

## APPENDIX I.

## Jail Manufactures.

Some of the convicts in Assam jails are employed in weaving, and the fabrics they produce, though not of much artistic value, are, at any rate, distinct from most others made within the Province.

Owing to the scarcity of labour in Assam it was, until quite recently, the policy of Government to employ convicts as far as possible on extramural work. Hence weaving like other industries has never held an important place among the employments to which the prisoners are put. Moreover, to make it at all profitable, weaving requires some skill on the part of the workman, and so this form of labour is of necessity restricted to two classes of prisoners, *viz.*, those that know the art on entering prison, and those whose terms of imprisonment are sufficiently long to allow of their having time to learn the art and practice it. Female convicts appear never to have been largely, if at all, employed in weaving, and the professional weavers of the Surma Valley are not a criminal class. Hence the cotton industry in the jails of Assam has been almost exclusively confined to the three central jails of Gauhati and Tezpur in the Assam Valley and Sylhet in the Surma Valley. When Dibrugarh was a first class jail the long-term prisoners were often employed in weaving *jangia* and dusters, but this manufacture ceased with the reduction of the jail to a subsidiary jail in 1879. In the Sibsagar jail a few cloths were woven by the prisoners in 1894 and 1895, but no other subsidiary jail appears to have tried weaving.

From a statistical account of the District of Sylhet it appears that, as far back as 1867, the prisoners made a few cotton fabrics, for the following are mentioned:—

Coloured table cloths 6 feet by 5 feet, price Rs. Bathing towels, price Rs9 per dozen. Table napkins, dusters, etc., price Rs3 per dozen.

The following is a brief sketch of the weaving industry in the jails of Assam compiled from recent administration reports together with a note on the present state of that industry in the three central jails.

In 1880 Captain Williamson was deputed to study the working of Bengal jails, but he recognised the impossibility of introducing into the jails of Assam any of the manufactures then being carried on in Buxar, Bhagalpur and Alipur. As regards weaving, he considered that the manufacture of *sattringi* and good carpets might perhaps be introduced as a remunerative and light form of labour when the demand for extramural labour should have slackened, but that, in the matter of jail and police clothing and blankets, it would be impossible to compete with the steam power looms of the Bengal jails.

Accordingly, for the next ten years, weaving was not encouraged in the jails of Assam, though the Gauhati jail did turn out a few cloths for use by the prisoners confined there, and in some of the subsidiary jails and lock-ups of the Assam Valley. In 1881 the average daily number of prisoners employed on weaving in Gauhati was only 21, in 1882 it fell to 13, and in 1883 to less than 10. In 1882 cloth weaving was included among the minor industries carried on in the Sylhet jail, and in 1883 nearly the whole of the receipts from weaving were from the jail at Tezpur. It was in this year, 1883, that receipts from different industries were first shown separately in the annual returns. Henceforward the receipts from weaving, though fluctuating largely, diminished from Rs50 (in 1885) to Rs199 in 1891, the lion's share always coming from Tezpur, and the small balance entirely from Gauhati and Sylhet. From 1891, however, these receipts rose by leaps and bounds, till in 1895 the comparatively large amount of Rs2,748 was realised. In Gauhati the industry still takes an insignificant place, but in Sylhet it has rapidly developed and become far more important than anywhere else, the receipts from Sylhet in 1895 being nearly double those from Tezpur. In 1894 weaving was started on a very small scale in the Sibsagar subsidiary jail, but it did not prove a success, and has had to be abandoned.

The following table shows the rapid development of the cotton weaving industry from 1891 to 1895. The figures for 1885 are also given for sake of comparison over a period of ten years. It may be noted that these figures show the gross receipts only and not the profits.

Receipts from cloth weaving in Assam jails.

Year.	Sylhet.	Tezpur.	Gauhati.	Sibsagar.	TOTAL.
	R a. p.	R a. p.	R a. p.	R a. p.	R a. p.
1885	26 14 6	359 12 3	32 9 0	.....	419 3 9
1891	17 6 3	152 10 8	29 5 0	.....	199 5 11
1892	63 2 3	421 5 6	35 15 0	.....	520 6 9
1893	139 5 6	520 6 0	26 0 0	.....	685 11 6
1894	1,164 2 6	390 12 6	83 12 9	3 6 0	1,642 1 9
1895	1,730 11 6	972 10 4	44 7 6	1 2 0	2,748 15 4

The cause of this rapid increase is an attempt to produce police and choukidari uniforms in the central jails. Such a proposal had been abandoned as impracticable in 1880, and it is therefore not surprising to find that twelve years later, when the conditions in Assam were practically the same and progress had been made in Bengal, the effort did not prove very successful. In reviewing the result of the experiment in 1894, the Inspector General of Jails remarked :—"So long as we can find remunerative outdoor labour, the result does not matter, but it would be different if we had to find more work inside our jails." That necessity has now arisen, for in 1896 extramural labour in all but the smallest jails was almost absolutely prohibited. It will be very interesting therefore to watch the progress of the industry in future years. That weaving by the handloom can ever prove a success financially can hardly be expected, but there is no reason, on that account, why it should not continue to hold an important place among jail industries, as it is eminently adapted to convict labour; it forms an excellent occupation, the work is capable of exact measurement, and any scamping is impossible without immediate detection.

In 1890 the Chief Commissioner was of opinion that a move should be made in the direction of adapting jail industries to the requirements of the consuming departments of Government. Accordingly, in 1891 the Inspector General intended to introduce into two of the central jails the weaving of khaki for the Assam Police, but exceptional circumstances prevented any new industry from being started that year. The project, being approved by the Chief Commissioner, was carried into effect the following year. The results of that year's work are thus stated by the Inspector General of Jails :—"Since my last report I have endeavoured to introduce the weaving of khaki cloth. I have not succeeded in Tezpur, but in the Gauhati jail I have met with more success. The texture has to be improved before the cloth can be used for the Military Police. I have had more success, however, in turning out blue jumpers and *dhotis* and red puggis for the Civil and Armed Civil Police. Sample suits have been made at both Tezpur and Gauhati, and at both stations committees composed of the Deputy Commissioner, the Superintendent of the Jail and the District Superintendent of Police have examined the articles. The reports are favourable regarding the cloth, but the blue colouring is considered inferior. This will have to be improved. Six suits of clothing manufactured at each of the two jails will be issued to policemen, and further reports made in due course. The jails are able to turn out this clothing cheaper than similar articles now supplied by the contractors. I have every hope that, with careful supervision, the experiment will be successful, and that the industry, when fully developed, will be beneficial to both the police and the jails."

These hopes, however, were not to be realised. In 1893 the manufacture of clothing for the Civil Police was confined to the Tezpur jail, but the results were not altogether satisfactory. "We made and issued during the year the following :—

	Number made.	Actual cost.			Number issued.	Sale price.			Profit.		
		₹	a.	p.		₹	a.	p.	₹	a.	p.
Red puggis . . .	397	488	13	6	397	496	4	0	12	6	6
Blue jumpers . . .	8	10	8	0	8	11	0	0	0	8	0
Blue <i>dhotis</i> . . .	19	15	7	0	19	17	13	0	2	6	0

"The profit to the jail is very small. We have issued the clothing at rates below the contractor's rates and the police have likewise saved the cost of carriage to Assam. But the manufacture will have to be improved and the colour made more fast and lasting before we can call the experiment a success." During this year in Sylhet some of the prisoners were employed in making clothes for the Manipur State Jail, and the manufacture of uniforms for rural choukidars was commenced.

In 1894 the only articles of police uniform manufactured were red puggis, and these only on a small scale; 466 were made at a cost of ₹582-8-0 and sold at a profit of ₹20-6-0 only. The financial result therefore was not satisfactory. In Sylhet the manufacture of uniforms for the village choukidars was continued during the year, and this accounted for the large receipts shown in the table given above. The profits derived from the sale of these uniforms are not stated.

The present state of the industry in the three central jails will be seen from the following particulars received from the Deputy Commissioners of those three Districts :—

*Gauhati.*—The following cotton fabrics are made by the convicts in the Gauhati jail :—

- (1) Dusters.
- (2) Prisoners' uniform.
- (3) Towels.
- (4) Red turbans.
- (5) Darris.

These are all made of imported thread bought from the bazaar, white or ready coloured red or green as required. There is no account of the profit derived from the manufacture of these fabrics, as the object in view is rather to keep the prisoners employed than to acquire a pecuniary profit. It is estimated, however, that a sheet of cloth measuring 42 yards by 1 yard gives a net profit of ₹2 after deducting the cost of materials and labour. From darris no profit is derived.

The process of manufacture, which is said to be the same as that followed by the Assamese, is taught to the convicts; men and women of all castes are employed on this work, but chiefly Naga men.

*Tezpur*.—The following is a list of all the cotton fabrics made in the Tezpur jail:—

- 1 Prisoners' clothing of all sorts.
- 2 Uniform for paid warders of the jail.  
The prices of these cannot be compared with bazaar ratés; the charge is adjusted by book debit.
- 3 *Jharan*—Dusters.
  - (i) Blue and white checks . Price 3 annas.
  - (ii) Red and white checks . Do.
  - (iii) White with black borders . Price 2 annas and 3 pie each.
  - (iv) " " red " . Do.
- 4 *Barkapor*—Sheets . . . Price 8 annas a yard.
- 5 *Darris*—Floorcloths . . . Price ₹2 per yard.

The sizes are not stated.

This jail manufactures the cotton cloths required for the prisoners by itself and the jails of the upper districts of Assam. The dusters are sold to the public and the darris are sometimes made to order.

The process of manufacture is the same as that followed by the Assamese. The thread used is and always has been imported yarn bought from the bazaar ready dyed or plain.

All classes of male prisoners are employed without distinction of caste or creed, but especially long term prisoners. Naga men make good weavers, but it has been found that the most skilful weavers are Bengalis who have been previously convicted in Bengal, and employed on this work in the jails of that Province.

There is nothing in the records of the jail from which a history of the industry can be made out, but it appears that weaving has been carried on a small scale ever since the opening of the jail.

*Sylhet*.—The cloths usually made consist chiefly of prison clothing, but comprise dusters, coarse bedsheets, dhuties for the use of female prisoners, and coarse sheetings.

As for the most part this jail supplies the Sub-divisional lockups in the district, and the subsidiary jails of Cachar and Manipur with all prison clothing, the sale of cloths to the public does not take place to any considerable extent, and no figures are therefore available to show the profit or loss arising from the manufacture.

The yarn used for weaving is purchased in the bazaar, which is in turn supplied from Calcutta.

Last year (1895) an attempt was made to produce a stuff made of cotton mixed with Cawnpore wool for winter coats, but the article proved inferior to cloth of the same sort sold in the bazar. Some time back uniforms for the rural police (village choudkidars) were made in this jail, but when the experiment was being made, no statistics were systematically kept. Hence the result of the experiment cannot now be stated.

Only handlooms are used, and these are of the same description as those of the weavers of Sylhet, and the method of manufacture is the same.

As a rule male convicts of all castes, including Assamese, are employed in weaving. A certain amount of preliminary training being necessary, it is the practice to employ long-term prisoners on this work.

Weaving is not the only stage of the industry carried on in the jails of Assam. Experiments have also been made at cotton ginning and even at the cultivation of cotton. For some years a cotton gin was worked with considerable, though fluctuating, success at the Tura lock-up in the Garo Hills. In Mr. Darrah's "Note on Cotton in Assam" some interesting particulars have been given regarding the working of this gin. Beyond this there is no information available, except the following figures which show the gross receipts on account of ginning in the Tura lock-up from 1886 to 1893. No figures are available for years previous to 1886, and, though the gin afforded capital hard work for the prisoners, it has now been abandoned:—

*Gross receipts on account of cotton ginning in the Tura Lock-up.*

	R	a.	p.
1886 . . . . .	464	1	11
1887 . . . . .	1	1	6
1888 . . . . .	126	9	6
1889 . . . . .	836	14	10
1890 . . . . .	205	12	3
1891 . . . . .	182	11	3
1892 . . . . .	99	13	0
1893 . . . . .	93	3	0
1894 and 1895 . . . . .			<i>Nil.</i>

Another gin was for some time working at Goalpara, but not for long. The gross receipts on account of ginning by it in 1887 were ₹33-6-5. Figures for other years are not available.

Except at these two places, cotton ginning seems never to have formed a substantial item of manufacture in any of the jails of Assam. In 1893 at Dibrugarh the receipts on account of ginning were ₹15-2-9, and at Nowgong ₹3-2-3; and in 1894 in Tezpur ₹1. No other instances have come to notice.

The only instance of experimental cultivation of cotton in the jails is one recently made in Tezpur. The following particulars have been received: 16. 12. 51. of land was sown with four seers of Bhoko or Garo cotton. The land was first ploughed and then the seeds were sown broadcast in April 1896. After this the land was harrowed once. The plants began to yield in September, and are expected to continue yielding till the end of April. The outturn up to 28th February 1897 was 1 maund 20 seers 8 chattaaks of uncleaned cotton, which was found to contain an equal quantity of fibre and seed. The quality of the cotton obtained was good. The cotton was not sold, but kept for use in the jail. The value of labour expended was ₹33-12-0. On the whole, the experiment may be considered a success in spite of the partial failure of rain when it was much wanted.

## APPENDIX II.

The following information about dyeing among the Noras and Turungs of Jorhat has been received and is given here as supplementary to the account contained in Mr. Duncan's Monograph (page 49).

"The Turungs and Noras of this sub-division dye cotton thread and cloths with the rum plant to a very large extent. The process adopted has been very fully described in Mr. Duncan's monograph on "Dyes and Dyeing in Assam," page 49. By this method light or dark blue colour is obtained as required. This colour is again converted into black by the bark of a large creeper which is very common in the jungle and is called by the Assamese *Barasi akora lata*, and by the Turungs *Tungataru*. It has hooked thorns like the *Barasi*, i.e., fishing hook.

"The bark is obtained and cut into small pieces. It is then either slightly boiled or steeped in cold water in an earthen or metal vessel till the water attains a reddish black colour. The blue cloth is then put into the liquid for some minutes. The cloth is then dried in the sun. It is put into the liquid once or twice according to the depth of the dark colour required.

"They also dye blue or black longcloth in the above way from which they make shirts, coats, etc."

## APPENDIX III.

A good deal of information has been received from the various districts concerning the varieties of cotton grown and the methods of cultivation. It contains little new matter and so has not been embodied in this monograph. The following points, however, may be noted.

In *North Lakhimpur*, there is only one variety of cotton grown, but it is called *dhanna* when grown as a mixed crop with *ahu* paddy, and *bira* when grown as an independent crop.

In *Jorhat*, there are two kinds of cotton grown, viz., one with white flowers called *boga kapak* or simply *kapak*, and one with khaki flowers called *set kapak*. The *boga kapak* is sorted into two classes for sale, viz. (1) *Jola bachha* which contains the more perfectly opened and woolly pods and sells at from 5 to 8 seers for a rupee; and (2) *Kanria* (round like the *keroo*), which contains the imperfectly opened and less woolly pods, and sells at from 7 to 10 seers for a rupee.

In *Nowgong*, there are two varieties, viz., the *bar kapak* and the *sara kapak*. The cotton is sorted into two classes for sale, and sometimes into three. The best quality is called *joka* and sells at Rs 5 per maund, the worst quality is called *ras* and sells at Rs 3-8 per maund. An intermediate quality called *rabrab* sells at Rs 4-8 per maund, but the sorting is not usually carried so far as this.

In *Mangaldai*, only one kind of cotton, called *baria kapak*, is said to be cultivated, but *chemti kapak* is found in the homestead.

In *Gauhati*, three kinds of cotton are grown, viz., *dhoka*, *chemti* and *rangi*.

In *Silchar*, the *khungajas* variety mentioned by Mr. Darrah and described as pale khaki is said to be reddish-white.