

**Amghata—Gangavas**—Gangavas is the name given to a portion of the village of Amghata, which is situated about 6 miles west of Krishnagar. It lies on the Alakananda, which was an off-shoot of the Jalangi falling into the Bhagirathi, but has now silted up. The waters of this stream, owing to its connection with the Ganges, were considered holy, and a palace was built on the banks by Maharaja Krishna Chandra, and named Gangavas, *i.e.*, residence on the Ganges. Temples were also erected in which the images of Hari and Hara and six other gods and goddesses were installed, and provision was made on a liberal scale for their worship. As a consequence the fame of Gangavas spread far and wide, and it became a place of pilgrimage, at which a large number of persons assembled on the Paush Sankranti, Barun and Dasahara days, to bathe in the sacred waters of the Alakananda, and pay their homage at the various shrines. When the stream silted up, the place gradually lost its importance, and the temples were neglected and fell into ruins. Only those of Hari Hara and Kal Bhairav have withstood the ravages of time, and now one Brahman, on a small pittance allowed by the present Maharaja of Krishnagar, performs the daily *pūja* to the idols. The Ram padak (*i.e.*, footprint of Ram) which is still to be seen here is said to have been brought from the Chitrakuta hills.

**Aranghata**—Village situated in the Ranaghat Thana about 6 miles north of Ranaghat. It lies on the main line of the Eastern Bengal State Railway and has a station called after its name. The population is about 600, most of whom are low class Muhammadans. The river Churni passes

by the village and on its bank is the Hindu temple of Jugal Kishwar, which is believed to have been constructed about 1728 A.D., and which contains the images of Krishna and Radha. According to tradition the former was brought from Brindaban and first installed at Samudragarh (near Nabadwip), whence it was transferred to Aranghata by Ganga Ram Das, the first mahanth of the temple. The image of Radha is said to have been brought from the palace of Krishna Chandra, the famous Maharaja of Nadia, who made a grant of 125 bighas of rent-free land for the support of the temple. A big fair is held here annually throughout the month of Jaista, and is attended by pilgrims from all parts of Bengal: among the visitors females predominate, owing to the belief that any woman who visits the temple will escape widowhood, or, if she be already a widow, will be spared from that fate in her next birth. To the south of this temple there is another, and a more ancient one, containing the idol of Gopi Nath, but this possesses no special fame or sanctity.

**Bagula**—A small village and a station on the Eastern Bengal State Railway. Until Krishnagar received a direct railway service, it was the nearest railway station to that place, with which it is connected by a metalled road 11 miles in length. It is now of little or no importance. It was for some time, from 1862 onwards, an outstation of the Church Missionary Society.

**Bamanpukur**—A village in the Kotwali Thana on the east bank of the Bhagirathi opposite Nabadwip. There seems no doubt that a portion of the old Nabadwip of the Hindu kings of Bengal lay within this village: the remainder of the site now lies under the waters of the Bhagirathi. In the village there is a large mound which is called Ballal dhibi and is believed to be all that is left of the palace of Ballal Sen; and near by is a tank which is called Ballal dighi.

**Birnagar**—The ancient name of this small town was Ula. It is in the Ranaghat Subdivision about five miles from Ranaghat and 13 from Krishnagar, and is situated in

23° 15' N. and 88° 34' E. Its population was 3,124 in 1901 as compared with 3,421 in 1891, and 4,321 in 1881. Its present (1901) population is made up as follows:—Hindus, 2,380; Muhammadans, 735; and Christians, 9. The town was constituted a Municipality in 1869, with 12 Commissioners, 8 of whom are elected and the remainder nominated. The Subdivisional Officer of Ranaghat was *ex-officio* Chairman until 1901, but since that year there have been a non-official Chairman. The average annual income and expenditure was from Rs. 3,500 to Rs. 4,000 until 1906-07. In the last two years the figures on both sides of the account have increased, and in 1908-09 the income was Rs. 5,483 and the expenditure Rs. 5,735. The public buildings are (1) the Municipal Office, (2) the Municipal Charitable Dispensary and (3) the Municipal Market.

One of the earliest traditions connected with this town is that it was once visited by Srimanta Saudagar, the mythical Hindu merchant-prince. At that time the Ganges flowed past the place, and as Srimanta was sailing up to it, a terrific storm came on. In response to divine inspiration he called upon Ulai Chandi, one of the wives of Siva, the destroyer, to help him. She answered his prayer and protected his fleet; whereupon he instituted a special worship of her in this place, which has been carried on to the present day. The Ulai Chandi festival is celebrated here annually in the month of Baisakh, and is attended by 10,000 pilgrims, who, it is said, are housed and fed by the residents.

According to tradition the present name of Birnagar (*anglice*, town of heroes) was conferred upon the town in recognition of the bravery of its inhabitants in capturing noted dacoits on two occasions. The first capture was that of a notorious bandit, who was known as Shena Shani, a native of Santipur, and a Goala by caste: it is said to have been effected by Anadi Nath Mustafi, of the Mustafi family of Ula. The second capture was that of the gang of dacoits who were headed by Baidya Nath

and Biswa Nath, and ravaged the district during the latter part of the eighteenth century. Babu Mahadeb Mukhopadhyay is said to have effected this capture, though this is somewhat at variance with the account of the destruction of the gang which has been given by Sir William Hunter.\*

\* Since the above was written, the following letter, dated 29th October 1800, from Mr. J. Lumsden, Registrar, to the Secretary to the Government in the Revenue and Judicial Departments, has been traced, and may be quoted in *extenso*, "Sir,—In a trial before the Third Judge of the Calcutta Court of Circuit at the last Jail delivery for Zilla Nuddea which came under reference before the Nizamut Adawlut, it appeared in evidence that a night attack having been made on the house of Mahadeo Muckerjee, a respectable resident in the village of Ooloo, by a large Gang of armed Dacoits, the Inhabitants of the Village immediately assembled, surrounded the House, and after a desperate Resistance in which nine of the Villagers were wounded, apprehended on the spot eighteen of the Robbers, who were tried and convicted and sentenced to perpetual Imprisonment and Transportation.

2. The Judge of Circuit considered the Inhabitants of Ooloo as entitled to some mark of Distinction for their Behaviour on this occasion, and the Nizamut Adawlut concurring in this Opinion, desired him to propose some specific Recompense which might with propriety be made to them.

3. I have now received the Orders of the Court to transmit to you the enclosed copies of two letters from the 3rd Judge of the Calcutta Court of Circuit on this subject, and to request that you will lay them before the Most Noble the Governor General in Council, with their recommendation that his Lordship will be pleased to authorize the Magistrate of Nuddea to pay a reward of twenty sicca Rupees to each of the nine Villagers who were wounded in apprehending the Robbers, and to change the name of the Village from Ooloo to Beernagur, as proposed by the Judge, notifying the same by proclamation in the manner suggested in Mr. Camac's Letter of the 25th instant.

4. The timid Behaviour of the Natives of Bengal in general, in deserting their Habitations and Property when attacked by Gangs of Dacoits, is to be ascribed, in the opinion of the Court, more to the horrid acts of Barbarity which are often perpetrated by the Robbers, than to any want of personal Courage, and it is believed that the occasional notice and approbation of an Opposite Line of conduct by Government, may operate as a spur to excite others to follow the example, and by creating a Spirit of Emulation throughout the Country, may prove the most effectual means of checking the Depredations of the banditti, and raising up opponents to them in every village."

The Mustafi family was founded by one Rameswar Mitra, who visited Delhi in the time of Aurangzib, and who is said to have much impressed the Emperor with his scholarship and personal appearance, and to have obtained from him an introduction to Murshid Kuli Khan, then Nawab of Bengal. The Nawab gave him a high post in the Accounts Department, in which he so distinguished himself and did such good work, as to earn for himself the title of Mustafi. This title has been retained in the family during the eight generations which have passed since it was conferred. Owing to partition and litigation the fortunes of the family have greatly declined and they are no longer well off.

The Mukhopadhyay family, whose founder is alleged to have been instrumental in the capture of the gang of Baidya Nath and Biswa Nath, are the local magnates of Birnagar, and keep open house for all who care to avail themselves of their hospitality when visting the town.

Birnagar was once a large and prosperous town, but the epidemic of malarious fever in 1857 caused great ravages in the place, and it has been steadily declining ever since.

The following account of the place is taken from an article by Revd. J. Long which appeared in the *Calcutta Review* in 1846. "Not far from Ranaghat is Ula, so called from Uli, a goddess whose festival is held here, when many presents are made to her by thousands of people who come from various parts. There are a thousand families of Brahmans, many temples and rich men living in it. As Guptapara is noted for its monkeys, Halishar for its drunkards, so is Ula for fools, as one man is said to become a fool every year at the *mela*. The Baruari Puja is celebrated with great pomp; the headmen of the town have passed a bye-law that any man who, on this occasion refuses to entertain guests, shall be considered infamous, and, shall be excluded from society. Saran Siddhanta of Ula had two daughters, who studied Sanskrit grammar and became very learned. In 1834 the Babus of Ula raised

a large subscription and gave it to the authorities to make a pukka road through the town."

**Chakdaha**—A town in the Ranaghat Subdivision on the main line of the Eastern Bengal State Railway, situated in 23° 6' N. and 88° 33' E., not far from the left bank of the Hooghly river. Tradition says that Bhagirath, when bringing the Ganges from Himalaya to Ganga Sagar to water his fore-fathers' bones, left the traces of his chariot wheel (*chakra*) here; hence the name. Not much appears to be known of the ancient history of the town, but it is believed that the army of General Man Singh was weatherbound here for some days, on its way to the subjugation of Pratapaditya at the close of the sixteenth century. Chakdaha, as well as Bansbaria and Ganga Sagar, was once notorious for human sacrifices by drowning. In Hamilton's "Description of Hindostan", London, 1820, it is stated that "this town was formerly noted for voluntary drownings by the Hindoos, which however latterly have become a mere ceremony of immersion without any fatal result." Stavorinus, 1785, writes, "The village of Chagda, which gives its name to the channel, stands a little inland, and there is a great weekly market or bazar here: the channel terminates about three Dutch miles inland, and on its right has many woods in which are tigers and other wild beasts; on entering the woods a little way, we soon met with the traces of tigers in plenty, and therefore we did not think it prudent to venture further; we met in the way the remains of a Bengali who had been torn in pieces by a beast of prey." There is other evidence to show that tigers were not uncommon in the district in the latter part of the eighteenth century; it is said that during that period persons travelling in the neighbourhood of Nabadwip were compelled to sound instruments to frighten these animals away; in 1802 expeditions were made to Krishnagar to hunt them, and as late as 1825, a tiger was killed at Dhogachhia 6 miles west of Nabadwip. Tigers have long since disappeared, but leopards are still found occasionally in the district, especially in the Meherpur Subdivision.



At the beginning of the nineteenth century, dacoits committed great havoc in the neighbourhood of Chakdaha. At the trial of some men who had committed a dacoity in the town, one of the witnesses stated that "the country is in the hands of the dacoits, and they do not scruple to plunder in broad daylight." In 1809 one Hanif, with eight companions, was hanged in the town for dacoity.

Chakdaha used to be an important trade centre, but a change in the course of the river affected it adversely in this respect. The only public buildings now in the town are the Municipal office, dispensary and hospital, and the office of the Sub-Registrar. The town was constituted a Municipality in 1886, with 12 Commissioners, all of whom are nominated. The population in 1901 was 5,482 as compared with 8,618 in 1891. Its present (1901) population is made up as follows:—

Hindus	...	4,300
Muhammadans	...	1,181
Christian	...	1

The average annual income for the quinquennium ending with the year 1894-95 was Rs. 3,844, and the expenditure Rs. 3,984. There was but little variation during the following ten years, but from the year 1905-06 there was a considerable increase in the figures on both sides of the account. In 1908-09 the income was Rs. 4,669, and the expenditure Rs. 4,259.

**Chapra**—A village about ten miles north of Krishnagar on the road between that town and Meherpur. It has been a centre of work of the Church Missionary Society for nearly 70 years. A church was built here in 1841, and a school was started in 1850: the latter is now a most useful institution; in 1908, there were 202 boys on the rolls, and teaching was carried on up to the Middle English Stanard. There is a thana in the place, and not far off, on the banks of the Jalangi, is the village of Bangalji, which was once an important river-mart, and in which there is still a certain amount of local trade.

**Chuadanga Subdivision**—Forms the central portion on the eastern side of the district, and lies between 23° 22' and 23° 50' N., and 88° 38' and 89° 1' E., with an area of 437 square miles. It is bounded on the north-east by the Kumar or Pangasi river; on the north-west by the Meherpur subdivision; on the south-west by the head-quarters subdivision; and on the south-east and east by the Jessore district. It has no natural boundaries except upon the north-east. It is traversed by the Matabhanga or Haulia river, upon which lies its head-quarters. The subdivision consists of a flat widespread plain intersected by numerous streams, which have now in many instances silted up. The population which suffered a decrease of 3.5 per cent. in the decade ending in 1891, more than made up the loss by an increase of 3.74 per cent. in the following decade, and was, in the census of 1901, returned at 254,589, which gives a density of 583 persons to the square mile. The variations in the decade ending in 1901 ranged from an increase of 1.54 per cent. in the Jibannagar thana to an increase of 9.65 per cent. in the Damurhuda thana. The subdivision contains 485 villages, but no towns, Chuadanga being its head-quarters. From 1st April 1892, it was amalgamated with the Meherpur subdivision under one Subdivisional Officer, but on 1st April 1897 it was re-established in response to a petition from the inhabitants of the villages on the east, complaining of the great distances which they had to travel to reach the Court. For police purposes, it is divided into four thanas, viz., Chuadanga, Damurhuda, Alamdanga, and Jibannagar.

**Chuadanga**—This village is the head-quarters of the subdivision to which it gives its name. It is situated in 23° 39' N. and 88° 51' E., on the left bank of the Matabhanga river. It is traversed roughly from north to south by the main line of the Eastern Bengal State Railway, which has a station here; and from west to east by a metalled road from Meherpur over the boundary into the Jessore district. It is an important trade centre. It contains the usual public offices of the head-quarters of a subdivision. Its population was returned at 3,147 in the census of 1901.



**Damukdia**—A village on the Padma in the extreme north of the district, and within the Kushtia Subdivision. It is the southern transshipment station for the crossing on the Ganges on the Eastern Bengal State Railway. There is a police outpost in the village.

**Ghoshpara**—A village situated in the Chakdaha thana of the Ranaghat subdivision, about five miles north-west of the Kanchrapara Railway station. It is also known under the name of Nityadhan. This village is the headquarters of the *Kartabhaja* sect, of which an account has been given in Chapter III above. According to Babu Gopal Krishna Pal, who has written an interesting note on the sect, festivals are held at Ghoshpara at the Dol Jatra, in the month of Falgun; at the Rath Jatra the following month; on the anniversary of the death of Ramdu Lal or Dulal Chand, the son of the original founder of the sect, in the month of Chaitra; on the anniversary of the death of the founder, in the month of Asarh; and on the anniversary of the death of the founder's wife in Aswin. The places visited by the pilgrims are the room where the founder's wife was buried, the room containing the relics of the founder, and the room containing the relics of his son; in each of which places daily prayers are also offered. In addition to the above, two tanks, named Dalimtala and Himsagar, are also visited by the pilgrims: both of these tanks are associated with the name of the Fakir who assisted in the founding of the sect. Except for its connection with the sect, the village of Ghoshpara is of no interest or importance.

**Ghurni**—The north-eastern suburb of the town of Krishnagar, famous for the manufacture of clay figures and models of remarkable excellence. The industry is carried on by a few men of the Kumar or potter caste, and specimens of their work have received medals at the London and Paris exhibitions. Ghurni is said to have been the birthplace of Gopal Bhar, the celebrated jester of the court of Maharaja Krishna Chandra.

**Gosain-Durgapur**—A village in the Kushtia Subdivision about 5 miles to the south-east of the Halsa railway station. A fair is held here annually on the full moon day in the month of Kartik, in honour of the idol Radha Raman, which is installed in a temple in the village. According to local tradition, this idol was stolen by a band of outlaws and presented by them to the saint Kamala Kanta Goswami, in return for his having miraculously quenched their thirst with a small *lota* full of water. Shortly afterwards, the saint, who was young and good-looking and deeply learned in the Sastras, was seen by the princess Durga Devi, who had accompanied her father to the spot on a hunting expedition. The father consented to their marriage, and made a grant of several villages as a dowry. The temple bears an inscription to the effect that it was erected by Raja Sri Krishna Rai in 1674 A.D., and was dedicated to the idol which it contains.

**Hanskhali**—A village on the Damurhuda Churni river at the point where the metalled road from Bagula to Krishnagar crosses that river. It was, before the advent of the railways, a river-mart of some importance, but has now greatly declined, especially since Krishnagar obtained a direct railway service. It is a station for the collection of Nadia Rivers tolls. There is a thana on the right bank of the river by the ferry.

**Kanchrapara**—A fairly large village in the extreme south of the district, and about 3 miles west of the station on the main line of the Eastern Bengal State Railway, to which it has been given its name. It is about a mile to the west of the Hooghly, and is on the road to Ghoshpara, the seat of the *Kartabhaja* sect. At one time Kanchrapara was a big and important village, and was very largely attended by visitors on the occasion of the celebration of the Rath Jatra festival. It is now, however, on the decline, and is being depopulated by malaria. The village temple of Krishna and Radhika is said to have been built by the Malliks of Calcutta in 1708.

**Kapasdanga**—A village in the Damurhuda thana of the Chuadanga subdivision, about 7 miles from the Ramnagar railway station on the Eastern Bengal State Railway. An out-station of the Church Missionary Society was established here in 1809, and has been maintained since. Kapasdanga was visited by a Mr. Innes in 1841, and he described the Bhairab river, on which it stands, as “a beautiful river whose banks are richly ornamented with fine trees, and the water of which is truly excellent and wholesome.” This description is very far from representing present conditions; the place has been notoriously unhealthy for years, and there seems no doubt that this unhealthiness is directly attributable to the stagnancy of the river. In 1843 a church was built, which was replaced by a somewhat larger building in 1893. There is a school in the village. About a mile away is a cemetery.

One mile to the east of Kapasdanga is Nischintapur, the head-quarters of a concern which formerly used to cultivate indigo but now does zamindari only. The property was once known as the “Katchee Katta” Concern, and it lay along the line of the Eastern Bengal State Railway from near Munshiganj to Poradah. The following extract from a letter written in 1860 by the then Manager is of interest:—“In the year 1849 I joined the Katchee Katta Concern as an Assistant in the Pykeparrah Division. Owing to high inundations and the crops having failed some years previous to my coming, the whole of the country was nothing but waste lands and jungles all round my four factories, and I may say for miles together. It used to be a favourite hunting-ground of the Nawab of Murshidabad, when he gave large parties in Mr. Torrentine’s (?) time; his last was 1851, as the country after that began to clear up. In 1850 the villages were mostly deserted and the few houses that were left were in a most miserable condition. Mr. Montresor, who was then Magistrate of Nadia, can prove the above, as he was with me in Pykeparrah in March 1850 and saw the state the country was in then. Now I can say that in the 10 years that I have managed the Concern, from 1849 to

1860 (I took the management of the whole Concern in 1850), the whole of these jungles and waste lands have been brought into cultivation, and for miles now around Katchee Katta, Pykeparrah and Doorgapore Divisions not a bigha of waste land is to be seen. Mr. Forlong, who has been over all that part of the country lately, can swear to the truth of what I assert. Not less than 40 to 50,000 bighas of lands were brought into cultivation in the Katchee Katta Concern while I had the management of it. Numbers of large and prosperous villages now existing were formed by me, and this was done by my cultivating a portion of lands, *neezabad*, for one year, and then abandoning them to the ryotts; in many instances I dug the lands with my own coolies, and after this was done, the ryotts used to pay me my expenses, and they took the land for paddy. That is the system I pursued for several years.”

In 1857 the Manager wrote thus with reference to the mutiny. “Since these unhappy disturbances began, the factory business everywhere has gone on as regularly and quietly as if mutiny in the country had never taken place. I wish only the want of rain had frightened me as little as the mutiny or disbanded sepoys have done, and I should have had little indeed to make me anxious.”

**Khoksa**—A village in the Kushtia Subdivision in the north-east corner of the district about 3 miles to the south-west of the railway station which is named after it. It is situated on the banks of the Sirajpur river or *khal*, an off-shoot of the Garai. A fair is held here in honour of the goddess Kali, during the month of Magh every year. It was established by one of the Rajas of Naldanga, who is said to have discovered there a stone sacred to the goddess. There is a thana in the village.

**Krishnagar Subdivision**—Head-quarters subdivision of the district, lying between 23° 17' and 23° 49' N. and 88° 9' and 88° 48' E. It has an area of 701 square miles, and consists of a wide alluvial plain, bounded on the

west by the Bhagirathi, and intersected by the Jalangi which flows past the head-quarters station, and, eight or nine miles further on, joins the Bhagirathi opposite Nabadwip. The population, which had decreased by 6·9 per cent. in the decade ending in 1891, increased in the following decade, by 3·5 per cent., and, in the census of 1901, was returned at 361,336, which gives a density of 515 persons to the square mile. The variations in the decade ending in 1901 ranged from an increase of 15·38 per cent. in the Kissengunge thana to a decrease of 5·69 per cent. in the Kotwali thana, which was the only thana which did not show an increase. The subdivision contains two towns, Krishnagar (population 24,547), the head-quarters of the district, and Nabadwip (population 10,880); and 740 villages. For police purposes it is divided into seven thanas, viz., Kotwali, Chapra, Hanskhali, Kaliganj, Nakasipara, Nabadwip and Kissengunge. The famous battlefield of Plassey lies in the extreme north of the subdivision, in the Kaliganj thana.

**Krishnagar**—Head-quarters of the district, situated in 23° 24' N. and 88° 31' E., on the left bank of the Jalangi, about 9 miles above its junction with the Bhagirathi.

The town covers an area of about 7 square miles, and its population was 24,547 in 1901, as compared with 25,550 in 1891 and 26,750 in 1872; this steady decline is probably due to the ravages of malarial fever, for which the town is notorious. A few years ago the municipality took a loan from Government to re-excavate the stagnant bed of the Anjana river, which passes through the town and is believed to be one of the causes of the prevalence of fever; but the scheme has not been a success. The present (1901) population is made up as follows:—Hindus, 16,220; Muhammadans, 7,449; Christians, 864; and other religions, 14.

The original name of Krishnagar is believed to have been Reui. In this village a palace was erected by Maharaja Raghab, whose son Rudra Rai changed the name to

Krishnagar or Krishnanagar, in honour of Krishna. Since then the town has remained, almost continuously, the residence of the Maharaja of Nadia. A municipality was constituted in 1864 with 21 Municipal Commissioners, two-thirds of whom are elected and the remainder nominated.

The income during the year 1883-84, which is the first year for which records are now available in the Municipal office, was Rs. 23,539, and the expenditure Rs. 25,482. There was not much variation until the five years ending with 1900-01, during which the average annual income was Rs. 43,609, and the average expenditure Rs. 39,391. Since then there has been a steady advance in both income and expenditure, the figures for which for the year 1907-08, were Rs. 58,541 and Rs. 58,117 respectively, including advances and deposits. There is only one major building which belongs to the municipality, namely the Municipal office.

Up till 1898 the town was without the benefit of a railway service, and the nearest railway station was Bagula, on the Eastern Bengal State Railway, with which it was connected by a metalled road about 11 miles in length, broken at Hanskhali by the Churni river, which was unbridged and had to be crossed in open ferry boats. In 1898 a light 2½ feet gauge railway was constructed from Krishnagar *via* Santipur to Aistola Ghat, on the right bank of the Churni, near Ranaghat, and the Eastern Bengal State Railway ran a siding down to the opposite bank from Ranaghat station. Finally in 1906 the Ranaghat-Lalgola branch of the Eastern Bengal State Railway, with a station at Krishnagar, was opened, and the town was at last placed in direct railway communication with Calcutta.

Krishnagar contains the usual public offices, including the District Jail, which has accommodation for 189 prisoners, the manufactures being mustard oil, mats and surkhi or brick-dust, all of which are sold locally. In addition to these buildings there is a Government College affiliated to the Calcutta University, which was attended by 82



pupils in 1907-08: the total expenditure in that year was Rs. 29,983. Attached to the college is a Collegiate school. The attendance at both these institutions has shown a steady increase since 1881.

The town is a centre of Christian evangelistic enterprise: it is the head-quarters of a diocese of the Roman Catholic Church, and an important station of the Church Missionary Society, each of these bodies having its own church and schools. The Church of England Zenana Mission also maintains here two dispensaries, a hospital and two schools.

The great Hindu Swinging festival (Baradol) is celebrated in Krishnagar annually in March or April, when 12 idols, belonging to the Maharaja of Krishnagar and representing Sri Krishna in twelve different personalities, are brought together to the Rajbari from different parts of the district and worshipped. Some 20,000 pilgrims assemble every year for this festival, and a fair lasting for three days is held simultaneously.

The town suffered somewhat severely in the great earthquake of 1897: some masonry buildings were destroyed and many were seriously damaged, including the Collectorate office, the main entrance of which collapsed.

**Kulia**—Small village, situated in the Chakdaha thana of the Ranaghat subdivision, about 3 miles north-east of the Kanchrapara Railway station. A fair is held here annually on the 11th day of Paush: it is called the *Apradh Bhanjan Mela*. There are various legends as to the origin of this fair: that which, perhaps, obtains the greatest credence is that the place was once visited by Chaitanya, who was well entertained there by one Debananda, after having been refused hospitality in the neighbouring village of Kanchrapara, and he was so pleased with the treatment which he received, that he sanctified the place and declared that all who worshipped there on the 11th day of Paush would be absolved of all their sins. There is a temple in the village, known as Debanandapat: it is of comparatively

recent date and is said to have been built by Babu Kanai Lal Dhar of Calcutta. Adjoining the temple are some tombs, among which is alleged to be that of Debananda.

**Kumarkhali**—A town in the Kushtia subdivision, situated in 23° 52' N. and 89° 15' E., on the left bank of the Garai river. It is a station on the Poradah-Goaland branch of the Eastern Bengal State Railway, and is a trading centre of some importance. During the mercantile days of the East India Company, a Commercial Resident was stationed at Kumarkhali, and a large business in silk was carried on: the only relic of those days now to be found is a cemetery with a few tombs, the earliest dating from 1790. The town was originally included in the Pabna district, and it had a Munsif's Court, subordinate to the District Judge of Pabna: on its transfer to the Nadia district in 1871, the Munsif's Court was abolished.

The town was constituted a Municipality in 1869, with 6 Commissioners, all appointed by Government: the number of Commissioners was increased to 9 in 1875: in 1884 the privilege of the elective system was conferred upon the town, and since then there have been 15 Commissioners, of whom 10 are elected and the remaining 5 nominated.

The population in 1901 was 4,584, as compared with 6,165 in 1891, and 5,251 in 1872. The present (1901) population is made up as follows:—Hindus, 3,242, and Muhammadans, 1,342.

The only public building is the Municipal Office. The average annual income and expenditure of the town during the quinquennium ending with 1894-95 were Rs. 4,064 and Rs. 4,415 respectively, and during the next quinquennium, Rs. 5,836 and Rs. 6,215: there has been but little variation since, and in the year 1908-09 the income was Rs. 6,131, and the expenditure Rs. 6,583.

**Kushtia Subdivision**—The northernmost subdivision of the district, lying between 23° 42' and 24° 9' N., and 88° 44'

and 89° 22' E., with an area of 596 square miles. It is bounded on the north by the Padma, and on the south-west by the Matabhanga which separates it from the Meherpur and Chuadanga subdivisions: on the south and east it is bounded respectively by the Jhenidah subdivision of the Jessore district, and the Goalundo subdivision of the Faridpur district. The subdivision is a wide alluvial plain of great fertility and densely populated. The population, which had increased by 6·4 per cent. in the decade ending in 1891, gained a further slight increase of 71 per cent. during the following decade, and, in the census of 1901, was returned at 468,368, which gives a density of 816 persons to the square mile. The variations in the decade ending in 1901 ranged from an increase of 7·19 per cent. in the Kushtia thana to a decrease of 4·69 per cent. in the Kumarkhali thana. The density of the population in these two thanas is extraordinarily high, being 923 and 997 persons to the square mile, respectively. The subdivision contains two towns, viz., Kushtia (population 5,330) and Kumarkhali (4,584); and 1,011 villages. For police purposes it is divided into four thanas, viz., Kushtia, Kumarkhali, Naopara and Daulatpur.

Kumarkhali was at one time the headquarters of a subdivision of the Pabna district; it included the thanas of Kumarkhali and Pangsa. On the formation of the Goalundo subdivision of Faridpur district in 1871, Kumarkhali thana was transferred to the Kushtia subdivision, and Pangsa thana to the Goalundo subdivision.

**Kushtia**—Headquarters of the subdivision of the same name, situated in 23° 55' N. and 89° 9' E., on the right bank of the Garai, not far from the point at which that river leaves the Padma. The Subdivisional headquarters were originally located at old Kushtia, which is about 3 miles from the two villages of Bahadurkhali and Mahajhampur, which form the town now known as Kushtia. It lies on the Poradah-Goalando branch of the Eastern Bengal State Railway, and has a flag station opposite the Subdivisional offices, and a station in the town, about

1½ miles further on. It is the centre of a considerable trade in rice, pulses, molasses and jute. The Mohini Cotton Mills, established in Kushtia by a retired Deputy Magistrate as a *Swadeshi* enterprise, have not met with much success. During the rains the town is connected by river-steamer with Pabna, but soon after the advent of the cold weather this service has to be stopped owing to the fact that sufficient water does not remain in the mouth of the Garai to afford a passage for the steamer. The population in 1901 was 5,330, as compared with 11,199 in 1891 and 9,245 in 1872. The large decrease in population is due mainly to a revision of the area within Municipal limits. The present (1901) population is made up as follows:—Hindus, 3,066; Muhammadans, 2,235; and Christians, 29. The town was constituted a Municipality in 1869, with 12 Commissioners, 8 of whom are elected and the remainder nominated.

The income and expenditure of the town remained at about Rs. 6,000 till the year 1898-99, when, with the introduction of Part IX, it rose to about Rs. 9,000. In the year 1908-09 the income was Rs. 13,683, and the expenditure Rs. 10,513.

Kushtia contains the usual public offices of the headquarters of a subdivision. Sugar-cane crushing mills of the well known Bihia pattern are manufactured here. The Church Missionary Society has a branch in the town. There is a cemetery here which was consecrated by the famous Bishop Cotton in 1866. It was on the very day on which this ceremony took place that he lost his life. Returning to the river steamer for the night, he had to embark by a slippery plank; his feet gave away, and he fell into the flowing stream never to be seen again. The accident was regarded as a public calamity. A special notice was published in the *Gazette of India* in the following terms:—"There is scarcely a member of the entire Christian community throughout India who will not feel the premature loss of this Prelate as a personal affliction. It has rarely been given to any body of Christians in any country to



witness such depth of learning and variety of accomplishment, combined with piety so earnest, and energy so untiring. His Excellency in Council does not hesitate to add the expression of his belief that large numbers, even among those of Her Majesty's subjects in India who did not share in the faith of the Bishop of Calcutta, had learned to appreciate his great knowledge, his sincerity, and his charity, and will join in lamenting his death." The Secretary of State, in acknowledging the receipt of the despatch announcing the Bishop's death, recorded that "the loss of a Prelate who discharged the duties of his high office with such zeal, devotedness, charity and sound judgment, cannot fail to be sensibly felt both by the Government with which he was connected, any by the Diocese over which he presided; and I have to express my entire concurrence in the sentiments recorded by your Government."

**Meherpur Subdivision**—Forms the north-western portion of the district, and lies between  $23^{\circ} 36'$  and  $24^{\circ} 11'$  N., and  $88^{\circ} 18'$  and  $88^{\circ} 53'$  E., with an area of 632 square miles. The subdivision is bounded on the north-west by the Jalangi, on the north-east by the Matabhanga, on the south-east by the Chuadanga subdivision, and on the south by the headquarters subdivision. It is a deltaic tract with a considerable portion of low-lying black clay soil, on which *aman* rice alone can be cultivated. It is divided from north to south by the dead river Bhairab. The population, which suffered a small loss of 5 per cent. during the decade ending in 1891, increased by 3.39 per cent during the following decade, and, in the census of 1901, was returned at 348,124, which gives a density of 551 persons to the square mile. The variations in the decade ending in 1901 ranged from a decrease of 5.53 per cent. in the Karimpur thana, to an increase of 8.52 per cent in the Gangni thana. The subdivision contains one town, viz. Meherpur, with a population of 5,766, and 607 villages. For police purposes, it is divided into four thanas, viz., Meherpur, Karimpur, Gangni and Tehatta.

**Meherpur**—Headquarters of the subdivision of the same name. It is situated in  $23^{\circ} 47'$  N. and  $88^{\circ} 38'$  E. on the silted up Bhairab river. It covers an area of about  $7\frac{1}{3}$  miles, and in 1901 had a population of 5,766, as compared with 5,820 in 1891 and 5,562 in 1872. The present (1901) population is made up as follows:—Hindus, 3,968; Muhammadans 1,787; and Christians, 11. The town lies 18 miles from the nearest railway station, Chuadanga, with which it is connected by a metalled road, interrupted by two unbridged rivers.

Meherpur was constituted a municipality in 1896, with 9 Commissioners, of whom 6 are elected and the remainder nominated. The income of the town has steadily risen during the last twenty years. It was Rs. 2,059 in 1890-91, and Rs. 4,754 in 1908-09. The expenditure has followed the income. It is more an aggregation of rural villages than a town, and it seems probable that it would not have been constituted a municipality, had it not been for the fact that it is the site of the headquarters of the subdivision.

The town contains the usual Subdivisional offices, Munsif's Court, Municipal office, Sub-jail, hospital and District Board inspection bungalow. The Church Missionary Society has a branch here. The only manufacture is brass-ware.

**Muragachha**—Village in the Nakasipara thana of the head-quarters subdivision, about 12 miles north-west of Krishnagar. It is now a station on the Ranaghat-Lalgola branch of the Eastern Bengal State Railway. The population is close on 600, about two-thirds being Hindus, and the rest Muhammadans. The village has two temples, one dedicated to the god Siva, and the other to the goddess Sarvamangala; the latter is said to have been built in 1870 by Devi Das Mukhopadhyay, a salt Dewan of Hijli, who also established a High English School in the village. A fair is held in honour of the goddess on the day of the full moon in Baisakh: it lasts for three days, and is



attended by one to two thousand pilgrims. The importance of the village dates from the time of Dewan Devi Das, whose family, known as the Dewan family of Muragachha, is still one of the most respected in the district.

**Nadia or Nabadwip**—The town from which the district derives its name. It lies in  $23^{\circ} 24' N.$  and  $88^{\circ} 23' E.$ , on the west bank of the Bhagirathi, opposite the confluence of the Jalangi with that river: it covers an area of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  square miles, and has a population (1901) of 10,880, as compared with 13,384 in 1891 and 8,863 in 1872. The present (1901) population is made up as follows—Hindus, 10,416; Muhammadans, 457; and Christians 7. This great preponderance of Hindus over Muhammadans in a district in which the latter form 59 per cent. of the total population, is remarkable.

There are three different traditions as to the origin of the name Nabadwip: the first is that the town originally stood on an island, which was called Nabadwip (*i.e.*, new island), to distinguish it from Agradwip (former island) which lies about 15 miles up the Bhagirathi from Nabadwip; the second is that it was formerly the resort of a recluse who used to practise his religious rites at night surrounded by 9 lights, whence it came to be called 'Nava-dip' or 'nine lights', but this derivation, as will be observed, does not account for the letter 'w' in the last syllable; and the third is that it formed one of a group of nine islands (Nava-dwip), an account of which is given by Narahari Das in his 'Nabadwip Parikrama Paddhati.'

Navadwip is a very ancient city, and is reputed to have been founded in 1063 A.D. by one of the Sen kings of Bengal, who is said to have been induced to transfer his capital there from Gaur, on account of its superior sanctity owing to its position on the sacred Bhagirathi; and also, probably, because it was considered less liable to Mughal raids. On the east bank of the river, immediately opposite the present Nabadwip, is the village of Bamanpukur, in which are to be found a large mound known

as 'Ballaladhibi', said to be the remains of the King's palace, and a tank called 'Ballaladighi'. These names go to prove that Ballal Sen had some connection with the place, though it is not universally admitted that the actual capital was transferred there from Gaur.<sup>1</sup> It is clear, however, that it was the constant resort of the kings of Bengal until 1203 A.D., when it was captured by Muhammad Bakhtiar Khilji, and the foundation stone of the conquest of Bengal by the Muhammadans was laid.

The following account of the capture and sack of Nabadwip is taken from the Riaz-u-s-Salatin, as translated by Maulvi Abdus Salam (Calcutta, 1904).

"That year Malik Bakhtiar, bringing to subjugation the Subah of Behar, engaged in introducing administrative arrangements, and the second year coming to the kingdom of Bengal he planted military outposts in every place, and set out for the town of Nadiah, which at that time was the capital of the Rajahs of Bengal. The Rajah of that place, whose name was Lakhmania, and who had reigned for eighty years over that kingdom, was at the time taking his food. Suddenly Muhammad Bakhtiar, with eighteen horsemen, made an onslaught, so that before the Rajah was aware, Bakhtiar burst inside the palace, and unsheathing from the scabbard his sword that lightened and thundered, engaged in fighting, and put the harvest of the life of many to his thundering and flashing sword. Rajah Lakhmania getting confounded by the tumult of this affair, left behind all his treasures and servants and soldiers, and slipped out bare foot by a back-door, and, embarking on a boat, fled towards Kamrup. Muhammad Bakhtiar, sweeping the town with the broom of devastation, completely demolished it, and making anew the city of Lakhnauti, which from ancient times was the seat of Government of Bengal, his own metropolis, he ruled over Bengal peacefully."

1. In the Ain Akburi it is noted that in the time of Lakshman "Nadia was the capital of Bengal, and abounded with wisdom."

For many centuries Nabadwip has been famous for its sanctity and learning. From its earliest days the patronage of the Hindu kings and the sanctity of its site attracted, from far and near, erudite scholars, who taught Sanskrit Philosophy to thousands of students. Of such were Halayudha, Pasupati, Sulapani and Udayanacharya, who are believed to have flourished there during the reign of Lakshman Sen, and also Abdihodha Yogi, a Pandit from the upper country, who is said to have been the first scholar to set up a school of logic in Nabadwip. The most celebrated of the native savants of the place were Basudev Sarbabhauma, who, while a pupil of Pakshadhar Misra, the first logician of Mithila, is said to have learnt by heart the whole of the treatise on logic; and his distinguished pupils, Raghunath Siromani, the author of the *Didhiti* and the commentary on the *Gautam Sutra*; Raghunandan Smarta Bhattacharya, the most renowned Pandit of *Smriti*, whose school is followed even today throughout the whole of Bengal; Krishnananda Agambagis, whose work on *Tantra* philosophy is the standard book on the subject; and Gauranga, or Chaitanya, the great Vaishnava reformer of the 16th century. Chaitanya was the son of Jagannath Misra, and was born at Nabadwip in 1485 A.D. He was undoubtedly a man of great intellect, but the key-note of his philosophy was universal love, and he is still spoken of as the 'Apostle of Love'. He was the founder of the Vaishnava sect, and has still a very large following throughout Bengal.

The present Nabadwip still continues to be famous for its Sanskrit teaching. The indigenous Sanskrit schools known as *tols*, in which *Smriti* (Hindu social and religious law) and *Nyaya* (logic) are taught, form the principal feature of the town. A valuable report was submitted upon them by the late Professor E. B. Cowell in 1867. This report contains a full account of the schools, the manner of life of the pupils and the works studied. Mr. Cowell describes the *tol* as consisting generally of a mere collection of mud hovels round a quadrangle, in which

the students live in the most primitive manner. Each student has his own hut with his brass water-pot and mat; few have any other furniture. A student generally remains at the *tol* 8 or 10 years according as he is studying *Smriti* or *Nyaya*. No fees are charged, and, until comparatively recent years, the pandit even provided his pupils with food and clothing. He himself makes his living by the presents which his fame as a teacher ensures him at religious ceremonies.

The following extract is taken from Professor Cowell's report:—

"I could not help looking at these unpretending lecture halls with a deep interest, as I thought of the pandits lecturing there to generation after generation of eager inquisitive minds. Seated on the floor with his 'corona' of listening pupils round him, the teacher expatiates on those refinements of infinitesimal logic which make a European's brain dizzy to think of, but whose labyrinth a trained Nadia student will thread with unfaltering precision. I noticed during my visit middle-aged and even grey-haired men among the students of the celebrated *tols*."

Sir William Hunter remarks: "The sole end of the Nadia scholastic training is *Vichara*, i.e., to win the victory at a festival by adroit arguments, which silence the opponent for the time being. According to the established rule in Hindu dialectics, the disputant first presents his opponent's views, and exhausts whatever can be adduced in their favour, and then proceeds to overthrow all that he has just brought forward, and to establish his own opinion. The Pandits, therefore, come to a discussion with a store of plausible arguments on both sides, and love to oppose a popularly received opinion in order to win credit by successfully supporting an apparently hopeless cause. The very form of Hindu logic involves error, and it is so bound up with technical terms, that it is apt to degenerate into a mere play of words. This tendency reaches its climax in the Nadia schools. Mr. Cowell in three of the *tols* listened to the students exercising themselves in such



discussions. He noticed the intense eagerness of the disputants, as well as the earnest sympathy of the surrounding students and pandits. A successful sophism was responded to by a smile of approval from all."

In 1829 Professor Wilson found between 500 and 600 pupils studying at the *tols*. in 1864 Mr. Cowell found 12 *tols* attended by about 150 pupils. In 1881 there were 20 *tols* with 100 pupils, in 1901, 40 with 274 pupils, and in 1908, 30 with 250 pupils. Maharaja Krishna Chandra instituted a monthly allowance of Rs. 100 for the maintenance of the *tols*. This grant was confirmed by the Committee of Revenue in 1784, but was stopped in 1829 on the ground that no mention had been made of it in the correspondence relating to the Decennial Settlement. However, in the following year, on a remonstrance from the Nabadwip students, and on the recommendation of the Murshidabad Commissioners, the grant was renewed and has since been raised to Rs. 300 per month: in addition to this, Government now awards stipends of Rs. 100 and Rs. 60 per mensem to the First and Second Professors of Nyaya, and Rs. 50 to the First Professor of Smriti. Mathematics, Astronomy, and Philosophy (other than Nyaya) are not regularly taught here. About 1870 a Professor of Philosophy, by name Kashinath Sastri, a native of Orissa, set up an unsuccessful *tol*, and during the last few years a pandit from the North-West has been teaching Darsan and Vedanta to a few pupils. Formerly the almanacs of Nabadwip were of great repute, and their meteorological predictions were held to be infallible; but the Acharya (astrologer) class has become nearly extinct.

Sir William Hunter remarks: "The past of Nadia raises very high expectations, but its present state is disappointing. It is not an ancient city with venerable ruins, crowds of temples, a great population and time-honoured *tols* in every street, with numbers of learned pandits, such as one might expect from its antiquity. All that meets the eye is a small rural town with little clusters of habitations, and a community of Brahmans, busied

with earning their bread, rather than in acquiring a profitless learning. The caprices and changes of the river have not left a trace of old Nadia. The people point to the middle of the stream as the spot where Chaitanya was born. The site of the ancient town is now partly char land, and partly forms the bed of the stream which passes to the north of the present town. The Bhagirathi once held a westerly course, and old Nadia was on the same side with Krishnagar, but about the beginning of this (19th) century the stream changed and swept the ancient town away."

The town, being situated on the bank of the holy Bhagirathi, is frequented by pilgrims from all parts of Bengal, chiefly those of the Vaishnava sect, who bathe in the sacred waters, and at the same time pay their homage at the shrine of Chaitanya. The concourse of pilgrims is very large at the time of the full moon in the months of Baisakh, Kartik and Magh. In order to enable the Municipality to make better conservancy and sanitary arrangements for these large gatherings, the Pilgrims' Lodging-house Act IV (B.C.) of 1871 was extended to the town of Nadia by Government Notification dated 8th August 1891, and the annual income from this source is now above Rs. 3,000.

Nabadwip was constituted a municipality in the year 1869 with 12 Commissioners, of whom 8 were elected and the remainder nominated. In January 1904 the Commissioners were superseded by Government for contumacy, but the municipality was re-established in March 1905 with 9 Commissioners nominated by Government, though the elective system was not restored till September 1907.

The principal industry of the place at present is the manufacture of brass utensils. It was, in former times, noted for its manufacture of conch-shell bracelets, and one of the streets is still known as Sankari Sarak. The East India Company once had a cotton spinning factory here, the site of which is pointed out by old inhabitants.



The present site of the town is not satisfactory: it lies below the level of the river when in flood, and is full of pits and hollows where water stagnates during the rainy season. At one time it was protected all round by embankments, but those have been suffered to fall into bad repair. The cost of restoring them satisfactorily was estimated at Rs. 10,000, and Sir John Woodburn, while Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, offered a Government contribution of Rs. 5,000 provided that an equal amount were raised locally: advantage was not, however, taken of the offer, and nothing has yet been done to restore the embankments. Under such circumstances it is remarkable that the health of the town does not compare more unfavourably than it does with that of other towns in the district.

That the climate of Nabadwip was at one time considered beneficial, or at any rate less unhealthy than that of Calcutta, is clear from the following extracts which have been taken from the "Diary and Consultations Book of the United Trade Council of Fort William in Bengal":—

"673. The Governor goes for a change of air.

JANUARY 3RD, 1713

The Governor having for several Months been very much indisposed and being advised by the Physicians to go up to Nuddea for change of Air, as the only means left for the Recovery of his health—Agreed that during his absence the Worshipful Robert Hedges Esq. act as Chief and Transact all affairs with the rest of the Council, and also take charge of the Cash—Ordered that the Doctor go with the Governor, and considering the troubles in this Country, that Captain Woodvill with 50 Soldiers go as a Guard."

"688. Return of the Governor

FEBRUARY 17TH

This day the Governor returned from Nuddea, where he has been some time for the Recovery of his Health."

"691. The Governor has a relapse.

FEBRUARY 23RD

The Governor not being perfectly recovered of his illness and beginning to relapse which the Doctors impute to the difference between the air of this place and Nuddea, where he has been lately for the Recovery of his health, and therefore advise him to go up thither again, Agreed that Mr. Hedges act as Chief during his absence.

"Ordered that Thirty Soldiers do go up with the Governor as a Guard, also that Several of the Company's Servants who are now indisposed go up with the Govr. for the Recovery of their Health."

The change does not appear to have afforded any permanent benefit to Mr. Russell, for his health became hopelessly impaired, and he was forced to leave India for good at the close of the year.

**Plassey**—Village in the head-quarters Subdivision, situated in 23° 47' N. and 88° 16' E, on the east bank of the Bhagirathi, near the point at which that river first impinges upon the district. It is famous as the scene of Clive's victory over Sirajud-daula, Nawab of Bengal, on 23rd June 1757. After the capture of Calcutta by Sirajud-daula in June 1756, Clive was despatched with a force from Madras, and he recaptured Calcutta in January 1757. After prolonged negotiations he succeeded in gaining over Mir Jafar, the Nawab's general, whom he promised to instal as Nawab in place of Sirajud-daula. In March Chandernagore was taken from the French, and on the 13th June a fresh advance was made; Katwa (on the west bank of the Bhagirathi in the Bardwan district) was captured on the 18th, and on the 22nd the troops marched to Plassey, where Sirajud-daula was encamped with an army of 50,000 foot, 18,000 horse and 50 pieces of cannon, mostly 24 pounders and 32 pounders drawn by oxen. To oppose this army Clive had a force of 900 Europeans, of whom 100 were artillery men, and 50 sailors, 100 Topasses or Portuguese half-castes, and 2,100 sepoys; the artillery consisted of 8 six-pounders, and 2 howitzers. Clive encamped

in a mango-grove, the greater part of which is believed to have since been cut away by the Bhagirathi, and the enemy were entrenched on the river bank to the north of him. At daybreak on the 23rd the enemy advanced to the attack, enveloping Clive's right, Mir Jafar being on the extreme left of the line. Both sides maintained a vigorous cannonade until 2 o'clock, when Sirajud-daula returned to his entrenchments. At this Mir Jafar lingered behind on the left, and eventually joined the British. Clive advanced and cannonaded the Nawab's entrenchment, and entered his camp at 5 o'clock after a slight resistance, Sirajud-daula having already fled to Murshidabad. This decisive victory was won with only a small loss, but it made the British masters of Bengal. In 1883 the Bengal Government erected on the spot a somewhat meagre monument to commemorate the battle: the inscription upon it is simple, but dignified, and consists of the one word "Plassey." During the last few years the Imperial Government has erected an obelisk on a black marble base, and 36 masonry pillars have been set up to indicate the supposed positions of the different troops engaged in the battle on both sides. Up till 1905 the site of this famous battle was very inaccessible, being 34 miles from the nearest railway station, but in that year the Ranaghat-Lalgola branch of the Eastern Bengal State Railway was opened with a station only 2 miles south-east of the place, and a metalled road now runs from the station to the furnished Dak Bungalow which has recently been constructed on the field by the Public Works Department. Cannon-balls have constantly been found by the cultivators while tilling the soil, and the writer was presented with two, one large and one small, when visiting the village in 1897. The place is of no importance, except as being the site of the famous battle.

**Poradah**—A village in the Naopara thana of the Kushtia subdivision. It is a station of the Eastern Bengal State Railway and the junction from which the Poradah-Goalundo extension branches off from the main line.

**Ranaghat Subdivision**—The southernmost subdivision of the district, lying between 22° 53' and 23° 20' N., and 88° 20' and 88° 45' E., with an area of 427 square miles. The subdivision is a deltaic tract, bounded on the west by the Hooghly, on the south by the Barasat subdivision of the 24-Parganas district, on the east by the Bangaon subdivision of the Jessore district, and on the north by the Krishnagar subdivision. It contains much jungle and numerous marshes and backwaters, and the whole tract is malarious and unhealthy. The population, which had decreased by 4·6 per cent. in the decade ending in 1891, suffered a further decrease of 5·63 per cent. in the following decade, and, in the census of 1901, was returned at 217,077, which gives a density of 508 persons to the square mile. The variations in the decade ending in 1901 ranged from a decline of 1·5 per cent. in the Ranaghat thana, to a decline of 8·16 per cent. in the Santipur thana, which suffered a greater loss than any other thana in the district. The subdivision contains four towns, viz., Ranaghat (population 8,744), Santipur (26,898), Chakdaha (5,482) and Birnagar (3,124): and 568 villages. For police purposes it is divided into three thanas, viz., Ranaghat, Santipur and Chakdaha. The head-quarters of the subdivision was originally at Santipur, but was transferred to Ranaghat in the year 1863.

**Ranaghat**—Head-quarters of the subdivision of the same name. It is situated in 23° 11' N. and 88° 34' E., on the Churni river: it covers an area of about 2½ square miles, and in 1901 had a population of 8,744 as compared with 8,506 in 1891 and 8,871 in 1871. The present (1901) population is made up as follows: Hindus, 7,405; Muhammadans, 1,268; and Christians, 71. The town contains the usual subdivisional offices, Munsif's Court, Municipal office, Sub-Jail and hospital. It has been the head-quarters of the subdivision since 1863, before which year the headquarters was at Santipur. It was constituted a municipality in 1864 with 14 Commissioners, 5 of whom were appointed *ex-officio*, and the remaining 9 nominated by Government. When Act III (B.C.) of 1884 came into



force, the number of the Commissioners was increased to 18, of whom 12 were elected and 6 nominated: there has been no change since. The income and expenditure of the municipality during the first 20 years of its existence averaged Rs. 6,933 and Rs. 6,907 per annum, respectively; there was but slight variation during the next ten years, but, with the introduction of Part IX, both income and expenditure increased to over Rs. 10,000 per annum during the quinquennium ending with the year 1899-1900. In 1907-08 the income was Rs. 14,128, and the expenditure Rs. 15,004.

Ranaghat carries on a large river traffic, and is one of the principal seats of commerce in the district. It is an important railway junction, as here the Jessore and Khulna branch, and the Ranaghat Lalgola branch meet the main line of the Eastern Bengal State Railway. There is also a light railway connecting the town with Krishnagar *via* Santipur.

The Ranaghat Medical Mission was established here in 1893 by Mr. J. Monro, C.B.: the head-quarters of this Mission has since then been moved to a site just outside the limits of the town. An account of the Mission will be found in Chapter XIV of this volume.

Very little seems to be known of the early history of this place. It is said to have been originally called Ranighat after the Rani of the famous Krishna Chandra, Maharaja of Nadia. It is on record that dacoits swarmed here in 1809 when Mr. Tytler was Magistrate.

The town is the seat of the Pal Chaudhuri family of Ranaghat referred to by Bishop Heber in his journal. The family was founded by Krishna Chandra Pant and Sambhu Chandra Pant, two brothers who were originally petty traders in the place. It is said that their wealth originated in the fortunate purchase from Ganga Ram Das Mahanth, the founder of the Jugal Kishwar temple at Aranghata, of a large store of grain, which appeared

to have been hopelessly damaged by insects, and was to have been thrown away, when Krishna Chandra appeared on the scenes and offered a small sum for it, which was accepted. When the gain came to be removed, it was found that only the outer layer had been damaged, and it was sold at an enormous profit. This occurred in 1780, and with the capital thus amassed, which was increased by judicious trading, the brothers became great merchants, and almost monopolized the trade in salt, which at that time was sold by auction by the Board of Revenue. The family were most munificent in charity and works of public utility, and it is said that the Marquis of Hastings offered Babu Krishna Chandra the title of Raja when he visited Ranaghat in the course of a tour; but, being of a modest and retiring disposition, he declined the offer, preferring to retain merely the title of "Pal Chaudhuri", which had been conferred upon him by the Maharaja of Nadia, and has been borne by the family ever since. For the two succeeding generations the family were deeply involved in the famous Pal Chaudhuri suit in the Supreme Court, which lasted from 1821 to 1850, being carried four times in appeal to the Privy Council, and which cost them an enormous sum of money. Babu Sri Gopal Pal Chaudhuri, the great-grandson of one of the founders, was a very public-spirited zamindar; he subscribed largely to many works of public utility, and founded the Ranaghat High English school, which has since been mainly supported by his descendants. The present head of the family, Babu Nagendranath Pal Chaudhuri, served Government for 21 years in the Provincial Civil Service, and now, in his retirement, is Chairman of the municipality. The family now own zamindaris in the districts of Nadia, Khulna and Jessore, the Government revenue of which aggregates about Rs. 53,000.

**Ratnapur**—This village has been a centre of Church Missionary Society work since 1840, and is now the head-quarters of the Ratnapur Parish, and has a population of 627 Protestant Christians. It is in the Meherpur thana



of the Meherpur Subdivision, and about 11 miles from the Darsana station on the Eastern Bengal State Railway. There is a fine church in the village, and a boarding-school for boys, which was established in 1842. The Zenana Mission have here a hospital, dispensary and home for converts.

**Santipur**—A town in the Ranaghat subdivision, situated in  $23^{\circ} 15' N.$  and  $88^{\circ} 27' E.$ , on the left bank of the Hooghly. The town covers an area of about 7 square miles, and its population in 1901 was 26,898, as against 30,437 in 1891, and 28,635 in 1872. Though there has thus been a decline, it is still the most populous town in the district. The present (1901) population is made up as follows:—Hindus, 18,219; Muhammadans, 8,672; Christians, 6; and other religions, 1. Santipur is about equi-distant from Krishnagar and Ranaghat, and is connected with each of these towns by a good metalled road, and also a 2 feet 6 inches gauge light railway. The road between Krishnagar and Santipur is believed to have been originally constructed by Rudra Rai, the Maharaja of Nadia, who is reputed to have given its present name to the former of these two towns. Santipur is also connected with Calcutta by a steamer service on the Hooghly.

Very little is forthcoming in connection with the ancient history of this town. It can be gathered, however, that Santipur was in existence at the time of Raja Ganesh, who ruled Bengal in the 12th century. It is said that forts were at one time erected at Santipur by the Mughal Emperors. The names of Sutragarh, Saragarh and Topkhana, which are attached to certain portions of the town, support the popular view, but no trace of the alleged fortifications can now be found. In the latter part of the 15th century, Adwaitacharya, who was supposed to be an incarnation in one person of both Vishnu and Siva, flourished here: it is said that Chaitanya took his initiation from Adwaitacharya, who afterwards, himself became a disciple of Chaitanya. Ever since then the place has been

held sacred. In the time of Rudra Rai, Maharaja of Nadia, it was a populous town and a celebrated cloth-mart. In the old days of the East India Company it was the site of a Commercial Residency, and the centre of large Government cloth factories. The Government purchases of Santipur muslin, which then had a European reputation, averaged over 12 lakhs during the first 28 years of the nineteenth century. None of these factories are still in existence, the last ruins having been pulled down and sold between 1870 and 1880; only the name of the suburb Kuthirpara remains to indicate that there were once rows of *kuthis* or factories in the neighbourhood. It is said that the Commercial Resident enjoyed an annual salary of over Rs. 42,000, and lived in a magnificent house with marble floors, built by himself at the cost of a lakh of rupees: the Marquis of Wellesley spent two days there in 1802: the ruins of the house were finally sold for Rs. 2,000.

Holwell was landed at Santipur as a prisoner on his way to Murshidabad, after having survived the misery of the Black Hole: he was marched up to the Zamindar of Santipur "in a scorching sun near noon for more than a mile and a half, his legs running in a stream of blood from the irritation of the irons." From thence he was sent in an open fishing boat to Murshidabad, "exposed to a succession of heavy rain or intense sunshine."

It is stated that in the early part of the 19th century no place was so infested with dacoits as Santipur, until the appointment of a resident Deputy Magistrate, and the provision of swiftly sailing guard-boats which put a great check on river dacoity.

There are many mosques and temples in the town. The oldest mosque is in Topkhana; it was erected by one Yar Muhammad in the year 1115 Hijri, during the reign of the Emperor Aurangzib: it is now in a very dilapidated condition. Of the temples, the three most famous are that of Syamachand, built in 1726 at the reputed

cost of two lakhs of rupees, by one Ram Gopal Khan Chaudhuri, whose family is still one of the wealthiest in Santipur; that of Gokulchand, built about 1740; and that of Jaleswar, said to have been built by the mother of Maharaja Ram Krishna of Nadia about the beginning of the 18th century.

Santipur was constituted a Municipality in 1865, with 24 Commissioners (of whom 16 were elected and the remainder nominated), and an *ex-officio* Chairman in the person of the subdivisional Officer of Ranaghat. The Commissioners were superseded by Government in 1903 for contumacy in the matter of the introduction of Part IX: the Municipality was, however re-established in September 1904, with 9 Commissioners appointed by Government, and the same *ex-officio* Chairman as before, but the elective system has not up to date (1909) been restored.

The average annual income has been steadily rising during each quinquennium since that ending with the year 1889-90, when it was Rs. 20,892 as compared with Rs. 30,786 in the quinquennium ending with 1904-05: there has been a further large increase since then, chiefly owing to the introduction of Part IX, and in 1908-09 the income was Rs. 48,514. The expenditure has varied with the income from Rs. 22,722 in the quinquennium ending with 1889-90 to Rs. 41,519 in 1908-09.

The major buildings belonging to the Municipality are, (1) the Municipal office with outhouses, tanks and garden, covering about 2 acres, (2) the Municipal school building with outhouses, etc., also covering about 2 acres, and (3) the charitable hospital and dispensary with a compound surrounded by brick walls, covering a little less than one acre.

The manufactures of Santipur are in a decaying condition. The cloth industry has been practically killed by the competition of machine-made goods, and the weavers are no longer prosperous. The East India Company once

had a sugar manufactory in the town, but this has met with the same fate as the cloth factories; however, there are still some native refineries in which date-palm molasses, imported from the neighbouring district of Jessore, is refined. There is a certain amount of local trade in other articles.

The town is visited by a large number of pilgrims at the time of the full moon in the month of Kartik, when the Rash Jatra festival lasts for two days and ends with a procession in which the idols of the Gosains are carried about on elevated wooden platforms. Santipur is also a celebrated bathing place.

The town suffered severely in the earthquake of 1897: many of the largest buildings were destroyed, and the impoverished owners have been unable to restore them.

**Sibnibas**—A village on the bank of the river Churni, nearly due east of Krishnagar, in thana Kissengunge of the Head-quarters Subdivision: the name of this village has been taken for the station upon the main line of the Eastern Bengal State Railway which was formerly called Kissengunge, the change being necessitated by the fact that there are at least two other railway stations in India named Kissengunge, whereby confusion was caused in the booking of parcels and goods.

Sibnibas was established as a country seat in the first half of the 18th century by the great Maharaja of Nadia, Krishna Chandra. Two accounts are given of the reason why he selected the place. The first is that, while out hunting, he casually came upon it and was so struck with its beauty and pleasant situation on the banks of the Churni, that he built a palace there for his occasional residence. According to the second account, the place was selected because it was surrounded on three sides by the Churni and thus afforded a comparatively safe and easily-defended retreat from the incursions of the Mahrattas who were giving much trouble in those days. It is said that through the bounty of the Maharaja no less than



108 temples were constructed in the place. Sibnibas was deserted by Maharaja Shiv Chandra, son of Krishna Chandra, and now only five temples survive in a more or less dilapidated condition. Of these three are of fair size, standing about 60 feet in height; two contain images of Siva, 9 feet and  $7\frac{1}{2}$  feet high, and the third contains an image of Ramchandra, about 4 feet high. A fair is held here on the *Bhumi Ekadashi* day, and is visited by about 15,000 persons. The village was purchased in 1860 by one Swarup Chandra Sarkar Chaudhuri, whose son, Babu Brindaban Sarkar Chaudhuri, is said to have done much to improve its material condition.

In 1824, Sibnibas was visited by Bishop Heber on his way by boat to Dacca, and the following account is taken from his Journal (London, 1828). The gentleman with whom he had an interview may have been a descendant of Krishna Chandra, but he was certainly not the then Maharaja of Nadia—

“We landed with the intention of walking to some pagodas whose high angular domes were seen above the trees of a thick wood, at some small distance, which wood, however, as we approached it, we found to be full of ruins, apparently on an interesting description. ...As we advanced along the shore, the appearance of the ruins in the jungle became more unequivocal, and two very fine intelligent looking boys, whom we met, told me, in answer to my enquiries that the place was really Sibnibashi, that it was very large and very old, and there were good paths through the ruins. We found four pagodas, not large but of good architecture, and very picturesque. The first (temple) which we visited was evidently the most modern, being, as the officiating Brahmin told us, only fifty-seven years old. In England we should have thought it at least 200, but in this climate a building soon assumes, without constant care, all the venerable token of antiquity. It was very clean however, and of good architecture, a square tower, surmounted by a pyramidal roof, with a high cloister of pointed arches surrounding it externally

to within ten feet of the springing of the vault. The cloister was also vaulted, so that, as the Brahmin made us observe with visible pride, the whole roof was “pucka” or brick, and “belathee” or foreign. A very handsome gothic arch with an arabesque border, opened on the south side, and showed within the statue of Rama, seated on a lotus, with a gilt but tarnished umbrella over his head, and his wife, the earth-born Seeta, beside him. From hence we went to two of the other temples, which were both octagonal, with domes not unlike those of glass-houses. They were both dedicated to Siva and contained nothing but the symbol of the Deity, of black marble. ...Meantime the priest of Rama, who had received his fee before, and was well satisfied, came up with several of the villagers to ask if I would see the Rajah’s palace. On my assenting they led us to a really noble gothic gateway, overgrown with beautiful broad-leaved ivy, but in good preservation, and decidedly handsomer, though in pretty much the same style with the “Holy Gate” of the Kremlin in Moscow. Within this, which had apparently been the entrance into the city, extended a broken, but still stately, avenue of tall trees and on either side a wilderness of ruined buildings, overgrown with trees and brush-wood. I asked who had destroyed the place and was told Seraiah Dowla, an answer which (as it was evidently a Hindo ruin) fortunately suggested to me the name of the Raja Kissen Chand. On asking whether this had been his residence, one of the peasants answered in the affirmative, adding that the Raja’s grand children yet lived hard by.... Our guide meantime turned short to the right, and led us into what were evidently the ruins of a very extensive palace. Some parts of it reminded me of Conway Castle, and others of Bolton Abbey. It had towers like the former, though of less stately height, and had also long and striking cloisters of Gothic arches, but all overgrown with ivy and jungle, roofless and desolate. Here, however, in a court, whose gateway had still its old folding doors on their hinges, the two boys whom we had seen on the beach came forward to meet us, were announced to us as the great-

grandsons of Raja Kissen Chand, and invited us very courteously in Persian to enter their father's dwelling. I looked round in exceeding surprise. There was no more appearance of inhabitation than in Conway. Two or three cows were grazing among the ruins, and one was looking out from the top of a dilapidated turret, whither she had climbed to browse on the ivy. The breech of broken cannon, and a fragment of a mutilated inscription lay on the grass, which was evidently only kept down by the grazing of cattle, and the jackals, whose yells began to be heard around us as the evening closed in, seemed the natural lords of the place. Of course I expressed no astonishment, but said how much respect I felt for their family, of whose ancient splendour I was well informed, and that I should be most happy to pay my compliments to the Raja, their father. They immediately led us up a short steep straight flight of steps in the thickness of the wall of one of the towers, precisely such as that of which we find the remains in one of the gateways of Rhuddlan Castle, assuring me that it was a very "good road" and at the door of a little vaulted and unfurnished room like that which is shown in Carnarvon Castle, as the Queen's bed chamber, we were received by the Raja Omichand, a fat shortish man, of about 45, of rather fair complexion, but with no other clothes than his waist cloth and Brahminical string, and only distinguished from his vassals by having his forehead marked all over with alternate stripes of chalk, vermilion and gold leaf. I, confess I was moved by the apparent poverty of the representative of a house once very powerful, and paid him more attention than I perhaps might have done had his drawing room presented a more princely style. He was exceedingly pleased by my calling him "Maharaja", or Great King, as if he were still a sovereign like his ancestors. The news had probably spread through the village that a "burra adme" (a great man) had come to see the Raja, with divers account of our riches and splendour, and about one o'clock an alarm of thieves was given by my sirdar-bearer, who happening to look out of one of the cabin windows, saw

three black heads just above the water, cautiously approaching the sides of the vessel. His outcry of "Dacoit, Dacoit" alarmed us, but also alarmed them; they turned rapidly round, and in a moment were seen running up the river banks. Thus we had a specimen of both the good and evil of India."

**Swarupganj**—A village on the south bank of Jalangi at its junction with the Bhagirathi. It was at one time an important mart, and centre of river trade, but with the opening of the railways it has lost its importance. It is a station for the collection of Nadia Rivers tolls.