area was sown for the rabí than had ever been before, and a fall of rain in January came in good time; and the result was a bumper rabí crop throughout the whole of the Dry Tract. The crops dependent on the floods of the Ghaggar and Satlaj were somewhat below the average, but the crops on wells and unirrigated lands were good. Prices kept very low and barley sold at 60 sers per rupee. In July 1883 the district was in a still more prosperous condition than it had been a year before. The rabí instalment was realised with ease, and at the end of September 1883 the arrears of land-revenue, including suspensions, were only Rs. 243. The peasants had considerable savings in hand and well-replenished stocks of grain, and probably the amount of capital accumulated in the district was larger than at any previous period in its history.

The rains of 1883 have not been very favourable for the kharíf harvest, and the long drought in August made the outturn poor, but the district as a whole obtained a fair supply of fodder and some little grain. The kharíf instalment of the revenue has been almost all realised without the issue of a single warrant. The rainfall of September was most opportune for the rabí sowings, and throughout the district the prospects of the rabí crop are at present excellent (January 1884). The area sown and the produce promise to turn out larger than the district ever saw, and there is every hope of a bumper rabí crop, exceeding even the excellent crops of the last two years. The tide of prosperity is still in full flow, and shows no signs of turning.

CHAPTER III.—The People.

Colonisation of the district. Gradual increase in number and size of villages.

68. When the tract of country comprising the Sirsá district first came under British influence at the beginning of the present century, there were in the whole of the district only 35 inhabited villages, of which eleven were in the valley of the Ghaggar, twelve on the Satlaj, and twelve elsewhere, chiefly scattered in the great Dry Tract. The largest of them was Rániá, the head-quarters of Nawáb Zábita Khán, a place of little size and importance. A few of the villages along the north of the district were held by Sikh Jats, but most of the settlements were insignificant hamlets occupied by Bhattis, Joiyas, Wattus, Bodlas and other Musalmán tribes who lived chiefly by the large herds of cattle they drove hither and thither over the prairie for pasture, and by the plunder they obtained in their frequent raids on settlements further advanced in civilisation. So soon as British influence began to be felt and life and property became more secure, the Sikh Jats pushed forward their colonies from the north, the Bágrí Játs and Kumhárs from the south and the Musalmán Rájputs and Jats from the neighbourhood of the Satlaj, and founded new settlements and devel-

oped agriculture in the waste. The stream of immigration which then commenced has rolled ceaselessly on till now, and the desert has gradually become peopled with flourishing villages, and been brought under the plough. In 1820, soon after the Sotar valley came directly under British rule, there were within the present boundaries of the district altogether 94 inhabited villages, still most numerous on the Ghaggar, where they had increased to 33, and on the Satlaj, where there were 21; in the Dry Tract there were only 36 villages scattered along the present Pattiála border. In 1840, soon after the Dry Tract was brought under British rule, and the district was separately placed under a British officer, there were altogether 331 inhabited villages, of which 81 were on the Ghaggar, 47 in the sandy tract to the south of it, 34 on the Satlaj and 164 in the Dry Tract between the two rivers, chiefly along the present north-east border. A large area of country round Abohar was still uninhabited. In 1850 the number of inhabited villages had increased to 431, the chief increase being in the Dry Tract, where the number had risen from 164 to 239; the whole district, except a tract round Abohar and towards the Satlaj, had been fairly colonised. In 1868 the number of inhabited villages was 628 (only 30 of the 658 townships being then uninhabited). In the Census of 1881 the number was returned at 635, so that very few new villages had been founded in the interval. The whole of the district is now fairly covered with villages, and there is no considerable area without permanent inhabitants. Probably no part of it is more than four miles from the nearest village. The gradual increase in the number of villages in each tract appears clearly from the following statement:—

Assessment Circle.	Number of villages inhabited at some time previous to 1800 A. D.	Number of villages inhabited in A. D.				
		1800.	1820.	1840.	1850	1881.
Bágar	78	1	3	47	51	52
Náli	179	11	33	81	88	106
Rohi	325	10	36	164	239	363
Utár	9	1	1	5	10	56
Hitár	1	12	21	34	43	58
Total of district ...	592	35	94	331	431	635

While the villages have steadily increased in numbers, they have also increased in size. From the returns of the Revenue Survey in 1841, so far as they are available, it appears that in 123 villages in different parts of the district, the average number of families per village was then 35. In the same area in 1868 there were 242 villages with an average of 72 families per village, and the average for the whole district was 68 families per village. According to the Census of 1881 the average was 81 families per inhabited village.

The general increase in the size of the villages also appears from the following comparison :—

Number of villages and towns containing	In 1868.	In 1881.
Above 10,000 inhabitants	1	1
„ 5,000 „	1	2
„ 2,000 „	5	6
„ 1,000 „	21	31
„ 500 „	101	132
„ 200 „	361	423
Under 200 „	267	212
Total inhabited towns and villages ...	628	635

Growth of population and rate of increase.

69. For a comparison of the population at different times we have no reliable returns previous to the Census of 1868. In 1849 when the district was about the same size as it is at present, (though since then a small pargana has been transferred to Bíkáner and another added from Firozpur), the population was given, probably after a rough enumeration, as 112,974. At the first Regular Settlement, which was in progress from 1852 to 1862, a Census was made of each village as its lands were measured, and according to that Census the total population of the present district was 151,182; but the census was not taken simultaneously over the whole district, and therefore does not give the total population on any one date. In 1868 the population was 210,795, and in 1881 it was 253,275. If we take the Census of the Regular Settlement as representing the population of 1858, we have the following rates of increase :—

Year of Census.	Total population.	Increase since previous Census.	Percentage of increase.	Interval since previous census in years.	Approximate average annual increase per cent.
1849 ...	1,12,974	.....	.....	.....	.....
1858 ...	1,52,182	39,208	35	9	4
1868 ...	2,10,795	58,613	38	10	4
1881 ...	2,53,275	42,480	20	13	1½

The comparison with the figures of 1868 is exact, for since then there has been no change in the boundaries of the district or of the tahsíls, except the insignificant changes caused by alluvion and diluvion on the Satlaj. It appears then that while, for the nineteen years previous to 1868, the population increased at the rate of something like 4 per cent. per annum, it has in the thirteen years since increased by 20 per cent., which gives an average increase of about 1½ per cent. per annum, while the rate of increase for the whole Panjáb for the same period is only 7 per cent., and Simla and Kohát are the only two districts which show so large a rate of increase. Probably the normal population of 1881 was even larger than that returned by the Census, for at the time of the enumeration some parts of the district were

suffering from drought, and part of the population, as their custom is, had migrated for the time in search of food and work; so that some of the villages, especially those south and east of Sirsá and south of Abohar, had then less than their normal population. I should estimate that the ordinary population of the whole district in 1881 was close on 260,000.

Immigration from neighbouring tracts.

70. Some part of this increase is no doubt due to the healthy climate and the general prosperity of the people and to the consequent normal excess of births over deaths. The district has passed through several seasons of scarcity since 1868, but has suffered from no famine so severe as to seriously increase the number of deaths or check the fecundity of the population. Nor has there been any widespread epidemic of cholera or fever such as to carry off many of the inhabitants. The dry climate of the greater part of the district is very healthy, and comparatively few of the population are of weak constitution, or liable to succumb to the diseases which are so fatal in moister climates. But a considerable part of the increase in population since 1868 must be due to immigration, which caused so much of the rapid increase of population before that date. As the district became more fully settled, and the land occupied and cultivated, the stream of immigration naturally slackened, but still immigrants continue to find their way into the district. As might be expected, the new-comers take some time to settle down, and a season of scarcity drives some of them from one part of the district to another, or back to their former home, or onwards to some more promising country; but emigration out of the district is small in extent as compared with the number who still enter the district from other tracts and settle in it. There is no means of estimating the number of immigrants since 1868, but the present census returns show that of the present population of 253,275 only 158,381 were born in the district; so that 94,894 or 37 per cent.—more than a third—of the present population are immigrants from other districts or States (a larger proportion than for any other district of the Panjáb except Simla). Of these the largest number have come from the following districts:—

State or district.	No. of immigrants.	Percentage of total population.
Bikáner State	38,741	15
Other Rájput States (chiefly Jaipur and Jodhpur)	7,080	3
Pattiála State	12,948	5
Other Cis-Satlaj States	5,187	2
Hissár district	12,719	5
Other British districts to the east	2,934	1
Firozpur district	7,790	3
Other British districts to the north ...	2,406	1
Bháwalpur State	2,197	1
Montgomery district	3,876	2
Other British districts to the west ...	415	.....

Thus no fewer than 18 per cent. of the present population are immigrants from the Rájputána States to the south, and 7 per cent. from the Sikh States to the north; while 6 per cent. have come from British districts to the east, 4 per cent. from the north, and 2 per cent. from the west. 24,617 persons born in the Sirsá district were returned as living in other districts or States of the Panjáb, chiefly in Pattiála, Bháwalpur, Firozpur, Hissár and Montgomery. Many of these were no doubt women who had been given in marriage by their parents in Sirsá to relatives or connections near their former homes, but a number of them must simply have wandered in search of greater comfort, especially in times of scarcity. The population, though gradually becoming more attached to the land, is still given to wandering. Allowing for the considerable number of persons born in Sirsá who now reside in Bíkáner, we have still a clear gain by immigration over emigration of at least 60,000 persons, or about one-fourth of the population, in the present generation.

This extraordinary immigration and colonisation of the prairie desert are undoubtedly due to the *pax Britannica* which followed on the troubles of last century, and gave to every colonist security of life and property in a region where previously neither had been worth a day's purchase. Land was plentiful and was offered to immigrants at a very low rate of assessment, and all who suffered from oppression or want in the neighbouring Native States or British districts hastened to the country thus newly opened up to them, where they found an easy means of subsistence by cultivating the virgin prairie, and an assurance of being allowed to enjoy in peace and security the produce of their labour. The history of this district affords a striking illustration of the blessings of British rule, of the political advantage of having a well-governed tract of country in close proximity to Native States, and of the readiness of some classes of the Indian population to migrate from one part of the country to another when the advantages of migration are evident and within their reach.

Increase of population and cultivation in different parts of the district.

71. With the increase of population, cultivation has spread and the waste has rapidly been brought under the plough. In 1841, in about one-third of the district for which the statistics of the Revenue Survey are available, only 20 per cent. of the total area had been brought under cultivation. At last Settlement, in 1853-57, the percentage of area cultivated in the same tracts was 35. At the Revenue Survey of 1876-79 the percentage of cultivated area was 51. Taking the whole district, the percentage of total area cultivated at last Settlement (1853-61), was only 34; now 55 per cent. of the area is cultivated. Since 1868 the cultivated area has been increasing at the rate of a little over 1 per cent. per annum, and has thus not quite kept pace with the increase of population. In 1868, the cultivated area was given at 921,696 acres; it is now 1,066,816 acres, an increase of 16 per cent. as compared with the increase of 20 per cent. in the population.

The extent to which population and cultivation have kept increasing together, and the way in which the increase is spread over the district, may be better seen by taking separately the different tracts into which, with reference both to physical features and to social history, the district has been divided for assessment purposes. The Bágar, or sandy tract south of the Ghaggar, was colonised from Bíkáner soon after 1818, and in 1853 the area cultivated was 78 per cent. of the whole; it has since then actually decreased by about 6 per cent.; and similarly the population of the tract, though in 1868 it had increased by 23 per cent. from 1853, has since fallen off by 9 per cent. In the Nálí, or Ghaggar valley, and the high land immediately adjoining it, cultivation has increased by 24 per cent. since last settlement in 1855, and the population has increased by 6 per cent. since 1868. In the Rohi, or dry tract stretching from the Ghaggar valley for nearly 70 miles to the Danda or old bank of the Satlaj, cultivation has increased by 76 per cent. since 1861, and the population by 33 per cent. since 1868. In the Utár, or narrow tract between the Danda and the present valley of the Satlaj, which was last colonised, cultivation is nearly four times what it was in 1861, and the population has increased by 42 per cent. since 1868. And in the Hitár, or present Satlaj valley, which was colonised at an early date, cultivation has increased by only 10 per cent. since 1861, and population by only 8 per cent. since 1868. As already stated, at the time of the Census in February 1881 some parts of the district were suffering from drought, and part of the population had migrated for the time. This partly accounts for the number of houses returned as unoccupied on the night of the Census. The number so returned is 2,645 or 1 in 11. The migrations were chiefly from the dry tracts south of the Ghaggar (Bágar) and south of Fázilka (Rohi) either to the Satlaj valley or out of the district altogether, and though they cannot have been so extensive as to affect greatly the population of the district as a whole, yet no doubt the population of the tracts mentioned was affected, and part, though not all, of the decrease in the population of the Bágar was due to this migration, which was to some extent only temporary. The population of each assessment circle is as follows :—

Assessment Circle.	Population.			Increase or decrease per cent. since 1868.
	In 1852-53.	In 1868.	In 1881.	
Bágar ..	17,836	21,889	19,993	− 9
Nálí ...	40,548	55,263	58,707	+ 6
Rohí ...	76,021	1,05,414	1,40,370	+33
Utár ...	8,405	10,382	15,478	+42
Hitár ...	14,372	17,347	18,727	+ 8
Total ...	1,52,182	2,10,795	2,53,275	+20
Tahsíl Sirsá ...	...	86,305	94,245	+ 9
Tahsíl Dabwálí ...	...	57,520	71,136	+23
Tahsíl Fázilká ...	...	66,970	87,894	+31

Density of population in different parts of the district.

72. The Revenue Survey measurements of 1876-79 give the total area of the district as 3,004 square miles and the Settlement measurements of 1880-81 give it as 3,006 square miles, which may be accepted

as approximately correct. This gives an average population for the district of 84 per square mile as compared with the 70 per square mile of 1868. In 1868 Sirsá stood, as regards density of population per square mile of total area, 27th among the 31 districts of the Panjáb (Simla being excepted). It now stands 25th, those below it being Kángra, Dera Gházi Khán, Montgomery, Jhang, Kohát and Dera Ismáil Khán. The cultivated area of the district is given by the present Settlement measurements as 1,667 square miles, while in 1868 it was 1,441 square miles; and the density of population per square mile of cultivated area, which in 1868 was 146, is now 152, so that, as above noted, population has in the interval increased somewhat faster than cultivation. The population is densest in the Satlaj valley (Hitár), where it averages 195 to the square mile of total area; then in the Ghaggar valley (Nálí), where it averages 110 per square mile. In the Utár or dry tract below the Danda it averages 86; in the sandy tract south of the Ghaggar valley (Bágar) 74; and in the Rohi, or great Dry Tract between the valleys of the Ghaggar and Satlaj, it averages only 73 to the square mile. (In parganas Malaut and Mahájaní in that tract it was in 1862 only 22 and 17 to the square mile respectively). It thus varies with facility of irrigation and fertility of soil; and in the dry tract it is denser along the north-east border than along the south-west, where the rainfall is less and the colonisation more recent. The figures for the different assessment circles are as follows :—

Assessment Circle.	Total area in square miles.	Total Population.		Population per square mile of total area.	
		In 1868.	In 1881.	In 1868.	In 1881.
Bágar	271	21,889	19,993	81	74
Nálí	534	55,263	58,707	103	110
Rohi	1,925	1,05,414	1,40,370	55	73
Utár	180	10,852	15,478	60	86
Hitár	96	17,347	18,727	181	195
Total of the district ...	3,006	2,10,795	2,53,275	70	84
Tahsíl Sirsá	993	86,305	94,245	87	95
„ Dabwálí ...	817	57,520	71,136	70	87
„ Fázilká ...	1,196	66,970	87,894	56	74

The tribes arranged in order of numbers.

73. The most important tribes in order of numbers, according to the Census of 1881, are as follows :—

No.	Tribe.	Number of the tribe.	Percentage of total population.
1	Ját	64,040	25
2	Rájput	46,827	19
3	Chamár	18,022	7
4	Kumhár	16,114	6
5	Chúhra	16,051	6
6	Banya	10,496	4
7	Kháti	7,222	3
8	Bráhman	5,559	2

No.	Tribe.	Number of the tribe.	Percentage of total population.
9	Rora	5,554	2
10	Ráín	4,742	2
11	Náí	4,150	2
12	Telí	3,914	2
13	Thorí or Heri	3,368	1
14	Báwariya	3,335	1
15	Mochí	3,073	1
16	Dúm or Mirásí	3,015	1
17	Chhípí	2,825	1
18	Juláhá	2,817	1
19	Máchhí	2,804	1
20	Shaikh	2,733	1
21	Sunár	2,479	1

74. The social importance of the different tribes, however, in an agricultural district like Sirsá depends more upon the proportion of land owned by each than upon its mere numbers. The following statement shows the number of villages and parts of villages owned by each tribe in the different assessment circles :—

The number of villages owned by each tribe.

Villages how owned.

Tribe.	Bagar.		Nali.		Rohi.		Uttar.		Hitar.		Total of the district.	
	Whole villages.	Parts of villages.	Whole villages.	Parts of villages.	Whole villages.	Parts of villages.	Whole villages.	Parts of villages.	Whole villages.	Parts of villages.	Whole villages.	Parts of villages.
Musalmáns												
Bodla	...	...	1	...	8	4	12	1	11	4	32	9
Chishti	...	...	...	...	...	1	2	...	8	1	10	2
Shaikh, Saiyyad, Mughal, Pathan, Biloch ..	...	1	12	8	7	4	2	1	2	2	23	16
Wattu	...	...	2	4	6	15	1	1	15	8	24	28
Bhatti	...	...	..	8	6	14	1	1	1	1	8	19
Other Rajputs... ...	1	3	11	21	31	41	..	3	3	9	46	77
Mirás	...	...	6	13	...	...	...	...	...	1	6	14
Miscellaneous... ...	...	...	2	25	13	33	...	..	1	...	16	58
Total Musalman ...	1	...	36	...	71	...	18	...	41	...	167	...
Sikh Jat	...	...	1	1	110	49	7	8	1	1	119	59
Hindús and Others.												
Jat Hagri	36	12	12	9	33	26	10	11	...	3	91	60
Bishnoi	...	1	...	1	16	3	...	...	...	...	16	5
Rajput	2	3	2	2	2	3	1	...	...	...	7	8
Banya, Arora, Khatri, Sunar	...	9	5	23	15	24	3	8	...	9	23	73
Brahman, Gosayan Bairagi Jati	...	1	1	3	4	9	...	1	...	...	5	14
Inferior tribes ...	1	3	...	3	15	13	2	1	2	1	20	21
Total Hindús and Others	39	...	20	..	85	...	16	...	2	...	162	..
Christian	1	...	9	4	3	...	...	...	...	...	13	4
Mixed	16	...	43	...	95	...	17	...	18	...	189	...
Total	57	...	109	...	364	...	58	...	62	...	650	...

Thus of the 650 villages in the district, 119 are wholly owned by Sikh Jats, 167 by Musalmáns, 162 by Hindús and inferior tribes, and 13 by Christians, (chiefly the Skinner family); while the remaining 189 are not owned by any one single tribe, but by two or more tribes in shares. Sikh Jats own shares in 58 of these, Musalmán Rájputs in 96, Bágrí Játs in 60, and Banyas, Aroras, Khatris and Sunárs own shares in 73.

The social position of each tribe.

75. In order to ascertain the position in the social scale assigned to each tribe by the people themselves, I had enquiries made from representatives of various tribes, both high and low, all over the district as to the relative grades they would give to themselves and the other tribes they know. There was, as might be expected, a good deal of difference in the answers given, but the general result gives the following grading. As evidently the position assigned in the social scale depends chiefly on the respectability and cleanliness of the trade generally followed by the members of the tribe, I give a short description opposite each of its usual occupation.

HINDU TRIBES.

Grade.	Tribe.	Usual occupation.
1	Bráhman ...	Religious rites and ceremonies.
2	Rájput ...	Agriculture, and service as soldiers and guards.
3	Banya ...	Trade in grain, &c., and money-lending.
4	Khatri ...	Ditto ditto ditto.
5	Rora or Arora ...	Ditto ditto ditto.
6	Káyath ...	Clerks—men of the pen.
7	Ját or Jat ...	Agriculture.
8	Ahír ...	Ditto.
9	Gújar ...	Ditto.
10	Máli ...	Market gardening.
11	Kahár Jhínwar or Maira.	Water-carriers and burden-carriers.
12	Kháti or Tarkhán ...	Carpenters.
13	Lohár ...	Blacksmiths.
14	Sunár ...	Gold and silversmiths.
15	Kumhár ...	Potters and brick-makers.
16	Nái ...	Barbers, and assistants in ceremonies at births and marriages.
17	Chhípí or Chhímbá ...	Dyers of cloth.
18	Darzi ...	Tailors.
19	Mochí ...	Workers in tanned leather.
20	Bázígar or Nat ...	Tumblers, acrobats and buffoons.
21	Báwariya and Mahtam	Hunters and cultivators.
22	Chamár ...	Skinners of dead animals, workers in leather and weavers of cloth.
23	Raigar or Khatík ...	Tanners of leather.
24	Dhobi ...	Washermen.
25	Thorí ...	Wandering agricultural labourers.
26	Bhand and Kath ...	Wandering singers and dancers.
27	Dhának ...	Sweepers.
28	Sánsí ...	Gipsies.
29	Bhangi or Chúhrá ...	Sweepers.

The higher-class Hindús have the distinction into four castes *(baran)* Bráhman, Chhatrí, Baish, Shúdr. The Rájputs (they say) are Chhatrís, the Játs were also Chhatrí or Rájput, but have adopted the custom of re-marriage of widows and thus become Shúdr, but hold the first rank in that class. The Banyas are the Baish caste. All the lower miscellaneous tribes are considerd Shúdr.

Among the Musalmáns the social grading of the tribes depends partly on the relative respectability of the usual occupation of the tribe, and partly on the position held by the Hindú tribes from which they were converted. The grading is approximately as follows :—

MUSALMAN TRIBES.

Grade.	Tribe.	Usual occupation.
1	Saiyad ...	Service in mosques and agriculture.
2	Shaikh (including Chishti and Bodla).	Ditto ditto.
3	Pathán ...	Service in the army and agriculture.
4	Mughal ...	Ditto ditto.
5	Rájput ..	Agriculture and grazing cattle.
6	Biloch ...	Agriculture and keeping camels for carriage.
7	Dogar ...	Agriculture.
8	Labána ...	Carrying on pack-bullocks and agriculture.
9	Jat ...	Agriculture and grazing cattle.
10	Ráin ...	Market gardening and agriculture.
11	Kháti or Tarkhán ...	Carpenters.
12	Lohár ...	Blacksmiths.
13	Sakka, Machhí and Jhínwar.	Water-carriers and fishermen.
14	Malláh ...	Boatmen and fishermen.
15	Téli and Dhuniya ...	Oil-pressers and cotton-scutchers.
16	Maniár ...	Makers and sellers of bangles.
17	Ráj or Mimár ...	Masons and brick-layers.
18	Qasáí or Qassáb ...	Butchers.
19	Juláhá ...	Weavers.
20	Bisátí ...	Pedlars.
21	Náí ...	Barbers and assistants in ceremonies at birth, marriage, &c.
22	Mochí ...	Workers in tanned leather.
23	Kumhár ...	Potters and brickmakers.
24	Kunjra ...	Sellers of vegetables.
25	Bhatiyára ...	Bakers, cooks and keepers of sarais.
26	Nílgar or Rangrez ...	Dyers of cloth.
27	Khatík ...	Tanners of leather.
28	Dhobí ...	Washermen.
29	Mírásí ...	Musicians.
30	Kanjar ...	Gipsies and prostitutes.
31	Dúdár or Bhangí ...	Sweepers.

I shall now give some account of each tribe separately.

The Jats and Rájputs.

76. The most numerous and most important tribe in the district are the Jats or Játs, who number 64,040, or almost exactly one-fourth of the whole population. With them may be taken the allied tribe of Rájputs, who come next in point of numbers with 46,827, or nearly a fifth of the total population, so that the Jats and Rájputs together number 44 per cent. of the whole population of the district, and own between them about three-fourths of its area. The two tribes taken together constitute nearly 28 per cent. of the population of the Panjáb, and include the great mass of the dominant land-owning tribes in the Cis-Indus portion of the Province. They are especially numerous in the neighbourhood of Sirsá, and together form 38 per cent. of the population of Hissár and Rohtak to the east, 35 per cent in Pattiála and Firozpur to the north, 23 and 37 per cent. respectively in Montgomery and Bháwalpur to the west, and a large proportion of the population of Bíkáner and other Rájput States to the south. In the case of the Hindús the distinction between the Játs and the Rájputs is in this part of the country clearly defined, the most marked difference between them being that the Játs allow the re-marriage of widows while the Rájputs do not; but among the Musalmáns there is no such clear distinction; many Musalmán tribes are called Jats in one part of the Province and Rájputs in another, and in this district there are several such tribes which claim to be Rájputs, a claim allowed by some of their neighbours and denied by others who call them Jats. There seems reason to believe that the great mass of the Játs and Rájputs belong to one great Aryan race, and that instead of the Játs being, as they commonly say, Rájputs who fell from their high estate by permitting the re-marriage of widows, the Rájputs themselves are simply the aristocracy or nobility of the Játs, descendants of families who attained power and gradually separated themselves off from their fellows, literally "sons of the kings" of the Játs, of the same race and blood as the Játs themselves. And if physique, language, custom, religion and tradition are any evidence of origin, the great mass of the Rájputs and Játs are of as purely Aryan and Hindú origin as the Bráhmans themselves.

Different sections of Játs.

77. There are, however, broad distinctions between the different sections of this race which divide them into a number of practically distinct peoples. It is not that the Rájputs are clearly marked off from the Játs, for the Hindú Rájputs resemble the Bágrí Játs much more closely than they do the Musalmán Rájputs from the west; and, as already said, the latter are hardly to be distinguished from the Musalmán Jats with whom they immigrated. Whatever doubt there may be as to the identity of origin of the Rájputs and Játs, it seems certain that, as the people themselves admit, all Jats and Játs from whatever quarter belong, with perhaps a few exceptions, to one great race. In this district the chief grounds of distinction between the different sections of the race are religion,

language and place of origin. In the Census of 1881, of the 64,040 Jats or Játs 38,320 or more than half were returned as Hindús, 21,855 or about one-third as Sikhs, and 2,798 as Musalmán. The Sikhs and Musalmáns call themselves Jat, speak Panjábí, have all come in recent times from the north and west, and live chiefly along the north-east border of the district; while the Hindús call themselves Ját, speak Hindi, have all come in recent times from the south and east, and live chiefly along the south-west border of the district. The Játs of this neighbourhood may be divided into four classes: (1) the Deswál Játs of Hariána, known also as the Bángar or the Des, *i.e.* "*the* country" which includes a great part of the Hissár and Rohtak districts, and extends west as far as Agroha, a deserted city of some fame between Hissár and Fathábád; (2) the Bágrí Játs from the Bágar or Bíkáner country to the south; (3) the Singhs or Sikh Jats from the Málwa to the north; and (4) the Musalmán Jats from the country of the Five Rivers to the west. All these four sections of the race may be said to meet in the Sirsá district. The line of demarcation between them is not very sharply marked:—for instance, the Bahniwál Játs about Darba claim to be Deswál and not Bágrí Játs, but their neighbours to the east call them Bágrís, and their dialect and characteristics, while having some affinity to those of the Hariána Deswáls, seem to resemble more closely those of the Bágar. Again the Jhorar Jats of Nathanhar, Bani and Bachíhar are considered Sikhs by their neighbours to the south and Bágrís by their neighbours to the north. They seem to be among the oldest Hindu settlers in this tract, their language is neither pure Panjábi nor pure Bágrí, they do not wear the long hair prescribed for all true Sikhs, and yet follow to some extent the precepts of the *gurus*. Other Jats of the same Jhorar clan, *e.g.*, those of Jhorar in the Dabwálí tahsíl are pure Panjábí Sikhs closely conected with the Gill clan, while others, such as those of Jhorar on the Ghaggar near Sirsá, are Musalmáns speaking Panjábí. Besides these four classes already mentioned, there are in the district some Játs who have immigrated from Márwár, *i. e.*, from Jodhpur and Jaysalmer, and others again from the Dikhnád or Jaipur country; but although these are distinguished from the Bágrís among whom they live by their dialect, dress and other peculiarities, they resemble the Bágrís much more closely than they do the other sections of Játs, and being few in numbers may be classed with them. Indeed, speaking broadly the Jats and Játs of Sirsá may be divided into the two great sections already noticed: (1) the Hindu Hindí-speaking Játs from the south and east, *viz.*, the Deswál, Bágrí, Márwárí and Dikhnádí Játs, and (2) the Panjábí-speaking Sikh and Musalmán Jats from the north and west. The Musalmán Jats and Rájputs, except in religion and points connected with religion, resemble the Sikh Jats much more closely than they do the Bágrí Játs. Both Sikhs and Musalmáns talk Panjábí, they are taller and finer men than the others, and more independent and self-asserting; their clans are in many cases the same, and both sides admit that they are in many instances descended from the same ancestors, and have adopted different religions from choice or by compulsion. The Bágrí and Deswál Játs

speak very much the same dialect of Hindí, and are somewhat similar in physique and in character, though the Deswáls are much superior in those respects to the Bágrís, and may be said to lie between them and the Sikh Jats.

The Bágrí Játs.

78. The 38,320 Játs returned as of the Hindú religion are almost all Bágrís from the south. Some of them have traditions of ancestors who formerly lived in this neighbourhood, but they have all immigrated from Bíkáner, Jodhpur, Jaipur, and Hissár within the last 60 years. Like the Boeotians and other peoples distinguished for the broadness of their dialect, the Bágrí Játs are also famous for the slowness of their intellect. This may be partly due to their long residence in the Rájputáua desert country, cut off from intercourse with tracts more advanced in civilisation; there they have, under the oppressive rule of the Rájput Thákurs, been a down-trodden race, and they are greatly wanting in spirit and the power of self-defence. In the mutiny many of them fled into Bíkáner, and left their villages to be plundered by their Musalmán neighbours. In physique they are generally short and dark and badly put together, with coarse unintelligent faces, especially noticeable perhaps among the women. They are not very cleanly in their persons; and their clothing, though sometimes including a good woollen blanket, is generally coarse and often ragged and dirty. They often live in wretched hovels or carelessly-built mud houses, and their standard of comfort is low, as might be expected of a people who for generations have inhabited a dry and sandy country which may almost be called a desert. They are much given to hoarding up wealth, and very reluctant to spend their gains except on the occasion of a funeral feast *(káj)* when the expenditure in *ghi*, sugar, &c., is sometimes enormous. They perform almost all their agricultural operations with the aid of camels, which form their chief wealth; and coming from a region of little rainfall, they are accustomed to cultivate only the poorest kharíf crops by the roughest processes in light sandy soil, and are only now learning from their Sikh neighbours how to cultivate a rabí crop. They are little given to pasturage, and have few cattle, though some of them have large flocks of sheep famous for the fineness of their wool. They call themselves *par excellence* agriculturists (the word *zamindár* being here almost equivalent to *Ját*) and are, and have evidently for generations been, essentially an agricultural race; and yet until lately they attached little value to their land, and were ready to migrate in numbers on the slightest pressure of famine, but in truth, until recently, such rights as they had in such soil as was available were of very little value. They now own 107 of the 650 villages in the district, and shares in 65 others.

The Sikh Jats.

79. The Sikh Jats are returned as numbering 21,855, or about 9 per cent. of the total population of the district. They own 119 villages and shares in 58 others. They are found chiefly along the north-east boundary of the district,

and have immigrated from Pattiála, Fírozpur and other districts to the north, *i.e.*, from the Málwa, within the last 70 years. They admit that they are of the same great race as the Bágrí Játs and Musalmán Jats, and like the Bágrís apply the word *zamindár* or "agriculturist" to all Jats and Játs as distinguished from other races; but unlike the Bágrí, the Sikh Jat clings to his land to the last. The Sikhs sometimes marry the daughters of the Bágrí Játs, but they rarely give their daughters in marriage to the Bágrís, partly because they with reason consider them their inferiors and partly because the Bágrís make their women do hard work in the field. There are some instances of Bágrí Játs having recently become Sikhs, and adopted the dialect, dress and manners of Sikhs, while on the other hand there are instances of Sikh Jats having given up the long hair and the other marks of the Sikh religion, adopted the Bágrí dialect and become to all intents Bágrís. The Sikh Jats are the best peasantry we have. They are fine, tall, strong men, well-made, orderly, industrious, thrifty, intelligent and self-respecting. They are fond of manly games, and are famous as good soldiers. They wear their hair long, as it is against their religion to cut it, and the long white beards and intelligent faces of the older men give them a venerable and prepossessing appearance. They are fairly clean and tidy in their persons, and build for themselves comfortable houses which, as well as their villages, they keep neat and clean. They are good industrious cultivators, and while ready to spend their gains on reasonable comforts, generally manage to keep clear of the money-lender. Their women are good-looking, dress well and make capital housewives, but do not often work in the fields.

The Hindú Rájputs.

80. Of the 46,827 persons returned as Rájputs, 3,838, or about one-twelfth, are returned as Hindú, and the rest as Musalmán. The Hindú Rájputs are immigrants from Bíkáner, Jodhpur and Jaipur, very similar to the Bágrí Játs in dialect and habits, but with more of the instincts and appearance of a ruling caste. They are mostly scattered along the south-west of the district in small families who have established themselves as owners of villages, and surrounded themselves with Bágrí cultivators. Some of them, such as Súrat Singh of Jandián, Anji of Otu and Berisál of Buddhimárí, are among the most prominent men of the district, but on the whole their numbers are small, and they are of no great importance in the district as a class. The chief clan here is the Ráthor, who are returned as numbering 374. This is the clan of the present rulers of Jodhpur and Bíkáner. Súrat Singh and his two brothers are Ráthors, sons of Náhar Singh, who was a risáldár in Skinner's horse and afterwards Kotwál of Sirsá. The family are followers of the Jodhpur Pretender Rájá Sabal Singh, who was pensioned by the British Government near Jhajjar, and fled with him from Jodhpur when their faction was defeated. Thákur Anji is also a Ráthor, son of a man who did some service in the mutiny with the Bíkáner Contingent. Berisál is a Kechhí Chauhán of Jodhpur, where his family held several villages; on their being deprived of them by the Rája, Berísál came here and

was presented with two villages in this district and three in Firozpur by an old friend Birjlal who had made money in the Commissariat. Ranjít Singh of Dhingtána is a Ráthor of the Bíká *nak* from Bíkáner.

The Musalmán Jats and Rájputs.

81. With the exception of those Musalmán tribes which claim a distinctly foreign origin, such as the Shaikh, Saiyad, Pathán, Mughal and Biloch, or the Bodlas who claim to be Sadíkí Shaikhs, the Chishtis who call themselves Fárúkí Shaikhs and the Háns who say they are Kureshis, all the Musalmáns of the Sirsá district admit that they were at one time Hindús, and state that they have lived for many generations in this tract of country, or in the regions in the immediate neighbourhood. They may thus be reckoned among the indigenous inhabitants of the country. They are all of them known collectively as "Pachádá" or "Ráth"—the name "Pachádá" being apparently derived from "Pachhaun" the west, because they mostly lived to the westward of the Hindús who gave them the title, and because many of them have within the last few centuries, and indeed within the present century, migrated eastwards from the Panjáb rivers—and the term "Ráth" seemingly meaning "hard," "cruel," "violent," epithets supposed to describe the general character of these Musalmán tribes. These names are similar to that of "Ránghar," which is applied to the similar tribes in Hissár and Rohták—the word Ránghar is known in this district, but is used with reference to the Musalmáns of Hariána; the boundary between the Ránghars and the Pachhádas or Pachádas may be taken as Agroha, which is about the western boundary of the tract of country known as Hariána. These miscellaneous Musalmán tribes number 45,717, or about 18 per cent. of the total population of the district. Of these 42,913 are returned as Rájputs and 2,798 as Játs, but really there is no clear distinction between these classes. All of them trace their descent from some well-known Hindú Rájput stock; but while some of them admit that they have fallen into a lower social grade, marked by the adoption of the custom of re-marriage of widows and of intermarriage with inferior Jat tribes, and call themselves Jats, others maintain that notwithstanding the change of religion they have lost none of their former high position, and endeavour to keep up their rank by an assumption of exclusiveness, intermarrying only with a few other tribes of like pretensions to themselves, and in a few cases forbidding the marriage of widows. Some of the latter tribes, such as the Bhattis, Wattus and Joiyas are admitted by their neighbours to occupy a high position; while others, such as the Mahár and Sanglá, are considered by their neighbours to be Jats. All of them have traditions connecting them with their Hindu neighbours. For instance, the Jhorar and Bháneke Musalmáns admit that they have become Musalmán within the last ten or fifteen generations, and that they are descended from the same ancestors as the Jhorar and Dandiwál Sikh Jats respectively. Again, the Bhatti and Wattu Musalmáns claim connection with the Hindu Bhátí Rájputs of Jaysalmer and with the Siddhu Barár Sikh Jats. It seems very probable that all these Rájputs and Játs, Hindu, Sikh and Musalmán,

belong to one great Ját race, forming by far the most important part of the inhabitants of the whole of this region. In Hindu times the families of Játs which attained power became exclusive, especially in the matter of marriage. They were really "the sons of the kings" and called themselves Rájputs, *i.e.*, princes, nobles, aristocracy. The Játs who lived on the river banks were the first to come under the influence of the Muhammadan invaders; they were more exposed to the attacks of the Musalmán armies, more reluctant to leave their valuable lands, and perhaps of feebler stamina owing to the malarious nature of the climate in which they lived. On the other hand, the Játs who lived in the dry tracts were more difficult to reach, had little reluctance to leave their lands which were of comparatively little value, and could easily take refuge in the jungles or the desert until the invading armies, which found little to tempt them to stay, had passed by; while the dryness of their climate had developed a more robust physique and independent character. Accordingly we find that the inhabitants of the dry tracts away from the valleys of the Satlaj and the Ghaggar are still Hindu or Sikh, while along the banks of both rivers Muhammadans greatly predominate, and almost all the Musalmáns who are found in a band of country stretching from one river to the other between the Sikhs on the north-east and the Bágrís on the south-west have come within the last three or four generations north-westwards from the Ghaggar, or more commonly south-eastwards from the Satlaj or Rávi.

The Musalmáns are sharply distinguished from their Hindu and Sikh neighbours by their religion and the manifold differences it creates. Their characteristic dress is the *lungí*, a striped or checked cloth worn kilt-fashion, while their women wear a petticoat (*gagra*), a vest, often of bright scarlet, and a wrap thrown over the head. Their dialect is distinctly Panjábí, even the Ghaggar Muhammadans pronouncing their vowels short and using the Panjábí inflexions and vocabulary. They are many of them tall, strong, well-made men, generally darker in complexion, less intelligent, and altogether of a lower type than the Sikhs, but as a rule greatly superior to the Bágrís in physique, intelligence and spirit. They all used until two generations ago to live a pastoral life, roaming about the prairie with great herds of cattle on the produce of which they supported themselves, and cultivating only a few patches of grain here and there, especially near the Ghaggar and Satlaj. Whenever they saw a chance they would combine and make a raid on some distant Hindú village. But, soon after the beginning of this century, the approach of British power and the colonies of Sikh and Bágrí Játs from the north and south circumscribed the limits of their wanderings, and by degrees they settled down to agriculture within fixed boundaries, which were finally determined when in 1853-57 the whole prairie was divided off into townships, many of which were settled with Sikhs and Bágrís. As generally happens when the undefined rights enjoyed by a pastoral tribe over a large tract of country are exchanged for well-defined rights over a smaller area, the Musalmáns still show a disposition to claim rights in the land made over to the colonists, and it was partly for this reason, partly owing to the survival of their former predatory habits, that in the mutiny many of them seized the opportunity to plunder

their defenceless Hindu neighbours. Since they were given proprietary rights in defined tracts of land, much of it has passed by sale out of their hands into those of Hindus. As compared with the Sikhs and Bágrís they are unthrifty and extravagant, and more in the clutches of the money-lender, yet on the whole, as compared with similar tribes in other districts, they are well off, and some of them have still large herds of cattle, while others derive a considerable income from their cultivated land.

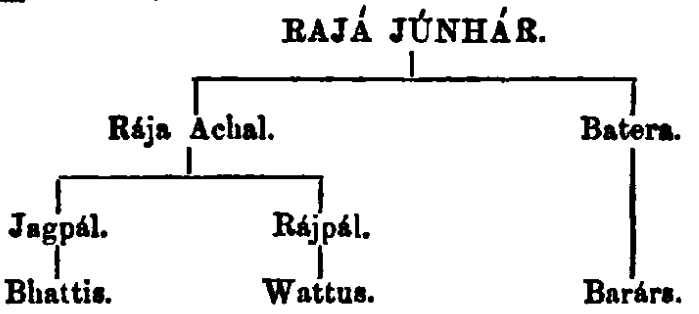
Clans of Musalmán Jats and Rájputs.

82. The most famous tribe of Musalmáns in the Sirsá district are the Bhattis, who number 7,358, almost all returned as Rájputs. According to their tradition, they are a branch of the Bháti Rájput clan, another branch of which still rules Jaysalmer. There are a very few Hindu Bháti Rájputs in the district, but almost all of this tribe are Muhammadans and call themselves Bhattí. They migrated northwards and settled about Bhatner, an old town and fort on the Ghaggar some distance west of Sirsá, which they held for many generations; but were within the present century turned out of it by the Ráthor Mahárája of Bíkáner who now calls it Hanumángarh. Their Nawábs held Rániá, Sirsá and Fathábád for a time, until in 1818, the Bhatti Nawáb of Rániá (Zábita Khán) was dispossessed by the British and became their pensioner. The last titular Nawáb was hanged for rebellious conduct in the mutiny, and his family are now hardly distinguishable from their neighbours, though some of the surviving females living at Rániá are in receipt of small pensions. That their former dignity is still remembered however, was shown by the voting of the Bhatti headmen for a relative of the late Nawáb to be their Zaildár, though he is now but an octroi-clerk at Rániá the seat of his ancestors' power. The Sirsá Bhattis admit their connection with the Bhattis who are so numerous in almost all parts of the Panjáb and with the Wattus and the Siddhu Barár Sikh Jats. The census of 1881 returned 3,38,689 Bhattis in the Province, and showed they were most numerous in Siálkot, Gujrát, and the Salt Range country, all along the lower Satlaj and Indus, and on the Chenáb, the upper Satlaj and the Biás, as well as on the Ghaggar; and these various sections of the tribe in all parts of the Province almost universally trace their origin to Bhatner or its neighbourhood. Owing to the leading part taken by the Bhattis in the country about Sirsá in the beginning of this century the word Bhatti became applied to all the Musalmán residents of the tract, which from them was long known as Bhattiána or the Bhatti Territory. The word "Bhatti" thus became almost synonymous with "Ráth," or "Pachádа," but the true Bhattis number only a small proportion of the population. In this district they are found chiefly along the Ghaggar or Sotar valley from Sirsá to Bhatner, though numbers of the tribe may be found scattered about the Musalmán villages all over the district. They own eight villages and shares in nineteen others.

West of the Bhattis along the Sotar valley in Bíkáner territory from Bhatner towards Súratgarh came the Joiyas, another ancient and powerful Muhammadan tribe who used to contest the possession of

Bhatner with the Bhattis and the Bíkáner Rájputs. They seem to cover a large tract of country to the west of Sirsá, and occupy both banks of the Satlaj south-west of the Wattu country, in Montgomery, Multán and Bháwalpur. In the census of 1881, 5,494 Joiyas were returned in the Sirsá district, but they own little land here, and are found scattered about the Musalmán villages. The leading man of the tribe is Jalla Zaildár of Ránia, of whom his neighbours say "*úpar Alláh, níche Jalla*" ("above there is God and below there is Jalla"). The Sirsá Joiyas have almost all returned themselves as Rájputs, and declare they are of ancient and princely descent and closely related to no other tribe, an idea they express by saying they have no ancestor but Adam common to them and other tribes. Their neighbours however say the Joiyas are related to the Mahárs. They speak of Mahmúd Khán and Farid Khán, two brothers, as famous Joiya Nawábs in Akbar's time at Shah Farid now in Bháwalpur territory.

The chief tribe of Musalmáns in the Satlaj valley in this district are the Wattus, who number altogether 3,810. They own 24 villages and shares in 28 others. The Bards (Mírásís) trace the descent of the Wattus from Noah through Shám his son, and then through a long list of famous Rájas, one of whom settled Sirsá, while another reigned over Arabia. However this may be, they consider themselves Raghbansi Rájputs, and some importance may be attached to their tradition already mentioned, that they are closely connected with the Bháti Rájputs of Jaysalmer, with the Bhattis of Rániá, and with the great clan of Siddhu Barár Sikh Jats. This relationship they give as follows:—



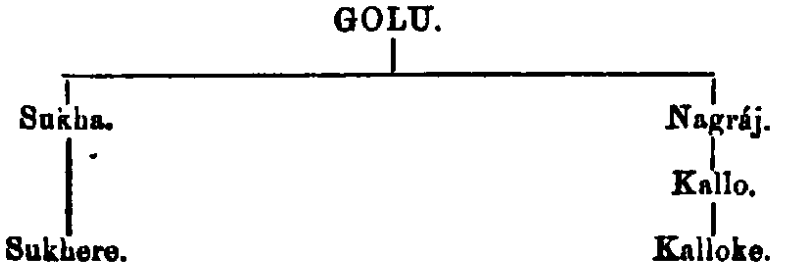
Their ancestor Wattu was a great Rája who ruled at Watála in Gurdáspur district. A descendant of his came and settled in this neighbourhood, and his descendants became Musalmáns some 16 generations ago, about the time of Khíwa, who ruled near Hawelí in the Montgomery district, and was succeeded by Lakhá Khán a famous Wattu chief (See Montgomery Settlement Report). The Wattus are found chiefly in the Montgomery, Sirsá and Bháwalpur districts, and as only 24,395 have been returned for the whole province, it is probable that they are only a comparatively small branch of the great Bhattí clan. They hold the country along both sides of the Satlaj from about Baggekí, 16 miles north of Fázilká to Phulálí, 70 miles south; and are bounded on the north by the Dogars, and on the south by the Joiyas. They settled on this side of the Satlaj only four or five generations ago when Fázil, Ráua and other ancestors of the present leading men came across from Jhang, near Hawelí, and settled near the

river in the country which was then unoccupied. They were for a time under the Sikh Bháís of Kaithal, but threw off their yoke after the grandfather of Pír Khán (now one of their leading men) had killed at his village of Muhammad Píra the brother-in-law of the ruling Bhái for demanding grazing fees from a holy man of the Wattus; they then placed themselves under the rule of the Nawáb of Bháwalpur until in 1844 the Wattu pargana was ceded by him to the British. In the mutiny, the Wattus rallied round Mr. Oliver at Fázilka, and some of them were rewarded with revenue-free grants and the gift of confiscated villages. Several of their leading men, Ahmad Khán of Ládhoke, Mokím of Muazzam, Jaga of Ráua, and Rahím of Salemsháh, have been recently appointed Zaildárs.

North of the Wattus, along the Satlaj, come the Dogars, whose country extends along both banks of the river to about Firozpur, where it meets the country of the Naipál Bhattís. The Mamdot country is the chief seat of the Dogars. In the Sirsá district they own only three villages and the number returned at the census was only 236.

There are a good many Punwárs in the district (5,693) almost all returning themselves as Rájputs, and almost all Musalmáns; they are mostly scattered about the Dry Tract. A number of them form the influential Bhúr family of Búbshahr in the Dabwálí tahsíl, the present head of which is Kábil Khán Zaildár. This family came within the century to their present seat from Pathrála in Pattiála, but originally they came from Púghal, west of Bíkáner, where the Bhúrs are said still to hold about a hundred villages. Another important family of Punwárs is at present represented by Chaudan Khán, Zaildár of Balluwána, in the Fázilká tahsíl. Wágú of Jandwála is also a leading Punwár. Of other Musalmán tribes from the Panjáb rivers may be mentioned the Khokhars (1376), the Khichi (only 163 in number), the Dhudhi (994) from Bháwalpur and Montgomery, and the Siál (259). Some Kharals (2,061) from the Rávi are to be found here and there, especially near the Satlaj; they are said to be related to the Punwárs. The Chímnas, a few of whom are found near the Satlaj, are said to be a branch of the Kharals. The Chhínas again, who own two villages on the Bíkáner border, came from the Satlaj and claim to be Bhattis. The Háns from the Satlaj or Rávi say they are of Arab origin, and call themselves Koreshi Shaikhs, but may be of Indian origin.

A considerable number of villages are owned by Musalmáns calling themselves Tunwar Rájputs (4,095). There are two great branches of them in this district, the Kalloke and the Sukhere, whose relationship is given as follows :—



A less important branch of the Tunwars are the Kuháras. The Kalloke are chiefly found about Fathábád and between that town and Sirsá along the Sotar valley ; among their leading men are Chandan of Kukarthána and Sába of Sháhpur Begu near Sirsá ; another, Jinda of Darbi, recently died at a great age. The chief colony of the Sukhere is at Abohar, where they say ancestors of theirs lived 200 years ago. They were driven back to Bígar near Fathábád, but came and settled again at Abohar some 60 years ago under the leadership of Amra, a famous hero renowned in the early modern history of this district. Amra was one of 20 brothers, another of whom was noted for having killed an Englishman at Fathábád in the early years of this century. Amra himself was carried off as a hostage for his father's good faith by the adventurer George Thomas about the end of last century. He lived to be several years over a hundred and died at Abohar in 1880 leaving ten stalwart sons, the eldest of whom is Waryám Zaildár of Abohar. Amra retained his intellect to the last and was very proud of a third growth of good teeth with which nature favoured him after the age of ninety. Wonderful tales are told of his prowess. His was a commanding nature ; the wildest horse bent its head before him, and the most furious bull allowed him to stroke its brow ; even rulers of men paid great attention to his advice and wishes. He often travelled on foot more than 50 miles in a night. On one occasion a tiger had killed a cow and 16 of them were sitting round ; Amra put them all to flight. On another occasion, when Mr. Oliver and he were driving deer, pig, &c., in the Satlaj jungle, five tigers attacked Mr. Oliver and Amra fearlessly advanced to meet them armed only with a sword. One night Amra went out alone on a raiding expedition and drove off 120 oxen laden with salt, his activity and the noise he made frightening their Banjára owners into believing that they were attacked by a large body of men, but seeing by the light of a prairie-fire that he was alone, they plucked up courage and got back their oxen. Amra was severely fined in the mutiny at the instance of Mr. Oliver, because he did not restrain his people from attacking their Bishnoí neighbours, and had in order to pay it to sell a number of villages which had been granted to him ; but he left a share of Abohar and several other villages to his sons, among whom he divided them before he died ; and although the division was unequal, they have not attempted to gainsay his wishes.

In the Sirsá district, 4,361 persons have returned themselves as Chauhán Rájputs. These are chiefly the Bháneke Musalmáns who hold several villages along the present course of the Ghaggar, north-east of Sirsá. They admit that they were Dandiwál Jats like their Sikh neighbours of Rori, and that they became Musalmán only a few generations ago. They are exceptionally quarrelsome in disposition and gave trouble in the mutiny, when some of them were hanged and others had their land confiscated for being implicated in the murder of the Sarrishtadár and the plunder of Sirsá. Their leading man was Ságar of Budha Bhána, who died recently and was succeeded by his son Rukna, now made Zaildár.

The Musalmán Jhorars, like the Bháneke, became Musalmán only a few generations ago, and are closely related to the Sikh Jhorars close by. Their chief village is Jhorar, a little to the north-west of Sirsá, the proprietary right of which has passed out of their hands. They are a turbulent lot and gave trouble in the mutiny. The Musalmán Khods about Chánmal say that they came originally from Bíkáner, and that there are some villages of theirs on the Ráví. There are a few Musalmán Jatánas related to the Sikh Jatánas of Pattiála. The Mahárs and Sanglás near the Satlaj claim to be Rájput, but are generally considered Jats by their neighbours. The leading Mahár is Májhí of Shikárpur near Fázilká, who has nearly ruined himself by his extravagance, especially with regard to women. The Mahárs claim a common descent with the Joiyas, but this is denied by the latter. A few Ránghars, from Hariána beyond Hissár, chiefly of the Sisodiya and Chauhán clans, have settled in the district.

Clans of Bágrí Játs.

83. Perhaps the only Hindu tribe who have lived continuously in the district for many generations are the Jhorar Jats of Nathauhar, Bani and Bachíhar in the Sirsá tahsíl, who have been already mentioned as neither pure Sikh nor pure Bágrí. They are related to the Musalmán Jhorars of the Sotar described above, and to the Sikh Jhorars of the Dabwálí tahsíl. According to tradition, they first came from near Bhatinda in Pattiála, and settled at Rámpura in Pargana Mahájaní of Bíkáner, where there are still some 15 villages of Jhorars. From there they settled on or near the Sotar valley some 360 years ago, and notwithstanding famines and forays have lived there ever since. They say they were originally Bará Rájputs.

The Bahniwál clan which now holds Darba and Jamál and some 15 other villages in that pargana, claims to be classed with the Deswál Játs of Hariána, but is generally classed by its neighbours with the Bágrís. The census number of 1,846 must be below the truth. The Bahniwáls have been settled in the neighbourhood for many years, and gavé its name to the Mahál in which Akbar placed the tract south of Sirsá. The chief seat of the clan is Bahádra in Bíkáner, 18 miles south of Darba, where they have lived for some 28 generations. They came originally from Sámbhar, where their ancestors lived as Chauhán Rájputs. In Akbar's time they held the Darba pargana, but they were driven back southwards to Bahádra by the famine of 1840 Sambat and the raids of the Bhattís about a hundred years ago, and only returned some 70 years ago and repeopled their deserted villages under the protection of the Rájput Rája of Bíkáner. Their leading man at present is Dhonkal Zaildár of Darba.

The only important clan of Hindu Játs in this neighbourhood which does not claim a Rájput origin is the Púniya (1,583) a clan numerous in Hissár and Bíkáner. They call themselves Sheogotra, and say they were from the first created as Játs by Sheo (Siva). All the other clans of Játs say they were originally Rájputs, and that they separated off from the original stock by taking to agriculture and the

remarriage of widows *(karáwa)*—the eldest son remained a ruler and a Rájput, and the rest became cultivators and were called Ját. As already noted, the reverse is probably the truth. Probably the Rájputs were originally Játs, but acquired the ruling power and kept it in their families, making themselves into an exclusive caste.

The Godáras, another important Bágrí clan, say they were originally Gahlot Rájputs from Chittor. They own 360 villages in Bíkaner territory, and have recently founded a few villages here. The Sahú derive their traditional origin from the Chauhán Rájputs, the Saháran from Bhátí Rájputs, the Kaswán from Panihár Rájputs, the Siyág from Tunwar Rájputs, and the Kásaniya from Punwár Rájputs.

There are a few Márwárí Játs at Ludesar, Naráyan Khera, &c., in the Darba pargana and in the neighbouring part of the Hissár district. They came from Jodhpúr in the famine of 1869 Sambat (1812 A. D.), and still retain their peculiar dress and dialect.

Among the leading Bágrí Játs, besides Dhonkal of Darba above-mentioned, are Kishna of Katera, Nathu Godára of Khaowáli, Gangárám Bishnoi of Sitogano and Asa Godára of Chautála.

Clans of Sikh Jats.

84. Of the 21,855 Sikh Jats from the north by far the most important clan are the Siddhu Baráns, who number 8,333. This is the most numerous and most important Sikh clan in the Panjáb as a whole, and to it belong the Rájas of Pattiála, Nábha, Jínd and Faridkot. According to the Siddhus of this district they were originally Bhátí Rájputs, and came from Siálkot to the neighbourhood of Sirsá (so called from one of their Rájas Sirkap), where they were settled when the first Musalmán invaders came from Ghazni. Some of the Bhattís became Musalmán and are now called Wattu, while the others, to avoid a compulsory change of religion, left this part of the country and went to Kachhbhuj and afterwards to Jaysalmer, where there are still Hindu Bháti Rájputs their relatives. Some 30 generations ago, an emigration of Bhátís from Jaysalmer northwards took place. Some became Musalmán and are the Bhattis of the Sotar valley about Sirsa and Rániá. The others took to agriculture and the remarriage of widows (*Karáwa*) and so became Jats. Lálbai, Kakkhánwálí and Bídowálí, between Dabwálí and Malaut, are said to be in the neighbourhood where they first settled as Jats. Siddhu from whom the clan is named lived 25 generations ago, and Barár, who gave his name to that section to which all the Siddhus in this neighbourhood belong, lived 18 generations ago. As all parties acknowledge the connection it may be taken as a fact, and one of some political importance, that there is a close relationship between the Hindu Bhátís of Jaysalmer, the Musalmán Bhattís and Wattus of the Ghaggar and Satlaj, and the Siddhu Sikh Jats of the Málwa. The Siddhu Baráns own a considerable number of villages along the north-east border of the district, especially about Gúda, Jagmálwálí, Dabwálí and Abulkharána. Among their leading men are Híra Singh and Basáwá Singh, Zaildárs of Dabwálí, Fata Singh of Fatakhera, Bhána Singh of Abulkharána, and Malla of Bhítiwála.

The Dandíwál Sikh Jats, who own a compact circle of some 12 villages about Rori and Súratiya, say they were Chauhán Rájputs, who went from Delhi to Garhdadera, somewhere beyond Jaysalmer, and from there migrated to Rori and its neighbourhood, took to remarriage of widows and became Jats, with the name of Dandíwál, because this part of the country was called Dandí. Their neighbours on the Ghaggar, the Bháneke Musalmáns, were formerly Dandíwál Jats who became Musalmáns under the Delhi emperors only nine or thirteen generations ago. The leading men of the Dandíwál Sikhs are Naráyan Singh and Dhyán Singh of Rori, and Budh Singh of Súratiya.

The Jhorar Jats have already been mentioned as among the oldest Hindu settlers in this neighbourhood. Some of them have become regular Sikhs, and own some five villages about Sukhchain west of Rori. They are closely connected in origin with the Gill Sikh Jats (728), who own one or two villages close by and are an important tribe in Amritsar and Firozpur districts. One of their leading men here is Gurdatta Singh of Kurangánwálí.

The Sará Sikh Jats (1,131) own some eight villages, chiefly about Kálánwálí and Desu Jodha. Their leading men are Atar Singh of Kálánwáli and Sáhib Singh of Jogiwála. The Dhillon (833) an important tribe in Amritsar and Gujránwala, own some four villages south-east of Malaut; their chief man is Fath Singh, Zaildár of Bádal. The leading man of the Dháríwál Sikhs (731) is Dídár Singh of Lambi; of the Mán Sikhs (2,277) is perhaps Ghaní Singh of Abulkharána; of the Bhangu Sikhs is Anokh Singh of Sohuwála. There are also a few Virk, Sandhu, Bhúlar, and Aulak Sikhs here and there along the north-east of the district.

The Bodlas and Chishtis.

85. The Bodlas claim descent from Aba Bakr Sadík Khalífa and call themselves Shaikh Sadíkí. According to their tradition, their ancestor Shaikh Shahábuddín, known as Shahábulmulk, came from Arabia to India three or four centuries ago, and became a disciple of Khwája Muhammad Irák Ajami at Multán. One day that saint told Shahábulmulk that he was to him Bo-e-dil (Heart's Fragrance) which is explained to mean that he knew intuitively his preceptor's every thought; hence the descendants of Shahábulmulk are known as "Bodlas." Shahábulmulk afterwards settled at Khái near the Satlaj in what is now Bháwalpur territory, some 70 miles south-west of Fázilká. All Bodlas are said to derive their descent from Shahábulmulk and their origin from Khái. Two small families of Bodlas seem to have come directly from Khái to this district within the last 60 years,—one of these holds Ranga on the Ghaggar in the Dabwálí tahsíl, and the other owns Saráwán and four other villages in the Fázilká Rohi. But the chief immigration of Bodlas took place some four generations ago, when Muhkamdín came from Khái and settled at Abal not far from Bahak, where the remains of his town are still to be seen. The country was then uninhabited, and the Bodlas kept large herds of cattle and drove them hither and thither for pasture over the tract of country afterwards known as pargana

Bahak, from Bahak which became their chief village after the destruction of Ahal. The Bodlas had many contests with the Nawáb of Mamdot, who claimed jurisdiction over their country, and it was not till about 1855 A. D. that they were removed from his control and the pargana was attached to the Firozpur District. It was regularly settled soon after and transferred to the Sirsa District in 1858. The greater part of pargana Bahak was declared to belong to the Bodlas in proprietary right, and one-sixteenth of the revenue of the whole pargana was confirmed to them in jágír in recognition of their saintly character. Those Bodlas who belong to this pargana still enjoy the allowance, which is divided into complicated shares founded chiefly on ancestral descent. When the country to the south and east was being colonised 35 years ago, some of the Bahak Bodlas acquired villages or shares in villages outside the pargana, and a few of them obtained further grants for good service in the mutiny. Their claim to a saintly character and to some sort of precedence has always been allowed by their neighbours. They are supposed to be able to curse with efficacy, and instances are given in which the evils called down by them on their enemies were fulfilled; but their special gift is the cure of the bite of mad dogs or jackals which is performed by a species of incantation, and large numbers of all classes, Hindu as well as Musalmán, apply to them in cases of bite, and are said to be cured by their miraculous power. They were until 25 years ago essentially a pastoral tribe, and even now a large part of their wealth consists in horses and cattle. They do not cultivate much themselves and are bad managers, unthrifty and extravagant, leaving much to their agents; and the proprietary rights conferred on them at settlement are fast passing out of their hands into those of Sikh Jats. Their tenants are mostly Musalmáns paying rent in kind, and to an unusual extent under the power of their landlords. The Bodlas are generally large stout men with broad flabby faces, large broad prominent noses and thick, but not projecting, lips, which give their wide mouths a weak appearance; and altogether they look like men accustomed to a lazy life of self-indulgence. Their language and customs are those of the Wattus and other Panjábí Musalmáns, among whom they live, and with whom they are closely connected by inter-marriage. They have no connection with other Shaikhs, and notwithstanding their proud traditions are probably, as surmised by Mr. Oliver who knew them well, really of Wattu descent, or at all events of indigenous origin, and distinguished from their neighbours only by the assumption of superior sanctity and the spirit of exclusiveness it has bred. They are returned as numbering only 749 in this district, in which they own 32 villages and shares in nine others, most of them being in or near pargana Bahak and not far from the Satlaj. They are a small but comparatively important clan found also in Firozpur, Montgomery, and Bháwalpur, only in the neighbourhood of the Satlaj. Their leading men in this district are Shaikh Subhán of Bahak, Burhánuddín of Hasta, and Iláhi Bakhsh of Saráwán.

The Lakheke Bhattis are probably the beginning of a special family or clan like the Bodlas, with whom they are closely connected. They are known as Bhattis, but say they have now no connection with the Rájput Bhattís. They trace their descent from Lakha, a faqír who came from Abohar to the Satlaj a few generations ago, and like the Bodlas claim a sacred character. They own two villages in pargana Bahak, and are allowed by the Bodlas to share in their jágír. Another family which may develope into an exclusive saintly clan are the Kharal family of Abdul Khálik near Fázilká, who were ordinary Kharals of the Ráví but have recently acquired fame as holy men and are greatly venerated by the Musalmáns of the neighbourhood and of Bháwalpur.

The Chishtis, who are also a holy tribe, claim descent from Umar the companion of Muhammad, through Sultáns of Balkh, Shám and Kábul, and call themselves Shaikh Fárúkí. Their more recent ancestor was Khwája Faríduddín, known as Bábá Farid Shakarganj, who starting from Multán, after a 40 days fast at Sirsá, became the pupil of Kutbuddín at Dehli, and finally settled as a Chishti faqír at Chavaddhan, now known as Pákpattan in the Montgomery District, where his shrine and family are still famous. The ancestors of the Sirsá Chishtis crossed the Satlaj from Pákpattan only four generations ago, and settled near the river on lands then uninhabited. They now hold some nine villages in the Sirsá district, all near the Satlaj south-west of Fázilka. A number of them are found in Montgomery and Bháwalpur. Like the Bodlas they are considered a holy tribe and are in consequence very exclusive, and do not give their daughters in marriage out of the tribe, while they take in marriage only the daughters of high-class tribes in the neighbourhood. They have sharper features and a less sensual appearance than the Bodlas, but like them they are bad managers and do not themselves cultivate their land; and their sacred character has enabled them to contract large debts on low interest, so that they are as a rule somewhat involved. Their leading man is Khair Muhammad of Pakka Ganj Bakhsh.

The Ráins.

86. According to their own tradition, the Aráins or Ráins of the Ghaggar were originally Rájputs living near Uch on the Panjnad, near Multán; but some four centuries ago, when Saiyyad Jaláluddin was ruler at Uch, their ancestors were overthrown by some powerful enemy from whom they escaped only by disguising themselves as members of inferior tribes. The ancestors of these Ráins disguised themselves as market-gardeners, the trade followed by the Aráins or Musalmán Kambohs of the neighbourhood. The name Ráin has stuck to them ever since, and they have taken to agriculture but have not forgotten their Rájput descent. Their ancestors from Uch came and settled on the Ghaggar about Sirsá, and until the famine of 1816 Sambat (1759 A. D.), they held the whole of the Sotar or Ghaggar valley from Bhatner upwards to near Tohána (in the Hissár district) being at that time in possession of 117 or, according to some, of 360 villages. The famine of 1759 A.D. ruined many of them, and as the Mughal empire decayed, they became more and more exposed to the predatory attacks of their

neighbours the Bhattis, and at last the famine of 1840 Sambat (1783 A. D.), broke them altogether, and drove most of them from the country to settle across the Jamna, near Barelí and Rámpur. The few who remained took refuge in Sirsá, Rániá and Sikandarpur, and it was only when the country came under British rule that they ventured again to settle villages of their own. They deny connection with the Ráins of the Satlaj and the Panjáb proper, and endeavour to maintain their exclusiveness by intermarrying only with Ráins of the Ghaggar and of Barelí. There is only one village on the Satlaj partly owned by Aráins, but a good many of the tribe are to be found scattered about as tenants among the villages near the Satlaj. Those Satlaj Aráins are of the same class as the Aráins of Montgomery District and the Panjáb proper, and admit their connection with the Hindu Kambohs who like themselves are good cultivators devoting their attention especially to market-gardening. It seems probable that these Ghaggar Aráins are an off-shoot from the Satlaj Aráins, who again may be Musalmán Kambohs, and that they came to this neighbourhood in comparatively recent times from about Multán, and settled in considerable numbers in the Sotar valley about Sirsá and Rániá but were driven out by the famines of last century and the raids of the Bhattis, and that the Bareli Aráins with whom they intermarry are really emigrants from near Sirsá. On the introduction of British rule, the remnants of the tribe, who had not lost their instincts of industry, took up land in the Sotar valley, where the tribe now owns, in whole or in part, some 20 villages. They speak of themselves however as "the 12 villages." Until very lately they were strictly endogamous, allowing intermarriage only with Aráins of the 12 villages and their near relations of Bareli. The Aráins in this district number 4,742. They are, as a rule, middle-sized men with intelligent, pleasant features. Their dress and language are similar to those of the Satlaj Musalmáns. They are very thrifty and industrious and have been for generations devoted to agriculture, especially on irrigated land. On the Ghaggar the rice cultivation is either in their hands or has been learnt from them. Their villages have hitherto paid a comparatively high assessment, but they are on the whole a prosperous community. Numbers of them take land as tenants in other villages, and they often carry goods long distances for hire in their large carts drawn by good bullocks. Their houses and villages are kept clean and tidy, many of them being tastefully built of *pakka* brick. They are unusually intelligent, and upon the whole further advanced in civilisation than any other tribe in the neighbourhood, but unfortunately rather given to quarrelling and litigation, though this may be due to the greater value and more complicated nature of their rights in their favourably-situated and well-cultivated lands. Their leading men are Chúriya of Rániá, Muhammad of Mangála and Sohna of Sikandarpur.

Other Musalmáns.

87. The 2,733 Shaikhs returned at the census seem to include the Bodlas and Chishtis. The rest of the Shaikhs, with the 694 Mughals, the 634 Saiyyads, and the 1,554 Patháns, may be some of them Government servants, and

in the case of the Patháns, perhaps traders from the frontier who were passing through the district at the time of the census; but most of them are descendants of the *Sukhlambars*, the troopers of the Rohilla Cavalry and other native soldiers who on being disbanded about 1820 after the Pindárí campaigns, were given revenue-free grants of land in the Ghaggar Valley, seemingly with the idea of founding on the then frontier a sort of military colony after the Roman plan. Most of these men belonged to districts beyond the Jamna, and their descendants are still in dress, language, customs and appearance, regular Hindustánis quite different from the indigenous population of this neighbourhood. Some of them are said to be really Ránghars who have adopted the name of Pathán as more honourable than their real tribal name. Among their leading men may be mentioned Kamaruddín Khán and Ruknuddín Khán, Patháns of Talwára and other villages, sons of a Risáldár who was killed on our side in the Mutiny.

The 1,380 Biloch returned at the census are perhaps partly true Biloch traders from the Deraját passing through the district, through which great strings of camels pass every winter from the frontier to Dehli and back, and perhaps partly camel-drivers called Biloch from their trade. There are a few resident in the district, the chief man among them being Bahádur of Lálánwálí near Fázilká, who owns a large number of camels and employs them in carrying goods.

The Bráhmans and Faqírs.

88. The Bráhmans are the eighth tribe in the district in order of numbers, being returned at 5,559, an increase of no less than 60 per cent. on 3,466, the number returned in 1868, against an increase of 20 per cent. in total population. One-third of the total number is found in the towns where they are largely supported by the mercantile classes, and the remainder chiefly in the Hindu villages. The caste is sub-divided into tribes, of whom the most numerous in this neighbourhood is the Gaur (2,119), and next to them the Sársut (1,310). Some of the Gaur Bráhmans are called Gújar-Gaur, a name said to be derived from *gujjh* (secrecy), because at one time for some reason their ancestor had to conceal his religion; but more probably it marks some connection with the Gújar tribe. The Sársut Bráhmans derive their name from the Sarsuti (Saraswati) the present Ghaggar, which is held especially sacred by them; they are oftener engaged in agriculture and less in religious services than the Gaur Bráhmans. The Gaurs are more numerous to the east, and the Sársut to the north; towards Bíkáner again there is a tribe called Párík Bráhmans. The Khandílwál say they are a branch of the Gaur Bráhmans, and derive their name from *khandan* (to break or divide), because at Parasrám's great sacrifice their ancestors arrived too late, and the only thing left to give them was a golden stool which they broke up and divided among them. These are all high-caste Bráhmans who perform religious ceremonies for the Banyas, Játs, Ahírs and other ordinary agricultural tribes. There is an inferior and quite distinct class of Bráhmans called Gurra, or Chamarwa, who minister to the Chamárs, Aheris, and other impure low-caste

tribes. These may be Bráhmans who have sunk in the social scale by associating with low-castes, or they may be members of those castes whose families have been set apart for religious functions. Some Bráhmans, especially members of the Sársut tribe, are employed wholly in agriculture, but most of them are employed in conducting religious ceremonies, attending to temples, &c., and are supported by fees and offerings, especially by the Hindus to whom they are necessary as ministers of religion. They are honoured to a less extent by the Síkhs, but even the Musalmáns sometimes show them especial respect owing to their semi-sacred character. Those of them who are engaged in agriculture are almost as ignorant as their fellow-cultivators, and even the most learned of those devoted to religious duties know very little of the Sanskrit and Hindu literature which it is the prerogative of their caste to know. A *Pandit* is a *rara avis* in Sirsá. The Bráhmans have a peculiar form of property known as *birt*, the right of performing religious ceremonies for certain clients (*jajmán*) among other tribes, which is inherited like other property and is subject to much the same restrictions as immovable property, the *clientèle* being on the death of the father divided equally among the sons.

At the census, 2,740 persons were returned as faqírs; this includes 1,000 Bairágís, all Hindus; 587 Gosáyans, all Hindus; and 682 faqírs, of whom 443 are Musalmáns. Some of these are regular religious ascetics, such as the Udási Sádhs among the Sikhs, or the Charndási Sádhs, among whom may be mentioned Jánkídás of Rori, who was given a revenue-free grant for aiding the fugitive Europeans in the mutiny. Such ascetics are often found established on the bank of the village pond, where they plant and water trees as a good work for which they daily beg the alms of the village; others wander about as religious mendicants, or settle down as attendants on temples and shrines, and are supported by the alms and offerings of ordinary work-a-day people. But others are engaged in the affairs of ordinary life, and have probably been given the name of faqír from some ancestor who by his asceticism gained a name for sanctity. Such are Rámpatgir Gosáyan of Jodhka, and Jánkídás Bairági of Jhúmbánwálí; indeed, the Bodlas and Chishtis may be classed with this description of faqír.

The Banyas, Aroras and other mercantile classes.

89. In the Sirsá district, as among the agricultural classes the Sikh Jat of the north, the Bágrí Ját of the south, and the Musalmán of the west, all meet each other, so among the commercial classes the Banya of the east meets the Arora of the west and, it may be said, the Khatri of the north. The Khatris however number only 295, and so can hardly be said to have established themselves here. The Banyas number 10,496, and stand sixth of the tribes in order of numbers; of these only 22 are returned as Sikh and 799 as Jain or Saráogi; the remainder are Hindus. At last settlement the Banyas were returned as numbering 7,819, so they would appear to have increased by 34 per cent., while the total population has increased by only 20 per cent. The Banyas almost all came into this district from the

east and south, from Hariána and Rájputána, and their dialect is generally the broad Hindí spoken by the Bágrí Játs. They are still found chiefly in the east and south of the district among the Bágrís with whom they immigrated ; their place to the north-west being taken by the Aroras. A line drawn across the narrowest part of the district about Dabwálí would roughly mark the boundary between the two great trading classes. The word "Banya" pronounced by the Bágris "Bánya" is from the Sanskrit *banij*, which simply means "a trader," and is more the name of a class or occupation than of a tribe. The word *kirár* is used by the Panjábi-speaking tribes in the same sense, and is applied by them to Banyas as well as to Aroras. Both *kirár* and *banya* are used in a somewhat opprobrious sense, and the more respectable members of the caste do not like to have these names applied to them ; they prefer to be called *Mahájan* as a caste, and the chief merchants and bankers among them are known as *Seth*, from *Sreshtha* (eldest, best), a title however which is in ordinary usage confined to only a few wealthy families forming important firms. There are in Sirsá one or two branches of large commercial houses whose head-quarters are in Bíkáner and other parts of Rájputána, and whose ramifications extend over the whole of North India. The Banyas generally derive their origin from Rájputána and the country immediately adjoining it, and are most numerous in the south and east of the Panjáb. Of the tribes to which this name is commonly applied, the most important in this neighbourhood, and indeed in the whole Panjáb, are the Aggarwáls, who originally came from Agroha between Sirsá and Hissár, where their ancestor Raja Aggar a member of the Vaish caste once held sway. The Aggarwáls are very numerous in the country between the Ghaggar and the Jamna. In this neighbourhood by far the greater number of them are Bishni or Vaishnava, that is, orthodox Hindus or followers of Vishnu ; but a considerable number comprising many of the most wealthy of the tribe belong to the Jainí or Saráogí sect, who worship Párasnáth and have a great tenderness for animal life. There is some difficulty about the intermarriage of Bishni and Saráogi Aggarwáls, but these are simply religious sects, not separate castes or tribes, and the difficulty is caused only by religious animosity, not by caste rule or tribal custom. Instances are to be found of late years in which Bishnis and Saráogis have intermarried. Next to the Aggarwál Banyas in numbers come the Oswál (1,378), known also among the Sikhs as Bhábra, who say they came from a town called Osanagari in Jodhpur. They are numerous in south-western Rájputána. In this neighbourhood they are nearly all Saráogis. The only other Banya tribe of importance here is the Mahesri (920), whose tradition is that they were originally Rájputs, and were turned into stone by the curse of some faqír, but were restored to human shape by Mahesh or Mahádeo, whence their name of Mahesri. They have clans with names similar to those of the Rájputs, and are mostly Bishni or orthodox Hindus. These three tribes of Banyas are quite distinct, and have no close connection with one another, each marrying within itself only. The Banyas of this district are of

course chiefly engaged in trade, and more than half of them are in the towns. In the villages some of them cultivate land as tenants, the trade of the country not being sufficient to employ them all in their traditional calling. They have not here such a hold on the peasantry as in most parts of the Province, as many of the proprietors and cultivators are sufficiently prosperous and provident to be quite independent of the money-lender. The import and export trade however and the shop-keeping trade for the supply of salt, sugar and other commodities which are not actually produced in the district, are altogether in the hands of Banyas and Aroras. The Banya is very similar to the Bágrí Ját in language, manners and appearance, but as he spends most of his time in his shop and takes as little exercise as possible, his frame is less vigorous than that of the peasant accustomed to live in the open air, and he has even less spirit than the Bágrí Ját. The village Banya is generally a miserly money-grubber, hoarding up the smallest possible gains and seldom making any ostensible use of them; but the better class often show great energy and a power of organisation which enables them to originate and carry out far-reaching mercantile transactions of some magnitude. Even the best of them in Sirsá however are somewhat rude, ignorant and narrow-minded. The chief men of the Banya class are perhaps Rámsukhdás the treasurer, an Aggarwál, who owns besides other lands five villages formerly held by the Nawáb of Rániá, which were confiscated after the mutiny and granted to his father, Fatehchand, in payment of debts due by the Nawáb; Hukmchand Aggarwál, the agent of the Seth firm of Lachhmangarh who own some villages near Sirsá; Debidatt Aggarwál, one of the first settlers in Sirsá town; Sheojirám Oswál of Sirsá; and Gobindram Aggarwál of Sirsa.

The trading class of the north-west end of the Sirsá district are the Aroras or Roras, who number 5,554, an increase of nearly 25 per cent. on the number (4,461) returned at the previous census. They are born traders like the Banyas, whose place they take in the south-west of the Panjáb. A considerable portion of the trade of the Fázilká town is in their hands; more than two-thirds of the Roras however live in the villages. They are like the Banyas called *Kirár* by the Panjábi-speaking tribes; but they call themselves Rora, or more rarely, Arora. They say they were originally Rájputs, and give an account of their separation from that class similar to that given by many tribes, *viz.*, when Parasrám was slaying the Rájputs, their ancestors, when asked whether they were not Rájputs, said they were not, they were another tribe "*aur qaum*," hence the name *Ar* ora. The tribe is divided into two sections, the northern Roras (*Uttarádhi*), whose women wear red ivory bracelets, and the southern Roras (*Dakhana*), whose women use bracelets of white ivory. The northern section are most numerous in Gújránwála, Sháhpur, Jhang and Lahore; in Sirsa they number 1,522. They are sub-divided into the Bárí or twelve-clan and the Bunjáhí or fifty-two-clan sections, of whom the twelve-clans do not give their daughters in marriage to the fifty-two clans, but take daughters in marriage from them. The southern Roras are most numerous in Multán, Dera Gházi

Khán, Bháwalpur and Montgomery, and comprise the majority (3,875) of the Aroras of Sirsá; they also are sub-divided into the Dakhnádhain and Dáhra sections, of whom the former will not give their daughters in marriage to the latter. The Aroras are similar in character to the Banyas, but their dress and dialect are more like those of the Panjábí tribes among whom they live, and the custom some of them have of wearing the beard gives them quite a different appearance from the shaven Banya. They are not such bigoted Hindus as the Banyas, and many of them follow the precepts of the Sikh Guru Nának. Some Aroras have taken to agriculture, and one or two families own villages in the Fázilká tahsíl, which they took on speculation when the prairie was divided into lots. The Banyas and Aroras together own 23 whole villages and shares in 73 others. Many of these villages were obtained by them by grant or purchase years ago, when land was of very little value and the development of the country only beginning, and they have by settling tenants and sometimes by expenditure of capital improved their estates and established villages. Some of the shares in villages have been purchased by them from less thrifty or less successful land-speculators, or from improvident Musalmáns who could not keep the rights in land conferred upon them; but such transfers are less numerous and less to be regretted in this district than in many other districts of the Panjáb. The Banyas and Roras appear to be increasing in numbers at a faster rate than the total population.

The Sunárs (2,479) may be mentioned here because, although their proper occupation is that of gold and silver-smith and jeweller and they rank with the artisans, yet many of them are money-lenders like the Banyas and Koras, and almost all the banking of the district is done by members of these three castes. The Sunárs also find a good deal of employment in making up the savings of the peasants into gold and silver ornaments, in which shape they prefer to hoard them.

The Kumhárs.

90. The Kumhárs come fourth of the tribes of the district in order of numbers, being returned as 16,114, or 6 per cent. of the total population. Of these 12,289 or three-fourths are Hindus, 880 Sikhs, and 2,947 Musalmáns. There are two large sections of Kumhárs: (1) the Jodhpuriya, so called because they are supposed to have immigrated from the direction of Jodhpur; and (2) the Bikáneri or Desi who belong originally to this part of the country. The Jodhpuriya Kumhárs are partly engaged in agriculture, but chiefly in potters' work, making bricks and earthen dishes and vessels of all sorts; they also keep donkeys and employ them in carrying about their vessels and bricks for sale, and generally in carrying grain and goods for hire. A number of them are to be found as far north as Bhatinda. The Bíkáneri or Desi Kumhárs rarely engage in making earthen vessels; although this seems to be the original trade of the tribe, they look down upon it and take to it only in extremity. They are in this district chiefly employed

in agriculture as tenants or proprietors, and many of them who have no land of their own engage in agricultural labour rather than in potters' work. It is said that the Desi Kumhárs when they do make earthen vessels, burn them in a kiln (*pajáwa*) which takes three days to bake properly, while the Jodhpuriyas bake their vessels in a furnace (*bhatti*) and have them ready in 24 hours. Many of the Kumhárs in this district are as much devoted to agriculture as are the Játs, some villages being owned by Kumhárs who have surrounded themselves with tenants of their own tribe, so that in some cases the whole of the proprietary and cultivating part of the community are Kumhárs. They are excellent and thrifty cultivators, not inferior to the Bágrí Játs from whom they are hardly distinguishable in physique, dress, habits and language. They are most numerous about Abohar, but are found all over the district. The Sikh Kumhárs are found chiefly in Sikh villages, and the Musalmán Kumhárs in Musalmán villages. They seem to be all closely connected and to form one great tribe which according to the Sirsá Kumhárs came originally from about Jodhpur and Bíkáner. The Sikh Kumhárs who now speak Panjábí, say they came from Bahádra in Bikáner some hundred years ago. The Musalmán Kumhárs have forgotten their connection with the Hindus, and say they are a class by themselves, and have been Musalmán for generations. In some parts of the district the Kumhár occupies the position of a village menial, and supplies the drinking-vessels and the pots for the Persian wheel in return for a share of the produce at harvest, but often he is rather in the position of an independent artisan and sells the vessels he makes for cash. The leading Kumhár is Kesra of Kera.

The Khátis.

91. The Khátis, returned as 7,222 in number, come seventh of the tribes of the district in order of numbers; two-thirds of them are Hindu and the rest are Sikh and Musalmán. The Sikh and Musalmán Khátis are called *Tarkhán*, which is simply the Panjábí word for Kháti or carpenter. The traditional occupation of the tribe is that of working in wood, but many are in this district wholly engaged in agriculture, and make excellent cultivators hardly to be distinguished from the Játs. A few villages and shares in villages are owned by them. The Khátis are divided into two great sections—the Khatti with 1,444 clans and the Dhamán with 120 clans; these two sections rarely intermarry. The Suthárs, a sub-division of the Dhamán section, endeavour to keep themselves aloof from the ordinary Khátis and seldom intermarry with them. They admit however their connection with the Khátis, although in this district they are almost exclusively devoted to agriculture, and look down upon the trade of carpenter, which they follow only when in poor circumstances. They say they came originally from Jodhpur, and that Suthárs hold some villages and a jágír there and in Bíkáner, where they also serve in the army. They have a tradition that in Akbar's reign 12,000 Suthárs went from Jodhpur to Dehli as artificers, and were there compelled to become Musalmán, after which they took to working in iron and became Lohárs; and

many of the clans of the Lohárs have the same names as those of the Suthárs; indeed the Suthárs say they are more closely connected with some of the Lohárs than with the Khátis. This is admitted by a section of the Lohárs, and has probably some foundation of truth. It is said that the Suthárs who became Musalmán Lohárs got land in Sind, and thence came and settled in villages about here under the name of Multáni Lohárs. The Sikh Tarkháns, who speak Panjábí and are found chiefly among the Sikh Jats near the Pattiála border, say they came from Bíkáner (the Thali) three or four generations ago, and then became Sikh. Some of the Musalmán Tarkháns say they came from Jaysalmer with the Dandíwál Jats of Rori; some claim a connection with the Bhattí Rájputs. Tarkháns who do ordinary carpentry work for the peasants generally take payment in kind at the rate of a maund of grain per plough each harvest, but some of them work for hire as independent artisans. Some Sikh Tarkháns also work in iron; they are then called *Lohárs*, and are hardly to be distinguished from the Lohárs proper, with whom in such a case they sometimes intermarry. Indeed there is evidently a close connection between the Tarkhán and Lohár tribes. Some Khátis are, like the Kumhár, ashamed of their ancestral trade, and devote themselves almost exclusively to agriculture. The Tarkháns or Khátis occupy one of the highest places among the artisan tribes; some Jats say they will eat food cooked in a Tarkhán's house, and are almost prepared to allow a Jat to marry the daughter of a Tarkhán. They would not eat food cooked, for instance, by a Nái or Kumhár. Among the most prominent men of the tribe are Motí Suthár of Risálya, whose father, Jálu, brought supplies to Captain Robertson at Pípli in the Mutiny, and was rewarded with the grant of the confiscated village of Chhatryán; and Rámsukh Zaildár of Khúíkhera.

The Lohárs.

92. The Lohárs, or workers in iron, are returned as 1,652 in number, chiefly Musalmán, but some of them Hindu and Sikh. They may be divided into three classes: (1) the Suthárs and Tarkháns who have taken to working in iron and so formed an endogamous caste of Lohárs, sometimes called Multání, as they are supposed to come from Multán; (2) ordinary Jats and Rájputs who have taken to the trade of blacksmith; the Lohárs of the Satlaj say this is their origin; they have the same clans as the Jats and Rájputs, such as Panwár, Dhúdhi, Joiya, and probably the tradition has some foundation; these Lohárs also marry only Lohárs and seem to admit some connection with the first section; they say, however, that they sometimes intermarry with Jats; (3) the wandering, or Gádiya Lohárs, so called because they have no fixed dwelling but go about from village to village in carts *(gádi)* carrying their families and implements with them. They are Hindus of Bágrí origin and wander about this district, Hissár, Rohtak and the adjoining parts of Rájputána. They are looked down upon by the stationary village Lohárs, who have a natural jealousy of them and deny all connection with them. They have no home but their cart, which is generally a sort of rectangular box on small strong wheels, containing all their

household goods. They carry about no iron; that is furnished by the peasant, and they work it up with their few simple tools, the chief of which are the anvil (*airne*), the small hammer (*hathorá*), the sledge-hammer (*ghan*), the pincers (*sandasi*), and the bellows (*dhawan*), made of two goatskins with a double iron nozzle and worked alternately with the hands. Ordinarily the women work the bellows seated on the ground, and sometimes they take a turn at the sledge-hammer. In return for their labour (*gharái*) they often take payment in grain or fodder instead of in cash. The most valued charcoal for blacksmiths' work is that of the *phog*, but the charcoal most commonly used is that of the *kair* or *kikar*. The stationary Lohárs are often village menials, taking payment for their labour in kind, generally at the rate of a maund of grain per plough per harvest.

The Chamárs and other workers in leather.

93. The Chamárs are the third tribe in order of numbers in the Sirsá district, and comprise 18,022 persons, or 7 per cent. of the total population; of these, only 314 are returned as Sikh and the rest as Hindu. They are very numerous also to the south and east, and form about 10 per cent. of the population of the whole south-east of the Panjáb. If the number of Chamárs in the district was rightly given at last census (11,701), they have increased in numbers 54 per cent. In the Musalmán villages their place as leather-workers is taken by the Mochis who number 3,073, all Musalmán except 132 who are returned as Hindu. All the leather-work is done by Chamárs or Mochis, and they also work as labourers in the fields for wages in money or in kind. But in this district land is so plentiful that many of the Chamárs are ordinary tenants, and have given up leather-work for agriculture, making very good prosperous cultivators, little inferior to the Játs. The Chamárs also do the weaving of blankets and coarse cotton cloth in the Hindu villages, their place as weavers being taken in the Musalmán villages by the Juláhás (2,817), or, as they are called by the Panjábís, Páolís. The Panjábí Chamárs are known only by the name of Chamár, or Chimiyár. Those from the Bágar like to be called Meghwál and say they are descended from Meghrikh, who was created by Naráyan. Any one wishing to be abusive calls a Chamár "Dhed" which seems to be the name of a large tribe holding a similar position in Kachh and Sind. Chamárs are also sometimes called "Bhámbi." Possibly all the tribes, Chamár, Bhámbí Meghwál, Dhed, Juláhá, Páoli and Mochi, engaged in weaving coarse cloth and working in tanned leather are originally the same race, or at all events closely connected, and perhaps of aboriginal descent. The Chamárs are divided into several distinct sections which will not intermarry with each other. Almost all the Chamárs of this neighbourhood are of the Chándor section, and will not have any intercourse with the Jatiya Chamárs of the neighbourhood of Delhi, who (they say) work in leather made from camels' and horses' skins, which is an abomination to the Chándors probably because those animals do not chew the cud. On the other hand, some Márwári Chamárs settled in Delhi, who make trips in this direction in the cold weather selling leather ropes in the villages, refuse to have any connection with the Chamárs here, who (they say) tan

leather and eat the flesh of animals that have died, while these Márwári Chamárs work only in leather already tanned, and eat only the flesh of animals that have been killed in the Musalmán fashion (*halál*). All the Chandor Chamárs of this neighbourhood intermarry with each other. They do not themselves tan leather—that is done by the Raigar and Khatík, and (they say) by the Jatiya Chamárs of Delhi, and the Chamárs of the Pawád about Ludhiána. I found a Musalmán Mochi in a Satlaj village tanning leather with kíkar bark, lime (*chúna*) and sajji (*barilla*) which he called *khár*. The Sirsá Chamárs eat the flesh of cows, buffaloes, goats and sheep, all cud-chewing animals, and work in their leather; but they will not eat the flesh of the camel or horse or work in leather made from their hides which are left to the Chúhras; nor will they eat fish, lizard or pig. The Chamárs are practically Hindu, and have a caste of Bráhmans of their own called Chamarwa or Gurra Bráhmans, who do not eat with Chamárs and who wear the sacred thread, but are quite distinct from the ordinary high-caste Bráhmans. They accept offerings from Chamárs and preside at their religious ceremonies. They may either be Bráhmans who have fallen from their high estate by deigning to accept offerings from such a low caste, or perhaps a class of Chamárs who have been separated off for religious work after the model of the Bráhmans. The Chamárs have also a separate caste of Mirásis (Musalmán) and another of Bháts (Hindu) endogamous and distinct from the Chamárs on the one side, and from the ordinary Mirásis and Bháts on the other. The Juláhá or Chamár weaver may often be seen in the village lane arrangiug the warp (*táná*) which the women of the family make by setting up sticks (*kána*) as supports, and winding the threads between them as they walk rapidly along the line and back again. The weaver puts on size (*pán*) made of wheat-flour and a little sweet oil, with a large brush (*kuchch*) made of the roots of the *sain* grass, bound together with leather. The operation of sizing is called *piáwan* or *táná piwáná*. In weaving he has his loom almost on a level with the ground and sits with his feet below it. His web is usually very narrow only about a *hatth* (20 inches) wide, and on the Satlaj he sells the cloth at the customary rate of 5 *solis*, that is 80 *hatth*, or over 40 yards for the rupee. The leather ropes (*nárí*) made of tanned cow and buffalo-hide by the wandering Márwári Chamárs are ordinarily 18 *háth* or about 30 feet long and sell for about 8 annas each. Closely connected with the Chamárs are the Raigars and Khatíks (1,100 in number), who are perhaps the same caste, their proper occupation being to tan leather. There is a community of Hindu Raigars and Musalmán Khatíks in the town of Sirsá engaged in tanning; they inhabit a separate quarter outside the town-wall.

The Chúhras.

94. The Chúhras, though the lowest of the low in the social scale, are important from their numbers, which are given as 16,051 or 6 per cent of the total population of the district, thus making them 5th in order of numbers of the tribes of the district. Of these 10,215, or two-thirds, are returned as Hindus and have come chiefly from Bíkáner and the country to the south and east; the remainder, 2,078 Sikh and 3,758 Musalmán, are chiefly from the north and west. Many of the latter living in Musalmán

villages near the Satlaj have adopted Islám within the last few years, and the wave of conversion is still advancing. The converted Chúhras are known as Díndár (faith-possessing) or Khoja, which is by some said to mean one who has tracked out (*khoj*) salvation, and by others to be applied in derision in the sense of eunuch, and are admitted in a wonderful degree to social intercourse by the Musalmán Rájputs, who say they will even smoke with them. Chúhra is the proper name for the tribe, and the name by which they describe themselves. The Sikhs, when they want to flatter a Chúhra, call him Rangreta. "(*Rangretá guru ka beta*). They do not like to be called Bhangi, a term which is applied to them in contempt. A Sikh Chúhra is called Mazhabi. Chúhras are also called Halálkhor (eater of lawful food), Khákrob (sweeper of dust) and Mihtar (Prince). There are some seven or eight clans of Chúhras which are numerous in this neighbourhood ; they all intermarry with each other. The Chúhras are the scavengers of the country and do all the dirty work, sweep streets and houses, carry manure and night-soil, and the like. They also carry burdens, run messages and work in house and field for wages or for scrapings ; but in this district many of them live and prosper as independent tenants. They are almost certainly of aboriginal origin and are generally of a dark complexion and inferior physique. The Dháuaks (1,491) occupy a similar low position, but consider themselves superior to the Chúhras because, although they sweep up and carry away everything else, they do not like the Chúhras clean up night-soil. The Chúhras however say that the Dháuaks are their equals, for neither tribe will eat the leavings of the other, and that the Sáusis are beneath them, for a Sáusi will eat a Chúhra's leavings, while a Chúhra will not eat a Sánsi's. By common consent of almost all other tribes however the Chúhra or Bhangi is ranked below even the Dhának and the Sánsi. Chúhras eat almost anything (hence the name *halálkhor*); they eat the flesh of the camel and horse and get as perquisites their hides, which are rejected by the Chamárs ; they eat also fish, lizard and pig, except that Chúhras who live in Musalmán villages will not eat pig. They also eat the leavings (*jhúl*) even of such low castes as the Báwariya, Chamár and Khatík, and often get the clothes of the dead as their perquisite. They say they have separate castes of Bráhmans and Dúms of their own. Sometimes a body of them may be met with wandering about the Dry Tract with shelters of *kána* (stalk of the *sarr* grass) carried on donkeys, selling winnowing baskets (*chhdj*) and other articles made of *sarr* grass (*tíli*) which they carry with them in bundles.

The Máchhí and allied castes.

95. The Máchhís (2,839) are an important tribe in the Musalmán villages near the Satlaj, where they act as bakers, grain-parchers, cooks and water-carriers, while the Máchhin is often a midwife. The Máchhí is a Musalmán and keeps the village oven (*tanúr*) where the Musalmán peasants have their bread baked in the hot weather. It is probable that this is the same tribe as the Hindú Jhínwar or Kahár, or as he is called by the Sikhs Maira, the water-carrier of the Hindús (returned as 883 in number). The Bhatiyára or baker of the

caravanserais is generally a Máchhí. The Malláh or boatman (58) is usually a Jhínwar Musalmán, but the boatmen on the Satlaj belong to the Jhabel caste. The Bihishti or water-carrier of the Muhammadans, known also as Sakka, is usually a Jhínwar by caste. I saw two brothers Sikh Mairas carrying water for Sikh households; one of them carrying it in a goat-skin like the Musalmán Bihishtis and the other in earthen vessels carried on a yoke (*bángi*) like that used by Hindú Kahárs. Indeed, it seems that almost all these classes engaged in carrying water for others, in baking, cooking and parching grain, in carrying burdens slung from a yoke (*bángi*) or palanquins, and to some extent in fishing and boating, *viz.*, the Kahár, Maira, Jhínwar, Máchhí, Bihishti, Sakka, Bhatiyára, Bharbhunja and Malláh, are of the same caste originally and have been separated off from each other by difference of religion or of occupation.

The Chhímba, Telí, Nái, Mirási and allied castes.

96. The Chhímba or Chhípí (2,825 in number) are properly calico-printers, and in this district a number of them follow this trade, but they are closely connected with the Dhobis (347) or washermen, the Darzis (142) or tailors, and the Lílárí (410) or dyers in indigo; and all may possibly be of the same tribe originally and distinguished only by diversity of occupation. The three latter classes are generally found in towns, as in the villages the wives of the peasants generally do the washing and sewing for the family. It is curious to note how low the Dhobi ranks in the social scale, evidently because his occupation brings him in contact with the dirty clothes of all sorts of people. He is classed below even the workers in leather, whose clothes he is said to be ready to wash. Many of the Chhímbas seem to have taken to agriculture in this district. About half of them are Hindú and half Musalmán.

The Telís (3,914) are the oil-pressers and cotton-scutchers of the district,—when following the latter occupation they are called Dhuniya. They are all Musalmáns, and many of the Qassábs (842) or butchers seem to be originally of this tribe. Thus the cultivators of Chak Doyam near Sirsá are called Qassáb or Qasái by their neighbours, but call themselves Telís. The Kaláls (401) are properly distillers and sellers of spirituous liquors, but some of them have taken to agriculture, and a large body of them are so engaged in Sainpál in the Sirsá Rohi.

The Nái (4,150) or Hajjám is the barber of the country and may often be seen shaving his customers in the open air. He is also greatly in request at all domestic ceremonies, such as circumcision, betrothal and marriage. He often, along with or in place of the family Bráhman, goes on formal deputation to arrange the nuptials of his clients, and is known as the *negí* or *lágí* as being entitled to perform these duties and to receive from both parties the customary fees (*neg* or *lág*). More than half the Náís are Hindús, a few Sikh and the rest Musalmán. The Nái is ranked below the Kumhár because he will shave a Kumhár, and is considered a menial.

The Dúms or Mírásís (3,015), called also Dhádhí, are the musicians and genealogists of the peasants and are in great request on all occasions of feasting, such as a marriage or funeral feast, when they play their musical instruments, sing songs and celebrate the praises of the ancestors, real or imaginary, of their entertainers, from whom they exact large fees. It is strange that almost all Dúms, even those of the Hindú tribes, are Musalmáns. Some of them travel about among their clients, and I once saw a family of Dúms on tour living in a small tent (*chholdári*), an unusual sight in a Bágar village. The Chamárs and Chúhras have Mirásís of their own, who are considered unclean by the ordinary Mirásís. The Bháts (447) are the genealogists of the higher castes, and visit their clients periodically to record all births and other domestic events of importance.

The Báwariyas.

97. The Báwariyas are returned as 3,335 in number, an increase of 40 per cent. on the number returned at the Census of 1868; of these 297 are returned as Sikh and the rest as Hindú. They are divided into four sections—(1) the Bídáwati from Bíkáner territory, claiming connection with the Bídáwat Rájputs and giving Chitor as their place of origin; (2) the Deswálí living in the country about Sirsá; (3) the Kápriya to the east towards Delhi; (4) the Kálkamaliya or black-blanket people, who (especially the women) wear black blankets and are found chiefly among the Sikhs of the Jangal and Málwa country. These four sections do not eat together or intermarry, but say they all came originally from the neighbourhood of Bíkáner. They are most numerous in Rájputána and the districts bordering on it, but extend up the Satlaj to Firozpur and Lahore. The name of the tribe seems to be derived from the *báwar* or snare with which they catch wild animals, but many of them despise this their hereditary occupation, and indeed it seems now to be practised only by the Kálkamaliya or Panjábí section. Their method of hunting, which I have seen, is this: A body of them, men, women and children, go out into the prairie in search of game. When they have sighted a herd of antelope in the distance, they choose a favourable piece of ground and arrange their *báwars*, which are a series of many running-nooses of raw hide tied together and fastened loosely to the ground by pegs; from the *báwars* they rapidly make two lines of bogies by sticking bits of straw with black rags tied to them into the ground at distances of a foot or two apart. These lines widen away from the snares so as to enclose a V-shaped piece of ground with sides perhaps a mile in length, the unsuspecting herd of antelope being enclosed within the V at the pointed end of which are the snares. All this is arranged in a wonderfully short time, and when all is ready the main body of hunters, who have meanwhile gone round the herd of antelope and formed a line across the open end of the V, suddenly start up and by unearthly yells drive the herd inwards towards the point. The first impulse of the antelope is to rush directly away from their tormentors, but they soon come to the long line of fluttering bits of rag which forms one leg of the V; they think this must be a snare

for them and dash across only to be brought up by the other line of bogies. Thus they are brought in to the point, where they see a blank space undefended by fluttering rags (for the nooses are almost invisible on the light-coloured ground), and in case their suspicions might be aroused, so soon as they approach this spot up jumps a man hitherto concealed and frantically shouts and waves his blanket, pretending to drive them back from this outlet. The simple antelope think this must be a weak point in the lines by which they are enclosed, and that this solitary man is its only defender. They come dashing past him at full speed, and the next moment their feet are entangled in the nooses and they are tumbling over and over in a cloud of dust; and a few men bidden close by rush on them with shouts of savage exultation and despatch them with their clubs. I saw seven antelope caught out of one herd in this way, and have little desire to see the sport again. It is interesting as one of the methods by which an ignorant tribe of hunters with the simplest means can by their superior cunning circumvent the swift antelope on his native prairie. The Báwariyas are seemingly an aboriginal tribe, being of a dark complexion and inferior physique though resembling the Bágrí Játs. Many of them are fond of a jungle life and given to wandering, living in wretched huts and feeding upon lizards, jackals, foxes and other jungle animals; but they say they will not eat fish. In other districts they are known as a criminal tribe, but here many of them are fairly respectable cultivators; some are employed as village watchmen and many of them are skilled in tracking. They are divided into clans (*got* or *nak*) with Rájput names such as Chauhán, Panwár, Bhátí. The Báwariyas who live among the Sikhs (*Kálkamaliya*) wear the hair long (*kes*), and some of them have received the *páhul* and become regular Sikhs. The black-blanket Báwariyas speak Panjábí and the Bídáwatí speak Bágrí, but they have besides a dialect peculiar to themselves, and not understood by the ordinary peasants. Báwariyas consider themselves good Hindús, and say that regular Bráhmans officiate at their marriage ceremonies, the same Bráhmans as officiate for Játs and Banyas. They hold the cow sacred and will not eat beef; they burn their dead and send the ashes to the Ganges. They are said sometimes to admit men of other tribes to their fraternity and an instance is given in which a Banya, for love of a Báwariya woman, became a Báwariya himself.

The Aherís, the Mahtams and other low castes.

98. The Aherís, or Herís as they call themselves, are also called Náik (a sort of honorific title) and Thorí (somewhat in contempt). They are returned as 3,368 in number, all Hindu; of these 527 are returned as Aherí and 2,841 as Thorí, but their leading men told me that these are simply different names for the same tribe. In appearance and physique they resemble the Báwariyas, and like them come from the Bágar. There are many of them about Bíkáner and Jaipur and in Jodhpur, which they give as their place of origin; in the Panjáb they are found chiefly in Hissár and Sirsá. They speak a Bágrí dialect, and have no special dialect of their own. Many of them are given to wandering and gangs of them come north when the harvest is ripe and help to reap it, wandering

off again when it is over, to work on canals or wherever they can find earth or field labour. Some of them however have settled down as cultivators in villages, being generally made to reside outside the village ditch as an inferior caste. They do not keep donkeys, but carry their bundles on their heads, when they wander from village to village with their families. They are divided into clans (*got*) with Rájput names, but form one tribe and all intermarry with each other. They do not eat beef; they burn their dead and send the ashes to the Ganges; and they worship ordinary Hindú deities such as Debí and Mátá of Gurgáon, but chiefly Bábují of Kolumand in Jodhpur and Khetpál of Jodhpur. Their marriage ceremonies are performed by the Gurra or Chamárs' Bráhmans.

The Mahtams (1,988) in this district are found only near the Satlaj. Like the Báwariyas with whom they are ranked, they seem to be originally a tribe of hunters, living chiefly on the river-banks and hunting in the tamarisk (*pilchi*) jungle which grows along the river on land subject to inundation. Their traditional mode of hunting is similar to that of the Báwariyas above described, only instead of making their nooses of hide they make them of *múnj* rope, and call them *vám*, not *báwar*, and instead of setting them in the open prairie they set them in the tamarisk jungle. They catch all sorts of animals in this way, and say they used to snare wild pig and even tigers in their nooses. They also sometimes make a long line of low impenetrable hedge by interweaving the branches of bushes together, so that small animals, such as hare and partridge, running through the jungle, are stopped by this hedge and run along it to the gap near which the hunter lies in wait to get an easy chance of killing them. The Mahtam is very fond of the sarr grass, and one of his chief employments is making rope and other articles out of it. They are considered a low caste and often live apart from the other villagers, but many of them have taken to agriculture, and make very good industrious cultivators especially on lands subject to inundation. Some villages and parts of villages on the Satlaj are owned by them; their huts are often squalid and dirty, but they are as a rule prosperous and somewhat quarrelsome. Their dark complexion and general appearance, as well as their hereditary occupation of hunting, seem to argue them an aboriginal tribe. They speak Panjábí and are classed as Hindú or Sikh. No other tribe intermarries with them.

The Jhabels (987) are a low-caste tribe living on or near the Satlaj. A few of them are engaged in agriculture, but they seem chiefly to live by fishing or boating. Most of the Satlaj boatmen (*Mallák*) in the Sirsá district are Jhabels. Another river-tribe are the Mors, who sometimes come up the river as far as Fázilká in their boats on fishing excursions. They catch and eat crocodiles. Some Mors showed me a young crocodile they had caught, and it is said that the crocodiles smell them a long way off and flee before them.

The Ods (198) are a wandering tribe who have no fixed place of abode, and whose hereditary occupation is earth-work. They wander

about with their families carrying their grass huts and belongings on the backs of donkeys, and wherever they can get a contract from the villagers to excavate or deepen the village-pond they set up their huts and encamp for a time until the job is finished. Their ordinary rate for such work is a hundred cubic *háth* = nearly 800 cubic feet for a rupee. The men dig, the women carry the earth in baskets and put it into open sacks on the donkeys' backs, and the children drive the donkeys to the spoil-bank. They often take contracts for lengths of earthwork on a canal or railway, and do that kind of work very skilfully and quickly. Ods often have small flocks of sheep and goats which they drive about with them and send out in charge of the children to graze on the village common. At harvest time they work in the fields for wages in money and grain.

Another wandering tribe are the Sánsís (92) who are well known for their pilfering propensities and are ranked very low because they will eat the leavings of almost any tribe. They do not often come to this district, and seldom give much trouble. The Nats (287) and Bázígars also wander about from village to village and perform as tumblers, rope-dancers, jugglers and buffoons. They have no fixed home and carry their grass huts about with them. The Kanjars (265) also wander about the country; their women dance and sing and prostitute themselves, and are said to find their greatest admirers among the Wattus of the Satlaj.

The caste-system in Sirsá.

99. In reviewing the whole system of tribes and castes prevalent in the Sirsá district, the first thing that strikes one is the extraordinary number of classes and sections into which the population is divided and the minuteness of the differences which separate them. In order to realise the mode in which these divisions have been formed it is perhaps best to start with the individual peasant and try to look at the caste-system from his point of view. The enquiry into tribal custom has shown almost conclusively that throughout the whole population the system of relationship is essentially agnatic. The children belong to the family and clan of their father, and a woman on marriage leaves the family of her father and she and her children belong to the family and clan of her husband. Thus the whole population is primarily divided into groups of agnates, and each individual recognises all persons related to him through males as his brothers, as members of his family; persons related to him through his mother or other females are his relations indeed, but they belong to another family. Sometimes these groups of agnates, each descended from some recent male ancestor, are classed together into large groups comprehending all those agnatic families which are descended through males from some more distant (but still recent) ancestor, whose name is remembered as the founder of the branch; for instance the Sukhere and Kalloke (or descendants of Sukha and Kallo) among the Tunwars, the Ládhúke, Saiduke &c., (or descendants of Ládhú and Saidu) among the Wattus, or the Dádúke

(descendants of Dádú) among the Siddhu Barár Sikh Jats. As time goes on the personality of the founder of the agnatic group is forgotten, but the agnatic relationship is remembered, and marked by the name of the clan (generally called *got*). Thus each individual recognises that his immediate agnatic family belongs to a large group connected together by agnatic relationship and can never forget that his clan-brothers, all belonging to his clan, are related to him through males. No one outside his clan is his agnate relation, or if he is, the common agnatic ancestor is so distant that the relationship is practically forgotten or kept in the background. The clan relationship on the other hand has very important effects in the ordinary affairs of life. His property cannot be inherited by any one not belonging to his clan, and (except where Muhammadan law has overridden tribal custom) he must not marry the daughter of his clan-brother, must not marry a woman related to him through agnates only. He must go outside his clan to find a wife. And the number of clans in which he may seek a wife is marked off more or less strictly. Here we have a ground for grouping clans together which is always present to the mind of the ordinary peasant. All clans from which he can take a wife belong to the same tribe or caste, and from this point of view a tribe or caste may be defined as a collection of agnatic groups, the members of which are allowed by custom to intermarry. But it is here too that the minute distinctions begin to make their appearance. When a family or clan aims at social importance, the first step it takes is to limit the number of families or clans to which it will give its daughters in marriage, and the next is to restrict the number of clans whose daughters it will take in marriage. This exclusiveness can be carried furthest by the Musalmáns, whose religion (which has to this extent modified their tribal custom) allows agnatic cousins to intermarry, a thing forbidden by the tribal custom of the Hindús. For instance, the Bodlas and Chishtis give their daughters in marriage to no other clan; the Wattus have a strong prejudice against giving their daughters out of the clan, but sometimes give them to other clans of high rank, such as the Bodla, Chishti and Bhatti. Again, the Bodlas will not marry the daughters of any clan except their own or the four high-class tribes, Bhatti, Joiya, Wattu, Dhúdhí. The Ráíns of the Ghaggar will not allow marriage with any one not belonging to their own small section of a tribe. Among the Hindús, the twelve-clan section of the Northern Roras take in marriage the daughters of the fifty-two-clan section, but do not give them their daughters in marriage, and there is a similar division among the Southern Roras; and the Suthárs will hardly intermarry with the other Khátis. These distinctions are simply social and owing to pride of family, and therefore are more or less shifting and elastic. Instances may be seen in which such a distinction has grown up in modern times or has recently been broken down; and in the case of several clans, when attesting their tribal custom before me, doubts were expressed and disputes arose as to the clans with whom intermarriage was allowable. Hence a vagueness as to the limits of the tribe or caste regarded as a group of clans to whom intermarriage is allowed by

custom. The social distinctions however which forbid intermarriage, are extraordinarily minute and are maintained to an absurd degree, even by tribes occupying a very low rank; for instance, the Chándor Chamárs will not intermarry with the Jatiya Chamárs because the latter work in leather made from the hides of horses and camels. Many tribes, which follow the same occupation and are generally considered by their neighbours and even by themselves to be of the same origin, are divided into sections which refuse to intermarry. In some cases it seems probable that the division is due to separation by distance for a considerable period during which each section developed customs and ideas of its own, so that on again coming into contact with each other the sections, though vaguely admitting a common origin, found it difficult to amalgamate again. This may be the cause of the distinction between the Chándor Chamárs of this neighbourhood and the Jatiya Chamárs of Delhi; between the northern and southern sections of the Aroras; between the Bídáwatí Báwariyas of Bíkáner, the Deswálí of Sirsá, the Kápriya of the country towards Delhi, and that Kálkamaliya Báwariyas of the Málwa; between the Aggarwál Banyas from Agroha in Hissár, and the Oswál Banyas from Osanagari in Jodhpur; between the Gaur Bráhmans of the east and the Sársut Bráhmans of the neighbourhood of the Saraswati. (Indeed, the Sásans of the Gaur Bráhmans are said to be named after their different places of origin, and the sections of the Ghaggar Ráíns undoubtedly are).

These are instances in which a tribe or caste is divided into distinct endogamous sections, which are still called by the same name, follow very much the same occupation and are generally recognised as being more closely connected with each other than they are with other groups of agnatic clans. And similarly we find that tribes or castes known by totally different names in different parts of the country, and perhaps so different that if we were to compare the physique, language and habits of one with those of the other in a tract of country separated from it by some distance, we should at first sight think it impossible to confound the two, are yet found to merge almost imperceptibly in one another, so that where they meet it is almost impossible to draw a sharp line of distinction between them. For instance, the Aggarwáls and Oswáls both call themselves Banyas, and although they do not intermarry are generally recognised as belonging to the same caste. Again, the Gaurs and Sársuts, though they hold aloof from each other, are considered both to belong to the same caste, *viz.*, Bráhmans. Similarly, the Chamár who weaves coarse cloth is hardly to be distingnished from the Juláha, and will sometimes give his caste as Chamár-Juláhá: the same man in the villages on the Satlaj is called Juláhá and Páolí indifferently. The Chamár sometimes calls himself Kúlí, and likes to be called Meghwál; he is sometimes called Dhed and sometimes Bhámbí. The Chamár who makes shoes and other articles of tanned leather, is hardly to be distingnished from the Mochi; and the Chamár, who himself tans leather, closely resembles the Raigar and Khatík, whose proper occupation it is. It is true that these tribes do not ordinarily intermarry, but where they meet as they may be said to do in

Sirsá, they merge in one another so that a hard-and-fast line cannot be drawn between them, and several of these tribal names are actually applied to the same man. Again, the Kahár or burden-carrier is also the water-carrier of the Hindús and is not to be distinguished from the Maira, who carries water for the Sikhs, or from the Jhínwar who sows water-nuts; the Jhínwar, who fishes and works boats on the rivers, is often called Malláh or boatman; the Musalmán water-carrier, Sakka or Bihishti, seems to be often a Jhínwar or Kahár by caste; the Máchhi who bakes and cooks for the Musalmáns on the Satlaj is said to be of the same caste as the Maira; he parches grain and becomes a Bharbhunja; he attends a caravanserai and is called Bhatiyára; he fishes and becomes again connected with the Malláhs or boatmen. Again, the Chhímbá of the Panjáb and the Chhípi of the Bágar country are not to be distinguished; the Chhímbá's proper trade is calico-printing; he washes clothes and is called a Dhobi; he makes clothes and is called a Darzi; he dyes them and becomes a Nílgar, Lílárí or Rangrez. The usual occupation of the Telí is oil-pressing; he scutches cotton and becomes a Dhuniya; he kills butcher-meat and becomes a Qassáb. The same man is called Tarkhán by his Sikh neighbours and Khátí by the Bágrís; the Tarkhán takes to working in iron and becomes a Lohár; some Khátís who have taken to agriculture are called Suthár. The Aroras claim to be Khatris by origin, and both Aroras and Banyas are called Kirár by their Sikh neighbours. A convert to Islám calls himself a Shaikh, and in a few generations his descendants are generally considered to be Shaikhs; a family of Ránghars call themselves Patháns and soon get to be called Patháns by their neighbours; a family of Wattus separate themselves off (the Bodlas) and in a few generations are supposed to be Shaikhs of true Arab descent; the origin of the Chishti and Háns, who also claim Arab descent, may be similar. A Máchhí or Páolí takes to agriculture and his descendants are soon called Jats; a Jat takes to working in iron and is called a Lohár and intermarries with Lohárs; he adopts the barber's trade and becomes a Náí and intermarries with Náís. Some tribes are called Jat in one part of the country and Rájput in another; or Jat by one set of their neighbours and Rájput by another. The Bhátí Rájputs, the Siddhu Barár Sikh Jats, and the Musalmán Wattus and Bhattís are all admitted to be of the same stock, and so again are the Dandiwál Sikh Jats and the Musalmán Bháneke who call themselves Chauhán Rájputs. Many other instances could be given in which tribes seem to merge in one another. In some cases, no doubt, the so-called caste or tribe is merely a sort of trade-guild or an occupation, and all following that occupation are admitted to the guild and called by the name. Thus probably any respectable Musalmán of whatever tribe becoming a barber or a water-carrier would soon be called Nái or Bihisbti, admitted to the fraternity of Náis or Bihishtis, and even allowed to intermarry with the families previously composing the guild. A boatman is a Malláh whether he is a Jhínwár or a Jhabel by tribe. Distinctions founded on ties of blood and distinctions founded on occupation thus overlap each other, and aquatic groups are sometimes

divided by diversity of occupation to such an extent that after a few generations the different sections would deny any near relationship with each other; and thus a new caste is formed, or two sections of the same agnatic group merge in two different castes.

While then society is divided by minute distinctions, partly founded on difference of descent, real or supposed, partly on minute differences of occupation, partly on differences in habits and character due to a residence for generations in different parts of the country, the classes, tribes or castes into which it is thus divided are not clearly marked off from each other, but merge one in another so gradually that it is hardly possible to point out the boundary between them. Possibly Sirsá, "the meeting-place of races," affords an unusually large number of instances in which tribes ordinarily considered quite distinct seem to pass gradually the one into the other, but there seems reason to believe that if our researches extended over a sufficiently large tract of country and a sufficiently long period of time, it might almost be possible to connect any one tribe with any other (say the Bráhman with the Bhangi) by a series of steps so gradual that it would be impossible to say at any point that a distinct boundary had been over-passed. It is however possible to throw the Sirsá tribes and castes into groups, the members of which have (except at the extremes of each group) a closer connection with each other than with those of the other groups. They may be classified as follows:—

1. Foreign Races and Races of the Frontier.—Saiyyad, Shaikh, Mughal, Patháu, Biloch, perhaps Chishti and Háns. It must however be remembered that many Shaikhs are converted Hindús, some so-called Patháns are Ránghar by origin, some so-called Biloch seem to be Jat camel-drivers; and probably a considerable proportion of those known by these names are really of indigenous Indian origin.
2. Classes generally devoted to Religious Rites.—Bráhman including the Gaur, Sársut, Párík and other divisions. And perhaps the ascetic classes may be included here, the Bairági, Gosáyan, Faqír, Jogí, Jati etc., although these are generally admitted to have originated from the secular castes. It is true that in this part of the county the Bráhman seems clearly marked off from the other classes, but it seems probable that in some districts he may be found to merge imperceptibly in the other castes.
3. Trading and Mercantile classes.—Banya, including Aggarwál, Oswál, Maheswri, and other sections, Arora or Rora, both northern and southern sections, Khatrí, Mahájan, Seth Bhábra, Kirár, and Sunár so far as he follows the trade of banker; as a goldsmith he is more closely connected with the artisans.
4. Agricultural and Dominant Tribes.—Rájput, Ját or Jat and all the many tribes which are returned sometimes as Rájput sometimes as Jat, such as Bhatti, Wattu, Joiya, Jhorar, Bodla and perhaps Chishti and Háns, Gújar, Ahír, Dogar, Labána.

5. Market-gardeners.—Málí, Saini, Ráín or Aráín, Kamboh and perhaps Kunjra, the vegetable-seller.
6. Water-carriers, fishermen, cooks and bakers.—Jhínwar, Kahár, Maira, Máchhí, Bharbhunja, Bhatiyára, Sakka, Bihishti.
7. Workers in wood, metals and clay.—Khátí, Tarkhán, Suthár, Lohár, Sunár, Kumhár, Ráj, Mimár, Maniár.
8. Oil-pressers, cotton-scutchers and butchers.—Telí, Dhuniya, Qasáí or Qassáb.
9. Dyers and cleaners of cloth and tailors.—Chhímbá, Chhípí, Nílgar, Lílárí, Rangrez, Dhobi, Darzí, perhaps Nái and Bisáti.
10. Weavers of cloth and workers in skins and leather.—Páoli, Juláhá, Chamár, Mochí, Meghwál, Dhed, Kúlí, Raigar, Khatík.
11. Musicians, dancers and acrobats.—Dúm, Mirásí, Nat, Bázígar, Bhand, Katk, Kanjar.
12. Hunters and jungle tribes.—Od, Báwariya, Thorí, Herí or Aherí, Náik, Mahtam, Jhabel, Malláh, Mor, Dhának, Sánsí, Chúhra, Bhangí, Díndár, Khoja.

These classes, as I have already said, to some extent overlap and merge in each other, but they are approximately the classes into which in ordinary estimation society is divided, and the order given above is approximately the order in which they take rank in the social scale. The differences in rank are marked as follows: A man considers all his agnates as his equals, and also all clans with whom his clan intermarries on equal terms; when he begins to consider his clan as somewhat superior to another he refuses to give his daughter in marriage to the inferior clan; when the distinction becomes greater, he refuses to take a daughter in marriage from that clan. For instance all the clans of Sikh Jats are approximately equal and intermarry with one another, although the Mahárájke section of the Siddhu Baráns, to which the Mahárája of Pattiála belongs, consider themselves as somewhat above their fellows; the Bodlas on the other hand will not give their daughters in marriage to any other clan nor will they take wives from any but a few high-class clans. Another distinction among the higher tribes is marked by the position of women; the Bágrí Ját makes his wife do hard work in the field; the Sikh Jat thinks she should work chiefly in the house and go out only to take her husband his food or to fetch water from the well, and gives this as one reason why he considers the Bágrí Ját his inferior and will not give him his daughter in marriage; the Bodla and the high-class Bhattí shuts his wife up altogether, makes her *pardahnashín* and thinks he has thus established a claim to higher rank. And again with the remarriage of widows; the Bágrí sells a widow almost to the highest bidder; the Sikh allows her to marry only her husband's near agnate; the Rájput, Bánya or Bráhman forbids her marrying at all, and is acknowledged to be on this account entitled to a higher rank. Descent makes another distinction; the Saiyyad occupies a high rank because he is descended from the daughter of the Prophet; the Qoreshi because he

is of Arab descent; the Pathán or Mughal because he is related to former conquerors of India; the Rájput because he is of ancient aristocratic blood. Lower down the social scale, equality of rank is marked by eating or smoking together; thus the Ját, Gújar and Ahír though they cannot intermarry will smoke together, and some Játs say they will eat food made in a Tarkhán's house, but not food made by a Kumhár. Regarding smoking a curious distinction is made; for instance, the Sunárs said they would not smoke from the same mouthpiece as a Ját, but would smoke a Ját's *huqqa* if the mouthpiece were taken out, and fresh water put in. Most of the distinctions of rank, however, are founded on the occupation generally followed, especially with regard to its cleanliness or otherwise. Thus workers in wood, metal and even clay, are considered to rank higher than workers in leather; the stationary village Lohárs look down upon the wandering Gádiya Lohárs because they have no fixed home; workers in cloth and tanned leather rank higher than makers of the raw materials; the Chándor Chamár will not associate with the Jatiya because the Jatiya handles camels' and horses' skins; the washerman ranks low because he handles the dirty clothes of other people; the wandering musicians and actors rank low because of their wandering life, and perhaps because their women often dance or act and sometimes prostitute themselves. The hunters are looked down upon because of their uncertain jungle life; and the Dhának considers himself better than the Chúhra because he does not sweep up night-soil, while the Chúhra does. In this district it is especially worthy of notice how many of the lower castes have taken to agriculture, and despise their former occupation, and try to separate themselves from those who still follow it; for instance the Suthárs who own land keep aloof from the Khátís who still work in wood, and the Kumhárs who have taken to agriculture look down upon their fellows from Jodhpur who still work in clay. But among the lowest classes the distinctions of rank are chiefly founded on the nature of their food. The Báwariya considers himself better than the Chamár because he does not eat beef; the Chamár is better than the Chúhra because he does not eat camel's flesh. The Mor comes low because he eats the crocodile; and the Dhánaks, Sánsís and Chúhras come lowest of all because they not only eat lizards, pigs and all sorts of animals, but eat the leavings of other castes.

It is worthy of note that many of the inferior tribes have clans bearing the same names as those of superior tribes, and especially names the same as those of Rájput clans. For instance, the Mahesri Banyas, the Ráins, the Báwariyas and Aherís and other tribes all have clans called Bhatti, Chauhán etc. Probably in most cases this is due to some connection of the inferior tribes with those clans of Rájputs, which has led the different sections of those tribes to adopt the clan name of their masters and protectors. But in some cases it may originally be due to a real similarity of origin; for instance, some Lohárs and Náís are generally admitted to have been ordinary Jat or Rájput agriculturists a few generations ago and retain the clan names of their Jat or Rájput ancestors.

It seems then that society in Sirsá primarily consists of groups of agnates with limits more or less clearly defined, and that the tribes or castes into which these agnatic families may be further grouped have no clearly defined limits, but seem to pass gradually into one another, the distinctions between them being marked by customs forbidding intermarriage and social intercourse and founded chiefly on vague and often minute differences of descent, recent surroundings, social customs, occupation and habits. Thus the caste system of Sirsá is by no means so rigid as is generally supposed, but society is constantly changing. New castes are now in process of formation; and old ones are amalgamating. Families are rising or falling in the social scale, and passing from one caste into another. A new country like Sirsá perhaps affords more numerous and striking examples of this progress than most other tracts of country, but probably detailed enquiry would show that elsewhere also similar changes are constantly affecting the internal framework of society.

The dialects spoken in the Sirsá district.

100. The languages returned at the Census of 1881 for the Sirsá district were Hindústáni, Bágrí, Panjábí, Pashto, Márwári, Hariána, Púrbi, Bangáli and English. The fifteen persons returned as speaking Bangáli and the 46 who spoke Púrbi were probably immigrants from Bengal and the North-Western Provinces or Oudh; and the 130 Pashto-speakers, only four of whom were females, were probably chiefly traders from the frontier passing through the district. Márwári, the dialect of Jodhpur (741 persons), and the dialect of Hariána (56 persons) are both dialects of Hindí, closely connected with Bágrí. The great mass of the population is returned as speaking either Panjábí, Bágrí or Hindustání. There are very few persons who speak the Hindustaní or Urdu of Dehli, and almost all who were returned as speaking Hindustání really use the Bágrí dialect. The only persons who speak Hindustání are the few educated Government officials, and the descendants of the Sukhlambars in the Sotar valley, many of whom came from Hindustán proper, *i. e.*, the country about Dehli and to the east of it. With these few exceptions all classes, even the comparatively educated Bráhmans and Banyas, speak in dialects which may be classed either with Panjábí or with Bágrí. There is a saying that just as the quality of well-water changes every few miles so the dialect of the peasants changes every 20 miles (12 *kos*); and it is true that, as a rule, the dialects spoken by the people merge almost imperceptibly in one another so that a hard-and-fast line defining their boundaries cannot be drawn; yet in this district, which until lately was a desert forming a complete separation between the peoples of the north and those of the south, the dialects spoken may be divided into two practically distinct classes: (1) the Panjábí spoken by the Musalmáns from the west and the Sikhs and other immigrants from the north; and (2) the Bágrí and cognate dialects spoken by the Hindú immigrants from the south and east. Panjábí is returned as spoken by 144,260 persons or 57 per cent. of the total population; and the number returned as speaking Bágrí or Hindustání is 108,012 or nearly 43 per cent. The 57 per cent. of

Panjábí-speakers includes the 11 per cent. who are Sikhs, and nearly all the 37 per cent. who are Musalmáns; and the 43 per cent. of Bágrí speakers are nearly all included in the 51 per cent. returned as Hindús. A line drawn along the greatest length of the district from Jodhka through Sirsá and Abohar to Fázilká approximately represents the boundary between Panjábí and Bágrí. Almost all living to the north and east of this line speak Panjábí and most of the population to the south and west of it speak Bágrí; but all along the valleys of the Ghaggar and Satlaj the people are Panjábí-speaking Musalmáns and there are here and there to the south-west of this line a good many villages and scattered families of Panjábí-speakers, while comparatively few Bágrí-speakers have pushed their way north-east of it. South of the Ghaggar valley the people almost without exception speak Bágrí.

Panjábí and Bágrí are not different languages, but different dialects of what has been called the Western Gaudian group of the Indic languages, both closely connected with Sanskrit. The most striking difference between the two dialects is perhaps the difference in accent and in the pronunciation of the vowels which makes the speech of a Ját from the Bágar sound so different from that of a Sikh Jat from the Málwa, even when the words they use are pretty much the same. The difference is similar to that between the broad accent of Glasgow and the sharp accent of Aberdeen. The vowel *a* especially is pronounced differently by the two classes; for instance, the Sikh calls himself Jat with the short *a* pronounced much like the English word "jut" and the Bágrí calls himself Ját with the long *á* pronounced like the *a* in "far" or rather like the *a* in "saw"; and so all through, the Panjábí shortens his *a's* as much as possible, and the Bágrí pronounces them as broadly as possible. Even the *á* which is the termination of so many words is pronounced by the Bágrí more like *o* or *aw*, *e.g.*, the word "*káká*" = "father's younger brother" is pronounced "cawcaw," and the people themselves in writing Bágrí words often spell this sound with *o* and not *á*. Similarly in pronouncing the other vowels the Bágrí makes them as broad as he can, and the Panjábí cuts them short, at the same time often doubling the following consonant, *e. g.*, Bágrí "*tábar*" (child), Panjábí "*tabbar*" (wife); Bágrí *tibá* (sandhill), Panjábí *tibba;* Bágrí *kút* (bruise), Panjábí "*kutt.*" Bágrí is very free from nasal sounds which are common in Panjábí, and especially in the Panjábí of the Satlaj Musalmáns who seem to speak every word through the nose. In many words Bágrí has dropped the *r* which has been maintained by the Panjábí of the Satlaj, *e.g.*, Bágrí '*gám*' (village), Panjábí '*giránw;*' Bágrí *pota* (grandson), Panjábí *potra;* Bágri often has *b* for the sound pronounced *v* or *w* by Panjábí, *e.g.*, Bágrí *bánt* (divide) Panjábí *vand.* Bágrí has a greater tendency than Panjábí to adopt words with cerebral letters, *e.g.*, Bágrí '*kathe*' (where), Panjábí '*kitthe.*' Bágrí pronounces some of its surds like sonants, *e g.*, the Urdu affix '*ká*' is pronounced and even written "*go.*" A similar tendency is sometimes seen in Panjábí, *e g.*, the participial termination '*dá*' for '*tá,*' but aspirated sonants are often pronounced like surds, *e.g.*, '*ghar*' (house) sounds very like *khar*, *Bhatti* like *Patti*, and "*Dháríwál*" (the name of a clan of Sikh Jats) like

"*Thálíwál.*" The result of these differences is that Bágrí is distinguished by its broadness and coarseness, Sikh Panjábí by its sharpness, and Musalmán Panjábí by its nasal sound. Bágrí seems to be spoken from the back of the head, Sikh Panjábí from the front part of the mouth, and Musalmán Panjábí through the nose.

There is a great difference in the vocabulary of the two dialects, many of the commonest objects being called by totally different names. Indeed, there is an extraordinary variety of words within each dialect for the objects and operations of a peasant's every-day life, for domestic animals in all stages and conditions, for clothing of every kind, for utensils and implements, articles of food and ordinary operations in the house or in the field. Even the prepositions and conjunctions differ in the different dialects. I have given in an appendix a vocabulary of words I have come across, distinguishing between those used by the Bágrís and those used by the Panjábís. Some of the words there given are Hindustání or even Persian or Arabic, and have been put into the vocabulary because used in some peculiar sense by the peasants, but most of them are pure Bágrí or Panjábí and will give an idea of the difference between the two dialects. They are only a very few of the many local terms used by the peasants in different parts of the district.

Notwithstanding these differences the structure of both dialects is essentially the same. Yet there are also great differences in the inflections. The Hindustání affixes of the possessive case *ká kí ké* become in Bágrí *go gí ge* or rather *ro ri re* and in Panjábí *dá dí de* fem. pl. *diyán*; the dative affix in Hindustání *ko* becomes in Bágrí *ne*, in Panjábí *nun*. The affix denoting the agent of a past act, in Hindustání *ne*, is often dropped in Bágrí and almost always in Panjábí. The ablative affix instead of the Urdu *se*, is in Bágrí *sún* and in Panjábí *thon* or simply *on*. The plural base in both dialects generally ends in *án* instead of the Urdu *on* and is often retained in the nominative of a masculine noun ending in a consonant where the Urdu drops it. The pronouns and their oblique cases are expressed very differently. In Bágrí the tense which in Urdu is the subjunctive is used for the present, while in Panjábí as in Urdu the present tense is expressed by a participle with some form of the verb '*hai*', *e.g.*, Urdu '*kartá hai*,' Bágrí '*kare*,' Panjábí '*kardá-hai*' (he is doing). The present tense of the auxiliary verb is much the same in Panjábí as in Urdu, but in Bágrí the *h* gives place to *s*, *e.g.*, Urdu '*hai*' (is), Bágrí '*se*,' Panjábí '*hai*.' The past tense differs in all three, Urdu '*thá*' (was), Bágrí '*há*,' Panjábí '*sá*' or '*sí*'. The gerund which in Urdu ends in *ná*, ends in *an* in Panjabi and in *bo* in Bágrí, *e.g.*, Urdu *kháná* (eating), Bágrí *khábo*, and Panjábí *kháwan*. Their very interjections are different, *e. g.*, instead of the Urdu *hán* for 'yes,' the Bágrí says *hambe* and the Sikh *áho*. There are numerous other differences, some of which will be found stated in the appendix. The syntax of both dialects is very much the same, the most noticeable difference being the peculiar use made in Bágrí of the phrase *ko nín* = the Urdu *koí nahín* ('not at all'), *e. g.*, *dána ko hoiyá nín*, with the emphasis very much on the *ko*, meaning "no grain was produced," or *ko gaya nín* = 'he did not

go.' The vocabulary and notes in the appendix with the verses, ballads and proverbs will show how different the Bágrí and Panjábí dialects are practically, although structurally they belong to the same group.

I have said that all the many varieties of speech in the district may be grouped into these two classes, and that it is possible in this district to draw a sharper line between the two dialects than in most cases where two closely-related dialects meet each other; and yet it must be remembered that all the dialects of this part of the country, whether classed as Panjábí, Bágrí, Hindí, Márwári or Jatki, belong to the same family, and if the field of inquiry be made sufficiently wide, will be found to merge almost imperceptibly in one another. For instance, the dialect of the Bahníwál Játs south of Sirsá about Darba is neither pure Bágrí nor pure Hindí (applying that term especially to the dialect of Hariána); the Ghaggar Ráins use the Panjábí and Hindustání inflections indiscriminately, the Sikhs talk a Panjábí which more closely resembles ordinary Hindí than does the Panjábí of the Satlaj Musalmáns, and even Panjábí and Bágrí have affinities with each other which they do not possess with the Hindí of Hariána, *e.g.*, the future which in Urdu and Hindí is *milega* (he will meet), is in Sikh Panjábí *milegá* or *milú*, in Musalmán Panjábí *milsi* and in Bágrí *milshi*; the dative affix *nun* of Panjábí is more like the *-ne* of Bágrí and Hindí than the *ko* of Urdu; and Panjábí and Bágrí resemble each other in dropping the instrumental affix *ne* which is expressed in Urdu and Hindí. It is the same with the vocabulary. Almost every single word has its own range of country throughout which it is commonly used, and it is only gradually that it is displaced by another word of the same meaning. This classification of dialects therefore is only a rough one, and is rendered possible only by disregarding minor differences and taking account of the most important and striking.

As the different varieties of speech so closely resemble each other it is easy for the one to pass into the other even in the case of an individual family. For instance, a Bágrí family settles in a Panjábí village and in its constant intercourse with its neighbours it gradually drops its Bágrí words and inflections and adopts those of the Panjábí dialect. The change is not a sudden one, as it would be in adopting a totally different language: it is gradual and imperceptible; and in the course of a generation or two, the Bágrí family is found talking almost pure Panjábí. The change is greatly hastened if they have changed their religion, for instance, if they have become Sikh or Musalmán. A Panjábí is less likely to change his dialect for Bágrí, for he looks down on the Bágrís and makes constant efforts to keep up his connection with his own people. If the difference of dialect be great or the body of colonists numerous, it takes longer for the change of dialect to take full effect; and we find, for instance, villages of Márwári Játs among the Bágrí Játs south of Sirsá who still speak their own Márwári dialect.

The Báwariyas have a dialect of their own which has sometimes been considered a sort of thieves' slang, kept up to facilitate their combination

for purposes of crime; but the great mass of the Báwariyas in this district are not at all given to crime and have no desire to conceal their dialect; moreover, it is spoken most commonly by the women and children, while the men, at all events in their intercourse with their neighbours, speak in ordinary Bágrí or Panjábí. It seems probable that it is simply the dialect of the country of their origin kept up by them in their wanderings. I had not time to make much enquiry about it, but was given the following as their names for the numbers by their leading men; *ek, bai, tren, chár, pánch, chhau, hát, áth, nau, daukh, vikh* (20,) and the following words *khakhra* for *susra* (father-in-law), *khákhú* for *sású* (mother-in-law), *hándo* for *sánda* (lizard), *manakh* (man), *chárv* (antelope), *háru* (snake), *laukra* (fox), *naurí* (jackal), *jamna* (right hand), *dáva* (left hand). Some of these words may be Bágrí, and they are not much to go upon, but the use of *h* for *s* and the peculiar *kh* for the Sanskrit palatal sibilant should afford some clue to the origin of the dialect, for this *kh* sound, like the Arabic *kh* in "*kháwind*," is not found in any dialect indigenous to this part of India. The Nats and some others of the wandering tribes are also said to have dialects of their own.

Characters used in writing.

101. In writing the vernacular, the Persian character is used in the Courts and in all official correspondence and is taught in the Government schools, but except among officials and persons closely connected with Government offices, such as patwáris and petition-writers, it is almost unknown in the district. The characters indigenous to the tract, which are still ordinarily employed by all private persons in their every-day transactions, are all founded on the Devánágarí alphabet ordinarily used in printing Sanskrit books. A considerable number of persons of all classes, peasants, Bráhmans, Banyas and Aroras employ the pure Nágarí or Shástrí character, the letters and vowel-marks being made almost exactly as they are printed in our Sanskrit books, so that any one who has learned the Nágarí characters of books printed in English presses can easily follow their hand-writing. This character cannot be written quickly if each letter be completely formed, and different styles of writing have grown into use due to the attempts made, by omitting portions of some Nágarí letters and modifying others, to write more rapidly. The first thing to be dropped seems to be the horizontal stroke which forms the upper part of most Nágarí letters, but an intermediate stage perhaps is the drawing a continuous horizontal line and hanging the letters from it. The next thing is to drop the vowel marks above and below the line. And we then have a hand-writing consisting of unconnected letters, almost all consonants. This is called Hindí or Mahájaní because commonly used by Hindú Mahájans or Banyas, and sometimes Moda or Munde Akhar (with shaven letters) or Lande Akhar (with tailless letters)—the last three names seem to refer to its bare appearance as compared with the Nágarí characters with their horizontal lines and vowel marks, as *Munda* means shaven, *Moda* is applied to a shaven mendicant, and *Landa* means an animal which has lost

its tail. These contractions and simplifications have been gradually worked out in somewhat different ways in different parts of the country and among different sets of people and consequently we have different Hindí characters known as Hissári, Bíkáneri, Márwári or Aggarwáli, Mahesri, Aroránwáli; but they are all very similar in their nature, and each letter is represented in the different kinds of writing by characters more or less resembling each other and the original Nágarí letters from which they have been developed. It is true that the total result is so different that a man who knows one style of writing often cannot read his neighbour's hand-writing because of the differences in the forms of the letters, but any one who knew the Nágarí characters well would not take long to master any of the Hindí or Lande styles of writing which have originated from that alphabet. The commercial classes generally, both Banyas and Aroras, employ these characters in keeping their accounts and writing their letters, but they do not seem in this district to have developed a running hand in which the letters are all joined together; almost every letter stands by itself without any connection with its neighbours. The want of vowel marks and of spaces between the words adds greatly to the difficulty of deciphering such hand-writing. A few Bráhmans and peasants have also adopted one or other of these styles. Another character, also founded on the Nágarí alphabet, or on an older alphabet from which the Nágarí itself is derived, but developed from it in another part of the country and in a different way, is the Gurmukhi, which is employed by some of the Sikh Jats and their religious teachers and sometimes by traders living among the Sikhs. The character employed is almost exactly the same as that ordinarily used by English presses for printing Panjábí books in the Gurmukhi character. Some of the Lande characters resemble Gurmukhi characters more closely than they do the original Nágarí, and seem to have developed from the Nágarí through the Gurmukhi. But of all these different characters it may be said that they are all evidently of one origin, and as in the case of the dialects, they gradually shade off into one another, and no clear line can be drawn between any two of them. Some of them differ no more from each other than do different styles of hand-writing in English; others differ as much as ordinary English hand-writing differs from ordinary German hand-writing, both differing from Nágarí much as English and German hand-writing differ from printed Roman letters; except that, as already said, the Hindí styles employed in the Sirsá district do not run the letters together.

Literature—Verses and Proverbs.

102. There are few written books in the district, as the people are not much given to reading. There are of course the lithographed law-books and school-books introduced by Government officials, but these are to be found only in the hands of officials and pupils of Government schools. In the towns too there are a few lithographed books imported from Delhi, Lahore, &c., but the number of people who read them is very small. With these exceptions almost all the books in use in the district are written by the hand and they nearly all deal with religious

subjects or traditions regarding the ancestors of their readers. Thus the Musalmáns have their Qurán written in the Persian character, which they are taught to learn by heart in the village mosque; the Sikhs have their Gurmukhi Granth Sáhib; and the Hindú Bráhmans and ascetics have their religious writings in the Nágarí character. The Bodlas are said to have in Khái their place of origin a book called Intisáb-ul-mubárak, giving an account of the origin and history of the tribe. The Ráins of Mangála have two lithographed books in the Persian character representing the opposite sides of a religious discussion which has divided the thinking Musalmáns of the neighbourhood into two parties; they are interesting because they are composed in the dialect of the Sotar, a form of Panjábí. The Balmíwal Játs of Jamál have a book in the Nágarí character and the Bágrí dialect as spoken about Darba, giving an account of their early history when their ancestors formerly held this part of the country. The Bishnois have a book in the Nágarí character, written in verse seemingly in a Márwári dialect, giving an account of Jhámbají the founder of their religion and of its principal tenets.

Although the written literature is very meagre, there is as usual among illiterate peasants, a wealth of proverbs, ballads, verses, songs and stories which are committed to memory and passed on from one generation to another. The Mirásís and Bháts on festive occasions recite the praises of the ancestors of their host; professional story-tellers repeat long-winded stories for the benefit of their rustic audiences; many of the older peasants have learned by heart old ballads or snatches out of the Granth Sáhib or some other religious or moral composition and repeat them for the edification of their fellows. I have given in an appendix a number of the proverbs and sayings, both in Panjábí and Bágrí, which are current among the people, as well as some longer verses which seem to have been passed from mouth to mouth, and some which were composed while I was in the district with reference to the operations of the Settlement. I regret that I had not time to make the collection more complete, for these proverbs and current sayings, while they are good specimens of the language, give us perhaps the best available evidence of the real thoughts and feelings of the people.

Education.

103. As might be expected in a new district where the people have recently settled and where land is plentiful, education is rather backward in Sirsá. So late as 1856 the Superintendent reported that there was not a single school in the whole district, and according to the Census Returns of 1881 the only districts in the Panjáb in which the proportion of the male population who can read and write is so small are Bannu, Kohát, Hissár and Hazára. The proportion however is not very much below the average for the Province, for in Sirsá 56 out of every thousand males can read and write, while the proportion for the Province is only 61. Of the 138,691 males in the district only 7,813, or 1 in 18, can read and write or are under instruction; of these 6,158 are returned as able to read and write, and

1,655 as under instruction. Half of the boys under instruction are in the towns, although the population of the towns is only about one-eighth of that of the villages, and the number of males who can read and write is almost as many in the towns as in the villages; and while one male out of every five in the towns can read and write, only one in every 30 of the village population can. The number who could read and write was returned in 1868 as 6,461 males and 99 females; the number returned in 1881 including those under instruction was 7,813 males and 91 females; so that, if allowance be made for the increase of population, the improvement in education would seem to have been very small.

Of the 588 Saráogí males 235 or nearly half can write. The Saráogís are nearly all well-to-do traders of the Banya class, and almost all their boys learn to write the Nágarí or more commonly the Lande character. Of the Hindú male population one in 13 can write; these belong chiefly to the Banya and Arora trading-classes, many of whom take advantage of the Government schools to have their boys taught Urdu, while others send their boys to some old Pandit who teaches them to write the Nágarí or Lande character, and to make simple calculations, but little else. Of the Musalmán males only 1 in 36 can read and write; and probably many so returned have only been taught in the village mosque to learn the Qurán by rote. According to the figures, the Sikhs are most backward of all in education, for only one male in 38 can write; they are especially devoted to agriculture and live mostly in the villages where there is less opportunity and less inducement to learn than in the towns; many of them know only the Gurmukhi character.

The standard of education too is very low, as may be judged from the nature of the instruction now given. There are in the district two Anglo-vernacular Middle Schools, one at Sirsá and the other at Fázilká, but very few boys attending those schools are above the Lower Primary classes; and there are 19 Vernacular Primary Schools with 590 boys on the rolls, four of them teaching Nágarí only and the rest Urdu. The total number of boys attending these Government schools in 1881 was 622 and in 1883 the number had risen to about 750. There are besides 105 indigenous schools with 814 pupils. In 88 of these so-called schools with 650 pupils the teaching is given in the Persian character; they are mostly village mosques, where the attendant, himself an illiterate man, teaches the Musalmán boys of the village to recite passages in Arabic from the Qurán without any understanding of their meaning; writing is taught in only one such school, but in 37 of them lessons are said to be given in religion, morality and Arabic grammar; arithmetic is not taught in these Musalmán schools. The teacher is the mosque attendant and gives these lessons as part of his religious duties, for which he is paid in mosque-fees usually given in kind at harvest-time, or in customary fees at marriages and funerals; the amount he thus realises is generally small, and he often ekes it out by engaging in agriculture. In seven schools with 52 boys Gurmukhi is the medium of instruction; the pupils are taught by the village Sádh to read and

write Gurmukhi and learn something of the Granth, the sacred book of the Sikhs. In eight schools with 42 pupils the Nágarí or Shástrí character is taught and in two schools with 70 boys Lande Mahájaní; these schools are chiefly in Sirsá and Fázilká, and are taught by Bráhmans and attended by the sons of Bráhmans, Banyas and Aroras; in a few of them religion and astrology are taught; but the usual subject of instruction is mental arithmetic with a little writing, which the boys practise at home. It is noted as interesting that one of these schools is taught by a man of the Chúhra (sweeper) caste and attended by boys of all classes. In all schools the attendance is often irregular and the boys are rarely kept at them for any length of time. It is evident then that the school-education given to most of those returned as under instruction is of the most elementary nature, and that it is by a stretch of language that even the small number returned as able to read and write can be said to be educated at all. What education there is is almost confined to the trading-classes, and the number of peasants who can write more than their own names is exceedingly small. Low as the standard of education is among males, it is lower still among females. Only 91 females in the whole district were returned as under instruction or able to read and write, and the only female school in the district has just been closed because of the poor results it gave.

Muhammadanism in Sirsá.

104. In discussing the religions of the Sirsá population it will be best to take first the Musalmáns, partly because in the modern history of the district they are its oldest inhabitants, but chiefly because it is easier to distinguish between the Musalmáns and all other religions and sects than it is to distinguish the latter among themselves. A Musalmán believes in one God, whom he calls Alláh, follows Muhammad as the prophet of God, undergoes circumcision, learns the Qurán, says his prayers (*namáz*) with his face towards Mecca, worships in a mosque (*masít*), marries by the Muhammadan ceremony of *Nikáh*, and buries his dead; he abhors the pig, but will eat beef and the flesh of most other clean animals, only they must be killed in the Muhammadan fashion (*halál*), that is, they must be bled by having their throats cut before death with the phrase "in the name of God" (*bismilláh*); he is allowed to smoke tobacco or eat opium, but not to drink wine or spirits; he is not so particular about his food as the Hindú, nor does he consider ablution a religious duty, except the washing of his mouth, hands and feet before formal prayer in the mosque; he allows his beard to grow, but often shaves the lower edge of his moustache, and when he shaves his head he leaves no scalp-lock; his characteristic dress in this district is the loin cloth (*lúngi*), worn like a kilt; only the few Muhammadans of Hindustání origin wear drawers (*páejáma*). The total number of Musalmáns is returned as 93,289 or 37 per cent. of the total population, an increase of only 14 per cent. on the number returned in 1868, when they amounted to 39 per cent. of the whole, so that the increase of the Muhammadan population is not quite keeping pace with that of the total population, which has increased by 20 per cent. since 1868. Of

the number now returned 42,919 or 46 per cent. are Rájput and 2,798 are Jats, but as I have already pointed out in describing caste and tribe, it is, in the case of the Musalmáns, almost impossible to distinguish between Jats and Rájputs. All the Biloch, Pathán, Saiyyad, Shaikh and Mughal are Musalmán, and so are all the Ráins. Of the inferior tribes all the Juláhá, Telí, Qassáb and Jhabel are Musalmán, most of the Máchbí, Lohár, Mochí and Dúm, and a considerable number of Faqír, Gújar, Kumhár, Khátí, Súnar, Nái, Chhípí, Khatík and Chúhra. As a rule in villages where the proprietary body is Musalmán the cultivators and lower classes are also Musalmán, as they have more in common with the proprietors than Hindús or Sikhs would have. In this district the Musalmáns are mostly either Bhattís, Joiyas, Chauháns, Tunwars and Ráins, who have lived for some time in and near the Ghaggar valley, or Wattus, Bodlas, Chishtis, Panwárs, Kharrals and other tribes who came from the Satlaj and the rivers farther west, bringing with them their inferior Musalmán followers, or Hindustání Musalmáns settled on the Ghaggar by the British Government; while the Sikhs came from the dry Málwa tract to the north and the Hindús from the dry Rájputána country to the south. Almost the whole of the population along the Ghaggar and Satlaj are Musalmán, and there is a band of Musalmán villages stretching across the Dry Tract from the one river to the other between the Sikhs and Bágrís, where the pastoral Musalmáns were found roaming in the waste with their herds of cattle, and were confined within circumscribed boundaries when the prairie was parcelled out by British officers. With the exception of the Hindustánís from across the Jamna, almost all the Musalmáns speak Panjábí.

Of the Muhammadan population only 131 are returned as Shiáhs and 28 as unspecified, so that practically they are all returned as Sunnís. The fact is that the peasants ordinarily do not know anything of sects, or trouble themselves about minute differences of creed. There is a small sect on the Ghaggar about Rániá and Mangála, the disciples of a teacher named Núr Muhammad of Fathábád who died in Mangála in 1864 and left a book, which has been lithographed, in the local dialect of Panjábí with many Arabic and Persian words intermixed, on the subject of his special tenets. His followers are called Núrias after their teacher and Takfiriyás because they insist strongly on the spiritual nature of the deity and call those heathens (Káfir) who speak of God as if he had eyes and hands and a bodily presence. The sect however is unimportant. An interesting process of conversion to Islám is now going on among the Chúhras (sweepers) in the Musalmán villages on the Satlaj and in the Dry Tract towards Fázilká. It is said that some Qází near Pákpattan began a few years ago to proselytize among this the lowest caste of all, and every year sees new converts join Islám. Such converted Chúhras are called Díndár (holders of the faith) and nicknamed Khoja (eunuch) which is sometimes interpreted to mean "one who searches after truth" (*khojná*=to search). They undergo circumcision, say *namáz*, keep fasts and otherwise act as Musalmáns; and the Wattus and other high-class Musalmáns of the neighbourhood treat them with consideration as new converts, and sometimes even

smoke with them. "Otherwise," say the Chúhras, "what good would it be to be converted!" Except among the Chúhras Islám does not seem to be spreading in the district, although in Musalmán villages a family of some inferior caste perhaps now and then yields to the inducement to become Musalmán, especially when its relatives and caste-fellows in the village and neighbourhood are mostly Muhammadan; and although Islám has this advantage that once a man has become Musalmán, his descendants must remain Musalmán and cannot revert to Hindúism. The Musalmáns are not, as a rule, at all bigoted in this district, nor are they ordinarily very particular about conforming to all the rules of their religion. Almost every Musalmán village has its mosque (*masít*), sometimes a pretentious erection of brick and plaster, conspicuous from afar with its three white domes and two tall mínárs, but more often a humble building of unburnt clay plastered over with mud with three mud pinnacles to do duty for domes and a mud enclosure strewn with grass, where there are generally some jars of water standing, and sometimes a fireplace for heating it for the ablutions of the worshippers before they begin their prayers. Here the sons of the more pious villagers come to learn verses of the Qurán by rote from the mosque-attendant (*masítwála*), who is sometimes dignified by the title of Mullá or Qází, and here on rare occasions the villagers themselves come to public prayers. Few of the peasants trouble much to keep the prescribed fasts (*roza*), and it is only the more particular among them who make a point of saying prayers (*namáz*) daily at the times appointed. According to the Ráins, who are by far the most intelligent of the Musalmáns, these times are as follows:—

Fajar ...	...	a little before sunrise.
Peshí or zohar	...	about 2 P. M.
'Asar or dígar	...	just before sunset.
Maghrib ...	...	after sunset.
'Isha or Sota	...	about 8 or 9 P. M.

These are the five times at which it is the duty (*farz*) of a good Musalmán to pray. The *tahajjad* or prayer after midnight is not a necessary duty, but a desirable act of devotion (*wájib*). The Bodlas and Wattus of the Satlaj are most particular, or at least most ostentatious, about saying their prayers at the proper time, especially in the early morning (*namáz weld*) and after sunset. The Musalmáns seldom exhibit any feeling of religious bigotry towards their Hindú neighbours, and notwithstanding the great differences between them, they manage to live together with very little friction. Like the Hindús, they are very superstitious, and notwithstanding their monotheism they are much given to the worship of saints (*pír*); they also treat with great respect the sacred families, such as the Bodlas and Chishtis who are given the best places and the first helpings of food at their feasts, and are credited with miraculous powers. The Musalmán peasants generally however have no such fear of these holy men as the frontier Musalmáns have for their Saiyyads and Mullás, and are quite ready to oppose them when their demands seem too exacting.

Conversion to Islám seems to have a wonderful effect upon the character of Hindú tribes, which is best seen where, as in this district, members of the same clan related to each other within a few generations are found living side by side, some of them Sikhs or Hindús and some of them Musalmáns. The chief characteristics of the Hindú peasant are perhaps thrift and quiet contented industry; those of his Musalmán relative pride, extravagance and restless discontent. The Hindú and Sikh are especially devoted to agriculture; the Musalmáns until lately lived a roaming pastoral life. The Hindús generally are less given to quarrelling than their Musalmán neighbours. But it is especially in want of thrift and forethought that the Musalmán differs from the Hindú. The Sikhs are frugal and saving but not miserly; the Bágrís are often so very thrifty as to deserve the name of misers; but the Musalmáns take no thought for the morrow; they waste their substance in feasting, in fine clothing, in lavish presents, and when hard times come they are forced to borrow from their Hindú neighbours often at ruinous interest. One consequence of this want of thrift is that the land is fast passing out of their hands into those of Hindús. A large area of land, the proprietary rights in which were held to belong to Musalmáns when rights were first created fifty years ago, has already passed by compulsory or voluntary sale into the hands of Sikh and Bágrí Játs or Hindú Banyas and Aroras; and the process is still going on, though more slowly than before. Another consequence is that very generally throughout the district Musalmán peasants pay their rents in kind, while, as a rule, Hindús and Sikhs pay their rent in cash; and there are not a few villages in which the same owners take rent in cash from their Hindú tenants and in kind from the Musalmáns. It seems that both landlord and tenant find it hopeless to expect a Musalmán to save in good years in order to provide against bad years, as the Hindú will. It is difficult to explain this effect of Islám on the character of the peasant. Perhaps it is partly due to the stronger belief of the Musalmán in the resistless power of fate, so that when any difficulty meets him he exclaims: "Well! it was so fated" (*Khair! Sáhí nasíb!* or *qismat!*) and succumbs to it. It is true that religion does not alone form the character of a tribe; for instance Hindú Rájputs are often proud, lazy and thriftless; and on the other hand, few Hindús are more thrifty and industrious than the Musalmán Ráins; but there can be no doubt that the tendency of Islám is to deteriorate the character of the peasant and make him thriftless and discontented.

Hinduism in Sirsá.

105. With the exception of the Musalmáns and the 17 persons returned as Christians, all the other inhabitants of the district may be classed as Hindús; for Sikhism, Jainism and the Bishnoi religion are but sects of Hinduism, and the religions of the lowest classes, though admitting of practices which are abhorred by the high-caste Hindú, have much the same general character as other Hindú religions, and cannot be marked off from them by any clear definition. Indeed, Hinduism in its widest

sense embraces such a vast number of deities, doctrines and practices that it seems almost hopeless to attempt to distinguish them. It is true that a high-caste Hindú, such as a Bráhman or Banya, will deny the right of the many low-caste tribes to the name of Hindú, but when we go a little lower down the social scale we find the definition less rigid and many of these lower castes claim to be Hindús and give some reason for their claim. It is however possible to separate off a number of castes which, from the impure nature of their food or their occupation, are generally considered to be beyond the pale of Hindúism. Such are the tribes which eat carrion, or the leavings of other tribes, or the animals of the river and prairie thought to be impure feeders, such as lizards, snakes, crocodiles and turtles, for instance the Chúhra, Sánsí, Dhának, Báwariya, Mor, Mahtam. So also the tribes which eat the flesh of the sacred cow and work in leather, such as the Chamár, Khatík, Raigar. Perhaps from the point of view of the higher castes, a Hindú might be defined as a man who venerates the cow, will not eat beef or the flesh of unclean animals, will not engage in an impure occupation and is ministered to in matters of religion by Bráhmans of acknowledged caste. Yet this definition is by no means satisfactory, for the idea of uncleanness in animals and impurity in occupation varies greatly; for instance some consider the wild pig to be clean enough for men of undoubted good caste to eat, while others abominate it. If however we separate off on the one hand the lower castes who are generally considered unworthy of the name of Hindú, and on the other the sects which have become so distinct as to be ordinarily known by a name of their own, such as Sikhism or the religions of the Saráogís and Bishnois, we have left the great mass of the Játs, Rájputs, Bráhmans, Banyas, Aroras, Abírs, Gújars, Mális, Khátis, Kumhárs and other castes who rank fairly high in the social scale, except of course those of them who have been converted to Islám. Of these, the Hindús in the stricter sense of the term, it may be said that they venerate the Bráhman and the cow, perform worship (*pújá*) and present offerings in their temples (*thákurdwára* or *shiválá*), revere the names of Rám, Hari, Shiv and other well known gods of the Hindú Pantheon, mutter set prayers, perform ablutions as a religious duty, will not eat beef or the flesh of any animals that do not chew the cud and divide the hoof, perform the marriage ceremony by moving round the sacred fire, burn their dead and send the ashes to the Ganges. The men generally wear a loin-cloth tucked up between the legs (*dhoti*), and usually shave the head leaving only a scalp-lock (*bodí* or *choti*); sometimes they allow the beard to grow, but more commonly shave the whole face, or all but the moustache. They are very particular about the purity of cooked food and will not eat out of an earthen vessel which has already been used for the purpose; nor will they drink water from the hands of any but men of certain pure castes. They are allowed to smoke tobacco or opium and to drink spirits. The chief characteristics of the Hindú are mild tolerance and contented thrift; his religion seeks no proselytes and rarely bursts out into fanaticism; when it does, it is usually in defence of the sacred cow. Some practical inconvenience is caused by their observance

of caste, which prevents members of one tribe from intermarrying, eating, smoking or having much intercourse with those of another; but these rules are social rather than religious, and are observed by the Musalmáns and by the lower castes as well as by the strict Hindús, though not quite to the same extent. The idea of personal defilement from contact with persons of other castes, especially of the inferior castes, must often be troublesome and fixes a great gulf between man and man. It is wonderful however how little friction these multifarious rules cause between the different classes. Each caste respects the prejudices of its neighbours and is almost unconsciously careful to avoid offending them. For instance, a Chamár or Chúhra will not approach unless specially invited, and sometimes takes care to announce that he belongs to one of the castes whose touch is defilement. The rules of caste are not so strict in Sirsá as they are farther east, and they are so generally recognised and obeyed by all classes of the community that they rarely attract notice; and restrictions which would seem intolerable to a European, and prejudices which would be constantly offended in European society, seem only natural to a native, and form an unnoticed part of his every-day life.

It is difficult to make out exactly the religious beliefs of the ordinary Hindú peasant. He has practically no belief in the transmigration of souls, but has a vague idea that there is a future life, in which those who are good in this world will be happy in a heaven (*surg*) while those who are bad will be wretched in a hell (*narak*). His devotional offerings to demons, saints and godlings are meant rather to avert temporal evils or secure temporal blessings than to improve his prospects of the life to come. He has an idea that sin (*páp*) will bring evil on him and his fellows in this life as well as after death. His instincts as to good and evil are much the same as the ordinary European moral distinctions, only they do not take so wide a range; instead of extending to the whole human race, or to the whole nation or sect, they extend only to his own tribe, or village, or family. He thinks it wrong to tell a lie unless perhaps to benefit a relative or friend; he thinks it wicked to injure a man unless he has been injured by him; or to cheat another unless he thinks that that other would cheat him if he got the chance; or to take a bribe without giving the promised consideration for it. He believes vaguely that it is good for him to meditate on the deity, and to show that he is not forgetting him, he mutters "Rám Rám Rám" or repeats the name of some other Hindú god when he gets up in the morning, and if he is piously inclined, at other times also, in season and out of season. Notwithstanding all the numerous saints and deities whom he endeavours to propitiate he has a vague belief that above all there is one supreme God whom he calls Naráyan or Parmeshar, who knows all things and by whom all things were made, and who will reward the good and punish the bad both in this life and in the life to come. There are of course particular sects of Hindús who have developed one phase of these beliefs more strongly than another, some who believe in transmigration of souls, some who have devoted themselves to the worship of one

godling more than that of the others; but so far as my experience goes, the moral and religious ideas of the great mass of the Hindú peasantry are as I have above described.

The Sikh religion.

106. Hindúism, in its widest sense, embraces innumerable sects, some of them of little importance, either because of the small number of their followers or because of the insignificant effect which the peculiar tenets of the sect have upon their daily life. The most important development of Hindúism in this neighbourhood is the Sikh religion, professed by 28,303 persons, or 11 per cent. of the total population of the district, which thus ranks sixth of the districts of the Province in proportion of Sikhs to total population, although, owing to the smallness of its population, it contains only one-sixtieth of the total number of Sikhs in the Province. A distinction must be made however between the true Singhs, the followers of the tenth Guru, Govind Singh, and the Nánakpanthís or followers of the first Guru, Bába Nának. The latter are often denied the right of calling themselves Sikh, and indeed they often call themselves Hindú only, and it seems probable that in the Census of 1881 some of them returned themselves as Sikh, and others simply as Hindú. The Nánakpanthís have little to distinguish them from ordinary Hindús. They dress like them and shave the head with the exception of the scalp-lock (*bodí* or *choti*), whence they are sometimes called *munna* or shaven Sikhs, or *bodíwála*. They are allowed the use of tobacco and are not required to wear any distinguishing marks; they venerate Bráhmans and the cow, and indeed the only difference between them and the ordinary Hindús is that they follow the tolerant quietist doctrines of Bába Nának and are less trammelled by caste rules and ceremonial observances, especially in the matter of food. Many of the Aroras are Nánakpanthís. The true Singh is a follower of the warlike Guru Govind Singh, and is distinguished by five outward marks, the names of which begin with the letter *K*,—(1) the *kes* or uncut hair and unshaven beard, (2) the *kachch* or short drawers ending above the knee, (3) the *karó* or iron bangle on the wrist, (4) the *kangá* or comb, (5) the *kard* or steel knife. They are initiated by *páhul* or baptism, follow the Granth, and are forbidden the use of tobacco, but allowed to indulge in spirits and drugs; they venerate the cow and object to cow-killing even more vehemently than the ordinary Hindú does, but are more given to eating the flesh of other animals which chew the cud and divide the hoof, the proper method of killing them being by *jhatká* or decapitation; they are not supposed to follow the teachings of Bráhmans or to be bound by caste rules and ceremonial observances, except those connected with personal cleanliness. The Sikhs in this district however are not particular in obeying all these precepts to the letter. They do wear the *kes* (whence they are called *kesadhárí*) and allow their beards to grow uncut, but often dress in the ordinary Hindú loin-cloth (*dhotí*) instead of the *kachch*, and omit to carry the *karó*, the *kanga*, and the *kard* except when it suits their personal convenience; they do hear the Granth read some-

times and a few learn passages out of it, and they have Gurus of their own and do not revere the Bráhman quite so much as do other Hindús; they would not allow cows to be killed if they could help it, but make little objection to cow-killing by their Musalmán neighbours so long as it is not too ostentatious. Many of them smoke tobacco, and few in this district are given to excessive indulgence in spirits, opium or drugs. They are more lax in caste observances than is the ordinary Hindú, but still keep the lower castes at a distance. This makes it impossible to draw a line between Singhs, Nánakpanthís and Hindús, and there are some, for instance the Jhorar Jats of Bani, who are considered Sikhs by some and by others Bágrí Hindús. Of the 28,303 persons returned as Sikh, 21,855 or 77 per cent. are Jats, and most of the others belong to the Arora, Tarkhán, Kumhár and Chúhra tribes, while a few are Báwariya, Chamár, Chhípí, Sunár, Mahtam, Nái or Lohár by caste. Most of those who are not Jat by tribe have adopted the Sikh religion owing to some connection with Sikh Jats and are generally found living in villages owned by Sikh Jats. The Sikhs all speak Panjábí and have come south within the last 60 years from Pattiála, Nábha, Firozpur and the rest of the Málwa country Cis-Satlaj. Their villages lie along the north-east border of the district in the Dry Tract between the valleys of the Ghaggar and Satlaj, and are for the most part separated by a band of Musalmán villages from the Hindú Bágrís along the south-west border; but the Sikh immigration from the north is still going on, and they are gradually dispossessing the less thrifty and industrious Musalmáns, several of whose villages have passed within the last few years by sale into the hands of Sikhs. Some of them have even pushed across into Bíkáner territory and taken up land there. The Bágrí Játs show some tendency to adopt the Sikh religion. They are admitted to belong to the same race as the Sikh Jats who take their daughters in marriage, and it is easy for a Bágrí Ját to make the changes necessary to entitle him to be considered a Sikh; indeed, it is said that a Bágrí has only to let his hair grow and speak Panjábí to become a Sikh. Several Bágrí Játs, as well as men of inferior castes, have professed the Sikh religion within recent years. And thus by immigration and conversion, Sikhism is making way in the district, and according to the Census figures the increase of Sikhs since 1868 has been 31 per cent., while the increase of total population has been only 20 per cent. This is matter for congratulation, for the Sikh religion and its associations greatly improve the character of the Hindú peasant, and the Sikh Jats are far and away the finest peasantry we have. They are industrious and thrifty yet not miserly, manly and independent yet not aggressive, intelligent and tolerant and as free from prejudices and caste restrictions as it is possible for a Hindú to be, and if only we could teach the hand that has wielded the sword and now holds the plough so well to handle the pen to as good purpose, the problem of self-government would be solved.

There are in the district a few followers of the Carpenter Rám Singh known as Kúkas or Howlers, and one of his immediate followers belonged

to Thiráj in the Dabwálí tahsíl and is said to have brought away the treasure of the party when they were suppressed after their outbreak at Maler Kotla in 1872. They are of little importance in this neighbourhood and seem to be looked upon with some contempt as harmless fanatics by their Sikh neighbours, who however give them credit for a purer morality and a stricter regard for truth than most people. Some of them gather at the annual fair held at Bará Tírath or Haripura near Abohar, which is described below.

The Bishnoí religion.

107. The next most important development of Hindúism in this district is the Bishnoí sect, which is of Bágrí or Márwárí origin. The name Bishnoí is evidently derived from the prominence they give in their creed and worship to the god Vishnu, though they themselves say it is derived from the twenty-nine (*Bís-nau*) articles of their creed as prescribed by the founder of the sect. They own sixteen villages in this district, chiefly about Sítogamuo and to the south of Abohar, and are numerous in the Hissár district and in Bíkáner. It is said that any member of the higher Hindú castes can become a Bishnoí, but in this district at least they are almost all Ját or Khátí by tribe, and retain the language, dress and other characteristics of the Bágrís; but they try to sink their tribe in their religion and give their caste as Bishnoí merely. The account they give of the founder of their sect is as follows:—At Pípásar, a village south of Bíkáner in the Jodhpur territory, there lived a Rájput Panwár named Laut who had attained the age of sixty years and had no son. One day a neighbour going out to sow his field met Laut, and deeming it a bad omen to meet a childless man, turned back from his purpose. This cut Laut to the quick, and he went out to the jungle and bewailed his childlessness until evening, when a faqír appeared to him and told him that in nine months he should have a son, and after showing his miraculous power by drawing milk from a calf, vanished from his sight. At the time named a child miraculously appeared in Laut's house and was miraculously suckled by his wife Hánsá. This happened in Sambat 1508 (A. D. 1451). For seven years the boy, who was an incarnation (*autár*) of Vishnu, played with his fellows, and then for 27 years he tended cattle, but all this time he spoke no word. His miraculous powers were shown in various ways, such as producing sweets from nothing for the delectation of his companions, and he became known as *Achamba* (the Wonder), whence his name of Jhámba by which he is generally known. After 34 years a Bráhman was sent for to get him to speak, and on his confessing his failure Jhámbájí again showed his power by lighting a lamp by simply snapping his fingers, and uttered his first word. He then adopted the life of a teacher and went to reside on a sandhill some 30 miles south of Bíkáner, where after 51 years he died and was buried instead of being burnt like an ordinary Hindú. He did not marry but devoted himself to the life of an ascetic teacher. His sayings (*sabd*) to the number of 120 were written down by his disciples, and have been handed down in a book (*pothi*) which is written in the Nágarí character

and in a Hindú dialect similar to Bágrí, seemingly a Márwárí dialect. The "twenty-nine" precepts given by him for the guidance of his followers are as follows :—

Tís din sútak—pánch roz ratwanti nárí
Será karo shnán—síl—santokh—suchh pyárí
Páni—báni—ídhni—jtná líjyo chhán.
Daya—dharm hirde dharo—garu batáí ján
Chori—nindya—jhúth—harjya bád na kariyo koe
Amal—tamákú—bhang—líl dúr hí tyágo
Mad—más se dekhke dúr hí bhágo.
Amar rakháo thát—bail tani ná báho
Amáshya barat—rúnkh lílo ná gháo.
Hom jap samádh pújá—básh baikunthí páo
Untís dharm kí ákhrí garu batáí soe
Páhal deo par chávya jisko nám Bishnoí hoe

which is thus interpreted :—"For thirty days after child-birth and five days after a menstrual discharge a woman must not cook food. Bathe in the morning. Commit not adultery. Be content. Be abstemious and pure. Strain your drinking-water. Be careful of your speech. Examine your fuel in case any living creature be burnt with it. Show pity to living creatures. Keep duty present to your mind as the Teacher bade. Do not steal. Do not speak evil of others. Do not tell lies. Never quarrel. Avoid opium, tobacco, *bhang* and blue clothing. Flee from spirits and flesh. See that your goats are kept alive (not sold to Musalmáns who will kill them for food). Do not plough with bullocks. Keep a fast on the day before the new moon. Do not cut green trees. Sacrifice with fire. Say prayers. Meditate. Perform worship and attain heaven. And the last of the twenty-nine duties prescribed by the Teacher—Baptize your children, if you would be called a true Bishnoí."

Some of these precepts are not strictly obeyed; for instance, although ordinarily they allow no blue in their clothing, yet a Bishnoí, if he is a servant of the British Government, is allowed to wear a blue uniform; and Bishnoís do use bullocks, though most of their farming is done with camels. They also seem to be unusually quarrelsome (in words) and given to use bad language. But they abstain from tobacco, drugs and spirits, and are noted for their regard for animal life which is such that not only will they not themselves kill any living creature, but they do their utmost to prevent others from doing so. Consequently their villages are generally swarming with antelope and other animals, and they forbid their Musalmán neighbours to kill them and try to dissuade European sportsmen from interfering with them. They wanted it made a condition of their Settlement that no one should be allowed to shoot on their land, but at the same time they asked that they might be assessed at lower rates than their neighbours on the ground that the antelope being thus left undisturbed do more damage to their crops; but I told them this would lessen the merit (*pun*) of their good actions in protecting the animals and they must be treated just as the surrounding villages were. They consider it a good deed to scatter grain (chiefly bájra and moth) to pigeons and other birds, and often have a large number of half-tame birds about their villages. The day before the new moon they observe as a Sabbath and fast-day, doing no work in the fields or in the house.

They bathe and pray three times a day, in the morning, afternoon and in the evening, saying "Bishno Bishno," instead of the ordinary Hindú "Rám Rám." Their clothing is the same as that of other Bágrís, except that their women do not allow the waist to be seen, and are fond of wearing black woollen clothing. They are more particular about ceremonial purity than ordinary Hindús are, and it is a common saying that if a Bishnoí's food is on the first of a string of 20 camels and a man of another caste touches the last camel of the string, the Bishnoí will consider his food defiled and throw it away. The ceremony of initiation (*páhal*) is as follows:—A number of representative Bishnoís assemble, and before them a Sádh or Bishnoí priest after lighting a sacrificial fire (*hom*) instructs the novice in the duties of the faith. He then takes some water in a new earthen vessel, over which he prays in a set form (*Bishnogáyatri*), stirring it the while with his string of beads (*málá*) and after asking the consent of the assembled Bishnoís, he pours the water three times into the hands of the novice who drinks it off. The novice's scalp-lock (*choti*) is then cut off and his head shaved, for the Bishnoís shave the whole head and do not leave a scalp-lock like the Hindús; but they allow the beard to grow, only shaving the chin on the father's death. Infant-baptism is also practised, and thirty days after birth the child, whether boy or girl, is baptised by the priest (Sádh) in much the same way as an adult; only the set form of prayer is different (*Garbh-gáyatri*), and the priest pours a few drops of water into the child's mouth, and gives the child's relatives each three handfuls of the consecrated water to drink; at the same time the barber clips off the child's hair. This baptismal ceremony also has the effect of purifying the house which has been made impure by the birth (*sútak*). The Bishnoís intermarry among themselves only, and by a ceremony of their own in which it seems the circumambulation of the sacred fire, which is the binding ceremony among the Hindús generally, is omitted. They do not revere Bráhmans, but have priests (Sádh) of their own chosen from among the laity. They do not burn their dead, but bury them below the cattle-stall or in a place frequented by cattle, such as a cattle-pen. They observe the Holi in a different way from other Hindús. After sunset on that day they fast till the next forenoon, when after hearing read the account of how Pahlád was tortured by his infidel father Harnákash for believing in the god Vishnu until he was delivered by the god himself in his incarnation of the Lion-man, and mourning over Pahlád's sufferings, they light a sacrificial fire and partake of consecrated water, and after distributing unpurified sugar (*gur*) in commemoration of Pahlád's delivery from the fire into which he was thrown, they break their fast. Bishnoís go on pilgrimage to the place where Jhámbají is buried, south of Bíkáner, where there is a tomb (*mat* over his remains and a temple (*mandir*) with regular attendants (*pujárí*). A festival takes place here every six months in Asanj and Phágan, when the pilgrims go to the sandhill on which Jhámbají lived and there light sacrificial fires (*hom*) of *jandi* wood in vessels of stone and offer a burnt-offering of barley, til, ghi and sugar, at the same time muttering

set prayers. They also make presents to the attendants of the temple and distribute *motá* and other grain for the peacocks and pigeons which live there in numbers. Should any one have committed an offence, such as having killed an animal, or sold a cow or goat to a Musalmán, or allowed an animal to be killed when he could have prevented it, he is fined by the assembled Bishnoís for the good of the temple and the animals kept there. Another place of pilgrimage is a tomb called Chhámbola in the Jodhpur country, where a festival is held once a year in Chait. There the pilgrims bathe in the tank and help to deepen it, and sing and play musical instruments and scatter grain to peacocks and pigeons.

The religions of the Jains, ascetics and low castes.

108. Another development of Hindúism is Jainism or the religion of the Saráogís, as they are more generally called in this neighbourhood. The number in this district is only 1,084, a very small increase on 1,015, the number returned at the Census of 1868. They are almost all Banyas by caste, speak Hindí, and have immigrated from the south and east. Almost all the Oswál Banyas are Saráogi, and some of the Aggarwáls. The Saráogís are chiefly distinguished from the Vaishnavi or orthodox Banyas by their excessive tenderness for animal life, and by their worship of Párasnáth, but no such prominence has been given to the difference in this district as was given to it in Delhi and elsewhere by the disputes about the Saráogí procession and other matters. There are in the district a few Jatis or Saráogí ascetics, the best-known of whom holds a garden revenue-free at Sirsá.

No other sect of Hinduism has attained any prominence in this district, but the different classes of ascetics and devotees may be considered in a sense to belong to different sects. Some of them, such as the Gosáyans and Bairágis, are hardly to be distinguished from ordinary peasants; they marry and have families, eat flesh and drink spirits and engage in ordinary agricultural work, and although at first they seem to have given up their original caste, they have come to form a sort of caste of their own. Others, such as the Nirmala faqírs, followers of Guru Gobind Singh, who allow their hair to grow uncut like the Singhs, or the Udásí faqírs followers of Bábá Nának, who shave their heads and wear magenta-coloured clothes, or the Charndásí faqírs, followers of the Dhúsar Charndás, who wear light yellow clothes, or the Kánphátte faqírs, followers of Gorakhnáth, whose chief monastery in the neighbourhood is at Bohar in the Rohtak district, and whose outward mark is the great hole which they make in the lobe of the ear by hanging heavy weights to it, are not allowed to marry, and propagate their class by adopting disciples (*chelá*) from among the laity. Such men are called Sádh (pure) and are supposed to live a life devoted to religion and supported on the alms of the peasantry. Some of them are true ascetics or priests, and devote themselves to religious duties, such as ministering in the temples, reading the Granth, assisting at religious ceremonies, teaching the peasants and their children; while others live a licentious and self-indulgent life, whose influence is all for

evil. As a rule any ordinary Hindú can become a Sádh, and often a young lad religiously inclined, or a childless old man, or even sometimes the father of a family, gives up the world and leaves his home and family to adopt an ascetic life. He is then considered to be dead to the world, and his heirs take possession of his land and property as if he had died, and his wife even may marry again as if she had become a widow.

Most of these sects seem to have been partly originated by a desire to shake off the yoke of the Bráhmans or the trammels of caste. For instance, the Bishnoís have ministers of their own, not Bráhmans, and the Sikhs are guided by their own Sádhs more than by the Bráhmans; the Bishnoís have indeed elaborated the ceremonies and restrictions binding on the ordinary Hindús, but they have to a certain extent substituted sect for caste; the Sikhs have got rid of some of the most irksome of the ceremonial caste rules; and the ascetics generally ignore caste and pay no special reverence to Bráhmans. And yet caste has often been too strong for these tendencies; for instance the Bishnoís, Gosáyans and Bairágis now form separate castes of their own, and even the sects of devotees rarely admit into their ranks men of the lower castes, such as Chamárs and Chúhras, who have ascetic orders of their own generally quite distinct from those of the higher castes. In attesting the tribal custom of these lower castes, I took the opportunity of enquiring from their leading men the nature of their different religions, and found it to resemble closely that of the higher-caste Hindús. The Chamárs have no special deity of their own, but worship the ordinary Hindú gods, and make pilgrimages to shrines commonly held sacred, such as those of Rámdeo Gosáyan of Rúnícha in the Bágar, Mairí Ká Pír or Gúgá Pir, not far from Sirsá in Bíkáner territory, Masáni of Gurgaon, Debi of Nagarkot near Kángra, and Bhairon of Ahror near Rewárí. Their marriage ceremonies are performed under the guidance of the Gurra or Chamarwa Bráhmans by the ordinary Hindu form of walking round the sacred fire. It is worthy of note that among the Chamárs the dead are either buried or burnt as is most convenient; neither custom is binding. Towards Bíkáner it is more usual to bury the dead; towards the Panjáb both customs are common, even in the same family. In either case the relics (*phúl*) are taken to the sacred Ganges, *i.e.*, the ashes, if the corpse was burnt; the nails, if it was buried. They say they have no belief in transmigration, but believe the good are happy after death in heaven (*surg*), and the bad are wretched in hell (*narak*). At funerals the women remain at home and weep, while the men go out with the corpse mourning somewhat as follows:—"*Tú hí hai: tainne paidá kiya aur tainne márliyá*"="Thou alone art: thou madest, and thou hast struck down." The Chúhras bury their dead, and do not send any remains to the Ganges; they seem to adopt the ceremonies of their masters to some extent, and those living in Hindu villages have the marriage ceremony performed under the guidance of Bráhmans of their own, by walking round the sacred fire, while the Chúhras living in Musalmán villages have the Muhammadan form of *nikáh* performed by a Chúhra faqír who is not a Musalmán; and Chúhras living in Sikh

villages often leave their hair uncut and sometimes are regularly initiated by the Sikh baptism (*páhul*), when they are known as Mazhabí Sikhs. Their special deity is Lálbeg or Lálguru, whom their leading men described to me as the supreme and only god without form or dwelling-place. The worshipper makes a small shrine of earth and puts up over it a stick with a piece of cloth making a small flag, offers a little *ghi* or grain as a sacrifice, bows down before the shrine and prays to be saved from illness and trouble. They do not believe in transmigration of souls, but say the good go to heaven after death, where they bathe and sit in ease and happiness, while the bad go to hell where they are tormented by wounds and fire until the deity is pleased to relieve them. The Báwariyas hold the cow sacred, marry by circumambulation of the sacred fire, burn their dead and send the ashes to the Ganges. So do the Aherís or Thoris, but besides the ordinary Hindú deities, they worship especially Bábújí of Kolumand in Jodhpur and Khetpál of Jodhpur.

Places of pilgrimage.

109. Such are the religions of the people; but all of them, Musalmán, Hindú, Sikh and low-caste, are very superstitious, and perform many rites and ceremonies not exactly recognised by their religious teachers, intended to propitiate minor and local deities, good and evil spirits, saints and ancestors. Certain shrines are considered especially sacred, and long pilgrimages are made at fixed times to them by persons anxious to gain the favour of the local god or saint. Some of them are especially attended by persons of certain religions or sects, such as the pilgrimage to Jhámbájí's burial-place made by Bishnoís, or that to Bará Tírath made especially by Kúka Sikhs; but others are attended by all sects and classes without distinction, Hindús, Musalmáns, Chamárs and Chúhras all making the pilgrimage and presenting their offerings at the shrine. Some go out of mere curiosity to see the place and the gathering, but almost all have an idea that to go on the pilgrimage is a work of merit, likely to bring them good in this world, if not in the world to come. I have given a description of the pilgrimage undertaken by Bishnoís to the place where the founder of their sect lived and taught and was buried, and I need only refer to the distant shrines of Masání the small-pox goddess at Gurgáon, Hardwára on the sacred Ganges, the temple of Debí at Nagarkot, the tomb of Bábá Farid and the Gate of Paradise at Pákpattan, and other well-known places of pilgrimage, which attract numbers of people from this district as well as from other distant parts of the country. The only place of any note in this district itself to which people go on pilgrimage is Bará Tírath or Haripura west of Abohar, which has only lately acquired sanctity, and some account of the origin of the pilgrimage to that place may be interesting as showing how such fame arises. Haripura was a Bishnoí village, some ten miles west of Abohar in the prairie, and Charndás, an ordinary Udásí Sádh, lived on the bank of the village-pond. In 1876 it is said that a Mirásí woman had died, and her people had gathered to the funeral feast. That they might not defile the water of the tank, the Bishnoí villagers dug a hole some little distance off to

pour water into for the use of the Mirásís, and came upon an iron box some three feet below the surface. This was opened by the Sádh, and inside it were found three rusty arrow-heads, a sword-blade, a quoit (*chakkar*), two seals (*chhápa*), a trident (*tirsúl*), a stone image of the Lion-man incarnation of Vishnu, two footmarks (*charanpád*) of Nának and Debi, three written orders (*hukmnámá*) and a document in book-form (*pothí*) consisting of 24 leaves. These were the relics shown me by the Sádh, but it seems they were not all there at first, and Mr. Wakefield, Deputy Commissioner, had some of the original relics taken away and deposited in the Gurdwára at Sirsá, but duplicates of them miraculously appeared at the place where they were found. They were said in the documents to have been buried there in 1699 A. D. to mark the place where Guru Gobind Singh had rested on his flight into the Bágar country. The Sádh noised his discovery abroad, and on the authority of the written orders he had found, he established the fame of the tank as a place of pilgrimage, and called it Bará Tírath. Many of the people of the neighbourhood considered the whole thing an imposture, but notwithstanding the discouragement given by the district authorities, it has become usual to go on pilgrimage there twice a year in March and November, and a small fair has sprung up, which is attended by numbers of the country-people and by shopkeepers who establish booths to supply their wants. Many go simply out of curiosity, while the pilgrims proper make a point of bathing before day-break in the tank, of helping to deepen it, and of making an offering at the small shrine which has been erected for his relics by the Sádh, who as shrine-attendant (*pujárí*) appropriates the offerings and thus makes a good thing out of his find. The fair has become a meeting place for the Kúka Sikhs, and the attendance was estimated in March 1882 as nearly 7,000 and in November 1882 nearly 9,000, including 52 Kúkas each time. It is as yet a very unimportant fair, and may soon be neglected altogether; and no doubt many similar attempts to establish places of pilgrimage have proved abortive, but it is probable that the well-established shrines gradually acquired their present fame from similar small beginnings, perhaps aided by some judicious imposture. Such may have been the origin of the annual pilgrimage to the shrine of Gúga Pír near Bahádra in the Bíkáner territory, some 25 miles south-west of Sirsá, which brings sometimes 20,000 pilgrims of all castes, both Hindú and Musalmán, from great distances, especially from the north, south and east, in Sáwan and Bhádon every year. He is known also as Záhir Pír, Bágarwála and Mairí ká Pír, or the saint of the Bágar or Dry Country, and is very generally worshipped in the south-east Panjáb, where his standard (*jhandá* or *chhari*) consisting of a bamboo surmounted by a few peacock feathers and otherwise adorned is carried round at certain times of the year by Chúhras asking for alms. Gúga is said to have been a Chauhán Hindú, son of a Thákur of Bahádra, who killed some relative of his own in a quarrel about the succession, and in order to escape the reproaches of his mother desired the earth to swallow him up. He was told by a faqír that as he was a Hindú he must be burnt

not buried, and thereupon he became a Musalmán, and was swallowed alive with his white horse and spear by Mother Earth. Until a few years ago his turban and the points of his spear and of his horse's ears were visible above the ground ; but as the pilgrims irreverently touched the turban, these signs are now concealed from view. A tomb *(khánkah)* has been built over the place, and here the pilgrims present their offerings. There is often great trouble about water, which is only to be got from ponds or from villages some miles off, and the pilgrims undergo some hardship, having to lie about on the bare ground ; but they bathe in the sacred pond, and carry away some of its clay which is a cure for snake-bite, and having fulfilled their vows by presenting an offering at the sacred shrine, they return to their homes satisfied that they have gained the favour of the saint who will help to protect them from evil.

Fasts and Festivals.

110. There are certain anniversaries which are kept by the villagers as days of rejoicing or of mourning, and as they break the monotony of the peasant's life, he uses them as dates to mark the divisions of the year. The Musalmáns observe the days prescribed by their religion which are determined by the Muhammadan lunar year, while those observed by the Hindús and Sikhs are determined by the solar year. Comparatively few of the villagers think of the event which the day is intended to commemorate. It is to them a day of fasting and mourning or a day of feasting and rejoicing, when they and their womankind put on their best clothes, and indulge in some dainty dish generally composed of flour and coarse sugar and melted butter. Each festival has its own peculiar dish which is prepared and eaten and distributed to relations and to the poor by all who can afford it, and many festivals seem to present themselves to the peasant's mind simply as the day on which a certain dish is eaten. On fast days the strict Muhammadans refrain from eating and drinking altogether until after the sun has set, but the Hindús are allowed on their fast days to eat fruits and the seeds of certain grasses and to drink milk. The most noteworthy anniversaries among the Musalmáns are (1) the Muharram, the first nine days of which are observed as days of mourning, during which no one changes his clothes or washes his head, while on the tenth the villagers exchange sweetmeats and *sharbat*, and give some to the poor in the name of the Imáms Hasn and Hussain ; (2) the whole month of Ramzán is observed as a fast, and strict Muhammadans neither eat nor drink from sunrise to sunset. The new moon of the next month, whose appearance ends the fast, is anxiously looked for, and when it has been seen the fast is broken with rejoicing and distribution of food to the poor. (3) *Id-ul-fitr*—on this day after formally breaking fast, the men attired in their best go to the outskirts of the village or to the mosque and join in public prayer ; (4) *Id-uz-zuhá*—on this day after fasting in the morning and joining in public prayers, the richer villagers sacrifice a lamb, goat or cow, whose flesh they cook and eat together, giving a share to the poor. The chief anniversaries kept by both Sikhs and Bágrís are (1) *Basíro* or *Basthra*, in the beginning of Chait—the women dress in their

best and worship Sítlá, the goddess of small-pox ; no food is cooked on this day, but food cooked the previous evening (*bási*) is eaten ; (2) *Tíj*, on the 3rd of Sáwan—the women dress in their best, eat sweetmeats and erect swings on the trees, in which they swing each other ; (3) *Gúga Pír*, the feast of Saint Gúgá, already mentioned—on the 8th of Bhádua a fast is kept until the moon rises when she is worshipped and the fast is broken; next day the Dhánaks carry about the standard of Gúga Pír, and beg alms from house to house ; (4) *Diwáli*, the feast of lamps—on the last day of Kátik, numbers of little lamps (*díwá*) are lit, and a general illumination made. The lamps are sometimes put in a frame (*hathrá*) made of mud and straw, something like a cage. Anniversaries specially kept by the Bágrís are (1) *Kanágat*—the first 15 days of Asauj are kept as days of mourning for near relations ; on the day corresponding to the day of the month on which a relation died Bráhmans are formally feasted in his name ; (2) *Holi*, the spring festival at the end of Phágan is observed as a time of boisterous rejoicing in the villages, and decency is thrown aside for the time. The youths of the village dance and sing and play, and when the women come and look on, both parties indulge in the most obscene abuse and finally they come to throwing dust and dirt and cowdung at each other, and the women pursue the men with sticks and whips, sometimes beating them severely. Days specially kept by the Sikhs are (1) *Namáni*—the last day of Jeth is kept as a fast which is broken next morning after first feeding a Bráhman, or a daughter, or daughter's child ; (2) *Lorhi*—on the first day of Máh the Sikh villagers bathe and distribute food in charity, and the little girls go round and beg some *gur* from every man in whose house a son has been born or a daughter married within the year. It is often difficult to discover any reasonable origin for these time-honoured customs, but the people never trouble their heads about that, only as the day comes round they do as their fathers did before them, and swing on trees, or dance and sing, or send their little girls round to beg *gur*, without asking why.

Superstitions, omens and charms.

111. The usual idea of prayer among the more ignorant peasants seems to be to make a bargain with the god or saint ; for instance I saw in one village a small mud representation of the temple (*thán*) of Rámdeo of Runícha, made by Chamárs who told me they lit a lamp inside it twice a month, and that when they were ill or in trouble they would come to this shrine and bow down before it and promise that if their trouble were removed or their wish gratified, they would present (*chárhná*) some offering such as bread or a cocoanut or a flag. If the saint fulfilled his part of the bargain, the worshipper fulfilled his vow ; if not, the vow was void ; thus I was told that a small flag waving over the shrine had been presented by a Chamár who had been ill and who had vowed to offer a flag on his recovery. Often a small shrine may be seen outside the village to the village-god or the small-pox goddess or some other deity, where at set times the women make offerings of water or grain ; and a small lamp may often be seen burning on a Thursday night at the tomb of a Musalmán saint. These practices are said to be forbidden in

the Qurán, but the women especially place some faith in them, and a Ráín is said to have divorced his wife because she persisted in lighting lamps at a faqír's tomb in hope of being blessed with a son. As an instance of the higher form of worship among the Hindús I may quote the account given by a wealthy and intelligent Suthár peasant of Risáliya who told me he believed in one God only—call him Naráyan, Parmesbar, Khudá, Thákurjí, Rám, Bishn, or what you will—and that twice a day he went to the small mud temple (*Thákurdwára*), distinguished from other houses only by a flag and a sort of altar inside, to view the shrine of of the deity (*darsan karná*) and bow before it saying "Naráyan Naráyan, Thákurji, Thákurji" and every day he sent an offering (*pett*) of flour, ghí and sweets which was eaten by the Bairágí faqir who attended the shrine. The peasants often wear armlets as a protection against disease, the evil eye and bad spirits. The Musalmáns on the Satlaj get the mosque-attendant to come and bless the heap of grain on the threshing-floor before it is divided, and he gets a regularly recognised share for doing so; this saves the grain from being carried off by evil spirits. As a precaution against such depredations the Hindú peasant traces a circle of ashes round his heap of grain. The common cure for cattle-disease when it breaks out in a village is to tie a string across the gateway with a potsherd hanging to it on which some holy man has traced characters supposed to represent a verse from the Shástars or the Qurán and to have the effect of protecting from the disease the cattle who pass below it. A Banya in counting measures of grain does not begin to count with 'one' but with "*barkat*" (a blessing.) Odd numbers are considered to be lucky. The door of a house or the gateway of a village must not face the south. A woman must not mention her husband's name or he will die; nor should a man mention his wife's name. One should not speak of one's father-in-law, but call him 'uncle.' Should a Hindú kill a cow by accident he must take her tail to the Ganges, there to be purified at considerable expense, and on the road he bears the tail aloft tied to a stick that all may know he is impure. An interesting account of trial by ordeal was given me at Rori, and I was assured by the Sikh Jats there that it used to be practised quite recently in doubtful cases while Rori was under the rule of the Rájá of Nábha. In the ordeal by water the parties were made to dive into a deep pond, and the man who came first to the surface was held to be the liar. In more serious cases recourse was had to the ordeal by fire. A pípal leaf was placed on the hand of each of the parties, and both were made to grasp a red hot ploughshare (*pháli*); the first man who let go was declared false and the dispute was decided against him.

A true Hindú thinks he can best please the Deity by propitiating the Bráhmans, and it is common to feed a number of Bráhmans by way of sacrifice. Should the worshipper wish to make an offering of cows (*gáopun*) or of land, it is done by a formal ceremony (*sankalp*) which is also used in giving away a daughter in marriage. The giver takes in his hand a copper coin (*paisá*) and some grains of bájra on which the Bráhman pours water; he then places them in the Bráhman's hand saying, "I have given to you for the sake of God (*Naráyan nimitt*) five

cows or two bighas of land," in return for which the Bráhman gives him his blessing. Sometimes the giver rocks the Bráhman to sleep and puts sweets in his mouth. The Musalmáns also sometimes give land to a holy man and consider it pleasing to Alláh to give alms to the poor (*barákh-i-khudá* or *Rabb de wáste*); thus a Musalmán when dying often distributes alms to the poor or gives money to the mosque-attendant "to buy Quráns."

The Bodlas are credited with miraculous powers; for instance, the other day a man had stolen a Bodla's buffalo, and a committee (*melá*) of Bodlas went to him and required him to give it up. He refused, and they cursed him and all his house. A few days after his son died. But it is chiefly for the cure of the bite of mad dogs that they are famed, and men of all castes and classes, both Hindú and Musalmán, come to them to be cured. The venom is exorcised in this way. The patient is made to sit down and a circle consisting of six boys and a Bodla is formed round him. The Bodla takes some moist earth, blows on it and recites over it a formula containing the name of Alláh. He then passes it round the circle of boys, each of whom works it up into a ball (*golá*) and passes it on. This is done seven times. Then the Bodla takes the seven balls and works them up into one which he strikes on the wound reciting all the time, and then gives to the patient telling him to follow certain minute directions for two and a half months; such as, to eat nothing cooked in iron, not to go near water at night, to take care not to see the reflection of the sun or moon in water, &c., and should the man die, his death is ascribed not to the failure of the charm, but to his neglect of these instructions. The usual rate for a cure is Re. 1-4.

Age and conjugal condition.

112. The returns of the Census of 1881 showed that in the Sirsá district, as in the whole Province and indeed in the whole of Northern India, the fecundity of the population is liable to extraordinary variations, and is affected to a wonderful degree by changes in the climatic conditions, and more especially by periods of plenty and of scarcity. The numbers of children of both sexes were returned as follows for the Sirsá district:—

Age.	Year in which born.	Number.	
Under one year ...	1880	10,551	
Between one and two ...	1879	6,346	
Between two and three ...	1878	6,031	
Between three and four ...	1877	7,919	
Between four and five ...	1876	7,770	
Between five and ten ...	1870-75	33,266	of which one-fifth is 6,653.
Between ten and fifteen ...	1865-70	27,438	of which one-fifth is 5,488.

There has been no such unusual mortality among young children of late years as to make any marked difference in the numbers of those of any particular age, and after making every allowance for wrong returns, there can be no doubt that the number of children born in the district in 1878 and 1879 was much less than the average number born in one year, and less than the number born in 1876, 1877, or 1880. The harvests of 1875-76 were bumper harvests, and those of 1876-77 were about average; the rains of 1877 failed, and the harvests of 1877-78 were so poor that the people suffered severely from scarcity, though not so bad as to be called famine, and did not fully recover prosperity until the bumper rabí crop of 1879. Thus a period of scarcity was closely followed by a period of few births, and there can be no doubt that, as in the other parts of the Province, the scarcity was the cause of the fewness of the births. It would seem that the effect of scarcity upon fecundity is much greater than is commonly imagined, for the scarcity in Sirsá, though somewhat severe for more than a year, was not so bad as to cause any deaths from starvation, or to permanently injure by emaciation the constitution of any large proportion of the population, and yet the decrease in the number of births is very marked.

The Census Report for the Province shows that the proportion of children to adults in the Panjáb is considerably greater than in England, and it appears that the proportion is even greater in Sirsá than in the Panjáb as a whole, 39·4 per cent. of the total Sirsá population being returned as under fifteen years of age, while the proportion of males for the whole Panjáb is only 38·1 per cent. and for England 36·7 per cent. This is no doubt chiefly due, as pointed out by Mr. Ibbetson, to the custom of universal marriage of women. The greater proportion in Sirsá than in the rest of the Panjáb may be partly due to the fact that the present generation of children have less actual hardship to encounter than the past generation had in the earlier years of colonisation of the district, and thus their rate of mortality is lower than it was among the present generation of adults when they were children.

According to the Census figures the number of unmarried males in the district is greatly in excess of that of single females, being 77,830 to 46,334. Thus ten males in every 18 are unmarried, while only ten women in 24 are single; and taking both together almost exactly half the total population are married, while in England the proportion is only 35 per cent. Very few females fail to get married before the age of twenty, and only 605 women above that age in the whole population were returned as single. There is a very general idea that it is disgraceful for a family to have a grown-up daughter unmarried, and great efforts are made to have all the daughters married early, so that even a girl who is blind or lame is married either by giving her into the bargain along with her sister, or by bribing some one to marry her. But ordinarily in most tribes a daughter is a valuable piece of property, and can be disposed of readily at a price. It is common to require the bridegroom's family to give something in exchange for the bride; and as in a newly-colonised country like Sirsá women are comparatively scarce, they

fetch a good price as a rule. The people say this practice is spreading, and that tribes and families who would formerly have given their daughters in marriage without an equivalent now exact something in exchange for them. There are some Musalmán tribes who do not think it necessary to get their daughters married at a very early age, and grown-up single women are not uncommon in their villages. Other castes again, such as the Bodlas, do not give their daughters in marriage to any tribe except their own, and thus sometimes find difficulty in disposing of their girls in marriage. The most common age for marriage is from twelve to fifteen for girls and from fifteen to eighteen for boys, but it is not unusual, especially among the Banyas and Brábmans, for children to be married at a much more tender age. It must be remembered, however, that the marriage ceremony is more like the betrothal ceremony of Europe than the marriage, and that except where the parties are already adult, the girl, after the marriage, still lives in her father's house until she attains puberty, and it is only after a second ceremony, called the *mukláwa*, that she leaves her parents and goes to reside with her husband. The *mukláwa* generally takes place some odd number of years after the marriage, such as three, five, or seven years, and the husband is considered to have the right to demand the custody of his wife when she has attained puberty; but it is often delayed by the reluctance of the parents to let their daughter leave them, especially where she is, as among most agricultural tribes, a useful member of the family, able to help greatly in the work of the household. Thus although 149 boys and 395 girls below the age of ten are returned as married, and there are five widowers and fourteen widows of that tender age, this really only means that they have been betrothed, though with ceremonies which are considered indissoluble, and probably the girls have never left their parents' house, except for a visit of a day or two to the house of their future husband. And although 23 females out of every 24 above the age of fifteen are married, few women bear their first child before the age of sixteen; probably the majority of women become mothers at the age of seventeen or eighteen, and many are even older than this before their first child is born.

While only one female in 96 who reach the age of 20 fails to get married before that age, one male in every five above 20 years of age is still single. Again, in the whole population there are only 143 unmarried females above the age of 30, while there are 5,138 unmarried males above that age. While few women fail to get married before they are past the age of girlhood, a considerable number of men either never marry at all, or do not marry until a much later period of life. It is not that it is thought better that a man should grow up unmarried, but the difficulty and expense of getting a wife often delay the marriage of a youth for some time. Few men who can afford it fail to obtain wives for their sons before they reach the age of 20. Possibly prudential considerations, such as the consideration that the family holding cannot support more mouths in comfort, have some weight in preventing early marriages of males.

The number of widows is considerably larger than the number of widowers, being 15,409 to 6,940; so that, while only 5 per cent. of the males are widowers, 13 per cent. of the females are widows, and of females above the age of 40, no fewer than 52 per cent. are widows. This is no doubt partly due to the prejudice against the remarriage of widows which is strongest amongst the Hindús, but also prevails among the high-caste Musalmáns. Among Bráhmans, Banyas, Aroras and Rájputs remarriage of widows is strictly forbidden, and the Musalmán Bodlas, Chishtis and some other exclusive tribes forbid their widows to remarry, as this rule is thought a sign of high caste and social superiority. But all Jats and lower castes allow their widows to remarry, and unless the widow is too old and ugly to be worth marrying, or is herself averse to it, she generally soon finds another husband. There is no rule in any caste or religion forbidding a widower to remarry, and if a man can afford it, he generally gets another wife if his first wife dies while he is still young. Polyandry is nowhere openly practised in this district, and I do not believe that the custom exists even in its highest form of two or more brothers having one wife in common; such a practice would be universally condemned by the Sirsá peasants. Polygamy is not very common, except when a man already married marries the young widow of his deceased brother or cousin. In no tribe or caste is polygamy prohibited, but it is not considered right for a Hindú to marry a second wife while his first wife is alive unless when she is barren and he, generally with her consent, marries again in hope of getting children. The richer Musalmáns, especially on the Satlaj, often have more than one wife, but that is a question of luxury. On the whole the proportion of married men having more than one wife must be small. Indeed, according to the returns, there are more married males in the district than married females in the proportion of 53,921 to 52,841. This is due to the recent colonisation of the district. Many immigrants, such as traders in Fázilká, or wandering labourers on the canal or elsewhere, leave their wives in their former homes until they determine on finally settling down in the district, or until they can save enough to enable them to return to the homes they have temporarily quitted. In a new country like this too, many have to get wives from a distance, and the number of married women from older-settled districts who had not yet joined their husbands or who had gone temporarily to revisit their parents would be greater than the number of such wives who had similarly come into or remained in the district away from their husbands, especially in a season of comparative scarcity such as prevailed in some parts of the district at the time of the Census.

Disparity of the sexes.

113. For every thousand males in the district there are only 826 females. At the Census of 1868 the proportion was only 802 females to a thousand males; the females are thus increasing in a faster proportion than are the males, but still their proportion is smaller than it is in most other parts of the Province, for the proportion for the whole Panjáb is

843 females to every thousand males. This disproportion is no doubt due, as above noted in the case of married persons, to the recent colonisation of the district and to the greater number of males than females among the immigrants—a cause which is gradually having less effect as the tide of immigration slackens. That it has had great effect is shown by the figures of the Census, from which it appears that the net gain to the district by immigration within the present generation has been 89,762 males and only 27,515 females, *i.e.*, only 691 females to every thousand males. But there can be little doubt that the number of male births normally exceeds the number of female births. The Census returns show a larger number of males than of females at every age, and there is no reason to believe that female infanticide is practised anywhere in the district. There is indeed no inducement. A girl is a valuable member of the family; she helps in the household work while she remains with her parents, and there are very few families in which there is any difficulty in disposing of a girl in marriage; indeed, the parents are generally able to exact some equivalent for their daughter from the family of the bridegroon. Girls seem to be treated by their parents in every respect as well as boys, and are protected as tenderly and carefully from disease and trouble as the boys are.

Health, Infirmities and Insanity.

114. The district appears to be unusually healthy, for according to the mortality returns, the average death-rate per thousand per annum for the last five years has been only twenty-two. The following statement shows the number of deaths and their causes:—

Year.	Cholera.	Small-pox.	Fever.	Bowel complaints.	Injuries.	Other causes.	Total deaths.	Death-rate per thousand.
1878 ...	0	304	3,263	257	48	823	4,695	18
1879 ...	1,053	617	4,980	324	44	1,052	8,070	32
1880 ...	2	24	2,979	135	56	1,203	4,399	17
1881 ...	1	76	4,178	208	58	1,189	5,710	23
1882 ...	0	25	3,428	201	61	1,251	4,966	20
Average ...	211	209	3,766	225	53	1,104	5,568	22

In 1879, the most unhealthy year of the five, the death-rate rose to thirty-two per thousand per annum, and of the 8,070 deaths which occurred in that year 1,053 were ascribed to cholera, 617 to small-pox, and 4,980 to fever. Cholera rarely visits the district in a serious form, and for eleven years before 1879 there had not been more than a hundred deaths from cholera in any one year. The Sirsá district has suffered less from epidemics of fever and cholera than have the districts farther east, and in the famines and scarcities which have visited it in common with the whole tract between the Satlaj and the Jamna comparatively few inhabitants have died of starvation or had their

constitution impaired by want of food. Ordinarily the rainfall is small and the climate excessively dry, except for a short time after a fall of rain, and it is no doubt owing to this dryness of the climate that there is so little fever, especially in the high-lying parts of the district where the water level is generally more than a hundred feet below the surface. When an epidemic of fever does visit the district after an unusually wet season, as it did in 1881, it is generally in the valley of the Satlaj and still more in that of the Ghaggar that it is most prevalent, and perhaps Ellenábád and the neighbouring villages round which water often stands for months are most subject to malarious fever. Although the harvests fluctuate greatly and often a bumper crop is succeeded by an exceedingly poor one, few of the people, except the very lowest of the village labourers and some of the wandering tribes, are subject to periods of semi-starvation, for they are mostly well enough off and provident enough to store up the surplus of good years against the bad years which they know are likely to follow. No doubt when one of the periodical scarcities comes round, the food of many of the lower classes must become so much reduced in quantity and quality as to weaken their stamina for the time and render them more liable to succumb to disease, but not so generally or to such an extent as seriously to shorten the average duration of life of the population. It is astonishing how healthy the people are when one considers their almost universal habit of drinking pond-water, which has drained into the pond off the dirty ground round the village, in which they wash and bathe, and in which their cattle stand and wallow, often voiding urine and excrement as they drink; and when one sees this filthy water, which looks and smells like a solution of mud and ordure, full of decomposing animal matter and often covered with a fungus scum, used for bathing, drinking and cooking purposes by the people seemingly with impunity, one's ideas of hygiene undergo a change. It must be seen to be believed, and it seems impossible that such habits should not affect the health and longevity of the people; yet their open-air life keeps them strong and healthy. It does seem that the use of this filthy water is the cause of the prevalence of skin diseases in a more aggravated form and of parasites, such as *chigoe*, which chiefly attacks the foot and sometimes lames a man for life or even makes it necessary to resort to amputation, while guinea-worm (*nahárwa*) is perhaps more common in this district than in any other and is ascribed to the habit of bathing in dirty ponds from the water of which the thread-like worm finds its way into the skin. Cases of guinea-worm are very numerous, especially in the hot and rainy seasons, and not unfrequently a neglected guinea-worm lames a man permanently, but although the health and comfort must be greatly affected by the presence of two or three worms twenty inches long under the skin, death is seldom directly caused by the disease.

Blindness is unusually common in this district, 7·2 persons in every thousand being returned as blind, while the proportion for the Province is 5·1 only, and only in Ludhiána and Karnál is the proportion of blind to total population so high. Blindness developes with age, and while

In the total population below 60 years of age, only one in every 209 is blind, the proportion among those above 60 years of age is one in 21, or about ten times as great. In early life blindness is chiefly due to small-pox; in later life it is, according to the people, due to the general use of *rábrí* which is the daily food of the greater part of the population. This diet is said to bring on blindness gradually, first in the form of night-blindness (*rátaunda* or *andhráta*) and then total blindness. Probably however the real causes of the prevalence of blindness in Siraá are the glare of the sun on the treeless plains and the scorching sandstorms which are so frequent in the hot weather.

The number of deaf-mutes is only 247, or one per thousand of total population, which is about the average for the province. The infirmity is chiefly congenital, and the number of males so afflicted is twice as many as that of females. Only thirty-five males and ten females are returned as lepers, the proportion being only half that for the province. Leprosy does not develope until comparatively late in life, and there are no lepers under twenty years of age, while more than half the total number are over fifty years of age.

Of the whole population only 109 are returned as insane, the proportion being slightly below the average for the province. Few are born idiots, and insanity is said by the people to be generally caused by fever mounting to the head, or by grief for the loss of relatives or property.

Food and drink.

115. The Bágrí residents of the Dry Tract live from year's end to year's end chiefly on *bájra*, *moth* and milk. Their bread consists of scones or bannocks (*roti*) of *bájra* flour, and their two chief dishes are *rábrí* and *khichrí*. To make *rábrí*, which is a sort of thin gruel, steep *bájra* flour in butter-milk and water and place the mixture in sun till evening that it may ferment, add more butter-milk and a little salt and cook over a fire for a time, allow it to cool and then it is ready to be drunk or supped. *Khichrí* is a thick porridge made by pounding (*kútna*) *bájra* so as to remove the husk (*chilká*) and boiling the whole grain with the pulse of *moth* in water with a little salt added. These are ordinarily eaten with butter-milk (*lassí* or *chhách*) which is made by heating the milk gently in a sort of oven (*hárá*), over which is placed an earthen cover (*khopra*) to keep in the heat, and placing it in an earthen vessel with a little curd, so that the whole of the milk curdles and coagulates (*dahi*). Next morning a little water is mixed with the *dahi* and the whole is churned (*bilonú*) until the butter (*makhan*) comes to the surface. The butter is melted over a fire and becomes *ghi* which is kept in a liquid state for great occasions or sold to richer people; and the remaining liquid which is sour and more like whey than butter-milk is the *lassi* or *chhách* which is set aside to be drunk with the *rábrí* or *khichrí*. Any fresh green vegetable food, such as the green pods of *moth* or *guár*, or gourds and melons, is much prized as adding a relish to this food; and when these are not in season, itinerant vegetable-sellers from the river-valleys

travel long distances among the villages of the Dry Tract bringing turnips, carrots and other vegetables to be exchanged for grain. A light meal is eaten early in the morning consisting of *bájra* scones and greens or the *rábrí* left over from last night's supper; this breakfast is called *kalewá*. A similar meal is eaten about noon; but the principal meal of the day is the supper or evening-meal eaten after the day's work is done, and consisting of *rábri* or *khichri* with *bájra* scones and greens or vegetables when they can be got. The poorer classes who cannot afford butter-milk have to be content with *rábri* and *khichri* made with water only, but except in times of scarcity all classes are generally able to eat as much grain as they care for, and it is estimated that an average family of five, father, mother and three children, eat four *sers* of grain a day. An ordinary labourer, man or woman, eats a full ser of grain in a day (2lbs), and this is the allowance made to adult labourers at harvest-time when they get their food from their employer.

The Sikhs live somewhat better and have a greater variety in their food. Their morning meal is much the same as that of the Bágrís. In the afternoon they often appease their hunger by munching parched barley or gram; and their supper consists in the cold weather of *bájra* and *moth* porridge (*khichri*), and in the hot weather of scones made of gram and husked barley (*ghát*) with split gram or *múng* and butter-milk (*lassi*) and in the season the leaves of young gram or sarson by way of greens. The Musalmáns of the Dry Tract indulge in still better food. They breakfast on the remains of the supper of the night before (*bási tukra*) and before noon make a meal of barley-scones or *bájra* scones and butter-milk (*bhela* or *lassi*); in the afternoon they munch parched barley or *jawár*, and the supper consists of barley-scones with split gram or *moth*, or porridge (*khichri*) of *bájra* and moth; while the richer or more extravagant peasants sup on wheaten cakes and milk, and on great occasions a kid or lamb, or even a cow, is killed and eaten; but the great majority of Musalmán peasants only rarely taste butcher-meat. The Musalmáns of the Ghaggar valley live in much the same way, except that they can more easily get vegetables to eat with their scones and porridge, and are more generally able to afford to drink butter-milk with them. The Musalmáns of the Satlaj live most luxuriously of all. Their breakfast consists as with the others of the remains of the evening-meal (*bela*); before noon they dine on wheaten scones, sometimes weighing a pound each, and butter-milk; in the afternoon they munch parched *jawár*, gram or wheat; and in the evening they sup on wheaten scones with split gram or *moth* or *múng*, and cooked onions, turnips, radishes or other vegetables, while the more extravagant drink milk instead of butter-milk. In these Musalmán villages it is a pleasant sight in the afternoon to see the Máchhin or grain-parcher seated over her fire (*chúla*) with her bowl-shaped iron pan, while the village children bring their lapfuls of grain to be parched. She throws in a few handfuls of grain and keeps stirring it in the pan over the fire with a small brush made of grass, and in a few minutes the grain cracks and each half turns over and shows

a beautiful white. The Máchhin keeps a little for her trouble and returns the rest ready parched to the child who runs off home with it to be munched with great gusto by the family. Another lively sight in the Satlaj villages is the village-oven (*tanúr*) on the summer evenings, presided over by the Máchhi or Máchhin who acts as village baker, when the women have brought their thick wheaten scones to be baked and stand gossiping round the oven until they are ready. The baker claps the scones on the inside of his oven, which is simply a hole in the ground with the fire inside, and as each is ready he returns it to the housewife who hurries off with it for the family supper. The baker pays himself (*bhára*) by keeping a scone or two every now and then according to some recognised rule, sometimes a tenth or a twelfth of the bread brought to him to be baked.

When a guest comes, a better meal is served according to the means of the family; etiquette requires that the best meal of all should be given on the occasion of a son-in-law's visit. On such occasions rice or wheat takes the place of *bájrá* or barley, milk is drunk instead of butter-milk, and the scones or porridge are enriched with *ghi* or sweetened with sugar. On festival-days, too, sweet and toothsome cakes and messes are prepared, each festival having its own time-honoured dish. But it is on occasions of family celebrations, and especially at the feasts given after the death of some honoured relation, that eating is to be seen in all its glory. I saw the preparations being made for such a feast given by a Bágrí Kumhár in honour of his father who had died three months before. A trench had been dug in the ground in the courtyard of one of the houses in the village, and in this trench a strong fire was kept burning. At one end of the trench simmered a small cauldron of *sharbat* made of coarse sugar and water, and at the other end was a large cauldron (*karáu*) containing (I was told) 80lbs. of wheaten flour, 100lbs. of coarse sugar (*gur*) and 50lbs. of melted butter (*ghi*) which, as it boiled over the fire, was being well stirred by three men with long poles. The *sharbat* was to be poured in when the mixture was well cooked, and the resulting sweet pudding which they called *sírá*, *karáh* or *halwá* would be eaten by the 150 Kumhár guests who sat about chatting with their mouths watering for the feast. Sometimes extraordinary sums are spent by the Bágrís on these funeral festivities. Gangárám Bishnoí of Sitoganno is said to have spent Rs. 8,000 on one occasion; and a Bishnoí of Gumjál, not seeing why he should lose the pleasure of it, gave his own funeral feast in anticipation the other day. Motí Suthár of Risálya when he came back from seeing his old father Jálu die at Káshíjí (Banáras) spent Rs. 2,500 in feasting the whole country-side for three days. A boat-load of coarse sugar (*gur*) on its way to the feast sank in the Ghaggar, a mishap which nearly caused a failure of the banquet. It is considered a great disgrace if there is not enough at such a feast for all the guests that come, and sometimes people having a grudge against the host, or wishing to play a practical joke on him, make up a "surprise party" and come in a body to try and eat him up.

The ordinary drink of the peasant is the filthy water of the village pond, or the cleaner but still muddy water of the well. All but the poorest classes are generally able to drink butter-milk with their meals, and the well-to-do have fresh milk as a luxury. In rich Sikh families the younger boys, and sometimes the girls, are given fresh-drawn milk to drink in the morning, and the growing lads from 10 to 20 suck the milk directly from the buffalo's udder like a calf, as it is thought especially strengthening when taken thus. On great occasions the favourite drink is a *sharbat* made of sugar and water, and very little spirit (*sharáb*) is drunk anywhere in the district. The Musalmáns and Bishnois are forbidden by their religion to indulge in spirits, and even the Sikhs, to whom it is allowed, very rarely drink to excess. Opium and other drugs are sometimes consumed by the Sikhs and the Hindú Rájputs, but intoxication from the excessive use either of spirits or drugs is almost unknown in the district. The Musalmáns and Bágrís are fond of smoking tobacco, and a group of them may often be seen passing round the *huqqa*, from which each man takes a long pull before handing it on to his neighbour. The Bishnois are forbidden to smoke as well as to drink, and the strict Sikhs are also supposed to avoid tobacco, but many Sikhs in this district ignore this rule of their Guru, and smoke like their Hindú neighbours.

Dress and Ornaments.

116. Small children of both sexes are allowed to play about in the dust without any clothing to bother them. A little boy may be seen sometimes with nothing in the way of clothing but a string (*tágrí*) tied round his waist; as he grows older a small cloth between the legs is added (*langotí*.) A grown-up man among the Bágrís wears a broad loin-cloth (*dhotí*) tucked up between the legs, a wrap (*chádar*) thrown over the shoulder, a turban (*págrí* or *poliya*) on his head and shoes on his feet. These clothes are generally made of coarse unbleached country cotton-cloth (*gádá*), and are often worn until they are filthy rags. Richer men wear a vest (*kurti*), or long coat (*bugtarí* or *angarkha*) also of cotton; the sleeves of the latter are sometimes very long and wide so that they hang down from the wrists in a peculiar way. Sometimes the *págrí* is of red or coloured cloth but it is often carelessly put on. In the cold weather most of them carry comfortable woollen blankets (*kamal* or *lohí*). Bágrí women wear a petticoat (*sáriyá* or *ghágra*) of coloured, striped or printed cotton, and a wrap (*orhna*) worn over the head shawlwise, of cotton generally striped or coloured (*chunrí*). Sometimes the wrap is of a bright colour (*phulkárí*) ornamented with bits of looking-glass which flash in the sun. A married woman wears a boddice (*kánchli* or *ángí*) often richly embroidered, covering her breasts only and leaving the waist naked, but Bishnoí women lengthen it so as to cover the waist also. In the cold weather a woollen petticoat (*dháblá*) and woollen shawl (*lonkáriya*) are worn instead of cotton, the shawl being often of a dull red colour, and embroidered in wool in pretty patterns (*lohiyá*); indeed, some of them are very

tastefully ornamented and quite works of art worthy of being displayed in an English drawing-room. The presents exchanged between families at betrothal and marriage often take the form of a suit of clothes (*tíwal*), consisting of an *orhna*, *ángí* and *ghágra*.

The characteristic dress of the true Sikh is the *kachch* or short drawers ending above the knee which may often be seen among the Sikhs of Sirsá; but most of them wear the loin-cloth *dhotí*-fashion like their Hindú neighbours. On their heads they wear a *pagri* generally longer, of better quality, and more neatly put on than that of the Bágrís, and most men wear a vest (*kurta*) with or without sleeves, and carry a wrap (*chaddar*) over the shoulder. These clothes are ordinarily of unbleached cotton (*khaddar*), but sometimes of English calico. In the cold weather they carry a woollen blanket (*loí*) or a wrap of double cotton (*dutahí*,) or a thick wrap (*khes*) which may almost be called a cotton blanket, checked with a dull red and having bright-coloured stripes of silk forming a border. Sometimes the young men wear a red or yellow turban. The Sikh women wear dark-blue trowsers (*suthan*) down to the ankles, and after marriage wear over them a short petticoat or rather kilt (*ghagra*) generally of blue with some ornamentation, and above that a loose coat (*kurti*) covering the whole of the body, while over the head is thrown a cotton wrap (*utla* or *dopatta*) generally dyed or printed. The wrap is often of a dark colour ornamented with silk embroidery (*phulkárí*), and sometimes very handsome. A Sikh woman's full dress is very becoming and they evidently take a pride in being neat and clean and well-dressed.

The Musalmán's characteristic dress is the *lungi* or loin-cloth worn kilt-fashion and only tucked up between the legs when the wearer is going to ride or otherwise exert himself. It is ordinarily of cotton striped or checked with dark blue and sometimes having a border of coloured silk and costing from Rs. 5 to 10. His sheet (*chaddar*) is often striped with blue, and he wears on his head a rudely arranged turban (*pagrí*) of white or red cotton. The women very rarely wear the wide drawers (*páejáma*) affected by the Musalmán women of the towns; their common dress is the petticoat (*ghagra, lahinga*, or *dáwan*) generally dyed or printed in dark colours, and a loose boddice (*kurti*) often of a bright red colour covering the body, while over the head is thrown a wrap (*dopatta* or *chunní*) of printed cotton cloth generally of a dark colour. A suit of clothes for a woman consisting of the three garments, *ghagra*, *kurti* and *dopatta* is called *trewar*, and as among the Bágrís and Sikhs is often presented to the women of a family at the betrothal or marriage of a relative.

The Sikh allows his hair to grow untouched by scissors or razor. Small boys have their hair carefully braided and tied firmly over the head, and grown-up men twist their hair (*kes*) into a knot under the turban. They are very particular about combing it and keeping it clean. The ordinary Hindú shaves his head all but the scalplock (*chotí* or *bodí*) on the crown and the Bishnoí shaves this off also. Musalmáns sometimes shave the head, but the Satlaj Musalmáns often

let their black hair hang down over the neck below the *pagri*, giving them a wild appearance. Sikhs are not allowed to shave the beard, and many of the older men have fine long white beards, generally allowed to hang naturally downwards except when tied up by a beard-cloth (*dhánta*) round the chin to protect them from the dust. Musalmáns do not shave the beard, but some of them shave the lower edge of the moustache. Some Bágrís shave the beard and others do not. A woman's hair is generally put up in braids (*chúndá*), and to judge from the frequency with which in the villages one woman may be seen enjoying the pleasure of having her hair hunted through by another, it is not always kept so clean as the Sikh Jat keeps his *kes*.

Among the Musalmáns men rarely wear any ornaments, but sometimes a boy wears earrings until his beard appears. Bágrí men very commonly wear gold and silver ornaments (*túm*), such as silver bracelets (*kará*), or gold earrings (*murki*), with a chain (*sánklí*) fastened to them and turned over the ear, or a necklace of gold (*tora* or *kathla*) or beads (*múngon kí kanthi*) ; or a silver chain round the waist (*tágrí*) or a small image of some god or saint (*múrat*) of gold or silver worn like a locket round the neck. Sikh men do not wear ornaments so commonly as the Bágrís, but sometimes have earrings (*tungal*), bracelets (*kangan*) and rings (*chháp*). All three classes of men, Hindú, Sikh and Musalmán, often carry strings of beads (*málá*) sometimes of wood or iron, to help them in counting their prayers, and a man may be seen, even when in conversation with others, working his beads round and at the same time, it is to be supposed, praying inwardly. Women of all classes are fond of ornaments (*tum* or *gáhne*), and when they cannot get them of gold or silver wear bangles or armlets of coarse glass (*kách*). Musalmán women wear earrings (*báliyan* or *pattar*) and necklaces (*hamel* or *kasli*), armlets (*bhutta*) above the elbow and bangles (*churi*) on the wrists. Bágrí women wear nose-rings (*náth*), earrings (*báliyán*), necklaces (*kasli*), anklets (*kariyán*), bangles (*churi*), armlets (*tád*). Sikh women wear earrings (*dandiyán*) sometimes as many as twelve at a time, nose-rings (*laung*), necklaces (*kasli*), bracelets (*kangan*), bangles (*chura*), anklets (*bánk*), mostly of silver.

Houses and Furniture.

117. The most primitive kind of dwelling is that used by the Ods, Kanjars and other wandering tribes who carry about with them, generally on the backs of donkeys, their mats (*pankhí*) made of the thin stalks of the *sar* grass (*sirki*) and put them up in a row as some shelter against sun and rain wherever they camp for a time. Some of these wanderers do not even take the trouble to provide so much shelter as this, but camp out in the open : while the wandering Lohárs make their cart their home. Many of the poorer immigrants from the Bágar prairies, even when they settle down permanently in a village, are content with the rudest of huts. A common dwelling in Bágrí villages is the *jhámpá* or *jhomprá*, a round hovel with walls made by interweaving branches of the *ák*, *jál* or *kair* bush and filling up the interstices with mud,

and with a thatch of *bájra* straw (*karbi*). Another Bágrí dwelling is the *chaunrá* or *dúndá*, a round hovel with mud walls (*bhínt*) and a roof of *bájra* thatch, and only one opening to serve as door, window and chimney closed by a wicket. When the Bágrí peasant rises in the world he makes a *parwá* or *chhuppar*, an oblong house with mud walls and thatched roof; or better still a *sál* or *kothá*, an oblong house with walls of sun-dried brick plastered over with mud and a flat roof of rafters and branches covered with clay. The richer men enclose a courtyard (*ángan*) in front of the *kothá* and build a sort of ante-room (*páulí*) or an imposing entrance (*darwáza*) often of burnt brick and high enough to admit a camel. The Sikhs almost always have good flat-roofed houses (*kothá*) kept clean and in good repair, with a courtyard (*sahan*) in front and an entrance gateway. The poorer Musalmáns on the Satlaj make primitive huts (*jhuggi* or *khuddi*) by putting up screens (*kamána*) of interwoven branches of tamarisk (*pilchi*) and several of their hamlets consist wholly of temporary huts of this nature thatched with grass and not even plastered with mud. These are common near the river-bank, where the chances of diluvion are too great to make it worth while to build better houses. Their more permanent houses (*kothá*) are made with walls (*kand*) of sun-dried brick and roofs thatched with the thick stalk (*kána*) of *sarr* grass. The best houses in the district, out of the towns, are those of the Ráins on the Ghaggar, which are often built substantially and neatly of *pakka* brick taken from the numerous old *thehs* in the neighbourhood, with open verandahs and a clean well-kept court-yard (*sahan*) and gateway.

In the courtyard of almost every house, and even at the side of wretched hovels may generally be seen a cylinder made of mud for containing grain. It has a lid made of mud and fastened on with clay, and a hole below stuffed with a rag, the removal of which allows the grain to run out, and is generally raised above the ground on a sort of stand to be out of reach of the white ants. When made of mud it is called *kothi* or *kothliyá* by the Bágrís, and *bharola* by the Musalmáns, and when made of *kána* or *sarr* stalks plastered over with mud, as it generally is in the Musalmán villages of the Satlaj, it is called *palla*. Some of the richer men have large bee-hive-shaped receptacles (*búrj*) built of sun-dried brick in a circular form with a pointed dome-shaped roof, capable of containing several hundred maunds of grain. In most villages, and indeed in most houses, except after a succession of bad harvests, there is a store of grain kept in these receptacles for consumption until the next harvest. The cattle and camels are often tied for the night in the open court-yard, but sometimes a shed (*táp*) is erected for them by putting up stakes and making a roof of branches over them by leaning it against the wall of the house; and the Sikhs generally have good byres made for them and keep them tied up inside and well-sheltered from the weather. In the court-yard may be seen the earthen fire-place (*chúla*) where the food of the family is cooked; the round earthen oven (*hárá*) where the milk is heated over a fire of cakes of dried cowdung (*goha*); the churn-

stick (*rai* or *mandhani*) for making butter; and an array of earthen and metal dishes (*bhándá*) for use in the work of the household. These are of different shapes and sizes, from the large earthen jar (*ghará*) used for bringing water from the well to the small earthen mug (*matkana*) used for ladling out the water from the *ghará* for drinking; or from the metal pot (*bhartiya*) in which liquids are cooked to the small metal cup (*chhaná* or *bátká*) out of which milk, water, &c, are drunk. The spinning-wheel (*charkhi*) stands in a corner, and one or two sleeping-cots (*manji*) stand about. Most of the furniture and utensils are made in the village and are very cheap and simple, but the metal vessels are imported from a distance and are comparatively expensive.

Family Life and Etiquette.

118. A good Sikh housewife has a hard day's work to do. She must get up at the dawn of day and grind the flour (*átá*) for the day's consumption at the hand-mill (*chakki*). Then she gets out the scones and butter-milk left over from last night's supper for her husband to breakfast on before he goes out to his work. Perhaps she has to milk the cows and buffaloes; at all events she must warm the milk of the morning and churn the milk of the previous day. She has to fetch water from the village well and sweep her house and court-yard, cook her husband's dinner and take it out to him in the field, take a turn at the spinning-wheel (*charkhi*), or do some embroidery work, and in the evening prepare the family supper and heat the evening's milk. Sikh women are not allowed to work in the field, and some of them are not even allowed to take out their husband's food; but all of them go out to bring water from the well, or to wash the clothes of the family. They make capital housewives and keep their persons and their houses neat and clean. The Bágrí women are not so particular about their houses, and often have to work in the fields along with their husbands, helping them to sow and reap, and indeed in everything except holding the plough. Often at harvest time the whole family go out and camp for the time in the fields under a temporary shelter of thatch, taking with them their cattle and utensils; so that during harvest a Bágrí village is sometimes almost deserted for days together. Except the Bodla and Chishti women, who are *pardahnashín*, and are not allowed to go outside the house, the Musalmán women do the household work and sometimes help in the field as openly as do those of the Hindús. Among the Bágrí Játs the milking of the cows is done by the women of the family; among the Musalmáns, and generally among the Sikhs, it is done by the men.

The Sikh peasant rises some time before daybreak, washes and says his prayers by memory from the *granth*; and after eating a scone and taking a drink of butter-milk he takes his cattle out to the field and works there until his wife comes out with his dinner of scones and butter-milk before noon. After dinner he works again for a time, and then gives himself and his cattle an hour's rest in the afternoon; then has another spell of work until sunset, when he takes his cattle home; and after washing has his supper of porridge and milk in the evening and goes to

bed soon after dark. His life is regulated by the sun, and there is little midnight-oil burnt; unless when some festivity is in progress the whole village is dark and quiet by nine o'clock. In the hot weather, unless it is cloudy, he does not work much in the heat of the day, and makes up for it by working earlier in the morning or later at night. The Bágrís, whose camels feel the heat even more than bullocks, often plough all night long instead of working in the daytime; and in irrigating tobacco in the hot weather the Musalmáns sometimes work their wells by night and rest by day. At harvest time when the crops are standing ripe and there is fear of hail, the peasant sometimes reaps both night and day, taking just as much sleep and rest as is absolutely needful. The Panjábi names for the different parts of the day are—

		About	
Tarká	...	3 or 4 A. M.	... Some time before dawn; time to get up (Bágri *parbhát*).
Sawer	...	5 or 6 A. M.	... Dawn
Rotiwelá	...	9 or 10 A. M.	... Dinner-time, when the dinner is brought to the field.
Dopahar	...	Noon.	
Táoriwela	...	5 P. M.	... When it is time to put the porridge-pot (*táori*) on the fire.
Sánjh	...	7 P. M.	... Evening—Supper-time.
Sotá	...	8 or 9 P. M.	... Bed-time.
Adhí rát	...	Midnight.	

As the children of a family grow up and marry, the daughters go to their husbands' homes, and the married sons are given a separate hut within the same enclosure as their parents. Sometimes the whole family continue to have their meals in common, but this often leads to quarrels among the women, and the married sons often start separate fire-places (*chúlá*) and have separate arrangements for food, while they all work together on the family land and share its produce in common. Sometimes the sons continue this arrangement after the father's death, but they generally after a short time effect a permanent partition of the moveable property, and sometimes also of the land. If the mother be still alive, sometimes a share of the estate is set apart for her maintenance for her life-time, and on her death is divided among the sons. It is not uncommon for the father, in his life-time, to make a more or less complete partition of the family estate. Ordinarily, in that case, he keeps all the land still recorded in his own name, and as each son grows up and marries, he gives him a separate house and a separate share of the cattle and moveable property, and separate possession of a share of the family holding, keeping for himself and his wife a share equal to the share of one son. Each son then cultivates separately the share of the family land made over to him, and keeps for his own use, and that of his wife and children, the produce of his share of the land and of the moveable property. On the death of the parents, the share they had reserved for themselves is equally divided among the sons, who also share among them the debts of the family and join in defraying the funeral expenses of their parents and the expenses of marrying their sisters. Thus one often finds a number of brothers

and agnate cousins. each with his wife and children forming a distinct family (*ghar, gwárí*) but all living in the same enclosure, surrounded by a common wall and having one common entrance; each having a separate hearth (*chúlá, dluwán*) but all perhaps so far joint, that they share the produce of part of the ancestral holding in common. The family thus defined is the basis of the social system, and these groups each eating food cooked at a separate hearth, are the units of which native society is composed. The number of such families was returned at the Census as 51,596, and the average number of persons to a family in the villages was almost exactly five. A typical peasant's family may be taken as consisting of father and mother, two children and grandmother. The distribution by enclosures is not so well-defined as that by families. An enclosure ordinarily consists of an assemblage of families closely related to each other, and a new enclosure is formed by a new family settling in the village, or an old family either overflowing the limits of the old enclosure or developing into a number of families so distinct in their interests as to separate off their dwellings by distinct enclosures with different entrances. But sometimes a new-comer, though not nearly related to the old inhabitants, is allowed to settle in their enclosure, or a number of families, not related closely to each other but generally of the same caste, make a common wall round their dwellings with one entrance, and thus form one enclosure. The number of enclosures returned was 34,276, of which 3,741 were unoccupied on the night of the Census. And in the village the average number of families per occupied enclosure was 1·7 and of persons 8·6. In all these respects, number of persons per family, number of families and of persons per occupied house, the average for Sirsá is considerably above the average for the Panjáb, and when the number of individual immigrants and the unsettled habits of many of the population are considered, this is strong evidence that the joint-family system has been less affected by tendencies towards severalty in Sirsá than in the Panjáb generally. The number of unoccupied houses in the villages on the night of the Census was only 10 per cent., while for the Province generally it was 28 per cent. In Sirsá it would have been still smaller had not scarcity caused a number of families to emigrate temporarily at the time of the Census. The comparatively small number of unoccupied houses is due partly to the prosperity of the population, and partly to the recent colonisation of the district.

The Sirsá peasants are not by nature polite, and the Bágrís especially are often unintentionally rude and boorish in manner. Hindús when they meet generally content themselves with putting the right hand to the forehead and saying "*Rám Rám*" to each other, while Musalmáns say "*salám*"; or sometimes they enquire after each other's health (*tu ráźí haí*), replying "quite well" (*ráźí khushí*). Women are generally treated as the inferior sex, and when a husband and wife are walking together, she follows at a respectful distance behind. A woman must not mention the name of her husband or of his agnates older than he by generation, and she should veil her face before them. Words denoting connection by marriage have become so commonly used as terms of

abuse that they are not often used in their proper sense; and a man generally speaks of his father-in-law (*súsrá*) as his uncle (*táyá*). It is shameful for a man to go to his married daughter's house or take anything from her or her relations; so much so that when on the occasion of a death in the family, the wife's relations come to join in the mourning, they bring their own food with them and are not feasted by the deceased's family like the other mourners. On the other hand, a son-in-law is an honoured guest in his father-in-law's house, and is treated to the best of toothsome sweets. When a married woman goes to visit her mother, it is proper for the women of the family, both on her arrival and departure, to make a great lamentation, and lift up the voice and weep. On all occasions of domestic ceremony the relatives are feasted, and the host must see that the provisions do not run short; while the guests are expected to subscribe towards the cost of the feast.

Towards superiors, and especially towards a "Ruler" (*hákim*), the people are as polite as they know how, and in such circumstances their politeness generally takes the form of most fulsome flattery and extravagant gestures. They address the Ruler as "your majesty" and liken him to all the heroes and sages of antiquity and even to the deity; and a man anxious for some favour will grovel on the ground, and put dust on his head, or take off his turban and cast it on the ground, or twist his wrap round his neck like a rope and hold out the end of it, or in short do anything that he thinks will please the superior from whom he is asking a favour. It is thought a great honour to be allowed to sit on a European chair before a Ruler, and great anxiety is shown by the leading men to be placed on the list of chair-sitters (*Kursí nashín*) who alone have that privilege. A man must of course take off his shoes before he comes into the presence, and he must not sit down or take his leave until he is given permission; he must not laugh before the Ruler but he may yawn without any attempt to conceal it. A man meeting a Sáhib on the road will sometimes step out of his shoes and stand barefooted on the road until the Sáhib passes by; a horseman will dismount and a woman veil her face when passing the great man. To a European all these absurdities are at first amusing, then disgusting; but after a time they come to be matters of course and excite no particular attention.

Domestic ceremonies at Birth, Betrothal, Marriage and Death.

119. Among all tribes there are certain ceremonies which are always performed in connection with domestic events, such as the birth, marriage or death of a member of the family. Many of these ceremonies are exceedingly elaborate, and great importance is attached to their performance at the proper time and place and by the proper persons, although no reason can now be given for the origin of the custom. These ceremonies are very much the same among all Hindú castes, both high and low, but have been considerably affected by a change of religion, for instance conversion to Islám or to the doctrines of the Bishnois.

The ceremonies connected with the birth of a child among the Bágrí Játs are as follows:—The mid-wife (*dái*) is given a fee of two annas and some food if the child be a boy, but only one anna if it be a girl. On the sixth day after the birth, the mother (*jachá*) is formally bathed and dressed in new clothes, her old clothes being given to the barber's wife (*náin*) who plaits (*gúnduá*) her hair for her and gets a fee of four annas and some food. A ceremony called *chúnchí khulái* is performed by the mother's sister-in-law (*nanad*) who washes her breasts (*chúnchí*) and is presented with a suit of clothes (*tíyal*) in return for the service. When the child is a month old its father's sister or niece brings it a present of a cap (*topi*) or silver bangles (*kara*) and blesses the child (*baláen leni*) by making a pass with the hands over it and then cracking the fingers against the temples, so as to take on herself any evil that may threaten the child, and in return is presented with a suit of clothes (*tíyal*), or a cow, buffalo or young camel. The *tíyal* consists of a sheet (*orhná*), boddice (*ángí*) and petticoat (*ghágrá*). If the child be a boy the family menials (*karú* or *láyí*) bring him toys representative of their respective trades and wish him luck (*badhái*); thus the Kumhár brings him a little earthen pot (*kalsa*), the Khátí brings a toy-cart, the Lohár a pair of small pincers (*chimta*), the Chamár a pair of shoes, and the Nái does something to please the child; in return they are given a rupee each. A Bráhman comes to give the child his name, and gets a fee of four annas and a meal; and sometimes the relatives are invited to a feast and each leaves a rupee for the child. No such ceremonies are performed on the birth of a daughter. When the mother is able to begin her household duties again, some twenty days after the birth, she puts an empty water-pot and *lota* on her head and goes in procession with the women of the village to the well or pond, and there distributes sweetmeats to the children of the village before she brings back water to her house.

The ceremonies connected with birth are very similar among other Hindú tribes with unimportant differences. For instance, among the Sikhs the ceremony of washing the mother's breasts is performed by the barber's wife, the Tarkhán brings the baby-boy a toy bow and arrow, the Lohár an iron bangle, and the Mochí a leather horse. Among the Kumhárs the uncle's wife of the child (*káki* or *tái*) announces his birth by beating a tray (*thálí*) outside the door. A woman is considered impure after child-birth, and any other woman who comes to see her must wash her hands in cow's urine to purify them before she does any household work. On the day on which a boy is born, the father or some agnate relation goes to the family Bráhman, and asks him on what day the child's name will be made known (*nikalegá*). He makes his calculation and names a certain odd number of days, from 3 to 27, the luckiest number being nine; and if the number of days be more than nine the parents must give certain clothing to a Dakaut, or low-caste Bráhman, to take away the bad luck. On the day fixed for giving the boy his name, his mother washes her head with cow's urine (*gáo mútr*), and is washed and dressed by the barber's wife, while the women of the family sing around her. The house too is purified by being smeared with mud and sprinkled with cow's urine. The Bráhman then comes and

looks at his almanac (*patra*), and reads out five names beginning with the same letter, one of which is chosen by the parents, and thereafter considered the boy's name for purposes of religious ceremonies, but the parents give him any name they think fit, and by that he is generally known. The Bráhman then lights the sacred fire (*hom*) with twigs of the *jand* tree and puts in it clarified butter, coarse sugar, barley and sesamum, reciting verses the while. He then puts some of the fire into a vessel of water, in which also are put some cow's urine and Ganges water, and a copper coin (*paisá*) or silver ring (*chhalla*), and sprinkles all the persons present and the walls of the house with this consecrated water. The Bráhman is then fed and feasted and the neighbours are entertained. This ceremony which is called *mangalá mukhí* seems to correspond to the baptism of the Sikhs and Bishnoís. The boy is often vowed to some god, such as Hanúmán, Mátá or Kálí, and when the period of the vow has expired he is taken to some place sacred to his tutelar divinity, and there his hair is cut off (*chharola*). A girl is named with much the same ceremony as a boy, but none of the other ceremonies is considered necessary. A child is often not weaned for three years, unless another child be born in the interval. His cradle (*pálná*) is swung from a tree or rafter. Among the Báwariyas and Naths, the mother on the ninth day after the birth washes herself and the child, and comes out to a feast in which the women of the tribe join her.

Children are generally betrothed (*sagái, mangewá*), while still of a tender age. Among the Bágrí Játs, when the parties have privately agreed about the betrothal, the girl's father sends his family barber (Nái) or Bráhman to the boy's house, where, before the assembled brotherhood, the boy is placed on a stool (*chauki*) and the girl's Nái or Bráhman puts in his lap a rupee and a cocoanut (*náriyal*), and puts a lump of sugar in his mouth. The Nái is then feasted on sweet things, and dismissed with a present which he is allowed to choose from Rs. 2 and four annas and a wrap (*khes*) placed before him. If the families are already connected by marriage, the wife of that marriage brings the signs of betrothal in place of the Nái, and gets a suit of clothes for her trouble. Sometimes a man simply sells his daughter for money; in that case he goes himself to betroth the girl and fetch her price. Among the Kumhárs sometimes the boy's father sends some jewels and Rs. 16 in cash by his Nái to the girl's house or takes it himself, and if the girl's father approves of the betrothal, he accepts the ornaments and money and returns Rs. 5, of which Rs. 2 are for a suit of clothes for the boy's mother, Rs. 2 for a blanket for his father, and Re. 1 for the boy himself; or the girl's father sends a rupee and a cocoanut to the boy's father as among the Jats. Among the Báwariyas the boy's father goes to the girl's house and gives her father from Rs. 10 to Rs. 30 for the girl before her relatives. Among the Thoris the usual price is Rs. 14, and among the Chamárs Rs. 12, of which Re. 1 is given back to the boy's father for the boy, and a wrap (*khes*) for himself. Sweetmeats are ordinarily distributed to the relatives, and the women of the family sing in honour of the occasion.

At marriage among the Bágrí Játs, the girl's father first gets the Bráhman to fix a lucky day, and sends his family Nái or Bráhman to the boy's father to inform him of the date fixed. Seven days before the wedding, the bridegroom is feasted with the boys of his family, and a red string is tied round his right wrist, and an iron rod placed in his hand to keep off the evil eye (*phitora*). He is then placed on a stool (*chauki*) and rubbed over by the barber or his wife with a mixture (*ubatna*) of barley-flour, turmeric and oil, while the women of the family sing round him. This ceremony is called the *bán*; and after it until the wedding the bridegroom does no work. At night his hands and feet are coloured with henna, and in the morning the relatives assemble, and the boy's mother's brother brings the wedding presents (*bhát*) sent by his maternal relatives, which include a suit of clothes for the mother and a wrap (*khes*) for the father of the bridegroom. When the wedding-party (*janet*) is ready to start, the Nái again rubs the boy over with ointment and washes his head, in return for which he gets a rupee and the boy's old clothes; the Sunár fastens a coloured string (*kángná*) on the boy's right foot, and gets an anna and some rice and sugar; the Bráhman fastens on a cap (*sera*) on the boy's head. A cloth is spread on the ground, and the bridegroom is seated on it with a tray (*thálí*) before him, in which a yellow cross is drawn with turmeric (*haldi*), and on this are placed some rice, a lump of sugar, and a rupee dotted round with turmeric. Then all the friends and relatives place in the tray their subscriptions (*naundá*) towards the expenses of the wedding, while a Banya writes out a list of the subscribers and the amount they give, and a Sunár tests each rupee to see that it is all right. For this service the Banya and Sunár get a fixed fee. Sometimes these subscriptions amount to a large sum, such as Rs. 1,000, and it is considered binding on a family to return them by subscribing on similar occasions in the families of the subscribers, whether they be of the same caste or not. The bridegroom's father takes with him ornaments, clothes, dates, almonds, sugar, raisins, cocoanut, &c., to present to the bride. The wedding-party (*janet*) with the bridegroom then start for the village of the bride, often a long distance off, on camels and horses, and when they get near (*dhukna*) the village, they announce their approach by firing off guns and beating drums. The party halts outside the village, until certain ceremonies have been performed. The bride's family barber (Nái) brings out some water and gives them to drink, and after getting a fee of five *paise* from the bridegroom's father, goes back again into the village. The Dhának also comes out with fire and gets an anna. The bridegroom and his party then advance into the village, and are met by the bride's father with his family priest (*purohit*) who makes the forehead-mark (*tilak*) on the bridegroom's forehead, and gets a rupee from the boy's father, who also gives a rupee to each of the family menials of the bride. The bride's father and his priest then retire, but the former soon returns with his relatives and greets the bridegroom's party, formally presenting the boy's father with a wrap and the boy's musician

(Dúm) with a rupee, while the boy's father gives a rupee to the girl's family Dúm, and a rupee to the headman of the village (*gwáreká haq*). The whole of the bridegroom's party then go to a house specially set apart for them (*janwása* or *dándalwása*) and the bridegroom and some of his party go with the bride's father to the bride's house, over the door of which has been placed a small wooden framework (*toran*) often ornamented with carved birds' heads, and strikes this framework with a twig of green *beri*. The actual marriage ceremony (*phere*) always takes place at night. The bridegroom and his party go to the bride's house and sit down opposite the bride's party, while between them squares are traced out on the ground. The bridegroom's father presents a pair of earrings, a nose ring and a pair of shoes for the bride, and when she has been washed and dressed she is brought out and seated on a stool (*pídá*) while the bridegroom is seated beside her on another. The family priests (*purohit*) of both parties light a sacred fire (*hom*) of *jandi* wood, and the bride's priest fastens the end of the bridegroom's wrap (*dopatta*) to the end of the girl's wrap (*orhna*) tying five *paise* into the knot. Thus tied, the boy goes round the fire three times followed by the girl, and then she goes round once followed by him. They then sit down each on the other's stool, and the priests fasten on wedding caps (*mor* and *sira*) on the heads of the bride and bridegroom and take them into the house. The bridegroom is given rice and sugar to eat, and after taking off the wedding-cap, he returns to the *janwása* leaving his wrap (*dopatta*) with the bride. The boy's priest gets a fee of Rs. 2 and the girl's priest Rs. 6 for their share in the ceremony. Next day the bridegroom's party are feasted morning and evening at the bride's house on rice, sugar and clarified butter. On the third day the bridegroom's father gives the bride (*bándhní*) the presents (*bari*) he had brought with him. A sleeping-cot (*palang*) is brought out and over it a coloured cloth is stretched, and on this the bride's family put 11 or 21, or 31, or 41 suits of clothes for the bride, and under it five brass vessels (*bhánde*), *viz.*, a tray (*thálí*,) two jugs of different shapes (*katora* and *lota*), a jar (*tokni*) and a ladle (*kurchhi*). The bridegroom is seated on the cot, and before both parties the bride's father puts some money in a tray and announces that he has given away his daughter with this dowry (*dán*) to the bridegroom's father, who takes the money and distributes some copper to the village menials, giving four annas to the Lohár, four annas to the Khátí, a rupee to the Nái, a rupee to the Purohit, and a rupee to the Mírásí, as well as Rs. 5 to the headman of the village, and a rupee to each of the faqírs of the place; and if the boy's father has kettle-drums (*dhol*) beaten, he pays a rupee to the Dúm of the village, 5 *take* to the drummer and Rs. 2 to the headman of the village as drum-fee. The bridegroom takes leave of his mother-in-law and the party go off with the bride on a cart or camel. When the bridegroom's party with the bride get back to their own village, they halt outside it until the girls of the village come out singing and take the bride in with them to her husband's house, where her mother-in-law receives her, and after waving (*wár pher*) water over her head takes her into the house.

The bridegroom's sister makes a pretence of stopping the doorway, and has to be appeased by a present of an ornament or a cow. When the bride gets inside the house, her mother-in-law and the wives of her husband's uncles each give her a rupee to show her face. The bridegroom's father then feasts the wedding-party on rice and sugar and dismisses them. Next day in a ceremony called *got kúndála* the women of the family all eat rice, sugar and ghí out of the same dish (*parát*) with the bride, and thus admit her into the family or clan (*got*). On the third day the bride and bridegroom are seated on opposite sides of a dish (*parát*) into which water and various articles are put, and the bride unfastens the strings on the wrist and ankle (*kangna*) of the bridegroom, while he does the same for her, and the bridegroom's brother's wife takes them and throws them into the water. Then the bride and bridegroom dip their hands into the dish and take out what they can find, and the brother's wife takes the articles and throws them into the water again. This game (*kágan dora khelna*) goes on for some time. Then the bride's brother takes her away home to her father's house again, with some presents such as a fine suit of clothes given the bride by her mother-in-law, and Rs. 2 and a suit of clothes to the barber's wife who came in attendance on the bride. She stays in her father's house until she grows up, and then goes to live with her husband after a separate ceremony called the *mukláwa*. If she was already grown-up at the time of the marriage, her husband sometimes accompanies her and her brother back to her father's house, and the *mukláwa* takes place at once; more generally it takes place after a delay of a year or an odd number of years. The bridegroom goes with his father or brother and family barber; and after a day or two's stay at the bride's house brings her away with him. With her, her father gives a spinning-wheel (*charkha*), a stool (*pída*), a sleeping-cot (*palang*), bedding (*saur sauriya*), some wraps (*khes*), metal vessels (*bhánde*), ornaments and sometimes camels or ponies.

Among the Sikh Jats and other Hindu tribes the customs at marriage are very much the same as among the Bágrí Játs. Among the Sikhs, when the bridegroom first goes to the bride's house, he strikes with a sword or hatchet (*takwa*) the *tatti*, which consists of four earthen jars (*thuti*) pierced and tied together and hung up by a string in the bride's court-yard. Among the Kumhárs, when the wedding procession is about to start for the bride's house, the bridegroom's sister seizes the rein of his camel and will not let him go until she has been appeased by the gift of a rupee; at the wedding ceremony some moist henna is placed in the girl's right hand which is clasped by the boy's right hand, and the girl leads the boy round the fire three times, and then he leads her round once. Among the Báwariyas, before the bridegroom's party start for the wedding, a basket (*khára*) is placed on the ground with four copper coins (*paise*) under it, and on this the bridegroom is seated and washed, and then his elder sister or his maternal aunt gives him a rupee and lifts him off the basket, and he crushes with his feet four earthen jars which have been placed there for the purpose, while his sister takes the copper coins which were under

the basket. When the wedding party starts the women of the family go outside the village with them to a *jand* tree, and there the bridegroom (*lára*) and a lad of the family (*shahbála*) go round the tree seven times, and then cut off a branch with an axe; the bridegroom's sister or maternal aunt gives the boys some coarse sugar to eat, and the bridegroom gives his sister a rupee. The bridegroom's sister goes with the party to the bride's house. At the wedding the bride and bridegroom are seated on two baskets, and after the bride's sister has tied the bridegroom's turban and the bride's sheet together, and the Bráhman has made nine images of gods and worshipped them, the bride and the bridegroom go round the baskets seven times. The bride's father formally hands over a dowry with his daughter, but is paid for it in money by the bridegroom's father who also pays him the price of the girl, which is usually Rs. 29. In this tribe the bride does not return to her father's house after the wedding, but remains with her husband. Among the Thoris when the bridegroom goes to the bride's door and touches the wooden frame (*toran*) the bride's mother comes out, and measures the bridegroom with her wrap (*orhná*), and puts some sugar in his mouth, and is given a rupee for this ceremony. At the wedding-ceremony, instead of the ordinary *hom*, the Thori Bráhman lights four wicks inside a cocoanut, and the bride and bridegroom walk round this. The bridegroom's father pays the bride's father a price for the bride, ordinarily Rs. 40. Among the Nats the wedding ceremony is performed by wrapping the bride in a blanket, and making her go round the bridegroom three times, while a Bráhman repeats some formulæ. The bride does not go back to her father's house after the wedding, and so there is no *mukláwa* proper, but a year after the wedding the bride's father sends a present of a donkey, which is understood to represent the *mukláwa*.

Among the Bágrí Játs, when a small child under seven years old dies, no particular ceremonies are performed. The body is taken outside the village and buried, not burnt; and the period of mourning lasts for only a few days. When an adult dies the relatives are called together, and the son or brother of the deceased washes the body and wraps it in the dead-clothes (*kafn*) consisting of a loin-cloth, turban and white sheet. A bier (*síḍí* or *arthi*) is then made of two long sticks and three short ones fastened like a ladder, and covered with a white cloth; on this the body is placed and a coloured wrap (*khes*) thrown over it. The bier is then carried out by the relatives and followed by the weeping women to the door of the house, while the men repeat the name of God (*Parmeshur* or *Rám Rám sat hai* = "God is true.") At first the body is carried head foremost, but when the procession gets outside the village, the bier is placed on the ground, and the son of the deceased or other near agnate who acts as chief mourner (*karn karne wála*) puts four balls (*pind*) of barley-flour on the ground round it, and sprinkles round it water from an earthen jar which he then breaks. Then the bier is again raised and carried, this time feet foremost, to the burning place, or sometimes the bearers simply change places without turning the corpse round. Arrived at the burning-place

they put the corpse on the pyre (*chitá*), and anoint the breast and head with clarified butter. The son then applies a light (*lámpá*) to the pyre, and they wait until the corpse is nearly consumed, when the son knocks a hole in the skull (*kapál*). When the fire has burned down, the funeral-party return to the village after bathing in the pond; and the barber (Náí) awaits them outside the village-gate (*phalsa*) with a vessel of water with which he sprinkles each man. The dead-clothes are buried with the corpse, but the clothes on the bier above and below the corpse are given to the sweeper (Chúhra), and musician (Mirásí.) For eleven days after the death all the relatives, male and female, of the deceased sleep on the ground; on the third day after the funeral, the bearers of the bier with the son of the deceased and a Bráhman go to gather the relics (*phúl chugná*) *i.e.*, the teeth and the nails of the hands and feet, which are placed in a small earthen urn (*kúlhariya*), and either sent at once to the Ganges or buried for the time until an opportunity of sending them occurs. They are then thrown into the river after some further ceremony has been performed, and some fees paid to the Bráhmans. If the family is rich they have the full funeral obsequies (*kiryá karm*) performed by Bráhmans, but ordinarily it is thought sufficient on the eleventh day (*ikádasha*) to give the old clothes of the deceased to the Acháraj Bráhman with some grain, a bed, a vessel, and some sugar. On the twelfth or thirteenth day, if the deceased was a married man, eleven jars are filled with water (only one for a bachelor,) and covered with clean cloth fastened on with raw thread; Bráhmans are fed and given presents (*dakshina*). If the deceased was a young man, the women of the family meet for three days, and mourn together, covering their faces and beating their breasts. If the relations of the wife of the deceased come to join in the mourning, they supply their own food, and do not, like the other mourners, partake of food supplied by the deceased's family. Only the near relatives mourn for an old man. Every month for a year a jar is filled with water, and given to a Bráhman who is formally feasted (*rasoí jamái játí hai*); and in the next *kanágat* (the first fifteen days of Asauj) a Bráhman is feasted on the day corresponding to the day of the month (*tith*) on which the deceased died.

Among the Sikh Jats when the bier is placed on the ground half-way to the burning-place, the wife or near female relatives of the deceased bow down to the corpse by touching the ground with their foreheads (*máthá tek kar*), and place on the ground some silver or copper coins which are the perquisite of the Náí. For three days after the death the men of the family sleep on the ground with the chief mourner in the village guest-house. Among the Kumhárs when a man is about to die, some *dáb* grass is spread on the ground, and he is lifted off his bed and placed on it, as it is considered unlucky to die on a bed. When the bier is being carried to the burning-place, four balls (*pind*) of bájra-flour with a copper coin in each are taken with it, one of which is left outside the village gate, one at the half-way place (*bichhla bása*), and the other two are burnt with the corpse. At the half-way place

water is poured on the ground by a man walking towards the corpse, and when he gets near the corpse he breaks the jar. On the way back from the funeral a green bough is torn off some tree, and each man steps on it. For eleven days after the death the son of the deceased goes every morning to the place where the body was burnt, and places on a three-legged stand an earthen vessel full of milk and water, which drops out through a hole made in the bottom of the vessel. Among the Báwariyas the cloth spread over the bier of a man is white, and over a woman's bier red. Among the Nats the bier is made of a screen of twigs covered with straw, and the body is burnt in the clothes it wore when alive; and the head of the corpse is shaved when it is laid out. Among the Chamárs the head of the son of the deceased is shaved. Among the Aroras a young child is not burnt, but thrown into the river or buried in a sitting position. When a man is about to die, a lighted lamp is placed near his head, and he salutes it with joined hands before he dies. This lamp is kept burning for ten days, and then put in a fresh earthen jar and set swimming on the river or pond, or sometimes it is thrown into the burning pyre.

The Bishnoís have many ceremonies similar to those of the Bágrí Játs, but several of their religious ceremonies are peculiar to themselves. On the 30th day after birth the mother and child are washed and bathed, and the Náí cuts off the child's hair. The mother then sits down in a clean place with the child, and her husband or his father sits opposite her with the priest (*sádh*) who lights a fire in an earthen vessel and puts clarified butter on it. The child's father takes a rupee in his hand and holds it over an earthen jar (*kalas*) full of water, until the priest has finished lighting up the fire (*hom*) and repeating his formulæ, when he drops the rupee into the vessel, and scatters some grain for the birds. The priest gives the father and mother each three handfuls of water and drops water three times into the child's mouth. This baptismal ceremony makes the child a Bishnoí, and purifies the mother. At the marriage ceremony, which takes place after dark, the bride and bridegroom are seated on two planks (*patra*) the bride being seated at the bridegroom's right hand, and the bride's family priest ties the clothes of the bride and bridegroom together, and lights up the sacred fire (*hom*) repeating some formulæ. When he has finished certain phrases he makes the bride and bridegroom change places, so that the bride sits on the bridegroom's left hand which is considered the wife's place. He then unlooses the knot and calls on the girl's relatives to give the dowry. When this has been done, a cup (*kalas*) of water is set down and the bride's father holds a rupee over it while the priest recites some formulæ and then drops it in. The priest then gives the bride's father, the bridegroom and the others present each three handfuls of water, and each salutes the cup as he goes away. The Bishnoís bury their dead instead of burning them. A woman's corpse is dressed in woollen clothes for the grave. The grave is dug by Bishnoís themselves, and the corpse is carried out on the hands of the bearers not on a bier. After the earth has been filled in over the corpse the handle of the spade is washed and grain

is scattered over the grave for the birds. Three days after the death a funeral feast (*káj*) is given to the neighbours. Sometimes this is followed by a greater feast to which all the brotherhood are invited ; such a feast lasts for three days and often costs a large sum of money, but sometimes the guests give subscriptions (*nauta*) towards the expense.

Among the Musalmáns the usual ceremonies on the occasion of a birth are as follows :—The mid-wife (*dái*) who is generally a Máchhin by caste is given a fixed fee, and the Mulláh is sent for from the mosque to utter the call to prayer (*báng* or *azán*) into the child's ear. Within ten days the child's hair is cut off by the barber, and when the mother and child are formally bathed some 21 days after the birth the women of the family are summoned together and feasted. If the child is a boy he is circumcised (*khutna*) at about the age of five before the assembled relatives by the family barber (Nái). At betrothal after exchanging messages through the Nái the boy's father and relatives go to the girl's house and go through certain ceremonies, the chief of which consists in the payment of money by the boy's father for the girl. Sometimes the girl's Nái formally presents a dish of sweetened milk to the boy's father and the men who have come with him, and they drink the milk and put the ornaments they have brought as presents into the vessel. At marriage many of the same ceremonies are performed as at the marriage of Hindus ; for instance, the bridegroom is anointed by the Nái in preparation for the marriage, and is seated on a basket to be bathed and jumps off it on to some earthen vessel which he smashes beneath his feet. When the wedding-party starts the women of the village go with them outside the village to some *jand* tree, where the bridegroom's mother or sister ties a string to a twig ; the bridegroom then goes seven times round the tree with a sword or knife in his hand, and finally cuts the twig off the tree ; it is carried back into the village in a tray by the women, while the wedding-party goes off to the girl's village. They are there stopped by the village Bhangi (sweeper) who shuts the village gate and will not let them in until they give him a rupee. When they get in, the girls of the village pretend to drive them back by beating them with twigs, but they force their way through to the bride's door, where the bride's Nái and Máchhin bring them *sharbat* to drink and the village cow-herd brings milk for the bridegroom only. When the time for the marriage arrives, the Mulláh is summoned from the mosque and performs the marriage ceremony (*nikáh*) as prescribed in the Muhammadan Law. After feasting and exchange of presents, the wedding party carry off the bride to the bridegroom's house, where the ceremonies of getting her to show her face, making her dip into a vessel of water with the bridegroom, and introducing her into the family by eating out of the same dish with her, are performed much as among Hindús. After three days her brother takes her back to her father's house where she remains until puberty, when her husband comes and takes her home to live with him. When a man dies he is washed and wrapped in a white winding-sheet (*kafn*) and the men of the

family assemble with the Mullâh from the mosque who recites the appropriate verses from the Qurán, and accompany the body to the grave where it is buried as prescribed by the Muhammadan religion. A period of mourning of forty days (*chahal*) is observed, and during this time the relatives of the deceased do not sleep on beds but on the ground. If the deceased have left a widow she does not wash or change her clothes for forty days after the death.

The first thing that strikes the observer of these domestic ceremonies is the astonishing number of elaborate formalities which are performed in all tribes and even in the poorest families on the occasion of domestic events, and especially in connection with marriage. For many of these formalities no reasonable origin can be assigned by the people themselves: they perform them merely because their fathers did before them, and yet wherever it is possible great care is taken to go through the most minute portions of these irksome and expensive ceremonies. Another characteristic of them is the number of persons required to take part in them and the duties assigned to each. Every minute ceremony must be performed by some one standing in a certain relation to the parties. Not only are the agnates of the bride and bridegroom required to take part in the wedding-ceremonies, but parts are assigned to the sister, and mother, the maternal aunt and the brother's wife; not only must the family priest and the family barber be present, but the potter, the musician, the sweeper and other menials of the family all take a share in the formalities. Another remarkable characteristic of the ceremonies is the amount of money and other valuables that exchanges hands and the number of customary fees and presents that have to be given, not only to the principal assistants at the ceremony, such as the priest and barber, but to all the menials and dependents, not only to the bride and bridegroom and their families collectively but to the sister, mother and other relatives individually; in fact, every little ceremony has to be paid for, every ceremonial duty carries with it the right of receiving a customary fee. In most cases these fees are actually paid and make marriages very costly, for when added together they amount to a large sum; but sometimes the money changes hands as a form only, and is not actually expended, but returns to the giver. Again it is noticeable that, notwithstanding the mercenary nature of most of the ceremonies connected with marriage, there are a number of customs which seem to support the theory that marriage formerly was effected by capture of the bride; for instance, the preparatory anointing of the bridegroom and his resting from work for some days before the marriage, his formally cutting a branch off a *jand* tree before starting for the bride's house, his sister's attempt to stop him by seizing his rein, the halting of the party outside the bride's village, the pretence of shutting the village gate in their faces and of driving them back with blows, and the ceremony in which the bridegroom strikes with an axe or twig a frame hung up at the girl's door. It is also very remarkable how similar in their general character are the ceremonies performed by all sorts of tribes, high-caste and low-caste,

Hindú, Sikh and Musalmán. It is true that there are certain ceremonies which appear to be peculiar to certain tribes, and that there are small differences in the particular ceremonies as practised by different tribes, but as a rule these differences are insignificant in comparison with the general resemblance. Probably some of the inferior tribes, whose origin is almost certainly quite different from that of the higher races, may have simply imitated the ceremonies of their masters, but even after making full allowance for possible imitation, there remains an extraordinary similarity in the elaborate and seemingly meaningless ceremonies so carefully performed. It is also extraordinary how little difference a change of religion makes in the character of the ceremonies; of course some of them have been supplanted by new forms necessitated by the essential doctrines of the religion; thus a Bishnoí child must be baptised, a Musalmán boy must be circumcised; the Musalmán performs the actual wedding contract by the Muhammadan form of *nikáh* instead of the circumambulation round the sacred fire; the Hindu burns his dead while the Musalmán and the Bishnoi buries his dead; but all of them have besides these different ceremonies, a number of other elaborate formalities performed with almost equal care, and having much the same character among the followers of all religions. It may also be noticed that only some of the ceremonies can be called religious, and require the attendance of ministers of religion; the Hindu Bráhman must name the child, must light the sacred fire and perform the marriage ceremony; the Bishnoi Sádh must baptise the child; the Musalmán mosque-attendant must perform the Nikáh and read the Qurán at the funeral; but there are many elaborate ceremonies which require the presence of no minister of religion, and are performed by the relatives themselves with the aid of their servants and dependants; and may therefore be considered to be tribal or family ceremonies as distinguished from religious formalities.

Tribal Custom.

120. As a Code of Tribal Custom in Sirsá has been published separately I need not here do more than give a very brief account of the prevalent customs. I have already described the system of agnatic relationship and of tribe, caste and clan on which society is organised. The whole body of custom which regulates the rights of individuals and of families is founded on this system. A man must marry within his caste, and sometimes within a certain section of his caste, but, except where Muhammadan law has so far overridden custom as to make marriage of cousins lawful, he must not marry in his own agnatic group (*got*), for all females of his own generation related to him through agnates only are considered to be his sisters. He must not marry any one nearly related to him through his mother; some tribes extend the prohibition still further, and forbid a man to marry in his mother's clan or village, or even in his grandmother's clan. A girl is a valuable piece of property, and betrothal is a contract by which the girl's family bind themselves, often for a money consideration, to transfer the ownership of the girl to the boy's family on her reaching a marriageable age.

The ceremony of marriage actually transfers the ownership of the girl from her agnates to those of the boy. The actual possession is transferred afterwards at the *mukláwa*; and thenceforth she belongs to her husband's agnates. If she on her husband's death marries his brother no formal transfer is required, as she already belongs to the family. If the husband's agnates give the widow in marriage to an outsider, she is simply sold without any formal ceremony. The father of a family has full control over the whole family estate during his life-time, but he cannot deprive the sons of their right to share the immoveable property equally after his death. There is no custom of primogeniture, except in the succession to the office of headman of the village, and it is only rarely that the sons divide the land according to the number of mothers. Almost always the sons all share alike. If a man die without sons leaving a widow, she is entitled to remain in possession of his whole estate until her death or remarriage, when it reverts to his agnates. Daughters have no right to inherit; they are only entitled to be suitably maintained and suitably married; on marriage they enter into the clan of the husband and have no further claim on their own families. Only agnates and the widows of sonless agnates have the right to inherit. Where there are several agnates of the same class they share equally, and no heir excludes the agnatic heirs or the sonless widow of another heir of the same class. Wills are quite unknown, and a proprietor cannot interfere with the distribution of his property after his death. He has almost full power to distribute the moveable property as he pleases in his lifetime, but he cannot alienate the immoveable property from the agnates without their consent. If he has no son, he may adopt an agnate nephew who then succeeds to him as a son; and if he dies without sons, his widow may adopt one of his agnate nephews who succeeds to the whole estate. The fundamental principles of the whole body of tribal custom are that a man must marry in his own caste or tribe, but he must not marry an agnate; and that the land must not be alienated from the agnates.

Except in social matters, the tribal organisation is not very strong. Often when any caste question, especially some question connected with marriage, requires to be decided, the parties interested summon a *panchâyat* of the tribe, which is attended by tribesmen from the neighbouring villages, but no particular person or family has a special right to be present. There are no definite rules as to the persons who are to attend the *panchâyat*, or as to the mode in which the business before it is to be discussed and decided. Everything is vague and indefinite. But the *panchâyat*, guided generally by the opinions of the older and more respectable tribesmen present, usually comes to a decision which is acquiesced in by all. The only way in which a *panchâyat* can enforce its decision is to excommunicate a disobedient tribesman (*huqqa pání band karná*) refusing to eat, drink or smoke with him or to intermarry with his family, until he obeys the order of the *panchâyat* and pays the penalty they impose. The power of the *panchâyat* is not strong, and it is a common saying that, now that such

disputes can be taken into the Civil Court, few think of obeying the orders of a *panchâyat*, and no doubt our law-courts have much weakened the power and importance of the institution. In Panjábí a *panchâyat* is called *parah*, and the word is applied not only to an assembly of leading men of the same tribe, but also to a gathering of men of different tribes to discuss some question of common local interest. Among the holy tribes of the Satlaj, the Bodlas, Chishtis and Lakheke Bhattís, there is another kind of gathering called *meld*, a sort of "Cursing Committee," employed when any outsider has injured a member of the tribe. Two or three of the holy clan go to the offender and, if he refuses redress, they invoke curses on him. As they still have a reputation for sanctity this weapon often stands them in good stead. Few of the tribes have any ruling family to which they pay especial regard. The Wattus and Joiyas tell of old Nawábs belonging to their clans, and the Bhattís have a more recent recollection of the Nawáb of Rániá and showed it by voting for his representative as their zaildár. The Siddhu Barárs, especially the Mahárájke branch, are proud of their connection with the Mahárája of Pattiála and other ruling chiefs, but here, as in other new countries, each colonist came depending chiefly on his own exertions to make his way and earn his livelihood ; and there is consequently more independence and less inequality of rank and position than in most older-settled countries. In short, though the family system of agnatic relationship is very strong, the tribal organisation is weak.

The villages.

121. In the Dry Tract a village was always founded at the edge of a natural hollow where the drainage water from the neighbouring high land collected in the rainy season. The hollow was deepened that it might hold more water and the clay dug out of it was used to build huts for the colonists. Sometimes the villagers are content to use unshapen clods *(dhím)* of earth dug out of the pond when the water dries up, but more often the moist clay is dug out and shaped into rough little bricks, which are dried in the sun. The huts are built round a courtyard or open space and the whole surrounded by a ditch or hedge of thorns. As cultivation and prosperity develope the huts are gradually enlarged and made into houses with flat roofs, the clay to build and repair them being still taken annually from the bottom of the pond ; new colonists settle and new courtyards are made, separated by lanes from the older enclosures, and thus by degrees the village grows until it comes to consist of a number of separate enclosures or courtyards, each with its separate entrance and its separate set of houses, usually inhabited by families related to each other; but until the village attains a considerable size it is ordinarily still surrounded by a deep ditch or a hedge of thorns, and has only one entrance (*phalsa*), which is closed by a rude gate at night as a protection against thieves. This is the ordinary type of Bágrí village in the Dry Country. Some of the dwellings are simply the rude round thatched hovels I have already described ; some are larger and more comfortable, but still built of sun-dried bricks and roofed with thatch ; but ordinarily there are one or two houses in the village belonging to

the richer peasants of a more pretentious character, high buildings with a flat roof sometimes of two stories and having a lofty gateway of red brick. Outside the village may generally be seen the hovels of a few families of the unclean castes, such as Chamárs or Chúhras, or possibly a few recent Kumhár or Thori settlers living under temporary shelters of straw, or an encampment of wandering Ods or Sánsis with their grass screens pitched on the village common. The Musalmán villages in the Dry Tract are similar to those of the Bágrís, except that they are generally more straggly and dirtier, and that the hedge and ditch round the village are not kept in such good repair; nor do they affect the round hovel so popular among the poorer Bágrís. The Sikh villages again are ordinarily neater and cleaner, more regular and more comfortable than the Bágrí villages, though some of the best Bágrí villages are very like those of the Sikhs. In an ordinary Sikh village most of the houses are of the best type of Bágrí house, oblong buildings of sun-dried clay with lofty flat roofs, and high doorways. Their lanes are often narrow, but generally kept clean. Some of the Musalmán villages on the Satlaj consist only of huts made of screens of interwoven twigs, but the better villages have a number of flat-roofed *kachcha* houses like those of the Sikhs, only not so high. The best type of village in the district is to be found on the Ghaggar, where several of the Ráins' villages consist chiefly of neat substantial houses of red burnt bricks, sometimes got out of the old mounds in the neighbourhood. Except among the Sikh Jats, few villages have developed so far as to have a guest-house (*hathái* or *chaupál*), and there is hardly in the whole district a good *pakka* guest-house, such as is often the pride of older villages further east. But often in a Musalmán village may be seen the mosque (*masít*) generally hardly to be distinguished from other buildings except by the three mud pinnacles on its roof, but sometimes a pretentious building of brick covered over with plaster whose high minarets and white domes are conspicuous from afar. And a Hindu village has often a small Thákurdwára or temple, but this is rarely more than an ordinary *kachcha* building with a flag waving over it. Outside the village or in an open space within it may sometimes be seen some of the gigantic beehive-shaped receptacles for grain (*burj*) already described. Many villages stand out bare and treeless above the prairie, but most of them have a few trees about them, making a pleasant green patch on the monotonous brown. There are almost always some *jand* trees about the pond or a small jungle of *kíkar*, *van* or *beri*—sometimes a few *pípal* trees in the courtyards of the village, or a large *pípal* or *bar* tree above the village well. Some of the villages in the Dry Tract have now a small grove of young trees, often not more than ten or twelve, which are carefully watered by the villagers or the Sádh that lives near the village-pond, and may form the nucleus of a larger grove.

The water-supply.

122. As the village grows its pond (*johar*, *tobá*, *chhappar*) gradually deepens; year by year the rain washes down some of the mud of which the houses are built,

and the clay to repair them and plaster their walls is got out of the bottom of the village pond. Thus the village-site gradually rises above the plain until in a comparatively short number of years it is considerably above the general level; and no doubt this is the chief cause of the origin of the high mounds which mark the sites of old villages in the Sotar valley. As the comfort of the village depends upon its pond and the amount of water it will hold, various expedients are resorted to in order to get it deepened. Sometimes each household supplies a man in turn every morning, whose duty it is to dig clay from the bottom of the pond and put it into baskets, and each house-wife, before she takes away her supply of water for the day, must first carry out two basket-loads of earth and throw them on the bank some distance off. Or sometimes the village combines and works for a time at deepening the pond, or subscribes to pay Ods or other labourers to enlarge it. Care must be taken however not to get below the richer upper stratum into a layer of sand which will let the water escape. While the water of the pond lasts it is used for all purposes by the people. They bathe and wash in it, their cattle wallow in it and often void excrement in it when drinking; and still, as a rule, especially in the Bágrí villages, the villagers are content to use its water for drinking and cooking purposes. In a few villages, chiefly of Sikhs and Bishnois, there are two ponds, one of them kept for the cattle and for washing, while the water of the other is used for drinking and cooking only. When the water of the pond dries up, as it does in almost every pond before the hot weather is far advanced, the villagers have to take to wells. For instance in the 157 villages of tahsíl Dabwálí there are 388 ponds of some size, besides small ponds scattered about the fields for the use of the peasants and their cattle when out at work. Of these only seven ponds ordinarily retain water all the year round, 75 have usually some water for nine months in the year, and 137 for about six months only. As a rule the water of wells all over the Dry Tract is originally so brackish as to be undrinkable, but it varies in different places, in some being quite salt (*shor*), and in others only brackish (*kaurá*), and it is found that after water has stood in the village-pond for a number of years, there is a stratum of drinkable water in wells dug at the margin of the pond. At first the villagers dig only *kachcha* wells which are made by simply excavating a hole at the edge of the pond wide enough for a man to sit in. As the digging goes on the earth is pulled up in a basket, and where the sand threatens to fall in the sides are propped up with twigs and branches. As the water-level is often more than a hundred feet below the surface, this is a work of great labour, and even of danger, and it is not uncommon for a man to die in the well probably for want of fresh air, or to be buried alive by the sand falling in on him from above. When the rains come the *kachcha* well falls in, and often the water of the pond is intentionally poured into it to sweeten the stratum of water below for next year, and thus year after year a new *kachcha* well has to be dug, and the stratum of water below the pond gets less brackish. Sometimes only the first few bucket-fuls of water drawn in the morning are drinkable, *i.e.*, only

the upper stratum (*tár ká páni*), and hence one often sees four or five *kachcha* wells on one pond. Generally speaking it is necessary to be careful not to excavate the well too deep and so get below the sweet stratum into a brackish stratum of water. When the village has developed sufficiently to bear the expense, the villagers subscribe and sink a *pakka* well with a cylinder of brick on the edge of the pond, generally leaving a hole (*mori* or *bamba*) in the side of the cylinder, so that the rainwater collected in the pond may be let into the well every year to keep the well-water sweet. This is called *bharwa ká páni*. Usually at first the water remains sweet only during the cold-weather months (*siyál siyál mitthá rahndá*), and as the stratum of rainwater which had poured into the well during the previous rainy season becomes exhausted, the water of the well gets more and more brackish (*kaurá* or *khára*) until it is hardly drinkable, or, as the peasants say, it becomes poison (*bish*) so that if a bird drinks its wings drop off and it falls down dead! But when the process has been kept up for a number of years, the stratum of water below gets extensive enough to keep the water sweet (*mitthá*) all the year round until the next rainy season; such wells are however always liable to get brackish in seasons of drought, or when the supply of rain water is not kept up. Some wells again seem to be always sweet—so sweet that their water is compared to milk (*duddh*). The people tell that long ago, in time of drought, a headman went to a *faqír* to beg him to pray for rain and agreed to give him his daughter in marriage if the prayer was successful. The rain came, but the headman would not fulfil his promise, and the *faqír* cursed the country and turned the whole well-water brackish; but on the entreaties of the people he so far relented as to declare that so long as water was given to all comers free, it would remain sweet; and it is said that in one village the well-water turned brackish when the villagers imposed a rate on outsiders using the well, and sweet again when the rate was abolished. In Síto they say that the water, formerly sweet, has been brackish ever since a man died in the well. In several villages the water is said to have become sweet at the prayer of a *faqír*, for instance in Phaggu the water became sweet at the prayer of a *guru*, on condition of the free use of the water being allowed to everybody. There is a class of men called sniffers (*súngá*) generally holy *faqírs* who are believed to be able to smell (*súngná*) sweet water below ground, and several wells have been shown me where it is said such a man sniffed out sweet water, while *kachcha* wells formerly tried in the neighbourhood had given only brackish water. It costs a large sum of money, sometimes Rs. 1,500 or more, besides labour, to make a well where the spring-level is so deep, and a village often makes one by instalments. In a good year it will make an effort and burn the necessary bricks, it will then wait for another good year before engaging the mason (*ráj*) to come and build the cylinder, and even then perhaps it will be able to build and sink only half the well, waiting for another good year before finishing it, and perhaps for another before making a platform with drinking-troughs round its mouth

In some villages there are two *pakka* wells, either because one was not enough for the wants of the village or because the Hindus have one and the Musalmáns another, or in some instances because two *pattis* have quarrelled. In one village I found the well had four separate runs for the water to be used by Hindus, Musalmáns, Chamárs and Chúhras respectively. It requires considerable labour to draw water from such deep wells, and often the villagers prefer to drink the filthy water of the pond rather than draw sweet clean water from the well close by; but when the pond dries up, the villagers take turns in drawing water by means of their bullocks, or more rarely camels or buffaloes, day by day for the cattle of the village, and sometimes a long string of women, who have come to get water for household purposes, may be seen joining to drag the long rope which brings up the bucket out of the well. When the pond has dried up and the water of the well is undrinkable, the villagers have sometimes to go long distances to neighbouring villages to get water for themselves and their cattle, and at times in the hot weather numbers of men and women may be seen bringing jars of water on their heads from neighbouring villages. Sometimes camels are used to carry jars of water, or they are placed on a rude frame which is dragged along the ground by bullocks. Even now-a-days some villagers have to go as much as five miles daily for drinking-water in the hot weather, and many have to go two or three miles to the nearest well of sweet water. Some owners of such wells allow all comers to help themselves free of charge; others, notwithstanding the curse above alluded to, charge all strangers a fee on each animal allowed to drink at their pond or well, generally something like eight annas a buffalo and four annas a cow for the season; or sometimes the village is charged a lump sum for the permission to dig a *kachcha* well at the edge of its neighbour's pond. In the early days of colonisation the trouble of getting drinkable water must have been very great, and the people often tell of the brackish water they have had to drink as one of the greatest hardships they have endured when founding villages in the desert prairie. There is now much less trouble of this sort than there formerly was, but still of the 650 villages in the district there are 117 which have no well at all and 106 in which the well-water is so salt as to be quite undrinkable. In 1838 Captain Thoresby wrote that there were not ten wells in the whole Rohi tract from which wholesome water could be got. At last Settlement (1861-63) there were in the Rohi Chak 81 *pakka* wells and 350 *kachcha* wells; there are now 177 *pakka* wells and 303 *kachcha*. As each *pakka* well in this tract costs at least Rs. 1,000, this increase of wells represents an expenditure of nearly a lakh of rupees, or considerably over a year's land-revenue of the Chak. There are still however in the Rohi 79 villages (or one in every five) with no well at all. In the Bágar Chak, south of the Ghaggar, there were at last Settlement 11 *pakka* and 176 *kachcha* wells; now there are 29 *pakka* and 114 *kachcha*. So that here too a sum equal to about a year's revenue has been spent in making wells; but one village in every six has still no well. In the Utár

Chak below the Danda water is near the surface and only two villages have no well; and while at last Settlement there were only 23 *pakka* wells there are now 86; the increase represents about two years' revenue. In the valleys of the Ghaggar and Satlaj water is generally near the surface and sweet, and there is no trouble about drinking-water; indeed many wells, especially on the Satlaj, are used for irrigation. In the Náli Chak on the Ghaggar, some of the *pakka* wells are old ones re-opened and repaired; at last Settlement there were only 139 *pakka* wells, and now there are 203; the increase represents about half a year's revenue. In the pargana Wattu part of Chak Hitár on the Satlaj there were only two *pakka* wells in 1844; at last Settlement in the whole Chak there were 122 *pakka* and 156 *kachcha* wells, and now there are 217 *pakka* and 69 *kachcha* wells; and the increase of *pakka* wells represents an expenditure of over a year's revenue. In the whole district the number of *pakka* wells has doubled since last Settlement, and the expenditure on the 350 *pakka* wells built in the interval must considerably exceed a year's revenue of the district. There are still in the whole district 201 villages which have *kachcha* wells only, besides the 117 which have no well at all, so that little more than half the villages have *pakka* wells.

The village menials and village organisation.

123. Notwithstanding the recent date of the founding of most villages in the Sirsá district, and the different quarters from which the individual inhabitants of each village gathered together, the organisation of the village community is, as a rule, very similar to that of older villages farther east. It cannot be fully explained until I have discussed the growth of rights in land, but I may here describe the system of village menials, which forms such an important part of the machinery of village life. The peasant himself does most of the work of agriculture proper, attends to his cattle, ploughs his field, sows his grain, watches it, reaps it, winnows it and takes it to market; and his wife does the ordinary work of the household, brings water from the well, cooks the food for the family, washes their clothes, and sweeps her house. But work requiring special skill, such as iron-work, wood-work, or leather-work, weaving and dyeing; or work which is performed for the whole village community, such as running messages, fetching wood and grass for travellers, putting up tents, and sweeping the streets of the village, is performed by men of the caste whose special occupation it is and usually paid for in kind by customary fees for the service generally, and not by the job. Many cultivators secure the services of the village menials in ordinary agricultural operations, by giving them a fixed amount of grain each harvest, and in the previous description of the numerous domestic ceremonies it will have been noticed how often the Bráhman, Náí, Mirási and other ministers to the wants of the peasants receive presents or fees in money or in kind, the amount and nature of which is fixed by custom. The classes of village menials or servants who are thus paid are as follows:—

The Lohár or blacksmith does all the ordinary iron-work required by the peasant. He does not supply the iron, which the peasant

himself purchases, but he makes and mends all the iron implements. He receives at harvest one ser per maund of the total produce, sometimes limited to 25 ser per plough. On the Satlaj he gets 1½ maund per well, and on land not irrigated from wells 4 *tope* (measures) per plough.

The Tarkhán or Khátí, *i.e.*, the carpenter, makes and mends all ordinary wooden implements and furniture, but not the cart or Persian wheel. He does not supply the wood, but works it up only. He is ordinarily given at harvest one ser per maund, or on the Satlaj, three maunds per well or 4 *tope* per plough.

The Kumhár or potter makes the earthen jars and vessels for household use, and the small earthen pots for the Persian wheel. He also brings in the grain from the field to the village on his donkeys (*dhuláí* or *bhára.*) His due is a ser per maund, or on the Satlaj, three maunds per well, or 1½ *tope* per plough for potter's work, and 4 *tope* per 12 maunds or 7½ sers per *máni* for carrying the grain.

The Chamár or worker in leather does the leather-work, makes and mends the shoes of the household, and all leather straps: he also helps in the field and does the *begár* work of the village, such as fetching grass, putting up tents, carrying burdens, &c. In return for this the Chamárs get the skin and flesh of cloven-footed animals that die in the village, while those of the camel and horse go to the Chúhras. He also gets half a maund per plough, or sometimes if he does no field-work and takes payment for new shoes, he gets only five or ten sers per plough. A similar allowance is given to the Mochí who takes the Chamár's place as leather-worker in the Musalmán villages on the Satlaj.

The Chúhra or sweeper cleans the streets and sometimes the houses, and does all the dirty work of the village. He also runs messages and sometimes does the *begár* work in place of the Chamárs, or helps in the field, where his special occupation is winnowing the grain. He gets the skins and flesh of dead camels and horses, and at harvest takes a ser per maund or sometimes 4 *tope* per plough for general service, and if he winnows the grain he gets a ser per maund or ten ser per *máni* for this work.

The Dharwái or Banya, who weighs the grain and whose services are especially valuable where rent is taken in kind and the grain has thus to be weighed out and distributed between the menials, the tenant, and the landlord, gets an allowance varying from a quarter of a ser per maund, or 2½ ser per threshing-floor, or one *paropi* per maund to one ser or even 1¼ ser per maund.

The Muhassil or Thápí, the landlord's watchman, who attends on behalf of the landlord when the grain is winnowed and stamps the heap of grain with a wooden stamp on clay so that it may not be tampered with until division, and who also collects the landlord's share of the produce, gets one *topa* per threshing-floor or five sers per plough, or sometimes as much as six sers per 12 maunds.

In Hindu villages the Bráhman, and in Sikh villages the Guru, gets ten sers per plough for religious services, besides the customary fees

given on all occasions of birth, marriage and death. Similarly in Musalmán villages the Qází, Mulláh, or Masítwála gets five sers per plough, in return for which, among other services, he blesses the heap of grain after it is winnowed and before it is divided. Sometimes this blessing is given by the *faqír* or professional religious mendicant who in that case sometimes gets five sers per plough.

The Máchhí or baker who parches the grain and cooks the bread of the family, besides paying himself by retaining some of the grain or cakes brought him gets ten sers of grain per plough at harvest. And the Saqqa or water-carrier who on occasions helps in bringing water from the well for family-use, gets five sers per plough.

The Shikárí or hunter who kills the birds and animals which prey on the crops, sometimes gets five sers per plough. The Mirásí or musician who supplies the music and poetry required on festive occasions is given 15 sers per plough. The Biráhi or drummer who beats the drum in a Ráín village when the rice-embankments are in danger from a flood to call the people together to protect them, gets five sers per plough at harvest. And the *deredar* or fire-carrier whose business it is to see that the *huqqas* are always full and alight, sometimes gets five sers per plough for this service.

These allowances are not all paid in any one village; and in many parts of the district, especially in villages where rent is not paid in kind but in cash, such customary allowances are almost unknown, and the services of the village artisans are paid for commonly in cash by the job. There is no doubt that in this district owing to its recent colonisation and the abundance of land, the position of the lower classes is often very independent as compared with the older-settled and more thickly-populated districts farther east; here they often have land of their own held by them as tenants with rights of occupancy, and having their own houses, crops and cattle to look after, and the produce of their own fields to support them, they are comparatively independent of the higher classes and will work for them only by bargain and for a money wage, instead of doing customary work for them as a matter of course in return for a customary share of the produce at harvest; and I have often had complaints addressed to me by the peasants complaining that they could not get their menials to perform their customary duties. This state of things weakens the village organisation and makes it more difficult for the village as a body to get work done. But it must not be thought that, although the village system is less complete than it is in the older villages, it has been altogether superseded. On the contrary, it is astonishing how a village, founded only 40 or 50 years ago, and composed often of a haphazard congeries of individuals gathered from all quarters and having little previous connection, has grown together into an organic body of very much the same type as an archaic village community (say among the Játs of Rohtak or Karnál) with cultivators, ministers and dependants of all sorts each occupying his customary place and performing his customary duties as a member of the organism. Everywhere

instances may be seen of the ability of the village to unite for a common object, *e.g.*, the Ráíns on the Ghaggar unite to dig and clean out their water-courses and turn out together on emergency to protect their rice-embankments from high floods: the villagers in the Dry Tract unite to deepen their pond, sometimes by making each household and each housewife help in turn as already explained, sometimes by levying a regular subscription per house, or per adult male (*pagri*), or per male young or old (*tagri*), or per head of cattle; they combine to dig their *kachcha* wells, and to work them for the village-cattle, and often a large number of families combine to make a *pakka* well costing much labour and a large sum of money; the whole village sometimes unites to dig the village-ditch, to repair the village-hedge, or to put on a new gate on the entrance to the village; and lately on the Satlaj, a large number of villages combined, under official direction, to dig a long inundation-canal. It is often difficult however for a village or a number of villages to work together as a body. The social censure which is the only penalty for the laziness or indifference of individual members standing in the way of the common good, is often not sufficient to compel them to combine, and the majority will not act when they see that the lazy minority will share in the benefit of the common action without sharing in the preliminary labour and expense.

Labourers and Wages.

124. While much of the work not done by the peasants themselves is done by village-menials performing duties determined by custom and receiving customary dues, it is not uncommon to find men employed on contract as simple labourers or paid in cash for the work they do. For instance, a peasant takes one or two labourers into partnership (*síri*) for the cultivation of the land held in his own hands, supplies the seed and cattle and if necessary advances food to the labourers, and at harvest gives them a share of the produce deducting the food advanced. The shares are generally fixed according to the number of lives (*jí*), a bullock getting as much as a man. For instance, I found two proprietors who had five *síri* labourers working their six ploughs with them, two oxen to each plough; the gross produce was divided into $2+5+12=19$ shares, of which the proprietors with their oxen took $2+12=14$ nineteenths and the labourers $\frac{1}{19}$ each. Sometimes where the proprietor supplies the food (*roti*), he takes a share for that. For instance I found 4 labourers working 4 ploughs with 8 oxen and getting their food from the proprietor, who did not work himself. The crop was divided into $4+8+1=13$ shares, of which each labourer got one share, and the proprietor took eight for the oxen and one for the food. Sometimes a labourer is hired for so much a month all the year round *e.g.*, I found one man getting Rs. 7 a month for farm labour, and Sikh Mairas told me they got Rs. 4 or Rs. 6 per household every six months for carrying water. At harvest time owing to the great extent of the crops and the scantiness of the population, wages generally rise very high, often to 5 annas a man for a day, or 3 annas or 4 annas with food, which generally consists of a ser of grain per day to

each adult; and wandering bands of labourers, such as Thoris, Ods or Mens go about from village to village while the harvest lasts. Wages are apt however to fluctuate generally with the fluctuations of the harvests and of prices. In times of plenty, or after an epidemic of fever, labourers are too few for the demand and wages rise high. When the harvests are bad, work is difficult to get and food is dear; and labourers are ready to work for very little. Thus in the drought of 1837-38 able-bodied men were satisfied with 1 anna a day, and in the scarcity of 1877-78 wages of ordinary labourers fell from 3 annas to 1 anna a day, and artisans who used to get 5 annas were glad to take 4¼ annas. The condition of labourers of all kinds thus goes up and down with the fluctuations of the harvest, but on the whole work is plenty, wages high and food cheap, and the labourers are generally better off in this district than in most others.

Occupations.

125. The proportion of males over 15 years of age engaged in agriculture is larger in Sirsá than in any other district of the Panjáb; for Sirsá the proportion is 66 per cent., while for the Province it is only 55. This is of course due to the recent colonisation of the district and the manner in which the population is scattered about in villages instead of being gathered in large towns. Few industries have yet had time to develope, and agriculture is the main support of even a larger proportion of the population than the figures show; for land is so plentiful and other means of livelihood afford support to so few that many men of castes whose hereditary occupation is distinct from agriculture though connected with it, such as Kumhárs, Khátís, Lohárs, Chamárs, supplement their caste occupation by engaging in agriculture sometimes as assistant labourers only, but more often by taking land separately as tenants on a rent in cash or kind, and cultivating it independently with their own stock like ordinary peasants. Agriculture is the most respectable occupation ordinarily open to a Sirsá artisan or menial, and when a man of these menial classes is able to support himself by agriculture alone he gives up his hereditary caste occupation, and endeavours to forget it and to ignore his connection with his caste brethren who still pursue the caste occupation. This feeling may be seen among the Kumhárs, the Khátís, the Báwariyas and almost all other inferior tribes. The number of persons who still follow their caste occupation but supplement it by agriculture is also large, and the proportion of the population of the district who do not engage in any way in agriculture proper is exceedingly small. Moreover, the manufactures carried on by the artisans and menials are the simple trades by which the produce of the village is prepared to suit the simple wants of the agricultural population, and their customers are in each case a very small number of peasants whose purchases and means of paying for articles supplied cease so soon as their harvests fail. There is no outside market for articles manufactured in the district, and thus the artisans and menials are dependent on the harvests almost as directly as the peasants themselves. Land however is still so plentiful, and the people of all classes are so ac-

customed to provide against bad seasons, that the artisans, like the peasants, are generally better off in this district than in many other parts of the Panjáb.

While it is the case that many belonging to artisan castes have more or less abandoned their hereditary occupation and taken to agriculture, and that some tribes, such as the Ját, Rájput and Ráin, are wholly engaged in agriculture and pásturage, it is also true that special occupations are confined to special castes almost as much as in older parts of the country. Indeed in many cases caste and occupation are almost synonymous terms. Thus the carpenters and men engaged in working in wood are almost all of the Khátí caste. The ironsmiths belong to the Lohár caste. The shoemakers and workers in leather are in Musalmán villages generally Mochís, and in Hindú and Sikh villages generally Chamárs. The tanning is done by men of the Raigar and Khatík castes. The weaving of coarse cotton cloth is done by Páolís or Juláhás in the Musalmán villages and by Chamárs in the Hindu villages. The earthen vessels are made by Kumhárs. Oil-making and cotton-scutching are done by Telís, and the butchers also generally belong to this caste. The cloth-dyers and stampers belong to the Chhípí caste. There are few cases of a man's having given up the hereditary occupation of his caste for any other occupation save agriculture, and many of the artisan-castes engaged in agriculture still keep up some knowledge of their caste-occupation, and would turn to it in preference to any other if deprived of their land.

The number of persons in service is small and consists chiefly of the servants of Government in the various departments. Few recruits are got in Sirsá for the army. Many of the population, especially the Sikh Jats, would make excellent soldiers; but land is too plentiful and agriculture too prosperous for the peasantry to feel much inclination to take service.

Trade and carriage.

126. A considerable proportion of the trade within the district is carried on by a species of barter, without the aid of coin. I have already described the mode of paying for the services of the village menials in grain. It is not uncommon for neighbours to borrow so much grain from each other to be repaid in kind. Many of the wandering tribes take payment for their labour or for the articles they make in grain instead of in money; and a regular system of sale by barter may be seen when the vegetable seller (Kunjra) from the Ghaggar or Satlaj brings his carrots, radishes, pepper or other vegetables into the villages of the Dry Tract. He squats in the village square, and the housewives come each with her lapful of grain to exchange for the vegetables which are to give a relish to the evening meal. For instance in one Rohi village I saw two Kunjras from Hissár who had brought three bullock-loads of red pepper and were exchanging it with the villagers for double its weight of *bájra*, weighing one against the other in their scales. On another occasion I saw a Kumhár exchanging carrots for an equal weight of barley. I believe however that payment in cash, both for services rendered and

for articles sold, is much more the rule in Sirsá than in districts farther east. Not only does the peasant who takes his bullock to the fair, or sells his cow to the cattle-dealer who has come to the village, take payment in cash, but it is common here for the Sikh Jat to take his barley and gram or the Bágrí Ját his *bájra* or wool to the market-town himself and there sell it for cash down, instead of simply making it over to his Banya to be credited in his books. A good deal of trade is also done by small bodies of peasants who come with their camels from Bíkáner and Hissár and purchase grain for ready money from the peasants in the villages. All the larger operations of trade, however, and the supply of articles not actually produced in the district, such as salt, sugar, iron, and English cloth, and the distribution of flour, oil, pulse, *ghí* and other ordinary articles to persons who do not directly share in their production, are as usual in the hands of the trading classes,—in the south and east of the district the Banyas, and in the north and west the Aroras. Almost all banking transactions are in their hands, but the Sunárs sometimes engage in this branch of commerce. About 5 per cent. of the males over fifteen years of age are returned as engaged in commercial pursuits, and more than half of these are in the towns. A considerable number of villages have no shopkeeper, and it is an era in the development of a village when a Banya or Arora establishes his shop (*hát* or *hattí*) in it for the sale of flour, *ghí*, spices, cloth, &c. The position of the village Banya is much inferior in Sirsá to the place he holds in older districts such as Rohtak and Gurgáon. This is specially the case in the Rohi tract. The peasants, both owners and tenants, are many of them so well off that they seldom have a balance against them at the Banya's at harvest time, and are thus so independent that they store up large quantities of grain and wait for a favourable market, keeping themselves informed of the ruling prices at Sirsá and Fázilká, and when they see a good chance, convey their grain by cart or camel to the wholesale dealer at one or other of these places, and obtain from him there and then the fair market value in hard cash. And often, in the seasons when the field-work is light, peasants who have carriage but no grain, besides conveying the grain of Banyas and others at rates of hire which fluctuate with the demand, themselves watch the market and purchase grain in or near their villages to carry for sale to Sirsá or Fázilká, such transactions being generally cash transactions. Contrast this with the state of things in many older districts, such as Gurgáon, where owing to the poverty or improvidence of the people, almost all the grain in the country is the property of the Banyas before it leaves the field, and is allowed for by them in the accounts of the peasants at exceedingly low prices.

Besides the Biloch camel-owners and a few others who devote themselves chiefly to the carrying trade, large numbers of Sikh Jats and Ráins with their waggons drawn by fine bullocks, and of Bágrí Játs with their camels, employ themselves in the months of December and January after the kharíf harvest, and of April and May after the rabí, in conveying to market their own grain or that of others.

This labour is shared by Labánas and others with pack-bullocks and ponies, and by Kumhárs with donkeys.

The following statement shows the cost of carriage along the chief trade routes, which in this district are all unmetalled. The principal articles of merchandise carried are food-grain, wool, *ghí* and *gur*, and except that some difference is made for carrying wool on account of its bulk, the rates of carriage are much the same for all kinds of merchandise.

Trade.		Distance in miles.	Usual charge per maund in annas.
From	To		
Sirsá ...	Ellenábád ...	25	2
Sirsá ...	Fázilká or Minchinabad	90	3 to 8
Sirsá ...	Firozpur	100	8
Sirsá ...	Delhi	158	7 Road partly metalled.
Odhán ...	Sirsá	20	2
Odhán ...	Fázilká	70	8
Abuikharána ...	Fázilká	40	2½ to 6 Usually 3½
Malaut ...	Fázilká	33	3
Malaut ...	Bikáner	200	8 to 12
Malaut ...	Firozpur	60	5 or 6
Malaut ...	Ludhiána	120	8 or 9

The average rate of carriage on the unmetalled roads of the district may be taken at one anna per maund per stage of ten or twelve miles. But the rates vary very greatly with the fluctuations of trade, and especially depend on the chances of a return hire. In January and May, when no important field work is done, carriage is cheap. In July, when there has been good rain, all the bullocks and camels are busy ploughing and carriage is dear. In 1878, when Government was impressing camels for the Kábul campaign, their owners took them off to Bíkáner, and carriage rates doubled. They seem to vary from one anna per maund for six miles to one anna per maund for sixteen miles. Ordinary loads on these unmetalled roads are as follows:—

A four-bullock cart load ...	...	24 maunds.
A three-bullock cart load ...	...	18 „
A two-bullock cart load ...	...	12 „
A camel-load	...	6 „
A pack-bullock load	...	3 „
A pack-buffalo, pony or mule load	...	3 „
A donkey-load	...	1½ „

Communications.

127. There are no *pakka* roads in the district, except for a mile or two near Sirsá and Fázilká. A good wide *kachcha* road enters the district at Narel from Hissár and runs by Sirsá, Dabwálí and Fázilká to Muazzam on the Satlaj where there is a ferry, and so on to Okára, a station on the Sind, Panjáb and Delhi Railway in the Montgomery district. This road, which for a great part of its length runs along what was, till lately, the Customs

Line, has hitherto been kept in good order for the mail-cart which daily traversed it. Another broad road almost as good runs to the west of this nearly the whole length of the district from Sirsá by Abohar to Fázilká, and is much used by Pawindah traders from the frontier who annually pass through the district in the cold weather with their long strings of camels laden with merchandise from Kábul and Kandahár on their way from the Deráját to Delhi and Hindustán. Other broad roads kept more or less in repair run from Sirsá north-east to Rori, south-east to Darba, south to Jamál and west to Ellenábád; from Malaut south-west to Abohar and Usmán Khera, and north to Mukatsar; from Fázilká north-east towards Fírozpur and south-west towards Bháwalpur. These roads were made in connection with trade centres outside the district, such as Bahádra, Nohar and Bhatner in Bíkáner, and Bhatinda in Pattiála; but after leaving British territory they dwindle into uncared-for village roads. Within the district, except where here and there they cross a sand-hill, or traverse an unusually sandy bit of country, or where sand has been blown on to the road, they for eight months in the year present a hard smooth surface along which cart or camel moves without difficulty. Indeed the same may be said of every village-road in the district, and except where impeded by the sand which forms a serious obstruction only in comparatively few places, there is no difficulty for either carts or camels in getting from any one village to any other. In the four months of the rainy season traffic is not so easy; the roads get soft and muddy and easily cut up, and rain stands on the lower parts of them for days; the Ghaggar and Satlaj spread over the country in their neighbourhood and some villages in their valleys become almost quite surrounded by water. Ferry-boats are maintained when necessary at Khaireka and Jhorar where the roads from Sirsá to Dabwálí and Abohar respectively cross the Ghaggar, and sometimes at Bansidhár between those places. On the Satlaj ferry-boats are maintained all the year round at Ghurká, Munzzam, Jhangar and Amruka, ferries all leading into the Montgomery district. On the principal roads there are camping-grounds with wells of drinkable water at regular stages, and here and there sarais for travellers. In short the communications are good for such a new and scantily-peopled country, and except during the rainy season there are no serious obstacles to traffic, though in the dry hot months great difficulty is sometimes experienced from want of water. The Rewárí-Fírozpur Railway now under construction, which will enter the district from Hissár at Díng and run through Suchán to Sirsá, and thence straight north across the Ghaggar by Kálánwálí and Desu Malkána into Pattiála territory, while a branch from near Mukatsar will run by Roránwála to Fázilká, will vastly improve the communications, and bring every part of the district much nearer the rest of the world.

The ferries on the Ghaggar and Satlaj are annually sold by auction to a contractor who works them through professional boatmen (*malláh*) generally of the Jhabel caste, and levies the fees authorised by the Panjáb Government by notification in the Gazette. The three ferries

on the Ghaggar have brought in on the average of the five years ending 1882-83 only Rs. 357; the contract for 1882-83 was Rs. 305 and for 1883-84 Rs. 250. The four ferries on the Satlaj brought in on the average Rs. 7,385; the contract for 1882-83 was Rs. 5,600 and for 1883-84 Rs. 5,900. The most important ferries are those at Muazzam on the road from Fázilká to Dipálpur and Okára and at Jhangar on the road from Fázilká to Pakpattan. But most of the export trade through Fázilká goes down the Satlaj by boat. The river front of the district is small, and there are said to be only twenty-eight boats belonging to the district.

Course of trade.

128. The trade of the district centres in Sirsá at the one end and in Fázilká at the other. As a general rule the trade of the eastern part of the district passes through Sirsá and of the western part through Fázilká; but when, as in 1877-78, there is a great demand *(máng, khich)* towards Delhi, grain goes eastwards through Sirsá from near Fázilká; and on the other hand when the demand to the east is dull, most of the grain of the district goes through Fázilká to Sind for export, as in 1878-79, when the Fázilká grain-trade almost doubled. According to the returns of the five Municipalities, Sirsá, Rori, Rániá, Ellenábád and Fázilká, the average imports of the last eight years into those towns of grain, sugar and *ghí* have been as follows :—

Average Imports of the eight years ending 1882-83 (*in maunds*).

Town.	Grain.	Sugar.	*Ghí.*
Sirsá	282,000	57,000	2,300
Fázilká	390,000	25,000	2,600
Ellenábád	54,000	7,500	300
Rániá	32,000	2,500	125
Rori	12,000	2,500	100
TOTAL ...	770,000	94,500	5,425

According to the returns for the five years ending 1879-80, which give the estimated value of all articles imported, the average value of the imports during that period was as follows :—

Average value of imports of the five years ending 1879-80, (*in rupees*).

Town.	Articles of food.	Animals for slaughter.	Fuel, lighting and washing.	Drugs and Spices	Tobacco.	Cloth.	Metals	Total value.
Sirsá	5,65,000	1,200	88,000	36,000	10,000	2,07,000	19,000	9,26,200
Fázilká ...	5,13,000	2,000	2,58,000	42,000	6,000	1,62,000	46,000	10,29,000
Ellenábád ..	1,00,000	...	12,000	7,000	2,000	29,000	3,500	1,53,500
Ránia ...	41,000	1,200	3,500	2,300	1,100	15,000	...	63,100
Rori ..	27,000	...	800	1,200	400	6,000	...	37,400
TOTAL ...	12,46,000	4,400	3,61,300	88,500	19,500	4,21,000	68,500	22,09,200

The greater part of the articles imported into these towns is again exported, and as almost the whole of the trade of the district passes through one or other of them, the average total value of these imports may be taken as representing the average value of the trade of the district. It is true that some of the trade of parts of Pattiála and Bíkáner territory passes through these towns, but on the other hand some small proportion of the trade of the district itself goes direct to places outside the district without going through a municipality, and the value of the total trade, exports and imports, may be estimated at about twenty-two lakhs of rupees, or about eight times the new land revenue assessment of the whole district. The grain, *ghí*, *sajjí* and wool are the produce of the district and the surrounding country, and are chiefly exported in exchange for sugar, fruits, drugs, spices, piece-goods, and articles of metal. Grain is chiefly exported down the Satlaj towards Karáchí, or eastwards towards Bhiwání and Delhi. *Ghí* goes in the same directions or northwards towards Ludhiána and Fírozpur. *Sajjí* and wool go chiefly through Fázilká towards Karáchí or Fírozpur and Lahore; sugar comes chiefly through Sirsá from the Jamna or the Ludhiána country. Piece-goods, drugs and spices, and articles of metal come through Sirsá from Delhi or through Fázilká from Karáchí. The trade of Sirsá and Fázilká is now approximately equal, but it is only recently that Fázilká has attained such importance owing to the opening of trade in the direction of Sind, Karáchí and the sea, partly by the Sind, Panjáb and Delhi and Indus Valley Railways, but still chiefly by the river. A very large quantity of grain and wool is put on boats at the Dárá *bandar* some five miles from Fázilká and taken down to Karáchí either all the way by the river or partly by the Indus Valley State Railway. An agent of that railway was lately stationed at Fázilká to take consignments for Karáchí from Fázilká, and small steamers now and then plied from Fírozpur and Fázilka down the river to the railway, but most of the traffic is still by country-boats (*berí*) holding from 200 to 1,000 maunds and worked by boatmen from down the river who often have their families on board. Each boat pays a pier-due of 4 annas to the owners of the village opposite which it lands. These boats take about a month to go down to Sakkar, which is said to be 600 miles off by river, and the freight (*mok*) for grain for that distance is sometimes 5 annas per maund. Several schemes have been talked of, such as a steam ferry across the river and a *pakka* road to Okára, a branch railway from Okára to the river, or a railway down the left bank of the Satlaj from Ludhiána by Fírozpur and Fázilká to Bháwalpur; but the Rewári-Fírozpur Railway now under construction, with its branch to Fázilká, will supersede some of these schemes and revolutionise the course of trade.

License Tax.

129. The principal traders in Sirsá are Banyas connected with Rájputána and Delhi, and in Fázilká are Aroras from Montgomery and from the country down the Satlaj towards Multán. The license tax, which is supposed to represent about two per cent. on the annual income of all traders whose

income exceeds Rs. 500 a year, was levied from 323 persons in 1882-83, and from 301 persons in 1883-84; in the former year it brought in Rs. 5,965, and in the latter year Rs. 5,500, the detail being—

Tahsil.	No. of persons.	Amount of tax. Rs.
Sirsá	100	1,765
Dabwáli	48	875
Fázilká	153	2,860
TOTAL ...	301	5,500

One man pays Rs. 200, and one Rs. 150; six pay Rs. 100 and of the rest 220 pay only Rs. 10.

Rates of interest and exchange.

130. In the Sirsá district although, as in all new countries, capital is somewhat scarce, 2 per cent per month or 24 per cent. per annum is a high rate of interest; commoner rates are one *paisa* per rupee per month, or 18¾ per cent. per annum and 1½ per cent. per month or 18 per cent per annum. A respectable peasant who can give good security can borrow even at 12 per cent. per annum, and it is only the impecunious Musalmáns, from whom it is difficult to exact repayment of a debt, that have to pay so much as 36 or 37½ per cent per annum. The ordinary Musalmáns are very careless and take little trouble to check their accounts; the Sikhs and Bágris, on the other hand, calculate out the interest and weigh the grain themselves. When a grain-dealer makes an advance in grain to be repaid in kind, the usual stipulation is that 1¼ times the amount advanced is to be repaid at harvest, whether that be one month or six months off; but such bargains are comparatively rare, and few peasants are deeply in debt to their bankers, or have had to mortgage their lands.

The traders have a regular system of exchange by means of bills (*hundi*) very similar to the European system of bills of exchange. Their bills are generally made payable after a certain odd number of days (*miti*), 5 or 21 for Bhiwáni, 11 for Delhi, and 61 for Calcutta. The rates of premium or discount (*hundáwan*) vary with the state of trade and the risk (*jokham*) of bankruptcy (*díwála*) of the merchant &c., and it is not unusual to send a camel-load of silver to pay for a consignment instead of paying by bill of exchange. Even in Sirsá however it is becoming usual to employ currency notes and postal money orders as means of transmitting money.

Sirsá Town.

131. Forty-six years ago (in 1837 A. D.) when Captain Thoresby, the first Superintendent, came to the district, the only places where there was anything that could be called trade were Rániá and Rori, and perhaps Khariyál, but they were then, and indeed are still, little more than large villages with bázárs of small importance. Rániá was the seat of the Bhatti Nawáb, and Rori had been settled by the Sikhs under Nábha, and both of them seem to have been inhabited all through the time of anarchy when the rest of the country was a desert. Khariyál had been settled

by Bíkáner subjects about ten years before. Sirsá, once a flourishing town on the Sarsuti, had for years been totally deserted. I have already described how in the course of a year a large town sprang up, where had till then been an uninhabited jungle; and Sirsá has flourished ever since. Its population about 1853 was 7,242; in 1868 it had increased to 11,000, and in 1875 to 12,807; in 1881 it was 12,292, an increase of 12 per cent. on the population of 1868. More than two-thirds of the total population is Hindu; and although there are a few agriculturists who cultivate as tenants in the surrounding villages, the great majority of the population are engaged in trade, that is, in gathering and distributing the produce of the land and articles manufactured elsewhere, rather than in producing or manufacturing themselves. Most of the trade is in the hands of Hindu Banyas from Rájputána and the country to the south-east. Some of them belong to firms of considerable wealth and repute, which have established branches here. According to the Municipal returns, the imports of grain, sugar and *ghi* during the past eight years have been as follows (in maunds):—

Year.	Imports in Maunds.		
	Grain.	Sugar.	Ghi.
1875-76	247,000	56,000	1,300
1876-77	214,000	38,000	1,400
1877-78	560,000	29,000	1,700
1878-79	269,000	73,000	1,400
1879-80	241,000	72,000	2,800
1880-81	166,000	40,000	3,900
1881-82	189,000	68,000	3,000
1882-83	369,000	81,000	3,000

The sudden increase of imports of grain in 1877-78 was due to the great demand in the country farther east, caused by the drought and scarcity, which drew a large quantity of grain from the country to the west through Sirsá towards Delhi. The falling-off in 1880-81 and 1881-82 was due to the failure of the harvests in those years, as very little grain was produced in the neighbourhood of Sirsá in the four harvests from kharif 1879 to rabi 1881. The increase in the imports of grain during the past year is due to the recent good harvests, and it was estimated in August 1883 that four lakhs of maunds of grain were stored in the town. The sugar comes from the Jamna country to the east, and from Ludhiána to the north, and is sent on into the villages and towards Bíkáner; the demand varies a good deal with the nature of the harvests in the neighbourhood; thus in 1877-78 and 1880-81, when the harvests were bad, little sugar was imported. The *ghi* is made in the neighbourhood, and exported towards Delhi and

Ludhiána. Piece-goods are imported from Delhi for distribution in the neighbourhood, as well as vessels of metal, tobacco, drugs and spices; and some *sajji* from Bíkáner is exported to the east and north. The average total value of the imports for the five years ending with 1879-80 was estimated at over nine lakhs of rupees. The opening of the Rewárí-Fírozpur Railway through Sirsá will no doubt have a great effect on its trade.

Sirsá is a second class Municipality with four official members and seven non-official members appointed by nomination; five of the seven non-officials are Hindus. Hitherto a low octroi has been levied on all imports, and no refunds have been granted on exports, nor has there been a bonded warehouse. The annual income for the last four years has been—

Year.	Income. Rs.
1879-80	14,899
1880-81	12,489
1881-82	11,373
1882-83	16,003

and the balance on 31st March 1883 was Rs. 7,753. By far the greater part of this income is from octroi, which is collected by direct agency, and of last year's income of Rs. 16,003, Rs. 14,843 was from octroi. There is a considerable income from fees levied for grazing in the Government Bír or grazing-ground, which is administered by the committee, and the income from this source and from rents, &c., amounted last year to Rs. 844. Sirsá as the head-quarters of the district has a good kachahri and treasury, a police office and lines, a church appropriately named "St. John's in the Wilderness," a small station garden, and a few bungalows, some of which are survivals of the days before the mutiny, when a part of the Hariána local battalion was stationed here. There is also a small fort with a high mud wall and a deep ditch, prepared after the mutiny as a place of refuge for the European residents in times of danger. Inside the town wall there are a Municipal Hall, a District School, a Gurdwára supported by the Sikhs, and a large masonry building called the Katra, built by the Treasurer Fatehchand as a market-place, but not much used for that purpose. The opening of the railway, and the abolition of Sirsá as a district head-quarters, both seemingly events of the near future, will make a great difference to the town.

Ránia Rori and Ellenábád.

132. The old Bhatti village of Ránia in the valley of the Ghaggar, which was the seat of the Bhattí Nawáb and remained inhabited all through the time of anarchy, had about 1854 a population of 3,209; in 1868 it was 4,583; in 1875, 4,917; and in 1881, 4,626, or almost the same as in 1868. It has not much trade, and is simply a large village. More than two-thirds of the population are Musalmáns, chiefly Ráins, Joiyas and Bhattis, engaged in the cultivation of the rich rice and wheat lands of Ránia and the neighbouring villages. It has a small regularly-built bázár, and is a Municipality of the third class with

seven members, but the octroi income has averaged only Rs. 1,253 for the last four years and the balance at the end of 1882-83 was Rs. 751.

The old Sikh village of Rori near the Ghaggar also remained inhabited when all the country round was deserted. It was held for a time by Nábha, but was confiscated with its pargana in 1847. Its population about 1855 was 2,157; in 1868 it was 2,723; in 1875, 2,728; and in 1881 it had risen to 3,063, an increase of 13 per cent. over the population of 1868. Half the inhabitants are agriculturists, chiefly Sikh Jats, who own and cultivate the large area attached to the village. The trade is even smaller than that of Rániá; and, although it is a municipality of the third class with six members, the average income for the past four years has been only Rs. 492, and the balance at the close of 1882-83 was Rs. 350.

Khariyál was founded about 55 years ago by Bágrí Játs and Banyas from Bíkáner territory, and was reported in 1837 as a large and increasing village with 700 houses where there was a good deal of traffic and barter. In 1863 the village was inundated and made very unhealthy by the floods of the Ghaggar, and Mr. Oliver built a new town on the higher ground close by and named it after Mrs. Oliver Ellenábád. Its population about 1854 was 2,662; in 1868 it was 3,414; in 1875, 3299; and in 1881 it rose to 4,131, an increase of 21 per cent. on the population of 1868. But this includes the population of the hamlets scattered about the lands of the village, and the population of the town of Ellenábád proper is not nearly so great. Mr. Oliver laid it out in rectangular wide streets, and some of the shops built have never been occupied, so that the town wears a deserted appearance. Four-fifths of the population, including that of the hamlets, are Bágrí Hindús, chiefly Játs who cultivate the large area attached to the village. The place is said to be still feverish and unhealthy. It is a municipality of the third class with seven members, but has little trade, and its income, chiefly derived from octroi, averaged only Rs. 2,446 for the last four years, with a balance of Rs. 3,777 at the end of 1882-33. Grain from Bíkáner is exported through Ellenábád in exchange for sugar, cloth and metal vessels from the east.

Abohar.

133. Abohar appears to have been mentioned by Ibn Batuta about 1341 A. D., as the first town in Hindustán, and even then it was in a desert. There are the remains of a large fort which must have been at one time of considerable strength, and the villagers have a tradition that many centuries ago it was held by a Rájpút Rája Abramchand. They tell that his horses were one day carried off in a raid (*dhár*) made by the Saiyads of Uchán towards Multán, and as he had no son, his daughter dressed like a man, went after the raiders armed with sword and spear and gun and bow and arrow, and after various exploits brought back the spoil of Uchán which consisted chiefly of horses. The Saiyads of Uchán, being holy men, endeavoured to get back their property by threatening to curse the spoilers, and forming a *mela* or cursing committee, they came and sat *dharna*, as it were, on the sand-ridge

east of Abohar. But the Rája held out so long that the women of the Saiyads at Uchán got tired of waiting for the return of their lords, and came in a body to look for them. When the Saiyads on the ridge saw their wives approaching they called down curses on all around, and they themselves and their wives and the inhabitants of the town all died on the spot. The *pakka* tomb of the women in the cemetery, and that of the holy men (*pír*) on the sand-ridge exist unto this day "to witness if I lie." In the beginning of this century Abohar was uninhabited, and the whole country round was a desert prairie. About A.D. 1828 a body of Musalmán herdsmen, headed by Amra Sukhera from Bígar near Fatháhád, came and settled here. At that time the only established villages in the neighbourhood were Bhatner, Guda, Malaut, Salemsháh and Gaurdyána to the west now in Bháwalpur, and to the south-west for several hundred miles there was not a village. Soon after the Sikhs began to extend their authority southwards, and the Sukheras have a lease granted them in A.D. 1828 by the Sikh Bháí of Kaithal authorising them to settle in Abohar. At first the three Sikh chiefs of Arnauli, Jhumba, and Kaithal had each a third share in this territory, and each had a separate fort and force at Abohar, where they were constantly quarrelling about their respective rights. Jhumba's share came into the hands of Pattiála, and the Sukheras have leases granted them in A.D. 1831 by Pattiála, under whom the large *pakka* well was made. In 1838 the tract came under British rule, and Capt. Thoresby granted leases to Amra and other Musalmán residents of the village of all the unoccupied land in the neighbourhood, which then amounted to over 300 square miles. According to tradition, which probably exaggerates, there were then 1,400 houses in Abohar, and a lakh and a quarter of cattle grazed in the prairie lands attached to it, and produced daily 60 maunds of *ghi*, which was then the chief article of trade. But when the prairie waste was gradually brought under the plough and new colonies were established in the country round, many of the Abohar traders left it for smaller villages or migrated to the new town of Fázilká, which was much more advantageously situated for the rising grain trade, and soon eclipsed Abohar, which is still only a large village. The population of Abohar about 1858 was 1,477; in 1868, it was 1,445; and in 1881, 1,823, an increase of 26 per cent. There are three separate collections of houses forming the village, one of them being a bázár with a fairly wide street, built from the bricks of the old fort under Capt. Robinson.

Fázilká Town.

134. Fázilká has sprung up almost as suddenly as Sirsá, but its history is still more recent. When in 1844 the tract of country on the Satlaj was ceded by Bháwalpur, there was no village where Fázilká now stands; but Mr. Vans Agnew, the first officer stationed there, built himself a bungalow, from which the place became known as Banglá, a name still given to the town and the tahsíl by the people. Two years later Mr. Oliver established a few shops there and gave the place the name of Fázilká from Fázil, one of the early Wattu settlers. Its favourable position near the Satlaj

has enabled it to engross almost the whole of the export trade from the great Jangal tract towards Sind, and made it very soon a flourishing mart; and its population and trade have steadily increased. In 1868 the population was 3,406; in 1875 it was 4,346; and in 1881 it had risen to 6,851, or more than double what it was in 1868. More than two-thirds of the total population are Hindus, and almost all the inhabitants are engaged in trade and operations connected with it. The greater part of the trade is in the hands of Aroras from the west and south, some of them branches of important firms of Multán, Shikárpur and other towns towards Sind. According to the Municipal Returns the imports of grain, sugar and *ghí* during the past eight years have been as follows (in maunds) :—

Year.	Imports in Maunds.		
	Grain.	Sugar.	*Ghí.*
1875-76	1,46,000	17,000	1,100
1876-77	1,80,000	34,000	1,400
1877-78	3,45,000	19,000	4,500
1878-79	6,23,000	20,000	2,600
1879-80	4,89,000	32,000	2,200
1880-81	6,33,000	29,000	4,400
1881-82	2,83,000	39,000	2,800
1882-83	4,21,000	5,000	1,600

The trade in grain consists chiefly in the export of barley, grain and oilseeds from the Dry Tract towards Multán and Karáchí, and varies with the nature of the harvests and the demand in that direction. The brisk trade of the three years 1878-81 was chiefly due to the demand created on the frontier by the Afghán War; and the falling-off in 1881-82 was chiefly due to the poor harvests of kharíf 1880 and rabí 1881. Fázilká also exports large quantities of wool and *sajjí* from the Dry Tract, and imports sugar and articles of metal in exchange. The construction of the Rewári-Fírozpur Railway with a branch to Fázilká will probably make a great difference in the course and amount of trade.

Fázilká is a third-class municipality with 17 members of committee, and its income, which is principally derived from a low octroi on all imports with no system of refunds, has been as follows for the last four years :—

Year.	Income.
1879-80	Rs. 16,109
1880-81	„ 16,972
1881-82	„ 16,404
1882-83	„ 19,696

and the balance in hand at the end of 1882-83 was Rs. 27,129. The

town has been laid out with rectangular wide streets, and is rapidly extending. The municipality owns a small area in the neighbourhood kept as a grazing-ground for the cattle of the town. An Extra Assistant Commissioner is stationed here in charge of the subdivision, and besides the usual tahsíl and thána buildings, there is a small mud fort made by Mr. Oliver in the mutiny: his bungalow is still standing surrounded by a garden, some distance from the town. There are some bits of *pakka* road about the town, and some avenues and small groves of trees improve the appearance of the neighbourhood.

Distribution of population.

135. Notwithstanding the marked increase in the size of the villages since 1868, the average population per village and town is only 399, and the average rural population per village only 353, so that Sirsá in both respects stands 28th of the 32 districts in the Panjáb, the four below it being Gurdáspur, Hazára, Montgomery and Simla. In Sirsá 88 per cent. of the total population live in the villages, so that in this respect the district stands 19th of the districts of the province. There are in Sirsá 21 villages per 100 square miles, so that the average distance from village to village as calculated in the Panjáb Census Report is 2⅓ miles, and the district in density of villages stands 24th of the districts of the province. The characteristics of Sirsá are a scanty but rapidly increasing population living in villages, each of which is the centre of a large township (*mauza*), and as there are few outlying hamlets or dwellings, and the increase of population takes place as a rule within the existing villages, the distance from village to village is great, and the villages are rapidly increasing in size. The difficulty of getting water, the dread of thieves, and the desire of society prevent the people from readily establishing small hamlets and out-dwellings, and the rough methods of agriculture employed make it unnecessary for them to live very near their fields.

Measures of time.

136. The Government offices date their transactions by the Christian year and months, the feasts and fasts of the Musalmáns are regulated by the Muhammadan Lunar year, and the Patwáris' papers have hitherto been dated by the Fasli year, but the peasants generally, Hindu, Sikh and Musalmán, ordinarily reckon by the Sambat or Solar year of Vikramáditya. Thus the present year A. D. 1883 corresponds to the Muhammadan Hijri year 1300-1301, to the Fasli year 1290-91, and to the Sambat year 1939-40. The Hindus divide the Sambat year into 12 months, each determined by the moon's age, and divided into the light fortnight (*sudí*) when the moon is waxing and the dark fortnight (*badí*) when she is waning; and in order to make these months coincide with the Solar year, a month is intercalated every few years by doubling one of the twelve months according to a recognised rule, so that in that year there are two months of one name and thirteen months altogether. The Sikhs reckon by the Sankránt or solar year always consisting of 12 months, and arranged in a way very similar to the European system.

The year is considered as consisting of three seasons (*rut*), each consisting of four months, as follows :—

Season.	Month.	Corresponding English month.
The dry hot season (*Unhála*) ...	1. Phágan or Phaggan	February-March.
	2. Chait ...	March-April.
	3. Baisákh ...	April-May.
	4. Jeth ...	May-June.
The rains (*Chaumása* or *Chatrmása*) ...	5. Sárh or Hár ...	June-July.
	6 Sáwan ...	July-August.
	7. Bhádua ...	August-September.
	8. Asauj ...	September-October.
The cold weather (*Siyál* or *Siyála*)	9. Káti or Kátik ...	October-November.
	10. Mungsir ...	November-December.
	11. Poh ...	December-January.
	12. Máh ...	January-February.

It would be more in accordance with the actual course of the seasons in this neighbourhood to consider them as each commencing a fortnight later, *i.e.*, from the middle of the Sambat month. The rains may be taken as lasting from 1st July to 31st October, the cold weather from 1st November to 28th February, and the dry hot weather from 1st March to 30th June. The hottest part of the year is the latter part of June=the beginning of Hár, and the peasants sometimes use the word Hár to express the driest, hottest time of the year. The Sambat year begins in Chait.

I have already given the Panjábí names for the different parts of the day as it is divided by the peasants. The Bágrí and Musalmán names are very much the same, except that the Musalmáns sometimes use words taken from the names of the prayer-times prescribed by their religion. Thus *namázwela* or *fajar=tarká* or *parbhát*=a little before sunrise; *peshíwela* about 2 P.M.; *dígarwela*=just before sunset. The day and night (24 hours) are divided into eight *pahars* or watches, four from sunset to sunrise, and four from sunrise to sunset, and as these are determined by the sun, they vary in length at different times of the year, but at the equinox the *pahars* of the day and night are equal, each being three hours long. *Dopahar* means midday; *pahar din rahá*=3 P.M.; *pahar rát gaí*=9 P.M.; *pahar din charhá*=9 A.M. Ordinarily the peasants take no note of more minute divisions of time, but in some of the Ráín villages on the Ghaggar, they measure the time during which each sharer is to take his share of the water for irrigation purposes by a water-clock like that ordinarily used by police sentries to measure the hours. A thin brass bowl (*katori* or *chhani*) with a small hole in the bottom is floated in a large earthen vessel (*kund*) filled with water, which gradually comes through the hole into the bowl until it sinks. The weight and capacity of the bowl are so proportioned to the size of the hole in its bottom, that it

sinks exactly one *ghari* after it is first floated. The *ghari* used in Mangála, one of the largest villages, is somewhat shorter than the ordinary Hindústaní *ghari*, of which there are 64 in 24 hours; there are about 72 of their *gharis* in 24 hours, which makes each equal to about 20 minutes. In Khairpur the villagers can hear the gong struck by the police-sentries at the Treasury every hour, and regulate the division of their irrigation-water accordingly.

Measures of length.

137. The unit of length employed by the peasants in measuring their fields is the *kadam*, called also *karam* and *karu* by the Sikhs of the northern border, and *páondá* by the Bágrís of the southern border. It is the same as the Roman passus or double pace, and is measured by taking two steps or English paces as one *kadam*, so that in stepping out a boundary by *kadams*, the number is counted from right foot to right foot, or from left foot to left foot. The *kadam* however varies very much in length, being sometimes a short double pace, sometimes a long or an ordinary double pace, and there is among the people no fixed standard to which it can be referred. In the last Settlement of the district (except in pargana Bahak,) the unit measure of length employed was the *gathá* of 8¼ feet or 99 inches. This measure is not known to the people except through the Settlement measurements, and we have dropped it in the present Settlement in favour of the *kadam* which they themselves use. The *gatha* was the unit of length employed throughout the Delhi Territory at last Settlement, and has been adopted in the present Settlements of the Delhi Division and in Rohtak. It can be measured by three short steps or a *kadam* and a half, and is such that a square of 20 *gathas* by 20 equals a standard *bígha* = $\frac{1}{8}$th of an acre. This *bígha* is now well-known to the people, who, according to the length of their local *kadam*, defined the *bígha* variously as 32, 31, 30, or 28 *kadams* square. In the measurements of this Settlement, we have adopted as our measure of length in place of the *gathá*, a *kadam* of exactly 66 inches, or two ordinary English steps of 33 inches, which is thus exactly two-thirds of the *gathá* hitherto used by the patwáris, and is approximately an average of the *kadams* used by the villagers, a square of 30 such *kadams* by 30 being exactly the standard *bígha*. This was the *karam* used in the Settlement of the Montgomery district, but in the Settlement of Muktsar the *karam* was taken at 60 inches.

The unit of length employed in measuring cloth, ropes, the depth of wells, small pieces of land within the village site, and for similar purposes, is the *háth* or cubit, called by the Sikhs *hatth*. There are three kinds of *háth* in use—(1) the *sídhá háth* or straight cubit, measured from the projecting bone of the elbow to the end of one or other of the fingers; (2) the *murwa* or *morwá háth* or bent cubit, measured from the projecting bone of the elbow round the end of the fingers held out straight, and back to the knuckles, or sometimes to the wrist; (3) the *mutthí háth* or fist cubit, measured by adding to the *sídhá háth* the fist of the other hand with thumb extended. Of these the *murwa háth* is by far the most commonly used, but as the length of each man's arm varies and there is no common stan-

dard, its exact length cannot be determined. In one village I found that the *háth* of a particular shopkeeper was accepted as the standard *háth* of the village. Usually cloth is measured by applying the arm directly, but in Fázilká some of the shopkeepers use an iron rod, a *murwa háth* long, called a *hathrá* or *háthlá gaz* about 23 or 23⅓ inches long (for even this varies in length); some of them have both this *hathrá* and the *Angrezi gaz* or English yard measure, and use both in measuring cloth. In cloth measure a length of 16 *háth* is called a *soli*, and the village weavers sell their coarse cotton cloth at so many *soli* for the rupee. The *háth* is the only cubic measure known; thus, when a village pond is deepened, the quantity of earth excavated is measured as so many *háth* long, broad and deep. A usual rate for digging is 10 *murwa háth* square by one *háth* deep for one rupee; this quantity, 100 cubic *háth*, is called a *khandá* and equals nearly 800 cubic feet.

Other measures of length are the *purs* or fathom, the utmost distance a man can measure by stretching his arms at full length, considered equal to 3½ *sídhe háth* and often used by the Bágrís, for instance, in stating the length of rope required to reach the water in a well—the *chappá* or hand's-breadth, measured across the lowest joints of the fingers and nearly equal to 3 inches—the *angal* or *ungal* or finger's-breadth, equal to about ¾ inch—and the seldom-used *gith* or span, the distance between the points of the outstretched thumb and little finger. The *chappá* and *ungal* are used to measure lengths less than the *háth*; thus the amount of rain-fall is estimated by the number of *ungal*, or finger's-breadths, the moisture has penetrated into the ground. An attempt seems to have been made to obtain a fixed standard for the *ungal*, by adopting the diameter of the Jhársháhí or Bíkáneri *paisá* as the standard *ungal*; but when I sent for some of these, I found them of all sizes. The *jau* or barley-corn is used only in expressions like "*ek jau ká farq bhí nahín haí*" (="It is not out by a barley-corn"). So too the expression "*ek bál ká farq*" (a hair's-breadth) is figuratively used. The peasants have now a measure for the English foot got by clenching the fists and extending the thumbs so that their points just touch; then the distance between the outsides of the knuckles of the little fingers is almost exactly a foot.

The *kán* =3 *kadam* is hardly known. The word *jeori* or *jaríb* or chain is ordinarily applied to the chain used by Government surveyors, but sometimes a peasant has a rope or chain the length of which he knows, and which he uses in measuring his fields. The *koh* or *kos* is generally considered to be 1,360 *kadams*. This relation between the *kos* and the *kadam* is very widely known and was probably fixed by some authority. Taking the *kadam* to be 66 inches, it would make the *kos*= 1·19 mile, but taking the *kadam* at 5⅝ yards, as in some villages it is said to be, would make the *kos* 1·51 mile. In this district, and so far as my experience goes, throughout the Dehli Territory, the *kos* is practically 1½ mile. On the Bíkáner border the Bíkáneri *kos* equals 2,000 *páonde* or something over two miles;

some say it is 2,000 camel's double paces which would make it much longer. Near the Satlaj the English mile is known as *munna koh* or $\frac{3}{4}$ of a *koh*, and is considered to be about 1,000 *kadam*.

Measures of area.

138. The measure of area adopted throughout the district (with the exception of Pargana Bahak) at last Settlement was the *bígha* = exactly $\frac{5}{8}$ of an acre, the same that is used throughout the Delhi Territory. Although this *bígha* was not native to the district (the *bígha* used in some parts of it being of a different size) it has, through long use in the Government records and measurements, become well-known to the people, and may now be considered to be accepted by them as a standard for general use. It has therefore been retained as the standard measure of area for this Settlement. It is divided into 20 parts called *biswas*, each of which was in last Settlement considered to equal 20 *biswánsis* or square *gathás* of 99 inches; but in the present Settlement a *biswa* is held equal to 45 square *kadams* of 66 inches to bring it into connection with the measure of length used by the people. The native *bígha* formerly used by the Bágrís and others in the south and east of the district is a square of 20 *kadams* or *páondás* each way and thus varies with the size of the *kadam*. Taking the *kadam* at 66 inches gives the native *bígha* = $\frac{4}{5}$ of the Settlement *bígha* or $\frac{5}{8}$ of an acre. I found in use in a Bíkáner village a *bígha* of 24 *páondás* square. The native or *kachcha bígha* is now little used in this district. In the north and west, among the Sikhs and Panjábi Musalmáns, the native measure of area is the *ghumáo*, here generally pronounced *ghumán*. Most of the peasants, especially the Sikhs, know nothing of its subdivisions, and simply take the *ghumán* as a square of forty *karams* a side, and consider it equal to four *kachcha* or local *bíghas*. This would at 66 inches the *karam* make the *ghumán* = $\frac{10}{9}$ of a Settlement *bígha*, or $\frac{10}{9}$ of an acre. The *karam* must be less however, for the *ghumán* is said to be $\frac{3}{4}$ of a Settlement *bígha*, which would make it $\frac{15}{16}$ of an acre. On the river Satlaj, among the Musalmáns, a different *ghumán* is used, which is calculated somewhat like the Montgomery Settlement *ghumáo* as follows:—

9 square *karams*	=	1 *marla*
20 *marlas*	=	1 *kanál*
8 *kanáls*	=	1 *ghumán*

Thus the *ghumán* at 66 inches the *karam*, would be exactly an acre as in the Montgomery Settlement. It is said however to be $\frac{9}{10}$ of an acre, as the *karam* is taken at less than 66 inches; but this too varies from village to village, and is not much used by the people, as they have the patwárí with his standard *bígha* and his chain to refer to. In the Settlement of pargana Bahak however, made while it was a part of the Fírozpur district, the *karam* was taken at 60 inches, and the area calculated as follows:—

9 square *karams*	=	1 *marla*
20 *marlas*	=	1 *kanál*

and the *ghumáo* was hardly used in the Settlement Records, the areas being recorded in *kánals*.

I append a table showing some of the many different standards given me.

Measures of length—

1 ungal or finger's-breadth = $\frac{3}{4}$ inch.
1 chappa or hand's-breadth = 4 ungal = 3 inches.
1 gith or span = $\frac{1}{2}$ sídha háth.
1 sídhá háth or straight cubit = 6 chappe = 24 ungal = 18 inches
1 morwa háth or bent cubit = 7 chappe = 28 ungal = about 23$\frac{1}{2}$ inches.
1 muthi háth or fist cubit = 31 ungal or = 8 chappe.
1 kadam, karam, karu or páondá = 3$\frac{1}{2}$ morwe háth or = 100 ungal or = 3 sídhe háth, or 2$\frac{1}{2}$ morwe háth or = 18, 22 or 24 chappe, or = the side of a square whose area is a Settlement *bígha* divided by 28 or 30, or 31 or 32 which would make it about 71, 66, 64 or 62 inches.
1 solí=16 háth.
1 purs or fathom = 3$\frac{1}{2}$ sídhe háth.
1 kán=3 karam, or 9 háth, or 8 háth.
1 gathá = 8$\frac{1}{4}$ feet or 99 inches exactly.
1 mile or munna koh = 1,000 karam (this makes the karam = 63 inches.
1 kos or koh = 1,360 karam.

Measures of area—

1 square karam = 1 sirsáhí.
1 square kán = 9 sirsáhí = 1 marla.
20 marlas = 1 kanál.
8 kanál = 1 ghumán.
20×20 karam = 1 kachcha or local bígha.
40×40 karam = 1 ghumán
1 Settlement bígha = $\frac{5}{8}$ of an acre = 28^s or 30^s or 31^s or 32^s karams.
1 ghumán = 2 kachcha bíghas or $\frac{3}{4}$ Settlement bígha.

Measures adopted at last settlement—Sirsa district.	Measures adopted at last settlement—Pargana Bahak.	Measures adopted in this settlement.
99 inches = 1 gatha	60 inches = 1 karam	66 inches = 1 kadam.
1 square gatha = 1 biswánsi	9 square karams = 1 marla	45 sq kadams = 1 biswa.
20 biswánsis = 1 biswa	20 marlas = 1 kanál	20 biswas = 1 bígha.
20 biswas = 1 bígha = $\frac{5}{8}$ acre	= $\frac{160}{363}$ acre	= $\frac{5}{8}$ acre.

Measures of weight.

139. Throughout the whole district the only measures of weight in general use are the Government standard *chhatánk*, *ser* and *man* with measures connected with them as follows:—

5 *tolas* = 1 *chhatánk*
4 *chhatánks* = 1 *páya*
8 *chhatánks* = 1 *adhserí*
16 *chhatánks* = 1 *ser*

5 *sers* = 1 *dharí*.
10 *sers* = 1 *dahserí*.
20 *sers* = 1 *dhaun*.
40 *sers* = 1 *man* (maund) of 82$\frac{1}{7}$lb avoirdupois.

Standard rupees are ordinarily used as *tola* weights, and both in the towns and villages weights of the Government standard stamped in English are in common use, and even in ordinary every-day

matters these standards have quite superseded the local *man* which was until lately in use among the Sikhs. It equalled $\frac{1}{5}$ths of a standard maund, so that 1 standard *man*=2½ *kachche* or local *mans*. On the Bíkáner border a different *man* was used, calculated thus :—

40 *Paise* = 1 *ser*
40 *Ser* = 1 *man*=29 Government *sers*.

But this too has altogether fallen out of use.

Measures of capacity.

140. Measures of capacity are used only in the Musalmán villages on the Satlaj and even there they have been to a great extent superseded by the standard measures of weight. The measures of capacity used are as follows :—

4 *Paropís* = 1 *Topá*
16 *Topás* = 1 *Kachcha man*
12½ *Mans* = 1 *Máni*

The *topá* and *paropí* are circular wooden vessels in which the grain is measured. The measurement is not made by filling the vessel so that the grain is level with its rim, but by heaping up as much grain as the vessel will contain. Thus three *paropís* almost fill the *topá* and one more *paropí* is heaped on the top. These measures are now seldom used, except that at the division of the grain on the threshing-floor the allowances of the artisans and menials are sometimes measured in this way. The weight of a *topá* of course varies according to the grain, thus a *topá* of wheat or gram weighs about 3 standard *sers*, of barley 2½ *sers*, of jawár 2¾ *sers*. So that a *kachcha man* of wheat so measured weighs about 1¼ standard maunds. Other rude measures of capacity are *lap*=a single handful and *boku*=a double handful. Where rent is taken in kind and the quantity of grain to be measured is large, it is common to use a large basket (*khárí*) or earthen vessel (*matká*) containing from one to three maunds of grain. The quantity of grain contained in the measure is weighed once only and the number of measures-full simply multiplied by the weight of one measure ;—but this can hardly be called a measure of capacity.

Measures of value.

141. The Government standard rupee is now in common use throughout the district, and although different kinds of native rupees still pass from hand to hand, they are not now used as a measure of value, all values being expressed in standard rupees. Wholesale prices are commonly quoted at so many rupees per maund, but the peasants and village shop-keepers generally calculate prices of grain, *ghí*, &c., at so many standard *sers* per Government rupee. The names of coins in common use are as follows :—An eight-anna bit or half a rupee is called *dhelí*; a four-anna bit or a fourth of a rupee is *páolá*; a fourth of an anna or *paisá* is called *dabbal* (? double pice) to distinguish it from the rude square bits of copper called *mansúrí paise* which are still common in the bázárs; half a *paisá* or $\frac{1}{8}$ of an anna is *dhela*, and one-sixteenth of an anna is *damri*; two *mansúrí paise* make a *taka*. The standard subdivision of the anna into twelve *pás* or pies is seldom followed by the people who prefer to go on subdividing by two, so that a rupee=256

damris. For still smaller values they use the small shells called *kauŕí* (cowries) which vary in value according to supply and demand.

The most striking feature of the system of local measures of all sorts in the Sirsá district is the want of a common standard and the consequent extraordinary diversity of the measures used. Other points worthy of notice are the universal use of the double pace, the cubit, and the finger's-breadth as measures of length, the absence of all measures of capacity except on the Satlaj, and the wonderful extent to which the Government standard rupee, maund and bígha have already superseded the various local measures in the ordinary every-day transactions of a people generally considered intensely conservative.

Games and amusements.

142. The Sirsá villagers, old and young, are fond of games and sports, and have a wonderful variety of ways in which they amuse themselves, some of them very similar to games played in Scotland. They take a great interest in races, and great numbers of them gather from long distances to witness trials of speed between horses or camels or men, and enjoy immensely fancy races such as sack-races, blindfold races, or donkey-races; but these are hardly of indigenous origin. The wrestling matches which are sometimes got up excite the greatest interest in the whole country-side and the fame of a champion-wrestler (*mall*) is spread far and wide. In wrestling (*kushtí*) the two opponents come into the ring with as little clothing on as decency allows; and after some preliminary exercise of their muscles by walking on their hands, &c., and slapping of biceps by way of challenge, or imitating a bull's action by throwing sand up over their bodies with a backward stroke of the foot, they stand facing each other with bodies bent forward watching for a favourable chance to grip. When they have seized hold of each other the struggle commences, the object being to put one's opponent on his back so that both his shoulders shall touch the ground at the same time. It is allowable to seize any part of one's opponent's body or limbs in order to put him in this position, and sometimes the struggle lasts a long time, for even when one man is full length on the ground and his opponent on the top of him he is not beaten until he is turned over flat on his back. There are numerous technical terms for the different positions and grips. The spectators standing round often become greatly excited so that it is difficult to keep them from rushing in to help their respective champions, and the cries and shouts at the different points of the match show the interest they take in it. Disputes as to what is fair play are very common and passions run high over them. The Sikhs, who are great at wrestling and other games of strength, have an annoying habit of stopping their match and letting go their grip to tie up their long hair which is constantly getting loose and streaming down over their faces; but when a real match is on, the wrestlers are careful to tie up their hair more firmly. To exercise their muscles and test their strength the men have a heavy weight of stone or wood with a handle to grasp it by, which they use much like a dumbbell (*muqdar*) raising it up

over the head in different positions, and sometimes they exercise with clubs as in an English gymnasium. A favourite trial of agility is to jump (*tap* or *chhál*) over a buffalo-cow, and it is amusing to see how patiently the old buffalo stands chewing the cud while one man holds her by the horns and the others in turn leap and tumble over her broad back, and with what evident relief she waddles back to the herd when the trial is over. A game often played by boys and youths (*jawán* or *gabhrú*) is *saunchí*, which is something like wrestling. The competitors throw off all their clothes except the loin-cloth and the *pagrí* and walk round and round challenging each other, while the old men, sitting in a ring round them encourage them with shouts of *taqre ho* (be strong!) Then two pair off and begin their struggle. One strikes the other with the palm of his hand on the chest and the other tries to seize and hold the striker's wrist. If the striker manages to strike three several blows without his arm being caught he has won, but if the man who is struck manages to seize the striker's arm and hold it firmly, despite his struggles to release it, he has won and retires leaping and slapping his biceps in triumph while the elders sitting around call out *shábásh* (bravo!) This *saunchí* is really a trial of strength, and in their struggles the one to hold and the other to escape, they wrestle and roll over each other on the ground.

There are numerous games played by small boys, in many of which they divide off into two equal parties in a way we used to employ in Scotland. Two of the biggest boys are chosen as captains or skips (*sardár*), and the others pair off, each pair going apart and agreeing on fancy names, such as "the sun and the moon", "the stick and the club," "the tiger and the leopard." Then each pair comes up in turn to the captains and says, "Will you have the sun or the moon?" The captain whose turn it is to choose says one name or the other, and the boy whose fancy title he names goes to his side, while his pair-fellow (*belí*) goes to the other captain's side. They have also a way of deciding which side is to begin a game like our spinning for first serve at lawn-tennis. One captain says to his opponent, "Right or wrong" (*sídhí yá ultí*?), and after the choice is made, kicks one of his shoes up into the air, and the right of beginning the game is determined by the shoe's falling right side up or wrong side up. In arranging a game they sometimes draw lots as we used to do by each drawing one of a number of unequal straws, the boy who draws the shortest straw being 'out.' Many of their games have no practical result, except the honour of victory (*jít*) or the shame of defeat (*hár*), but some of them give the victors (*ghorá*) the right of mounting on the backs of the defeated (*ghorí*) and riding them for a certain distance or a certain time: *e. g.*, so long as they take to count from one to a hundred. Some of the methods by which they determine this privilege are very simple. For instance in the game *dasá bíse* the two parties stand one at 10 paces, and the other at 20 paces, from a heap (*todá*) of earth as goal, and at the word "one, two, three—off!" (*bhágo*) one of each party starts off, the object of the one being to run his 10 paces, slap the goal ten times

and get back his 10 paces before the other who has 20 paces to run can reach the goal and then catch him. When all have had their turn the boys of the side which has gained most times mount the backs of the other side and ride them for a bit. In *chhori chhora* one captain says to the other, "Guess whose house I am thinking of in such and such a street in which there are two boys and a girl" and according as the guess is right or wrong the boys of one party mount the backs of the others, and are carried to the house named where they ask the good-wife, "Above above or below above" (*úpar ke úpar yá níche ke úpar*) and according to her answer they remain as they are or change places and so ride back to their play-ground. The game of *lukan chhippan* is exactly our hide-and-seek, and the catcher (whom in Scotland we used to call "it") is called "black-finger" (*kálí únglí*). In some games the children join hands in a ring and dance round one in the middle. The game of *dáṇí* or *khuddu khundí* is exactly our hockey, each side trying to drive the ball (*khuddu* or *dari*) with clubs (*khundi* or *gediya*) through its opponents' goal (*páná*). Sometimes the boys in the villages may be seen spinning the *lattu* which is made and spun exactly on the same principle as our top or peerie. *Ságar sidhi* is something like leap-frog; three boys stand one behind the other while other three leap on to their backs from behind. *Kavaddi* is something like prisoners' base or "Scotch-and-French;" the two parties take their places on opposite sides of a line, and one rushes across and touches an opponent and tries to get back without drawing breath, all the time shouting "*kavaddi kavaddi*" to show that he is not drawing breath. If he gets back in one breath, the opponent he has touched is dead (*margayá*), but if he is caught and held until forced to draw breath, he counts dead and goes out until the game is ended unless there is an exchange of prisoners. *Chappa mer* is like "pitch-and-toss", being played with rounded pieces of potsherd (*táma*) each player having two which they throw alternately, the object being to get near a mark, and the winner appropriating little bits of potsherd which are used as counters. *Charak chundi* is a combination of the whirl-go-round and the see-saw; a bent stick is balanced on an upright post stuck firmly in the ground; a boy gets on each end, and they are whirled round by a third. Girls are fond of swinging in a swing (*jhúl*) suspended from a tree, and on the third of Sáwan the women swing each other as a sort of religious ceremony. Babies too are often placed in a small swing (*hilola*) by way of cradle. The old men are fond of the game of *pása* which is something like backgammon, played with bits of *kankar* for "men" (*shaine*), and 6 shells (*kauri*) for dice, the "board" having 32 places arranged in the form of a cross. If one player's piece comes on to the same place as another's the latter is dead (*margáya*) and when a piece gets all round the board it is "ripe" (*pakgáya*).

Strolling bands of players, dancers, buffoons and acrobats, usually of the Nat or Bázígar tribes, go round the villages and perform for the amusement of the peasants. Their performances are not unlike what

one sees at home. For instance, one man balances a long bamboo, while another climbs up it and balances himself in various attitudes on the top; or a performer puts bent horns on his feet and walks along a rope balancing jars of water on his head; or an acrobat turns somersaults on a high stage, or with the help of a spring-board vaults over a camel's back, or jumps through a frame-work surrounded by swords. All these performances are usually accompanied by beating of kettle-drums and singing, and humourous conversation is kept up between the performers and a clown in the same way as in an English circus. Strolling musicians usually of the Kanjar tribe play and sing and are greatly in demand among the Musalmáns, especially the Wattus, who often get so enthusiastic with their music as to load them with extravagant presents. I found a number of Sikhs sitting at their village guest-house (*dharmsála*) listening to a wandering musician of the Tarkhán tribe who played on a stringed instrument (*sarangí*) and sang to it, accompanied by a Bhangí of the village. At another time I found Bágrí villagers listening to an old blind minstrel who played on a most primitive lute made out of a bamboo and a cocoanut and, accompanied by a little boy, sang plaintive lays of Rájputána. The Mirásís are professional musicians and are greatly in demand at all festivals with their stringed instruments and kettledrums (*dhol*) which they play in the usual monotonous style but with great enthusiasm, especially when elevated on a camel's back in a marriage procession. The Bágrí villagers have a peculiar sort of music. One man takes in his left hand a large tambourine (*daph*) which he plays by striking it with the points and knuckles of the fingers of his right hand, while the fingers of his left strike a straw against its edge. At intervals he gives a swing and a kick, and then begins to shout out a verse, while several others join in, sticking their heads close to the player's behind the tambourine and dancing round and round with him in a curious crouching dance. There does not seem much music in their song and the performers themselves explain that they are only trying to make as much noise (*raulá*) as they can.

Crime.

143. In the Sirsá district, according to the Annual Police Reports, the number of cognizable cases reported and convictions obtained has been as follows for the last three years, excluding Class VI or petty cases such as cases of public nuisance:—

Year.	Cases reported.	Convictions obtained.	Percentage.	Persons apprehended	Persons convicted.
1880	505	211	41·8	493	350
1881	535	218	40·74	496	313
1882	379	171	44·82	403	247

Including Class VI the total number of cognizable offences reported was 719 in 1881 and 682 in 1882 as follows :—

Class of case.	1881.	1882.	Average of five years (1868-72.)
Murder	3	3	2
Dacoity	2	1	1
Robbery	3	7	9
House-breaking	88	56	113
Cattle-theft	150	112	456
Ordinary theft	147	102	
Bad livelihood	47	62	not available.
Public nuisance	131	238	

Thus the number of cognizable cases (excluding Class VI) reported per 10,000 of total population was 20 in 1880 and 21 in 1882, while in those years the proportion for the whole Province was 18 and 17 respectively. It would thus seem that more crimes are committed in proportion to population in the Sirsá district than in the Panjáb as a whole, but the district seems to be much less criminal than it was ten years ago. The most important class of crime is cattle-theft, and the number of cases of this class reported has been as follows :—

In 1879.	In 1880.	In 1881.	In 1882.
161	129	150	112

or about three times the average for the Panjáb in proportion to population. It is only two generations since cattle-lifting raids on a large scale were common occurrences in the district and even so late as 1839 the Superintendent complained that bands of armed robbers on horses or camels made attacks on Sirsá villages and carried off their cattle and other moveables. The man who was most successful in lifting the cattle of his enemies, either by force or fraud, was honoured most among his fellows, and there is still a lingering feeling, especially among the Musalmáns, that cattle-stealing is an honourable occupation, so that their leading men, if not ready to engage in it themselves, are always ready to wink at it and help their fellow tribesmen to avoid detection ; and men who have distinguished themselves in helping the police to track such criminals are not popular among their neighbours. Some of the leading Bodlas and Wattus on the Satlaj have lately been placed on security for good behaviour because of their conniving at cattle-theft. The long distances between villages and the great length of frontier make it comparatively easy for the thief to take stolen cattle or camels out of the district into Pattiála or Bíkáner or across the Satlaj into Montgomery, and it is no doubt partly for this reason that the percentage of convictions to offences reported is comparatively low, so that the Sirsá district in this respect generally comes among the last ten of the thirty-two districts of the Panjáb. For protection against thieves the villages, especially those of the Bágrís, are often surrounded with a thick hedge of thorns or a deep ditch and have only one gateway (*phalsa*) which is closed at night by a gate or fence of thorns and is guarded by the village watchman that no suspicious

character may come in and that no cattle may get out; and at night-fall all the cattle are brought in from the fields into the village for security. When an animal is stolen, it is usual to employ a tracker, commonly of the Báwariya tribe, but it is not often that the animal can be tracked fast enough. Many of the cases of house-breaking and theft are committed by men of the Báwariya and Chúhra tribes, some of them professional thieves living in Pattiála territory, but there are no criminal tribes in the district whose profession as a tribe it is to steal. Even the Báwariyas as a rule are well behaved, although the Bidáwatí or Bíkánerí section are said to be given to crime; and the bands of Sánsís who sometimes wander through the district do little worse then pilfer grain from the fields. No tribe in this district is registered under the Criminal Tribes Act. Crime is said to be most prevalent in July, August and September when the people are busy in the fields with their kharíf crop or too tired to keep good watch at night, and of course the number of crimes varies greatly with the nature of the seasons, being much greater in years of scarcity than in years of plenty when grain is cheap. Indeed, considering the great distance of the fields from the villages and the number of stores of grain which are hardly protected at all, it is wonderful how few are the thefts of grain; the reason probably being that the people are generally well-off and have no difficulty in obtaining sufficient labour and food at a cheap rate.

Civil litigation.

144. The amount of civil litigation in the Sirsá district is on the whole less than for the Panjáb generally. The total number of civil suits instituted in the Sirsá district during the year 1882 was 2,765 or 109 per 10,000 of population, while the proportion for the whole Panjáb was 136 per 10,000; and of those 2,765, 936 related to proprietary right or occupancy right in assessed land. This large number of land suits is exceptional and due to the Settlement operations which led every man to look to his title and brought disputes to a head, and the number of civil suits is ordinarily much less than this; but it is evidently increasing, for the average number of suits instituted during the five years, 1868 to 1872, was only 1,150. There are comparatively few disputes between money-lender and agriculturist brought into court, partly perhaps because of the distance of the courts and the primitive nature of most of their transactions, but also partly because there is comparatively little indebtedness to money lenders who are thus seldom forced to bring suits against their debtors. The Ráins and the Sikhs are said to be prone to litigation regarding rights in land, but this is probably due to their higher cultivation and development and the consequent greater value of their land. The Bishnoís and the Musalmán Jhorars and Bháneke are especially given to quarrelling in words, but perhaps do not bring their disputes into court oftener than their neighbours.

General character and economic condition of the people.

145. Upon the whole, the material prosperity of the Sirsá peasantry is greater than in many other districts, if allowance be made for the climate and the natural draw-backs of living in such a country. It is true that they often drink bad water, live in

hovels, and endure great heat and much sand and dust, but they are accustomed to such discomforts and do not mind them, and the general health of the population is above the average of Indian peasantry. They have ordinarily no difficulty in obtaining plenty of good food and comfortable clothing; those who prefer a good house to a hovel have little difficulty in making one, and an unusually large proportion of the people have means enough to procure such utensils, comforts and ornaments as take their fancy. Notwithstanding the precarious yield of the harvests there is seldom any wide-felt scarcity at all approaching famine; for the population is still scanty as compared with the area, and the yield in good years is more than sufficient to support them and provide a surplus for bad years, and the people have learned from experience to store up grain against years of drought, while their general prosperity has enabled them to do so. The peasants generally are unusually free from debt and independent of the money-lender, and sales and mortgages of land by cultivating proprietors are unusually few. In a new country like this there is always a good deal of land-speculation in the early days of colonisation, and a number of villages have changed hands; but the sales have usually been made by land-jobbers or non-cultivating proprietors to whom rights had been granted in larger tracts of land than they could manage. This has been especially the case with the original Musalmàn inhabitants whose unthrifty habits have made it difficult for them to retain the proprietary rights conferred on them, and much land has already passed out of their hands. Some of it has gone into the hands of money-lenders, often non-resident, who cultivate their lands through tenants, but much of it has been transferred to Sikhs and Bágrís, who owing to their greater thrift and industry, are much better colonists than the Musalmáns; and even the Musalmáns, notwithstanding the loss of great part of the lands they formerly held, have benefited so much from the increase in the value of land and the greater security from vicissitudes of season and of civil strife that they are much more prosperous on the whole than they were two generations ago, when a much larger share of the land nominally belonged to them.

As is natural in a newly-colonised country, the people are unusually prone to wander. Not only are wandering homeless tribes and families more numerous than in older countries, but even after having lived in a place for some years a colonist, who is not getting on so well as he had hoped, thinks it no hardship to quit the village with his family, cattle and household goods and migrate to a more favourable spot. Especially in a year of scarcity such migrations are common and they are not necessarily a sign of distress. Indeed, the colonist often pays up his rent and settles all his debts and takes away with him a considerable amount of capital with which to start life afresh in a new village. As population increases, however, and land gets more scarce and capital accumulates, the people are becoming less migratory. The Sikhs are especially reluctant to leave the fields they have cultivated and learned to love, except when pressure of population drives some members of the family to move onwards leaving the

others in possession of the family holding and often retaining their rights in it. The Bágrís too are now settling down in their villages, though such tribes as the Báwariyas and Thoris are still very much given to wander, and Ods, Nats and Bázígars never settle anywhere for any length of time. Even the Musalmáns who two generations ago lived a wandering pastoral life, have now generally settled down in particular villages, though the poorer classes of Musalmáns are also very ready to migrate at the slightest hardship. Notwithstanding this rapid development of settled habits, the population is still much more shifting than in an ordinary Panjáb district.

As might be expected in a population developed on the borders of a desert, the ideas and habits of the people are very primitive. There is practically no education in the ordinary sense of the word, but the experience of generations has taught them much, and even the Bágrís, sluggish as their intellect is, are not wanting in a shrewd common-sense in matters of everyday life. Their life is not, for their ideas of comfort, at all a hard one, and they have much leisure and many opportunities for rest and amusement. Their enjoyments are not of a very refined nature, and consist chiefly in feasting on sweet and greasy foods, looking at rough sports, or listening to rude monotonous music; but to them these are real pleasures, and their lives are as a rule contented and cheerful, with a much greater share of pleasure than of pain. They can appreciate a joke if the point is not too fine, and can enjoy a hearty laugh among themselves, although unfortunately it is not thought good manners to laugh before a sáhib. They get excited over a wrestling-match or in a quarrel and abuse each other freely in words but rarely come to blows, and intoxication with the evils to which it leads is almost unknown. Their language is coarse and often obscene, and their manners are rough, but they have some idea of politeness and especially of hospitality. They are not so cringing and obsequious as the people of Hindustán proper, and indeed the Sikhs are very manly and independent, but unfortunately they are not free from the Oriental proneness to flatter. Among themselves they show great respect to the old and great tenderness to the young, and family affection is strong. They can subordinate their own self-interest to the good of the family generally, but their ideas of duty are not very wide-reaching, and most peasants would sacrifice truth and justice to the interests of their near relatives. Yet there is a great deal of fair dealing between man and man, and but little serious injustice done, though comparatively few cases come into our Courts. Their crimes seldom show any great moral depravity. Murders are few and are usually inspired by jealousy; cattle-thefts are common, but are from their point of view very venial offences. Owing to the universal practice of marrying all women early, to the strength of family ties and the closeness of family and village life, sexual immorality is probably very rare, although from the obscene allusions which are common in their ordinary talk, immoral ideas would seem to be familiar to them. In religion they are not bigots, nor are they slaves to superstition. Their pilgrimages are rather holidays

than hardships, and their religious ideas rarely cause them to inflict much discomfort on themselves or their neighbours. They have a vague idea that it is well to be good and wrong to do evil, and this is enough to keep their lives as a rule fairly free from vice and wrong-doing. They are on the whole a wonderfully peaceable, contented and law-abiding people, very easy to manage. There is nothing to dislike in the Bágrís, but they are so dull and coarse and wanting in spirit that one cannot admire them much; the Musalmáns are likeable for their frankness and spirit, but their comparative laziness and extravagance are objectionable; and it would be hard to find anywhere a better body of peasantry than the Sikh Jats, who are frank, spirited and independent without turbulence or arrogance, thrifty and industrious but not miserly, temperate in their habits and not wanting in intelligence, so that there is much in their character to admire, respect and like, and little to despise or disapprove.

CHAPTER IV.—The Produce of the District.

Total areas.

146. The following statement shows for each assessment circle and for each tahsíl the total area in acres as returned by (1) the patwáris' measurements of last Settlement made between 1853 and 1864; (2) the Revenue Survey made between 1876 and 1879; and (3) the present Settlement Survey made by the patwáris in 1880-81, with the percentage of difference.

Assessment circle and tahsíl.	Total area in acres by measurements of			Percentage of difference from Revenue Survey area.	
	Last Settlement, 1853—64.	Revenue Survey, 1876—79.	Present Settlement, 1880-81.	Of area by last Settlement.	Of area by present Settlement.
Bágar	1,80,258	1,74,351	1,73,809	+3·4	— ·3
Nálí	3,52,379	3,40,640	3,41,689	+3·5	+ ·3
Rohi	12,74,413	12,30,494	12,31,900	+3·6	+ ·1
Utár	1,19,749	1,15,440	1,15,668	+3·8	+ ·2
Hitár	66,109	61,436	60,372	+7·6	—1·7
Total of district ...	19,92,908	19,22,361	19,23,438	+3·7	+ ·1
Tahsíl Sirsá ...	6,58,184	6,35,819	6,35,158	+3·5	— ·1
„ Dabwálí ...	5,85,618	5,21,211	5,22,765	+2·7	+ ·3
„ Fázilká ...	7,99,106	7,65,331	7,65,515	+4·4	...

The difference of 1·7 per cent. in Chak Hitár between the measurements of the Revenue Survey and the present Settlement is due chiefly