

A STATISTICAL ACCOUNT OF BENGAL

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CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS, CHITTAGONG, NOÁKHÁLL,
TIPPERAH, HILL TIPPERAH

THESE VOLUMES HAVE BEEN PRINCIPALLY COMPILED BY

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Between the outer husk and the trunk of this tree is a soft layer of substance that makes an excellent tinder.

'In shady spots is also found another edible plant, something like asparagus; the Bengalis call it *faru*. It is cultivated in the plains as a vegetable; but the wild variety growing in the virgin soil of undisturbed forests is far superior. The tender shoots of the cane and bamboo, just as the young plant emerges from the earth, are very good eating. On the hills, also, the wild yam is found plentifully, so that no man able to search for food in the jungles could starve in these hills.' The hill people make two or three dyes from the roots and leaves of plants, and Captain Lewin says that 'they also use a certain creeper in catching fish; this plant, when steeped in a stream and the water confined by a dam, has the property of intoxicating and stupefying the fish, which come floating, belly upwards, to the surface of the water, and are then easily caught.' Trading in jungle products is carried on more or less by the whole people as an auxiliary means of livelihood to that afforded by cultivation. None of the inhabitants of the Chittagong Hill Tracts live entirely by pasturing cattle in the forests; but the villagers on the border between these Tracts and the Regulation District of Chittagong possess considerable herds, from whose produce they supplement their ordinary means of subsistence derived from nomadic agriculture (*jim*).

FERÆ NATURÆ.—Elephants exist in great numbers, and a considerable portion of the Government supply of these animals is derived from the forests of this District. During the years 1866-68, the officers of the elephant-*khedi* department took away no less than two hundred elephants captured in the Hill Tracts. The Assam rhinoceros is also common. Tigers exist in the hills in considerable numbers, and rewards up to £5 per head are given for their destruction. The leopard, the Malay black bear, the jungle-cat, the *gayal* (*gavæus gaurus* and *gavæus frontalis*—the latter species is frequently domesticated), the wild buffalo, the barking deer (*muntjak*), the *sambar* (*cervus Aristotelis* seu *hippelaphus*), the lemur, the gibbon monkey, the fisher monkey, the small common monkey, the long-tailed whiskered monkey (*langur*), are all met with—as are also the pangolin (*manis aurita*), the hare, the badger, the mongoose, the large dark-brown squirrel, the red squirrel, the yellow-bellied squirrel, the field-rat, the musk-rat, the bamboo-rat, the porcupine, the flying fox (*pteropus Edwardsii*), the horse-shoe bat, and the house bat.

The crocodile and several species of lizards are common. No records exist showing the deaths from wild beasts or snakes, but the number of such deaths is very small. Snakes are eaten by the hill people, and are eagerly sought after; numerous varieties are found in the Hill Tracts. The boa-constrictor is common, and is often of enormous size.

There is no trade in wild-beast skins, nor is any revenue derived from the *feræ naturæ* of the District.

BIRDS.—The birds met with in the Chittagong Hill Tracts are very numerous. Captain Lewin mentions the *bhimráj*, shrikes, the *bulbul*, warblers, the water-wagtail, the hoopoe, the *koel*, the carrion crow, the *máiná*, the hornbill, green parroquets, the king-fisher, the nightjar, the barbet, the peacock, the polyplectron pheasant, the *maturá* or Arákán pheasant, the button-quail, the jungle fowl, the green pigeon, the large wood-pigeon, the ringdove, kites, fish-eagles, the partridge (rare), and a few wild duck and snipe.

FISHES.—The following list of fishes found in the Chittagong Hill Tracts has been furnished by the Deputy Commissioner:—
I. River fish, large species—(1) *kátlá*, (2) *rúí*, (3) *mirgál*, (4) *gágat*, (5) *bodlá*, (6) *báchá*, (7) *máhdál* (*máhsir*), (8) *kalbaus*, (9) *bághi*, (10) *ghaná*, (11) *chitl*, (12) *koral* or *bhekhl*, (13) *pangás*; small species—(1) *bángásh*, (2) *selds*, (3) *báilá*, (4) *púnthi*, (5) *gúldia*, (6) *pháshiyá*, (7) *pápla*, (8) *popá*, (9) *bogori*, (10) *langadú*, (11) *nartí*, (12) *shálang*, (13) *mábdlang*, (14) *púinya*, (15) *kúchia*, (16) *phándá*, (17) *báshpátia*, (18) *harpota*, (19) *kítábáchá*, (20) *chingri*, (21) *rámádríka*, (22) *búr-gani*, (23) *kúrja*, (24) *kákíla*, (25) *chirung*, (26) *shámu*, (27) *rákhál*, (28) *koíncháng*, (29) *harínkopátia*, (30) *bágur*, (31) *tengábogri*. II. Marsh and lake fish—(1) *gajal*, (2) *sháil*, (3) *mágur*, (4) *singi*, (5) *kai*, (6) *tági*, (7) *malia* or *murala*, (8) *cheng*, (9) *phalui*, (10) *khaiya*.

POPULATION.—In his annual report for 1862, the Superintendent of the Hill Tribes gave the following statement of the number of villages, houses, and population under each of the three chiefs in the Chittagong Hill Tracts:—

of the Gahirá dyke, and have been embanked by the lessee. 'There are no Government embankments between the mouths of the Karnaphull and Phení rivers. The greater part of this division of the coast is under the lee of Sandwip and other islands in the estuary of the Meghná, and probably large dykes are not required. Such as there are, are kept up by the *samindárs* and other landholders. Alluvial formation seems to be actively going on along the shore, owing probably to the deposit of large quantities of silt yearly brought down by the current of the Meghná.'

LINES OF DRAINAGE.—The whole of the drainage of the District runs either directly or indirectly into the Bay of Bengal. The surface-water on the coast side of the hills finds its way directly into the Bay; whilst the interior of the District, where most removed from the coast, is first drained into the rivers Karnaphull and Sangu, and thence into the Bay of Bengal.

MAKSH RECLAMATION, JUNGLE PRODUCTS, AND PASTURAGE.—The marshes of Chittagong are not, the Collector reported in 1870, utilised for the cultivation of long-stemmed varieties of rice. Reeds and canes are mostly brought from moist valleys in the hill-ranges. The *sitalpáti* (*Phrynium dichotomum*) grows in damp localities, and is largely used in the manufacture of fine matting. The regulation District of Chittagong contains now no important forests; but the jungles yield thatching-grass, canes, and bamboos. The other jungle products are, the Collector reported, insignificant. The hills throughout the District yield abundant pasturage for cattle. There are no castes in the District who subsist by collecting and trading in jungle products. A list of the plants which yield medicinal drugs is given on pages 218, 219 of this Statistical Account.

MINERALS.—No coal or metals are known to exist in Chittagong District. The Commissioner, in his Annual General Report for the year 1872-73, says that stone is found in the Chittagong hills, but is not quarried. There is a hot spring at the sacred hill of Sitákund, which is said to be bituminous; but the Collector reported in 1870 that 'it has been surrounded by a temple, and observation is so very difficult that there are doubts as to how far it differs from ordinary springs.' The spring at Sitákund is a great place of pilgrimage, and is visited by pious Hindus from all parts of India; further particulars relating to it are given under the heading, 'Fairs and Religious Gatherings,' on pages 219, 220. There is also a salt spring, known by the name of Labanakhya, situated about three miles north

of the principal shrine at Sitákund. This salt spring is reputed to be of great sanctity, and pilgrims visit it in large numbers.

FERÆ NATURÆ.—The wild animals of the District consist of the tiger, wild elephant, rhinoceros, leopard, wild boar, and deer. The number of deaths caused by wild beasts was nine in the year 1873, and eight in 1874. During the five years ending 1868-69, the total amount paid as Government rewards for keeping down wild beasts amounted to only £5, 10s. During the year 1873 there were 34 deaths from snake-bites in the District, and in 1874 there were 45 deaths from this cause; no rewards have ever been paid in this District for killing snakes. No trade is carried on in wild-beast skins; and with the exceptions of the fisheries, and lime made from river and sea shells, the *feræ naturæ* do not, the Collector reported in 1870, contribute in any sensible way to the wealth of the District. There is, however, a considerable export trade in king-fisher skins; large numbers are collected by brokers in Chittagong, and sold for exportation to Burmah and China. Skins to the value of £700 or £800 are said to be now exported annually from the District.

POPULATION.—Prior to 1872, no systematic attempt was made towards an accurate enumeration of the people in the District. In 1801, the population was roughly estimated at 1,200,000, exclusive of Magh settlers who had fled from Arákán at the time of the conquest of that province by the Burmese. Subsequent returns give the population at 800,000, and this figure is quoted in the Board of Revenue's Statistics for 1868-69.

The first regular Census of Chittagong District was taken in January 1872. The result disclosed a population of 1,127,402 souls dwelling in 1,062 villages or townships, and inhabiting 197,104 houses; average density of the population, 451 per square mile. The following extract from a report on the subject by the Commissioner illustrates the mode in which the operations were conducted:—'In the District of Chittagong, the *samindárs*, as a rule, gave no material assistance; indeed they were not expected to do so, their position in this District being generally that of petty landholders with little or no local influence. In the Cox's Bázár Subdivision, however, they were utilised to a certain extent, sending their servants with the enumerators to point out houses, &c. The village *chaukidárs* were employed as runners to carry diaries, reports, and other papers from the interior to the police stations. The indigenous agency employed in taking the census was that of the village headmen or *mátabars*, from