

# A STATISTICAL ACCOUNT OF BENGAL.

*William Wilson*  
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*VOLUME I.*

DISTRICTS OF THE 24 PARGANAS AND SUNDARBANS.

TRÜBNER & CO., LONDON 1875.



wood, such as *sundrí* and *pasur*, used for planks and house posts; *kirpá*, used as rafters for thatched roofs; *báin*, used for house beams; *hentál*, used for the walls of houses and granaries, being afterwards plastered over with mud; *garán*, used for fences, rafters, etc., and the bark for tanning and dyeing; *keorá*, for planks, etc.; *gango* and *khálsi*, for firewood; and *báblá*, for firewood, the bark being also used in tanning and dyeing. (2) Different kinds of shells. (3) Honey and bees-wax. (4) *Golpátá* leaves, used for thatching purposes. (5) *Gáb* fruit, the extract of which forms a thick glue, and is extensively used in coating native boats, to preserve them from the action of the water. (6) *Anantamúl*, *golancha*, *nátá*, and other vegetable drugs grow indigenously, and are used for medicinal purposes. The people who principally trade in jungle products are, the low-caste Maules, Bágdis, Kaibarttas, Pods, Chandáls, Káorás, Karangás, and the poorer class of Musalmáns.

PASTURE-GROUNDS.—In the north-east corner of the District is the large village of Deará, enclosed on three sides by the Kabadak River, and inhabited by upwards of three hundred families of milkmen and cowkeepers (*goálás*). No cultivation is carried on in this village; and the neighbouring fields, about two miles in extent, are used solely for pasturing cattle. A similar tract of land, of about the same area, lies a little to the east of the Police Station of Kalároá, in the Sátkhirá Subdivision, which is also used by people of the Goálá caste for grazing purposes. The annual value of these pasturages may be estimated in round figures at £400. With the above two exceptions, there are no separate pasture-grounds in the District, and the cattle graze in the rice fields after the crop has been cut.

FERÆ NATURÆ.—The large sorts of game found in the District are, the tiger, leopard, rhinoceros, buffalo, spotted deer, hog deer, barking deer, *bara singhí* or large deer. Tigers, deer, and wild buffaloes abound in the Sundarban jungles, whence they occasionally make incursions into the settled parts of the District. The rhinoceros visits the swampy tracts and creeks in the vicinity of Dhuliápur Fiscal Division. The small game comprise hares, jungle fowl, wild geese, wild ducks, teal, pigeons, doves, snipe, and quail. The superior sorts of fish are the *bhetki*, *hilsá*, *tapsi* or mango fish, *rui*, *kátlá*, *mirgal*, *chital*, etc. Turtles, crabs, and shrimps are common. Major Smyth, in his Report on the District



in 1857, estimated that the value of the fish brought into Calcutta amounted to about £200 daily. Most of the rivers are infested by alligators. Snakes of all kinds abound,—the boa constrictor, cobra, *kuriát*, *gosáp*, and tree and water snakes.

No statistics exist of the yearly cost of keeping down wild beasts. The proprietors of Sundarban lots regularly employ hunters (*shikáris*) on their estates, but few applications are received for the payment of Government rewards for their destruction. The Collector states that the average Government expenditure for this purpose is about £17 a year. No rewards have ever been given for snake-killing, although the loss of life caused by them is considerably greater than that by wild beasts. For the three years ending 1869–70, 40 persons a year were killed by wild beasts, and 252 by snake bites. There is no regular trade in wild-beast skins, though *shikáris* occasionally sell deer and tiger skins; and, with the exception of the fisheries, the *feræ naturæ* are not made to contribute in any way towards the wealth of the District.

POPULATION.—Several attempts have been made to arrive at a correct enumeration of the people. The first appears to have been in 1822, when the population of the 24 Parganáas, as then constituted, was estimated at 599,595 souls. In a memorandum appended to the Police Report of Mr. Henry Shakespeare, Superintendent of Police in the Lower Provinces, in 1822, the area of the District is given as 3610 square miles, which doubtless included a part of the Sundarbans.

Another attempt was made at the time of the Revenue Survey in 1856. The area of the District was given at 2246·079 square miles, exclusive of the Sundarbans; and the population was returned at 947,204, exclusive of Calcutta and its suburbs, which were separately returned at 614,896. The number of male adults was stated at 350,466; female adults, 312,578; male children, 161,026; female children, 123,134: total, 947,204. The number of brick or masonry houses was returned to be 5768, and the number of mud or bamboo huts at 169,491. The general average gave 421 inhabitants per square mile, and 5·4 for each house, exclusive of the city and its suburbs. Major Smyth's Report, from which these figures are taken, does not state how the total number of inhabitants was arrived at, nor what means, if any, were taken to check the returns.

Since these calculations, the police limits of the District were



THE OTHER JUNGLE PRODUCTS OF THE SUNDARBANS consist of canes, reeds, thatching leaf, honey, and shell-lime. I condense the following paragraphs regarding their collection and utilization from Mr. Westland's Report before alluded to:—Reeds are extensively used both for mat and basket weaving. The mat-makers, Naluás by caste, do not usually dwell within the Sundarbans, but make several trips southwards in the cold weather, returning with a large quantity of reeds, which they work up into mats at their own homes. These mats are sometimes woven of a very large size, and are frequently used by European gentlemen in place of carpets for their rooms, as they are much better woven than the ordinary native-made article. During the absence of the men, the women work at home, but at other times the men work with them. Baskets are also largely manufactured of reeds; and little colonies of basket-weavers, as well as of mat-weavers, dwell just beyond the Sundarbans. During the cold weather they migrate to some town in the Sundarbans, and remain there weaving baskets, which meet with a ready sale, as they are required for the rice harvest. When the cold weather is over, they return to their villages with a large stock of reeds, and go on with the manufacture in their own houses.

The remaining products of the Sundarbans may be briefly enumerated. A peculiar long leaf is found in large quantities, and is used for thatching native huts, almost every one of which is roofed with this leaf. Honey and beeswax are collected in the forest, and form a remunerative trade. Shells are gathered both on the banks of rivers and marshes, and on the sea-shore, and are burnt down into lime. Khulná is the principal place where the lime-burning goes on; and the trade seems to have been a very ancient one. Many very old buildings were built with this lime; and at the end of the last century large quantities of it were sent to Calcutta, for building or repairing Government House. The lime is chiefly useful for plaster. The shells from which it is made are of two kinds—a long sort called *jomrá*, and a round sort called *jhinuk*. The ashes of the shell-lime, mixed with water, form the lime ash, or *chun*, which natives chew along with *pán* leaf.

Mr. Westland mentions another trade of the Sundarbans—the collection of timber, etc. from wrecks. He states that the boats which make expeditions to the sea-shore of the Sundarbans are pretty sure to come across teak beams, the spoil of some wrecked vessel. Other articles are also occasionally found, and sometimes



chains and other parts of ship-furniture. Such flotsam and jetsam were collected in secret until some few years ago, when a case occurred in which the authorities refused to interfere. Since then, the trade is openly carried on; and large teak beams may be seen at Khulná and other places, the product of such expeditions. Most of the spoil which the sea throws up is, however, taken straight to Calcutta, where it finds ready sale.

FERÆ NATURÆ. — Tigers, leopards, rhinoceros, wild buffaloes, wild hogs, wild cats, *bara singá* or large deer, spotted deer, hog deer, barking deer, porcupines, otters, and monkeys, are the principal varieties of wild animals found in the Sundarbans. Tigers are very numerous, and their ravages form one of the obstacles to the extension of cultivation. They often commit terrible havoc among the cattle, sometimes on the husbandman or his family. The depredations of a single fierce tiger have frequently forced an advanced colony of clearers to abandon their land, and allow it to relapse into jungle. Mr. Westland relates that there was one great man-eater, whom the whole District was perpetually hearing about, in 1868. Hardly a week passed without one or two people being carried off by him, and his face and appearance were perfectly well known. He had apparently a charmed life. One day he came on board an Englishman's boat, and coolly walked off with one or two of his oarsmen. The Englishman fired a blunderbuss at him, but it burst, and injured the shooter, while the tiger got off unscathed. On another occasion the tiger passed within a few yards of a gentleman, who fired at him, but again the beast escaped. This pest was finally killed by Mr. Morrell of Morrellganj. Either this or another tiger contracted a habit of attacking boats passing through a certain *khál* near Morrellganj, and made the passage so dangerous, that the route was for a time given up.

THE SERPENTS found in the Sundarbans are the boa constrictor, cobra-di-capello or *gokhurá*, *kuriat*, *sankhachur* or salt-water snake, *gosáp*, and green viper. Rewards for the destruction of wild animals in the Sundarbans are paid from the treasury of the District to which the particular tract belong; but no information exists showing the separate rewards paid for the destruction of wild animals in the Sundarbans or of the annual loss of life caused by them.

THE BIRDS of the Sundarbans comprise the following:—Ad-



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*VOLUME V.*

DISTRICTS OF DACCA, BAKARGANJ, FARÍDPUR, AND MAIMANSINH.

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TRÜBNER & CO., LONDON, 1875.



exist as to the area of these last named forests, save that each extends about half a day's journey in length. The principal articles of jungle produce are bees'-wax, honey, *chiretá*, and a coarse kind of yam (*kachu*). Extensive uncultivated pasture grounds are situated in the northern plains along the foot of the hills, as well as in the Fiscal Divisions of Pukhariá, Kháliájurí, and Nasírujiál, but their area has not yet been ascertained. Many of the Gáros who live at the foot of the hills gain a subsistence by pasturing cattle in the forest, or by collecting and trading in jungle products. Others of them bring down from their hills, honey, wax, *pachápát* leaf, cotton, and other articles, which they barter for rice, salt, tobacco, brass utensils, and dogs, the latter being a favourite article of food among them.

FERÆ NATURÆ.—The wild animals of Maimansinh are numerous, and of many kinds. The *char* lands in the beds of the rivers in the north-west of the District are infested by tigers, and a few years ago were believed to contain more of these animals than any other part of India. These lands, however, are gradually being brought under cultivation, and it is believed that in the course of a few more years tigers will seldom be met with. Leopards are found in abundance, and are occasionally killed in the vicinity of the civil station, although more often near other towns and villages. Bears are found in the Madhupur jungle. The *sambar* deer and the hog deer are abundant. In addition to these there is the barking deer and the *barasinghá*, or large deer. The last named rare and beautiful deer is found in the grassy plains at the foot of the Gáro Hills, and is said to be only known in Lower Bengal in the three Districts of Silhet, Maimansinh and Rangpur. It is a finely proportioned clean-limbed animal. The rhinoceros, although now rarely seen, is occasionally found in some parts of the District. Elephants abound in the Gáro and Susang hills, and sometimes descend and commit great depredations among the crops in the villages below. They are yearly captured in considerable numbers by the Mahárájá of Susang. The Madhupur jungle does not contain so much large game as the *chars* of the Brahmaputra, but a few wild elephants are still found there. Wild buffaloes, which were formerly very common, have become scarce of late years, and the wild boar is much less plentiful than formerly. There is no organised system in the District for the destruction of wild animals, but rewards are given on the scale sanctioned by the



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*VOLUME VII.*

**DISTRICTS OF MALDAH, RANGPUR, AND DINÁJPUR.**

**TRÜBNER & CO., LONDON 1876.**



of this neighbourhood was rented by a Mr. Fernandez. There is, however, no trade at the present day in this article. The *zamíndárs* do indeed farm out the combs on their estates, but the farmers appear to care only for the honey, and neglect the wax. The bees do not seem to select the *kátál* for their combs, but occupy any large-sized tree, wherever situated, being especially partial to the *hijal* tree, which is common in marshes.

The Páls and Kochs, two semi-aboriginal castes, who are very numerous in Maldah, live in the more open parts of the *kátál*, but they do not earn their livelihood by dealing in jungle products. They cultivate the land to a small extent, but substantially support themselves by hunting and fishing, eating the game they catch. They seem to avoid as much as possible approaching any place of public resort, and are averse to trade or barter. They prefer to gain a bare subsistence directly out of the natural products of the soil.

**FERÆ NATURE.**—The following is a list of the more important wild animals:—Tiger, leopard, tiger cat, civet cat, mungoose, otter, hyæna (very rare), wolf (rare), jackal, and ox, rhinoceros (very rare), wild hog, wild buffalo, large swamp deer or *gouz*, hog deer, and spotted deer. Among smaller game are found,—floricán, black partridge, *kyah* partridge, quail, jungle-fowl, peafowl, snipe, hares, green pigeon, plover (golden and grey), lapwing, wild geese (grey and barred headed), demoiselle crane, wild duck (not very numerous), pintail duck, black pink-headed duck, spotted-bill duck, red-headed pochard, crested pochard, and other ducks and teal.

Maldah has always been celebrated for the unusual quantity of large game which it affords, and especially for its tiger-hunting. The ruins of Gaur and Panduah, each of which extends over several square miles, are the favourite haunt not only of tigers, but of every other beast, bird, and reptile which frequents the isolated jungles of Bengal. The *kátál*, also, which is estimated to cover about 150 square miles in this District, particularly that portion between the Tángan and Purnabhabá rivers, is almost entirely given up to wild animals. Cultivation is hardly spreading at all in this direction. The jungle is too dense in many cases to admit even the passage of an elephant, and consequently the larger beasts of prey breed almost undisturbed, and their number is not on the decrease. Comparatively few are destroyed by the native *shikáris*;



but the Collector thinks that from thirty to forty tigers are annually killed by sportsmen, who do not claim the reward. So long as these animals refrain from the habit of attacking men, their presence is desired rather than dreaded by the cultivators. Dr. Buchanan Hamilton expresses the opinion, when writing of this very region, 'that a few tigers in any part of the country that is overgrown with jungle or long grass are extremely useful, in keeping down the number of wild hogs and deer, which are infinitely more mischievous than themselves.' Mr. Pemberton, the Revenue Surveyor in 1848, also states that 'the inhabitants of Gaur are rather partial than otherwise to the tigers, and are unwilling to point out their lairs to sportsmen. They call them their *chaukidars*, as being useful to them in destroying the deer and wild hog, with which the place abounds, and which make sad havoc of their crops.' The other side to the picture may be learned from the story of the notorious man-eater of 1863. This animal had its favourite haunt in the ruins of Panduah, but infested the whole of the high road between Maldah and Dinájpur. It is reported, on the authority of the gentleman who was at that time Magistrate of Maldah, that 'this mischievous and cunning beast killed no less than 110 persons before it was finally shot.'

With reference to the cost annually incurred in keeping down wild beasts, the Collector reports that between 1832 (when the District was first constituted) and 1870, a total of Rs. 2127. 5. 4, or £212, 14s. 8d., had been paid out of the treasury under this head. This would give an average of nearly £6 per year, but of course the amount has varied very considerably. For example, in 1847, no less than £24, 10s. od. was paid in one lump for the destruction of 196 hyænas; but since the date of that memorable battue these animals have hardly ever been seen in the District. The annual police reports return the number of deaths from wild beasts for the 8 years ending 1860 at 40, which would give an average of 5 for each year. The number of deaths from snake-bite in the same period is returned at 447, or an annual average of 51. No rewards appear to have been ever offered for snake-killing. There is no trade in wild-beast skins, nor, apart from the fisheries, do the *feræ naturæ* contribute in any way to the wealth of the District, though it is stated that the porpoises by their oil and the otters by their skins might become most profitable sources of trade.



of July, after the *Convolvuli* have flowered. A class of people called *jugts* collect a large quantity of shells, for the purpose of converting them into lime by burning. This lime is much used by the people, who chew it with *pán* leaves and betel-nut; it is also used in the manufacture of indigo. Dr. Buchanan Hamilton states that the best lime is prepared from two species of mussel (*Mytilus*), which greatly resemble the *Anatinus* common in the rivers of England, but are much smaller in size. The second quality of lime is prepared from a kind of snail called *sámuk*, almost round, and about two inches in diameter. The worst lime, which is never eaten, is made from a smaller conical snail about an inch long.

FERÆ NATURÆ.—The following account of the *feræ naturæ* of the Rangpur District is for the most part condensed from Dr. Buchanan Hamilton's very valuable ms. Report, supplemented by later information furnished in 1871 by the Collector of the District. As explained when quoting Dr. Buchanan Hamilton's list of trees, it must be remembered that his statements refer to a very much larger area than the present District. Some of the animals mentioned in the following list may not be found at all, or only very rarely, in Rangpur at the present day; and the modes of hunting described may now be obsolete.

WILD ANIMALS.—Tigers and leopards appear to be more numerous now than in former years. Buchanan Hamilton states that when he was in the District they were very rarely seen, and that in *Battrishazári*, one of the tracts then most exposed to their depredations, one man might be killed every two or three years, and about fifteen to twenty head of cattle annually. In 1871 the Collector reported to me that these animals were numerous in many parts of the District, especially in the *chars* or sandy islands of the *Brahmaputra*. Wild buffalo are numerous, especially in tracts where deer are found. Dr. Buchanan Hamilton states that many of these animals are caught in pitfalls by the villagers, who also capture the young ones alive, especially in the rainy season, when the inundation confines the herds to a few high places. On such occasions the people in their canoes attack a herd with spears, and after having killed or dispersed the old ones, are often able to secure some of the young. The buffalo is also sometimes hunted for the sake of the horns and skin. The hunters take an advance of money from a trader. Two or three men usually go together, and, without attempting to conceal themselves, shoot the



buffalo with poisoned arrows. The slightest wound proves fatal in a few hours, during which time the hunters watch the animal, and avoid a near approach until he is dead. The total number of skins procured is, however, very inconsiderable. The common black bear of India is found, but not very abundantly. Many exist in the Sinheswar forest, and occasionally kill a person who may have wandered near them. They eat mango, jack, and plantain trees, as well as honey, but do no harm to the crops or herds. In the early years of the century, elephants were numerous throughout the eastern and north-western divisions of Rangpur, now separated from the District, but they scarcely ever penetrated into the more settled parts; in the outlying tracts, however, they were very destructive to the grain crops. Dr. Buchanan Hamilton states that when the rice approaches maturity, the cultivators in the parts which elephants frequent have to keep a watch on the crop every night. Stages are erected on posts twelve or fourteen feet high; on one side of the stage a small shed is erected for the watchmen, who keep watch in pairs, one man feeding a fire which is kept constantly burning in the open part of the stage, while the other sleeps. In the event of elephants, deer, or hogs coming to the field, the sleeper is roused, and both men unite in attempting to frighten away the intruders by shouting and beating drums. They never attack the animals. The *sál* forests seem to be the principal haunts of the elephants during the rainy months; in the dry season they frequent the reed thickets. In travelling from one place to another, elephants usually follow a regular path made by themselves, which soon becomes well beaten and smooth. Several landholders keep tame female elephants as a decoy for capturing wild ones. The decoy elephant is provided with a long rope, which is fastened to its girdle and coiled on its back. At the end of the rope is a running noose, which the rider of the decoy female elephant throws round the neck of the wild one. As soon as the noose is thrown, the decoy walks away, and the noose is drawn tight, until the unfortunate prisoner is nearly strangled. The villagers then attach ropes to his legs, and fasten him to a stout tree until he becomes somewhat tame. The elephants caught in this manner are usually small, seldom more than six and a half feet high, and a larger proportion of them die than of those captured by being surrounded with a stout stockade (*kheda*). In Mechhpára and Hawárághát elephants are occasionally caught in pitfalls (*dhar*). These are dug in the paths



frequented by the elephants, and carefully covered over with branches and earth. A watch is kept near, and when an elephant has been trapped, the watchers come up with lighted torches, and make as much noise as possible in order to drive away the herd, who would otherwise help their companion to escape. As soon as the herd is frightened off, ropes are made fast to the captive and tied to trees. One side of the pit is then dug away, so as to make a slope, and enable the animal to come out of the trap. This, again, is a bad method of catching elephants, for the animals are frequently so much injured by the fall that they never recover. Elephants are also sometimes hunted and killed for the sake of the ivory. Rhinoceros are frequently met with in the forests and extensive reed thickets, especially in the eastern tracts which now form the Goál-pára District. They are perfectly harmless animals, and do no injury either to man or crops. Many persons make a profession of hunting them for the sake of the horn and skin. The horn is in great request, being considered to possess peculiar medicinal virtues; it is also utilized for making bracelets and cups used in the religious ceremonies of the Hindus. The skin is used for making targets and shields. The loss of life from wild beasts (almost solely caused by tigers and leopards) for the three years ending 1868-69 is returned by the police as follows:—1866-67, 49; 1867-68, 35; 1868-69, 38: annual average for the three years, 41. The amount paid in the shape of Government rewards for the destruction of wild beasts in the same three years is returned as follows:—1866-67, Rs. 24. 2. 0, or £2, 8s. 3d., paid for the destruction of 1 tiger and 9 leopards; in 1867-68, Rs. 141. 10. 8, or £14, 3s. 4d., for 16 tigers and 1 leopard; and in 1868-69, Rs. 17. 8. 0, or £1, 15s. 0d., for 1 tiger and 5 leopards.

THE OTHER VARIETIES OF MAMMALIA are the following:—Wild hogs are met with in nearly every part of the District; but in the eastern and north-western tracts, in the Sinheswar forest, and the Pangá forests they are very troublesome and destructive. In this part of the country the Hindu cultivators capture the wild hog in nets, and the flesh is considered as pure food. No attempt is made to extirpate or reduce the number of these animals, which are only occasionally killed for the sake of the flesh. Deer of many kinds are very numerous and destructive to the crops, particularly in the eastern and north-western tracts. The most common variety of deer is called either *gaoj* or *bhalángí*. The other kinds are the spotted



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VOLUME IX.

DISTRICTS OF MURSHIDÁBÁD AND PÁBNÁ.

*The Account of Pábná has been compiled by M. H. KISCH, Esq., C.S.,  
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TRÜBNER & CO., LONDON 1876.



is ferruginous ; but the ore is not worth smelting, owing to the very scanty portion of the metal which it contains. Beliá Náráyanpur, a large village on the right bank of the Páglá *nadí*, is described by the Revenue Surveyor in 1857 as being a market for iron ore. There were at that time sixty-two furnaces at work there, but the ore was all brought from the neighbouring District of Birbhúm. Stone is also to be found in Palsá *tháná*, but the quality is not suitable for building purposes. The calcareous earth called *ghutin* is obtained in several parts of the *thánás* of Palsá and Mirzápur, and is extensively used for making lime. In the same localities, and generally over the whole of the Rárh or western half of the District, *kankar* or nodular limestone is found and applied to the purpose of road-making.

FORESTS AND WILD VEGETABLE PRODUCTS.—There is one *sál* forest in the District, called the Mohrapur forest, in the Palsá *tháná*. It is now the property of Jái Sankar Rái, who purchased it for £300. Besides timber, it yields *tasar* silk and beeswax. *Santámul* and *anantámul*, medicinal drugs of great repute, are also found in it; the latter of these is said to be an excellent substitute for sarsaparilla. In the west and north-west parts of the District, the lac insect has to a certain extent been domesticated on jute plants and the *Butea frondosa*. The people who rear it drive an extensive trade in lac. The tribes who earn their livelihood by trading in jungle products are mostly the Santáls and the Dhángars.

In the south-west of the District, at the confluence of the Mor and the Dwarká rivers, there is a tract of low-lying country, about sixteen square miles in area, known as the Hejál, which is used for pasturing cattle. During the rains it is covered with water, and produces *áus* and *boro* rice ; but during the dry season the Goálás drive hither numerous herds of cattle. Besides the Hejál, there are numerous smaller spots of pasturage ground scattered over the District.

FERÆ NATURÆ.—Wild beasts are now very uncommon in the District of Murshidábád. The Revenue Surveyor, in 1857, gives the following information :—‘Tigers are occasionally found in the hilly parts to the north-west, which have probably strayed from the Santál Parganá. Leopards, civet cats, and wild cats find cover in the jungles about the native villages. Rhinoceros have been seen in the north of the District ; a few buffaloes still remain in the Nawárángá and Saulmárl *bíls* ; and wild hog are found about the



different swamps and on the *chars* of the Ganges. All, however, are yearly becoming more and more scarce, and but little sport is now to be found in the District. The advance of cultivation is rapidly driving the wild animals away.' Monkeys of two sorts abound, especially in the Rárh or western half of the District. In the Rárh, also, several kinds of deer are found, among which are the spotted deer, the hog deer, and the antelope. These animals are hunted both for their meat and for their skins. The birds found in the District include the black and red partridge, quail, ortolan, snipe, plover, wild duck, wild goose, and several sorts of doves, at least two kinds of the parrot family, the fish-eagle, and many sorts of hawks, the common vulture, adjutant, herons, etc. To the list of fishes given on a previous page in connection with Fisheries (pp. 31, 32), may be added the Gangetic porpoise and the crocodile.

The average annual number of deaths from wild beasts during the years 1864-68 was 13; and the average number of deaths caused by snake-bite during the same period of five years was 222. In the year 1869-70 the sum of Rs. 19. 10. 0, or just under £2, was paid in rewards for the destruction of wild beasts; but no such rewards have ever been offered for keeping down venomous snakes.

Apart from the fisheries, and a small trade in deerskins carried on in the north-west, the *feræ naturæ* do not contribute in any way to the wealth of the District.

POPULATION ESTIMATES PRIOR TO 1872.—It is hardly necessary to state that before the Census of 1872 there existed no trustworthy estimates of the population of Murshidábád District. The totals arrived at were formed, not by actual enumeration, but by some rough process of average calculations. The old figures, however, have a certain interest, though it would be most unsafe to use them for purposes of comparison with the results of the authoritative Census. The area of the District has not been altered during the present century to such an extent as to require any modification on this account. The Census Report by Mr. Beverley, C.S., p. 102, supplies the following information:—'In 1801, the population was estimated at 1,020,572 persons. In 1829, a tolerably accurate Census of the District was taken by Mr. H. V. Hathorn, the Magistrate. The results were as follow:—Hindus—males 268,148, females 269,162; total Hindus, 555,310: Muhammadans—males 216,478, females 196,344; total Muhammadans, 412,822: grand total 968,132. In 1837, Mr. Adam took a Census of the *tháná*



# STATISTICAL ACCOUNT OF BENGAL.

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*VOLUME X.*

TRIBUTES OF DÁRJÍLING AND JALPÁIGURÍ AND  
STATE OF KUCH BEHAR.

TRÜBNER & CO., LONDON 1876.



PASTURE GROUNDS.—The principal pasture grounds in Dárjfling are the reserved Government forests, and in the rains the highest mountains. The right of pasturage on Government land is rented by the Forest Department, and yields an annual income of about £115. The Gurungs, a tribe of Nepálís, annually depasture large flocks of sheep in this District, taking them to the heights in the rains, and in the cold weather bringing them down to the plains for sale. The Gháliás, a Nepálí tribe, and the Bhutiás and Lepchás, depasture large herds of buffaloes and cows indiscriminately. The Mechs in the plains, and the Nepálís in the Hills Sub-division of the District, collect and trade in jungle products, but this is merely made a subsidiary occupation to that of agriculture.

FERÆ NATURÆ.—No kind of game is very abundant in the hilly tract. Among the larger descriptions found are bears, large and small leopards, and musk deer on the higher mountains; large deer (*sambhár*) on the lower ranges; and a few elephants and tigers on the slopes above the plains. In the *tardi* Sub-division, tigers, rhinoceros, deer, wild hog, and a distinct species of wild pig, called *náphá* by the natives, are all pretty abundant. A few wolves are also found. The expense incurred in 1869 in keeping down wild animals amounted to Rs. 317. 8. 0 or £31, 15s. od., paid in the shape of rewards for their destruction. The amount paid during the five preceding years had averaged considerably less. The increase is due to the fact that it was found necessary in 1869 to materially augment the rates which were previously paid for the destruction of wild animals. The reward for killing a tiger is now Rs. 20 or £2; previous to 1869 it was Rs. 5 or 10s.: the reward for a leopard is now Rs. 10 or £1; formerly it was Rs. 2. 8. 0 or 5s.: the rate for bears is, and has always been, Rs. 2. 8. 0 or 5s. per head. The reward for the destruction of a wild elephant is Rs. 10 or £1, and for a rhinoceros, Rs. 5 or 10s.; previous to 1869 no rewards were given for the destruction of these latter animals. No rewards have ever been paid for the destruction of venomous snakes. Among the smaller varieties of game found in the District, hare, jungle-fowl, peacock, partridge, snipe, woodcock, wild duck, wild geese, and green pigeon are numerous in the *tardi* Sub-division. Jungle-fowl and pheasants are met with in the hills. Among fishes, the *mahsír* is found in the Tístá; and the *saul*, *sál*, *boyál*, *rangí*, *ruhí*, *tor*, *agar*, *khársilá*, *dekár*, *báyes*, and *urantá* exist in all the rivers. No trade is carried on in the skin of wild animals, but Thibetán traders purchase the hides of domesticated buffaloes.



POPULATION.—Prior to 1872, no attempt was ever made towards an enumeration of the population of the entire District. In 1869 a Census was taken of the inhabitants within the limits of the Dárjiling Municipality, which correspond to those of the tract originally ceded by the Rájá of Sikkim to the British Government as a sanatorium in 1835. The result gave a total of 22,607 persons, made up as follows:—Male adults 11,643, male children 3123; total males 14,766: female adults 5200, female children 2641; total females 7841: grand total, 22,607 persons. The area of Dárjiling Municipality is returned at 88,320 acres, and in 1869 contained 2223 houses, showing an average of 10·17 souls to each house, or 3·90 per acre. The 11,643 male adults were classified as follows:—125 Europeans, 14 Eurasians, 3 native Christians, 9881 Hindus, 727 Muhammadans, 300 Lepchás, 582 Bhutiás, 1 Chinaman, 2 Maghs, 1 Madrásí, and 7 Armenians. The Census thus taken for this tract is believed to be fairly accurate, as the individuals were actually counted.

A regular Census of the entire District was taken by authority of Government in the cold weather of 1871-72. Owing to the difficult nature of the country, the absence of regular villages, and the scattered population, it was found impossible to attempt a simultaneous census, and the ascertained results were arrived at by a gradual enumeration, which lasted nearly throughout the cold weather. The Bengal Census Report thus describes the mode adopted in taking the Census:—‘In Dárjiling, with the exception of the Headquarters Station and Karsiáng, and the coolie lines on the various tea plantations, there are no villages in the proper sense of the term. The people live in their separate enclosures near their patches of cleared cultivation, but often at a considerable distance from each other; and as, owing to the difficult nature of the country, much time and labour is expended in passing from one enclosure to another, a census to be taken in one night would involve the appointment of an enumerator to almost every enclosure—an arrangement which the illiterateness of the people renders a sheer impossibility. The District was carefully mapped out by the Deputy-Commissioner and divided into four well-defined tracts, which, for purposes of supervision, were distributed between himself and his immediate subordinates. The Census was effected by trustworthy men, who had certain blocks of land assigned them, and whose business it was to see that no house within their respective blocks



the larger streams, which all (with the exception of the Mahánandá and the Karátóyá, in the extreme west of the District) eventually find their way into the Brahmaputra. The Mahánandá and Karátóyá ultimately fall into the Ganges. There is no succession of swamps or marshes by which the surplus water finds its way out of the District.

MINERALS, ETC.—Limestone is found in considerable quantities in the Baxá hills, and in the lower Bhután hills. An inexhaustible supply may be obtained from a high range of hills near the place where the Torshá river debouches upon the plains; but this is just beyond British territory, and the Bhután authorities would no doubt demand a royalty for working the mineral. The limestone hills to the east of Baxá are within the British boundary. Tufa or calcareous limestone is found in large masses along the base of the hills. Copper has been recently discovered at a spot half a mile west of Baxá, but has not yet been worked; copper and iron are both worked in the mountains just across the British frontier. Coal is not known to exist in Jalpáigurí District. Building-stone of a good quality is procurable in the Baxá hills. A further description of the limestone and other mineral deposits of the Western Dwárs will be found in my Statistical Account of Dárjiling (*ante*, pp. 129-158), in which I have quoted at length from a paper by Mr. F. G. Mallet on the geology of Dárjiling and the Western Dwárs, published in the *Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India* (vol. xi. part i. 1874); so that nothing beyond the bare mention of their existence is needed here. There are no hot springs in Jalpáigurí District; and the only interesting natural phenomena worth mentioning are the gorges at the foot of the hills in the Western Dwárs, where the large rivers debouch upon the plains, which are very picturesque and beautiful.

FORESTS.—Jalpáigurí contains several extensive and fine forest tracts. In the Regulation part of the District, in the extreme north, is an extensive and valuable *sál* forest, known as the Baikunthpur Jungle Mahál, within which there is also an extensive pasturage ground. It belongs to the Ráikat or Rájá of Baikunthpur. In 1870, the proprietor had farmed out the whole tract at a rental of Rs. 3000 (£300) per annum; but the Deputy-Commissioner, in his report to me, states that with better management and supervision, it ought to yield him at least three times this amount. In 1870, the Deputy-Commissioner returned to me the various forest tracts in the Western Dwárs, together with their



respective areas, as follow:—(1) In Bhalká *parganá*—Sálbári forest, with an area of 8104 acres. (2) In Bhatibári *parganá*—Chakirbás Jhár (part of), area 992 acres; Chakirbás Jhár (part of), 2544 acres; Mahákalguri, 80 acres; and Síbkátá Ushnibári (part of), 352 acres: total 3968 acres. (3) In Baxá *parganá*—Mainágáon, area 6526 acres; Sanyási Jhár, 4510 acres; Barmáli, 19,448 acres; Pánbári, 25,517 acres; Pánialguri Chhotmálá (part of), 624 acres; Chuápár Jhájángí, 15,272 acres; Ráimatang, 8171 acres; Natábári (part of), 7344 acres; Atiábári Dhuldábrí, 6638 acres; Nimtár Domohani (part of), 2098 acres; Odláguri, 6182 acres; and Pátkáprá (part of), 1360 acres: total 103,690 acres. (4) In Madári and Chakoá Kshattriya *parganá*s—Bara Jhár Satáli, 26,707 acres; Satáli Mendábári, 784 acres; Patlákháwá, 608 acres; and Chakoá Kshattriya Pásti Sál, 763 acres: total 28,862 acres. (5) In Lakshmipur *parganá*—Dumchí Chápáguri, 1580 acres; Dalgáon Sarugáon, 1730 acres; and Nipánlá, 723 acres: total 4033 acres. (6) In Marághát *parganá*—Sálbári, 8160 acres; Gáyerkatá, 5000 acres; Sanko Jhár, 1130 acres; Bánárhát, 430 acres; Kháyerkatá (east of the Dimá river), 1600 acres; Dudumári Kalábári, 566 acres; Kalábári, 6587 acres; Tandu, east, 3785 acres; Kháyerkatá (west of the Dimá river), 1569 acres; and Sálbári, near Golándí, 6½ acres: total 28,833½ acres. (7) In Maináguri *parganá*—Tandu, west, 16,838 acres; Bhargilá Jhár, 11,466 acres; Barádíghi, 11,747 acres; and Dhop Jhár, 1686 acres: total 41,737 acres. Grand total of forest area, exclusive of the Baikunthpur Jungle Mahál in the Jalpáiguri Subdivision, which is private property, 219,227½ acres, or 342·54 square miles.

The Forest Department returns the Government forest areas in the Western Dwárs Subdivision as follow:—(1) Lish and Ghish; (2) Tandu or Maináguri; (3) west of the Murtí river or part of Maináguri; (4) Marághát; (5) Lakshmipur; (6) Bara Jhár Satáli; and (7) Baxá. They are, with the exception of Nos. 1 and 3, identical with the tracts mentioned above; but I quote the following paragraphs from the Report of the Assistant Conservator of Forests for 1871-72, as giving a detailed description of the varieties of trees found, soil, etc. of each tract:—

(1) 'LISH AND GHISH FOREST.—This tract runs from the foot of the Dámsang hills in Dárjling to Lish and Ghish, covering an area of about 2000 acres. It consists of dense grass and creeper jungle, with common trees on it here and there, till the Rangdang *jhorá* or



creek is reached, where it consists simply of *nal* or reed jungle, the stronghold of elephants and rhinoceros. The first part of this jungle, after crossing the Tistá, is high ground, and very rich and well-drained sandy soil; there are not more than about 20 *sál* trees on it. From the Tistá to the Rangdang *jhorá* it is complete waste land. On crossing the Rangdang *jhorá*, the land is undulating, well-drained for the most part, but a poor, red, sandy clay, without any surface soil. No *sál* trees of any kind are on this last patch, which consists of dense grass, with creeper jungle here and there.

(2) 'MAINAGURI OR TANDU.—This tract stretches from the Dhallá, a tributary of the Tistá, to the Jáldhaká river, and covers an area of 41,737 acres. It is principally flat land, with small *nálás* or watercourses intersecting it here and there, and has a stock of very stunted, half-burnt *sál* on it, with very few of any size; in fact, no tree fit to cut. It is a very large tract, high-lying and without swamps, and no doubt would have good timber on it if jungle fires could be put down; but it is burnt year after year, and all the young *sál* killed, and the half-grown trees so injured that many of them die, and some become stunted and grow up with a lot of little branches all round the tree. The leading shoot is very often killed when small, which makes the tree almost useless.

(3) 'PART OF MAINAGURI, WEST OF THE MURTI RIVER.—This is a patch of *sisu* forest on the banks of the Jáldhaká. It is a small block, and has very little mature timber on it. Some 50 logs might be got off the patch, but not more. *Sisu* on these streams never come to much, as the rivers are continually changing their course, and the timber does not get time to grow. I do not think much can be done to improve this strip of *sisu*, and am not of opinion that grazing does much harm. Jungle fires do not go into it.

(4) 'MARAGHAT FOREST.—This is by far the best forest now held by the Department. It covers an area of 28,833½ acres, with a very rich, dark-coloured soil. Here and there it is stony and sandy, but not very much so; it is very well drained, and is for the most part well stocked with *sal* and a few *chalauni* trees. There are many mature or full-grown timber trees on this tract which should be cut. I should say that not less than 500 or 600 trees might be cut this coming cold weather (1872). There is much heavy grass jungle in one or two places, also many creepers. The best timber on the tract is down the Nimái river, towards the Phálákátá



ing it out with a small adze. Six men usually work together, for mutual protection from wild beasts. They make two canoes during the season, one about 23 or 24 cubits long, and 2 cubits in diameter, worth Rs. 18; and one rather smaller, worth Rs. 12. These men are always commissioned by others, and the above values represent the price the workmen receive. The men are employed not quite two months, and the greater part of the canoes are made on the banks of the Dharlá.'

PASTURE GROUNDS, WILD VEGETABLE PRODUCTS, ETC.—The whole of the land in the Western Dwárs that is not forest or under cultivation is one vast pasture ground. Immense herds of buffaloes and cattle are annually brought up from Bengal to graze; a yearly revenue of Rs. 4970 (£497) was realized from a farmer who took a lease from Government of the pasture grounds for a period of five years, commencing from 1865-66. In the Regulation portion of the District, there are extensive pasture grounds within the Baikunthpur Jungle Mahál, which is private property. There is no class of people inhabiting the District who make their living by depasturing in the forest; those who do graze their cattle there nearly always come up with their animals from Bengal, and return again with their herds. With the exception of a medicinal drug, called by the natives *janglí chiretá*, and some lac and beeswax, there is little or no trade in jungle products. The Rájbandsís and Mechs collect what little jungle produce there is, principally in the Dwárs portion of the District, but this is only made a contingent occupation to agriculture. The right to collect lac in the Western Dwárs was sold for Rs. 68 (£6, 16s.) in 1870. The sweet-scented *khas-khas* grass, called here *ganbinyá*, is found in the Western Dwárs, and a small sum is paid annually for the right to collect it.

FERÆ NATURÆ.—The wild animals and large game found in the District are wild elephants and *mithun* or wild cattle, found only close to the hills; and rhinoceros, wild buffaloes, tigers, leopards, bears, wild hogs, *bará singhá* or red stags, *sámbhar* deer, etc. The sum of Rs. 1738 (£173, 16s. od.) was paid during 1869 in the shape of rewards for the destruction of wild animals. Prior to July 1867 no rewards were offered; and in 1868 it was found necessary to increase the rewards then in force to the sum of £2 for each tiger, and £1 for a leopard. By far the greater number of animals thus destroyed are killed in the Western Dwárs portion of the District, the increased rewards having induced a number of



native *shikáris* (huntsmen) to come up from Bengal to destroy them. No rewards have ever been given for snake killing. The number of deaths reported to have occurred from wild beasts and snake-bite was 65 in 1867, 76 in 1868, and 62 in 1869, for the Western Dwárs alone. These figures show the number of cases reported to the police; but the Deputy-Commissioner is of opinion that they do not correctly represent the loss of life from this cause, and that many deaths of this sort are not reported at all. Long-nosed alligators are found in many of the larger rivers.

Among the smaller kinds of game are fallow deer, hog deer, antelopes or black buck, hares, foxes, porcupines, civet cats, *happa* or wild cats, mongooses, jackals, and monkeys. The principal game-birds met with are pea-fowl, floricans, wild ducks, teal, wild fowl, wild geese, red and black partridges, quail, snipe, golden plover, etc. I have already enumerated the list of fishes on a previous page (p. 238). No trade is carried on in wild-beast skins in Jalpaiguri; and, with the exception of the fisheries, the *feræ naturæ* are not made to contribute in any way towards the wealth of the District.

POPULATION.—The population of the Regulation part of the District, according to a rough Census made in 1858-59, at the time of the Revenue Survey of Rangpur (to which District it then belonged), was returned at 189,067; the number of houses being put down at 37,529. No information is given as to the principles on which these estimates were based; and the Deputy-Commissioner in 1870 stated that, both as regards the number of the population and the number of the houses, he was of opinion that the estimate was too low. The number of houses returned would give a little over five inmates to each house; while the Deputy-Commissioner stated that it was not an uncommon circumstance to find an ordinary agricultural household to consist of from fifteen to twenty members. The results of the regular Census of 1872, which are given below, fully corroborated the Deputy-Commissioner's opinion.

The Census of the permanently settled *parganá*s was taken by the authority of Government during the cold weather of 1871-72. For various reasons, it was found impossible to attempt a simultaneous census, and the ascertained results were arrived at by a gradual enumeration which lasted through nearly all the cold-weather months. Village headmen were appointed as enumerators; but



banked, with a view to the extension of cultivation; but certain small marshes are drained by the cultivators, and planted with rice. These reclamations are covered with water each rainy season, and require annually to be drained afresh. The marshes are not otherwise utilized for cultivation. Cane is generally procured from the jungles in the eastern part of the State, and the very long-stemmed rice of Eastern Bengal is nowhere grown.

The general line of drainage is from north-west to south-east, following the course of the rivers, into which the surface water, for the most part, directly finds its way.

*FERÆ NATURE.*—Tigers, leopards, wild buffaloes, rhinoceros, bears, and other wild animals are to be met with in many parts of Kuch Behar. Deer of different descriptions are also numerous. Small game is scarce, consisting chiefly of a few partridges, wild duck, etc.

*POPULATION.*—No attempt at an enumeration of the inhabitants of Kuch Behar was made before the Census of 1872. As in the other Districts of what then formed the Kuch Behar Division, it was not attempted to take a simultaneous Census of the people. 'The Census of Kuch Behar was effected by the Settlement Officers. It commenced in November 1871, and was completed in February 1872.' The elaborate classification adopted for the Regulation Districts of Bengal was not extended to the State of Kuch Behar; and, therefore, the Census returns appear, in many respects, to be imperfect. The results disclosed a total population of 532,565 persons, living in 1199 villages or townships, and in 81,820 houses. The area of the State was estimated at 1307 miles, which shows an average density of population of 407 persons per square mile. The average number of persons per house is 6·5. It has already been remarked (*ante*, p. 333) that villages, in the proper sense of the word, hardly exist in the State of Kuch Behar. The columns, therefore, in the table appended, which give the number of villages, etc., and the averages calculated upon that number, are of no value for comparative purposes, and are merely given here out of regard to uniformity.

The table on the opposite page, exhibiting the area, population, etc. of each police circle (*tháná*) in Kuch Behar State, is taken partly from the Census Report of 1872, and partly from the subsequent special compilation:—