a Káyastha, the Bráhmaṇa Sivaratha, who had been a great intriguer." (VIII, 2383). "Sahelaka of the Purohita Corporation obtained the position of 'prefect of property' by securing a doubled revenue and became in time Mahattama". (VII, 1106). "The great mass of them (Káyasthas) was undoubtedly Bráhmaṇa by caste, corresponding to the present Kárkuns of Kasmir" (Stein Rájatarangini, Int. Ch. I, p. 19). Even now we find in the Poona, Nasik and Satara districts of the Bombay Presidency some families who call themselves Káyasthas but who have not yet given up their Bráhmaṇhood. To avoid confusion they are sometimes called Káyastha-Bráhmaṇas. The Vaisyas, too, though to a smaller extent, must have contributed their share in the formation of the Káyastha caste. From the Chandraprava of Bharatamallika we know of several Vaidya families whose members adopted Káyastha professions and became Káyasthas. On account of the presence of powerful non-Aryan communities in Eastern India some of whom by virtue of superior physical power established rulership and eventually became Kshatriyas* the infusion of Sudra or non-Aryan blood into the Káyastha caste through a Kshatriya medium has not been small. How Sudras and non-Aryan princes could become Kshatriyas is a matter of history. That the predominant elements in the Káyastha caste came from Bráhmaṇa and Kshatriya sources may also be assumed from the fact that the Káyasthas observe *gotra* and *pravara* restrictions in the matter of marriage with as much rigidity as the Bráhmaṇas and Kshatriyas. This is not the case with other castes, like the Navasákhas in Bengal, who, though bearing Bráhmaṇical *gotras* often marry in the same *gotra*. Further, the very close affinity between the Bráhmaṇas and the Káyasthas of Bengal in their head-form and structure of the nose as distinguished from those of the Upper Gangetic valley on one hand and of the lower castes in Bengal on the other, points to some close relationship between the two castes at the source.

Bengal is pre-eminently the land of Káyasthas. No other province in India can compare with Bengal as regards the number and importance of the Káyastha community. In the 16th century Bengal was ruled by a number of semi-independent and independent princes called Bhuiyás, most of whom were Káyasthas. It was only when the Moghul governors broke up the Káyastha fiefs and distributed them among more pliant Bráhmaṇas in the 17th and early 18th centuries that the political importance of the latter began to increase. It is no wonder that Abul Fazl, the Court historian of Akbar, was led to state that the Káyasthas had been ruling in Bengal for about two thousand years. The modern Káyastha community of Bengal must have absorbed the greater percentage of the descendants of the old ruling dynasties of the country, Sena, Pála Gupta, Varmá, etc., which may be one of the reasons for such a sweeping statement of Abul Fazl. Curiously enough unlike in the upper provinces the Káyasthas are not spoken of with any disrespect in Bengal. On the contrary, though they are regarded as Sudras by the Bráhmaṇas the expression Bámun-Káyeth is often used to denote the upper classes in society as distinguished from the other castes, just like Bráhmaṇa and Rájanya in the Vedic literature. The Brihaddharma Purána which gives a true picture of the social organisation of Bengal in mediæval times assigns the place of honour to the Karana of Káyastha in the list of non-Bráhmaṇa castes in the country, Kshatriyas and Vaisyas being non-existent in the Kali Age, and describes him as not only an expert in the art of writing but a skilful administrator (*rájakáryeshu kushalá*).

*For a fuller account of the nature of Aryan conquest and colonisation in the different parts of India, vide the writer's *Aryanisation of India*, Chs. IV and V.

Why is there no Kshatriya caste in Bengal? It is because firstly the non-Aryan communities in Bengal, like the Pods, Bágdis, Chandálas, Kaivartas, etc., were too numerous and powerful to be thoroughly subdued and absorbed by the thinning stream of Aryan warriors from the Upper Gangetic valley. From time to time Aryan Kshatriyas, either singly or in small bands, came and established themselves in different parts of the country, but they did not long remain unmixed with the non-Aryan ruling classes of the place. Secondly, the Rajputs, the Normans of mediæval India, who rose to power in almost all the parts of Northern and Western India after the Huna Cataclysm of the 6th Century, and who are regarded as their forefathers by most of the Kshatriya ruling clans in modern India, were shut out from Bengal by the indigenous Pála Kings for more than four centuries until the sovereignty passed into the hands of the Muslims. But for the appearance of the Rájputs the Kshatriya caste could have hardly succeeded in resisting the attempts of the Bráhmaṇa legislators to abolish the two intermediate *varnas* between the priestly and the Sudra, as they have done in Bengal. This resuscitation of Kshatriya power in mediæval India left Bengal untouched. Thirdly, Bengal, thanks to her predominantly non-Aryan population, was ever a land of heresy. Jainism and Buddhism claimed Bengal as their own. The long rule of the Buddhist Pála Kings very much loosened the ideas of caste and was the principal cause of the abandonment of the Bráhmaṇical thread by those Kshatriyas and Vaisyas who were associated with the court. It must have been at this time that the Káyasthas who depended entirely upon the court became mostly respecters of Buddhist principles and threw away the sacred girdle, the insignia of Bráhmaṇical orthodoxy.

In Bengal we find the Káyasthas well-established in society in the 5th and 6th centuries A.D. From the inscriptions of the period it is learnt that the Káyasthas formed a large percentage of the officials in the country and that no transfer of landed property could take place without their knowledge and permission. The names in these inscriptions do not always appear to be genuine compound words, but seem to show that family surnames were coming into use at this time. Thus we meet with names like Chiráta-datta, Jaya-datta, Mati-datta, Gopa-datta, Jaya-nandin, Sthánu-nandin, Vijaya-nandin, Guṇa-chandra, Ghosa-chandra, Siva-chandra, Soma-ghosa, Vihita-ghosha, Sám̄ba-pála, Vipra-pála, Pátra-dása, Naya-sena, Bandhu-mitra, Dhriti-mitra, Vasu-mitra, etc. From this alone however it cannot be concluded that the Káyastha caste had been definitely formed at this time in Bengal. The surnames in these inscriptions, even if they are treated as such, are not clearly indicative of caste. Thus the names with the ending of *mitra* in the Dámodarapur inscriptions are not those of Káyasthas but of Vaisyas, though the surname of *mitra* is at the present time borne only by Káyasthas in Bengal. The surname of *datta* might have been borne by Bráhmaṇas as well as Káyasthas. The Nidhánpur charter of Bháskaravarman contains the names of several Bráhmaṇa donees with some of the abovementioned surnames. I think that these name-endings are not caste surnames but family surnames which eventually developed into caste surnames some time later. Recruitment to the Káyastha caste from other castes continued for a long time after caste surnames had been definitely established, and that is why, as contrasted with other castes, the Káyasthas have about one hundred surnames which are as it were one hundred doors through which admission could be effected into the community, sometimes even from avowedly non-Aryan stock. Many of these would have found room in the Kshatriya caste had it continued in Bengal. In this respect the Káyasthas fulfilled in Bengal the functions of the Kshatriyas of the other provinces of Northern India.

If it can be proved that caste surnames like Ghosha, Mitra, Datta, have been in use among the Káyasthas of Bengal since the fifth century A.D., one more nail will be driven into the coffin of the story of the coming of five Káyasthas with five Bráhmaṇas of Kanauj to the court of King Ádisura towards the close of the 10th century. The principal argument against that legend is that while the Bráhmaṇa descendants of the five immigrants count 35 or 36 generations the Káyasthas count only 25 or 26 generations from their Kanauj ancestors, a difference not to be accounted for by any stretch of imagination, and also the discovery of Bráhmaṇas in Bengal in the 6th century from the inscriptions of Bhásak ravarma, who from their description cannot be differentiated from some of the so-called descendants of the five Bráhmaṇas of Kanauj. Besides, in the inscriptions of the 11th and 12th centuries none of the Bráhmaṇa families claim descent from any of the five immigrants from Kanauj. Further, the wide difference in the head and nose form of the United Provinces Bráhmaṇas and of the Bráhmaṇas of Bengal and the closer physical relationship between the Bráhmaṇas and the higher class non-Bráhmaṇas of Bengal do not support the theory of unmixed descent of all Rádhi and Varendra Bráhmaṇas from Kanauj ancestors. Immigration there must have been of Bráhmaṇas and Káyasthas from the west and the south but certainly not in the way it is generally described in the common genealogical records. Thus, for instance, the Khálimpur charter of Dharmapála informs us of the existence of Lálá (Gujarat) Bráhmaṇas in Bengal who were honoured by Náráyaṇavarman, a feudatory chieftain.

The origin of Kulinism also among the Káyasthas is shrouded in mystery. High born Káyasthas are mentioned in the inscriptions, but few of them have the modern Kulin surnames. From the introduction to the Nyáyakandali of Sridhara we learn that in the 10th century one Pándu-dása of Bhuririshti (in the district of Hooghly) was "the headmark of the Káyastha community," while the surname Dása is of an inferior order among modern Káyasthas. It seems probable that the foreigner Sena Kings finding it difficult to destroy the influence of the Pálas so long as the Káyastha hereditary administrators of districts and collectors of revenue remained loyal to their old masters, succeeded in winning over a small section of them, and that Kulinism was conferred upon them as a reward for their desertion of their Pála masters and Buddhist religion. At first they must have been a very limited number, but after the downfall of the Sena Kingdom there was little restriction upon all those who bore the surnames of the

original Kulin families claiming Kulinism for themselves. This happened in a practically wholesale fashion in West Bengal where there was little Sena influence left after the Muslim conquest of Nadia. But in East Bengal the process was very much checked by the presence of Sena and other Hindu rulers for a long time, and hence we find the number of Kulins even among those bearing the surnames of Ghosha, Vasu, Guha and Mitra to be very limited there. The Káyasthas of Northern Bengal could not be influenced by the Senas and so the Kulinism of the Senas is not to be found among them.

Namasudra.—The Namasudras of Bengal are not an occupational caste. They are found in various "humble" occupations as cultivators, fishermen, boatmen, carpenters, etc. They are regarded as "untouchables" by the higher castes of Bengal, and only a generation ago were known by the name of Chandála. No doubt they are a somewhat backward community with a rather low level of culture, who cannot point to any intellectual eminence or historical distinction among their forefathers in the immediate or distant past. But from their occupation as farmers and their observance of ceremonials imitating the higher castes of Bengal, together with the progress they are making in the field of education, they are justified in rejecting the name of Chandála for their community. The Chandálas of the Dharmashástras were men who lived outside the pale of civilization and settled life, and found maintenance from the most despised occupations.

Though the word Sudra was often loosely used by ancient writers to denote all those who did not belong to the three higher *varṇas*, there was always a distinction between those who had come or were coming under Aryan influences, the Sudras proper, and those sometimes called the fifth *varṇa*, who were too savage and unclean to be amenable to Aryan culture and practices, the Nishádas, Chandálas, Pukkasas, etc., of the Dharmashástras. Among the Sudras too, there soon developed a distinction between those who followed the ideals and imitated the practices of the higher castes (न्यायवर्तिनः), the "good" Sudras, and those who were semi-Aryanized and were as it were in the outer ring of the Bráhmanical society, the untouchable Sudras. The promotion of the Namasudras from the status of Chandálas to that of untouchable Sudras is quite natural and is the consequence of the improved culture and way of living they have adopted. And in the present state of things they can well claim to be regarded as "good" Sudras. It was with the object of emphasizing the fact that they were no longer Chandálas that they adopted the name-ending of Sudra, though they were ordinarily called Namas.

In pre-Muslim India when the system of caste had not become so rigid as in modern times, such a group of virile men as the Namasudras are at the present day might have established rulership over a considerable area and mixed in peace and war with the acknowledged Kshatriyas and Bráhmaṇas of the neighbourhood. The Bráhmaṇa legislators would have called the ruling families of the community at first Vrátya Kshatriyas and then good Kshatriyas, and admitted some of their tribal priests even into the Bráhmaṇa order, and increasing intermixture of blood would have lessened the distinction between these *novi homines* and those of real Aryan descent. Unfortunately for the Namasudras, they had not become sufficiently advanced to establish such a position of their own before the Muslim conquest. As this natural process of caste promotion had been stopped by the restriction of opportunities and as the intermediate *varṇas* have disappeared in Bengal, the Namasudras longing for a higher social status have begun to set up claims for recognition as Bráhmaṇas. The assumption of the new name Namabrahma is but a natural reaction against the Bráhmanical policy of keeping down the mass of people in a state of "depression," and especially when birth alone, and not merit or occupation, is the determining factor in caste.

As regards the claims of the Namasudras that they had formerly been Bráhmaṇas who were degraded because they stuck to Buddhism longer than other castes and who were given the name of Sudra by the jealous Káyasthas, they are not supported either by history or tradition or anthropometry. In fact, from their large number, their main occupations of cultivating and fishing, their traditional lack of higher culture, their original name of Chandála, their cephalic and nasal forms, and their habitat in the easternmost fringe of Aryávrata, it may well be assumed that they, like the Kaivartas, Pods and Bágdis, are the descendants of the natives of Bengal who were gradually Aryanized but whose tribal organizations could not be broken up. It is not unlikely that some Bráhmaṇa priests and Kshatriya adventurers and Vaisya farmers and artisans might have contributed their blood to the community so as to produce a mixed strain. The present number of the Namasudras, large as it is, is only a moiety of their actual number as undoubtedly a large percentage has dropped off by conversion to Islam. It cannot be believed that Bengal, which was regarded as a semi-Aryanized country by the writers of Dharmashástras, contained such a large number of Bráhmaṇas at the time of the Pála Kings. Secondly, conversion into Buddhism by groups did not involve any change in caste occupations, and a particular community might be lowered for the sake of its creed but could not even in those days be forced to adopt the professions of a low caste like the Chandálas and fishermen who were despised equally by the Bráhmaṇas and the Buddhists. It might have been possible in the case of individuals but not of a numerous community like the Namasudras, particularly if they had been of real Bráhmaṇa descent. Thirdly, how have two or three million men come to lose all memory of their great past and all trace of higher culture if they had been in possession of a high status in society, say, one thousand years ago, i.e., before the period of Hindu renaissance in Bengal? There is no tradition to this effect recorded either in the Sanskrit or vernacular literature of Bengal. Fourthly, do they show any similarity in physical appearance with the Bráhmaṇas with whom they claim caste affinity more than any other non-Bráhmaṇas caste in Bengal? Rather, the contrary is the case, as is known from a comparison of their cephalic and nasal indices.

To avoid the conflict of claims as to whether they are Sudras or Bráhmaṇas and to keep up the homogeneity of the caste in outward appearance, it might be better to drop the name-ending of Sudra or Bráhmaṇa altogether and call the caste by the name of Nama only, as is universally used in the spoken language of the eastern districts of Bengal. The name Nama, unlike the words Kaivarta and Chandála, does not carry any humiliation with it, not being associated with any particular occupation of a mean character.

Vaidya.—The word Vaidya in the early Sanskrit literature denoted a learned man or one versed in the Vedas, and was not associated with any profession. In the Vedic literature the word for a physician is Bhishak and not Vaidya. Even as late as the time of Manusamhitá the term Vaidya was rarely used to mean a physician, who was generally known as Bhishak and Chikitsaka. The word as used in the Asvalayana Grihya Sutra IV, 9, cannot be interpreted to mean anything else than "learned." So also is the reference about the sage Vasistha as a Vaidya in the Rámáyana, Ayodhyakánda, 77. No one can believe that the expression *Dwijeshu Vaidyah Shreyamsah* in the Mahábhárata, Udyogaparva, Ch. VI, 2, speaks of the medical men as being the most honourable among the Bráhmaṇas. Here the word Vaidya is used in its original sense as a learned man. An almost verbatim reproduction of the above passage occurs in the law-book of Manu (I, 96-97) which speaks of the Bráhmaṇas as the most honourable of men and of the learned men, *Vidyánsah*, as the most honourable among the Bráhmaṇas. The Mahábhárata, on the contrary, contains many passages (e.g., XII, 36, 28 ; XIII, 90, 13-14) which regard the medical profession as an ignoble one, the pursuit of which, like the selling of liquor, degrades a Bráhmaṇa from his rank. According to the Charakasamhitá the physicians are called Trija or thrice-born not because of their superior status among the twice-born but because after their ordinary initiation as twice-born the Vaidyas are initiated into the mysteries of the science of medicine. It is not possible to agree with those who seek to prove from the abovementioned passages that the medical men were always Bráhmaṇas and that they occupied a position of high honour among the Bráhmaṇas.

In Rigvedic times the physicians were no doubt respectable members of society. "In Rig. X, 97, 22, we find Bráhmaṇas exercising the functions of a physician without dishonour. 'With Soma as their sovereign lord the Plants hold colloquy and say : O King, we save from death the man whose cure a Bráhmaṇa undertakes.' Diseases were believed to be caused by the displeasure of gods or possession by demons; hence a physician had to be well-versed in *mantras* for propitiating gods and driving away demons as well as in the science of medicine. The physicians were generally Bráhmaṇas, and, like the witch doctors in primitive societies, were held in high respect, so much so that many gods, such as Asvins (I, 116-16), Varuna (I, 24-9), Rudra (II, 33, 4-7), are frequently called physicians. That different occupations did not impart any blemish even to Bráhmaṇa families is indicated in IX, 112, 3, where the rishi sings, 'I am a poet, my father is a physician, my mother a grinder of corn. With our different views, seeking after gain, we run as after cattle.' The Ribhus were supposed to have been skilful artisans who were exalted to divine honours (I, 161, 1-5). Some of the descendants of the great sage Bhrigu were expert chariot-makers (X, 39, 14)." (Origin and Growth of Caste in India by the writer, Vol. I, pp. 59-60).

By the time of the Dharmashástras a great change had occurred in the status of the physicians. As early as the time of Vasistha's law-book (before B. C. 300) a Bráhmaṇa who practised the profession of a physician was regarded as degraded (III, 3). The Vishnusmriti (L. I. 10) prescribes a penance of living on milk only for seven days for the offence of taking food from a physician, and forbids the invitation to a funeral feast amongst others of a physician and an astrologer (LXXXII, 7-9). According to Atrisamhitá (378), a physician and an astrologer, however learned, must not be honoured. Similar passages are to be found in the Mahábhárata and many of the law-books, old and new.

It is not easy to trace the causes of the degradation in the status of physicians from the Vedic literature itself. One cause no doubt is that according to the Bráhmaṇical conceptions of the time no profession could stand side by side with the priestly one, and that a physician even though of Bráhmaṇa descent, must rank lower than a priest. Secondly, with the growth and elaboration of the ideas of cleanliness and ceremonial purity a medical man who had to come in constant contact with the sick, the dying and the dead, could not but incur a little of impurity for himself, and thus drew upon his profession some stigma and social degradation.

From a comparison of the standard of living of the Rigvedic Aryans with that of the pre-Aryans in the Indus valley with their highly developed knowledge of sanitation as revealed in the archæological discoveries at Mahenjo-daro and Harappá we may suppose that the science of medicine was more developed among the latter than among the Rigvedic folk. When mixture took place between the Aryans and the non-Aryans in the plains of India the medical science of the latter did not die out, but was adopted by the former though after some resistance. The Atharvaveda, the bible of the physicians in India, which contains a large amount of this non-Aryan knowledge and belief, was not readily accepted by the orthodox Aryans and was not generally regarded as one of the Vedas even as late as the time of Kautilya's Arthashástra and Manusamhitá. In the medical profession of the later Vedic period, therefore, we may hope to find a large number of non-Aryan families who had been in possession of the knowledge of herbs and charms for many generations before the coming of the Aryans. It is known how in the 2nd century B. C. the Greeks, though conquered by the Romans, furnished the greater part of the skill and knowledge of medicine at Rome and transmitted their science to the children of their conquerors. The close association of the physicians and the Sákadvipi or astrologer Bráhmaṇas in many passages of the law-books lends colour to the supposition that, like the Sákadvipis who are undoubtedly of non-Vedic origin, the Vaidyas, too, must have been dealing with a science of non-Vedic or mixed origin and have contained

among them a large percentage of men of non-Bráhmānical blood. The story of the origin of the Vaidyas as given in the Brahmavaivarta Purána (Brahmakhaṇḍa, X, 126-32), fanciful as it is, points to a relationship between the physicians and the *vedadharmaparityaktāh* astrologers as social groups distinguished from the traditional social divisions of Vedic society. It is probably to this, more than anything else, that the low status of the Vaidyas in the Dharmashāstras is due. It is difficult to say when Vaidya, which was at first a functional name, became the name of a caste, but it is certain that the caste was not formed in the same way and at the same time in different parts of India. Even now a Vaidya caste as we find it in Bengal does not exist in Upper India. But the tendency towards the formation of a medical caste can be traced as early as the time of the Mahábhārata. There is mention of a caste by name Vaidya (Anushasana, 49, 9), which is said to be formed by the union of a Sudra male and a Vaisya female. If any significance be attached to this statement we may suppose that the Sudra or non-Aryan medical men, referred to above, were gradually mixing their blood with the Vaisya community and were given a recognised position in society. Then followed intermixture between these Vaidyas and the Vaidyas belonging to the Bráhmaṇa community, as was bound to happen when they together formed a functional group receiving knowledge at the common fountain and when marriage restrictions were not very strict. What became of the issues of such mixed unions? Naturally the general mass of them would receive their training in the profession of their parents and become physicians by occupation. As regards their caste, whatever may be said in the Dharmashāstras about the issues of mixed marriages and the formation of mixed castes, one is inclined to think that the children of such mixed marriages in earlier times generally, but not always, took the rank of their father. Thus the children of a Bráhmaṇa physician by a Vaisya or a pseudo-Vaisya wife were recognised as Bráhmaṇas while those of a Vaisya father by a Bráhmaṇa woman remained Vaisyas. The Dharmashāstras prefer to put the children of such mixed unions in a separate compartment and call them Ambasthas who are to be medical men for treating patients of all good castes including Bráhmaṇas. *Had this dictum of the Dharmashāstras been rigidly followed we would have found the existence of an Ambastha caste extensively spread over the whole of India, like the Vaidya caste in Bengal, especially as another dictum, referred to above, degrades all members of the Bráhmaṇa community following the profession of medicine from the priestly order. As a matter of fact the Vaidya functional group, consisting of Bráhmaṇas, Vaisyas, etc., developed into a caste only in some parts of India, and received the name of Ambastha to indicate the mixture in blood which had taken place and for the determination of their position in the hierarchy of caste as intermediate between Bráhmaṇa and Vaisya. In the United Provinces at the present day Bráhmaṇas, Káyasthas and others are found following the medical profession, for generations without losing their original caste. Amara defines the word Vaidya as pertaining to medical profession while by alluding to the Ambastha he probably indicates that wherever a medical caste is formed it is to be looked upon as mixed caste†.

On account of various reasons as discussed in the writer's note on Káyastha the development of caste took a peculiar turn in Bengal, and one of the results was the formation of the Vaidya caste in its present shape. From its birth it fell under the category of Ambastha as defined in the law-books. There is no doubt that Bráhmaṇa, Káyastha and other castes have contributed their blood to the formation of the Vaidya caste in Bengal. The name Ambastha of the Dharmashāstras was found a suitable appellation for the new-born caste with its mixed blood and profession of medicine, though the name Vaidya also remained side by side. The close relationship between the Vaidyas and the Káyasthas in Bengal up till recent years is revealed in the genealogical records of the Vaidya community. Numerous instances are cited of inter-marriages between the two communities and of Vaidya and Káyastha families of recognised position springing from a common stock. If this was the case with Vaidya Kulin families with whom the genealogists mostly deal we may assume a freer intermixture of blood among the non-Kulins and even the Vaidya author Bharatamallika writing in the 17th century did not express disgust at this intercourse. The Brihadharma Purána, which deals specially with the social institutions of Bengal of about five hundred years ago, treats the terms Vaidya and Ambastha as synonymous (Uttara XIV, 41). The Vaidya genealogist Bharatamallika in the 17th century and the Vaidya leader Rájá Rájballava in the 18th century identified their caste with the Ambastha and claimed for themselves the rights and privileges of the twice-born Ambastha. This claim was persisted in by Vaidya scholars and leaders up till the close of the last century.

On the other hand, attempts were made by Bráhmaṇa legislators and interpreters of law to reduce the status of the Vaidyas and make them Sudras on the plea that in the Kali age there were only two *varnas*, Bráhmaṇa and Sudra. Thus the Brihadharma Purána (Uttara, XIV, 44) directs the Vaidyas to observe the duties of a Sudra, *Sudradharmán*. Rughunandana, too, in his *Suddhitatvam*, classes the Ambasthas or Vaidyas as Sudra. The result was that many of the Vaidyas gave up the right of initiation as twice-born and began to observe the

* देश्यायां ब्राह्मणाज्जातोऽम्बुष्टो हि मुनिसत्तम ।

ब्राह्मणानां चिकित्सायं निर्दिष्टो मुनिपुङ्गवे ॥

इति पराशरः ।

†This subtle distinction between function and caste is hidden in the passage quoted from Shankha-sambhitá in the Shabdakalpádruma :

वेदाज्जातो हि बन्धः स्यादम्बुष्टो ब्रह्मपुत्रकः ।

thirty days' rule for impurity like ordinary Sudras. But fortunately for them their profession required them to be learned in Sanskrit, and so the right of studying religious literature and of teaching language and medical science could not be taken away from them. Moreover, as teachers and physicians they continued to enjoy the right of receiving gifts. These circumstances to a certain extent stood them in good stead. Then there came in the middle of the 18th century a great revival in the Vaidya community under the leadership of Rájá Rájballava and taking their stand on well-known dicta of the Shástras they pushed their claim for recognition as Ambasthas with the right of initiation and fifteen days' rule for impurity. When, however, this claim was resisted by Bráhmaṇa pandits a section of the Vaidyas changed their ground and began to argue that if in the Kali age there were only two *varṇas*, the Vaidyas with their right of studying and teaching and of receiving gifts were more like Bráhmaṇa than Sudra.

Of late some of the Vaidyas in Bengal have begun to set up claims that they are full-fledged Bráhmaṇas and are not in any way to be regarded differently from the acknowledged Bráhmaṇas of the land. It is no doubt true that the Bráhmaṇas of Bengal are not a homogeneous caste and have received admixture of non-Aryan blood. But there is one thing in their favour which is not possessed by the Vaidyas, viz., the right of acting as priest for others at religious ceremonies. Since the Vedic times the Bráhmaṇas have practically monopolised this function, and this function alone distinguishes a Bráhmaṇa from a non-Bráhmaṇa. The right of teaching could not be similarly monopolised as we come across references to non-Bráhmaṇa teachers in the Upanishads, Buddhist Suttas and Játakas and even in some of the Bráhmaṇical law-books. The exercise of the priestly function among semi-Aryanized aborigines would in course of time enable even non-Aryan priestly families to get recognition as Bráhmaṇas but the door to Bráhmaṇhood was closely barred against all who did not follow the priestly profession, whether Aryan or non-Aryan. The argument over *gotra* and *pravara* in support of claim to pure Aryan or Bráhmaṇa blood is not convincing as this sort of registration originated long after the barriers of caste had been established and as a good deal of confusion has arisen on account of the dictum that the non-Bráhmaṇas have to accept the *pravaras* of their Bráhmaṇa priests. The question of surname is another *cul-de-sac*. The existence of common surnames among the Káyasthas, Vaidyas and mercantile classes only makes confusion worse confounded. Then, again, it is well known that there are several Vaidya and Káyastha families who can be traced to common stocks. In the *Chandrapravá* of Bharatamallika we find accounts of a ruling chief, Chandrasena, some of whose sons became Káyasthas by caste while others remained Vaidyas. There is no historical evidence to prove that the descendants of Vallálasena have become Vaidyas. The Sena Kings called themselves Brahmakshatriyas and not Vaidyas in their inscriptions, and must have merged themselves in the ruling Káyastha caste for want of a local Kshatriya caste. It may be admitted, if any reliance be placed upon the confused genealogical records of Vaidya families, that some members of the Sena family might have adopted the profession of medicine and thereby found their way into the Vaidya caste. Lastly, it is to be noted that the practice of inter-marriage between Vaidyas and Káyasthas which had been in existence for centuries has resulted in a confused mixture of blood in the Vaidya community while the Bráhmaṇas in Bengal have at least for the last seven hundred years avoided intermixture with non-Bráhmaṇa blood.

It would have been well if Hindu society could be reorganised on the four-fold *varṇa* system of the Rigvedic age, but the mixtures and ramifications have been so widespread and deep-rooted that the task is absolutely hopeless at the present day. Unless the other castes recognise them as priests at religious ceremonies the Vaidyas after centuries of un-Bráhmaṇical living and intermixture with other castes cannot hope to get their recognition as full-fledged Bráhmaṇas. It is true that many members of the Bráhmaṇa community remain in possession of their premier rank in society in spite of their abandonment of priestly occupation and character while the Vaidyas as a class with their high culture and mode of living are relegated to an inferior position but that is a fault inherent in the system itself in which birth and not merit is the basis of caste.

Vyása or Gaudádya Vaidika Bráhmaṇa.—The word Vaidika is used to denote the descendants of those Bráhmaṇas who according to tradition came with their Vedic knowledge only recently, about seven or eight hundred years ago, when the Vedic religious rites had been nearly forgotten by the Bráhmaṇa priests then in Bengal. The majority of the Bráhmaṇa community in Bengal, the Rádhis and Várendras are not called Vaidikas, though they are associated with this or that branch of the Veda. Theoretically, every Bráhmaṇa, being supposed to be a descendant of one or other of the *rishis* or *seers* of the Veda and belonging to this or that branch of the Veda, may call himself a Vaidika. But in Bengal on account of peculiar circumstances the name Vaidika is borne by a particular class of Bráhmaṇas as stated above, and to avoid confusion the word should be used in the restricted sense. Of course, Vyása Bráhmaṇas are described as Vaidikas in some documents of comparatively recent date in the district of Midnapore, which for a long time had been a part of Orissa and not Bengal. The term Vaidika might have been in occasional use for some time past among the influential Cháshi Kaivarta disciples of the Vyása Bráhmaṇas because probably they sought thereby to exalt the status of their own priests, and this was possible only where, as in the district of Midnapore, the Cháshi Kaivarta community was particularly strong and the social system of Bengal proper had made little headway. As a matter of fact, no other community in Central, Northern and Eastern Bengal has accepted the name Gaudádya Vaidika for what they call Vyása or Parásara Bráhmaṇa, nor can the expression be traced in the ancient or mediæval literature of Bengal.

The word Gaudiya or Gaudádya might have been sometimes used in the district of Midnapore, probably to distinguish the local Bráhmaṇas from the Oriya Bráhmaṇas of the neighbourhood. Gauda or Eastern Gauda represented in the time of the Pála and Sena Kings roughly the province of Bengal. The non-Bengalis in Muslim times who did not understand the distinction

between Rádhis and Várendras, Vaidikas and Vyásas, would lump them all together and call them by the territorial name of Gaudiya as they nowadays use the expression Bengali Bráhmaṇa.

The Bráhmaṇas of Northern India are traditionally divided into five territorial groups, viz., Sáraswata, Kányakubja, Gauda, Maithila, Utkala*. The places of origin respectively are in *proper order* from west to east —(1) the region of the river Saraswati in the Eastern Punjab, (2) the territory of Kanauj, (3) Gauda in Oudh, (4) Maithila or North Behar, (5) Utkal or Orissa. The indigenous Bráhmaṇas of Bengal are neglected in this classification because they were not regarded as sufficiently pure and orthodox at the time when these social groupings were made. Bengal was not only a partially Aryanized country but was the stronghold of the two heretical religions, Jainism and Buddhism. The great majority of the modern Bráhmaṇas of Bengal choose to trace their origin from Kanauj. Bengal was no doubt called Gauda or rather Eastern Gauda in the time of the Pála Kings, but it would be rash to think that the sub-caste of Gauda Bráhmaṇas originated in Bengal. According to the Purána Uttara Kosala was also called Gauda, the capital of which was Srávasti (Kurma Purána I, 20 ; Linga Purána I, 65). In the Brihat Samhitá of Baráhamihira the territory of Gauda is placed along with Matsya, Panchála, etc., in the middle division of India (XIV, 3). References to Gauda Bráhmaṇas in Pauráṇic literature do not necessarily point to the indigenous Bráhmaṇas of Bengal, as is believed by some modern scholars. In fact no historical connection can be traced between the Gauda Bráhmaṇas of Upper India and the early Bráhmaṇas of Bengal so as to warrant any belief in their common origin as distinguished from the other subdivisions of the Bráhmaṇas of India. Up till the census of 1921 no Gauda Bráhmaṇas of the United Provinces or the Punjab admitted kinship with the Vyása Bráhmaṇas of Bengal, and there is no case of inter-marriage on record to prove the social relationship between them.

It must be admitted that in Gupta and earlier times, i.e., long before the traditional date of immigration of the five Bráhmaṇas from Kanauj Bengal contained a large number of Bráhmaṇas many of whom were learned scholars and well versed in Vedic rites and practices. The copper-plate inscriptions of the fifth and sixth centuries A. D. in Bengal support this view. Now if the Rádhis, Várendras and Vaidikas are the descendants of the later immigrants as they claim to be, what has become of the earlier Bráhmaṇas of Bengal? The Vyásas no doubt are a section of the indigenous Bráhmaṇas of Bengal. But a larger number like the Saptasatis have imperceptibly merged themselves in the ranks of the new-comers, as we know from many Kulajis or genealogical records.—The Vyásas being the priests of lower castes could not do so. There is no evidence to show that the Vyása Bráhmaṇas occupied a high social status in the Pála or Gupta times, and there is no history or tradition connecting the Vyása Bráhmaṇas with the priests of the Pála or Gupta Kings of Bengal. The tracing of connection through *gotras* and *pravaras* alone is deceptive. Even the Sákadvipi Bráhmaṇas, who are traditionally known to have come from outside India, possess many *gotras* and *pravaras* in common with the Rádhis, Várendras and Vaidikas of Bengal. We know from the Kulaji books that the Vyása Bráhmaṇas have been acting as priests to lower castes (*antyajas*) at least for the last four hundred years, and we are not yet in possession of any reliable evidence to prove that they served as priests to higher castes in the time of the Pála and Sena Kings of Bengal. It is therefore natural to conclude that the Vyása Bráhmaṇas have been associated with the Kaivartas from the beginning and that the earlier priests to higher castes have, with some exceptions, been merged in the modern Rádhis, Várendras and Vaidikas of Bengal. The story of the degradation of the Vyása Bráhmaṇas as a class from being priests to higher castes to their present status by the Sena Kings is an invention of recent years which is not supported by any reliable documentary evidence.

The name Vyása is significant. The sage Vyása of the Mahábhárata was the illegitimate son of the Brahmana sage Parásara by a fisherwoman, and hence might well be looked upon as the patron-priests of the fishing community or the Kaivartas. The priests of the Kaivarta community may therefore be appropriately called Vyásas of Parásaras, two names by which they are known generally throughout Bengal. Bráhmaṇas they are without doubt, because they act as priests for others, perform ceremonials according to Hindu scriptures, and follow Bráhmaṇical practices in life. Moreover, they use Bráhmaṇical surnames which are not challenged by others. Their defect is that they cannot act as priests to the higher castes of Bengal and that they are comparatively backward in Sanskrit education, and hence they are generally looked down upon by the other Bráhmaṇas of Bengal, a fact which was observed by the well-known genealogist Nulopanchánana about three hundred years ago.

The Kaivartas, Pods, Chandálas, Bágdis, etc., being in the main descended from the pre-Aryan natives of the country one may reasonably suppose that some of the aboriginal priests became later acknowledged as Bráhmaṇas and came to form a mixed race with the new Bráhmaṇa settlers who acted as Aryan culture-bearers in a particular locality. These priests of the mixed blood were regarded as "degraded" Bráhmaṇas, and they attached themselves as priests to their respective tribes and were seldom allowed to act as priests for others. That this supposition is not baseless is proved by the currency in the Pauráṇic literature of various stories (often fanciful) about the creation of Bráhmaṇas from out of non-Aryan communities. Thus, for instance, the Skanda Purána, Sahyádrī Khanda (Uttarárdha, I, 35), describes how the warrior sage Parasuráma conferred Bráhmaṇhood upon a select number of Kaivarta families who became priests to the Kaivarta caste.

* सारस्वताः कान्यकुब्जा गौडा मैथिलोत्कलाः ।

पञ्च गौडाः समाख्याता विन्ध्यशोत्तरवासिनः ॥

It may be that in those troublous days when revived Hinduism was trying to wipe away Buddhism and when the foreigner Sena Kings were introducing changes in the social system with a view to extinguish the Pála influence in Bengal, some high priestly families tarrying to bow to the changed conditions in the country found themselves degraded and eventually had to descend to the rank of priests to lower castes, but they were only exceptions. No evidence has yet come to light to show that such has been the case with the Vyása Bráhmaṇas as a class. On the other hand, the story, fictitious or otherwise, of the promotion in social status by King Vallálasena of a section of the Kaivarta community who gave up the profession of fishermen and boatmen and took to agriculture, is quite in the natural order of things, and we have not to travel far to seek the cause of distinction in status between the fishing Kaivartas and the cultivating Kaivartas at the present day. Change of profession leading to the elevation of a community and adoption of a new or modified caste-name is a common occurrence in India. For a fuller discussion of this question the reader is referred to the writer's note on Kaivarta.

Kaivarta and Máhishya.—In Bengal to-day there are two classes of Kaivartas, Cháshi and Jálíka or Jálía, who may be regarded practically as two separate castes. The occupation of the former is mainly agriculture, which was at one time looked upon as a noble profession belonging to the Vaisya community of the Vedic age, but which on account of various causes came to be despised and gradually fell to the share of the Sudra folk (*vide* the writer's *Origin and Growth of Caste in India*, Vol. I, pp. 97-101; 142-147). The occupation of the Jálía Kaivartas is to catch fish, a profession which from the time of the Vedas had ever belonged to non-Aryan outcastes, to men who were primitive savages hunting and fishing for a livelihood and knowing no art which makes for settled life of culture. The passage in Parásarasamhitá (II, 9) which describes cultivation of the soil as more sinful than even fishing is only a rhetorical statement made with the object of emphasising the duty on the part of farmers of making gifts to Bráhmaṇas, as is clear from the subsequent verses. As a matter of fact, farming has always been regarded in Bráhmanical and Buddhist literature as a much nobler profession than hunting and fishing.

The Cháshi Kaivartas nowadays call themselves by the name of Máhishya and claim that they had always been different from the Jálía Kaivartas with whom they had nothing in common except the name. Facts, however, do not seem to support this claim. First of all, the name itself. The prefixes Cháshi and Jálía are added only to make the distinction in function between the two classes, and are not parts of the name. In fact, these prefixes are not to be found in use in Sanskrit law-books and Puráṇas. The common name Kaivarta is suggestive of a common origin of the two sections unless there be any strong evidence to the contrary.

Secondly, the close similarity in the distribution of the two communities over the several districts of Bengal and the racial affinity between them as revealed by anthropometric evidences cannot be easily explained away.

Thirdly, the general belief of the higher caste people of Bengal about the common origin of the two classes of Kaivartas in support of which various stories are told, the fact that service as priest to either of the two communities is regarded as degrading by the Rádhi, Várendrá and Vaidika Bráhmaṇas of the country, and the claim of the Jálía Kaivartas based on tradition that in the past they formed one community with the Chási Kaivartas, are strong evidences against the theory of separate origins of the two groups.

Fourthly, nowhere in the ancient Sanskrit literature, legal, mythological or otherwise, do we find any mention of two classes of Kaivartas. According to Amara, Kaivarta and Dhivara are synonymous terms, and no one has yet disputed the meaning of Dhivara to be a fisherman, and the caste is placed by the lexicographer in the category of things pertaining to water. Manu knows only of one class of Kaivartas, an unclean caste (X, 34), and so also other writers of Dharmashástras like Angiras (I, 3) and Atri (195). Some scholars seem to discern a distinction between Kaivarta and Dhivara in one passage in Brahmavaivarta Puráṇa (Brahma, X, 111-112), (1) which can hardly stand any examination. Evidently, the word Dhivara in the second and third lines is used by the author as a synonym of the word Kaivarta and not to mean a different caste. This passage occurs in the course of an account of the formation of different castes by crosses and the degradation of several of them from their original status for some faults. The list is given in a serial order. Now if Dhivara and Kaivarta had been, according to the author, two different castes, he would have first accounted for the origin of the Dhivara as apart from the Kaivarta before explaining the cause of his degradation. But he has not done so in the whole long list. Again, according to the order observed by the author, we would expect to find in verse 112 the name of a new caste formed from a man or a woman of the caste created in the previous verse, i.e., the Kaivarta. Here also the synonym Dhivara is given to denote the connecting link between Kshatriya and Rajaka and in the subsequent verse the connection is traced between Rajaka and Koáli. Further, what is the significance of the word "degraded" unless we are informed of the original status of the caste concerned by reference to its extraction? In this passage the Kaivarta is shown to be of good parentage and hence the necessity of explaining the cause of his degraded status. The truth is that the author knew that the words Kaivarta and Dhivara were perfectly interchangeable according

(1) दक्षदीयं वैश्यां कैवर्तः परिकीर्तितः ।

कली तीवरसर्गात् धीवरः पतितो भुवि ॥

तीवर्यां धीवरात् पुलोवभुव रजकः स्युतः ।

रजकां तीवराच्च कोयालोति वभुव ॥

to both legal writers and lexicographers and therefore only avoided repetition and ensured smoothness of language and rhythm by using two words to signify the same thing. In Manu X, 11, for instance, two words Kshatriya and Rájan are used to denote the same caste and not two different castes.

Fifthly, the Kaivartas seek to identify themselves with the Máhishyas on the ground that as according to writers like Gautama (IV) and Yájnavalkya (I, 92) the union of a Kshatriya male and a Vaisya female produces the Máhishya while according to authorities like Brahmavaivarta Purána the same union produces the Kaivarta, therefore the two castes are identical. The present writer has discussed the trustworthiness or otherwise of these lists of mixed castes produced from the unions of the four *varnas* directly and indirectly in his book *Origin and Growth of Caste in India, Vol. I, Ch. I*. A few examples here will serve to illustrate the fancifulness of these lists. The caste Pukkasa is derived from Nisháda-Sudra union by Manu, X, 18, from Vaisya-Kshatriya by Vasistha, XVIII, and Vishnu, XVI, and from Sudra-Kshatriya by Gautama, IV, while Amara identifies Pukkasa with Chandála who is born of a Sudra-Bráhmaṇ union (Sudravarga, 12 and 55). The offspring of a Vaisya-Kshatriya union is, according to Manu, X, II, and Yájnavalkya, I, 94, a Magadha, but according to Gautama, IV, a Dhivara. As the Rájput is said to be produced from the union of a Kshatriya father and Vaisya mother (Brihad-dharma Purána, Uttara, XIII, 34), can he therefore be identified with the Máhishya of Yájnavalkyasamhitá and the Kaivarta of Brahmavaivarta Purána? The traditional professions of the Máhishyas—singing, dancing, star-reading and protection of crops (Kulluka on Manu, X, 6)—do not tally with those claimed by the Cháshi Kaivartas in Bengal.

Sixthly, as against the abovementioned claim of the Kaivartas, there are certain facts which require consideration. If the Cháshi Kaivartas had been Máhishyas in origin how did they come to acquire the name of Kaivarta in Bengal, a name which they do not deny, while a similar phenomenon is not evident in any other part of India? Besides, the name Máhishya is a comparatively recent one in Bengal which can hardly be traced in the ancient accounts of the province as referring to an extensive caste. We hear of the Kaivartas in the time of the Pála and Sena Kings but not of Máhishyas. There is almost unanimity of opinion among scholars that the Brahmavaivarta Purána and the Brihad-dharma Purána in their present shape were composed about the 14th or 15th century A.D. and that they give a good account of the religious beliefs and social institutions of Bengal of the time. The Brihad-dharma Purána gives a list of about 40 mixed castes, but Máhishya is not included in the list. Similarly silent is also the Brahmavaivarta Purána with its long list of mixed and degraded castes. Both the books, however, refer to the Kaivartas as a degraded or unclean caste. From this too, we may conclude that there was about five centuries ago no caste in Bengal known as Máhishya which was worth notice. A caste which to-day represents one of the numerically largest communities of the province could not certainly be ignored in a fairly exhaustive list of castes. Further, nowhere in the standard Dharmashástras and Puránas and old lexicons are the two words Máhishya and Kaivarta used as synonyms unlike Dhivara and Kaivarta which have represented the fisherman caste at least for the last two thousand years, whatever might be their distinction in earlier times.*

If on the strength of the statements in the Brahmavaivarta Purána and Padma Purána concerning their origin from Kshatriya-Vaisya union the Cháshi Kaivartas of Bengal have sought to change their name into Máhishya, then the claims of the other Kaivartas, like the Jálías and Pátnis, for a similar designation cannot be denied, because there is no indication in those passages that a particular class, and not the whole Kaivarta community, was meant. If, on the contrary, the Cháshi Kaivartas base their claim of superior social status on their present profession of agriculture and their assimilation of the Bráhmanical ideals of life, whatever might have been their origin in the distant past, they will certainly stand on stronger ground. It is not unknown how various aboriginal tribes and foreign races have found their way into the hierarchy of caste and their descendants can be traced in Bráhmaṇa and Kshatriya not to speak of Vaisya and Sudra folds.

One difficulty in the way of Jáliya Kaivartas and the Pátnis for recognition as Máhishya is that they still stick to professions, fishing and boating, which are said to belong to non-Aryan outcastes according to the Dharmashástras and Puránas. Moreover, the adoption of the name Máhishya by both the Cháshi and Jálía Kaivartas will necessitate the addition of prefixes before the caste name to distinguish the fishing and agricultural groups and is sure to be resented by the latter who are trying to dissociate themselves entirely from their original extraction and occupation. If the name Máhishya be given to the agricultural Kaivartas there is no necessity for retaining the prefix Jálía to distinguish the fishing Kaivartas.

*The word Kaivarta or Kevarta seems to be the Sanskritized form of the word Kevatta or Kewata which was probably the name of some aboriginal tribe, like the Nisháda, Pukkasa, etc., whom the Aryans encountered in the valley of the Ganges. The original form of the word is retained in the early Buddhist literature (e.g., Dighanikáya, Brahmajálasutta) and in Asoka's Inscriptions, and survives in modern times as the name of a sub-caste of fishermen, the Kewat. The elasticity of the Sanskrit language is such that even foreign words can be easily derived from Sanskrit roots and by a little change in a vowel or a consonant made to appear like genuine Sanskrit words. The orthodox derivation of the word Kevarta from the root *Ka*, water, does not dispel the suspicion that it was an after-thought to give a Sanskrit look to a non-Aryan word. From a tribal name Kevata or Kaivarta became a caste-name of a functional nature. At the time when the Kaivartas were first met by the Vedic Aryans they were in a very primitive stage of culture and their main occupation was hunting and fishing. Manu (X, 34) appropriately points out relationship in race between the Kaivartas and the Nishádas, another of the aboriginal tribes of Northern India. The Mahábhárate (Anushásana, Chs. 50 and 51) makes the two words Kaivarta and Nisháda synonymous. It is when a section of the Kaivartas advanced in culture, gave up their hunting and fishing life and settled as cultivators of the soil that their status was improved. Hence, probably we find that in more recent writings like the Brahmavaivarta Purána the Kaivartas are derived from respectable parentage though still with a stigma of degradation.

Pátni.—The Pátnis are a sub-section of the Kaivarta community, and at present stand intermediate between the Jália and Cháshi Kaivartas. The original professions of the Kaivartas were those of a fisherman and a boatman, while in later times a section of them gave up their traditional occupations and took to agriculture. Now the Pátnis combine the professions of a boatman and a cultivator, and thus cannot be called either pure Kaivartas or Cháshi Kaivartas. In fact, they form a community of their own distinguished from the two larger divisions of the Kaivarta people. By adopting a newly-coined name *Lupta Máhishya* they acknowledge their inferiority in status to the full-fledged Máhishyas and at the same time show their intention of elevating their position and will in course of time claim equality with the cultivating Kaivartas. The transition will be rendered easier when the Pátnis have abandoned altogether the work of the ferryman and devoted themselves entirely to agriculture, thereby making the word Pátni meaningless as a caste name and the folk indistinguishable from the Máhishya Kaivartas. The name Pátni is a peculiarly provincial word which does not find a place in the Sanskrit language and hence it is difficult to ascertain from references in the Dharmashástras the status of the caste as compared with that of the Kaivartas in general. As matters stand at present the Pátnis can well claim that they are more like the cultivating Kaivartas who have assumed the name of Máhishya in Bengal than like the despised fishing Kaivartas of the Dharmashástras, and that as such they are entitled to assume a name to show their near relationship with the Máhishya-Kaivartas without at the same time being connected with the boat, seeking to establish absolute identity with them. Like the Cháshi Kaivartas, the Pátnis, too, have fortified their claim to be called Máhishya by securing *Vyavasthá*s from well-known pandits.

Sáhá and Shundi.—The word Sáhá is borne as a title or surname by many persons among the mercantile classes in Bengal, Bihar and the United Provinces. It is derived from the Sanskrit word Sádhu, meaning a money-lender and a trader,* through the intermediate forms, Sáhu, Sáwoo and Sáh. Both the words Sáhá and Sádhu are to be found in use as a title or surname among different trading classes in Bengal. Thus there are Sáhá and Sádhu families among the Gandhabanik, Sankhabanik, Tili, Tánti and Shundi castes. In this respect Sáhá may be compared with the titles of Rái, Chaudhuri, Majumdár, etc., which are borne by men of different castes, high and low, with the difference that the former is used only among the mercantile castes.

Sáhá or Sáwoo is at the same time the name of a caste in Bengal, the members of which are nowadays found in mercantile, agricultural and other pursuits. There are many families who use the titles or surname of Prámánik, Poddár, Dás, etc., but belong to the Sáhá caste. A man may therefore have the surname of Sáhá but not belong to the Sáhá caste whilst another belonging to the Sáhá caste may have a surname like Dás or Poddár. The Sáhá caste is regarded in Bengal as being of a lower order, and good Rádhi, Várendra and Vaidika Bráhmaṇs do not ordinarily take water from a Sáhá's hands or serve as priests to him. The priests of the Sáhá community form a caste of their own, and are looked down upon by the ordinary Bráhmaṇs of the country, and they cannot act as priests to the higher castes. In this respect the Sáhás occupy a lower position than the Gandhabaniks, Sankhabaniks, blacksmiths, barbers, potters, betel-dealers, etc., who are called Navashákhas, and whose touch does not impart impurity to a Bráhmaṇ's drinking water. Like the Suvarṇabaniks of West Bengal, the Sáhás of East Bengal with all their wealth and influence and in spite of their orthodox mode of living are assigned a back seat in the hall of Bengal castes by the Bráhmaṇ leaders of society.

The inclusion in earlier census figures of Sáhás and Shundis in one group has of late excited some controversy. The traditional occupation of a Shundi, viz., the making and selling of spirituous liquor, is one of the most despised in Hindu society. There are many high caste Hindus, especially in West Bengal, who do not make any distinction between Sáhá and Shundi in everyday language and are not even aware whether any distinction exists between the two classes. In Eastern Bengal, the general currency of the expression *Sáwoo-Suri* reveals a subtle distinction between the two though they are coupled together to form one group. The problem which faces the historical inquirer is whether the Sáhás are only a section of the general Shundi caste who have been seeking for several centuries to elevate their social status by taking to a strictly Vaisya profession and dissociating themselves from those who still cling to their original occupation or are fundamentally different from the Shundis, who, however, are trying to worm their way up into the higher community by taking advantage of their Sáhá surname. It is worthy of note that the Shundis, at least those who aspire to higher social status, choose to be called Sáhás by caste, but do not claim community with the Gandhabanik or Sankhabanik Sáhás. Is it likely that the present Sáhá community has gathered recruits both from above and below?

If the occupation of a caste be the sole determining factor in the matter of social gradation, the Sáhá caste of Bengal, at least those of them who are associated with trade and banking, must be given the status of the Vaisya. We know that some of the functions which belonged to the original Vaisya *varṇa*, such as tilling the ground and tending cattle, became in later times dishonourable and gradually came to be associated with Sudra *varṇa*. But no blemish was at any time attached to the profession of trade, if only some forbidden articles were not dealt in. It is also known that by the time of the later Dharmashástras the status of the Vaisyas in general had sunk much lower in the estimation of the law-makers and had come very close to that of the Sudras who correspondingly had risen somewhat higher.† From Alberuni's account

“साधुर्वाहं पिके चारो सज्जने चाभिधायत” — इति मेदिनी ।

† For a fuller discussion of this subject reference may be made to the writer's *Origin and Growth of Caste in India*.

we learn that at least in some parts of India in the 11th century A.D. the distinction between the Vaisyas and the Sudras was very slight, and that the study of the Vedas was forbidden to both classes (Sachau I, p. 101 : II, p. 136). Moreover, as sea-voyages came to be forbidden by the Dharmashāstras many of the Vaisya merchants had either to give up their foreign trade or be degraded in social rank to the level of the Sudras. Further, in some parts of the country, as in Bengal, the mercantile classes were converted in large numbers to Buddhism and Jainism, and remained for centuries estranged from Vedic practices and Brāhmanical influence. It is no wonder, therefore, that the Brāhman legislators, especially of Bengal, began to assert that the Vaisya *varṇa* had ceased to exist in this Kali age and that even the mercantile classes, not to speak of the farming and pasturing folk, must be ranked as Sudras. A distinction was of course made between those who were respectful to Brāhman and their laws and who did not transact business in "bad" articles, and those who delayed to give up their heretical faith and who were dealers in "bad" commodities. The former were called "good" Sudras whose touch was not impure to a Brāhman and who could be served as priests by good Brāhman, and the latter became "untouchables" in society. On account of other causes* the Kshatriya community, too, had been reduced to Sudra status in Bengal. Hence the dictum has obtained currency that in the Kali age there exist only two *varṇas*, Brāhman and Sudra. The result is that many castes in Bengal to-day are regarded as belonging to the Sudra *varṇa* whose forefathers were of higher orders. They abandoned the use of the sacred thread either through the influence of Buddhism and Jainism or through compulsion by Brāhman and Brāhmanical princes on the strength of the above dictum after the fall of the Buddhist Pāla Kings. Gradually other rules of conduct fit for the Sudra, such as thirty days' impurity and offering of uncooked food to deities, were fastened on them. If any one ventured to resist he was assigned a still lower status in society as an "untouchable" Sudra.

The origin of the Sāhā caste in Bengal is obscure. Moreover, it is not clear what were the goods in which they traded. Some say that they were dealers in paddy and rice only, but the genealogical records of some Sāhā families show that they dealt in spices and precious stones as well. A caste of rice-dealers is very rarely mentioned in the Dharmashāstras. Neither in the Brihadharma Purāna nor in the Brahmavaivarta Purāna which contain fairly exhaustive lists of castes in Bengal about five or six centuries ago is there any reference to the Sāhā or Sādhu caste. In the Vallācharitam the rice-dealers are called not Sāhās or Sādhus but Tandulinas, who are ranked as "good" Sudras (Ch. XIX, 6). It is strange that an important community like the existing Sāhā caste in Bengal is not even mentioned in old literature as distinguished from the recognised mercantile groups like the Gandhabaniks, Suvarnabaniks, Sankhabaniks, etc. This fact may lend force to those who argue that the Sāhās were in the past the same as the Shundis, whose name is frequently met with in the books referred to above, though some of them might not be following the profession of a liquor-seller. There is evidence, however, that at least some of the Sāhā families have not originated from the Sundi caste.

Unlike some other castes of Bengal, the Sāhās have not invented any story of the immigration of a number of families from the west *at one time* from whom all the members of the Sāhā caste claim their descent. This makes their old genealogical records more trustworthy from the historian's point of view. The Kulakārikā of the Sāhā Tāmolin family of Kirtikholā in the district of Pabna contains a tradition that the ancestors of the family came from Western India in the time of Emperor Asoka. One of the genealogical books of the Sāhā community, the Laghujātichandrikā, states that a number of Vaisya trading families being unable to endure the oppression of Emperor Shahjehan left his capital and scattered in different directions. One batch found their way into Bengal and settled in the Varendra country. The Prāmāniks of Belkuchi, on the other hand, trace their residence in Bengal from at least as early as the time of the Sena Kings. A number of Sāhā families of Sylhet claim descent from Vaidya and Kāyastha ancestors during the reign of King Subidnārāyana in the sixteenth century A.D. These facts prove that the present Sāhā caste is not homogeneous, but contains an admixture of blood from different communities and from different parts of India. There are many families who are known not to have a noble origin, but their endeavour is to wipe away their antecedents and not to keep them on record.

It is probable that many Jaina merchants were degraded to Shundi status by Brāhman law-makers during the period of Brāhmanical renaissance in Bengal. Shaundika was a term of abuse which was sometimes applied by bigoted Brāhman to the Jaina. In the Prabodhachandrodaya the Jaina is caricatured as a drunken sot, low-born and vulgar-tongued. The genealogical records of some Sāhā families contain a tradition that at one time the ancestors of most of the Sāhās professed a non-Brāhmanical faith. The long centuries of name-association between the original Shundis and the degraded Jainas are likely to have led to greater intermingling between the two classes with the result that some of the latter sank to the position and occupation of liquor-sellers while some of the former gave up their profession and managed to mix their blood with the Jaina Shundis. When the latter were eventually reconverted into the Brāhmanical creed the name Shundi persisted and since then on account of growing class consciousness there have been attempts from time to time to widen the gulf between the two classes. At the present time even among the recognised Sāhā families of Eastern Bengal whispers are heard that such and such were Shundi in origin and that some others had Shundi connections. That such a controversy about the confusion of Sāhā with Shundi has its roots deep in the past may be gleaned from the family records of the well-known Sāhā Prāmāniks

*Vide the writer's note on Kayastha.

of Belkuchi. *The allusion therein to the curse pronounced by the sage Shukra upon spirituous liquor (Mahabhārata, Adi, Ch. 76) and the claim that the ancestor of the family, Sályé Sáhá, had nothing to do with liquor but followed the profession of an Arya, raise a suspicion that there were disputes about the matter for which a pronouncement in favour of the party concerned had to be obtained from a certain Sena King.

It is mainly on account of the diverse origins of the Sáhá families of Bengal and of their juxtaposition in relation to the liquor-selling Shundis that there are a comparatively large number of subdivisions in the Sáhá community. The two broad divisions are Várendra and Rádhi, though curiously enough the majority of the Várendra and Rádhi Sáhás are found in the districts of old Vanga or East Bengal. While the Sáhás proper are numerous in Eastern Bengal and few in the western districts, the case is exactly the reverse with the Gandhabaniks and Suvarnabaniks. This geographical distribution of the mercantile communities leads to the supposition that the original differences between the various trading groups were not very great, most of them being regarded as Vaisyas, and that the later differences in status were in a large measure due to the respective part they played in the long conflict between the heretical faiths and revived Brahmanism. Thus it is not unlikely that some of the Sáhás of Eastern Bengal and the Gandhabaniks of Western Bengal may have been descended from a common stock and that the separation took place not more than one thousand years ago. Tradition is not wanting to show that the forefathers of some of the Sáhá families of Eastern Bengal traded in those articles which are nowadays regarded as the monopoly of the Gandhabanik caste.

The Várendra Sáhás on account of their greater solidarity and class consciousness have been trying for a long time to avoid contact with the liquor-selling Shundis, and look down upon the Rádhis who, they state, have received a large admixture of Shundi blood. There are, however, instances known of inter-marriage even in recent times between Várendra and Rádhi, and there are families who are alleged to have once belonged to the Rádhi group but now claim to be Várendra. Their cry which is sometimes heard nowadays that the two sections are not the subdivisions of one caste but two separate castes for which two different names should be used, does not seem reasonable. On that ground the Kayasthas of Sylhet and some other districts, who inter-marry with Vaidyas and Sáhás, would have to be given a new caste name to distinguish them from others who are strictly endogamous. Besides, the territorial names of Várendra and Rádhi to distinguish the two sections, as among the Brahmans and the Kayasthas, indicate that they belong to one caste subdivided into two groups. Further, in many places the Várendra Sáhás and the Rádhi Sáhás are served by the same priests of the Sáhá community.

To distinguish those who are Sáhás by caste from those who only bear the title of Sáhá but belong to other castes, the name Sádhubanik has been suggested for the caste. There may be some objections to this name. In the first place, it was never used to denote any particular caste in the old literature of the country. Secondly, the word Banik meaning a merchant may be joined with a word like Gandha, Sankha, Suvarna, etc., to specify the particular branch of trade in which the Banik is engaged. Sádhu is almost a synonym of Banik unless it means a money-lender only, in which case there is nothing to indicate that the Sádhubaniks are a caste of grain-dealers, as many of them claim to be. Thirdly, if the word Sáhá be objectionable because it is used as a title by others than Sáhás by caste, the same objection applies to the word Sádhu, which is largely used as a title by the Gandhabaniks and others.

Teli and Till.—The term Teli is used in Bengal nowadays to denote two distinct classes of men, one whose profession is trade, and the other associated with oil-pressing. The former class is regarded as belonging to the Navasákha group, whose touch does not pollute a Bráhmaṇa's drinking water and whose priests are "good" Bráhmaṇas, while the oilmen are treated as an unclean caste whom ordinary Bráhmaṇas would not serve as priests. The latter are often called Kalits from the name of the oil-mill to mark the distinction between the two classes of Telis. This distinction has been in existence for several centuries as we find reference to two castes, Tailika and Tailakáraka, in the Brihadharma Purána (Uttara, X, 38, 41), the Tailika being classed as a good mixed caste who lived by selling betel-nut, and the Tailakáraka or oil-extractor being called an unclean caste. The Brahmavaivarta Purána (Brahma, X, 18), too, places the Tailakáraka in the group of unclean castes.

It is not an uncommon phenomenon in Hindu society for a section of a caste, generally of a lower order, to abandon their traditional caste profession adopting one which is regarded as "nobler" by Bráhmaṇa law-writers, and gradually form a caste of their own separate from the parent stock. We know how the Sadgopas, Cháshi Kaivartas, Madhu-nápitás, and Cháshadhópás have come to form distinct castes in Bengal. It seems that the Teli traders have originated by a similar process from the oilman caste, though this separation must have begun

*The quotation is as follows :—

तथाहि सेनराजोवाच—

इन्द्रजगुरुशापान्ते राजिका कृषिकारुडि ।

वारिन्द्रा अयार्धधर्मैव विशद्रेव न संशय ।

सैत्यस्य सौकुलइव सात्ये साहा वभूव ह ।

साधुत्वसा जगद्विद्यः धर्मनिष्ठा परा गतिः ।

This is the reading of Mahamahopadhya Dr. Bhagvat Kumar Goswami Shastrī from the original manuscript.

several centuries ago. The very name Teli as is used in Bengali or Tailika as written in the Brihaddharma Purāna is suggestive of such an origin. The trading Telis have sought to distinguish themselves from the oil-pressing Telis by adopting a comparatively newly-coined word Tili, which, however, is not recognised by the other castes in general. The word was not known to the old lexicographers, Sanskrit or Bengali, and obviously cannot be derived from the word Tulá or weighing scales. The weighing scales are not a monopoly of the betel-dealers in Bengal as the Tilis claim to be in their origin. Of course, there are tribal names like Jhalla, Bhila, Khasa, etc., which do not lend themselves to derivation in an intelligible way from Sanskrit roots but this is not the case in general with functional names, like Gandhika, Tailika, Rajaka, Charmaka, etc. Nobody has yet suggested that Tili comes from the name of any aboriginal tribe or is a word borrowed from foreign vocabulary.

Though in comparatively recent times Tailika has come to mean a different caste from Tailakāraka, it was not so in earlier times. About two thousand years ago Tailika (Vishnu-smṛiti II; Manu III, 158) was one of the degraded communities like the wine-sellers, washermen, etc., whose food could not be taken by a Bráhmaṇa and there is no indication that it denoted anything else than the oilman. Kulluka commenting on the above passage of Manu gives the meaning of Tailika as an oil-presser and evidently was not aware of any secondary meaning. The later difference between Tailika and Tailakāraka was an artificial one devised to mark the distinction in profession between the two sections of the same caste. A plausible theory is that one section became dealers in Tila or sesamum seed from which oil was extracted and the other section remained as the extractors of oil. Now as industries fell into lower estimation than trade on account of the growing contempt of the conquering Aryans for menial labour and the increasing association with Sudra or slave labour in the industries, and other causes (*vide* the writer's *Origin and Growth of Caste in India*, Vol. I, pp. 97-101), the trading Tailikas rose higher in social status than the oil-pressing Tailikas or Tailakāraka. This was a development which occurred only in Bengal where owing to the absence of the intermediate Kshatriya and Vaisya *varṇas* various classifications had to be devised to meet the claims of many functional groups. But how the betel-nut trade fell to the portion of the Tailikas in the time of the Brihaddharma Purāna is not known. At any rate it was a later acquisition as otherwise some more appropriate word than Tailika would have been chosen to denote the sellers of Gubáka or betel-nut. The Tailikas afterwards gradually extended their field of business and nowadays are to be found trading in various articles other than sesamum-seed and betel-nut. If any Vaisya order be recognised in the social organisation of Bengal the Tilis from their mode of living, their profession and their connection as disciples with the Bráhmaṇas of the land may well claim to belong to it.

APPENDIX IV

A note on the indigenous dances of Bengal

The following notes have been supplied by Mr. G. S. Dutt, I.C.S., who has been responsible for arousing an interest in dances of this kind which has led to their adoption by the Education Department as a form of physical exercise for school instruction. The dances described by Mr. Dutt seem to be of aboriginal or of Vaishnava origin, and before accepting his conclusion that the Raibishe dance for instance is a martial exercise it would be desirable to examine the dances described in comparison with tribal dances amongst the people with racial affinities to the castes now performing them, and to dispose of the possibility that the dances themselves are merely the linear descendants of the original tribal festival dances. Mr. Dutt's descriptions, however, are the only ones of which I know and are of interest not only in themselves but also as suggesting lines of further comparative study, whilst it is clearly an admirable thing that a form of recreation should be popularised which provides physical exercise through dance-forms free of the associations commonly attaching to dancing in Bengal.

Note on the folk-dances of Bengal by G. S. Dutt, I.C.S.

Jāri.—The Jāri dance and song is prevalent in some of the Eastern Bengal districts, particularly Mymensingh, and is confined to Muslim villagers.

The dancing and singing are performed by a group of adults who usually form themselves into a ring; there is a precentor—the *Boyati*, as he is called, who leads the song from outside the ring. All the dancers except the *Boyati*, wear sounding bells round their ankles, and as the *Boyati* sing they mark time with their left feet and then take up the song in chorus. Vigorous movement is not commenced till after the song has progressed to a climax. The scheme of dancing lends itself to an infinite variety. The simplest and most common is that in which the dancers as they stand in the ring with their faces inwards, make a light hop on their left feet, and simultaneously raise the right feet in a sharp sideways kick to the right. They repeat this movement round and round in a ring formation at the same time waving the red handkerchiefs which they carry in their right hands with sharp downward movements of the hands: Then they step back into their original position. All the time they hold the ends of their wearing cloths—*dhoties*, in their left hands. At times the dancers, while keeping up the ring formation, form themselves into pairs, the two dancers of each pair stand face to face and step simultaneously forwards and backwards and then step past each other forming themselves in to form fresh pairs with their neighbours.

There are various other complicated schemes of dancing which, as well as the simpler ones, are remarkable for perfect symmetry and rhythm, the briskness of footwork and the vigour of body and arm movements.

The songs sung either have reference to the tragic historical events in the desert of Karbala in Arabia connected with the life of Imam Hussain, as the meaning of the word "Jāri" (mourning) indicates, or breathe sentiments of religious harmony and goodwill. The tunes are melodious and pathetic and constitute a very suitable vehicle for the expression of the sentiments of the songs.

The *Jāri* dances and songs are associated with the annual *Moharram* festivals of the Muslims and an air of religious solemnity attaches to them.

Baul.—The *Baul* song and dance are confined to the Hindus and may be found in all parts of Bengal. The singing and dancing are performed either solo or in groups to the accompaniment of the *Ektara* or the *Ānandalahari* (popularly known as the *Gabgubāgub*) and in some cases, the *karatāli* and the *Dubki* as well.

The *Baul* dance, while lacking the variety of formations appertaining to the *Jāri* dance, has many points of similarity with it. Its most striking feature is a spirit of joyous abandon and a fluidity of rhythmic movement which is in complete accord with the sentiments of the songs.

The word "Baul" means "mad", that is "mad after the eternal spiritual truth". And the songs invariably preach the unreality of mundane existence and their message is that of religious toleration and universal brotherhood.

Baul dancing and singing are not associated with any particular occasion or festivity, and are performed sometimes as a pastime for the performers themselves, but more often as a profession for earning a livelihood.

Kāthi.—The *Kāthi* dance and song is practised in Birbhum by the so-called depressed sections of the Hindu society and mainly by the Bauris.

An even number of men—usually adults—dance to the accompaniment of the *Mādal*. They stand in a circle each carrying two short sticks—one in either hand. The man who plays on the *Mādal* remains outside the ring and sometimes at its centre. At the commencement the dancers sing in chorus and each keeps on hitting the left hand stick with the right hand one at regular intervals and in perfect time. Then, as the dance begins each alternate dancer forms a pair with his right hand neighbour and strikes with his left hand stick the right hand stick of his partner on his right. Each man then strikes his left hand stick with the right hand one. Different pairs are then formed—those who formed pairs with their right hand neighbours now form pairs with the left hand neighbours, and strike the left hand sticks of their partners with their own right hand ones. The process is repeated and all the while the dancers keep moving

along the ring in an anti-clockwise direction. The whole system is in accordance with a simple but regular and symmetrical scheme ; the steps are brisk and graceful and the body movements are very lively and in entire unison with the sound of the sticks which produce a pleasing rhythmic effect. The scheme includes many variations of which the most interesting is that in which a player falls flat on the ground on his back as if wounded, and yet keeps on dancing round and round in that position, striking his sticks against those of his neighbours who keep up the round progression of the ring.

In its origin it was very likely a war dance and the sticks are symbolised swords and shields. The fashion in which the sticks are wielded indicates parrying with swords.

The songs sung with this dance are simple ditties dealing with the simple joys and sorrows of the peasants and often striking a pathetic note.

The name is obviously derived from the fact that the dancing is performed with *kāthi* (sticks) in hand.

The *kāthi* dance and song are not associated with any particular occasion or ceremony and the players perform them both as a pastime for themselves and for the edification of the spectators.

Rāibeshe.—Of all forms of folk dance in Bengal the Rāibeshe is undoubtedly the most interesting. It is found in some of the Western Bengal districts, e.g., Birbhum, Burdwan and Murshidabad. It is practised by the *Bāuris* and the *Domes* of the Hindu community.

The dancing is performed by a group of men to the accompaniment of the *Dhol* (a type of indigenous drum) and the *Kānsi* (gong). The dancers wear brass anklets called *Nupurs* on their right legs and are usually adults though they occasionally include youths of tender age. This dance is one of the manliest and most vigorous folk dances extant in any country in the world and is marked by a remarkable dignity, orderliness and rhythm. The scheme of dancing is absolutely free from all traces of effeminacy and vulgarity, and displays a high order of symmetry and an innate sense of discipline in the dancers.

The dancing is punctuated by occasional yells, and the whole atmosphere is one of warlike excitement. But with all the vigour and virility introduced into the dancing, and the excitement under which it is performed, there is that restraint which is the criterion of all true art.

The dancing takes various forms and is in the nature of military exercises. At times the performers stand in a file or form a column and press forward with a singular orderliness ; at times again, they form a ring and with slightly bended knees, hop forward alternately joining and extending the knees imitating the gesture and movement of a horseman. The movements are such that all the muscles of the body are brought into prominence and play during the dance. Sometimes the dance is performed in pairs, one man supporting another on his shoulder, the dancer on the ground performing the usual movements of the dance while the dancer on his shoulder also performs the same movements with his arms and hands in a standing posture.

The dancing has as its counterpart a complete system of acrobatics which are remarkable for dignity, and the daring, valour and artistic grace with which they are executed, and which, like the dancing itself, are performed to the accompaniment of rhythmic beats of the *Dhol* and the stirring gong of the *Kānsi*.

From its nature it seems obvious that the *Rāibeshe* was a war dance in its origin. The *Rāibeshes* appear to have been the spearmen in the infantry of ancient Bengal from the earliest times ; and references have been found to *Rāibeshe* soldiers in ancient Bengali literature.

In "Kabikankan Chandi," an epic poem of Mukunda Ram Chakrabarty who lived from 1544 to 1608 A.D., the following passages occur :—

(1) বাজন হুপূর পার, বীর ঘটা পাইক ধায়,
রায় বাঁশা ধায় ধরশান ।

(1) "Footmen with bells round their waists and sounding anklets round their ankles press on—the *Rāibeshes* also rush forward."

(This passage occurs in the description of King Shalibahan's march.)

(2) বাজন হুপূর পার, বীর মুঠা পাইক ধায়
রায় বাঁশ ধরে ধরশান ।

(2) "Footmen with sounding anklets march on with closed fists, the *Rāibeshes* carry their *Rāibansh* (lances) in their hands."

(3) সোণার হুপূর পার, বীর বেরাপাকে ধায়
রায় বাঁশ ধরে ধরশান ।

(3) "The *Rāibeshes* wearing golden anklets march with great speed in rings and circular formation, and carry their *Rāibansh* (lances) in their hands."

[These two passages occur in the description of the march of the King of Kalinga which then included the southern part of Rarh Country (West Bengal) and Orissa.]

(4) শত শত বাজে ঢাক, পাইক ধায় লাখে লাখ,
কার কেহ নাহি শুনে বাণী ।
রায় বাঁশ তবকী, ফরিকাল ধায়ুকী,
আগুদলে কনক নিশাণী ॥

(4) "Thousands of battle drums are beating, millions of footmen rush forward ; in the turmoil of battle nobody pays any heed to others ; the *Rāibeshes*, musketeers and archers participate in the struggle, the golden standard bearers go ahead."

(5) যুগলী করিয়া, ধায় রায় বাঁশিয়া,
কেহ ধায় কিগারে নেজা ।

(5) "The *Rāibeshes* form themselves into rings and press forward, some brandish their javelins as they advance."

[These two passages occur in the description of the conquest of Guzrat by the King of Kalinga, which then included the present Rarh Country (West Bengal) and Orissa.]

The following passage is found in "Annada Mangal", a poetical work of Bharat Chandra Rai Gunakar, a famous Bengali Poet who lived from 1712 to 1760 A.D. In describing Raja Mansingh's expedition in the 16th century against Protapaditya of Jessore, the poet writes :

- (6) আগে চলে লালপোষ খাস-বরপার ।
সিপাই সকলে চলে কাতারে কাতার ॥
তবকী ধাঙ্গকী ঢাগী রায় বেশে মাল ।
দকাদার জমাদার চলে সদীয়াল ॥
- (6) "Soldiers in red uniforms and the personal guards (of the Raja) march ahead in columns. Musketeers, archers, shieldmen, *Rāibeshes*, Mals (probably soldiers recruited from Mallabhumī in Bankura) and cavalry men follow."

The passage quoted below is from Ram Prasad Sen Kabiranjan who lived from 1718 to 1775 :—

- (7) কোটি কোটি তীরন্দাজ,
যেথা বিকে একন্দাজ,
রায় বাশে কেহ নহে টুটা ।
- (7) "There are millions of expert archers who never miss their mark and there are the *Rāibeshes* who are not behind-hand in the use of their *Rāibansh* (spears)."

The next passage is from "Dharma Mangal", a famous Bengali book by Manik Ganguly who lived from 1694 to 1748. The passage occurs in the description of the court of a Raja in the 11th century.

- (8) রায় বেশে রাউত বসেছে রণসাজে ।
- (8) "*Rāibeshes* and cavalry soldiers are assembled in martial uniforms."

The following passage is from "Dharma Mangal" of Ghanaram Chakrabarty who lived in the latter part of the 17th century. The passage occurs in the description of the scene of attack of Maynagarh by Mahamada Patro in the 11th century :—

- (9) রনভূয়া, মল্লভূয়া, মগধ মগধ মিয়া,
এক লক্ষ সেনা সঙ্গে ধায় ।
ধাঙ্গকী বাছকী ঢাগী, রায়বেশে ফারিকালি,
রাহত মাহত সমুদায় ॥
- (9) "The Ranabhuya and Mallabhuya soldiers (probably recruits from Ranabhumi and Mallabhumī), soldiers from Magadha (modern Behar), archers, musketeers, *Rāibeshes*, soldiers on chargers and elephants,—altogether a hundred thousand strong march forward."

The name *Rāibesheshe* was applied to the lancers the handles of whose weapons were made from a particular kind of tough bamboo called *Rāi* (king) *Bānsh* (bamboo).

The *Rāibeshes* were soldiers in ancient days and their dance was a war dance, but in recent years the only demand for these dances was on the occasion of weddings in Hindu families. With the decline in public taste in this country, dancing as a martial and manly art and as a vehicle for the expression of pure joy fell into disfavour, and the *Rāibeshes* dancers, who belong to what is called the lower and depressed classes of society, and who, being in a state of poverty and semi-starvation, were obliged to cater to a corrupted public taste, grew long hair and adopted women's dress as their dancing apparel. In consequence of this, their style of dancing underwent, in many instances, a regrettable deterioration, inasmuch as it often became distinctly effeminate and sometimes suggestive of vulgar ideas, in imitation of "nautch" girls. But fortunately this deterioration has not been universal and a few troupes of *Rāibeshes* dancers are still to be found who have preserved the old traditional dance in its purity of style and manliness of form. The degree of corruption and degeneration is to my mind directly proportional to the length of time that has intervened between their military ancestors and the present day dancers. And this view receives support from the fact that the *Rāibeshes* dancers of Rajnagar and the neighbouring villages in Birbhum where a line of Muslim kings reigned till comparatively recent times, have been found to have completely escaped the degrading influences.

It may be mentioned that according to a competent observer the *Khuttack* dance of the Pathan soldiers bears some similarity to the *Rāibesheshe* dance.

Other folk dances of Bengal are the *Kirtan Dance* practised by Hindu villagers of all classes in connection with the worships attached to the Krishna cult and the Chaitanya cult; the incense dance and *avalār* dance of Faridpur (which are ritual dances), the *sloka* dance of Faridpur, the *jhumur* dance of West Bengal and the *vrata* dances still practised by Hindu women even of the highest and most respectable castes, particularly in East Bengal on the occasion of festivals, weddings, and rituals or "vratas."

ANNEXURE

The Sadhubaniks

The Sadhubaniks represented their case to Government. While Government do not intend to give any authoritative decision on the point it has been decided that the grounds of their claim which have been vouched for by Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Bhagabat Kumar Shastri, M.A., PH.D., who was consulted should be noted in the annexure. It may, however, be noted that Mr. Bhagirath Chandra Das, Secretary of the Baishya Saha Mahashabha, contends that all the Sahas as distinct from the Sunris should be known as Baishya Sahas and that the sections who claim to be Sadhubaniks are not really distinct.

The Sadhubaniks rest their claims on the following among other grounds :—

(1) The term "Saha" was used to designate a profession and not a caste or sub-caste. Thus there have been Saha-Sankhabaniks, Saha Gandhabaniks and even Saha Telis. There are analogous cases in other spheres. Compare the use of the title Goswami. There are Brahmin Goswamis and Vaidya Goswamis and even the Brahmin Goswamis belong to many different sub-castes and classes, the Rahris, the Barendras, the Baidik, the Srotriyas and Kulins. Again designations such as Roy, Dutt, etc., do not signify a particular caste or sub-caste. There are Brahmin Roys, Vaidya Roys, Teli Roys, Brahmin Dutts (e.g., in the Upper India) Kayastha Dutts, Suvarnabanik Dutts, Gandhabanik Dutts.

(2) The Sadhu Banik Sahas settled in Barendra as is indicated by the designation Sadhu Banik Barendra Sahas. Other Saha families also settled in the Rahr and Barendra and have therefore been called Rahri or Barendra Sahas but it does not follow that all the Saha families belong to one Saha community of the same caste. If the Sadhu Banik Barendra Sahas had belonged to the same caste stock as the other Barendra Saha families there would have been inter-marriage which is not the case.

(3) Though this sub-caste does not observe the characteristic rules of the Vaishyas, namely, the investiture ceremony and the recitation of the Gayatri to which the twice-born castes are admitted, the reason is found in the degradation of all non-Brahmin castes which was decreed about a thousand years ago by reascendant Brahmanism specially in Bengal, echoes of which are heard in the interpolated texts of the Smritis: "Juge jaghanye Dwejati Brahuana Sudra Eba Cha" "যুগে জঘনে দেজাতী ব্রাহ্মণঃ শূদ্র এবচ" "there are in this accursed age only two castes, Brahmin and Sudra". Thus Sudra practices were authoritatively enjoined in the case of all non-Brahmins, including the Kshatriyas and Vaisyas. Add to this that the other twice-born castes, namely, Kshatriyas and Vaisyas themselves discarded some of their cherished caste privileges so much so that when the Sen Kings were reigning in Bengal, the twice-born non-Brahmins were practically indistinguishable from the Sudras. Even the Brahmins of Bengal were hardly recognisable as Brahmins. The whole story of Adisura and the five Brahmins points this way and the prevalence of Buddhism and Jainism in those days accounts to a great extent for degeneracy and degradation of the twice-born castes in Bengal. Hence, if the Sadhu Baniks were originally Vaisyas the discontinuance of Vaisya rites only signifies that they lost or surrendered some of their rights under a new Brahmanical ukase and partly under Buddhistic and Jaina influences.

(4) The positive evidence for their Vaisya origin is—

- (a) The distinctive title of Sadhu Banik which is still retained. Their old family horoscopes show them to be "Sadhukulodbhaba" "সাধুকুলোদ্ভব" "sprung from the Sadhu family". Sadhu means a Vaisya who specially carries on the money-lending business, which is their traditional profession.
- (b) They have kept themselves completely separated communally from the Rahri or Barendra Sahas.
- (c) The evidence of the "Salhe Saha" inscription proves that their ancestor Salhe Saha was a Vaisya.
- (d) They have retained their purity of habits and have always been noted for their religious disposition.

Thus, though they do not claim to have observed all the Vaisya rites through the ages they claim recognition of their Vaisya origin.