

## CHAPTER XV

### GAZETTEER

**Agradwip**—A village in the Katwa subdivision situated on the Bhagirathi. The sacred river at Katwa has for Hindus an especial sanctity rivalling in that respect the Ganges at Benares. According to tradition the great Vikramaditya used to transport himself from his palace at Ujain in Rajputana daily in order to bathe in the river. Agradwip is a famous place of pilgrimage and contains a temple of Gopinath at which some ten thousand pilgrims gather every April.

**Andal**—An important junction on the East Indian Railway, situated some ten miles east of Raniganj in the Asansol sub-division. There is a large railway settlement here and the station which is known as Ondal station is the junction for the Ondal Loop line which serves the north of the Raniganj coldfield, and also for the recently constructed line to Suri in the Birbhum district.

**Asansol Subdivision**—The north-western subdivision of the district lying between  $23^{\circ} 25'$  and  $23^{\circ} 53'$  N. and  $86^{\circ} 48'$  and  $87^{\circ} 32'$  E. with an area of 618 square miles. A hundred years ago the whole of this tract was a wilderness of forest and jungle, dotted at long intervals with tiny clearings and settlements. For centuries it had been a sort of debateable land between the Jharkhand, or great western forest, inhabited by the aboriginal tribes whom the Hindus classed indiscriminately as Chuars, and the settled country to the east; and even at the end of the eighteenth century it was the haunt and refuge of bands of broken and outlawed men who, taking advantage of the unsettled state of the land, revaged and plundered the country-side. The tract contains the famous Raniganj coal-field. It is now one of the busiest centres of industry in the Indian continent and its coal and iron fields are filled with a throng of busy and prosperous

miners and artisans. It is bounded on the north by the Santal Parganas and the Ajay which separates it from Birbhum, on the east by the Burdwan subdivision, and on the south and west by the Damodar and Barakar rivers which separate it from Bankura and Manbhum.

Until 1909 in which year the subdivisional head-quarters were transferred to Asansol, the subdivision was known as the Raniganj subdivision. The north-western part consists of a rocky undulating country, which merges in the south and south-east in the alluvial plain stretching along the Damodar. Its population was 370,988 in 1901, compared with 310,273 in 1891. It contains 2 towns: Asansol, its head-quarters and a great railway centre (population 14,906), and Raniganj, its former head-quarters (15,841) and 811 villages. The subdivision is now the most progressive part of the district, but the density of population, 600 persons to the square mile, is still slightly less than that of the Katwa subdivision. It differs from the rest of the district, which is entirely agricultural in character; the alluvial soil here changes to laterite, and rich coal and iron fields have of recent years caused a continuous increase in the number and prosperity of its inhabitants. The subdivision contains numerous collieries and also the Bengal Iron and Steel Works at Kendwa near Barakar, the potteries of Messrs. Burn and Co., and the Bengal Paper Mills at Raniganj, and Messrs. Burn and Co.'s Lime and Brick Works at Andal and Durgapur.

**Asansol**—Head-quarters town of the subdivision of the same name situated on the East Indian Railway, 132 miles from Calcutta, in 23° 41' N. and 86° 59' E. Population (1901) 14,906. The head-quarters of the subdivision have recently been transferred from Raniganj to Asansol, which is situated in the centre of the coal-field and is now one of the most important railway centres in Bengal. In 1881 the town was a rural tract. In 1891 its population was returned at 11,000, and in 1901 at 14,906. There is a large European community connected with the railway and the bazar is growing rapidly. The town is situated in the middle of the Raniganj coal-

field, and since coal of a better quality is obtainable here than further east it has practically taken the place of Raniganj as the centre of the coal industry. There is a junction here with the Bengal-Nagpur Railway and the railway station and workshops have recently been much enlarged and improved; the locomotive shops are said to be the largest in the world. Asansol was constituted a Municipality in 1896 and the Municipal Board consists of 9 Commissioners; the area within municipal limits is 3.73 square miles. The Grand Trunk Road runs right through the town, which lies on either side of it for a distance of some two miles. The subdivisional offices and the civil courts are situated on the south of the road on high ground beyond the Bengal-Nagpur line, some two miles west of the town. The East Indian Railway Volunteers have their head-quarters at Asansol, and in 1901 head-quarters were constructed here for the newly raised "B" troop of the Chota Nagpur Mounted Rifles. A Roman Catholic Mission in the town maintains a church, convent, and schools, and a Methodist Episcopal Mission supports a leper asylum, orphanage, and girls' school. The town contains the usual public offices. There are also several emigration depots where coolies who have been recruited from other districts halt before they are despatched to the tea-gardens in Assam. The town contains a very large railway settlement and a handsome Institute and extensive recreation grounds have been provided for the employees.

**Ausgram**—A village in the Burdwan subdivision situated some five miles north-west of Guskhara Railway Station. It contains a charitable dispensary, which is maintained by the District Board, a police-station, a middle class English school and a branch post-office. There is also a Sanskrit *tol* in the village. On the road to Ausgram there is an old fort called Panchaganga which is intersected by the metalled road from Guskhara to Ausgram. The population of Ausgram according to the census of 1901 is 1725.

**Bagnapara**—A village in the Kalna subdivision containing a Siva *lingam* temple known as Gopeswar. The place is identified with Chaitanya and his followers, the Vaishnabs,

visit this temple in considerable numbers on the occasion of the *Shiba-ratri* festival.

**Banpas**—A village in the head-quarters subdivision with a population, according to the census of 1901, of 1,425 persons. The village is noted for its manufacture of brass and bellmetal ware, and gives its name to a railway station on the loop line of the East Indian Railway, though situated at some distance from the line.

**Barakar**—A village in the Raniganj subdivision of the district, situated on the left bank of the Barakar river in 23° 45' N. and 86° 49' E, about 143 miles from Calcutta. The population of Barakar proper in 1901, was 385 but the name is ordinarily understood to include the villages of Begunia, Ladna, Manberia and several small collieries with a total population of nearly 5,000. Kendwa, some two miles from Barakar, is the site of the Bengal Iron and Steel Works, which employ nearly 3,000 hands daily and had a total output in 1903 of 48,900 tons valued at 27 lakhs. The works were originally managed by Government but in 1889 were handed over to Messrs. Martin and Co., Calcutta, A Full account of them will be found in Chapter VIII. The opening of the grand chord line of the East Indian Railway has placed Barakar on the main line, and it is at present one of the busiest industrial places in Bengal. The roads are thick with coal dust, and the country ground is studded with collieries and factories, and covered with a network of railway sidings. Two fine bridges carrying the Grand Trunk Road and the new railway line span the Barakar river, and the town is thus in direct communication with the Jherria coal-field. There is an old dak bungalow on the Grand Trunk Road at the approach to the Bridge over the barakar river, which was formerly an important halting-place. The town also contains some very fine old stone temples. The following description of these is condensed from that given in the Archæological Survey Reports, Volume VIII (1878) : There are four temples whose towers are in entire preservation. Of these two consist of a simple cell each, surmounted by a tower roof, but there are traces of a *mandapa* in front, of

which all but the foundations have disappeared. Apparently the temple consisted of a cell with its doorway : an *antarala*, formed in the thickness of the back walls of the *Mahamandapa* ; and a *mahamandapa* about thirteen and a half feet square. The towers are richly indented. There is an inscription at the doorway of one of the temples. It is in two distinct pieces both of which are in a variety of the Bengali character. From the style of the characters the temples do not appear to date beyond the Muhammadan conquest, or at the utmost to just before. The inscriptions are not dated. One of them mentions the erection of the temple by one Harishchandra for his beloved : but who Harishchandra was or when he built the temple is not mentioned. The temples are particularly interesting as being the finest existing examples of their type. They face east. In the cell of the inscribed one is a *Ganeca* on a pedestal in front of which is an oblong *argha* with three *lingam* holes cut into it. A peculiarity of these temples, and not of these alone but of the entire series of temples of this type to be found in Manbhum, is the sunk position of the floor of the sanctum. Temple No. 3 stands by itself. Its features are much like those of the temples already described but unlike them it faces west. The object of worship inside is the figure of a fish lying flat, serving as an *argha* to five *lingam* holes cut in it. This sculpture is especially interesting as proving that the fish is essentially a representation of the female powers of nature, a character which it bears in the mythology of other nations, but which appears to have been overlooked or forgotten in Indian mythology, where it, and a similar symbol, the tortoise, are dissociated from the *lingam*. Close to this temple and facing it stands temple No. 4. It is now partially enclosed within a courtyard : but the walls of this enclosure are evidently later additions, as they cover up the mouldings of the temple outside on the sides. Divested of this wall the temple consists of a cell and an *antarala* or vestibule. It does not appear to have ever had a *mahamandapa* in front. The object of worship is a *lingam* placed in great *argha* 4 feet 7 inches in diameter. Externally the tower differs considerably from those of the

other temples, and though in bad order, surpasses them in beauty and richness, though the sculptured details are not profuse or minute. The temples are surmounted by urns and not, as usual, by cylinders or spires, or cones. Four miles north of Barakar under the Hadla hill there is a beautiful stone shrine to Kalyaneswari, the Lady of Fulfilment, a place of pilgrimage for barren women, which is said to be 400 or 500 years old. According to tradition the shrine and the group of temples attached were erected by an ancestor of the Panchet Raja, who is said to have married the daughter of a Raja Lau Sen of Senpahari. The story is that a Rohini Deoghar Brahman once saw a jewelled arm rise out of the waters in the adjacent nala. He went and informed Raja Kalyana Sinha of Kasipur of Panchet who came himself and saw the prodigy. At night the goddess herself appeared to him in a dream and pointing to an irregular stone, somewhat like a rude *argha*, said, "This is my *murti* ; worship it." The Raja built the temple and the stone having been duly inscribed was installed in it.

**Barul**—A village in the Asansol subdivision situated in  $23^{\circ} 44'$  N. and  $87^{\circ} 7'$  E. The population according to the census of 1901 was 532. Barul is situated in the middle of the iron ore tract and has given its name to the surrounding iron ore field. About 1,700 persons are daily employed in iron mining and practically all the mineral iron is despatched to the Iron and Steel Works at Barakar, where pig iron, pipes, and various kinds of castings are turned out. The ore is found in the alluvial deposits and soil at a number of places, as masses of hematite and magnetite at Kalimati in Singhbhum, and in the iron stone shales of the Raniganj coal-field. The Raniganj ore is in the form of carbonate at depths, but it readily weathers and at the surface consists of hermatite and limonite.

**Budbud**—A village situated on the Grand Trunk Road, some 22 miles from Burdwan, in  $23^{\circ} 24'$  N. and  $87^{\circ} 34'$  E. It was formerly the head-quarters of a subdivision and the station of a Munsif. In 1879, however, when the presnt districts of Burdwan and Bankura were constituted, the head-

quarters of the subdivision was removed to Bishnupur in the latter district. Two of the three thanas of the old Budbud subdivision, Budbud and Ausgram, were included in the head-quarters subdivision of the Burdwan district, while the third, thana Sonamukhi, was transferred to Bankura. The Munsif was abolished shortly afterwards, and in 1898 the police-station was removed to Galsi. Budbud is now a place of little importance. According to the census of 1901 the population is 938.

**Burdwan Subdivision**—Head-quarters subdivision of the district, lying between  $22^{\circ} 56'$  and  $23^{\circ} 37'$  N. and  $87^{\circ} 26'$  and  $88^{\circ} 14'$  E. and extending over 1,268 square miles. The subdivision is bounded on the north by the Katwa and Kalna subdivisions, on the east by Hooghly, on the south by Hooghly and Bankura and on the west by the Asansol subdivision. It contains the thanas of Burdwan, Sahebganj, Khandaghosh, Raina, Satgachia, Galsi, Ausgram and Jamalpur and the outpost of Memari. The subdivision for the most part consists of a flat alluvial plain, covered with rice crops, which is a part of the delta formed by the Ajay, the Bhagirathi and the Damodar. In thana Ausgram, however, the soil becomes laterite, and a tract of about 100 square miles in this thana is covered with forest of bastard *sal*. The principal rivers are the Damodar, which separates the thanas of Khandaghosh and Raina from the northern portion of the subdivision ; the Banka and the Khari, which are tributaries of the Bhagirathi. The Eden canal also runs through the subdivision. Its population in 1901 was 679,412 as compared with 619,868 in 1891. It contains one town, Burdwan, the head-quarters of the district and 1,688 villages. It is less densely populated than the rest of the district supporting only 536 persons to the square mile. Brass and bellmetal ware and cutlery are manufactured at Banpas and Kanchannagar, and silk *dhotis* and *saris* at Memari ; a large annual fair is held at Kanchannagar a suburb of Burdwan town. A considerable *tasar* silk industry is carried on at Mankur, which is also an important trade centre.

**Burdwan**—Principal town and administrative head-quarters of the district situated in  $23^{\circ} 14'$  N. and  $87^{\circ} 51'$  E. on the



Banka river and the main line of the East Indian Railway. The population according to the census of 1901 is 35,022 (excluding 3,669 persons returned as living within railway limits) of whom 25,453 are Hindus, 9,441 Muhamadans and 128 others. The town really consists of 93 villages stretching over an area of nine miles, and the greater part of it is rural in character. In 1814 the population was estimated at 53,927 and for a long time the town was regarded by the residents of Calcutta as a sanatorium. From 1863 onwards, however it suffered very severely from the Burdwan fever and, though the more virulent type of the disease has now completely disappeared, the town is still very unhealthy at certain seasons of the year. Since the construction of the water-works, however, the health of the town has much improved. It was the head-quarters of the Commissioner of the Burdwan Division from 1854 to 1871 and again from 1884 to 1896. The Commissioner's head-quarters are now at Chinsura in Hooghly.

The town has been identified by M. de St. Martin with the Parthalis or Portalis which, according to the Greek geographers, was the royal city of the Gangardae or Gangarides. According to Colonel Waddell one of its suburbs was the capital of the old Kingdom of Karna Suvarna which lay to the west of the Bhagirathi and under the Gupta Kings in the seventh century comprised the present districts of Burdwan, Bankura, Murshidabad and Hooghly. Mr. Beveridge, however, places the capital of Karna Suvarna at Rangamati in Murshidabad, and this is probably the more correct view. Burdwan city is first mentioned in Muhammadan histories in 1574, in which year, after Daud Khan's defeat and death at Rajmahal, it was captured by Akbar's troops. Subsequently it is mentioned as the country residence of Sher Afgan, the first husband of the famous Mihr-ul-nissa, afterwards the Empress Nur-Jahan ("light of the world"), who was treacherously attacked and slain just outside the town by the Emperor's foster brother Kutb-Ud-din, who was then Subahdar of Bengal. Jehangir subsequently married Mihr-ul-nissa and there is little reason

to doubt that her first husband was murdered by his orders. Kutb-ud-din himself was killed in the encounter, the scene of which is still pointed out near the railway station, and his grave and that of Sher Afgan are still to be seen in the town.

Burdwan was again besieged and taken by prince Khurram, afterwards the Emperor Shah Jahan, in 1624 and by the rebels Subha Singh and Rahim Khan in 1695. Subha Singh was killed by a daughter of the Raja of Burdwan whom he attempted to outrage, and Rahim Khan was eventually defeated and slain just outside the town by Azim-u-Shan the Emperor's grandson. After his defeat of the rebels Azim-U-Shan continued to reside in the town for some three years, during which time he built the great mosque which still bears his name.

There are several ancient tombs in the town, the most interesting being those of Pir Bahram Shah, Khoja Anwar Shah, Sher Afgan and Kutb-Ud-din. Of the two last an account has already been given. The following reference to Pir Bahram occurs in the memorandum book of Khusgo: "Hajrat Haji Bahram Sekka was a native of Turkestan. He belonged to the Bayet sect of Musulmans." He is also noticed in the memorandum book of Nudrat: "During the reign of Emperor Akbar, Bahram Sekka came to Delhi and was, for his peity, taken into the good graces of the Emperor, who placed implicit confidence in him, but owing to the machinations of Abdul Fazl and Faizi who held important posts in the court of Akbar and who had grown jealous of him, Bahram Sekka left Delhi in disgust and came to Burdwan. He however died here within three days of his arrival. It is also stated that when Bahram Sekka arrived at Burdwan he heard of a famous hermit named Jaipal and made his acquaintance. The latter, however, very much impressed with the miracles performed by this Muhammadan saint, became his disciple. The garden where the grave of Bahram Sekka lies formerly belonged to Jaipal, who having made over all his belongings to Bahram Sekka, fixed his residence in the corner of the garden. When the news of

the death of Bahram Sekka reached Akbar, he, through the Nawab Nazim of Bengal, allotted the revenues of certain villages to the perpetuation of his memory. The tank and garden were repaired and an allowance of two rupees a day was made for daily charity." The lands assigned have been resumed, and Government has granted a monthly allowance of Rs. 42-2-3 to replace the income from them. It is further related that Bahram Sekka was a Haji of Mecca and Medina and he afterwards became a water-carrier in the streets of Mecca and Najaf. It was his duty to offer water to every thirsty wayfarer and this act was considered highly virtuous. Bahram Sekka wrote in his works : "Shaikh Sadi was a water-carrier for forty years." The translation of the Persian inscription on the tomb is as follows : "When I wished to know the date of his death, methinks I heard a voice from the seat of God saying 'My Bahram Sekka was a wonderful fakir,' " Died 970 Hijri. Khoja Anwar Shah fell in battle near the town and his tomb was built by the Emperor Ferokh Shah in consideration of his services. The date on the tomb is 1127 Hijri.

About 2 miles from the town, at Nawab Hat, is a group of 108 Siva *lingam* temples which stand in a rectangle planted with trees and containing some well-kept tanks ; these temples were built and consecrated in October 1788 by the Maharani Adhiswari Bishtu Kumari Bibi, wife of Tilak Chandra and mother of Tej Chandra. This series of temples is exactly similar to that at Kalna, of which a full description is given in the article on that town. Near the temples, and probably intended to guard them is the specious fort of Talitgarh which formed the refuge of the Burdwan family and its retainers during the Maratha invasions of the 18th century. The fort stands in an open plain. It is almost circular in form and is a space of over half a square mile in extent, defended by a lofty earthwork rampart, with bastions at regular intervals, and encircled by a wide and deep moat. There are still traces of masonry at the northern gateway, and in the citadel and some of the bastions. The interior forms the cultivated lands of a village which has grown up within it and in the main street of which a twenty-

four pounder gun was visible in 1888, half buried in the soil. The fort was constructed by the Rajas of Burdwan expressly as a place of refuge against the periodical incursions of the Marathas, and though never completely armed must, when defended by a numerous body of men, have been impregnable against the attacks of horsemen unprovided with artillery. The cannon, mostly twenty-four pounders, with which it was mounted, were very numerous and are now kept at Burdwan. There is a similar fort at Kulingram, about six miles south of the Memari railway station.

Within the town itself the principal places of interest are the palaces and gardens of the Maharaja, which are in the centre of the town. The Dilkusha, which is surrounded by spacious and well-kept grounds, is situated some two miles west of the railway station : here there is a small zoological garden maintained by the Maharaja, which is well worth a visit. There are also some fine old tanks among which may be noticed the Krishnasagar tank constructed by Krishna Ram Rai, and the Ranisagar tank excavated by Rani Brojo Kishori in 1709 A.D. According to tradition Krishna Ram Rai was assassinated while bathing in the tank which bears his name. The only modern monument of any importance is the Star of India arch erected by the present Maharaja at the entrance to the town, to commemorate Lord Curzon's visit. Cutlery is manufactured at the suburb of Kanchannagar and there are two oil mills in the town ; a large annual fair is also held at Kanchannagar. Burdwan was constituted a Municipality in 1865 and the Municipal Board consists of 22 Commissioners, of whom 15 are elected. The area within municipal limits is 8.4 square miles. Water-works, constructed at a cost of Rs. 2 lakhs, were opened in 1884, the Maharaja of Burdwan contributing half a lakh, and the remainder being borrowed from or contributed by Government ; the health of the town has since greatly improved. The town possesses the usual public offices. The district jail has accommodation for 256 prisoners, the chief industries being *surki* pounding and the manufacture of oil and *newar* ; carpets are also made and indigo dyeing

is carried on a small scale. The most important educational institutions are the Burdwan Raj College, maintained by the Raj, and a technical school affiliated to the Sibpur Engineering College, maintained by the District Board, with a contribution from the Municipality. The Church Missionary Society early fixed on Burdwan as a centre from which to carry on its work and in the early half of the last century had established a prosperous and well-managed mission under the Rev. J. J. Weitbrecht. The fever epidemic of 1864-72, however, compelled the society to transfer most of its institutions elsewhere, and the mission is now a purely evangelistic one.

**Calna**—See Klana.

**Cutwa**—See Katwa.

**Chakdighi**—A village in the head-quarters subdivision, some thirteen miles south of Memari station. It is the residence of one of the leading zamindars of the district. The village contains a free High English school which was established in 1863 by the trustees of the will of the late Babu Sarada Prasad Singh Rai and a charitable dispensary.

**Churulia**—A village in the Asansol subdivision lying round a ruined stone fort on the Ajay in *pargana* Shergarh. The village is occupied by Muhammadan *aimmadars* who have built their houses and mosques from the stones of the fort. They have no tradition of how they came there. The fort is said to have been built by one Raja Narottam and is known as Raja Narottam's fort, but nothing is known of this Raja and no one can even say to what caste he belonged. It is possible that the fort may originally have belonged to the Panchet Rajas as Mr. Oldham has suggested.

**Dainhat**—A town in the Katwa subdivision, situated on the right bank of the Bhagirathi in 23° 36' N. and 88° 11' E. According to the census of 1901 the population is 5,618. Brass and bellmetal work is manufactured in the town, and weaving is carried on; there is also some trade in salt, jute, grain, English cloth, cotton and tobacco. The town, which lies between Katwa and Kalna, was formerly considered

one of the principal ports of the district. But the river is gradually receding from it and its prosperity has long been declining. It is now of little commercial importance. The remains of the Rajas of Burdwan from Abu Rai, the founder of the house, to Jagat Ram Rai, are preserved here. Dainhat was constituted a Municipality in 1869. The area within municipal limits is 4 square miles.

**Dignagar**—A village in the Burdwan subdivision of the district, situated in 23° 26' N. and 87° 42' E. Population (1901) 2,717. It is a local market for grain and sugar and is noted for its brass and bell-metal ware. Shellac and lac-dye are manufactured here. The village is described by Jacquemont as a place of some importance.

**Faridpur**—A village situated on the Grand Trunk Road near Oyaria station. It is the head-quarters of a police thana. It is important from a police point of view as it is situated in the centre of the jungle area which lies to the north of the Grand Trunk Road.

**Gopbhum**—A large *pargana* lying on the eastern slopes of the Asansol watershed. This was the name given to the tract of wooded upland forming the cape or headland of the promontory from Central India which juts out into the district. The neck of this promontory is Shergarh, lying between the Ajay and Damodar. Between it and Gopbhum in the same formation are the recently formed *parganas* of Salimpur and Senpahari, which probably belonged to Gopbhum. The actual headland is formed by Gopbhum with the delta, not only fencing it in on the west but coming round it on the south and edging in on the north. Gopbhum, which is still covered for the greater part of its surface with *sal* forest, was by universally current tradition the seat of Sadgop dynasty of which some traces are still extant. The only Raja of the race whose name survives was Mahendranath or, as he is locally called, Mahindi Raja. The ruins of his fort at Amrargarh near Mankur, and of other forts at Bharatpur and Kaksa, which apparently belonged to cadets of the house, are still visible. The remains at Amrargarh do not appear to be very ancient, and the Sadgop

kingdom of Gopbhum apparently existed till almost modern times, first as subject to the Mughals and then under the shadow of the Burdwan house itself. But by 1744 Raja Chitra Sen of Burdwan had occupied Gopbhum and had constructed his forts at Rajgarh at Kaksa and near Gorangapur.<sup>1</sup>

**Gorangapur**—A village in the Asansol subdivision situated on the Ajay in *pargana* Senpahari. The name is derived from one of the names of Chaitanya, the great Vaishnavite reformer—Goranga or Gouranga the fair limbed. The village contains a beautifully built brick temple, a landmark for miles far and wide, still in fine preservation though deserted, and evidently more than a hundred and fifty years old. The building is known as the temple of Ichhay Ghose, and tradition says that Ichhay Ghose was a devout person who constructed the temple in honour of the goddess Bhagabati. He is said to have been killed in battle by a Raja called Lau Sen who, according to tradition, was a descendant of Ballal Sen, the king of Bengal. It is very probable however that this supposed Lau Sen is no other than the Burdwan Raja Chitra Sen Rai, who conquered Gopbhum in the middle of the 18th century. Close to Gorangapur on a small tableland overlooking the Ajay, which is clothed with dense forest, on the very confines of Birbhum and Panchet (Shergarh), stands the fort constructed by Chitra Sen Rai to overawe Gopbhum and Senpahari, in which his cannon with his name in Persian characters deeply engraved on them lie to this day. Another account makes Ichhay Ghose the architect or artificer of the temple.

**Guskhara**—A large village in the head-quarters subdivision situated on the Loop line of the East Indian Railway. Since the opening of the Railway station the village has grown largely and it is now a rice mart of considerable importance. It contains a sub-registry office, a sub post-office, a Sanskrit *tol* and a District Board bungalow. Guskhara is now an important distributing centre and cultivators come from a

1. Oldham, Some Historical and Ethnical Aspects of the Burdwan District.

distance of fifteen or sixteen miles to it to sell their rice and paddy. A *hat* is held twice a week on Tuesday and Fridays. The population in 1901 was 2,172.

**Jamalpur**—A village situated some eleven miles south of Memari railway station on the east bank of the Damodar river. The village is an important trading centre and contains a sub-registry office, a police station, a sub-post office, a lower primary school and a Public Works Department inspection bungalow. The Damodar here is connected with the Eden canal by a sluice from Halara to Jamalpur. Population (1901), 795.

**Kaksa**—A village and police station in the Asansol subdivision, situated about half a mile north of Panagar railway station on the main line of the East Indian Railway in 23° 27' N. and 87° 30' E. According to the census of 1901 the population amounts to 2,244. Kaksa is historically interesting on account of its connection with the Sadgop dynasty which, according to universally current tradition, formerly ruled in Gopbhum and Senpahari. The south-western extremity of this kingdom, now *pargana* Salimpur, was apparently held by two Sadgop kinglings, probably mere cadets of the house of Gopbhum—one stationed at Bharatpur on the Damodar, and the other at Kankeswar or Kaksa. The fort at Kaksa was stormed and the Raja was slain by a Muhammadan leader from Bokhan named Sayad Sayad Bokhari, whose descendant Sayads, hold the Kaksa lands in *aimma* to this day. The date of the occurrence is very uncertain for while it is possible that Sayad Bokhari may have been a leader during the earliest invasion into Bengal, it is equally probable that he was a soldier of fortune in later times. A similar fate probably overtook the Bharatpur chief. The remains of the tiny fort at Kaksa can still be seen and in the small tank below it figures of Hindu deities carved in basalt are still occasionally found. In addition much stonework of Hindu workmanship may be traced in the ruins of the mosque which is known as the Raja's mosque close to the fort, Bharatpur overlooks the Damodar some four miles south of Kaksa and is only interesting as being



traditionally identified with the prince of the Sadgop dynasty. Four miles north of Kaksa lies the fort of Rajgarh, which was constructed by Chitra Sen Rai of Burdwan to overawe his conquest of Gopbhum. Local tradition now connects this stronghold and that at Churulia on the Ajay with the Maratha invasions of the 18th century, but this is contradicted by history and by the probabilities of the case. They lie on the path which the wild jungle tribes of the west, the Chuars of the Jharkhand, followed in their descents on the settled country of Bengal, and within the forest tract which possessed no attraction for the Maratha freebooters. They are not provided with moats as a defence against horsemen and would have been easily assailable by well equipped troops, although they presented serious obstacles to naked hillmen armed only with bows and arrows. Moreover, the ghatwali posts attached to them show that they were permanent stations for defence and not mere places of refuge. The country round Churulia is now open though bare, but the fort stands on a rocky promontory in such dense forest that it is difficult to make out its shape. A temple to Syamarupa is still maintained in the citadel and near it lie seven dismounted five-pounder cannon of English manufacture, all of which have been carefully spiked. The Rajgarh fort is a handsome ruin forming a rectangular fortification without a moat, standing just clear of the forest and surrounded by a rampart, which on the west side is still about 40 feet high, with bastions at the corners and along the faces. Much of the masonry of the southern and northern gateways, and also of an interior residence, still remains. Outside the southern gate are the remains of an outwork or barbican, with polygonal towers at the corners built of small excellently moulded bricks. It commanded both the highway along the Ajay and the road from Suri or Nagar *via* Ilambazar to Bishnupur.

**Kalna subdivision**—The south-eastern subdivision of the district lying between 23° 7' and 23° 36' N. and 88° 0' and 88° 25' E., with an area of 399 square miles. The subdivision is bounded on the north by the Katwa subdivision, on the

east by the Bhagirathi, and on the south and west by Hooghly and the Burdwan subdivision. The principal rivers are the Khari which joins the Bhagirathi a little above Kalna. The subdivision like the adjoining subdivision of Katwa, is flat and alluvial and the eastern portion along the bank of Bhagirathi is waterlogged and swampy, that river in its progress eastwards having left long loops of disused channels along its banks. The subdivision for many years suffered very severely from the Burdwan fever and is still very unhealthy. It contains the thana of Kalna, Manteswar, and Purbasthali. Its population in 1901 was 233,269, the density being 585 persons to the square mile. It contains one town, Kalna, its head-quarters, with a population of 8,121 and 698 villages. Nadanghat in the interior has a large trade in rice and is one of the principal agricultural marts of the district.

**Kalna**—Head-quarters town of the subdivision of the same name, situated on the right bank of the Bhagirathi in 23° 13' N. and 88° 22' E. The area of the town is two square miles and it lies on a long narrow strip of high land overlooking the river. According to the census of 1901 it has a population of 8,121 persons. Kalna was a place of great importance in Muhammadan times and the ruins of the old fort constructed to command the river can still be seen. It was formerly one of the principal ports of the district in the days when the river was the main channel for trade, but the river has silted up considerably, the East Indian and other Railways have diverted the traffic, and the prosperity of the town has long been declining. For several years also it was the focus of the terrible Burdwan fever, which ravaged the district between 1862 and 1874, and even after the disappearance of the disease was for many years extremely unhealthy. The town is falling into decay and many of the brick-built houses in the bazar are now in ruins. Kalna was formerly a favoured seat of the Burdwan house and most of the places of interest in the town are closely connected with that family. The Maharaja still keeps up a palace here and near it are a series of 109 Siva *lingam* temples similar

to those at Nawab Hat in Burdwan. The temples at Kalna were constructed and consecrated by Maharaja Tej Chandra Bahadur in 1809. The Temples, which are all dedicated to Siva, are arranged in concentric circles, the outer circle consisting of 66 temples containing black and white *lingams* alternately, while the inner circle has 42 temples containing white *lingams* only. The temples touch one another except where spaces are left for entrance into the centre. Each temple is a circular domed cell with the *lingam* in the centre. The worship of an hundred and eight phallic emblems of Siva is mentioned in the *Tantras* as productive of great religious merit. It is said to have special efficacy in averting certain dangers such as social degradation, loss of caste, extinction of one's race, or fatal disease. The number 108 has a great significance. The temples represent the beads in a rosary, and these symbolize the letters in the Sanskrit alphabet. The fifty letters counted from beginning to end and again the other way give us the figure 100. To this is added "8" as representing the groups (a, ka, cha, ta, tha, pa, ya, ca) into which the letters are arranged. There is yet one more bead called the *meru* or pole which serves to separate the two terminal beads and which, by its peculiar shape, apprises the votary that the full tale of the beads has been told off. Accordingly there is an 109th temple standing outside the temple grounds, typifying the *meru* or the polar bead. It may be interesting to note that the word "*aksha*", which is a Sanskrit synonym of rosary, is a compound of the two letters "*a*" and "*ksha*" (respectively the first letter and the *meru*). Among the other temples in the grounds of the palace are a very fine one of carved brickwork dedicated to Siva, two temples dedicated to Krishna, and several smaller ones erected and consecrated by the maidservants of the Raj. The Samaj Bari which contains tombs of all the Maharajas and Maharanis of Burdwan is also attached to the palace. There is a separate building for each Maharaja or Maharani, in which is kept the bones remaining from the funeral pyre, together with all the personal belongings of the deceased. But the remains of the late Maharaja and Maharani are kept in the palace building which the Maharaja

used to occupy during his lifetime. The cooking and eating vessels of the Maharani, used by her in her lifetime, with her umbrella, fans, scent-holders, etc., are placed round her remains. The remains of the late Maharaja Mahtab Chand are dressed in the cloths which he used during his life, which are changed three times a day. They are regarded as if the Maharaja was living himself and are placed on a velvet state cushion with silver salver, tumblers, *hookahs*, and *atar* holders, just as the late Maharaja used to sit with all the paraphernalia of state about him. They are surrounded by his utensils, chowries, walking stick and all the articles daily used by him in life; in another room is shown his office table with the inkstand, pens, waste paper basket, etc., used by him; and in another the bed which he used. The meals which they used to take in life are offered to the remains daily and are then distributed to the poor. In front is a shed where shows and dances are given for their entertainment. The bones of the Maharajas before Kirti Chand, from the founder of the family, Abu Rai, are similarly kept at Dainhat. The only other historical remains of interest in the town are the tombs of Majlis Saheb and Badr Saheb, who are regarded as the patron saints of Kalna. Majlis Saheb and Badr Saheb, according to tradition, were brothers who came to Kalna some 400 years ago to spread the creed of Islam. They have taken their place as "*pirs*" in the public faith and their tombs, which are still shown, are worshipped by Hindu and Muhammadan alike. The most common offerings are small clay horses, though fruits, sweets and flowers are often presented at the shrines. It is said that between the two tombs which are almost a mile apart on the river bank a man is safe from any accident and even crocodiles will not attack him. Kalna is also intimately connected with the great religious reformer Chaitanya. It was often visited by him and according to popular tradition was the scene of one of his many transformations. There are many fine old mosques in the town but almost without exception these are now in ruins. Just south of Kalna and in its suburbs stand the ruins of a mosque said to be of very great antiquity. The superstructure is of brick but the basement is of basalt

stone work, which, as in many similar edifices in Burdwan, bears manifest traces of having been carved for Hindu uses. The bricks are large and coarse and the antiquity attributed by tradition to the mosque most probably applies to an earlier building of either Hindu or Musalman construction.

Kalna was constituted a Municipality in 1869; the Municipal board consists of 15 Commissioners of whom two-thirds are elected. The area within Municipal limits is two square miles. The town contains the usual public offices; the subsidiary jail has accommodation for 14 prisoners. The Raj maintains a High English school and a dispensary. There is also a hospital maintained by the United Free Church of Scotland Medical Mission. The town is served by Messrs. Hoare, Miller & Co.'s steamers which run daily throughout the year and which compete not unsuccessfully with the railway for goods and passenger traffic. Its trade is now increasing owing to the increased demand in Calcutta for country produce; and when the railway which is at present under construction is completed, it will probably develop rapidly.

**Katwa Subdivision**—North-eastern subdivision of the district. lying between 23° 26' and 23° 50' N. and 87° 44' and 88° 17' E, with an area of 404 square miles. The subdivision consists entirely of a flat alluvial plain being a portion of the Gangetic delta, and in the east along the banks of the Bhagirathi the soil is water-logged and swampy. It is bounded on the north by Birbhum and Murshidabad, and on the south by the Katwa and Burdwan subdivisions. On the east the Bhagirathi separates it from Nadia. The principal rivers are the Ajay, which for the last fifteen miles of its course runs through the subdivision, and the Kunur. Its population in 1901 was retruned at 248,806 compared with 230,227 in 1891, the density being 616 persons to the square mile. It contains two towns Katwa, its head-quarters, having a population of 7,220, and Dainhat, and 445 villages. Large annual fairs are held at Agradwip and Dadia. The manufacture of *tasar* silk is an important industry in the subdivision.

**Katwa**—Head-quarters town of the subdivision of the same name, situated at the junction of the Bhagirathi and Ajay rivers in 23° 39' N. and 88° 8' E. According to the census of 1901 the population is 7,220. The fine strategical position of Katwa soon attracted the notice of the Muhammadan conquerors of Bengal and it was one of their earliest seats. During the period of the Maratha invasions it was considered the key to Murshidabad, and was frequently used as a base by Ali Vardi Khan in his operations against the invaders. In 1742 he defeated the Marathas in a pitched battle outside the walls of the fort. In 1757 Clive, in his march up the western bank of the Bhagirathi before the battle of Plassey, seized the fort of Katwa which was abandoned by the garrison at the first assault. The English army encamped in the town and it was here after an hour's meditation in a grove near the town, that Clive, disregarding the opinion of the council of war which he himself had called, formed the momentous decision that gave Bengal to the East India Company. The old fort which was a simple earthwork and mounted fourteen guns, now lies in the heart of the town and forms its poorest quarter entirely inhabited by Muhammadans. It is situated on a tongue of land at the confluence of the Ajay and Bhagirathi and is still distinctly defined by a deep and wide moat except on the north side. A large mosque in very fair preservation still exists within it. It was built by Jafar Khan, better known as Murshid Kuli Khan, the founder of Murshidabad and Subahdar of Bengal from 1702-1725. Katwa is held sacred by the Vaishnabs as having been the place where their apostle Chaitanya entered upon the life of an ascetic. Steamers used to ply all the year round to the town, but owing to the silting up of the Bhagirathi and the opening of the East Indian Railway the commercial importance of the place has declined; the new railway line from Hooghly to Kalna will however be carried on to Katwa and should lead to a revival of its trade. Katwa was constituted a Municipality in 1869. The town contains the usual public offices; the subsidiary jail has accommodation for 24 prisoners.

**Khana**—A village in the head-quarters subdivision of the district, situated in 23° 20' N. and 87° 46' E. The population

in 1901 was 1,600. Khana is an important junction on the East Indian Railway where the loop branches off from the chord line.

**Khandaghosh**—A village in the head-quarters subdivision situated some six miles south of Memari railway station. The village is by common rumour a very ancient settlement. In the month of *Magh* a fair is held here in honour of the village deity Gopal and some thousands of people gather yearly to see the image of the god. There is a District Board dispensary here, and a branch post-office. The population according to the census of 1901 was 1,149.

**Mahta**—A village in the Burdwan subdivision situated some seven miles from Guskhara railway station. The village contains a District Board dispensary, a Sanskrit *tol*, a middle English school, a vernacular *pathshala* and a branch post-office. A fair is held here twice a week. Mahta is a very old village and was formerly a well-known centre of Sanskrit education. A religious fair is held here yearly at the beginning of *Magh* in honour of the village god Gobinda Ji.

**Mangalkot**—A village situated on the banks of the river Kunur in the Katwa subdivision. It contains a police station a charitable dispensary maintained by the District Board, a Madrasa maintained by the local Muhammadans and a branch post-office. The sub-registry office named after the village is situated in Natunhat about two miles off. There are according to the last census 623 houses in the village containing a population of 2,335 souls. Mangalkot was formerly a great Muhammadan settlement and there are many ruined mosques in the village and in those adjoining it. The Muhammadan population still predominates though most of them are poor. It is also rich in Hindu remains of an earlier date and may possibly have been one of the outposts of the Sadgop kingdom of Gopbhum.

Kogram or Ujani, a neighbouring village on the other side of the river Kunur was the birthplace of the famous Vaishnab poet Lochan Das and is said to be one of the

many places which received the fragments of *Sati's* corps when it was cut into pieces by the wheel of Vishnu. It is also connected with Srimanta Saudagar whose voyage is described in the *Chandi* of the poet Kabi Kankan. A large number of pilgrims resort to the place on the anniversary of Lochan Das' death when a large fair is held.

**Mankur**—A village in the head-quarters subdivision of the district, situated in 23° 26' N, and 87° 34' E. The population in 1901 was 7,206. Mankur is a station on the chord line of the East Indian Railway, 90 miles from Calcutta, and has a considerable trade; it is also the chief seat of the local silk weaving industry. The Church Missionary Society maintains a Medical Mission here with a hospital and dispensary with 3 European ladies in charge and an efficient staff of workers under the Church of England Zenana Society. Eleven thousand patients were treated in 1901. Mankur is famous for its sweetmeats and its confectioners are noted for their *ola*, *khaja* and *kadma*. Amrargarh, a mile north of the railway station, is by tradition identified as the seat of Mahendranath or, as he is locally called, Mahindi Raja, the only prince of the Sadgop dynasty of Gopbhum whose name still survives. The long lines of fortification which enclosed his walled town are still visible just where the laterite plateau juts out into the alluvial land of the delta. They consist of a ruined earthwork rampart and ditch enclosing a square of about a mile in area.

**Manteswar**—A small village in the Kalna subdivision situated on the east bank of the Khari river. The village is the head-quarters of a police station, and contains a sub-registry office and a branch post-office. There are some very old temples here one of which is dedicated to Siva under his name Manteswar.

**Memari**—A village in the head-quarters subdivision of the district, situated in 23° 10' N. and 88° 7' E. The population in 1901 was returned as 1,674. Memari is a station on the East Indian Railway and an important trade centre; silk *saris* and *dhotis* are also manufactured. The village contains an independent police outpost and a Sub-Registry office.

**Nadanghat**—A village in the Kalna subdivision, situated on the Khari in 23° 22' N. and 88° 15' E. The population in 1901 was 916. Nadanghat is the principal rice mart in the interior of the district and large quantities of grain are brought down by country boat from the village to the Bhagirathi.

**Ondal**—See Andal.

**Raina**—A village in the head-quarters subdivision of the district, situated in 23° 40' N. and 87° 56' E., south of the Damodar river. It is the head-quarter of a police-station and in the early part of the 19th century was notorious for its *thags*, who were first found in Bengal here in 1802. According to popular rumour the people of Raina thana are particularly fierce and warlike. After the suppression of *thagi* the descendants of the *thags* are said to have taken to dacoity as a means of subsistence. Some of the stories told of the most famous of these robbers among the country-people are worth recording. One of their leaders "could eat the raw flesh of a goat and drink three bottles of brandy at a meal". Another, a woman, could ride a horse "as cleverly as an expert colonel or captain would do" and on one occasion with only the help of a sword and her husband robbed a zamindar's house in spite of his numerous men servants and armed retainers. Another woman with her old father put to flight and killed ten armed men who assaulted them.

**Raniganj**—A town in the Asansol subdivision, situated on the north bank of the Damodar river in 23° 36' N. and 87° 6' E. The population in 1901 was 15,841. The town, which is situated on the East Indian Railway, owes its importance to the development of the coal industry. Extensive potteries give employment to 900 hands, the value of the outturn in 1909 being estimated at 3.18 lakhs; paper mills employ nearly 1,100 hands and in 1909 made 5,394 tons of paper, valued at Rs. 16.36 lakhs; and three oil-mills were also at work. There is also a considerable trade in rice and oil. The town contains a police-station and sub-registry office. A Wesleyan Methodist Mission maintains a leper asylum,

and an orphanage and day schools. Raniganj was formerly the head-quarters of the subdivision, but in 1909 the subdivision Magistrate's Court was removed to Asansol. According to Homfray "the name is derived from the proprietary rights of the collieries having been vested in the late Rani of Burdwan."<sup>1</sup> A few years before the mutiny the portion of the town which now forms its centre, was an uninhabited plain covered with brushwood and jungle, and in the quarter now known as Khantsuli there were only a few huts occupied by eight poor families of goalas and Muhammadans: whilst the village of Kumarbazar or Kumar Ramchandrapur, now within municipal limits at the eastern edge of the town, was a pretty agricultural hamlet. During the mutiny Raniganj was the terminus of the East Indian Railway and a cantonment for the troops who had to detrain here on their way up-country was established temporarily at Khantsuli, which was afterwards better known as Gorabazar or "the white soldier's market." After the opening of the railway the prosperity of the town was assured. Before the extension of the line the criminal court, police-station, post office and lock-up were located in Mangalpur, some two miles from Raniganj; and the Munsif's court was at Ukhra, eight miles to the north, which was then in the district of Birbhum. At that time Raniganj was included in this district for purposes of revenue administration only, the criminal administration being under Manbhum. Raniganj was formerly considered the centre of the coal industry and the Bengal Coal Company still has its head office at Egara, near the town. The quality of coal obtainable is not, however, so good as that received from the mines further west, and Asansol has now taken the place of Raniganj as the centre of the trade in this district. Most of the houses in the town are of brick and the roads are well kept. The climate is very hot in summer but is dry and healthy.

**Sahebganj**—A large village in the head-quarters subdivision situated some seven miles north-east of Guskhara railway

1. The coal-field of the Damudah. Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1842.



station. The population in 1901 was 495. According to tradition the village owes its name to a Mr. Cheek (possibly the well known Mr. Cheap of Birbhum) who started a trading centre here. It was formerly an important distributing centre but since the opening of the railway station at Guskhara has greatly declined in importance. A market is held here twice a week.

**Salimabad**—A village in the head-quarters subdivision of the district, in  $23^{\circ} 4' N.$  and  $38^{\circ} 8' E.$  It is the head-quarters of a police-station and in the seventeenth century was called Sulaimanabad, and was the revenue and executive centre of the Mughal Sarkar of that name.

**Salimpur**—A small *pargana* at the south-west edge of Gopbhum which, according to current tradition, formed a part of that kingdom under the Sadgop chiefs of Kaksa and Bharatpur until it was wrested from them by the Muhammadans. The name is said to be a contraction of Sulaimanpur, after one of the kings of Bengal.

**Satgachia**—A village in the head-quarters subdivision of the district about 20 miles due east of Burdwan town. It is the head-quarters of a police-station. Close by at Bohar is a fine Madrasa which was constructed at the close of the last century. It is an extensive brick building enclosing a quadrangle with cloisters, chapels, dormitories and class rooms. Originally it contained accommodation for 700 students, but owing to the terms in which the *farman* constituting the *aimma* grant for its maintenance is worded, the hereditary *mutwali* is under no control, and the building is not fittingly maintained, while its character as a teaching institution has been entirely lost sight of.

**Senpahari**—A *pargana* on the eastern slopes of the Asansol watershed. The *pargana* was formed by Raja Chitra Sen Rai of Burdwan after his conquest of Gopbhum, and is called after himself and the stronghold which he built near Gorangapur on a hill over-looking the Ajay.

**Shergarh**—A large *pargana* in the Asansol subdivision which is practically conterminous with the Raniganj coal-field. It is that part of the promontory of Central India which

lies between the Ajay and the Damodar, a stretch of rolling rocky country parts of which are still covered with forest. Owing to its physical character and situation it was for many centuries the high road and harbour of the Chuars of the Jharkhand—the jungle tribes generally—in their descents upon the settled country to the east. It was ultimately conquered by Raja Chitra Sen Rai of Burdwan about 1742 A.D. It contains two old forts. That at Churulia on the Ajay is of stone and is said to have been built by Raja Norottam. But tradition and history are alike silent as to this Raja and no one can even say to what caste he belonged. The oldest residents of Churulia are the Muhammadan *aimmadars* who live under the fort and who have taken its cut stones for their mosques and houses. Mr. Oldham conjectures that the *aimmadars* may be descendants of Muhammadan soldiery who stormed the fort as in the similar case at Kaksa, which is not improbable. The other fort is an earthwork at Dihi Shergarh, the old capital of the *pargana* on the Damodar. It was erected by and still belongs to the Rajput house of Panchet, who were the proprietors of Shergarh until Raja Chitra Sen Rai wrested it from them. The Pathan sovereigns of Birbhum also at one time possessed part of the *pargana*.<sup>1</sup>

**Sitarampur**—A village in the Asansol subdivision, situated on the main line of the East Indian Railway. It is an important railway junction, the chord line to Mokameh branching off here from the grand chord which goes on to Gaya. Sitarampur is one of the principal subsidiary centres of the Raniganj and Barakar coal-fields, and there are many large collieries in its neighbourhood.

**Ukhra**—A village in the Asansol subdivision situated on the railway line connecting Andal and Suri. Ukhra is one of the largest village in the district and contains some 4,000 inhabitants. There is a high English school here, a dispensary, grain bank, and several interesting temples. The village is the seat of an ancient family of zamindars to whose generosity and public spirit it owes most of the institutions mentioned above.

1. Oldham. Some Historical and Ethnical Aspects of the Burdwan District.