

## CHAPTER II.

### HISTORY.

#### Chapter II

#### History.

#### Early history.

The antiquities and ancient history of Ambála, and especially of the Kurukshetra or battle-field of the Pándavas and Kauravas and of the numerous traditions connected with it that centre in Thánesar, have been discussed very fully by General Cunningham in his Archæological Survey Reports I, 245; II, 212-231; XIV, 72-106. Ambála and its neighbourhood are intimately connected with the earliest dawn of Indian history. The strip of country included between the Saraswati and Drishadvati (the Sarusti and the Ghaggar) is the "Holy Land" of the Hindu faith, the first permanent home of Aryans in India, and the spot in which their religion took shape. Hence the sanctity, even in modern times, of the waters of the Sarusti, which attracts worshippers from all parts of India, even from Orissa and remote portions of Bengal. The towns of Thánesar and Pehowa are the chief centres of attraction, but its whole bank is lined with shrines. At Thánesar as many as 100,000 persons have been known, even of late years, to assemble on the occasion of an eclipse; and a tank, filled from the Sarusti, is yearly bathed in by double or treble that number. Nor has subsequent history failed to supply food to keep alive the associations of remote antiquity. Thánesar and its neighbourhood, the Kurukshetra, teem with traditions of the great conflict of the Pándavas and Kauravas, and this fact, without doubt, has done much to stir up in the Hindu mind a lively desire to visit the sacred spots. The Mahábhárata, recording as it does the exploits of these heroes of antiquity, has exercised, and still does exercise, an unbounded influence over the masses of the people. It is always in their thoughts, and such religious ideas as they have are drawn exclusively from its pages. The scenes therefore whereon the great drama was played out cannot fail to interest and attract them. Modern rules of sanitation have done much to render unpopular the fairs at which pilgrims congregate, and the numbers have of late years undoubtedly fallen off. It is probable, however, that only idle lookers-on will be deterred by such measures, and Thánesar will always continue to be a resort of the faithful from all parts of India.\*

The name Kurukshetra, or "field of Kuru," is derived from Kuru, father of Santanu, great-grandfather of the heroes of the Mahábhárata. Kuru is said to have become an ascetic on the bank of the great holy lake to the south of Thánesar. The true limits of the holy tract cannot be ascertained with certainty.

\* See account of the town of Thánesar in Chapter VI.

According to popular belief the number of places of pilgrimage in it is 360, but no complete list of them is given. Its circuit is variously said to be 20, 40 and 48 *kos*, and these accounts would make it include the town of Jínd, which is 65 miles distant from Thánesar. This account General Cunningham\* rejects as a late invention of interested Brahmans, wishing to curry favour with the *Sikh Rája* of Jind, by bringing his capital within the range of the holy circuit; and he concludes, by accepting as the probable boundary a line drawn from Ratan Jaksh on the Sarusti, westwards to Pehowa, from Pehowa southwards to beyond Pundri, from thence eastward to Naráina, and from Naráina northward again to Ratan Jaksh. This circuit is as nearly as possible 80 miles, or 40 *kos*; and within its limits lie all the famous places connected with the history of the Pándus. It may therefore be accepted as approximately correct.

Of the later period of Hindu history there is but little to record. The capital of the country at this time was the town of Srughna, the site of which General Cunningham has identified† with the village of Sugh, situated in a bend of the old bed of the Jamna, now utilized for the Western Jamna Canal, and close to Jagádhri and Buria. Srughna is mentioned by Hwen Thsang, the Chinese pilgrim of the 7th century, as a town  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles in circuit, the capital of a kingdom and a seat of considerable learning, both Buddhistic and Brahminical. He describes the kingdom of Srughna as extending to the mountains on the north, and to the Ganges on the east, with the Yamuna or Jamna flowing through the midst of it. The capital he represents as having been partly in ruins; but General Cunningham thinks that there is evidence in the coins found on the spot to show that it was occupied down to the time of the Muhammadan conquest. He thus describes the extent and position of the ruins:—

“The village of Sugh occupies one of the most remarkable positions that I have seen during the whole course of my researches. It is situated on a projecting triangular spur of high land, and is surrounded on three sides by the bed of the old Jamna, which is now the Western Jamna Canal. On the north and west faces, it is further protected by two deep ravines, so that the position is a ready-made stronghold, which is covered on all sides, except the west, by natural defences. In shape it is almost triangular, with a large projecting fort or citadel at each of the angles. The site of the north fort is now occupied by the castle and village of Dyálgarh. The village of Amadálpur stands on the site of the south-east fort, and that of the south-west is unoccupied. Each of these forts is 1,500 feet long and 1,000 feet broad, and each face of the triangle which connects them together is upwards of half-a-mile in length, that to the east being 4,000, and those to the north-west and south-west 3,000 feet each. The whole circuit of the position is therefore 22,000 feet, or upwards of 4 miles, which is considerably more than the  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles of Hwen Thsang's measurement. But as the north fort is separated from the main position by a deep sandy ravine, called the Rohára Nala, it is possible that it may have been unoccupied at the time of the pilgrim's visit. This would reduce the circuit of the position to 19,000 feet or upwards of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles, and bring it into accord with the pilgrim's measurement. The small village of Sugh occupied the west side of the position, and the small town of Buria lies immediately to the north of Dyálgarh. The occupied houses, at the time of my visit, were as follows: Mándalpur 100, Sugh 125, Dyálgarh 150, and Buria 3,500, or altogether 3,875 houses, containing a population of about 20,000 souls.

\* Archaeological Report, 1863-64, pp. 215-216.

† Arch. Surv. Rep., 1863-64, pp. 226 and *f*.

## Chapter II.

### History.

#### Early history.

Later Hindu period.

## Chapter II.

## History.

## Later Hindu period.

"Of Sugh itself the people have no special traditions, but there is a ruined mound to the north-west of the village, and several foundations made of large bricks inside the village. Between Sugh and Amadalpur there is a square tank called the Surajkund, which is probably old, but the temple on its bank is a modern one. On the east and south-east faces, the earthen ramparts still form huge mounds on the crest of the high bank. A line of similar mounds extends from north-north-east to south-south-west nearly across the middle of the position, and towards the east there are several isolated mounds. But on none of these could I find any ancient remains, excepting broken bricks of large size from  $9\frac{1}{2}$  to  $10\frac{1}{2}$  inches broad and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches in thickness. These large bricks are unmistakable evidences of antiquity; but the great number of ancient coins that are found all over the place affords evidence equally certain and much more interesting. The place was said to have been visited only six weeks before by Lieutenant Pullan's coin collector; but so plentiful is the yield that I obtained no less than 125 old Hindu coins of all ages, from the small Diliāl pieces of the Chohān and Tānar Rājās of Delhi, to the square punch-marked pieces of silver and copper, which are certainly as old as the rise of Buddhism, and which were probably the common currency of India as early as 1,000 B. C. According to the traditions of the people the city of Māndar or Māndalpur formerly covered an extent of 12 *kos*, and included Jagādhrī and Chaneti on the west with Buria and Dyālgarh to the north. As Jagādhrī lies three miles to the west, it is not possible that the city could ever have extended so far, but we may reasonably admit that the gardens and summer houses of the wealthier inhabitants may possibly have extended to that distance. At Chaneti, which lies two miles to the north-west, old coins are found in considerable numbers; but it is now entirely separated from Buria and Dyālgarh by a long space of open country.

Thānesar, also, is mentioned by Hwen Thsang as the capital of a *quasi*-independent kingdom. Only a small portion of this, however, would fall within the boundaries of the present district of Ambāla. Thānesar was sacked by Mahmūd of Ghazni.

## Muhammadian period.

There is but little to record of the district during the period covered by the Mughal empire. It appears to have formed part of the Sirhind Division or Sarkār of the Delhi Province or Subāh, and to have been administered principally from Sirhind. Ambāla itself was probably founded in the 14th century, but the town was originally nothing more than a cluster of villages united together in one common village site, and such importance as the place has is of quite recent growth. Tradition does not recall the name of any prominent local administrator under the empire, and the principal relics of Muhammadan rule are a few of the *minārs* (brick pillars 24 feet high) marking the old trunk road from Lahore to Delhi, the alignment of the old Western Jamna Canal, and some faint traces of an abortive attempt to irrigate from the Sutlej in the Rūpar tahsīl by a small channel known as the Mirza Kandi Canal. [The main fact about the district is that by its geographical position it was destined to feel the effects of every important campaign in Northern India. Hemmed in on one side by the hills and on the other by the great jungle tracts bordering on the Rājputāna desert, Ambāla was the central spot through or near which every horde of invaders was bound to pass on the way to the battle-ground of India at Pānipat, with Delhi as the ultimate goal.] Placed in the direct track of successive invasions the people were ground down till they lost all power of resistance to difficulty, and hence the ease with which the country fell, almost without a



blow, into the hands of the Cis-Sutlej Sikhs in 1763. The bitter and comparatively recent experience of the country under Sikh rule has blotted out nearly all recollection of Muhammadan times, and it is rare in Ambála to hear the word *Turk* used as in the Punjab districts as an anathema marking the survival of ancient hatred of the Mughal rulers.

The following are among the objects of antiquarian interest relating to the Muhammadan period mentioned for the Ambála district in the Punjab collection of 1875 :—

- (1) Thaska, Tahsíl Pípli : the tomb of Shah Bhik, a very perfect masonry building, built in 1710, and still used as a place of worship by Mussalmáns.
- (2) Shahabad, Tahsíl Pípli : the mosque known as Mastgarh, built by Shah Jehán in 1630, but appropriated by the Sikhs more than a century ago, and now used by them as a place of worship.
- (3) Thánesar, Tahsíl Pípli : the tomb of Shekh Chilli, built of red granite and marble in 1660, and still in good preservation.
- (4) Thánesar : Jama Masjid, built over four centuries ago by Ferukh Shah, now in ruins and imperfect.
- (5) Buria, Tahsíl Jagádhri : the Rang Mahal, an old Muhammadan house built by Shah Jehán, a well built place with massive stone arches. The place is now a ruin, but with the interior tolerably preserved.
- (6) Sadhaura, Tahsíl Naráingarh : the tomb of Shah Newáz, built in 1450, with a mosque dating from 1600. The mosque is a curiously built place with three domes of peculiar shape and an inscription in Arabic characters over the gateway.
- (7) Sadhanra : the Sangni mosque built of blocks of grey stone over 400 years ago ; a fair specimen but partly in ruins.
- (8) Sadhaura : two old gateways built of red brick in 1618 according to an inscription on a stone let into one of the arches.

Mounds (*the*) marking the sites of ancient villages abound all over the district. In the Naráingarh tahsíl there are traces of what is said to have been a famous old Hindu city known as Karor, which, if tradition is to be believed, extended over a huge tract of country between Shahzádpur and Naráingarh. In the low hills of Tahsíl Rúpar near Bardar there are the remains of what is said to have been a Rájpút stronghold, which must also have been at one time an important place judging from the number of old wells which have come to light at various times. From coins dug up among the ruins the place would appear to have been inhabited in the comparatively recent times shortly before the Sikh conquest. Lastly among the antiquities

## Chapter II. History.

Muhammadan period.

Antiquities.

## Chapter II.

## History.

## Antiquities.

of the district some notice may be made of the very curious place Siswán in the low hills of tahsíl Kharar. Though now of no importance Siswán was long the centre of an extensive trade with the Simla States and Yárkand, and in spite of its out-of-the-way position there was a thriving settlement of merchants there down to quite recent years, with a large bazaar built by Mr. Melvill about 35 years ago. The trade has been latterly destroyed owing to the bad faith of the merchants in their dealings with the traders in the far hills. The route is practically given up, and the place is now almost deserted and fast going to ruin, but the remains show that it must at one time have been highly prosperous.

## The Sikhs.

The history may now pass on at one stride to the time of the fall of the Muhammadan Empire of Delhi. Its practical interest begins with the rise of the Sikh principalities south of the Sutlej during the latter half of the last century. As the central power of the Empire relaxed under the blows of the Mahratta on the one side and the Duráni on the other, the Sikh marauders of the Punjab proper began to extend their encroachments beyond the Sutlej and ere long acquired for themselves the heart of the country between that river and the Jamna. The first direct experience of the Sikhs had been in the time of Guru Tegh Singh Bahádur, who roamed the country from Hánísi to the Sutlej, and subsisted by plunder from 1664 to 1673. Under his successor Guru Gobind Singh a chain of forts was established at Anandpur in the Hoshiárpur district, a few miles north of the Sutlej, at Chamkor in the Rúpar tahsíl, and at Náhan in the hills, commanding the whole eastern portion of Ambála. For the first half of the eighteenth century there was no recognised leader of the Sikhs, who were, however, engaged in frequent struggles with the Delhi Empire, and were rapidly forming into the twelve great confederacies or *mishls* described in pages 114 to 118 of *Cunningham's History*. The storm burst at last in 1763. The Sikhs of the Mánjha country of Lahore, Amritsar and Ferozepore combined their forces at Sirhind, routed and killed the Afghán Governor Zain Khan, and pouring across the Sutlej occupied the whole country to the Jamna without further opposition. "Tradition still describes how the Sikhs dispersed as soon as the battle was won, and how, riding day and night, each horseman would throw his belt and scabbard, his articles of dress and accoutrement, until he was almost naked, into successive villages, to mark them as his."\* The chiefs hastily divided up among themselves and their followers the whole country to the Jamna, and asserted themselves as rulers of the people. In a very few cases, such as those of the Sayad Mír of Kotáha and the Ráipur and Rámgarh Rájput Sardárs of Naráingarh, and the Baidwán Jat Sardárs of Kharar, the indigenuous leaders of the country were strong enough to hold their own after a fashion, and to assimilate their position to that of the conquerors. Elsewhere the Sikh rule

---

\* Cunningham's history of the Sikhs, page 110.

was supreme, and the experience undergone by the people of the district at the hands of these merciless invaders has left its mark on the country to the present day.

The history of the next forty years is made up of the endless petty warfare of these independent Sikh chiefs among themselves, except when a common danger banded them to resist the encroachments of the more powerful States of Patiala and Mani Mājra on the north, and Ládwa, Kaithal and Thánesar on the south. Each separate family, and each group of feudatories strong enough to stand alone, built itself a strong fort as a centre from which it could harry the whole neighbourhood. Many of these are still in existence and a marked feature of the district, recalling the extraordinary lawlessness of a period when literally every man's hand was turned against his brother. No attention was paid to the country by the British Government, which had fixed the Jamna as the furthest limit for political enterprise, and it is believed that the profoundest ignorance prevailed both as to the constitution, the rights and the political strength of the supposed rulers. From 1806 to 1808 the position rapidly changed. On the one hand, the Cis-Sutlej chiefs themselves were panic struck at the sudden danger threatened to them by the rise of Ranjít Singh's power from beyond the Sutlej. In the three successive years 1806 to 1808 raids were made by Ranjít Singh in person to Ludhiána, to Naráingarh and to Ambála. It was openly announced by him that he intended swallowing up the whole country to the Jamna, and it was realised that one power and one only could prevent his immediate success. On the other hand, the British Government feared a new danger from the north by a combined invasion of the French, the Turks and the Persians, and it was hastily decided to give up the Jamna as the boundary, and to trust to the new principle of alliance with a strong buffer State at Lahore. At the same time it was recognised that Ranjít Singh was himself a source of danger not to be despised, and, with the Government in this mood in 1808, an impulse was easily given to the policy of active interference by the arrival at Delhi of a deputation represented by Jínd, Patiala and Kaithal, to invoke assistance for the Cis-Sutlej States. Some help had been given to the British by Jínd, Kaithal and Thánesar in the struggle with the Mah-rattas five years before. It was apparently assumed that the whole territory to the Sutlej was parcelled out among a few leading States of the same character through whom the country could be strongly governed, and the efforts of authorities were aimed at the two-fold object of, on the one hand, securing an effective alliance with Ranjít Singh, and on the other, extending British protection to these lesser States ranging from the Jamna to the Sutlej.

## Chapter II.

## History.

The Sikhs.

The overtures were eventually successful, and a definite treaty was made with Ranjít Singh on the 25th April 1809, by which he surrendered his new acquisitions south of the Sutlej, and bound himself to abstain from further encroachments on the left bank

Proclamations of  
1809 and 1811.



## Chapter II.

## History.

Proclamations of  
1809 and 1811.

of that river. The treaty was followed up in May 1809, by the celebrated proclamation of Colonel Ochterlony, on behalf of the British Government to the Cis-Sutlej chiefs. This proclamation beginning with the quaint wording that it was "clearer than the sun and better proved than the existence of yesterday" that the British action was prompted by the chiefs themselves, is given in full in Appendix 10 of *Cunningham's History*, and at page 122 of the *Punjab Râjas*. It includes seven short articles only, of which Nos. 1 to 5 are important; Nos. 1 to 3 limited Ranjit Singh's power and declared the Cis-Sutlej chiefs sole owners of their possessions free of money tribute to the British; while Nos. 4 and 5 required them in return on their side to furnish supplies for the army, and to assist the British by arms against enemies from any quarter as occasion might hereafter arise.

It is impossible to read the history of these transactions without seeing that the Government were in reality taking a most important step almost in the dark. Instead of finding the Ambála territory under the control of a few central States, they soon realised that they had given it over for ever to hordes of adventurers with no powers of cohesion, who aimed only at mutual aggression, and whose sole idea of Government was to grind down the people of the country to the utmost limit of oppression. The first point was easily settled by a sharp reminder given in a supplementary proclamation of 1811, that every man would have to be content with what he held in 1809, and that the British Government would tolerate no fighting among themselves. It was, however, found that as a fact the so-called Cis-Sutlej Sovereign States were represented, as far as Ambála was concerned, by some thirty petty rulers with estates ranging from 20 to over 100 villages, and by a host of small fraternities comprising many hundreds of the rank and file among the followers of the original conquerors, who had been quartered over the country with separate villages for their maintenance, and who were all alike now vested with authority as independent rulers by the vague terms of the proclamation of 1809. Published works have nowhere very clearly recognised how sorely the Government repented of its mistake; but there seems no doubt as to the facts; and it is not to be wondered at that Sir David Ochterlony should have privately admitted to the Governor-General in 1818 that the proclamation of 1809 had been based on an erroneous idea.

History 1809 to  
1847.

From 1809 to 1847 persistent efforts were made to enforce good government through the Political Agency at Ambála among the endless semi-independent States. The records of the time bear witness to the hopeless nature of the undertaking. They teem with references to the difficult enquiries necessitated by the frequent disputes among the principalities, by their preposterous attempts to evade control, and by acts of extortion and violent crime in their dealings with the villages. Year by year Government was driven in self-defence to tighten the reins, and every opportunity was taken to strengthen its hold on the country.

by enforcing its claims to lapse by escheat on the death without lineal heirs of the possessors of 1809 or their descendants. It was thus that the British District of Ambála gradually grew up, each successive lapse being made the occasion for regular settlements of the village revenues and the introduction of direct British rule. At the same time Government scrupulously observed the engagements of 1809, and with the exception of the prohibition of internal war by the proclamation of 1811 the powers and privileges of the chiefs remained untouched. Each chief, great and small alike, had within his own territory absolute civil, criminal, and fiscal jurisdiction, subject only to the general authority of the Agent to the Governor-General. No tribute was taken from them, and, though they were required, in the case of war, to aid the Government, yet no special contingent was fixed. The right to escheats was the sole return for its protection which the Government demanded. Throughout a long period of peace, during which, while north of the Sutlej every vestige of independence vanished before the encroachments of Ranjit Singh, the Cis-Sutlej Chiefs enjoyed a complete immunity from invasion, and retained undiminished rights of sovereignty. After thirty-six years, with the exception of a few States which had lapsed from failure of heirs, each chief still found himself the ruler of the territory which he or his fathers had held at the time when they passed under British protection.

## Chapter II.

## History.

History 1809 to 1847.

In 1846-47 a fresh step had to be taken owing to passive obstruction or open hostility on the part of the chiefs, when called on to assist the Government with supplies and men during its campaign against the Trans-Sutlej Sikhs in 1845. No occasion had occurred for testing their gratitude for the benefits secured to them, until the declaration of the first Sikh war and the Sutlej campaign of 1845. But when tested, it miserably failed. Throughout the war, few of the chiefs displayed their loyalty more conspicuously than by abstaining from open rebellion. Their previous conduct had not been such as to encourage the British Government in its policy towards them. Almost without exception they had abused its indulgence, and made the security of its protection a means of extortion and excess of every kind. There was nothing whatever to admire in the internal management or administration of their estates, as was amply testified by the universal satisfaction with which the peasants of those estates which, from time to time, had lapsed, came under direct British management. It has been well said that "independence, for these Sikh Chiefs, had no nobler significance than the right to do evil without restraint, and to oppress the people who were so unfortunate as to be their subjects."\*

The introduction of British rule.

Having thus already lost the confidence of the Government, the Sikh Chiefs in the Sutlej campaign forfeited all claim to consideration. It was seen that the time had arrived for the introduction of sweeping measures of reform; and the Government unhesitatingly resolved upon a reduction of their privileges.

\* Griffin, "Rájas of the Punjab" p. 218.



## Chapter II.

## History.

The introduction of  
British rule.

Several important measures were at once adopted. The police jurisdiction of most of the chiefs was abolished, the existing system being most unfavourable to the detection and punishment of crime. All transit and customs duties were also abolished, and, thirdly, a commutation was accepted for the personal service of the chief and his contingent. The despatch of the Governor-General, embodying this resolution, was dated November 7th, 1846. The only States exempted were: Patiala, Jind, Nabha,\* Faridkot, Maler Kotla, Chhachhrauli (Kalsia), Raikot, Buria and Mamdot. With these exceptions, the police jurisdiction was made over to European officers. The Political Agency of Ambála was transformed into a Commissionership, under an officer styled the Commissioner of the Cis-Sutlej States. His subordinates, however, under the titles of Deputy and Assistant Commissioners, while taking over the judicial and executive functions of the chiefs, still retained, for a time, their powers as political officers. At the same time the more serious offenders in the campaign of 1845 were visited with signal punishment. Their possessions were confiscated to Government and in some cases they were themselves removed as prisoners from the Province. One hundred and seventeen villages were in this way added to the British district in Pípli by confiscation from the Rája of Ládwa; 106 in Rúpar and Kharar from the Sardár of Rúpar; 72 in the same tahsils from the Sodhis of Anandpur; and 89 in Naráingarh from the Rája of Kapurthala. As regards minor chiefs similar severe measures were considered unnecessary, though the majority "had not shown their loyalty in 1845 in any more conspicuous way than in not joining the enemy," and for a short time an attempt was made to leave them the unrestricted right of collecting the revenue of their villages in kind as hitherto. It soon however became apparent that the chiefs, deprived of their police jurisdiction, were unable to collect their revenue. A proposal was therefore made for a regular settlement of the land revenue. But before final orders had been passed upon this point, the second Sikh campaign commenced. It ended in the annexation of the Punjab, and in the removal of the political reasons which had hitherto complicated the question of the amount of power to be left to the Cis-Sutlej Chiefs. In June 1849, it was accordingly declared that, with the exception of the States already mentioned, all the chiefs should "cease to hold sovereign powers, should lose all criminal, civil, and fiscal jurisdiction, and should be considered as no more than ordinary subjects of the British Government in the possession of certain exceptional privileges."† The revenues were still to be theirs, but were to be assessed by British officers, and under British rules. The whole administration now vested in the British Government, and was placed under the superintendence of the recently formed Board of Administration at Lahore. The District Officers ceased to

\* Nabha was exceptionally treated, one quarter of its territory being confiscated.

† Griffin's "Rájas of the Punjab," p. 217.

exercise political functions, and the Commissioner was appointed the sole referee in disputes between the chiefs. The final step necessitated by the march of events was taken in 1852 when the revenue settlement begun for British villages in 1847 was extended to the villages of the chiefs. Thereafter the chiefs have ceased to retain any relics of their former power except that they are still permitted to collect direct from their villages the cash assessment of revenue as fixed at regular settlement. They have sunk to the position of *jágirdárs*, but as such retain a right to the revenue assigned to them in perpetuity, subject only to lapse on failure of heirs who are unable to trace descent as collaterals from the original holders of 1809 or such other year as may have been determined under the special circumstances of the family as the basis from which status shall be derived.

The following account of the course of events in 1857 is taken from the Punjab Mutiny Report. The proximity of the Cis-Sutlej States to the focus of the revolt rendered it a very difficult matter to uphold in it British authority as supreme. The inhabitants of a part of it were to a certain extent one with the rebels of Delhi in race, in feeling, and in creed; there is no natural boundary to separate the Punjab from the North-Western Provinces; and this undividedness of country, joined with the care entailed on the authorities by the imperative necessity for holding the Grand Trunk Road, made this division a very anxious charge. But Mr. Barnes, the Commissioner, and his District Officers nobly and successfully exerted themselves to put down all discontent and crime, and to show that we still had power and the means to keep it. The feudal chiefs were ordered to furnish their quotas of horse and foot, and the revenue they had hitherto paid in commutation was remitted. The following extract from Mr. Barnes' report will show the inestimable value of the services rendered to us also by the chiefs of the protected Sikh States; the first stroke towards securing their allegiance was taken by Mr. Forsyth, Deputy Commissioner of Ambála, in calling on the Rája of Patíála, at the very first *émeute*, to send in his troops, thus leading him at once to take a decided part, from which he has never since swerved. Mr. Barnes says:—

"The station of Ambála was left with four weak companies (about 250 men) of the 2nd Bengal Fusiliers, the 5th Regiment Native Infantry, and some six-pounder guns, to man which we had only native artillerymen. A redoubt was erected with the church in the centre, and the remaining residents were concentrated in the houses around. A militia was formed of uncovenanted officers; and the magazine, the treasure, and the commissariat stores were all lodged in the redoubt, which was garrisoned by a company of the Fusiliers. Owing to the defection of the Nassiri Battalion, there was no available escort for the siege train or for the ammunition so urgently needed by the army. I offered, however, to furnish political escorts, and accordingly the siege train came down from Phillour under a guard of horse and foot furnished by the Nábha Rája, and accompanied by a detachment of the 9th Irregulars under Lieutenant Campbell. The ammunition was conveyed by a party of the District police, and so, throughout the campaign, the most important military stores were constantly sent down under the charge of contingents furnished by the chiefs of the Cis-Sutlej States. Their troops protected our stations and patrolled the

## Chapter II. History.

The introduction of  
British rule.

The mutiny.



## Chapter II.

## History.

## The mutiny.

Grand Trunk Road from Ferozepore and Phillour down to the very walls of Delhi. The safety of this Province may be attributed to their loyalty and good example. The Rája of Jind, with Captain McAndrew and a small but well-disciplined force, acted as the vanguard of the army, and by my directions kept always in advance. When the first detachment of Europeans reached Karnál, this little band proceeded twenty-two miles further to Pá nipat, quieting the country, securing the road, and collecting supplies; and in this manner they advanced boldly to within twenty miles of Delhi. A detachment of the Jind troops seized the bridge at Bagpat, and thus enabled the Meerut force to join head-quarters. A party of Jind *sowárs*, with Captain Hodson at their head, rode into Meerut and opened our communication with that station. The troops of the Mahárája of Patialá guarded Thánesar and Ambála, and the safety of Ludhiána was entrusted to the Rája of Nábha and the Kotla Nawáb. These eminent services afforded by the Cis-Sutlej Chiefs are thus casually noticed as part of the history of the late campaign. I feel under the deepest obligations to them, and the Governor-General, in the *Gazette* announcing the fall of Delhi, has declared that they shall not be without their reward."

Next in importance to the securing of the Grand Trunk Road, and of the loyalty of the Native Chiefs, was the necessity for saving the treasures from attack. They were all, at the commencement of the outbreak, under sepoy guards. Mr. Barnes promptly issued instructions to his District Officers, in obedience to which the Ambála treasure (Rs. 3,50,000) was placed under the 1st Fusiliers, and the Thánesar money (Rs. 10,00,000) sent to the same guard. Mr. Ricketts sent his Rs. 1,50,000 to the care of the two companies of the 8th Queen's Regiment at Phillour. Major Marsden at Ferozepore placed his in the entrenchment, where it was guarded by H. M.'s 61st Regiment. Only the Simla treasury remained under a guard of natives, and they, being Gurkhás of the Nassiri Battalion, were considered staunch. However, during their temporary mutiny, although the Simla treasury remained untouched, the branch treasury at Kasauli was plundered of Rs. 32,043, of which only Rs. 12,063 were recovered. Mr. Barnes thus describes the means adopted to secure ready and regular conveyance for stores and ammunition to the army, and sick and wounded men from it—means which never once failed of their end, and on which the District Officers reflect with an honest pride, that in no case was a single cart unreasonably delayed or a single rupee's worth of stores plundered :

"The requirements of the army became incessant, and the road was thronged with carts laden with every variety of stores. A bullock train was suggested by Mr. Forsyth to be carried on by the district officers. This arrangement proved defective in practice for the want of a general superintendent in charge of the whole line. I obtained leave from the Chief Commissioner to organize a 'Military Transport Train' under the agency of Captain Briggs, an able and zealous officer of great experience. His exertions and complete success deserve the special thanks of Government. We had been drained of our carriage, and no assistance could be drawn from either the Ganges Doáb or the Delhi territory. The Army Commissariat could give no help. Carts that reached Delhi never came back, and there was imminent danger of a dead-lock. All these difficulties were overcome by Captain Briggs. His jurisdiction extended from Ferozepore to Delhi, 265 miles. A train of 30 waggons a day from each of the principal stations of Ambála, Ludhiána, and Karnál, and 14 waggons per diem from Ferozepore, was soon organized. The same number was also daily employed on the return journey. Stores of every description, especially the enormous demands for ordnance ammunition, were safely and regularly supplied to the army. The sick and wounded were comfortably conveyed from camp to Ambála. The train was in full operation from the 22nd July to the middle of October. The scheme



was eminently successful owing to the skill, tact, and indefatigable energy of Captain Briggs. He has fully acknowledged his obligations to the civil authorities of the Cis-Sutlej States, who gave him their utmost support. The cost of the train was Rs. 97,317, and it has fully realized the objects for which it was organized."

Chapter II  
History.

The mutiny.

This division (in Mr. Barnes' words) "acted as a kind of breakwater: beyond was the raging sea; inside was comparative calm." It could not, however, be expected that the surface should be unruffled. At first the natives seemed aghast at the enormity of the odds against us; but after the first shock came the desire to rebel, and it required the strongest determination to quell incipient insurrection. The police were exhorted to use their arms freely against any one found in the act of perpetrating violent crime. The lawless and predatory were checked by the manifestation of a will on the part of the officers. Some were killed in pursuit, and 123 executed by process of law, partly by district officers sitting in commission, and partly by Mr. Barnes. Besides these, 258 mutineers were executed, and 102 sentenced to imprisonment, who deserved death, as they belonged to the mutinous regiments at Ferozepore. It was only by such measures that districts were controlled which were quickly escaping from our grasp.

It was known for some weeks previous to the outbreak that the minds of the native soldiers in this station were unsettled. On the 19th April mysterious fires began to occur, and, though they were at first attributed to the thatchers, the eyes of all the residents were gradually opened to see that the soldiery and none others were the real authors of them. Mr. Forsyth obtained positive information, on the 7th and 8th May, that the prediction of a rebellious clique among the sepoys was "that in the following week blood would be shed at Delhi or Ambála, and that a general rising of the sepoys would take place." On May the 10th, the day of the Meerut mutiny, the 5th and 60th Regiments Native Infantry, and the detached guard of the 60th at the treasury, simultaneously rushed to their bells of arms, and began loading their muskets. The treasury guard remained under arms the whole day in direct disobedience to orders. This overt act of mutiny was unconditionally forgiven by the military authorities, and the result was that large portions of these regiments afterwards joined the rebels at Delhi; the remainder, when ordered into jail on September 1st by the directions of the Chief Commissioner, attempted to fly, but were killed by the European troops, or afterwards captured and tried. Mr. Forsyth's exertions in procuring carriage at the first outbreak—when, as Mr. Barnes says, the natives, thinking our rule at an end, were deserting the town "like rats from a sinking ship"—were most successful. Mr. Forsyth says:—

"As soon as it was determined by the Commander-in-Chief that an onward move should be made, a sudden difficulty arose in the want of carriage. The Deputy Commissary-General having officially declared his inability to meet the wants of the army, the civil authorities were called upon to supply the demand. At Ambála there has always been a difficulty to furnish carriage of any kind, the carts being of a very inferior description. However, such as they were, they

**Chapter II.****History.****The Mutiny.**

had to be pressed into service ; and in the course of a week, after the utmost exertion 500 carts, 2,000 camels, and 2,000 coolies were made over to the Commissariat Department ; 30,000 maunds of grain were likewise collected and stored for the army in the town of Ambála."

As soon as this first difficulty had been overcome, the necessity for preserving the peace of the district led Mr. Barnes to call on the commutation-tenure chiefs to furnish men instead of their usual tribute in money. By the operation of this order, a force of 459 foot and 259 horse was soon at our disposal, but the moral effect of these and the other influential chiefs siding with us was of far greater value than even the force they supplied. Mr. Barnes observes further:—

"In addition to these jágirdárs, who were bound to supply levies, several public-spirited individuals volunteered their own services and brought several followers. Among these the most prominent were Ráo Rahím Bakhsh, of Panjlása, who with 50 followers guarded the road between Ambála and Jagádhri and the Sirkardahs of Sadhaura, who furnished 60 men to protect the public and private buildings in the civil station, thus relieving our police from very heavy duty."

The civil courts in this district were for some time unavoidably closed. Mr. Forsyth's time was wholly engrossed by his pressing miscellaneous duties. Captain McAndrew, Assistant Commissioner, was on duty with the advanced guard of the Dehli field force. Mr. Plowden, Assistant Commissioner, was on detached duty on the river Jamna ; and the time of the only remaining civil officer, Mr. Vaughan, Extra Assistant Commissioner, was entirely taken up with the very heavy duties of the treasury. It was not till Mr. C. P. Elliot was transferred from Lahore to Ambála that the court could be re-opened, and by his well-known industry and perseverance he rapidly cleared off all arrears in this department. Mr. Plowden was detached with a squadron of the 4th Light Cavalry under Captain Wyld, and two companies of the 5th Native Infantry under Captain Garstin, to keep down the turbulent population of the banks of the Jamna. He was out in camp from 19th May to November, and was always to be found wherever danger was threatening or insurrection abroad. His force (Mr. Barnes states) was the means of saving Saharanpur, whither he had gone to act in conjunction with Mr. Spankie, the energetic Magistrate and Collector of that place. Even when deserted and fired at by his Hindústáni troops, Mr. Plowden held on with his Sikhs, and eventually succeeded in checking the progress of the bold marauders, and destroying their short-lived power. Captain Gardner, a Dehli refugee, was sent with two other companies of the 5th Native Infantry to guard Rúpar. Mr. Barnes gave him authority to act as a Magistrate if needful, and he did excellent service. He remained there until the men were called in. The zeal he displayed led to his death, which occurred at Kasauli a short time afterwards from illness induced by the exposure and exertions which he had undergone.

**Famines.**

Ambála has only suffered once from serious famine since the formation of the district in 1847. This was in 1860-61 when the rains failed badly throughout the eastern Punjab.

**Chapter II.**  
**History.**  
**Famines.**

The distress was even then somewhat less severe in Ambála than in neighbouring districts, but was aggravated by the influx, which in such seasons always occurs, of refugees from Bikánir and Hariána, who flocked into the district in many instances only to die of starvation. There was widely spread failure of crops both in the autumn harvest of 1860 and the spring harvest of 1861, principally in the Ambála, Jagádhri and Naráingarh tahsils (tahsil Pipli being at that time included in the Thánesar district), and the price of wheat rose to 8 sérs per rupee. Revenue amounting to Rs. 77,000 was suspended in the three tahsils mentioned, and of this sum Rs. 20,778 was eventually remitted in Ambála tahsil and Rs. 14,062 in Jagádhri, while the collection of the balance of arrears was effected gradually as the district recovered with the good harvests which set in from the autumn of 1861.

In subsequent years there have been bad failures of crops in 1868-69, 1884-85, and 1890, involving revenue suspensions aggregating Rs. 45,509, Rs. 30,000 and Rs. 44,000 respectively, principally in the four southern tahsils. There are no instances on record of serious distress from complete failure of crops in tahsils Kharar and Rúpar, and though the distress in the remaining four tahsils was undoubtedly severe in the years specified it was hardly of so acute a nature as to deserve the name of famine, while it has always been possible to recover the arrears of suspended revenue in full in subsequent years without excessive pressure on the people. The year 1869-70 was elsewhere one of famine. In Ambála, however, there was no great distress, the harvest being fairly good. Relief was necessarily provided for the mass of fugitives from Bikánir, Hissár, and Sirsa; but for the residents of the district scarcely any relief was required. All demands were met from funds locally subscribed. On the whole it may be said that although not largely protected by irrigation the greater part of the district is reasonably secure from prolonged scarcity owing to continuous failure of crops. There are great vicissitudes in particular seasons, but it is comparatively rare for two crops in succession to fail badly over a large area. The risk of such a calamity is greatest in tahsils Pipli and Ambála and in these tahsils (and to a somewhat less extent in Naráingarh and Jágardhri) revenue may often be suspended with advantage, though it should seldom be necessary to remit any considerable items altogether.

It has been explained that the Ambála district was constituted in 1847 from territories which had lapsed to Government or been confiscated for misbehaviour during the period 1809-1846. The remainder of the district, as then constituted, covering five tahsils, included the large areas held in jágir by the representatives of hitherto independent chiefs, whose sovereign powers had been finally resumed in 1846-47. Tahsil Pipli was at that time a portion of the district of Thánesar—a district like Ambála formed from lapsed and forfeited territory—and was not added to Ambála till the Thánesar district was broken up in 1862.

**Formation of the  
district.**