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A STATISTICAL ACCOUNT OF ASSAM.

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VOLUME II.

DISTRICTS OF GOALPARA (INCLUDING THE EASTERN DWARS), THE GARO HILLS, THE NAGA HILLS, THE KHASI AND JAINTIA HILLS, SYLHET, AND CACHAR.

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in Bengal, for the purpose of purchasing timber. It is estimated that they carry down with them timber to the average value of £20 for each boat. The total value of the timber traffic would thus amount to about £12,000 per annum. Most of the small islands formed by the Brahmaputra, as well as certain other localities in the District, are used as pasture lands for large herds of cattle which are annually brought up from other parts of Bengal. These patches of pasture land are scattered all over the District, and their area has never been ascertained. The landowners levy a tax from the owners of the herds, called *káhácharáí*, which is estimated to yield a total sum of about £200 per annum.

FERÆ NATURÆ.—The large sorts of game common in Goálpára are tigers, leopards, rhinoceros, bears, buffaloes, and deer. Rewards are offered by Government for the destruction of wild animals, the amount so disbursed being equal to an average of £130, 13s. od. per annum, for the three years ending in 1870. It was subsequently found necessary to increase the rates of reward offered for the killing of wild animals. The Deputy-Commissioner states, on the authority of the District records, that, about twenty-five years ago, more money was paid in one year for killing wild animals than was realized from the land revenue. The number of deaths from wild beasts and snake bites, during the same three years mentioned above, averaged 116 a year. No rewards have ever been given for snake-killing in Goálpára. The smaller sorts of game consist principally of partridges, pea-fowl, jungle-fowl, floricans, quail, wild duck, etc. Crocodiles abound in the different rivers. There is no regular trade in wild-beast skins, but the skins of tigers which have been killed for the sake of the Government reward are sold for small sums.

POPULATION.—Goálpára was formerly included within the Bengal District of Rangpur; and as such, came under the Statistical Survey of Dr. Buchanan-Hamilton, in the beginning of the present century. He calculated the area at 2915 square miles (the present area, excluding the Eastern Dwárs, is 2863 square miles), and the inhabitants at 176,000. There can be no doubt that the population must have largely increased since that date. At the time of the Revenue Survey between 1849 and 1854, neither houses nor ploughs were counted, which would enable an approximate calculation of the number of inhabitants to be made. The police records in 1871

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22,226 acres; Kachugáon Jhár, 12,177 acres: total area of the forests in Rípu Dwár, 41,635 acres, or 65·05 square miles. (5) The only forest in Gumá Dwár is Sálbárl, with an area of 15,779 acres, or 24·65 square miles. Grand total of the area of the forests in the Eastern Dwárs, 422·40 square miles. No information exists as to the annual yield of these forests. In the Statistical Account of Goálpára Proper it is stated that the Conservator of Forests has found it necessary to stop the felling of timber in the forests of this portion of the District. The whole of the lands in the Eastern Dwárs that are not forests, or under cultivation, are in fact wide pasture-grounds. Very little revenue, however, has been realized as yet on account of pasturage, as the owners of the large flocks of buffaloes and cattle that come up yearly from Bengal to graze, find ample pasture in the Western Dwárs, nearer home, and therefore they do not care to come up farther. For the same reason, very few people in the Eastern Dwárs live by pasturing cattle in the forest.

WILD VEGETABLE PRODUCTS: JUNGLE PRODUCTS, ETC.—Among the wild vegetable products of marketable value, are *pipárl* or long pepper, and a creeper from which is obtained a red dye called *ásu* by the people, which seems to be a kind of madder. The jungle products are insignificant, and consist principally in the collection of small quantities of lac and beeswax. The people also weave a good deal of cloth from the silk of a species of wild silkworm, fed on the leaves of the castor-oil plant. It is called *eridá* cloth, and is much valued for making *chádars* or coverings for wear in the cold season. It is a strong, warm, and durable fabric, and fetches very good prices, a single piece on the spot generally costing from Rs. 6 to Rs. 10, or from 12s. to £1. There are no castes or tribes in the Eastern Dwárs who live entirely by collecting and trading in jungle products; but the principal part of the trade in timber and jungle produce is carried on by the Cáchárls and Mechs, who go up to the hills in gangs every year in the dry season to cut timber, which they float down to the plains for sale in the ensuing rains. This, however, is merely an auxiliary occupation, and altogether secondary to their regular employment of agriculture.

THE WILD ANIMALS and large game found in the Eastern Dwárs are the wild elephant, rhinoceros, wild buffalo, tiger, leopard, bear, wild pig, *sámbhar* deer, *bará singhá* or red stag, etc. The Deputy-Commissioner of the Dwárs is unable to give either the

yearly cost of keeping down wild animals, or the annual loss of life from wild beasts and snake-bites. No rewards have ever been paid for snake-killing. The smaller sorts of animals consist of fallow deer, hog deer, hares, foxes, civet cats, wild cats, mongoose, jackals, monkeys, etc. Crocodiles are plentiful in the rivers. Among game birds are the following:—Florican, wild ducks, teal, wild fowl, wild geese, red and black partridges, common and button quail, snipe, golden plover, etc. There are also pelicans, various sorts of cranes, paddy birds, etc. The fishes found in the rivers are the following:—*Chitál, kursá, bhángná, nandini, phisárángá, rui, mirgál, kátla, boál, bhul, súl, sáil, mahásáil, stethoká, gágla, kái, mágur, singi, láthá, pábdá, tengrá, punthí, chingrí, táki, gajar, báim, kunchiá, khalisá, siland, gháriá, khairá, chánpilá, chelá, kháriá, áir, mauyá, ilis or ilsá, kandhulí, báus, bágáir, tatkini, elang, bhedá, chándá, cheng, bánspatá, dwárkina*, etc. There is no trade carried on in wild-beast 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.—The first attempt at an enumeration of the population of the Eastern Dwárs was made by the Revenue Survey party between 1867 and 1869, when a rough census was taken, which returned the number of houses at 7415, and the total population at 17,369. This estimate, of the people at least, must have been far below the truth. At the time of the Settlement in 1869-70, the Deputy-Commissioner personally conducted a second census, which returned the number of houses at 6888, and the population at 37,047. The following table (p. 116) exhibits the population, area, etc. of each of the five Dwárs, as returned by the Deputy-Commissioner.

CASTES.—The following is a list of the different castes found in the Eastern Dwárs, arranged as far as possible according to the rank they hold in local esteem, with their occupations, etc., and the number of the adult male members of each caste, as ascertained by the Census of 1870:—(1) Bráhmañ; priests and spiritual instructors; 16 in number. (2) Kshatriya; the second or warrior caste in the old Hindu social system; the members are *barkandás* or guards, or cultivators; only 2 in number in the Eastern Dwárs. (3) Káyasth; writers, petty Government officials, etc.; 13 in number. (4) Kalitá; peons, sometimes clerks and cultivators; 23 in number. (5) Goswámí; Vishnuvite religious preceptors; 5 in number. (6)

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blue dye, but this is not an article of trade; the red dye is obtained from the wood of the *sisu* tree. *Tasar* cocoons are not found in the hills, nor any medicinal drugs of value. The Gáros are the only people in the District who drive a small trade by collecting and trading in jungle products. There are no wide uncultivated pasture grounds in the hills, nor do any people of the District live by pasturing in the forest.

FERÆ NATURÆ.—Wild animals and large game abound in the Gáro Hills, but are rarely to be seen owing to the dense forests and jungle. Wild elephants, rhinoceros, tigers, leopards, wild dogs, deer of various kinds, wild hogs, buffaloes, and *mithun* or wild cattle are found. The cost of keeping down wild beasts has hitherto been nominal, as until a year or two ago no rewards were paid for their destruction. The small game consists of silver pheasants, college pheasants, snipe, jungle-fowl, pea-fowl, hares, partridges, quails, etc.; but, although abundant, they are rarely bagged, owing to the heavy jungle. The *mahsir* fish is found in some of the rivers, and numerous varieties of fish abound in all the streams. A considerable trade in wild elephants is carried on, and large parties of native huntsmen used formerly to come up every year from Purniah, Rangpur, and Maimansinh to capture them. The method known as *melá-shikárl*, or catching wild elephants by lassoing, formerly prevailed; but this has now been prohibited, and Government has asserted its right to all the wild elephants within the Gáro Hills. No wild elephants have been captured for the last two years, as all hunting has been prohibited. The Deputy-Commissioner states that it is probable that hunting on the *khedá* plan will be permitted this year (1876) in certain localities in the hills. The same officer adds that the District will probably yield from a hundred and fifty to two hundred animals annually for several years to come, which would supply all the wants of the Commissariat Department, and leave a good number of animals for sale. He states that the profits from this source would probably pay nearly all the expenses of the District Administration. The Rájá of Susáng, whose estates adjoin the northern boundary of Maimansinh District, formerly possessed an elephant *khedá* or stockade, in which considerable numbers of wild elephants were annually captured; and up to two years ago the Rájá derived the sole benefit from the use of this *khedá*. He now possesses no rights over the wild elephants in any part of the hills. Previous to the prohibition

the greater part of the year. The principal fords during the rainy season are at Dimápur on the Dhaneswarí, and Mahangdijuá, Silbhátá, Bokoliá, and Gájoli on the Dayáng. These fords, however, are not always passable. No important lakes, canals, or artificial watercourses are situated within the District.

RIVER TRAFFIC.—No village with a community living by river traffic is found within the Nágá Hills. The trade carried on by means of water-carriage is comparatively petty, and consists chiefly in the importation of rice, salt, oil, cloth, beads, etc.; and the exportation of Manipurí and Nágá cloth, bees-wax, cotton, and occasionally a little ivory. The Angámí Nágás are the only inhabitants of the District who utilize the river water for irrigation purposes. These people cultivate their rice crops on the hill slopes, the sides of the hills being cut into terraces from base to summit. For the purpose of irrigating such terraces, water is often conducted along artificial channels for a considerable distance. No fisheries are leased in the Nágá Hills, nor have any rivers or marshes been embanked for the purposes of cultivation. The great need of the country is population, there being an immense extent of cultivable land lying waste, which must be brought under tillage before the marshes are reclaimed. In those tracts, however, which are peopled, the rivers and marshes are generally resorted to for the purpose of collecting the *ikhárá*, *nal*, and *katbán* reeds, as well as canes, which grow spontaneously in the swamps and along the river banks throughout the District.

LINES OF DRAINAGE.—The surface water finds its way out of the District, so far as it does so at all, by the Dayáng and Dhaneswarí rivers, which flow to the north, and by the Jamuná to the east. The rivers, however, by no means suffice to drain the whole District, and large sheets of water stagnate in the numerous swamps scattered throughout the country. These are stated by the Deputy-Commissioner to be the chief source of a most virulent type of malarious fever, very prevalent at the setting in and end of the rains.

MINERALS, QUARRIES, ETC.—Coal and chalk are reported to exist in the Rengmá hills, and limestone is found in abundance along the banks of the Námbar river. Hot springs are met with in several places, the most important being at the Námbar Falls, and at the Saru, Bar, and Thorá springs (*púngs*), near the sources of the Kaliání river.

FORESTS.—There are several large forests in the Nágá Hills, the

principal ones being situated in the valleys of the Jamuná, Dhaneswarí, and Dayáng rivers, the whole being stated to extend over about 2800 square miles. They have not yet been utilized as a source of revenue, but in 1870 a step towards this direction was made by the Forest Department taking over one of the largest tracts, known as the Námbar Forest. The jungle products consist of bees-wax, several dyes, a variety of cinnamon, and several kinds of fibre called by the Nágás *labhe*; a description of nettle (*ganin*); and a sort of creeper (*lakui*). Many members of the Míkír and Nágá tribes subsist by collecting and trading in jungle products.

FERÆ NATURÆ.—The principal wild animals found in the District are the elephant (*Elephas Indicus*); rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros Indicus*); wild buffalo (*Bubalus arni*); tiger (*Felis tigris*); leopard (*Felis pardus*); black bear (*Ursus ferox*); *gáyal* or *mithun* (*Gavæus frontalis*); wild boar (*Sus Indicus*); *sámbar* deer (*Rusa aristotelis*); hog-deer (*Axis porcinus*); barking deer (*Cervulus aureus*); *gural* (*Nemorhædus goral*); civet cat (*Viverra zibetha*); tiger cat (*Felis marmorata*); common wild cat (*Felis chaus*). The other mammals are the pangolin or ant-eater (*Manis pentedactyla*); porcupine (*Histria Bengalensis*); *huluk* (*Hylobates hoolook*); *lángur* or *hanumán* (*Presbytis entellus*); common monkey (*Inuus rhesus*); bamboo rat (*Rhizomys badzius*); common brown rat (*Mus decumanus*); common striped squirrel (*Sciurus palmarum*); grey flying squirrel (*Scinopterus fimbriatus*); and black hill squirrel (*Sciurus macruroides*). Among game birds are found the peacock (*Pavo cristatus*); pea or argus pheasant (*Polyplectron Tibetanum*); jungle fowl (*Gallus ferrugineus*); black partridge (*Francalinus vulgaris*); hill partridge; and several varieties of geese and ducks. Several good edible fishes are found in the Nágá streams. During the year 1869-70, twenty-three deaths were reported to have been caused by wild beasts. No trade is carried on in the skins of wild animals, nor are the *feræ naturæ* made in any way to contribute towards the wealth of the District.

POPULATION.—No regular census has ever been taken of the Nágá Hills, and it is impossible, therefore, to give a correct estimate of the population. The Deputy-Commissioner in 1870 roughly put the population at 82,500, and estimated the relative numbers of the different races as follow:—Assamese, 705; Aitanyás, 355; Cácháris, 3505; Míkírs, 8820; Kukís, 2524; and the Nágás,

at Dárjiling, who reported unfavourably on them. They have since been made over to the Siem of Nongkiao, who is responsible for their being kept clear of weeds and protected against fire. Up to the close of 1875-76 the total expenditure had been Rs. 672, or £67, 4s. od.

FERÆ NATURÆ.—Tigers, elephants, rhinoceros, buffaloes, *mithuns* or wild cows, bears, leopards, wolves, jackals, foxes, wild hog, and several kinds of deer abound in the Khásí and Jáintiá Hills. The expense of keeping down tigers in the shape of Government rewards amounted to £44, 10s. od. in 1869-70. The rate of reward now paid is Rs. 25 or £2, 10s. od. per head. No rewards have ever been given for the destruction of venomous serpents. The number of deaths from wild beasts and snake-bite reported to the police amounted to 28 in 1866-67, 18 in 1867-68, 16 in 1868-69, and 26 in 1869-70. The small game found in the Hills consists of black partridges, hill partridges, quails, ducks, teal, snipe, and woodcocks. The *mahsír* fish is caught in the rivers. No regular trade is carried on in the skins of wild animals; and, except in the case of wild elephants, the *feræ naturæ* are not made to contribute towards the wealth of the people.

ELEPHANTS.—Wild elephants are found in the lower ranges of the hills, and in the gorges opening on the valleys of the Surmá and the Brahmaputra. Each State in the Khásí Hills and each dolloiship in the Jáintiá Hills constitutes a separate hunting circle or *mahál*. In the Khásí States the conditions of elephant hunting are governed by rules framed in 1874-75 by the Chief Commissioner, and approved by the Government of India. These rules provide, (1) that the British Government will make no claim to royalty on account of elephants caught in the Khásí Hills; (2) that one half of the proceeds of the sale of each elephant caught shall be paid over to the chief whose State forms the *mahál*, and the other half retained by Government; (3) that if a chief wishes to hunt elephants on his own account, the *mahál* composed of his State shall be reserved from sale, and a special arrangement shall be made with him on the basis that half the proceeds of the hunting shall accrue to Government. A special form of hunting licence in accordance with these rules has been settled by the Chief Commissioner. In the Jáintiá Hills, as being British territory, the ordinary Assam rules are in force, in accordance with which leases of the *maháls* are sold at intervals of two years to the highest bidder at

the Seáltekh toll station has been taken under the direct management of the Forest Department. A description of the results is given in the Statistical Account of Cáchár District.

Up to a recent date the claims of the neighbouring landholders to a proprietary right in the forests of the District had prevented Government from adopting any measures of forest conservancy. In the year 1876-77, however, the old dispute was determined by the Settlement officer of Sylhet in company with the Assistant-Conservator of Forests in charge of the Cáchár Division, so far as regards certain large tracts of forest in the south-eastern corner of the District. The Settlement officer reported that no persons had any right to these forests; that no privileges were granted in them to anybody; and that they were the exclusive property of Government. Accordingly an area of 273 square miles, or 174,720 acres,—described as being all that is now worth reserving,—was gazetted as 'Government open Forests,' and placed under the charge of the Deputy-Commissioner of Sylhet. It is proposed to declare this tract as 'Forest Reserves,' as soon as sanction can be obtained for the necessary establishment. The name given is the Langái and Singlá Forests, from the two rivers flowing through, which have been ordered to be kept open for the transport of timber.

WILD VEGETABLE PRODUCTIONS.—In *parganá* Patháriá a kind of *attar* is prepared of wood called *agar*, which is exported to Calcutta for despatch to Arabia and Turkey. The *agar* is found on trees called *pitákará*, growing wild in the jungle; the wood is cut into small pieces and placed in water in a copper vessel and boiled, and from this infusion the perfume is distilled. Several tracts of uncultivated pasture land are situated in different parts of the District, their total area being estimated at 461,160 acres. The names of these pasture grounds are as follow:—Hakaluki *háor*, Son *bíl*, Ghungijuri, Káwádighi, Tenguá, Sanir *háor*, Arikámáni, Sarísh, Dekhár, Jhasá, Kásápásá, Jaldubá, and Háil *háor*. The jungle products of Sylhet consist of lac, honey, bees-wax, thatching grass, bamboo, and rattan; these are chiefly collected by the wild tribes of Tipperahs and Kukís, many of whom gain a subsistence by trading in these articles. According to a report by the Deputy-Commissioner in 1876-77, no indigenous lac is collected; but the lac-insect is artificially reared on the *jhuri* tree (*Ficus cordifolia*) on permanently-settled lands in the police circles of Látu, Noákhálí, Rájnagar, Hingájiá, and Lashkarpur.

FERÆ NATURÆ.—Wild elephants are found, as well as tigers, leopards, wild pigs, buffaloes, *sambhár* deer, *bará singhá* or swamp deer, and hog deer in the jungly tracts, besides bison in the south-eastern part of the District. Rhinoceros, though formerly found, have not been seen of late years. The yearly cost of keeping down wild beasts amounted to £4, 16s. od. in 1867, only 10s. in 1868, and £7, 13s. od. in 1869. No rewards have ever been given for snake-killing in Sylhet. The number of deaths from wild beasts and snakes was 149 in 1869, and 103 in 1875.

The following account of the system of capturing wild elephants is taken from page 300 of the *History and Statistics of the Dacca Division*:—‘The great elephant ground is the hilly tract to the south-east of the District, watered by the Singlá and Langái streams, where from fifty to a hundred animals might be captured every year, though not without considerable expense and trouble, as it would probably be necessary to make two or more *khedás*. In this part of the District the elephants have always been captured in herds by forming regular *khedás*; but in other parts, single elephants are killed or captured occasionally. The formation of a *khedá* is laborious and rather costly. In the first place, men are sent, generally in the month of November, to ascertain the haunts of the elephants during the cold weather. When they report having discovered a place where a herd may be captured, three hundred *garwas*, twelve of whom are *sardárs*, are despatched to surround the place at some distance. A *dafadár*, or head-man, and a *barkandáz*, or armed guard, are appointed for every twenty-five *garwas*, and a superintendent over the whole. These men form an extensive circle round the elephants, and keep up fires and a constant noise, the *barkandázz* firing muskets, the others shouting and beating drums, etc. This stage of the operations is known as *jagatber* or *patber*. Near the scene of the *patber*, the actual stockade (*garh*) is constructed, consisting of a strong wooden palisade, inside of which is a trench three cubits wide and two deep. Two converging fences are also thrown up from the *patber* to the narrow doorway of the stockade. When it is completed (the time occupied in construction being generally a month or more), the elephants ought to be driven in; but they frequently escape at this period of the operation. The trained female elephants (*kunkis*) are then taken into the stockade, and the newly-caught animals are secured by tying them to trees. From the stockade they are brought out by the *kunkis*, and taken to three

then return to their native haunts. The *bángar* buffalo differs from the common kind both in the shape of its horns, which curve inwards and downwards, and the configuration of its body. It is unable to do much damage with its horns, and therefore is not feared by huntsmen, though the common kind is very dangerous and formidable. Both varieties of buffaloes are similar in their habits. They are very sensitive to heat, and although they have a thick hide, the surface skin is thin, and insects easily draw blood. Ten or eleven years ago these animals were very abundant, and might be found in herds of two or three hundred; but they have now become scarce. As they are gregarious in their habits, they are still to be seen in herds of from one dozen to two score, but they have retreated far into the interior of the northern and southern hills. The skin and horns of a large wild buffalo are worth from £1, 8s. to £2.

The *parbattia* or *sámbhar* deer of Bengal is the largest species of deer found in the District. They frequent the low hills, covered with tree and bamboo jungle, lying along the edge of swamps and marshes. The males sometimes stand as high as fourteen or fifteen hands, and weigh from 800 lbs. to 1200 lbs. each. At no time timid animals, during the rutting season they become very fierce. They have been known to rush upon and wound an elephant very severely, even after being hit by a musket ball. The flesh is coarse and ill flavoured. The *lainga kbarra*, or barking deer, so called from its loud and harsh barking-like cry, is a small reddish animal, very timid. It seldom or never leaves the cover of tree or bamboo jungle. The boa constrictor devours many of these deer by lying in wait under the *amra* trees, and seizing them when they come to feed on the acid fruit, of which they are particularly fond. The flesh is dry but well flavoured. The *biluá*, known in other parts of India as the *bará singhá*, or twelve-horned deer, is by far the handsomest and most noble of all the deer tribe in Cáchár, and its flesh is particularly tender. This species of deer is only found in the neighbourhood of the large marshes, and even when pursued will not take to the tree-covered hills. The natives say that it is afraid to live in the jungle on account of the branches and creepers catching its horns, and thus making it an easy prey. Among other wild animals may be enumerated the tiger, leopard, rhinoceros, wild hog, and black bear, the latter being only found in the hills. Among small animals, there are monkeys, jackals, flying foxes, musk rats, moles, civet cats, wild cats, hares, porcupines, etc. Of birds, there are the partridge, pheasant, snipe,