

SONTHALIA

AND THE

SONTHALS.

BY

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Commissioner, Sonthal Pergunnahs.*

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PREFACE.

THE following pages consist of scraps often jotted down at the end of a long journey through the jungles, or when, solitary and tired, I passed away an evening after a hard day's work in Cutcherry.

I have attempted to convey to the reader the impressions that I have derived from my acquaintance with an interesting tribe.

Their traditions are noted as received from themselves or from the Reverend F. Lehman, and their customs as they came under my own observation.

The speculations in Chapters VIII and X are mentioned in the spirit of enquiry rather than in that of argument, and are condensed as much as possible.

In the Chapter on the origin of the Sonthal rebellion, I have given the opinion of the Sonthals on it. This opinion I have inferred from their chance expressions and desultory conversations, sometimes uttered while they were slightly under the influence of liquor, and therefore without caution in their speech. Whether their opinion is a correct one, or the contrary, I leave an open question ; but I have no doubt as to the genuineness of the expression of their feelings, and that “out of the fulness of their hearts their mouths have spoken.”

I am indebted to the Reverend Messrs. F. Lehman and J. Phillips for their kind assistance in the Sonthali language and songs, for which I render my best thanks ; as well as to the Hon'ble G. Campbell for his Ethnological List, and to Colonel T. Dalton, Commissioner of Nagpore, for his paper on the Coles.

E. G. M.

CALCUTTA,
January 1st, 1867. }

TO

THE HONORABLE ASHLEY EDEN,

WHO INITIATED THE VILLAGE SYSTEM IN SONTHALIA,
WHICH PROVED TO BE THE FIRST STEP
TOWARDS RAISING THE SONTHALS FROM
A STATE OF MISERY AND HATRED TO
THE GOVERNMENT, TO COMPARATIVE
PROSPERITY AND
CONTENTMENT,

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED WITH ALL ESTEEM,

HIS OBEDIENT SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

ERRATA.

Page 8, line 17, for “in,” read “near.”

„ 24 „ 27, for “by means,” read “by their means.”

„ 59 „ 10, for “Sandrocottus,” read “Sandrocattus.”

„ 63 „ 5, for “Ζευς ἀρχη, Ζευς μεσσα Διος ἐν
παντα τετυκται,” read “Ζεὺς ἀρχη
Ζεὺς μέσσα, Διὸς ὄρκ πάντα
τετυκται.”

„ 68 „ 3 & 11, for “Huq,” read “Huc.”

„ 76 „ 18, for “Baba,” read Ay “Baba.”

„ 81 „ 2, for “arriere pensee,” read “arrière pensée.”

„ 88 „ 26, for “villages,” read “villagers.”

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SONTHALIA

AND THE

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CHAPTER I.

Situation of Tribes, their peculiarity—Geography of their settlement—Sonthalia Proper—Similarity of customs—Numbers—"Friend of India"—Former prosperity—Increase of population—Unexpected Rebellion.

AT the foot of a range of basaltic and carboniferous hills extending from the banks of the Ganges in Latitude $26^{\circ} 10'$ North, and $87^{\circ} 10'$ East Longitude, and forming the North-Eastern portion of the Vindhya Mountains, there exists an uncouth, truth-telling, savage tribe, differing entirely from their immediate neighbours in their physique, habits, and superstitions. They are interesting as a race—the only race I can bring to recollection—which seems to live in a condition of comparative

happiness and prosperity, yet hopelessly addicted to intemperance, and who, as a weak people after a rebellion against a strong and powerful Government, although beaten, gained their end. I have been for a few years amongst them, and have dotted down what I saw and heard of their manners and customs, hoping that these few scraps may wile away a leisure hour for those interested in the study of ethnology. The Sonthals—for it is anent that tribe I write—inhabit the jungles stretching along the foot of the Rajmehal hills, and seldom squatting further than a day's journey from the uplands, have gradually pushed their way through wood and swamp, until the smoke from their villages rises under the shade of a large portion of the South-Eastern ridge of the Vindhya, lying in the Districts of Birbhoom, Burdwan, Midnapore, and Cuttack.

As my acquaintance with them has been for the most part confined to Sonthalia Proper, which more immediately includes and surrounds the Rajmehal hills, it is somewhat difficult to state whether a people so greatly increased and multiplied, and spread over such a large tract of country, have kept up intact, in other districts, the same traditions and habits as

in Sonthalia; but from a casual interview with an intelligent Sonthal in Midnapore, I discovered his ideas of his race, his religious ceremonies, and all his customs were identical with those mentioned by another of his tribe at Simra, in the Bhaugulpore District; and these two places are some 300 miles apart.

Regarding their numbers, the Rev. J. Phillips, of Jellasore, in the preface to his useful Grammar of the Sontali language, states—"In the Moharbunja, the Sontals are reputed to form three-eighths of the entire population. They are known to be numerous in the different native states all the way from Orissa to the Rajmchal hills in Behar, where they form a large and enterprising community." The *Friend of India* gives a very animated description of them in that vicinity. Speaking of Mr. Pontet, who had special charge of their Revenue collections, the *Friend* says:—

"With little more jurisdiction than that of a Deputy Collector, he (Mr. Pontet) has acquired among this wild people a power which is almost regal. He has increased the revenue paid to Government from two thousand to forty-three thousand rupees a year, and this with so little oppression, that the Sontals have

increased in number to 82,795 souls, inhabiting upwards of fourteen hundred villages. The most unobservant wayfarers can instantly discover the circle of Mr. Pontet's jurisdiction; for whereas beyond it there are villages containing five thousand inhabitants without one solitary hackery, within it there are broad roads from village to village, and the country is alive with the activity of a quiet and prosperous people."

It is now more than sixteen years from the time the above was written, and since then the Sonthals, always uncommonly prolific, must have nearly doubled those numbers in that once charmed spot so well described. It would be quite impossible, spread as the tribe is over such a vast tract of country, to give anything like an approximate estimate of their total, but, judging from analogy, I should certainly be led to presume that 300,000 souls would give a margin very much within their real amount.

A tacit satire upon the able article quoted above is offered by the fact that, some time after it was written, this very contented, happy, and prosperous people rose up, goaded to rebellion, by the wrongs they were suffering, and fought until their hearths were bathed in

blood, their villages burnt, and themselves, in the district towards Deoghur, reduced to a state of starvation and utter misery. In their case, at any rate, coming events had not cast their shadows before.

Viewing the case as it appears now, dimly looming through the vista of the past, the writer was justified by his facts, and founded right conclusions on them. The tribe was outwardly prosperous and happy, but the Mahajun, or money-lender, was even then silently pushing his trade amongst them; and when hard times and bad seasons came, the canker hid in the bloom of apparent peace and happiness showed itself, and in their struggle to shake off the incubus, the pleasant chimera collapsed.

CHAPTER II.

Oral tradition—Documents—Early origin—Language—Absence of honorific or inferior pronouns—Their independence—Freedom from slavery—His industrious habits—The Bengali ryot with reference to the Sonthali.

THE past history of a people unblessed with a written dialect, and whose language consists of a vocabulary just sufficient for the wants of uncivilized life, must necessarily be vague and meagre, as oral tradition has alone to be trusted. In this case it is assisted by a few meagre statements culled from old manuscripts, in which the name of the tribe is found incidentally mentioned, while the pith of the document generally relates to some other matter—an account of a raid, or the report of some Collector's tour. However, it is more my purpose to recount what the Sonthals think of themselves, of their own origin and history, rather than to attempt a learned disquisition on

their derivation, or an enquiry into what others may have found out for, or think of them.

A portion of the great Cole family, their language is, with few shades of variation, common to the Máháles, Kodas, Munda Bhumijas, and others of that race. A somewhat remarkable characteristic of their simplicity and freedom is to be noticed in the fact that, in their own proper tongue, there is no honorific or inferior pronoun by which a superior may be addressed, or a dependant ordered. The first person plural is the person in which the Sonthal addresses almost all, and backed up with a slap on the back (his usual style of greeting in his cups), it implies great friendship and intimacy. Their servants are treated as one of the family; and all, without exception, prefer the depths of the jungle to the more cleared approaches of civilized life. The Sonthal seems to have kept himself free from the slavery which has been the curse of the inhabitants of Bengal and other parts of India. His happy exemption from an oppression sufficient to break his independent spirit, probably lies in the fact that the plunder to be obtained would never have paid the followers of an Aurungzebe or an Akbar, for the trouble of looting him in his

fastnesses; especially as his settlements were always far removed from any large cities or important places from whence he could easily have been got at.

Should it happen, as was once the case in the neighbourhood of Peerpointee, that some tyrannical Rajah raises his fortress near the Sonthal clearings, the philosophic savage bears the unwonted oppression for a little while, and is then up and away with his goods and chattels, piles his Lares and Penates on his "sugur" or buffalo wain, and retreats deeper into the jungles to contest with the fierce lords of the forest the possession of the virgin soil. Soon the blows of his axe make the welkin ring; his wattle shed, buried amidst the foliage, rises in the new clearing; he sticks up his bamboo, with a tuft of straw on the top of it, as a rural sign of possession, and generally sure of good crops from land lain fallow for ages or never tilled by mortal man before; he throws oppression and dull care to the dogs, and spends all his leisure in feasting, drinking, and hunting. His ideas about rent used to be of the vaguest description, but civilization has now taught him that he must pay even for his jungle clearing.

An existence such as described above naturally inculcates a habit of rollicking independence in the Sonthal, and as it leads him to pay little outward respect to strangers, he never troubles himself about the use of honorific pronouns or other conventionalities of a more polite state of society.

His life is that of a primitive Backwoodsman, free and untrammelled by social or traditional prejudices. As the pioneer of civilization, however, he clears the way for an evil he would fain wish to avoid—contact with the Bengali; for, as already noticed, when cultivation reaches a certain point through the exertions of the Sonthal, the astute Bengali ryot generally contrives to slip in and gain possession of the land thus prepared. The former, no match for the wily cunning of the invader, finds that he is getting poorer and poorer the nearer the Bengali approaches: he therefore resigns his holding to retreat further into the jungle. In Midnapore, where Mr. Terry (the Manager of extensive Indigo plantations) formerly saw crowds of Sonthals, he now finds the jungle cleared, with Bengali squatters in possession of the old Sonthal holdings. That gentleman's experience extends from the time

10 *Sonthalia and the Sonthals.*

when there were more than one hundred square miles of jungle with scarcely a human inhabitant. He has seen the Sonthals come and settle there, clear and prepare the land, and then disappear to make room for the Bengali.

CHAPTER III.

*Mr. Sutherland's Report of 1817—Derivation of name—
Seeboo of Simra—Origin of Tribe—Vermin eaters
—Physique—Male and Female Sonthal—High status
of the Female—Their large families—Their content-
ment—Vices—Missionary endeavours—Conversions
—The Sonthali character—"Evil communications
corrupt good manners."*

IN a very able report by Mr. Sutherland, who when Joint Magistrate of Monghyr, about the year 1817, was specially deputed to make an investigation into the state of the landed tenures of the hill people, or Paharees resident on the Rajmehal Hills, I find the following incidental remarks regarding the Sonthals, or Sonthars, as that gentleman termed them. He writes:—"Within these latter years, very considerable tracts of the extensive forests which here existed, have been brought into gradual cultivation by the industrious *Sonthars*, who emigrate from the Beerbhoom and Ramghur Districts, and even from the Nagpore

Territory." The lapse of half a century, with its many changes, has told upon the word *Sonthar*, which is now corrupted into *Sonthal*; but according to an old Sonthal manjee, in whose society I have beguiled many an hour, the word *Sonthal*, or *Sonthar*, is quite a mongrel epithet. The old savage would often seat himself on his plough, and while watching his workpeople as they twisted the tails of the unwilling buffaloes, employed in treading out the last year's *dhan*, he would expatiate on the derivation of his race, and lay down the law very freely. I am constrained to say that he was most amusing when under the influence of gin, or *puchwae*, and only would shine, in narrating tales of his youth, when "half seas over." According to his rendering, his tribe first came from a place called "Chai Jumba" (so he pronounced it), in the Nagpore District, but having been greatly oppressed by a certain Mahdeo Sing, they were obliged to quit his neighbourhood, and retreating into the jungles lying to the north-east of their former habitation, cleared and cultivated their forward course until they settled in their present places. A small tribe, originally united for self-protection, they first called themselves, and

were called, *Shaitals*, which in course of time became corrupted into Sonthars, and now Sonthals. Some of them state that they were originally *Kewars*, and that while in the jungle, suffering great privation, a *Deb* or spirit (probably the spirit of hunger) put it into their heads to eat rats, snakes, field-mice, and other vermin. They at once took the hint, and thriving on and liking the fare, have ever since continued to indulge in it whenever an opportunity offered.

The ethnological characteristics of the Sonthals distinguish them from all other races in India, nomadic or civilized. The men are of middling stature and remarkably well made, with darker skins than the Bengalis. They have strong limbs, somewhat thick lips, and in many instances their cast of countenance almost approaches to the Negro type. They wear their hair, which is long and coarse, tied in a knot on the top of the head, the ends hanging down from the centre like a Dragoon's plume, which gives them a wild, savage appearance. Their foreheads can hardly be termed high or classical; but they possess a sparkling black eye, and an open, jovial countenance, which further acquaintance with them does

not wholly belie. In the majority of instances the face is with them a true index to their character, which is of a free, bold, jovial turn. Formerly, a Sonthal, as a rule, disdained to tell a falsehood, but the influences of civilization, transfused through the contagious ethics of his Bengali neighbours, have somewhat impaired his truthfulness. In the last four or five years a great change for the worse has become evident, although even now, as a people, they are glorious exceptions to the prevailing idiosyncrasy of the lower class of natives in Bengal. With the latter, speaking the truth has been always an accident; with the Sonthal it was a characteristic principle.

The women, when young, possess good looks and fine figures—that test of beauty in the eyes of the ancient Romans:—

“Formam aptat modico pueris, majore puellis
Murmure, cum Veneris fanum videt anxia mater
Usque ad delicias notorum, cur tamen, inquit,
Corripias? pulchrâ gaudet Latona Diana.”*

* “The anxious mother, at the shrine of Venus, prays softly for the boys a moderate share of beauty, but for the girls she begs aloud a form complete, even to the greatest nicety. Why, says she, do you blame me? Was not Latona glad to see Diana fair?”—*Juv. Sat. x.*

They are also lively, and generally chaste; they have small hands and feet, and, to use an Homeric simile, are ox-eyed; not being given too young in marriage, they wear better than the women of most eastern climes, and hold a much higher status in the family circle than their less fortunate sisters. They also enjoy the advantage of reigning alone in their husbands' wigwam, as there is seldom, if ever, a second wife or concubine to divide his affections—polygamy, although not exactly prohibited, being not very popular with the tribe.

Blessed with amazingly large families,—nine olive-branches being a common number to one man's quiver,—healthy, clean, and industrious, with few troubles except an occasional dunning visit from the mahajun, and with sufficient to eat and drink, particularly where they hold their lands direct from the Government of Bengal without the intervention of any landholder or middleman, as they do in Sonthalia Proper, they lead peaceful, happy lives, avoiding, as much as possible, all intercourse with outsiders, and varying their time, alternately, with the hard work of jungle clearing and husbandry, and with feasting, hunting, and revelry. Drunkenness, one of the two evils

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already referred to, and despite all the maxims and moralizings against it, does not seem in their case either to palsy their industry, sap their home affections, or ruin their constitutions. Old Seeboo, of Simra, the Sonthal mentioned at the commencement of this chapter, one day confidentially informed me that it was his custom, not only to put himself and his family under the influence of Bacchus once a year, but also to force liquor down his animals' throats, and to make them participate in the general debauchery. He naïvely remarked that, as the poor brutes did their fair share of their masters' work, they had an equitable right to participate in their masters' revelry. An active Missionary, who has labored with zeal and earnestness to convey the light of the Gospel to them, was once told by an old manjee that there was no objection to his preaching in their villages, and to his establishing schools in their midst: moreover, as the Sonthal children seemed to improve under tuition, the headmen even looked upon their conversion to Christianity with a favorable eye.—“But,” continued the old reprobate, “does your God allow us old people to get drunk twice a week?” “No!” replied the Missionary, aghast

at the question. "Then," said the manjee, turning on his heel, "teach our boys and girls, but leave us alone." I fear that amongst the older Sonthals the good seed is cast upon dry and stony ground, and that there is but slight chance of converting any of the race after their youth is past. The majority have such strong constitutions, and are so hardened in drinking, that they are seldom cursed with that which is, at any rate, a temporary incentive to repentance—a splitting headache the next morning. They seem to carry out to the full the principle—"To eat, drink, and be merry, and care nought for the morrow."

"Vivite contenti casulis et collibus istis,"
O pueri, Marsus dicebat et Hernicus olim
Vestinusque senex ; panem quæramus aratro
Qui satis est mensis : laudant hoc numina ruris,
Quorum ope et auxilio, gratæ post munus aristæ.*

* "Live content, my boys, with your cottages and your rugged hills, said honest Marsus and Hernicus and old Vestinus in former days. Let us get bread by the plough sufficient for our tables; the rural gods applaud our diligence: it was their bounty and assistance that bestowed upon us the use of corn."—*Juvenal Sat. XVI.*

Sir Bulwer Lytton says, "Contentment is the absence of an object to be gained, or indifference as to its attainment—either ignorance or lethargy." The Sonthal is an example of this definition; for as long as he can feel his skin tight as the head of a drum, his stomach well filled with rice and rats, or some such delicacy, and his head muzzy with *puchwacc*, contented and lethargic, he yearns for nothing else.

When I see a party of Sonthal women wending their way through the forest in Indian file, with their wood or market produce on their heads, and singing in unison, the following lines often occur to me as expressing the poetical meaning of their refrain:—

"Common is the vital air,
Common is the azure sky,
Common flowers are everywhere,
Common stars shine out on high :
Music of the forest bird
Cometh without stint or measure,
Friendly smile and loving word,
Common are as joy and pleasure :
Why from common things then turn,
And for the uncommon yearn ?"

So conservative are the Sonthals, that when

Mr. Pontet, who ruled them for many years, wished them to plant potatoes and gave every encouragement, they refused—saying, their fathers lived long enough without the vegetable, and why should not they ?

They are not cruel or vindictive, but open and honest, gentle and very obliging, kind and trusty, but superstitious, like the majority of untutored people who are buried in amidst the wilds and beauties of nature, and easily led. That the Sonthal is industrious, the cleared country at the base of the Vindhya, from Bhaugulpore to Cuttack, attests. May there never be wanting jungle for him to clear, or vermin and strong drink to fill his vacuum. Thus may their highest aspirations be summed up.

The following is the opinion of a Missionary as to the Sonthali morals and character. He has labored long amongst them; and, without entirely endorsing all he states, yet, as his ideas on the subject are entitled to great weight from his constant intercourse with the tribe, I insert his remarks in their integrity. He adds:—

“The morals of the Sonthal are, generally speaking, low, although they know little or

“ nothing of the pure refined villainy of the Hin-
“ doos. They send away their wives at their
“ pleasure for a trifling offence. I believe that
“ they are nevertheless good husbands and wives,
“ and affectionate parents, who will starve cheer-
“ fully as long as their children have enough to
“ eat. On their word one can rely better than on
“ that of other natives of the lower castes.
“ Nevertheless the great truthfulness which was
“ said to exist amongst them was a fancy, or
“ has disappeared. I believe they do not cheat
“ as a body in business transactions, which
“ may be more a negative virtue of theirs, they
“ being generally so ignorant. They don't steal,
“ and I believe there are no beggars amongst
“ them in ordinary times. There are in every
“ village virgins who have passed their usual
“ time of marriage, which generally takes place
“ for the female at the age between 14 and
“ 18.” He continues, “ They are a cheerful
“ race, and take troubles in an easy manner as
“ they come (on the principle of ‘ what can't be
“ cured must be endured'.) Their women par-
“ ticularly show a pleasing, naïve freedom in
“ conversation; free without being bold. They
“ are trusting to people whom they know, very
“ peaceably disposed, and offences are punished

“amongst them by heavy fines often quite disproportionate to the offence. A certain amount as a fine, varying according to the heaviness of the crime, is sufficient to put right again all kinds of offences. There is no quarrelling or wrangling amongst the females; they are frugal, can make a meal out of anything, but given much to drink, under which influence they sometimes act with great ferocity.”

It is greatly to be regretted that the respect they paid to truth should be so quickly passing out of their minds. Evil communications are exercising their baneful influences over them, and soon, I fear, the proverbial veracity of the Sonthal will become a by-word. I was drawn towards them by their natural, open, and joyous bearing, and allowing for their superstitions and ignorance, they were a race that, in the course of a long sojourn amidst, it was impossible not to feel a deep interest in. But my mind was repelled with disgust when, after an absence of three years, I returned to find my high notions of them almost demolished by the change which has over-taken them in that brief interval—a gradual declining towards repulsive shuffling and chicanery. I believe the general opinion of persons who know them

well is, that they are falling from their pristine innocence fast, and having once got a motive power for evil on them, they are going down hill like a rolling tub,—gaining greater impetus, the nearer it gets to the bottom,—“*facilis decensus Averni!*”

CHAPTER IV.

Influence of outward impressions on Sonthali character—Polybius' remarks—Wordsworth's remarks—Tennyson—Inferences drawn therefrom—Conversation with Sonthals—Their Belief in the Supernatural and Witchcraft—Susceptibility if ridiculed, and consequent reticence.

IT has often been remarked that the soil on, and climate in, which a man is born, and the scenery amidst which he is brought up, has a great deal to do with the bent of his thoughts and habits, and imperceptibly influences his character. This power is all the greater in circumstances where the advantages of education have not been enjoyed; as by that means alone a man can always raise himself, to some extent, above the level of outward impressions. I think it is to be questioned, however, whether, even in the strongest mind, education can ever entirely eradicate that affinity which exists between outward impressions and their influence on the emotions. For instance, a country inn on

a wet day, with nothing but a stable-yard to look into and an old directory to read, would not tend to impress the most educated with anything but a sensation of dulness. Neither would a moor call forth lively associations, when contemplated in company with a tired horse on a misty, drizzly November's afternoon, and with twenty dreary miles to traverse before home is reached. Nature according to its different guises acts upon the feelings of all, and the longer a man is under the influence of one of them, the more permanent will be the impression. The impressions on all may not be entirely the same, but that it does act more or less according as the minds of each are constituted, I think there is little doubt. Wordsworth, in his "Historical Greece," allows the above proposition to be proven, although at the same time he states that the *charms of music* have a power sufficient to counteract the effects produced. After describing the scenery and climate of the country and the blessings of the pipe, the favorite musical instrument of the swains of Greece, he adds—

"The social character of the people was
"beneficially affected by these influences. They
"were beguiled by means of the rudeness which

“they would otherwise have derived from the
“ruggedness of their soil, and from the inclemency of their climate ; and thus, by a happy
“and beneficent compensation of nature, the
“same causes which gave them impulses towards
“a rigid and savage mode of existence, supplied
“the most efficient means for reclaiming them
“from those tendencies and leading them to
“habits more refined.” Such then, he continues,
“were some of the results produced by soil and
“climate.”

Polybius, whom Wordsworth also quotes, when remarking on the manners and characters of the inhabitants of Cynætha, is of the same opinion.

The overhanging hills, the deep dells, the wind agitating the fluttering leaves of the trees,—the noise of which was to the ancient as the groans of the damned spirits of unjust men ; the lights and shades thrown by the setting sun over the gorgeous lichens and jungle foliage, have (in my opinion) impressed the Sonthal with an indefinable feeling of superstition and a desire to venerate something,—has caused his uncultivated imagination to run riot, and to people the woods and springs with ghostly beings, who are, in his estimation, generally

more powerful for evil than good, and to be propitiated with sacrifices—

“Are God and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil dreams?”

His traditions touch upon a future state, but bear an impress of a wild, weird-like character. He believes in the immortality of the soul, or rather that there is an existence of some sort beyond death.

“The wish that of the living whole
No life may fail beyond the grave,
Derives it not from what we have,
The likest God within the soul?”

I presume that his solitary life in the midst of the jungles, where, for a great part of the year, he has comparatively nothing to do, and but few distractions, gives nature a chance of impressing him with her grandeur and of working on the “divine essence” which Tennyson alludes to above, as the hand of the phrenologist by pressing the bumps of his mesmerised subject is said to work on and elicit the corresponding emotions. The drawback is that, having no education to guide, or strong intellect to direct him, his vague sense of veneration degenerates

into gross superstition, and his ideas of a future state coalesce into an insane fancy.

That he does think more than a casual observer would imagine, I strongly believe; and of his brain being bewildered with superstitious visions, I have often had an opportunity of judging. Sometimes, while returning from shooting, I have been attracted by the shrill sounds of his fife, and come up to a fine specimen of the male animal—some village dandy—with his beads round his neck, his bracelets on his wrists, and the end of his hair hanging over his top-knot, like the plume on a horseguard's helmet. It takes but a little time to strike up a conversation with him, and if one is fortunate enough to be accompanied by an attendant from his own tribe, and rid of all cringing chupprassies from one's heels (a plan which I was fond of adopting), he will allow himself to be drawn out in a manner, that would astonish those accustomed only to see him with that stupid, stolid look he is so capable of putting on when interrogated, and not knowing what may happen next.

[Scene opens, and discloses Sonthal sitting under a tree; Saheb, pushing his way through the jungle, stops and thus addresses him].:—

Sahab.—You drink spirits, my son ?

Sonthal.—Yes, “*ma-bap ! !*”*

[*Sahab* takes out his brandy-flask ; old *Seeboo*, his only attendant, seizes hold of the knob of hair on the crown of our *Adonis*' head and forcibly pulls it back, until his mouth opens and his eyes look as if they were starting out of their sockets. He then has about a wine-glassful of brandy-and-water poured down his throat, after which, although half choked, he slaps his stomach and relaxes into a broad grin.]

Seeboo, in apparent absence of mind, retreats after this manœuvre, and holding his right hand up to his mouth, pours into its palm half the remains of the brandy, and thus slyly drinks it without spilling a drop ; looking very innocent the while. He then generally contrives to screw on the top of the flask the wrong way—and squats down smacking his lips. This little episode over, the conversation continues—

Sahab (gravely).—I hear there is a spirit (*Bhoot*) near that spring in the hollow. Is it true ? Are there any *Bhoots* about here ?

Sonthal (looking up suspiciously).—Yes ! father-and-mother, they say so, and there are

* A term of respect—mother and father.

two witches up in that village west of the Janeera, besides the Bhoot in the hollow.

Saheb.—*Bapre!* that's very difficult to hear. How do you know there are witches?

Sonthal.—The Puchayet (an assembly of all the old men of the neighbouring villages, sometimes to the number of thirty or forty) have said so.

This is quite sufficient for him; what the "ten men" say must be true; he never thinks of questioning it, and if the Puchayet ordered him to go and kill those witches—although ordinarily a quiet, well-disposed person—he would beat them to death, and glory over the atrocity.

I must explain that ten men does not mean the numeral ten, but may mean from three to one hundred, or any number of persons selected to try a case.

I recollect, in this instance particularly, hearing words crop out which clearly demonstrated the deep superstitious feelings with which the Sonthals are imbued. No reasoning with them, nor ridicule, can disabuse them of their belief in witches, and of the necessity of their being at once murdered; and if they notice a smile or any gesture of disbelief while they are

speaking on the subject, they "shut up" at once, and one may as well try to get blood out of a stone as any more information from them. It is not, however, so many years ago that in our own civilized isle many unfortunate women were burnt at the stake, and bullied to death, with much more refined brutality than the Sonthal ever shows. History also leads us to imagine that if any one dared to ridicule the popular notions of the English boor, or expostulate at one of those barbarous exhibitions of ferocity common to the "good old times," he or she stood a good chance of sharing the punishment with the witch—an unpleasant liberality which the Sonthal is not guilty of showing to those not agreeing with his tenets, and bold enough to tell him so.

CHAPTER V.

Poetical feeling of the Sonthal—A love ditty—Their tunes—Traditions—Formation of the world—The first man and woman—Their family of seven sons and seven daughters—Licentiousness at their feasts—Similarity to old heathen mythology in their traditions.

THERE is a dash of poetical feeling in the composition of the Sonthals which shows itself in their traditions. Their songs generally allude to birds and flowers, and, unlike the lyrics of their neighbours, are remarkably free from obscenity. The tunes also which they play on their flutes are often attempts at the imitation of the notes of birds, or have a wild, melancholy cadence, which, heard in the depths of the jungle, sounds pleasing on the ear.

The following is the song of a love-sick girl:—

The Richie bird's (osprey) voice is heard on the mountain, then the people feel pity—

Oh, mother, at midnight the peacock's tail can be seen on the top of the hills, and in the valley.

My brother observes the Sikiyan flower (a large white one) upon the dried-up tree—

The parrot has her young ones ; oh, aunt, when will you dandle my children, when will you, my aunt?

The cock crows in the morning, the turtle-dove builds its nest in the garden,

Oh, my mother, come and see it.

From the steep sides of the mountain, I hear a pair of flutes,

And below in the valley the beating of a drum.*

She is supposed to disappear in the direction of the flutes, where we will leave her.

Their traditions concerning the origin of mankind, and the formation of the world, show that amongst some of the Sonthals there is both imagination to invent, and memory to retain, the numerous stories handed down. The following is their version of the creation of the world and its inhabitants:—

“In the beginning there was only water on the earth.

“A water god, ‘Lita Kutree’ or ‘Márang Buru,’ was flying over the water, when he dropped two feathers from his wings.

“These settled on the top of the waters,

* The Sonthali for all these songs will be found in Bengali and the Roman character at the end of the volume.

and floated about for many days, when they suddenly became transformed into a goose and gander.

“ This goose and gander began at once to fly about between the water and the sky.

“ Then said Márang Buru, the chief Banga or spirit, ‘ Where shall I put them ?

“ ‘ In the midst of the waters there is a white lily. Who will raise the earth for me ?’

“ The Hákkó (a fish) offered his services, but failed in his endeavours.

“ Upon this the Kaskorn (lobster) came and volunteered for the business, but could not effect it; for as soon as he had raised the earth a little, it was washed away again by the floods.

“ A spirit called Bangomáki was called and asked if he could raise the earth. ‘ Yes,’ he answered, ‘ but I shall not be able to do so alone.’

“ Then the Horoh (tortoise) came to his help, and took the earth on its head, and with the assistance of a chain tied to its four feet, it attempted the task.

“ The tortoise tried hard, but could not succeed, and was followed by the earthworm.

“ The Lende (earthworm) then lifted the earth upon the leaf of the white lily.

“When this was accomplished, Márang Buru descended (from Olympus).

“Márang Buru then compressed the earth with his own feet, and caused the green grass to sprout, and the roots to descend into the ground.

“Thus the earth and the vegetation thereon were formed.”

The following are their ideas of the formation of mankind:—

“It came to pass that the Sirom (a kind of coarse grass) sprang up luxuriantly, and the goose and gander, after flying about for twelve years, descended into it, and in process of time the female laid two eggs.

“While they were being hatched, two human beings came into existence, and when the period allowed for incubation had expired, they duly came forth from their shell—one a male, and the other a female.

“Then Chando (god) said to Márang Buru “(chief spirit, or Bonga) ‘Go and bring them to me that I may see them.’

“When they came into the presence of Chando, the human beings were already grown into full size, but they were both naked.

“The man and woman were giants.

“Chando commanded clothes to be brought.

“Then they brought one piece of cloth of
“ten cubits, and the other piece of twelve cubits
“in length.

“When the clothes were produced, then
“Chando addressed himself to the human beings
“saying:

“‘Children! where have you come to? Do
“you know, my children, that I have come to
“visit you?’

“‘Yes,’ said they, ‘we know that well enough.’

“‘Well then,’ replied he, ‘put these pieces of
“cloth on first.’

“So saying heⁿ ordered the piece of ten
“cubits to be given to the male, and the piece of
“twelve cubits to be given to the female.

“The cloth for the male covered his middle
“in front and behind.

“The cloth for the female partly veiled her
“bosom also.

“When this was accomplished, Márang
“Buru was commanded to bring them again
“before Chando.

“Márang Buru having called them his
“grandchildren, then asked them if they would
“pay attention to what he had now to say to
“them.

“They both signified their obedience.

“After this he gave them leaven, and told them to prepare from it *hāndi*, their home-made liquor.

“This preparation required four days, during which the leaven had to ferment.

“On the fourth day they received a visit from Mārang Buru, who asked them as follows:—

“‘My children, have you put by that *hāndi* or *harri*?’

“They answered at once ‘Yes, O grandfather!’

“‘Then bring it to me and let me see it,’ he said.

“When he had seen it, he told them to add water to it, which was at once done.

“Then Mārang Buru ordered them to fill the *phuru* (a leaf-cup, or dish made of leaves from which the Sonthals are accustomed to drink their liquors).

“Upon this they did so, and then asked him respectfully to drink, but he refused and said: “‘Stop! there is something that must first be done.’

“In surprise, they asked what it was.

“Then Mārung Buru took the cup and

“offered from it a libation. (This is always now done at every sacrifice, as will be noticed hereafter.

“When he had accomplished this he encouraged them to drink, and they wanted him to join them, but he refused, excusing himself by urging that he had to go home!

“After this they both drank until they were drunken.

“When Márung Buru returned” (tradition mentioneth not whither he had gone), “he found that they were very drunk.

“Up to this time each of them had slept in different places, but now, when Márung Buru saw them so drunken, he dragged them along, and shut them up together in one little room.

“On the next morning, when the two human beings awoke, they found themselves for the first time on the bridal couch together.

“Then early on that day, when Márang Buru came to visit them, and saw that they had slept with each other, he said to them :

“ ‘What, grandchildren, have you not yet risen, eh? It seems that you were drunk yesterday. Fie upon you! How did this come to pass?’ He then left them.

“It happened in course of time, while they

“still remained in that place, that they began
“to dandle seven male and seven female chil-
“dren on their knees.

“It also happened that after this they dis-
“pleased a powerful spirit—‘Mirjadurrik.’”

Some Sonthals say that this means a Mussulman King, who raised such a persecution against them, that they were forced to hide themselves from his anger in thick jungles.

The incident which Márang Buru remarked upon is well remembered by all the Sonthals of both sexes now, and the meeting of their two first parents, while intoxicated, is always the excuse for any accidents that may occur of a like kind at one of their drinking feasts, termed the “Soharai.” So lenient are they in this respect, that the fee which covers wounded virtue and honor lost at this festival is but trifling ; a graduated scale being used, varying according to whether a maid, wife, or widow is concerned.*

* I am afraid Mr. Seeboo's morals were not quite so good as they might be. He is my authority for the statement concerning their leniency in the above cases. It often happens, however, that should a girl be implicated and not married directly afterwards, she is turned out of doors by the parents.

It is fortunate for the morality of the tribe that it is only at a certain season that this feast is observed, otherwise their character for chastity would scarcely stand so well as it does at present.

I dare say the story of the eggs, mentioned at the commencement of the chapter, will sound somewhat familiar to the students of a more refined mythology. It first struck on my ear as if, while a schoolboy, I had heard it before in the tale of Leda and the Swan; but as I find the tradition is well known amongst the tribe; and the Rev. F. Lehman, a Missionary among them, agrees with me with regard to its authenticity, I insert it precisely as I received it.

CHAPTER VI.

Mirjadurrik—Dispersion of the first parents—Chatro Champa—Names of the tribes—Countries into which they fled—Chronology—Their gods—Chando Banga and others—Similarity between them and the deities of the Greek mythology—Their sacred Groves.

IT appears that the "Mirjadurrik," referred to in the last chapter, is by some supposed to have been a Mussulman; but I am of opinion that this period must have been before the Mussulman era. It might more probably relate to some hill chieftain whom tradition had in the lapse of time elevated into a god. It gives the Sonthal, however, a point from which he can account for the dispersion of mankind, which his traditions explain as follows:—

They say that the seven male and seven female children soon became so prolific, that they were, by force of numbers, compelled to emerge from their seclusion, and scatter themselves over the earth.

The narrative continues:—

“And it came to pass that Mirjadurrik took “them to a strong place called ‘Chattro Champa,’ (this probably is the Chae Jampa talked of by Seeboo in his conversation narrated in a former chapter).

“Then they remained at Chattro Champa “for some time.

“That place had a door in the front and “one in the back; and there the descendants of “Pilchu Haram (the first man) and Pilchu Furhi “(first woman) became divided and dispersed.

“It was then that their gigantic descendants “split up into tribes or families.”

The largest and most powerful tribe took the name of Hansdah, which they hold to this day; after these came the Murmū, then the Soren, after them the Tudu, then the Mardi, the Kisku, Besera, Kedoar, the Baski, Marmoring, Bisra, and Hemron, twelve tribes in all.

About that time they went away from the strong place Chattro Champa, and spread rapidly. Some went to the Sing country, others to the Sikur, others to Tundi, and the majority to the Kuttra country. It is from this latter place that they are now peopling this portion of the face of the earth. Those among them who have asserted their pretensions to

historical lore, say that the Kuttra country has the virtue of making its inhabitants increase and multiply to a wonderful extent; but this attribute is apparently common to the tribe wherever they seem to go.

Their chronology is of a very feeble order, and their statements of events before the division of the tribes partake largely of the mythical. "Once upon a time" gives all the chronological data I could ever extract from them, and considering that their months are counted by moons, their years by the reaping of the crops, that their accounts are either notches on a stick, like those formerly used by the rustics for keeping scores at cricket matches in country villages in England, or knots on a piece of grass string, or a number of bits of straw tied together, it is not surprising if (in relating events so far back as the Flood, and the dispersion of their tribes) they do not attempt to give any idea of the interval they may consider to have elapsed betwixt then and now.

I have not been able to discover that there are more than twelve gods or ruling spirits recognized by them; besides these twelve, however, there are numerous minor spirits of a sylvan

character, such as the spirits of springs, waterfalls, &c., but the latter I may class in the same catalogue with their witches, and omit them from the company of the more aristocratic dozen, whose attributes and names are—

1. "Chando," also called "Chando Banga," who appears to be the supreme being, and to correspond with the Zeus or Jupiter of the ancients, but he is never personally worshipped, neither are any sacrifices offered to propitiate him. It appears to me that the Sonthals look upon this god rather as a creative spirit raised too high above them to take much notice of their adoration; and as he has a *quasi* Prime Minister to whom they sacrifice, they regard the former as a being only to be venerated through this medium. I must mention, however, that his name is used to swear by, as the Sonthali oath in our Courts commences with *Chando Banga samangrè*, "before God."

2. "Marang Buru" or "Lita Kuttree," is the highest "bhoot" or spirit to whom sacrifices are offered. He conveys to me the idea of a mediator; and were a Sonthal to hear the story of our Saviour's mediation for fallen man, I should imagine that in his own mind it would immediately awaken his ideas of Marang Buru.

I write this with trepidation, as it is but an idea and not an ascertained fact. I think, however, Marang Buru may be termed the mediator between Chando Banga and the Sonthal.

3. "Jatra Banga."
4. "Chatta Banga."
5. "Patta Banga."

These three have an existence only known from their yearly recurring festivals and occasional sacrifices, but their actual position and attributes are a mystery even to the Sonthals themselves. Should one wish to question a Sonthal about these gods, a nasal "*hān*" is generally all the reply to be obtained, and as this means "yes" or "eh," or "what," or any like word, it does not tend to make the curious inquirer any the wiser. These deities are worshipped together with the rest of the Bangas, and at the time of any distress or misfortune happening to an individual or a village community, the sufferers propitiate them by special sacrifices and festivals.

Each of them has a stone stuck up to his honor upon a small mound of earth outside the village, which marks the spot where the worship and sacrifices are to take place.

6 to 12. The "More Turui Horko," literally

the 5 or 6 Bangas, or, as the Sonthals say, the five brothers and the one sister. These half dozen are thought to reside in the sacred grove, Jaher (or holy grove), planted near every village, where six stones at the foot of six separate trees show their existence.

There is a great similarity between the representation of these gods by the Sonthals and the representation of Zeus or Jupiter by the ancients: the flint stone in both cases is the symbol of the god. In concluding a treaty, the Romans took the sacred symbol of Jupiter, *viz.*, the sceptre and flint stone, together with a small quantity of grass from his temple, and the oath taken on such occasions was always expressed *per Jovis lapidem jurare*.* And again the sacred groves outside every Sonthal village, when once seen, immediately recall to mind the sacred groves of the Greeks. A statue, I believe, generally stood in the latter Grecian groves, which were situated near or surrounded many of their Doric temples. In the Sonthal grove, however, a stone is placed for a statue, their fine arts not having come to such per-

* August. de Civ. Dei II, 29, Cic. ad Fam. VII, Polyb : III. 26.

fection as to enable them to sculpture the human figure. The Sonthal's idea, however, is the same, although he may lack means to work it out into such a form as the more refined Greeks were able to accomplish.

There is a coincidence, too, worthy of remark, that the Greeks had six representations of Zeus placed in a row at their sacred place in Cronium. Have the six stones of the Sonthals any affinity with the above?

The Greeks had an altar* erected to their "twelve gods" at the point where all the principal roads of Attica converged, and from which distances were measured. It is interesting to note the identity existing in the number of the principal Sonthalian and the principal Grecian gods.

* The altar seems to have served the purpose to which our parish churches are put; distances in England always being measured from those parochial centres.

CHAPTER VII.

Druidical Sacrifices—“ Ahgè Bangà ”—The Priests and their avocations—Their votive offerings—Different kinds of festivals—Their Rites—Their Parubs—Their fairs—Goats, fowls, &c., sacrificed—Description of a Sonthal round-about.

THERE is a tradition that the Sonthals, like the Druids of ancient Britain, were accustomed to sacrifice human beings at a certain festival. Should there ever have been such a practice,—and I am inclined to believe that there was,—the change to British rule has long since swept this remnant of barbarism from their religious code. “ Ahgè Bangà ”* was the god who used to be so propitiated, but since his sacrifices have become obsolete, his worship has also fallen off, and his name, as such, is hardly known to the rising generation. I am ignorant of the reason why this spirit required such a sanguinary mode of worship.

* Another name for Litta Kuttree, or “ Marung Buru,” as far as I can gather.

The Nàkè or Naickay is the name common to their priests, about whom little is known; their office does not seem to be hereditary, neither do they hold that power in the village that the Brahmin priest holds in Bengal. They, however, officiate at all the festivals, and kill the goats, cocks, &c., offered at the shrine of the gods.

There is no worship without a sacrifice. The former never takes place without the latter, the sites for which are either before the three stones raised in honor of Jatra Bangà, Chatta Bangà, and Patta Banga, or in the sacred grove (Jaher) to be found near every village, in each Sonthal's private dwelling, or at the "Manjhcestan," opposite every headman's house.

There is some difference between the sacrifices offered at their several festivals, for they are varied according to the different bhoots or spirits before whom they may be presented, and they also bear a relation to the effect which is desired to be produced, such as exemption from especial distress—for example, sickness, dearth, famine, murrain, small-pox, and such like. Special sacrifices are made upon the occasion of marriages and deaths.

Amongst the festivals the following are the most important:—

The Baha Parub, occurring on the return of the spring season.

The Ma More Parub, which may perhaps be best termed "the general yearly festival of the great propitiation day."

The Sohorai Parub, or harvest joy.

The Chatta Parub, or Banga, which happens during the rains, and is named after the god of that name, as are the two following festivals:—

The Patta Banga, in connection with the Sonthal swinging festival, from whence the Hindoos probably borrow their Churruck Pooja.

The Jatra Banga, a drinking debauch in January.

On the Baha and Ma More Parub, that is to say, on the festival of the "five brothers and one sister," termed the Jahev-era, but the names of each of whom the Sonthals either know not or will not confide to a stranger, the worship and sacrifices are conducted in the following manner:—

The six stones at the foot of the six trees in the sacred grove are first marked with red paint (*ara hera*) by the village priest, who is generally an old man. He then cuts off the heads of

six fowls over* the *gahi*, or sharp Sonthali battle axe, and having accomplished this, immediately allows the blood to drop from their necks over the six stones. After this he appropriates the half-dozen heads as his own share. The villagers claim the bodies, and all partake of the sacrifice in company and on the spot. Then follows the drinking of their home-brewed *Hanri*, which invariably terminates every public or private sacrifice, whether it has taken place inside or outside of their houses. Returning home, each villager, at the close of every festival, offers a sacrifice to Marang Buru (the chief spirit), as well as to the manes of his ancestors. The deity, however, is honored by the tribute of a white fowl, which is sacrificed by the father of the family in any spot he may choose in his compound, and then the whole household, with any occasional visitor who may have dropped in, partake. This offering is immediately followed by that of a pig or goat, which they kill in honor of their departed ancestors' spirits. The same spot for the slaughter is used, and the same ceremony undergone in this case as in the sacri-

* The axe is held with the edge upwards, the necks being pressed down against it.

fice of Marang Buru ; the heads of the family giving the usual dinner party.

On the Ma More festival, which takes place in the grove, the first sacrifice offered is that of the six fowls, which are also offered in the Baha ceremonies. Three goats are the next victims, the first of which must be white, the second black, and the third must have some red hairs on its body.

The Jatra Banga sacrifices are performed outside the village, in front of the stones above referred to. These stones are imbedded in raised mounds of earth, and are first daubed with red paint. The priest then mixes raw rice, milk, butter, and betelnut together, and dedicates the compound to the Banga. After this a pigeon and a goat are killed, and their blood poured out as an oblation. During the performance of this sacrificial ceremony, the "Chatyas" or oracles of the Banga, three or five in number, have been sitting in a row on some adjacent spot, and by wagging their heads backwards and forwards, without ceasing, have addled their brains sufficiently to work themselves up into the orthodox prophesying frenzy. When this sublime condition is arrived at, any Sonthal desirous of peering into the future, or of obtaining an insight into

the causes of the past, has but to go up and consult the soothsayers in a reverent manner, and he will at once get an answer to his questions, whether as to his bodily ailments, the death of his cattle, or the suspected presence of a witch in his village. All this knowledge he may obtain for the moderate charge of four annas thrown down as a *douceur* at the feet of the oracles. The heads of the offerings are perquisites of the Chatya, and the people present share the bodies between them.

With this festival they combine a fair, and run up sheds made of the leafy boughs of trees, which afford sufficient protection from the sun and night dews. In these are sold looking-glasses, combs, beads, &c., and sweetmeats. They also have an attempt at a round-about, which consists of a strong circular frame-work suspended between two high posts, in which seats are placed and the whole is then made to revolve. This resembles very much the same kind of affairs as those to be seen in use in the grounds of the Crystal Palace. The Sonthali round-about, however, would cut but a very sorry figure by the side of its well finished rival.

CHAPTER VIII.

Festivals continued—Patta Banga, Chatta Banga, Sohorai, Churruck—Forms and ceremonies common to each—Singular homage to an Umbrella—The great drinking festival—Sonthal dinner party—Impressions concerning the antiquity of the Sonthals—Is their similarity to the ancient Mythology a mere accident?—Historical facts with regard to the advent of Alexander the Great, and deductions therefrom—Identity of all Mythology.

THERE are three more festivals observed by the Sonthals which I think deserving of mention. They are the Sohorai festival, and those dedicated to Patta Banga and Chatta Banga.

At the ceremony observed in honor of Patta Banga, and which is performed before the raised mound and stone outside the village, the same ordeal is gone through as when the Jatra Banga is celebrated, but at the finish the Sonthals formerly used to have the Churruck Pooja, or swinging festival; the hooks for suspending the devotee being inserted in the muscles of

his back, who was generally an inebriated oracle. He was then suspended in mid air and swung round, apparently hanging by the hooks. I have, however, seen a good many of these revolving martyrs, and although to a casual observer it appears very dreadful to behold a man thus pendant, it is not quite so bad as it seems, for his friends take the precaution to tie a girth of strong cloth round the victim's body, in such a manner that his weight rests upon the cloth rather than on his muscles. The perforation of the flesh may cost him a few drops of blood, but that is all; perhaps he may feel a very little more pain than is felt by a schoolboy when he inserts a pin up to its head in his thigh, and yet I fancy there are very few English schoolboys that have not tried the latter trick.

The Chatta Banga festival takes place during the rains, and is only observed by one tribe, the Hansdah, and by their Kewars or blacksmiths, who are naturalized Hindoos. In almost every village one of these knights of the forge is to be found, and as they are always wanted to repair the ploughshare or other agricultural implements, they drive a fair trade. The village communities pay them in kind, and

each village is yearly compelled to contribute a certain share towards their support.

The preliminary proceedings at this festival resemble those of all the others, but at the end of the offering a ceremony takes place, the significance of which it is difficult to discover. At a given signal a pole, some twelve cubits long, is erected and made to turn a half circle, perpendicularly and horizontally; the pole is fastened on a loose but strong iron pivot, which rests in holes made in two upright pieces of wood about a man's height from the ground. On the top of this revolving pole is tied a small ornamented umbrella, and as this is caused to jerk first one way and then the other, a peculiar style of worship is offered to it. Upon the erection of the pole, which is hailed with shouts and other noisy demonstrations of delight, the people gather handfuls of dust and dirt and forthwith begin to pelt the umbrella. This novel mode of veneration is at the same time accompanied with war dances by the men, the women also performing the usual Sonthali marriage dance. Refreshments and drink are dealt out from sheds erected for the purpose, and the whole assembled population regale themselves in the open air. The sacrifices

in this festival are always eaten at home, and not consumed on the spot.

The Soharai, or harvest joy, is their longest and one of the most important festivals. It extends over a period of five days and nights, and is devoted to dancing, eating, drinking, singing, and every imaginable kind of debauchery. For the whole of that time the village street is alive with noisy groups of both sexes; the elder ones smoking and drinking, while the young people are flirting, romping, and dancing. On one day in particular the confusion becomes worse confounded, the brute creation being pressed in as unwilling sharers in the commotion. The cattle are brought out and tied to ornamented posts in front of their several owners' compounds: men and boys then fling at them bits of sticks, baskets, &c., and the youngsters rush between the animals from one side of the street to the other, carrying in their hands skins and cloth which they wave before the eyes of the baited prisoners. This combined with the beating of drums, the shouting of many voices, the reeling figures of the drunken, and the shrill chantings of the women, make up a series of Bacchanalian orgies which baffle description. The sacrifices offered are the same as those used in the propitiation of Marang Buru.

There is one part of the ceremony which I think deserving of notice, as in its performance there is some similarity to the Egyptian myth of the "Bull and the Egg." On one of the five days of the *Sohorai*, there is a new-laid hen's egg brought into the village street by the priest, or *naick*, and placed in a certain square marked in the ground. The oxen are then driven past it, and the one which stoops to smell the egg is at once marked and held in high estimation for that year. I believe the Egyptian mythology states that the earth came out of an egg which the bull broke.*

The *Sohorai* festival is held for five days in every village; but as they contrive that all the villages should not hold it at the same time, it gives the *Sonthal* a chance to riot and drink for a month, which he is not slow to take advantage of.

The only other place appointed for sacrifice besides those before mentioned, is the *Manjhce Stan*, or open shed in front of every village head man's house. When the ceremony takes place, the village priest first bedaub

* The New Zealanders consider the egg to be a sacred symbol.

with red paint the wooden heads or stones placed in the shed ; he then fills a leaf cup with their favorite home-brewed liquor, hanri, and offers it to the manes of the village ancestry, accompanying this ceremony with many foldings of his hands, which are raised to his forehead, and prostrations. He is imitated in this act of devotion by all the males present, who bring on this occasion a fowl and a goat, which are beheaded, and their blood is afterwards poured out in front of the images or stones, while the flesh is shared among men, women, and children indiscriminately. This ritual only takes place at the seed-time, at the Ma More festival, and at their harvest joy (Sohorai).

I have before remarked upon the similarity existing between some of the Sonthalian myths and rituals, &c., and those of the ancients, and the longer I have resided among their tribes the stronger have become my impressions on the subject. This similarity ought to be accounted for by some theory other than that of the doctrine of chances. With my present limited facilities of reference, I feel neither competent nor willing to lay down any broad proposition which may attempt to account for what must be allowed

to be a remarkable coincidence, and I content myself, therefore, by suggesting a few suppositions, from which the thinking reader may draw his own conclusions as to their tenability.

It is known that Alexander the Great, on his march into India, only penetrated as far as the Indus, and that it was left to his General Seleucus to cross that river and with his army to proceed towards the Ganges. On his route he met Sandrocottus, a powerful king, and such friendly relations arose between them that Seleucus sent an embassy under one Megasthenes to Sandrocottus' capital city, Palibothra; and Murray has it that intermarriages there took place between the Greeks and the native Indians. Now Colonel Franklin and others find that the site of Palibothra, as explained by Ptolemy and Pliny, must either have been at Bhaugulpore or Rajmehal, and could not have been so high up as Patna. Either of the two former named sites will suit my purpose, but I have a leaning towards Rajmehal, which may be termed a suburb of the ancient city of Gour. The ruins there, overgrown with jungle, show that it was once a place of great importance, although of course there is nothing left of the original city as it stood in Sandrocottus' time,

Might not the intermarriages alluded to by Murray have infused a Greek element (weak, I allow) into the inhabitants of Palibothra and the surrounding country? Juvenal says that wherever those wily Greeks get, they are sure to work themselves into power, and have everything their own way. I think it not far from probable that the Greeks may have given some idea of their mythology to the ancient Indians, who must have come in contact with them under the above circumstances; and why should not the ancient Indians who received the infusion be the Sonthals? Brace, in his "Races of the World," says that "one of the signs of the oldness and aboriginal state of a people is their capacity for living in malarious and deadly miasmatic regions. That the Sonthals do live and thrive under these disadvantages, it must be allowed. That they are an ancient, perhaps the most primitive race in India, I think very probable. That the jungles in and about Rajmehal, and for many miles through Godda and towards Nonee away to Nagpore, have once been cleared and cultivated, and then a second time allowed to run to waste, is evident. On many a shooting excursion amidst the limited jungles still remaining in the vicinity,

I have often come up on artificial mounds, and remnants of old tanks, now silted up and with just the outline of the tank left, whose boundary even it took a long time to trace out, and from their appearance the tanks were many centuries old. Might not the Sonthal tradition of Mirjadurrick relate to the time subsequent to the advent of Alexander, and to the persecution of the Sonthals and their being driven back again further from the many-gated city? This would account in some measure for the neglected cultivation apparent. Do not the evidences of a former cultivation show that a people must have once inhabited and cultivated those present wastes?—and what people so likely as the Sonthals? And if they were the Sonthals, what so likely as that the similarity observed between the Sonthal and the Grecian mythology might have arisen from the infusion of the Greek element into Rajmehal at the time of the advent of the embassy of Seleucus?*

I only throw out these suppositions by way of a few notes and queries, without arguing on the probabilities or improbabilities involved in

* Colonel Layard, of Bhaugulpore, informed me that he had discovered the Statue of Phœbus Apollo at Gour while excavating there.

the proposition, for I think that the above statement assigns too late a date for the assimilation to have taken place.

There is a remarkable identity in the pith of all mythic history. Take the mythological tradition of the Romans, Grecians, Persians, Egyptians, Tartars, and Teutons, and in reading the history of the one the reader must often have an idea steal over him that he has read similar tales in the history of the others. Has ancient mythic history been all derived from one source? Was there a time when the races of men were all gathered into one place? (I do not allude to sacred history, but to the Rhematic period). Was there a time when the Sonthal and the Greek, the Persian and the German, the Feejee and the Māori, and others, were sufficiently near one another, and sufficiently under each other's influence to receive and adopt a like mythology? Was there a time when the speech of the Turanian, the Arian, and the Semitic type was the same? Are these classifications "mere varieties of one specific form of speech—ramifications from one centre?" May not the "Great Unknown" of the Greeks, the Big Spirit of the American Indians—the Great Father of the other savages—the Banga

of the Sonthal,—may not each of these be but a representative of the same Deity, to wit, Zeus? Of minor gods, all savage nations have many, but, looming in mysterious grandeur, there is generally to be found the *Zeus ἀρχη, Zeus μεσσα, Διος δεκ παντα τετυκται*, “Zeus the beginning, Zeus the middle, out of Zeus all things have been made.”

CHAPTER IX.

*Sketchy calibre of the work—Mythology and language—
The lead and line to sound the past—Rhetic period
—Unity of derivation of mankind—Pelagian race
—Egyptians—Phœnicians—Malkin's account—New-
ton's statement—The first inhabitants of Greece—
Religion of Greece—Similarity noticed in the myths
of the Egyptians, Jews, and Phœnicians—Paley's
remarks.*

WERE I to attempt an investigation into the origin of the Sonthal tribe by an analysis of the roots of their language and a comparison of their traditions with those of others, it would be far beyond the calibre of a light sketch such as this work is intended to represent. Howbeit it lies patent that the roots of language and ancient myths are the two great helps left for gauging the past. The one may be termed the deep sea line, linked to the other, the lead, by which the depths of the mysterious ocean of the "Has Been" may be sounded.

There is a further resemblance in the properties of the two. Both are only useful in

sounding to a certain depth, and then, after a given maximum is attained, they fail to be quite reliable indices, and often leave the enquirer to conjecture alone.

In alluding to the past, I do not intend to refer to that period of which we have some landmarks still left in the shape of ruined temples, coins, tombs, and remnants of statues, but to a past still antecedent to those useful milestones on the road of time,—to a past the events of which without the aid of the Sacred Volume would be buried in hazy conjecture: in other words, I allude to the Rhematic period, when the world was supposed to be in comparative infancy.

I have attempted in a former chapter to convey the impression my mind has been laboring under with regard to the identity existing, in some salient points, between the Sonthal myths and rituals and those of the ancients. That impression may be a wrong one, but I feel justified in stating that it is shared to some degree with others whose minds are educated, and who are acquainted with the subject. The difference, however, between their impressions and those of the writer lies chiefly in this: that each has noticed a

certain similarity, but all have been differently struck with that similarity. For instance, one gentleman informed me that there was some resemblance betwixt the Sonthals and the Jews; another said they reminded him of the Romans; a third, that he thought they had borrowed some ideas from the Egyptians;—all were prepared to agree as to their similarity to the ancients, but each made a different comparison.

This resemblance to ancient myths and rituals gives rise to two conjectures: first, that the traditions of all were derived from one source; or, secondly, that this tribe was connected with the races above-named at some early period of its existence. Either of these conjectures would account for a certain resemblance with the myths of the Egyptians, Jews, Grecians, Romans, and others.

The first proposition, however, is too broad to be mentioned in any other shape than as a supposition, and touches upon the vexed question of the unity of the derivation of mankind, which I leave to abler pens to ventilate.

I purposely avoid all mention of holy writ, convinced though I am of its inspiration; for I consider, despite Colenso, that the deeper our researches take us, the stronger will become



the proofs of the truth of every word contained in the Sacred Volume.* It appears now somewhat irreconcilable with the doctrine of the unity of the derivation of mankind when we view the Māori of New Zealand and the North American Indian, and ask ourselves,—Could these two races have sprung from one source? But I venture to add that it is far from improbable that if the enquiring spirit that is now abroad advances in a proportionate ratio to its present progress, by the end of this century we shall have a detailed account of the traditions and language of every known tribe on the earth, which will open a splendid field for analysis and comparison; for with such a knowledge as the study of these will give us, we shall have at once a powerful night-glass, as it were, by the help of which we shall be able to peer into the misty shades of the past,—and then we may hope for some more definite answer than can be given at present to the question.

* Bacon remarks—“That as a little smattering in philosophy inclines men to atheism, so does depth in it bring men back to religion.”

“Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas.” *Virg.*
“Quanto satius est causas inquirere et quidem toto in hoc intentum animo: neque enim quicquam illo invenire dignius potest, cui se non tantum commodit, sed impen-
dat.”—*Sen.* vi. 3.

The Sonthal tradition in Chapter V. may be taken as a garbled account of the flood.

Huq, in his travels through Tartary, relates the surprise the Tartars felt when he recounted to them the history of Noah and his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet; for, said they, "we are descended from three men, also sons of one man, but from these sons respectively sprung the families of the Mongolian, the Tartar, and the Chinese."

* I think that from Huq's statement we may be led to presume that the wandering Tartar tribes have their traditions tinged by the events of an epoch happening but a little time after the deluge. But, as followers of Buddha, there is also a resemblance between many of their myths and those of the Hindoos.

I consider the Sonthal traditions, however, to be more pure and unadulterated than

* From Wall, Siebald Jones, and Klaprath we learn of a supposed identity between the Indian, Persian, Assyrian, Egyptian, and Japanese, but the experience of the traveller Huq in noticing the above is interesting and partly corroborative of the generally received opinion. I may add here that amongst the Australian tribes the egg (so often alluded to) is an object of veneration. Wall notices an identity between the Egyptians and Chinese.

either, and to have been handed down more uncorrupted; for the Sonthal has never possessed the learning and education of a Llama, Buddhist, or Brahmin, by which he might enlarge and touch up his meagre and cherished stock of mythical lore. The Sonthal, as a distinct race, has every appearance of being older than the Hindoo, although Menu wrote of the latter 800 B.C. I confess to feeling like a child as he gropes in the dark, and fear that in this digression I am presuming to wander "where angels fear to tread;" but the study of the derivation of mankind is a fascinating subject, the attraction of which grows stronger the more the thoughts are turned towards the investigation.

But, on the other hand, having set aside the primary hypothesis mentioned above as vague, let us revert to the second proposition, and extend our researches back to a comparatively late period, to the time when it is conjectured that the Philistines united with the Edomites to drive out the Phœnicians from the plains of Palestine, which Newton supposes to have happened in the reign of David the Jew, and, according to Malkin, about thirty years after the foundation of Athens. We then shall find that

the fugitives introduced an Egyptian and Phœnician element into the Grecian worship and mysteries. Groping still in the thickening twilight as it merges into the shades of conjecture, history leads us to suppose that the ancient inhabitants of Greece were Pelasgians, whose religion afterwards became corrupted by the infusion of the Egyptian and Phœnician element alluded to.

Malkin says the latter worshipped nameless gods, which renders it probable that their Pelasgian ancestors had quitted the regions of Asia.

Whether the tribes in India came from Greece or some locality in those latitudes, or whether the family were dispersed from some fountain head in Asia, it is not my province to enquire. The "locus in quo" would form an interesting subject for research to the antiquarian.

I think I may presume, however, to say that the historical statements culled from good authorities, such as I have quoted above, will (if we allow of any affinity between the Grecian and the Sonthalian) somewhat tend to account for the similarity noticed as to rituals and myths between the severally named ancient races and those of the Sonthals. There is an identity in the number of the Sonthalian tribes and of the

tribes of Israel, the number twelve being common to both.

While remarking on the singularity of several minds being separately struck with the identity above alluded to, I think I may here aptly state an opinion given by Paley at the conclusion of his "Natural Theology." He states :—

"If we observe in any argument that hardly two minds fix upon the same instance, the diversity of choice shows the strength of the argument, because it shows the number and competition of the examples."

It must be borne in mind, however, that I do not put the above statements down as *arguments*, but merely as *suppositions* which will force themselves into the mind during the process of investigation,—a mere series of questions which require greater leisure, acumen, and advantages of reference, to elucidate or refute, than I, buried in the jungles, can possibly possess.

CHAPTER X.

Sanscrit, elder sister, but not fountain head, of language—Conditions requisite to arrive at unadulterated ancient tongue—Sonthals fulfil those conditions—Were they ever slaves?—Reasons for thinking that they were not—Honorific terms—Case between Mahajun and Sonthal—Curious system of accounts—Analysis of roots of language—Remarks on the same.

SANSCRIT, although aptly termed the elder sister of most civilized languages, can hardly be styled a mother-language, unless we are to presume that in the earlier epochs man became at once endowed with civilization, instead of having to work up to it by a gradual process. It is too civilized and complete to represent the idea. It is too elaborate for the wants of the Nomadic races, from whence, as is presumed, the generations of man first sprung. I venture to observe that amidst the few remnants of ancient tribes now driven to eke out their existence in fastnesses where civilization has not as yet been able to influence them, we are likely to find language in its primitive and uncorrupted

form, and in comparison with which the Sanscrit, as known to us, is but a mushroom in age. Amidst those tribes who have had vitality sufficient to keep up their numbers, individuality sufficient to withstand their absorption by more civilized invaders, and constitutions sufficiently robust to enable them to live in deadly swamps and jungles, where foes could not annihilate nor oppression conquer them, and by forced intercourse destroy the individuality of their mother tongue,—I think it is amidst a race fulfilling the above conditions we may look for the remnants of an ancient and uncorrupted dialect.

The Sonthals appear to me to resemble in many important features a tribe such as this. I am aware that it is stated by some of the learned that the Sonthals were originally slaves, but I am unable to perceive the grounds on which such a supposition is based. I can find it mentioned in no statements before 1832; and I rather think that the institution of slavery was of late creation, introduced by the mahajuns, who unwittingly copied the provisions of the old Roman law of debtor and creditor. The Sonthal's spirit of independence and comparative truthfulness also militate against this idea.

Their way of addressing any person to whom they wish to show affection and esteem, is not in the flowery language of the Hindoo and Persian: to wit, "Refuge of the World," "Light of the Sun, Ruler of the Universe," and so on; but simply, in Sonthali, *আপুই আয়ো*, "Father-and-mother"—"Ma-bap." As a patriarchal expression it has a double signification, and is a term well suited to convey the idea. In the old Arian language, king and queen is simply father and mother, and when a Sonthal wishes to show honor and respect, he conveys a double signification of honor when he says father and mother; should he wish to show dislike, he terms the person whom he addresses the "grandfather of the devil." The term "father of the devil" is less abusive in his ideas; and "you are a devil" signifies that the speaker is only slightly put out with him who receives the epithet.

The word for "poor" is "hungry;" the word "hungry" in their dialect conveys to them the same idea as "poor" would to us. When they say he is hungry, they mean to convey the idea that he is poor. I don't know another word in their language which would convey the same idea of "poor" as "hungry" conveys.

I consider the pure Sonthal numeral to stop at twenty. They have a mongrel method of numerals after twenty, but in my opinion their language was formed when their ten fingers and toes sufficed for all their counting, and up to twenty the numeral may be termed pure.* Their primitive mode of account is either by help of a knotted string, or by little bits of straw tied up in bundles of tens. To arrive at a hundred, ten bundles of ten bits of straw accomplish the feat.

I well remember my astonishment while trying my first case between a grasping mahajun and a Sonthal, when I ordered them to produce their accounts. The attorney of the one laid on the table an elaborate ledger, with a day-book bound in red cloth, and with compound interest calculated at the rate of 75 per cent. The other produced from his back hair—where it had been kept, I suppose, for ornament—a dirty bit of knotted grass string, and threw it on the table, requesting the Court to count that, as it had got too long for him. Each knot represented a rupee; a longer space between two knots represented the lapse of a year.

* Mr. Phillips' remarks, page 53 of his "Grammar and Sonthal Numerals," will be found in Appendix.

I must add here, that if the debt is just, ninety-five Sonthals out of a hundred will never deny the receipt of the money. They only come in, as they used often to tell me, for "an account," desiring the Court, in a familiar, free-and-easy manner, to inform them how much they ought to pay. As the Court generally found that the Mahajun had been screwing every pice he could get out of them, and often had taken payment of his debt thrice told, in dhan and grain, the Sonthal gained by his application to his "father-and-mother."

It is somewhat singular, as Mr. Phillips remarks in his Grammar, that in the vocative case the word is often entirely changed; thus **আপুইং** Apuing, my father, in the vocative is **এবাবা** Baba. In fact we might almost say **আপুই** has no vocative. I have taken the present tense of the verb "to be" in several languages, and compared them with the same in Sonthali, the results of which will be found in the Appendix, with the vocabulary of words mostly in use amongst all nations.

CHAPTER XI.

Ceremonies observed at birth—Purification of the child—Kindness with which their children are treated—Ornaments—Remarkable weight of those worn by the female—Free-and-easy style of the women—Their dress—Their fondness for flowers—Their weavers, kewars, or blacksmiths, and carpenters.

LUCINA has but little trouble in presiding over the advent of a Sonthal's entrance into the world. Immediately the birth is announced, there is a gathering of the friends and relations for congratulation, and on the third, fifth, or seventh day there is a purification, which really consists in nothing but shaving off any hair the child may have on its head at such an early period of its existence. Until this is done, it is considered unpropitious to engage in any shikar or hunting expedition: in fact, in many villages, it is positively forbidden.

When the purification has been completed, the women and children of the village who have assembled at the house each receive a leaf cup

full of rice water, with which the bruised leaves of the nimbree have been mixed. After this they all take a draught of their home-brewed liquor, and depart.

Upon the fifth day the child receives its name. Should it happened to be a son and heir, he takes the name of his grandfather; should he be the second son born, he takes that of his maternal grandfather; then they proceed to the paternal grandfather's brother for boy No. 3; then the maternal grandfather's brother for boy No. 4; and so on. The same routine is followed for the girls; the feminine relations being taken in the same order, from the female side. I have been told that three children at a birth are not uncommon, but such a case has never come under my personal knowledge.

The children are treated with great kindness by both parents. I have never seen a child whipped or treated harshly; and should the mother die, the child is taken and brought up by some married woman, who is generally connected on the husband's side. The boys and girls are always made to sleep separately, and, if the reports spread by the newspapers are to be believed, their general arrangements for decency far exceed those of the poorer classes in England.

The first attempt at clothing the baby consists in tying a piece of string round its waist; this suffices until he is three or four years of age, and it serves a double purpose, as it admonishes him when he has eaten enough. I have stood looking on astonished to see the enormous quantity of boiled rice a child of four will eat. As Mr. Weller says, one could see him swelling visibly before one's eyes, and if the string had not acted as a monitor by its cutting into him, I feel certain he would have suffocated himself. This is perhaps the only use the string is intended for, *viz.*, to teach the wearer quantum sufficit.*

They are fond of ornamenting their children's necks with charms, and all the younger men wear three or four necklaces of black and white beads. They also tie on their arms, above their elbow, a kind of a small pewter shield, and wear light bracelets on their wrists. Most females like ornaments, from the refined civilized belle dressed in her sparkling jewels, to the poorest savage with a brass ring in her nose, and the Sonthali is not an exception; but she likes weight and quantity instead of workman-

* There is generally a key tied on to this string, as an ornament and plaything.

ship and quality. She is happy when she can get about 5lbs. weight of brass, in the shape of bangles round each of her ancles, and with these on in the fields or at the dance she works or trips it without any apparent inconvenience from the immense mass she carries. They are also very fond of decking their hair with flowers. The garden of a certain Assistant Commissioner was regularly invaded on market days by troops of these damsels who used to walk about to pluck flowers, chirping and flinging their arms round each other's necks. Having gathered a sufficient quantity, accompanied by two or three old duennas, they would coolly walk into his house and decorate themselves before his glass in the dressing-room, thinking no evil, and fearing none. He was at last compelled to close his gates against them. Their manners are very free and easy, but it is the freedom of innocence—not the boldness of vice. They refrain from covering their faces as the Hindoos do on the approach of a stranger, but of the two classes they are more chaste and modest in both dress and behaviour. Of course, I am only alluding to the lower class of Hindoo female, who attempts to hide her face while she wears a gauze which displays her whole form

and who in her simulated modesty always appears as if attempting to convey an "arriere pensée."

In their traditions they state that their progenitors were giants of huge magnitude, and the cloth allowed them by Marang Buru hardly sufficed for the purpose it was intended. At present their habiliments are of very coarse material, and those of the men much more scanty than the dhoties worn by the Hindoos; but the Sonthal women drape their figures by winding a wide cloth once round their waist and over their right shoulder. This covers them from their knees to their neck, and the end of the cloth hangs down behind. They have the head, arms, and most part of their back uncovered, and tie their hair, which is very coarse and luxuriant, in a knot behind, much after the fashion that was in vogue amongst our own country-women some thirty years ago.

They have weavers from their own tribe, and in every garden the cotton plant is to be seen, the cotton from which it is the duty of the females of the household to spin into thread. It is a common sight to see a toothless old grandmother watching the last arrival in the family, as he lies kicking upon a grass mat in the sun, while

she, humming a Sonthal ditty, turns her spinning wheel.

Each man is his own carpenter, and as all their belongings, from the buffalo waggon to their pig-stye, are very primitive, their limited knowledge of the trade suffices for their wants.

The blacksmiths or kewars are often Hindoos who have become naturalized Sonthals, which, in other words means, that they have given up all caste, as the Sonthals have no caste at all, in the true acceptation of the word.

CHAPTER XII.

The cold weather—Morning ride—Cheerful scenery—Road—A Sonthal Hamlet—Description of village—The Manjhee Stan—Hearty welcome—Scene at the village—Punchayets and their judgments—Ancient custom of the Duel—The Sonthal Baby—The interior of the Sonthal hut—Their cooking apparatus—Ancient legend, and arbitrary conduct of Darogah, and death of his victim—Consequences.

WHILE camping during the cold weather, it is quite a pleasure to take a ride towards a Sonthal village a little after sunrise, when the thermometer is often as low as 48° , and the sharp bracing air seems to infuse quicksilver into the veins of your horse, as he bounds and curvets along on the dew-covered sward. The jungle glistening in the joy-inspiring sunlight, and covered as to its leaves with drops of water, sparkles as if studded with diamonds. The echoing cry of the camp dogs, as feathering their tails they creep amongst the brakes; the strokes of the mallets of those hammering the pegs preparatory to striking tents, still ringing

on the 'car—all united, tend to raise the spirits. Nature seems to smile, and when the rider emerges from a roadway, just wide enough to admit a cart, and belted by thick-leaved sal shrubs, and finds himself in a clearing, a sight still as pleasing greets him—a neat rustic hamlet.

These Sonthal habitations are models of cleanliness, and consist of about twenty or thirty houses fringing the road on either side. They are made of wattle and daub,—*id est*, a row of sal stakes driven into the ground close to one another, which constitute the sides of the house, generally about fourteen feet square and eight high. Thin lathes of the split bamboo are then intertwined between them, and the whole is plastered over with clay and cow-dung. This is allowed to dry, and then whitewashed. The roof is constructed of bamboos, thatched with long jungle-grass. Jotting out from the wall on one side is generally a small pen for the family pig, and at the back of the house a kind of courtyard, with huts made like the dwelling house, but without the mud and cow-dung. The doors of these face inwards, and serve as stables for their cattle, and granaries in which to store the dhan. If the pro-

prietor is too poor to form the four sides of the yard thus, he fills up the apertures with straight branches of trees cut with their leaves on, and stuck into the ground, thus completing the square. The dwelling-house generally boasts a verandah, under the roof of which is hung their tum-tum or drum, any dried skins they may possess, and their implements for the chase. Their stock of furniture and kitchen utensils is limited, and generally consists of a few cots made of four stakes rough hewn from the neighbouring jungle, the ends of which are bevilled into four wooden legs, and the framework thus formed is filled in with grass-string woven from end to end, and then from side to side. These primitive beds are of all sizes, from the diminutive cot that serves for the baby's cradle to the family couch. The richer Southals boast of a few brass pans for cooking, but in many houses brass utensils are uncommon, and earthenware is used, and forms a good substitute. The jungle, however, is the source from whence they get their plates and drinking-cups, and it affords a fresh supply daily. It is the duty of the women and youngsters to gather big fresh leaves; these they pin together with thorns until they form a platter about the size of a large sheet of

paper, only circular in form. Their harri or home made liquor is always drank from leaf cups, which are made from thick leaves with the ends pinned together, until the centre forms a hollow like a soup-ladle.

If a stranger asks for water, and the Sonthal addressed owns a brass cup, the leaf cup is not offered, but the brass one will be cleansed quickly, and the water which is taken from an earthen pot, perched with several others on a rude framework in front of the family mansion, given him. Their fire-place consists of a hole dug in the ground, and the earth so taken out, piled round the cavity, and soddened with water. This is allowed to harden, and on it they then put their pans for cooking; a raised platform at one end holds any spare clothes, and nick-nacks there may be, including a distaff and spindle, flute, &c., and from the roof hang, suspended by grass strings, earthen pots containing garden herbs or other delicacies. The whole interior is well blackened to a uniform tint by the smoke from the fire, as but few think of having a chimney. The "gude housewife" keeps her platters shining, and as soon as she has cleaned them, with the assistance of her mother-in-law and younger offspring, she sets

to work with a broom made of branches of the sal, or reeds, to sweep the courtyard and the road in front of her house. The husband is either chatting with his next door neighbour, or gone to turn the cattle out to graze in the jungle.

Opposite the village manjee or headman's house stands the Manjee Stan, or shrine to the manes of his ancestors. As far as I can discover, it appears to be the privilege of the headman of the village only to have this resting place for departed spirits. It consists of a raised mud mound about four feet high by five long, over which a neatly thatched roof is placed. The floor is kept washed with mud and cow-dung, and in the centre is stuck a small stone or wooden lump daubed with red. From the roof is suspended an earthen gurra or pot containing water for the spirits to drink, and beside it hangs a peacock's head. I once asked Seeboo how it was they only put water for the spirits, when in lifetime the departed never drank water when they could get liquor. The old man thought over this question for some time, and then quietly remarked, that if the pots contained handi or puchwae at his

Manjee 'Stan his spirit after decease would constantly hover near them.

The ancestors of the manjees are supposed to come and watch over the interests of their offspring. From this vantage ground there also is gathered together in solemn conclave the old men of the village, whenever any important matter arises requiring their presence. Here they arrange their weddings, talk over their crops, and investigate their cases of witchcraft. If a cow dies bewitched, a child gets convulsions, or any inhabitant is seized with low fever, and fancies himself under the influence of the evil eye, to this trysting place of the manes of former village sages is brought the witchfinder and his victim, and from thence emanates all the village gossip and a great deal of real justice. I except the findings in cases of witchcraft, as they are unjust and too often end in murder.

Whenever a quarrel arises concerning the possession of any disputed land, the sharing of any crops, the dowry of a bride, &c., each of the disputants names two, three, or five of his friends who generally comprise the oldest and most respected of the villages around; these

constitute their punchayet or council of ten. On a certain day appointed all parties assemble, and evidence is gone into and facts investigated with a patience and acuteness which would not disgrace more civilized tribunals. They very seldom come to a wrong conclusion. In the majority of cases both parties leave, acknowledging the justice of their judges' decision. Should it so happen that the one who is in the wrong refuses, after the finding of the punchayet, to give redress, the injured party at once files his suit in the Court of the Assistant Commissioner of the District. I can safely state that in all civil and generally in most criminal cases a village jury has sat and decided the points before the case is brought to the higher tribunal. It is somewhat to be regretted that greater encouragement is not given to the villagers in deciding their cases by punchayet; for many Assistant Commissioners have seen how readily they all acquiesce in the custom, the justness of the decisions, and the saving that it is to the time of the litigants.*

* I hear that the Commissioner, Mr. Alonzo Money, has lately ordered that these punchayets should be encouraged as much as possible.

Tradition has it that years long since there was a custom amongst the Southals of deciding their disputes, when the parties were males, by the ordeal of single combat. The bow and arrow or hanger served in lieu of pistol and sword for these rustic duels. Such affairs of honor were always fatal to one party, but of late times, as equitable remedies have been brought nearer to them, this remnant of a barbarous age has disappeared. I have heard that the Coles at one time also preferred the duel to any other mode of seeking redress for a wrong.

This statement is corroborated by Dr. Anderson, late Inspector-General in Calcutta, who twenty-five years since was sent to Deoghur to investigate a most ludicrous charge brought against the priest of the temple there.* The above gentleman spent some time in enquiring into the habits and customs of the natives and then remarked on the duelling code as a thing of the past, but the traditions of which he had discovered while at Deoghur.

I left the gude wife sweeping the road

* As the priest was disliked, a charge well illustrative of the Bengali character was brought against him; although descriptive and apt, it is such that I fear to sully these pages with an account of it.

when I digressed, and we may now presume that the rider has escaped the risk of breaking his neck by tumbling over the innumerable dogs, goats, and pigs which always infest the entrance to the villages, and that after a six-mile canter he has arrived safely at the Manjee Stan. The noise and clatter has brought every inhabitant to their doors, and they stand, the women surrounded by troops of fat-bellied children, smiling and talking—the men more dignified, but all apparently happy and anxious to assist.

Some auhtor has said that in the desire to please, the object of pleasing is attained, and judging from my own feelings I think there is truth in the opinion. It is far from unpleasant to meet a welcome greeting, however uncouth may be the greeter, or limited his power of welcome.

We will imagine the steed placed under a Sohajun tree—one of many that line the road in the village—and left to the care of some young fellow who immediately becomes a hero in the eyes of the naked boys who tumble and play round the animal within dangerous reach of his heels. A cot is brought out to serve as a seat—fire is forthcoming for the morning pipe of peace, (representing a fitting emblem of that

myth in this world as it is of fragile clay,) one manji brings some eggs, another a couple of fowls, here a village Sonthal Paramanick brings some milk, while others go to clear a place whereon to pitch the tent. A posse of girls have assembled near the big white dog, who, the centre of attraction, sits quiet and dignified, while they stroke him and search for any small animals he may have in his coat. The older men squat on their haunches round the Saheb and begin a conversation which is kept up until the tents arrive.

It was some time before I could understand the reason why a box that one man could easily take, should, as soon as it was brought into a Sonthal district, immediately require four to carry. I remarked on this one day as I was sitting in a village, and was informed that years ago, when the British Government was to them merely another name for rapine, extortion, and violence through the Police, and when the Province was Regulation, that a Collector travelling through a certain part of the Sonthal district ordered the Darogah or Police Inspector to expedite his luggage. The underling laid hold on the first man he could get, who happened to be old and feeble, and sent him, before he had

eaten, with a heavy load fourteen miles. The victim, unable to accomplish his task, died on the road: the Policeman hushed it up, and the Collector* knew nothing about it. The account of this accident spread through the Sonthal country, and although this is said to have happened while the present old men were young, yet to this day the whole tribe religiously keep to the custom of four men carrying the load of one, whenever it is a European's luggage or Government property that they carry. They do not, however, expect the wages of four men, neither do they often get it.

* I hear that the Collector is since dead.

“De mortuis nil nisi bonum.”

CHAPTER XIII.

Camp at Simra—Marriage invitation—Ceremony at night—The Bride and the Bridegroom—Curious customs—Marital dance—The welcome to the village—The pretty picture of Sonthali maiden—Alarming procedure on part of Bridegroom's younger brother—Custom with regard to Widows—Marital basket—Return to camp—Marriage supper—Songs sung by the women.

WHILE in camp at Simra, said to be the healthiest and, certainly, the hottest place in the Rajmehal hills, old Seeboo appeared one morning and invited me to witness the marriage of his nephew, a boy of about sixteen. The ceremony was to take place that evening in a neighbouring village. He at the same time gave an unmistakeable hint to the effect that if the "mother-and-father" would be pleased to bring a bottle of spirits (either gin or brandy) with him, it would not make his presence the less acceptable. So as soon as "atra nox" had commenced to darken the valley, armed with my wedding gift (a bottle of brandy watered), and

with a bundle of cigars for my own smoking, as an antidote against the aroma that is exhaled from the bodies of all Sonthals, unknown to any of the servants, I quietly left my tent, and guided by the noise of the tum-tums, which were making the hills echo again and again, I soon reached the spot. On my arrival, unobserved, I took up a position behind my fat friend whose oily sides were shaking as he hoarsely chuckled with delight at the gyrations of the dancers. As I thus stood I felt some small hands clinging to my knees, and found a couple of children who, having sustained the noise of the tum-tums and other unearthly sounds, had succumbed at last to fear, upon Seeboo commencing his cachinations. Not able to get out through the closely wedged crowd, they clung to the first object they could turn to, which happened to be myself, and there, holding fast, they howled in concert. Luckily, a woman, standing near me, pushed her way to the rescue; so as she took them away. I placed a cigar in each of their hands for them to chew at their leisure and be quietly ill upon. In the meantime the dancers, to the number of twenty or thirty males, each bearing a club or sword and a black shield made of buffalo hide—their necks covered with black and white

beads, their breasts and waists adorned with shells, as also their ankles, and with a large tuft of peacock's feathers in their hair—were performing the marital dance. Each performer advances by hopping for three or four paces on his left leg, while he touches the earth most daintily at every hop with his right toes. He then, sinking on the ground, makes a low bow, and suddenly rising with the whole of the performers in unison, gives an unearthly yell, turning round at the same time, much after the style of the Highland Fling dancer. The tumtums at this crisis are beaten more furiously than ever, and the excitement rises to a high pitch. When one dancer is tired, he falls out and some new arrival takes his place, so a never ending round is kept up.

During the dancing, the bride, a plump, buxom damsel of some fourteen years, swathed in clothes which left only her face and leg bare to the knee, stood a little removed by the side of the bridegroom, who, considering the heat, was also heavily clothed. About a year older, he seemed more bashful and conscious than his heart's delight, who took everything in a very matter-of-fact way. The bridegroom's younger brother, an important actor in the scene, stood

on her dexter side, and the whole party on the road at the entrance to the hamlet. Here we were met by a large crowd of village females, each bearing a brass basin containing a huge lump of coarse molasses of the dimensions of a cricket ball, and a lota (or brass vessel) filled with water. Upon the usual greetings being offered, which consisted of all bending down respectfully and touching the ankles of the happy trio, the elder matrons stepped forward, and each in rotation taking a large pinch from the sweet ball she had brought, first stuffed it into the bride's mouth with her finger and thumb, after which she held the lota of water for her to drink from, and then poured a portion of the liquid over her feet. The same ceremony was performed on the swain and his brother, until all three must have been surfeited, as the number of their kind administrators could not have been less than thirty. The dancing and music had been kept up without cessation during this performance, and many torches had also been lit. The glare from these added to the wildness of the scene. When the last ball had been stuffed down the victim's throat, three strong young women emerged from the crowd, and seating the bridegroom, brother,

and bride on their hips, walked away with them into the village, followed and surrounded by the other attendant girls and matrons, who amused themselves by uttering jokes on the bride. She, however, discreetly kept silent, only drawing her cloth closer over her face with one hand, while with the other arm she embraced the neck of her carrier. The male mob with the dancers closed the procession, and thus formed, we all proceeded to a clean white-washed house. On its threshold stood a young and graceful maiden with a lighted taper in her hand, the imperfect reflection from which caused her bright black eyes to glisten as like a timid fawn, half-frightened at the noisy crowd; she awaited their approach. The shrinking attitude well portrayed her fears, and taking the door lentil for a rough framing to the picture, the lines of her contour, with her half-open mouth displaying a row of white teeth, and her whole pose would have offered a fine subject for the pencil. Her retreat was cut off, had she wished to disappear, for in the background, huddled together, stood the remaining female members of the household, whose forms blocked up the way.

Here the carriers dropped their burdens,

and after salutation, the same cramming and feet-washing process was undergone, when they were again taken up and deposited at the next house, and thus through the village, until the three victims must have become heartily sickened with sweets, and have vowed to eschew molasses from that day.

Upon enquiry I found that the relations on both sides were bound to show this civility, as a sign that the new couple are received with joy into the family circle.

It was near midnight before all these preliminaries were settled, when about that time the wedding party adjourned to the house of the head man of the village. The bride had been transferred to a basket in which she sat looking very demure. The custom is for the bride to be lifted by her relations in the basket. The bridegroom, raised upon the shoulders of the eldest brother, then meets her in this exalted position, and applies five times to her forehead streaks of red paint, daubing them on with an horizontal stroke. This part is the most important of the programme, and is about equivalent in value to the placing the ring on the finger in our contracts. She then has dhan and grain showered on her. The

basket figured as a prominent object in the ancient Grecian marriage ritual, but I think it only held the bride's chaplet and flowers, instead of her body.

A wedding supper had been prepared at the Manjee's house, and consisted of goat's flesh, pork, fowls, and such like, with quantities of rice and large earthen pots filled with spirits, distilled from rice and termed Puchwacc.

I remarked with some surprise on the alarming familiarities displayed by the youthful brother of the bridegroom towards his future sister-in-law, and was informed that it was the Sonthali custom for the younger brother (if unmarried) to take the face of his elder brother's bride (as Lady Duff Gordon would say). My informant seeing astonishment depicted in my countenance, merely shrugged his shoulders and added, "Mother-and-father, such is our custom ; as our fathers did, so do we !"

When the elder brother dies, the next younger inherits the widow, children, and all the property ; so should a Sonthal be the younger son of ten, and the nine die leaving widows, he may be saddled with nine old women and a large family of children in his old age,—an awful prospect !

As Bacchus had already begun to exert his influence over the many, for their gait was becoming more unsteady and their eyes blood-shot, I thought it expedient to beat a retreat, and at last I succeeded, not, however, before two or three jolly good fellows!! in their eagerness to see me home, had measured their length on the ground, where I left them shouting out incoherent praises in bad Bengali of myself and themselves.

My own journey to the tent was accomplished under difficulties, as the glare of the lights rendered the darkness more opaque, and my progress was a series of tumbling over hillocks and walking against trees, until I got into the open, when the welcome white canvas gave me a point to steer to.

Amongst the Sonthals, should a man remain as a bachelor, he is at once despised by both sexes, and is classed next to a thief or a witch: they term the unhappy wretch "No man."

There are two other ways besides the above usual method by which Sonthal lovers may be united in the bonds of matrimony. One is by the Scotch fashion at the Soharai festival,

adopted by those who "love not wisely, but too well." After the festival is over, should the lover take the lady to his house, no more than the payment of a fine is required to complete the ceremony. The other is by taking the romantic and exciting course of an elopement. As soon as the girl's parents find out she has disappeared, they are entitled to go to the "happy swain's" house and take by force a cow or bullock, or a certain number of goats, or property amounting in price to about 30s. This obtained, "vi et armis," the irate mamma and papa are appeased, and the young bride holds her position as a wife in Sonthal society.

Old Secboo says there are not many elopements, because, when the fearful parent sees that any of his daughters are getting the "warm moist eye" of affection cast upon them, the lover's intentions are at once asked. Thus at an early stage of the courtship the man finds himself bound before his attentions are allowed to become very marked.

For three afternoons in succession, before the ceremony, such as I have attempted to describe, takes place, the Jog Manghi, or third officer of the village, calls the villagers, together

to confer on the subject. Hanri is then served out to enliven the proceedings, and on the third day the marriage ceremony is celebrated.

The Sonthals make it a rule not to intermarry into the same tribe. There are two tribes, however, which never intermarry in consequence of some ancient feud between them; one is the Hansdah, the other the "Murmuri" tribe.* At all these ceremonies it is wonderful to behold the gusto and vigorous manner with which they keep up the songs and dances.

On this particular night no sleep visited the writer; for as soon as the males had become too unsteady in gait or voice to dance and sing, the women took their places, and until long after cock-crow such refrains as the following were borne to my unwilling ears, as I lay and tossed on my cot, even envying that hackneyed "ship boy perched upon the mast":—

SONG NO. I.

They say that in olden times many were very rich,
My little sister !

* I believe that the feud was with the "Murmuri" tribe; I may, however, be mistaken as to the name of the latter of the two.

Their houses had roofs on four sides and strong
wooden fences,

My little one !

Whilst mine is like the lippe bird's cage with a door,
on the small side of the house.

SONG No. 2.

VERSE I.

For ten months I was pregnant with thee, and
For twelve I had thee on my knees ;
How can I leave thee now ? Oh, my daughter,
The house is up to the door full of people.

Chorus ad lib.

For ten months I was pregnant with thee, and
For twelve I had thee on my knees ;
How can I leave thee now my child ?

VERSE II.

Oh mother, for pity's sake, do not leave me !
How can I leave you ?
Get up, my daughter, and begone,
On the Tilayaka place stands the rich man's horse
saddled and bridled.
Oh my darling mother, how can I leave you ?

VERSE III.

My father has received a handful of rupees, and
a long horned bull,
My mother has got a striped dress.
The handful of rupees is spent, the striped dress of
my mother is worn out.
The tall horned bull died in the leaky watering-
place.

VERSE IV.

My head is marked repeatedly with the red paint,
I am signed for ever and ever !

SONG No. 3.

In my elder brother's country I have seen troubled
waters—troubled waters ;
In my sister's, clear ones. Yes, clear waters.
In the garden the plantain trees wave to and fro—
wave to and fro !
In the maize field, the Maskoru tree flowers ;
I have seen the Maskoru tree flower !
In order to enjoy the puthi fish (*for curry*), I will dig
for turmeric—dig for turmeric.
The centipede had stung me. Pour out the tur-
meric.
Comb your hair, my darling. Tie the hair-string
from the beam under the roof, sweet one !
My two little sisters, choose ye young leaves for me,
I say. Choose ye young leaves for me.

Now stitch at noon the rice plate (*of leaves*).
 My brother says, I will graze the herd—I won't
 plough in the open. Where the coarse grass
 grows I will play the flute.
 Shall I play the flute or the flageolet ?

SONG No. 4.

VERSE I.

Your relations have come and have sat down,
 O son of the house.
 Bring first of all the stools and sitting boards,
 (small boards, one for each person).
 After that give us lota water.
 Bring hukas, bring pipes stitched of leaves, says the
 father of the bride.
 Eat and drink, my friends, all of you !

VERSE II.

O ye relations that have come together from hill
 and dale,
 I pray each of you sit down ;
 Sit down before the sanctified door, sit down (*says
 the son.*)
 What do you choose, each of you ? What do you
 like ?
 Ye new arrivals, I pray you, let me give you dried
 (*not cooked rice.*)
 And ye, let me give you this fresh-drawn milk.

(Here the bridegroom howls out)

I don't care, my son, for this dried rice, and I don't
care for this fresh milk.

Eh ! Old mother, bring out thy daughter !

Bring out thy daughter !

VERSE III.

A chain, a chain, a gold chain, a silver fishing-hook,
O baba !

A silver fishing-hook for ever, O baba !

A gold chain is forged for ever.

The silver-fishing hook has fastened on thee,
O baba !

A gold chain has laid hold on thee, O baba !

Who has forged the silver fishing-hook ?

Who has forged the gold chain ?

Whose is the fishing-hook ? God has forged the
gold chain ;

God has also forged the silver fishing-hook—the
silver fishing-hook !

SONG No. 5.

Let us plant mango and palm trees, my brother !

Let us enclose a tank, my brother, that we may
be remembered.

And on the top of the embankment, and on the
Kadum tree (*jungle fruit tree*),

May the Sasung bird sing.

By the side of the dirty pool in the eidel tree the
black Taxo (*singing bird*) nests.

108 *Sonthalia and the Southals.*

On the mountain the Tironda (*a kind of swallow*)
stops beneath the clods of the field.

Hear the Lipido bird (*a small bird*), my sister-in-law,
At the time of the noon-day meal he screams.

The sun sees the going out and coming in of the
King.

The King of the Tandara entertained me in my
saffron-stained cloth,

On the banks of the brook. Yea, on its banks the
frog's croak.

The Duldung snake I did not see

On the banks of the Brahminee River. The heron is
said to eat the shrimps ;

I have not seen it.

CHAPTER XIV.

Origin and causes of Sonthal rebellion—Rapacity of the Mahajuns—Corruption of the Police—Supineness of Government officials—Inadequacy of the Law Courts—Improvidence of the Sonthal—Institution of slavery—Incompetence of the Moonsiffs—Iniquitous system of personal slavery—Activity shown by Mr. Robinson in abolishing system—Mr. Robinson's opinion thereon—Analysis of the system—Former distance of Law Courts from the Sonthal, and corruption of Mooktears—Ominous signs before breaking out of the rebellion—Active measures taken by the Hon. Ashley Eden at Aurungabad—Animus against Government—Eccentric Perwannah issued by Sonthal Chief—Heavy reprisals by our troops—Results of rebellion—The Paharies—A Bengali's experiences—Melancholy end of Mr. H. and his three sons.

IT is now some twelve years since the Sonthals, goaded to resistance by the wrongs they were suffering, rose up and attempted to release themselves from the oppression and misery inflicted upon them at the hands of the unwitting British Government, and savages

as the tribe were, they appear, while endeavouring to obtain redress, to have raised a panic even amongst the residents of Calcutta.

The primary causes which led to the rebellion of 1856 may be traced as far back as the year 1832, and may be shortly summed under the following heads, *1st.*—The grasping and rapacious spirit influencing the mahajuns or money lenders in their transactions with the tribe. *2nd.*—The increasing misery caused by the iniquitous system of allowing personal and hereditary bondage for debt. *3rd.*—The unparalleled corruption and extortion of the police in aiding the mahajuns. *4th.*—The impossibility of the Sonthals obtaining redress from the Courts. And last, but not least, the improvidence and “happy-go-lucky” style of living of the Sonthals themselves. These all combined were, in my opinion, the primary causes of the rebellion.

It has been argued, as before remarked, that the Sonthals were always slaves, and that the institution of slavery amongst them was of ancient date. But it seems rather to have been introduced by the mahajuns, who derived the institution from the inhabitants in the vicinity.

It appears, however, that from 1832 the

Moonsiffs had been in the habit of decrecing civil suits in the mahajun's favor, upon bonds the terms of which were thus:—"In consideration of having received — Rs., I undertake to work out (at any time I may be called to do so) this debt with interest (often) @ 40 and 75 per cent." Time was never made the essence of the agreement, and an arrow-head or some such mark was carelessly scrawled upon the bond to represent the signature of the recipient of the dole, who in nine cases out of ten never read or understood what he was signing, and was ignorant of the misery and ruin he entailed upon his children. This bond was of such value, that whenever the mahajun wanted his own fields prepared, or crops cut, he would immediately pounce down upon the unfortunate donor of it, and drag him to compulsory and doubly unprofitable work; for while the Sonthal's time was taken up in looking after the mahajun's field without payment or fair remuneration, his own land would lie fallow or his crop rot from not being reaped at the right time. To such a climax had this evil attained, that it was a common thing for a Moonsiff to decree that a grandson should give personal service in liquidation of a debt due by a grand-

father, and of which debt the grandson was ignorant, or which had never been incurred. In too many instances, I fear, *si vera est fama*, the lower Courts were guilty of gross negligence and fraud.

To Mr. Le F. Robinson, of the Bengal Civil Service, is due the honor of having called the attention of Government to this crying evil, and of never abating in his exertions until this great engine of oppression was abolished. His name, with a few others, is now mentioned with affection and gratitude by the people he benefited. I herewith append his remarks on the subject of slavery: he states that—

“ It was called Kamiotee, but it is not peculiar to Sonthalia or the Sonthals. You will find it nearly all over the country, I believe, in one form or another. But in Sonthalia it was very bad. A man borrowed money and gave a bond to work it out, binding himself to work for the lender, whenever he was required, without pay. The lender of course required his services at harvest and the other busy seasons of the year, when the debtor could have got work and pay elsewhere, and when work was slack the lender of course did not require his slave’s services. He could make nothing else-

“ where ; all he got when working was food, and
“ sometimes a bit of cloth once a year. As
“ interest was taken in advance, the debtor
“ could never work out the debt; the interest
“ was never less than 25 per cent., often much
“ more ; the son, daughter, or other nearest re-
“ lation of the debtor used in case of his death
“ to be considered liable, and if suits were
“ brought on these bonds in the old Moonsiffs’
“ Courts, they used to give decrees for their due
“ execution, no matter how old the debt or
“ who was working it out at the time! I have
“ had a bond brought to me in which 25 Rs. was
“ originally borrowed by a man who worked his
“ lifetime, his son did ditto, and I released his
“ grandson from any further necessity ; it had
“ been running on for over thirty years, if I
“ remember rightly! Whenever I got a com-
“ plaint, I made the creditor produce the bond
“ and impounded or tore it up, and sent the
“ debtor to work on the railway. It was in
“ 1858 that the whole matter was reported to the
“ Bengal Government.”

The rapacity of the mahajuns (curtailed as their power for evil has been, since the period about which I am now writing) is still patent to any who may come in contact with them. They

may be necessary evils, but the evil of doing without them would be far preferable to any supposed good to be derived from them. They are not so grasping with men of their own caste or nation, but the bargaining of the Bengali mahajun with the Sonthal is the contest between a knave and a reckless fool—about as equal as a battle with a wolf on the one side, and a lamb on the other.

When it is considered that under the old regulation system an ill-paid Darogah or Native Inspector of Police, with about twenty Burkundauzes or Constables, was placed in the country with no European or respectable Native supervision, or with just sufficient to give such supervision a name and to make it a farce; when the only English Officer performed at the most one hasty dash through the middle of the district but once a year; when these Inspectors were notoriously corrupt, and played into the hands of the money lenders, besides practising a little extortion on their own account—it ought not to be a matter of surprise that this confiding, impulsive, and unthinking Sonthal race should rise to strike a blow for their freedom. It was the custom of the mahajun to lend out small sums at exorbitant compound interest, and

upon presenting a fee to get the aid of the police to plunder and give him the debtor's property. To obtain redress for a wrong such as this, the sufferers were obliged to wend their weary way on foot through swamp and jungle to a distance of from 80 to 150 miles ere they could lay their complaint before the Hakim at Bhaugulpore or Deoghur. Upon filing their petition and paying through the nose in bribes to the Amlah and fees to the Mooktears (Native Court Agents), the first order obtained was generally an order by an overworked Collector to the Inspector to report on the plaint, and the same to be produced some fortnight or three weeks hence. It may be fancied that the bribe of the mahajun, with the knowledge that in the report he was reporting on himself, would hardly enable the Inspectors to give an impartial return. The necessity for the Sonthal to go constantly to and fro, with his ignorance of the dates appointed for hearing the cause, and the expenses, would tire him out long ere the case was in train for redress. Sick at heart he would return to his cottage, emptied by the money lender, to find his wife and children starving, his homestead in ruins, and his cattle and ploughs sold up for some paltry debt which, in many cases, had been

allowed to accumulate at compound interest for years ; for the mahajun, watching the industry of his victim, would, at the time when his garners were full and the sponge ready to be squeezed, pounce down on him and take hundreds for a debt of a unit, and but too often on some false claim. When for oppression such as this no remedy was to be found ; when they saw the proceeds of their labor annihilated, and the destroyers assisted by men wearing Government badges ; when many a dreary mile had been trudged, and their last pice spent to enable them to seek a remedy at the foot of the Hākim, and when their claims were either ignored or dismissed, it is not to be wondered at that they should seek a remedy for their misery in arms. When the Sal branch, their signal for war, like the old fiery cross of the Scots, was passed by willing hands from village to village, the whole of this peaceful, industrious race rose as one man, to contend not only for their rights, —for they had long since given up all hope of getting those,—but for bare existence, as they had no faith in a Government which seen only through the Police, and in their quarrels with the mahajuns they had every reason to consider tyrannical, unjust, and extortionate. Thus the

torch was lighted which flamed over all the Sonthalian country, caused the death of some Europeans, both male and female, and thousands of Sonthals, and was only extinguished when our troops had burnt and destroyed many Sonthal villages, all the crops accessible, and had starved the people into a surrender.

The causes that gave rise to this rebellion, with the prior inactivity to give the Sonthals redress, and the stringent measures afterwards taken, form a dark blot on the pages of British History in India.

Long before the rebellion itself broke out, ominous signs of discontent had appeared, and appeals for redress had been presented to the authorities; but in the former instances, where any tumultuous gatherings had taken place, they seem to have been treated merely as unlawful assemblies, and no further action taken on them at all, while in the latter the necessary enquiry seems never to have been instituted, or notice sent to the Government of the discontent amongst the people or the oppression practised on them.

This culpable negligence on the part of the responsible authorities can only be accounted for on the plea, that they were so far off

from, and so ignorant of the people and their language, that they had formed no conception of the volcano then ready for eruption. At any rate, no action was taken, no troops collected, and no enquiry made into their grievances, until after the Sal branch had been passed and held up in ominous silence at the Manjhce Stan, while the place of rendezvous was declared. The insurgent forces were collected, and the work of plunder and death commenced ere measures were taken to resist them.

It was on or about the 25th June, 1856, when some servants of an indigo planter residing at Aurungabad, and who had gone into the Sonthal country to collect coolies for the indigo manufactory, returned, terror-stricken, to their master with the intelligence that they had been seized by a large body of armed Sonthals on the war trail, who warned them to retire at once, for vengeance was to be taken on their enemies for injuries received, and upon mahajuns and Government Officials in particular. They had already commenced by decapitating every policeman, Inspector, or mahajun who was unlucky enough to meet them.

The indigo planter referred to at once sent notice of this to the Hon'ble Ashley Eden,

who was then in charge of the Aurungabad Magistracy. It was well for the interests of Government, and for the protection of life and property, that this intelligence came to one who had ability to conceive, and energy to carry out, a plan which probably saved the towns of Jungipore, Moorshedabad, and the surrounding country from being looted. Having sent express to Berhampore for all available troops, he issued perwannahs to the neighbouring zemindars to collect as many lattials or fighting men as they could, with whom to meet the insurgents. These assembling presented such a bold front that the Sonthals, apparently doubtful of their own strength, turned back and never attempted to ravage this portion of the boundary, but confined their depredations more towards the Rajmehal, Bhaugulpore, and Deoghur divisions, and to the regions about Nonee.

A curious instance of the animus shown by the Sonthals against Government is depicted in the following story which was told me by the planter before referred to. It is said that the Sonthals had made a Bengali gomashtha write perwannahs for the planters, informing them "that as they were 'chassas' or cultivators like themselves, if they stayed in their factories,

and gave the Sonthal army 'russud' or Commissariat supplies, they should remain unmolested." If this story can be relied on,—and it was narrated by a good authority,—it proves that the hostile feeling of the tribe arose, not from an animus against Europeans in general, but merely against Government and the police. I will not attempt to describe the murders committed and heavy reprisals taken by our troops, since all my knowledge is derived from hearsay evidence, which is seldom trustworthy. Suffice it to mention that after a guerilla warfare, in which many lives were sacrificed, the war was brought to a close, and the rebellion crushed by the end of 1858.

This period found the Sonthals houseless and wretched, with a great portion of their tribe annihilated, and their accessible villages and crops destroyed; but they had cut to pieces every mahajun they could get hold of, and had frightened the remainder away with a wholesome fear sufficient to keep them from again appearing to dun their miserable debtors for some time to come; so to a certain extent the Sonthals had temporarily gained their end, but at a fearful cost to themselves.

There was a rude kind of chivalry shown

by the tribes in this war which deserves to be recorded. Although, as a race, they are wonderfully well imbued with a knowledge of all the kinds of vegetable poisons with which their jungles abound, and although for hunting and shooting they dip their arrow-heads into a compound so poisonous that a full-grown tiger, even if scratched with the prepared barb, surely dies in half an hour; yet, despite all this, they disdained or neglected to take such an advantage when at war with our troops. I have never been able to find an instance of a case in which any of our men or officers were wounded by poisoned arrows, although many received arrow wounds. While in converse with Sonthals, I have often thought of asking them the question, why they omitted to use the arrows poisoned, but have abstained, as I feared to suggest a practice which they might try upon the questioner, should he ever offend them.

The only race that seems to have derived benefit and no evil from the rebellion is that of the Paharees, who live on the summits of the hills, at the base of which the Sonthals cultivate. These people followed the Sonthal bands at a respectful distance, and waited until the latter

had driven away the peaceful inhabitants of the villages en route, when they rushed in and, taking advantage of their absence and of the Sonthals pursuing, took everything they could lay hands on, and when gorged with booty speedily retired to their fastnesses, leaving to the Sonthals the fighting part and but little of the plunder.

I could scarcely refrain from laughter on hearing the account from a Bengali of his experiences of the rebellion. He lived on the margin of the Sonthalian boundary and the Bhaugulpore district proper, and had built a comfortable homestead, with his cattle, grain, and produce all around him, but the Sonthals marching through his village caused him to flee, and with his family hide himself in the woods. The Paharees following looted all his property, and when, after the expiration of a few days, he returned, congratulating himself that all was over, the British force arrived, whose array, to use his graphic language, "stretched from one end of the horizon to the other," and added to his stock of misfortune by burning down the whole village, and all his property also.

A melancholy incident occurred near Tela Gurrie, which resulted in the death of a Mr.

H—and his three sons. It appears that these gentlemen having received news that a body of Sonthals were approaching a village in the vicinity, marched out with some hired fighting men to meet them. But on the two parties coming in sight, the Natives on the Europeans' side fled, leaving old Mr. H. with his younger son on an elephant and the others on horses.

The elephant, slow and cumbersome, ran into a jheel or large swamp, and while in that position and without a mahout or elephant driver—for he had also fled—some of the enemy scaled the brute's side and with their battle-axes split poor Mr. H.'s and his son's skulls. The others disdainingly to leave their father, had already fallen pierced by many arrows.

Isolated incidents such as this occurred, but I refrain from harrowing the feelings of the surviving relations of the sufferers by recounting them in detail.

CHAPTER XV.

Conduct of Officials and Government with regard to the rebellion—Their indifference towards preventive measures at an earlier period—Mr. Eden's first great blow to oppression and first instalment of freedom—Abolition of the Police system—Difference between Regulation and Non-Regulation—Appointments of Assistant Commissioners—Rules laid down by Mr. Yule—Non-Regulation Officer in a crisis better able to cope with difficulties and responsibilities than a Regulation Officer—Sonthals were justified in rising—Fortunate choice of officials, and their hard work—Probability of the Sonthals again rising.

ALTHOUGH, before the rebellion, the conduct of the responsible officials who failed to inform the Government, and the neglect of the higher power itself in taking preventive measures earlier, was unfortunate in the extreme, yet as soon as the latter had been awakened to the gravity of the crisis, a sense of justice and moderation was shown which went far to atone for their former shortcomings, and repair the evil caused. Attention was first turned towards

that engine of oppression—the Police; and the Hon'ble Ashley Eden was appointed Deputy Commissioner in the disturbed provinces. His report, with its recommendations, was the first instalment towards the freedom, and the first great blow to the oppression which had temporarily weighed down the light-hearted Sonthals. By his recommendations, the whole of the Police, with their stations and all their paraphernalia of oppression, extortion, and cumbersome red-tapeism, were swept clear from the Sonthal Pergunnahs, and the duty of keeping the peace, arresting criminals, and of carrying on all executive duties, was vested in the villagers themselves, the headmen of each village being made responsible that the duties were carried out. A few regular guards were left merely as personal escorts, and as a protection to the Assistant Commissioner.

This was a wise and politic measure, for the Police institutions maintained the same as under the old régime, despite any reforms introduced; would have always been looked upon with suspicion and hatred. But the new change gave peace and contentment to the Sonthal, and monetary gain to the Government.

This system, initiated and proposed by Mr.

Eden, was carried out in its integrity under Mr. George Yule, C.B., by whose able management, with Messrs. Robinson and Wood as his deputies, the Sonthals were raised from misery, dull despair, and deadly hatred of the Government to a pitch of prosperity and happiness which, to my knowledge, has never been equalled in any other part of India under the British rule. The Regulation Courts, with their herds of leeches in the shape of badly paid and corrupt Amlah and pettifogging Mooktears, were abolished, and in their place a number of active English gentlemen, termed Assistant Commissioners and nominated by Mr. Yule, were set down amongst the Sonthals, with a Code of Regulations drawn up by that gentleman, the pith of which may be summed up as follows:—

To have no medium between the Sonthal and the Hakim, *i. e.*, Assistant Commissioner.

To patiently hear any complaint made by the Sonthal from his own mouth, without any written petition or charge whatever, and without any Amlah in Court at the time.

To carry out all criminal work by the aid of the villagers themselves, who were to bring in the accused, with the witnesses, to the

Hakim, who should immediately attend to their statements, and punish those found guilty according to the tenor of the law.

These were some of the most important of the golden rules carried out by men who recognized the responsibility of their situation; and with an adored chief, in the shape of Yule, for their ruler, whose firm, judicious, and gentlemanly conduct made them work with willing hearts, their endeavours were crowned with a success which far exceeded the expectations of the most sanguine of those who had seen the Sonthals reduced to the want and misery to which the rebellion had sunk them. The Non-Regulation system was introduced in its integrity, and the Regulation abolished. As to the uninitiated the difference between the two may not be known, I will attempt to describe the most salient points in which the two systems appear to me to differ.

In the Regulation Provinces, law in all its majesty and technicality is enforced, and no discretion is left to the presiding officer to temper his decision according to the caste or customs of the parties in the suits. In the Non-Regulation Provinces, equity, in the true acceptance of the word, guided by the spirit

of the law, is enforced without any of the cumbersome rules, intricate procedure, or expensive formula of the sister system. In the Regulation Provinces, the more subordinate officers, even to the Magistrates and Collectors of the first grade, are but mere cogs in the wheel of the Government machine; while in the Non-Regulation system, the Assistant and Deputy Commissioners have more independent action, and are more powerful for good and evil. In the former, a man of small energy and mediocre abilities, or positive corrupt qualities, is under so many checks, that the evil he is capable of committing is reduced to a minimum, and his incapability and corruptness may pass long unnoticed; while in the latter case, a man of the same calibre is a powerful engine of wrong and oppression, and soon has his district in such a state of disorder, that a moderately just and penetrative superior has no choice but to obtain his removal. Whilst, however, the fact of his incompetence and infamy is becoming known, the district may be suffering, and countless cases of hardship and injustice undergone by the people, for the protection of whom he has been placed. But, on the one hand, while a bad man can temporarily do more harm and

injustice in a Non-Regulation than the same person could do were he in a Regulation Province, yet, on the other, an active, energetic, and high-minded gentleman, with a just idea of his duties, can do a great deal more good in a Non-Regulation than the same man could do in a Regulation Province, for he is less tied and has more power for free action. Straws show which way the wind blows, and little anecdotes (if true) generally illustrate the feelings of a people better than deep theories or learned investigations. One important difference between the two systems may be presumed from the following :—

I was travelling in the Midnapore District (Regulation) when Mr. Herschell, a popular friend of the natives, was Magistrate and Collector there; of all Regulation men, if any one ought to have been known to every ryot, it should have been this one, as his activity and philanthropy in their cause, while Magistrate in Jessore, during the indigo disturbances, is a patent fact: but in a certain part of Midnapore, where the Collector Saheb was brought into conversation, I asked—"What is the Collector Saheb's name?" but could get no answer, excepting "the Collector Saheb." No villager

there even seemed to think of any Government official as having aught but an official identity.

With the exception of the Amlah about the Court, and those intimately connected in some way with its hangers-on, the ryots or inhabitants of a Regulation District, as a body, never know the name of the Collector or Magistrate, or seldom, if ever, the name of any official in it. Whereas, in the Non-Regulation Provinces, ask any ryot or inhabitant, and the majority will at once give you, not the name of the office, but the name of the official. In the one case the identity of the man is merged in the office, in the other the man himself merges the office in his own identity. In the Regulation it is always Collector Saheb, Magistrate Saheb, Judge Saheb; but in the Non-Regulation it is always Jones Saheb, Brown Saheb, Robinson Saheb: this in itself shows the more intimate relations that exist between the parties. For a newly annexed province, or for a semi-civilized tribe, the Non-Regulation system is indispensable, but it requires a man of peculiar tact and discretion for the appointment. A genius—according to Bulwer Lytton, “a man who knows everything but what is useful”—is not

required, for he would be crochety and out of place. Great ability of any kind is hardly requisite; but, above all things, tact and common sense, and some ideas of the rules of evidence, with the feelings of a gentleman, are indispensable. By the term feelings of a gentleman, I don't mean the polished habits acquired by home influences and associations with refined society; for this outward veneer will soon be rubbed off after a few years' sojourn amidst solitary jungles, with the rough-and-ready life it entails; but I mean that feeling which the Greeks termed the "noble and good." This appertains to a man who would never allow petty considerations to interfere with his ideas of justice, who would work only to satisfy his own sense of right, and who would disdain to serve for "eye service." Religion and education have a good deal to do with forming the gentleman, but they are secondary aids; the feeling must be innate, and I believe is almost always hereditary. Although, on the whole, when we wish to pat a people on the back, as it were, and to raise them up, the Non-Regulation system is certainly preferable to the Regulation system, and when a crisis comes gives us trained men to meet it,—

men who always having had a great share of responsibility, are more prompt to act and less afraid of responsibility than Regulation men,—yet I do not think it would be for the benefit of Bengal were the Non-Regulation system introduced there; for so peculiarly constituted are the Bengalis, with their village system half annihilated, and their fondness for litigation, yet wanting independence, that the Non-Regulation system would be to them a curse instead of a blessing, particularly as large zemindars intervene with their powerful interests between the Hakim and the ryot. Before the rebellion the Sonthals were badly treated, and reviewing the whole bearings of the case, together with the opinions the Sonthals held—anent their inability to obtain redress by fair means—I think the greatest fault they committed in thus rising was that they rose without a probable chance of success. With the Sonthals a weighty grievance drew them to arms, but they fought with an enemy that knew how to be generous, and who had sinned in ignorance, in the first instance, rather than from malice prepense, and who nobly repaired their errors afterwards.

The Sonthals appear to have been as for-

fortunate after the rebellion, with regard to their official protectors, as they were unfortunate before. Prosperity and justice were brought to them, when Government appointed gentlemen like Yule and Money for their Commissioners, Wood for their Deputy, and Wilmot and Cosserat for their Assistants. I will not attempt to take up the names of any who were instrumental in causing the rebellion, but it is a pleasant task to inscribe the names of officials who did, and are doing now, their duty with such happy results. With the anomaly so apparent in the majority of all mundane affairs, the Non-Regulation officials, although, as a rule, worked harder and with as great responsibilities as the Regulation officials, do not enjoy the same fair remuneration or chances of promotion the Regulation officials are blessed with.

There seems to be a tendency in high quarters to reduce the Sonthalian again to the old Regulation system. The same natural laws do not govern the tiger and the fish. Neither should the levelling system of Indian legislation govern with one code the Mahajun, the Bengali, and the Sonthal. Class legislation is to be

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avoided, but in England the Truck Act affords a precedent by which we may presume that exceptions to every rule are to be made for the sake of justice.

CHAPTER XVI.

Opportunity for observing Missionary efforts—Locality—Proselytism—Great deal of good performed—The Doctrines preached—Supposed character of the Bengali—Good at bottom—Outward life of Missionary counteracting evil effects of debauchery of vagrant loafers—Rev. E. L. Puxley—Establishment of Schools—Average attendance of scholars—Reasons why little progress is made—Sonthals aware of importance of education as a safeguard against the Mahajuns—Schools in the jungle—Fair progress of some Sonthal boys trained as teachers—Progress of American Missions—Good done in an unostentatious manner—Story related by Mr. Phillips—Mr. Lehman's judicious words—Number of Christians in Pakour Division—Drunkenness great drawback to conversion—Sonthals not a Priest-ridden race—Sonthal Priests.

MY opportunities for observing the efforts of the Missionaries amongst the Sonthals have been confined to the districts of Bhaugulpore, Rajmehal, Pakour, Godda, and thence on towards Midnapore ; any remarks I may therefore make are not intended to refer to the

contiguous province of Chota Nagporc, but merely to the above places.

Apart from proselytism, a great deal of good is performed by the Missionaries in India in a quiet, unostentatious manner, and as an eye-witness in many instances, I can speak to the happy results produced by their endeavours. I have never enquired whether they be Germans, Americans, or English, or whether they be college men and gentlemen, German artisans, Baptists, or Wesleyans, but I can safely say that all I have come in contact with appear to be doing a greater amount of good than is generally believed.

To my personal knowledge, wherever a Missionary goes he is respected, and I believe that, even by Mussulmen, he is seldom, if ever, reviled. Amongst the Sonthals, as the great instruments for conveying education to the children, as well as messengers of Christ, they are looked upon with veneration and esteem, and in many instances with affection.

It is to be noticed that, despite the lying and debauchery with which many Europeans associate the lower class of Bengalis, many redeeming qualities cannot be denied them, one of which, like Hope at the bottom of Pandora's

Box, lies deep in their mind—I mean their admiration of good apparent in others. The self-denying and outwardly blameless life led by these Missionaries, inspires the natives with a feeling of respect, and somewhat softens the bad impression that they have received of Europeans and Christianity, from witnessing the drunken brawls and depraved life of those unfortunate European loafers, who are undoubtedly lowering the English prestige and character, by their wanderings over the rural parts of India.

To one gentleman in particular, who, resigning his career in a Dragoon Regiment, and the blessing of civilized life, buried himself in the jungles, and devoted his time and fortune to the intellectual and religious improvement of the Sonthals, too much praise cannot be accorded. I refer to the Reverend E. L. Puxley, who labored long amidst one of the most pestilential swamps in India—Taljerria.

Mr. Puxley, assisted by the Church Mission Society, has established amongst the Sonthals, in all parts of their country, a number of schools, in which Bengallee and Hindee is taught. He commenced about seven or eight years ago. Although there appears to be a fair

average attendance of scholars, and a desire on the part of their parents to keep them at school, yet the progress is not so good as it might be, owing to the children themselves, who often play truant and are seldom corrected. For their mothers and fathers make a point of never beating them; and should corporal punishment be inflicted by the master, he runs the risk of losing all his pupils. Besides this, they are generally wanted to act the part of cowherds, and do the lighter work at reaping time, &c., &c. This takes them away from school too early, and militates greatly against the benefit they would otherwise derive, did they continue their studies uninterruptedly. In fact, they leave school before they have been sufficiently well grounded, to enable them to make use of their knowledge in after-life. The old men, however, seem to be aware of the important defence education will prove against the mahajun's accounts. For, as Seeboo says, "let my son read, write, and add, and he will be able to keep a check upon Piaree Loll, the village money-lender." So education is not by any means despised. Those fortunate enough to be allowed to apply steadily, make fair progress; and in the two schools of Taljerria and Heran-

pore, belonging to the Church Mission Society, there are classes for the training of Sonthal boys as teachers, who, when deemed qualified, are sent out to form small branch schools in the jungle.

These schools are under the superintendence of the two clergymen, Mr. Puxley assisted by Mr. Lehman.

There is an American Mission and schools under Mr. Bachelor and the two Messrs. Phillips, at Midnapore and Jellasore. They appear to have had greater difficulties to contend with than the English Mission, as I think the Sonthals are more corrupt and drunken there than those near Rajmehal. The elder Mr. Phillips has written a most useful grammar and dictionary of the Sonthal language, and, I believe, was the first Missionary who made himself acquainted with that tongue. I recollect hearing him tell the following story, which I inscribe from memory. After he had been with them for some time, and had studied their language sufficiently to understand what they said, it caused him regret and anxiety that he could not render a prayer into Sonthali, such that it might come to the understanding of all the tribe. While this was weighing on his mind, he happened to

hear a young Sonthali Christian boy praying eloquently (for him) in his own tongue, that God would cause His light to shine upon his parents and family. Mr. Phillips knew the language sufficiently to understand him, and, profiting by this happy accident, rendered a prayer on the model of the boy's supplication. The trained Sonthal Christian teachers before mentioned, assisted by some Hindoos and Bengalis learned in the language, have been, on the whole, moderately successful in their endeavours. They have to fight against great superstition and ignorance; and bearing in mind Mr. Lehman's judicious words,—“It is not desirable that the people should embrace Christianity without being first properly influenced thereto,”—we may presume that those who have become Christians, are Christians in the true acceptation of the word. I believe in the Pakour Division there are about one hundred baptized persons. A great many orphans are clothed and fed by the Mission, and as soon as they get old enough, are married off to some other of its members. Drunkenness is one of the great stumbling blocks to Missionary efforts, and, in my opinion, it is an impenetrable barrier in the case of the elder Sonthals; but I am glad to find that some

of those capable of judging, do not seem to view this vice as such an impediment to Christianity as I do.

Although the Sonthals are not a priest-ridden race, yet they boast of a kind of spiritual teacher or Gurū of their own. These generally make yearly visits to the villages. The majority can read and write, and all claim the same distinction from their followers as the Brahmins do from the Hindoos. But the priestly office does not seem to be hereditary, neither is much honor paid to them, except when they combine the office of oracle as well.

These Gurūs must not be confounded with those prophets who pretend to have intercourse with spirits. People often come from a great distance to consult them in cases of sickness, in all kinds of family distress, and when any perplexity happens to the village commune. They invariably sell their prophecies for a small remuneration, and their general fee is a quarter of a rupee, or six-pence, in each case.

CHAPTER XVII.

Curious belief with regard to hell—Heaven and enjoyments there—Dread of the evil eye and omens—Anecdote thereon—Ceremonies performed at death of adults—Burial of children—Oracles of the dead—Disposal of the ashes—Lamentation death song for a child—The same for a husband—Periodical pilgrimage to Damooda and Brahminee—Exclusiveness of the old Bhoots.

CICERO says that no old woman would believe the tales told about the heathen Hells. The Sonthals also have a peculiar belief with regard to the place of torment, which must try the credulity even of the most inane old Sonthali crone. They term it Ihkuur (place of stinks or stink place), and imagine that after death the damned live in poverty, hunger, and thirst, and are always subject to disagreeable smells. According to their idea, it is situate in a corner of the "Hurapuri" or other world.

They place their heaven also in the Hurapuri, and believe that there the good Sonthal will

have his agriculture and live comfortably, eating, drinking, and hunting for ever and ever. They will also be excellently housed.

They have a great dread of the evil eye and of omens. I was travelling with an official of high position, when we met an old Sonthal who had grown so fat that he would not have known his own feet had they been placed before him, for it must have been such a long time since he last saw them. My companion remarked to him, "You have grown fat." Instead of a polite answer he got a scowl, which seemed more severe than the occasion required. But the reason of this was that amongst the tribe it is believed that a remark on one's obesity causes early misfortune or death to the unhappy person thus addressed. It is our ignorance of the prejudices and superstitions of the natives, in small matters such as this, that occasions the breach between the two races, rather than any positive oppression or injustice on the part of the European.

Should a Sonthal boy or girl die young, the body is buried with little ceremony; but in case of an adult's death, the rites and ceremonies are elaborate.

While the person is dying, they generally

keep their door open, as they prefer to have the spirit of the departed wandering about outside the house than taking up a permanent abode inside. This is one of the reasons why the Manjee Stan is built, as it affords a residence to the manes of the departed. Although this Stan is only seen before the headman's house, yet I think that the spirits of all the deceased villagers are commonly considered to congregate there. After death, the body is taken to where two roads meet, and there the women and relations cry over it. Before the ceremony of burning takes place, the next heir of the family, with his face averted, and walking backwards, inserts a piece of grass between the lips of the deceased, and also places a small coin in his hand. At the place of burning, the body, thus prepared, is laid on its charpoy on the funeral pyre, and a small chip is taken off the collar bone and deposited in a new pot. The body is then consumed, and the ashes collected and placed in what remains of the skull. The clothes and brass utensils are often sold at half price near the pyre, and when the ashes are collected, the mourners return to the house. A cock is then caught, and his head being pounded on a stone, he is cooked

and eaten. If the deceased was rich, a cow, a goat, and a pig are also sacrificed. Before partaking, every one bathes, the house is thoroughly washed, and then the "funeral baked meats" are produced. When all the guests have departed, the relatives place a pan of water and rice in separate corners of the house, and leave the door open all night. On the next morning, should a few grains of rice be found in the pan of water, they suppose that the departed spirit, pleased with his funeral obsequies, has come to pay them a visit, eaten a little of the rice to show his good will, and in using the pan as a finger-glass, has necessarily left a few grains in the water. Should he not have come, they are compelled to appease and call him. They therefore call an oracle or ghost-finder in whose body the spirit is supposed to enter. The oracle works himself into a frenzy, and turns his head round and round. The departed then speaks through the medium. When he utters the words "I have come! I have come!" the desired effect has been produced and the relations are satisfied. The speedy appearance of the spirit depends a good deal upon the amount of remuneration given or expected by the medium. During the time the

body is in the house, the lamentations for the dead are thus chaunted :—

Oh me, oh me, my beloved one,

Where art thou now, my darling?

I said to myself all is well with me.

Alas ! alas ! my treasure, how short a time thou wast with us.

Oh my beloved, oh my beloved, where hast thou found a place ?

I said to myself he will get well again—

Ah me ! ah me !

The above is for a child, and the following on the death of the husband :—

Ah me, my husband, why didst thou die ?

Why didst thou leave me on this side of the generation ?

My husband, hast thou really left me ?

Oh me, oh me, my partner,

For a few days didst thou come, a few days didst thou stay ;

Thou wast like a flower of two days. Oh me ! oh me !

My companion, where can I go ? Where on earth can I turn ?

Where can I get one sight of thee ? Oh ! oh me !

My own darling, where can I find thy beloved face ?

From jungle firewood the villagers kindled to-day the fire —

They have burnt thee ! Oh me !

For two days thou wast on the face of the earth,

I saw my husband's body break like glass,

It happened as it was written in my destiny. Oh me!
Oh me! oh me! my darling, he has now left me
alone.

Oh me, as it was, so it came to pass.

I shall walk bowed down to the earth.

The earth shall feel hard under me.

Although I pray towards Heaven,

Heaven itself has gone up.

Oh me! oh me! No where advice and hope.

I have no discernment, no hope,

Why shall I live longer?

Why shall I feel any more comfort?

It is the custom of the villagers to wait until a sufficient number of their fathers and mothers have died, when they take their ashes and proceed in a body to throw them into the Damooda River, which is to them a sacred stream.

Unless this last ceremony is performed, the bhoot or departed spirit is not allowed to associate with those spirits whose ashes have been thrown in before.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Primitive knowledge of agriculture—Their food—Not abstemious with regard to animals which have died a natural death—Their system of visiting—Quaint mode of letter carrying—Peculiar notice from Juggernath—Their athletic games—Standard of money—Accounts of witchcraft—Persons' opinion of superstition—Punishment not efficacious in stopping witch-murders—The lightning box—Novel mode of trying a witch-finder, and his condign punishment—Murder of a reputed witch and her child—Murder of another witch, and arrest of the murderers—The trial—Four Hyænas viewing the proceedings.

THE Sonthal knowledge of agriculture is primitive. Although they use the same implements of husbandry as the Hindoos, yet I hardly imagine they obtain so much return for their work as the latter. For they are careless, although industrious, and are more suited for clearing land of jungle, than for afterwards bringing it into a high state of cultivation.

As observed before, they are not at all particular as to what they eat; they partake often of the sacrificial meats, such as fowls, goats, pigs, and pigeons. Should any of their cattle die a natural death, all the males of the village assemble around the animal, which is cut up with great expertness, and divided into as many shares as may be required. A portion is then eaten at once, and the remainder carried away to their homes. Rice is their chief food, but they also eat a variety of pulse. The women can concoct a soup, and are not ignorant of the way to make a kind of bread. They are skilled in their knowledge of the different edible jungle roots, and often use wild greens, leaves, and dried flowers boiled for food. In fact, as a Missionary once remarked, "a Sonthal will manage to live where even a rat would starve."

They are very fond of paying visits to their relations in different villages, and as soon as they have stored their crops, it is usual to see the young people of a family march off together to spend a few days with some friends, or connections perhaps, sixty or seventy miles away. They are also fond of dinner parties. Their way of carrying a letter is primitive; they take a small green twig and split it

slightly at one end ; in the cleft thus made they insert the manuscript, and it is thus carried, without being touched by the bearer, until it reaches its destination.

I recollect being encamped out in a wild jungly place, when I met a Sonthal thus carrying a dirty bit of coarse native paper. I had the curiosity to read the bad Bengali it was written in. The contents were, as far as I can recollect, as follows :—

“The doors of Juggernath are shut.

“A bull with snakes hissing all over him
“will pass towards Juggernath (here
“the writing was obliterated.) Keep your streets
“well cleaned and clear that he may pass
“through your villages without obstruction.
“Send this on to the next four villages, or you
“will be smitten with disease and die in a year.”

I found three of these papers being carried about, and in each instance the messengers were chokcedars or Government village watchmen. I may add that I was some hundreds of miles from Juggernath when this happened.

The villagers are fond of athletic games, and of contests with the bow and arrow. I have heard that an expert can peel the skin of a plantain without wounding the fruit ;

but this is mere report, and has never been witnessed by me. The victor in these trials of skill is taken to the headman of the village by the lower village official (the Paramanick) and made to kneel down, when the ancient gentleman places his hands upon him. After congratulations, he is carried off in triumph on the shoulders of his comrades.

It is only of late times that they have had money value for anything; formerly their standard was a handful of rice or pulse; so many handfuls of rice or pulse equalled the value of a fowl, so many fowls a pig, and so on. Even to this day, when cattle graze in another's maize or crop, the damages are assessed, and so many handfuls of rice or pulse given as a fine by the owner of the trespassers.

I have been unable to obtain a good witch song from any of their reputed witches. In only one instance did I find a woman willing to sing one, and I had placed her in hajut with her husband, for complicity in a witch murder. This young lady, to save herself, had accused a friend of having taught her the black art, and in consequence the unfortunate woman, thus charged, had been condemned to death and executed. The prisoner told me that she, with four

others, had been put into a sleep by the victim, and then carried through the air in a winged chariot to the bottom of a lake near Burhait; arrived there, they saw beautiful houses and gardens and horses, &c., &c. Although apparently willing to talk, she used to put off singing her incantation song from day to day with a kind of "call-to-morrow" sort of manner. I resigned my hopes of ever obtaining the verses, for her husband had eyed me uneasily, not seeming to like the daily interviews I was having with his bride. As the girl was young and pretty, and her protector imprisoned by me,—recollecting that "Cæsar's wife should not even be suspected,"—I resigned my pursuit of knowledge to the considerations of prudence.

Superstition is the cause of more than half the wrong and murders committed in Sonthalia. Their witches (Dan Aima) are supposed to have intercourse with the Bongas, which gives them the power of killing people by eating their entrails, and also of causing fevers, murrain in cattle, and all other kinds of evil.

Although punishment never seemed to have a very great effect in stopping witch-finders, yet a certain Assistant Commissioner found a great deal of use in an electrifying machine.

If a parent or husband would come up and confidentially ask his advice, with regard to a daughter or wife charged with witchcraft, this "lightning case" or "Devil's Box" was brought out with great awe by the servants, who had been often experimented on, and the girl told to hold the handles. When the wheel was turned no result would take place, and therefore she was considered quite correct; but on the same ordeal being put to the questioners, they generally used to dance for half an hour,—a practical proof which would stay any further belief in the girl's guilt, and procure the witchfinder condign punishment.* It was ludicrous to see the awe the box was held in, and the careful manner with which the servants used to carry it about to catch lightning. They used to be convinced that it wanted a supply from heaven periodically to ensure its safe action, and their delight consisted in seeing it used with full power on.

Before the Penal Code with its Draconian laws was in force, a young Sonthal came running in to tell Amicus (a certain Assistant Commis-

* In one case the drum was disconnected, in the other connected.

sioner) that his wife had been accused of witchcraft by a professional witch-finder; and as the son of the head of the village had been long ill, and was said to be under her influence, he had fears for her safety. My friend immediately rode out to the spot, and upon his arrival called a punchayet. It did not take long for the whole of the village to assemble under a group of trees. The elder men formed a circle, sitting on their haunches, outside of which were grouped the younger ones, and the women—some with children in their arms, some just rising into conscious womanhood—grouped themselves in wondering curiosity beyond, so as they could see the whole proceedings. Amicus had also squatted himself on his heels, forgetting he had spurs on, but apparently finding that position inconvenient, sat with his back against a tree. The witch-finder, a debauched and sinister looking vagabond with one eye, and tattooed as to his arms and thighs with divers colors, was then called into the assembly. So great was the awe in which he was held, that it was noticed, as he stalked forward, exulting in the commotion he had excited, that every one kept at a respectful distance from him. He first began by threatening

Amicus with sudden death, blindness, and sundry other lively punishments if he was not at once allowed to depart. The anathematized, however, who was smoking a disreputable short clay, apparently the cast-off property of some Blackheath donkey boy, seemed immoveable under the execrations he was receiving, but coolly motioned him to be quiet, at the same time calling for the accused—a demure, plump little damsel of some sixteen years, who darted a frightened look around her, and then gliding in, squatted down with her head between her knees, overcome by her misery. She neither moved tongue nor limb, although, had my friend left ere the investigation had been concluded, she would have looked her last on the sun in this world as he then went down in all his glory behind the adjacent hills. The husband bravely came and stood by her, notwithstanding the scowls that met him from all sides, as every Sonthal there was convinced she was a confirmed witch. For had not the witch-finder tried the “Tel-pani” (oil and water) and the fowl’s entrails, and was not that enough?

Amicus in a most unfeeling manner rated the unfortunate girl for bringing him out in the sun, and causing all this trouble, to the great

glee of the witch-finder, who saw that now his triumph was complete; but his looks changed to a puzzled expression of doubt, when a syce or groom stepped forward with a suspicious-looking rope and began, by my friend's order, and in a dexterous way, to fasten the witch-finder's legs tight together. Now, says Amicus, you seem to have power to do everything and know everything, "Sab Janta." I make this agreement with you. Bring your fowl and your Tel-pani, and if you are as you say you are, you can at any rate, by help of your incantations, get out of this circle and rid yourself of these ropes. But if you don't in half an hour, look out, my son. Manjees, is this fair? A muttered grunt of assent from the assembly was heard, and every one watched with anxiety the ordeal the man was about to undergo. First, with great solemnity he obtained a fowl from the village, and proceeded to disembowel it, he then obtained a leaf and some oil, and began to rub it on the leaf, waiting until the countenance of the accused should appear photographed, as it were, on the fibres.

After having done that, he began to rave and to roll about head over heels, invoking apparently all the denizens of the infernal

regions, until foaming at the mouth and covered with perspiration and dust, the end of half an hour found him with his feet still tied, and with his body inside the cursed circle. All this time the villagers had been watching the struggles with breathless interest, yet, with native impassibility, not allowing a word to escape them. Amicus pulled out his watch, cried time is up, and appealed to the manjies whether the witchfinder ought not to be punished for the imposition instead of the girl, and whether the girl was not innocent. She, half-stupefied, had risen to her feet, her large eyes filled with tears, and crept closer up to her protector. The manjies seemed to have little doubt on the subject, and declared the accused innocent and the witchfinder guilty. The husband above any one showed a pleasing alacrity in carrying out any of the orders given to him, particularly if he could get close enough to pull the accuser's hair or hit him a sly poke in the ribs. His gratitude was overwhelming; he ran by the side of the horse as Amicus returned home on a beautiful moonlight night, pointing out where the stones and holes were, and every minute bowing down to the ground. When questioned, he said he had no fear now of his wife being beaten to death,

as a policeman had been left in the village to bring the head men in to give security for the safety of the girl, and the opinion of the village was in her favor. A few doses of quinine from the Government medicine chest expelled the demon from the manjie's son. I need hardly add that the witch-finder did not escape scot-free.

Thus by a little tact ended happily a scene which might have finished in a hanging for two or three, and a painful death to the poor innocent girl.

It is not always, however, that the cases have such a prosperous termination as the one I have been relating. I recollect Amicus telling me that he was called out to investigate the death of a newly married mother with her first child: it was the old story—the accusation—the punchayet—the sentence—the five men picked out for the deed—the husband ordered to keep quiet, and get out of the way—and the poor girl taken out at midnight, and brutally beaten to death with clubs on the side of a road. When Amicus arrived there, he found the body showing but few cuts, but very much disfigured; the poor little child lying on the ground, wailing close to its dead mother, and no soul to be seen. To

make a long story short, said Amicus, as he balanced his chair on one leg and swung half into the fire—for it was a coldish night in December—I boned the females of that family first, my boy; women leak like sieves—never can keep a secret all the world over; got them to confess; found the men after and committed them. I was sorry to hear that although he offered Rs. 10 to any woman who would suckle the baby, not a female would have her breast polluted by the lips of the offspring of a witch. A dirty old cloth dipped in milk kept the little innocent alive for a few days, when exhaustion sent it to its long last sleep, to wake, let us hope, in its mother's bosom.

It is but a few months since that a girl near Simrah, in one of my old friend Seeboo's villages, was charged with witchcraft, and with having killed the child of another Sonthal by convulsions. A punchayet of nearly thirty old men was summoned, and the girl, while confessing her guilt as a witch, said she was taught witchcraft by a certain chief witch, termed Rohomonee, and that they had buried a spirit in a certain house. Rohomonee was summoned to take the spirit out, and dug up a bit of clay in the floor. This was deemed sufficient for her condemnation, and her

daughter being taken away from the house by the father who had bid his doomed wife goodbye, and the whole of her family leaving her, she was set upon by five men, picked out for the purpose, and beaten to death, while the punchayet sat that night for three hours in solemn conclave outside, listening to the cries and groans of the victim as in her agony and supplication she broke the stillness of the night. The bloody deed consummated, an old woman was left to watch the corpse, and next day her husband and daughter were allowed to return. Luckily a woman in the house at the time witnessed the whole affair, and, like most of her sex fond of talking, muttered the names of the murderers to some who, less bigoted, noised it abroad. Very soon the culprits were in jail, the evidence completed, and I had the satisfaction of committing the case and seeing it tried by Browne Wood, the Deputy Commissioner, in a way which even satisfied the Sonthals themselves, although convicted. I shall long recollect seeing the encampment at Barcope; the Deputy Commissioner's tent underneath the mangoe trees; the Sonthals whom he had summoned as a kind of punchayet, sitting around him on their haunches; the trembling culprits with their relations

grouped amongst the guards ; the women crying ; and high above all, perched upon some rocks, four hyænas eyeing the scene as they lazily basked in the sun. I longed to get a crack at them, as they were within bullet range ; but fear of disturbing the court curbed my ardour, and when the case had finished they were gone.

CHAPTER XIX.

Sonthali dances—Picturesque scene—Camp life—Deep gloom of surrounding scenery—Dance and bonfire by night—Curious figures in the dance—Two Sonthali dancing songs—Careful chaperons for the girls on their return home—Assiduous attentions of the Southals—Assent of Mawa Ghurri—Beautiful scenery on its summit—Unpleasant incident with regard to thorns.

I HAVE often had opportunities of witnessing the Sonthali dances, but one in particular appeared so picturesque that I will attempt to describe it. Our camp stood on a plateau some way down the slope of a hill, which rose to the height of nearly eight hundred feet above us. At the foot stretched a valley half a mile in extent, and walled in on all sides by precipitous mountains with their sides covered by big sal trees, the sakwa, and the graceful hill bamboo. Huge boulders of grey and brown rock, partly clothed with creepers, projected at intervals from the surrounding foliage.

The blackened remains of an old pole which had formerly served as a pivot for the suspended votaries of the Churruck Poojah, stood erect and solitary at the foot of the slope, and added to the somewhat sombre air which pervaded the whole scene. We had before sent the Pergnite notice that we desired a dance and a bonfire, so as soon as we had arrived hackeries laden with dry wood seemed to start from all parts of the jungle, and ere nightfall a huge pile of dry logs and sticks, some fifteen feet high and double that number in circumference, was heaped up round the post. The villagers from all directions had before assembled, and with their wives and daughters gave a cheerful bearing to a scene which otherwise would have been depressing from the deep gloom of the overhanging mountains and the dark foliage of the woods, deepening more and more in the shades of evening.

No impression of gloom seemed to affect the happy groups below us, who had already begun to arrange themselves for the evening's amusement. First of all some three score village girls, laughing and chattering, separated themselves from the groups and forming four lines with their arms crossed and hands

clasped, began a shrill and not unmusical chant, keeping time with their feet, and knocking their anklets together with every motion of their bodies. Their hair was adorned with flowers, and some of them had wreaths round their necks. A party of young men had taken up their position under some trees, and were blowing away at their flutes, every muscle of their whole economy being brought into play, as they swayed themselves backwards and forwards. Heading the damsels were the drummers, adorned as to their heads with peacocks' feathers, and who battered away most vehemently on their instruments, which were shaped like barrels. Ere they had warmed to the work, the darkness of night threw its veil over the valley, and for a few minutes there was a deep silence, while all stood wondering what might happen next; but our patience was not long tried. A huge Sonthal soon made his appearance bearing a flaming bundle of straw, with which, aided by a troop of youngsters, he proceeded to ignite the pile. This was intended to be a signal to the dancers to commence, and as soon as the light from the flames had thrown a lurid glare upon them, we perceived that they had formed themselves into two long lines,

intersecting each other in the middle at right-angles, and forming an equilateral rectangular cross.

Two or three girls in the centre then struck up a shrill chaunt, the rest joining in chorus at the end of every verse, and keeping time with the song by a peculiar swaying motion of the whole body, which increased as the voices rose higher and higher. They then, clapping their hands, divided into four separate bands, and stepped backwards and forwards, followed by the drummers, who at every chorus turned head over heels and rolled on the ground, never (even while in the midst of their saltations) attempting to forego for an instant the tum-tuming. I noticed that these gymnastic feats elicited great applause from the lookers-on, who had formed an immense ring around the performers.

I have tried to note down a few of their dancing songs, and give the two following as an example:—

I

My mother is no more,
My father is no more—
On the Jhangeri reed tree
I shall hang myself and die.

2

Then I shall drink honey
And revive myself again.
Before the house we both got dirty,
' On the road we sank in mud.

3

Why will we go on the way,
It is miry, why walk there ;
On the heights there are creepers,
Here is the wild vine, here the bandhu creeper,
There let us walk.

Jaipur Bazaar Town has very good water, I hear,
Let us buy there small rice pots and large pots
The Dahee fruits (rather sour) let us eat.
The Dahee fruit is sweet—the Dahee.

The following is a part of an inpromptu
song sung on that day.

Chorus.

The Saheb's garries are on the road,
On the road, on the road,
We shall have luck, we shall have luck,
The tigers fear him, &c., &c.

I noticed them all join and surround us
upon our approaching the fire, and could only

distinguish the word "gharries" amidst the noise, but am indebted to a Mr. Paroo Manjie for a translation.

Viewed from the verandah of our tents, the sight was as wild and weird like as any lover of the romantic could have wished to behold.

The glare of the fire threw the whole group well out into the light, touched up the white tents on the plateau in the foreground, and just gilding the jungle behind, left in dark and gloomy outlines the hills above.

The singing continued until midnight, when all retired to their homes. Some had to return a distance of six or eight miles. I had called two or three of the elder manjies to the tent and was regaling them with some genuine Old Tom, when the eldest rose and informed me he must go, as he had to see the girls of his village home, as it was their custom to send out the females under the charge of an elder male, who was responsible for their good behaviour. He naively informed me he never allowed them to go home with the young men, for fear of the pranks they might have on the road. Sympathising with him as to the responsibility he must labor under, I at once gave him leave; the others followed his example, and ere I had

finished the evening pipe of peace, we gazed on nought but some smouldering embers which were glimmering in the darkness around.

It was quite cold, with the thermometer at 46°, when we turned into our camp beds, and I was glad to snuggle under a warm resai, and find that for warmth's sake a couple of dogs and a small tame tigress* had already laid themselves near my feet. I once tried the experiment of having a charcoal fire in the tent, but the atmosphere soon got so oppressive, that I was glad to get rid of it, and trust to a large bonfire outside, which was kept burning all night by the guard.

I will refrain from describing the usual tent striking in the morning, the horror with which one hears the mallets of the tent coolies as they commence to loosen the pegs, &c., &c. Not until the sharp air with the rising morn had invaded my privacy, did I care to unwind myself from the blankets, and perform a toilet in the open air.

It was great fun to see the number of assistants at the toilet; some of the head Sonthals used to come round and struggle which should

She now performs in Edmond's show in England.

hold the glass ; another party would escort the shaving brush, while a third would produce a glass of water, and stand by with his thumb and finger well inserted in the liquid in company with the tooth brush. I once detected my friend Seeboo dry polishing the soles of his feet with Brown Windsor just before I was going to use it. There was generally a dead silence during the shaving operation, and that finished, the Bearer used to press the younger ones to hunt the fowls preparatory to putting them into their baskets. By daybreak the tea was ready, elephants and carts packed, and then onwards for another camping place.

These cold weather tours were enjoyable, and with a friend of like habits and thoughts as Nicholas Stewart for a companion, I have passed many a happy day amidst scenery something similar to that seen on the road between Llanrwst and Capel Carrig, in Wales. I well remember our ascent of Mawa Gurri, the highest hill in the range, where we spent our Christmas.

As we ascended, the elephants had to put their trunks round trees to keep themselves from slipping, and a part of the journey was performed on their knees. We had a party of hill men supplied by Mr. Eaton, who had a coal mine

near. These travelled before, armed with axes, and cleared a way wide enough for the elephants, whom we took to the summit. A beautiful view appeared when we arrived there. About 1,800 feet below us lay a plain extending for near one hundred miles, until it mingled with and was lost in the horizon; a small stream ran through the centre, and lay glistening like a belt of silver, as it meandered amongst the dark patches of indigo, which the clusters of trees resembled. The cultivated fields and their boundaries appeared like the different divisions on a very irregular chess-board, while the small white-washed cottages might have been mistaken for toy houses, as they dotted the landscape, here and there surrounded by their castor oil and jancera gardens. Close to our feet flourished the hill bamboo, the flowering mewa, large creepers, and the sál, which mingled and mingled until they were lost in luxurious confusion in the khud below. Hardly a leaf stirred. All nature seemed to be buried in one calm repose. The heat haze was plainly distinguishable exuding from the ground, while we, in comparative coolness and shade, talked and surveyed the scene below us with that dreamy satisfaction which the contemplation of anything calm

quiet, and beautiful generally conveys to the mind. As the sun retired like some good god in his glorious eastern majesty, offering in its quiet grandeur such a contrast to the final retiring of the man of the world after all his striving and struggling, a regret stole over me—a regret that any of the small evils and annoyances of life should be allowed such power over mortals, and that contentment should not always be attained by the mere fact of striving to do one's duty; while the old saying (true in part) recurred to memory, that, after all, "Youth is but a blunder, manhood a struggle, old age a regret." Thus moralizing, we stayed until the sun, which had been tipping the ranges with gold and lake, and then with purple, had at last marked out the outlines of some far off hills in the Bhaugulpore district, distinct and clear on the horizon, and then, refreshed with the scene, we were turning towards our hut, where we were to pass the night, when the very fact of turning caused us to utter a howl, and drew our attention to our present mundane evils. We had been reclining on the long grass which contained a peculiar barbed head, about one-third of an inch long, that insinuates itself into the clothes of the sufferer, and causes a feeling only to be

compared to so many needles inserted in one's flesh. It was impossible to move, and there being no other help for it; as the Novelist James would say:—

“ Two gentlemen, resembling highlanders, in scanty white kilted costume might have been seen, picking from some articles of male attire hanging before them, on a branch, sundry barbed points which had entered into their flesh. This tedious operation completed, we cautiously retreated to our camp.

CHAPTER XX.

Marked change with regard to the number of tigers in Sonthal Pergunnahs—Tigers in garden of nightly occurrence—Sheep taken—Tragic end of a cartman—Pursuit of tiger—Awful appearance of body—Man eater—Nine persons taken—Buxoo's unfortunate end—Daring chase by Native Jockey—Escape of tiger—Retreat of elephants—Pluck displayed by Mr. A. N. Stewart in shooting man eater from horseback—Happy escape of little boy.

WITHIN the last few years a marked change has come over the face of the Sonthal country. Where rank jungle and fetid swamps prevailed, once the homes of elephants, rhinoceros, wild boars, and their compeers, now stands many a thriving Sonthali village, buried in the midst of its rice, sugarcane, and barley fields, all in good cultivation, and attesting the industry of the race. Formerly it was no uncommon thing to be awoke by the sentry, and on going out, to see, at the bottom of a long walk in the garden at Pakour, a large tiger crawling with his nose close to the ground,

and with a peculiarly slouching gait, half trot half walk. I never but once got a shot at one when thus awoke, and as there was hardly light sufficient to distinguish the brute, and I half asleep, I discharged a couple of bullets into the elephant sheds, where two elephants and their drivers were sleeping. Luckily, besides frightening them, no mischief was done. That same tiger, however, not deterred by the warm reception given him, leaped the enclosure of the pound where the sheep were kept, and walked off with a fine one. We traced his marks on the wall the next morning, and found some traces of the victim in the shape of his wool, but nought else. It was my lot while there to see the bodies of many persons slain by wild animals, and whatever Cumming or any other lion killer may remark as to the pleasant feelings experienced by persons while in the clutches of a wild beast, I can positively say that, judging from the countenances of those I have seen after death, one unvaried expression of deep anguish is expressed on their faces. I recollect one instance where a cartman was loading some wood on his cart, while his mate was fetching it, when a tiger sprung out of a small patch of jungle near, and caught

him by the left arm and carried him off. Intelligence was brought to me, and, of course, instant search was made for the cartman, when he was found about a mile from the spot quite dead, with his arm wrenched from the socket, and all the ligaments over the left ribs actually torn away. The expression of agony on the man's face was deep and painful to witness, he had his eyes shut and his face wrinkled all over—every lineament expressing agony and horror. He looked as if in that mile's drag he must have lived a lifetime of misery. It seemed to me extraordinary that there was so little blood from the wound. The tiger must have put one paw on the side of his head by his ear, and one on the poor wretch's side, and then torn off the arm with a wrench. It is now some time since news was brought in that a man-eating tiger had taken up his position near a village on a raised mound covered with high grass, brier, and jungle, and near a pond which contained the only water drunk by the villagers, and that every morning either a man, woman, or child was taken away. After he had massacred about nine people, it suddenly struck the villagers that he had better be killed, so they sent in word to **Athicus** of his doings and his whereabouts.

Amicus, however, having been too often sold by false news, deputed a Rajpoot chupprassie to make sure of the truth of the report before acting on it.

Buxoo accordingly, very valiant, marches forth, and prepares to make a close inspection of the brute's lair. Early in the morning, alone and armed with a lattie, he approaches the cover side. The Fates had willed that he should see the sun rise that morning for the last time; for he had hardly got to the place when, with a roar, the tiger was on him, gave him one slap on his shoulder with his paw, which broke his arm and felled him to the ground. The brute then leaped back into the jungle. Poor Buxoo, in relating it before he died, said:—"For some time I lay stunned, but when I awoke to consciousness, feeling my side cold and numb, I put out my unwounded hand to pull my cloth over me. I had hardly moved when the brute was on me again, and having torn a large piece off the inner part of my thigh, and wounded me about the stomach and other parts, he crouched near me." By this time the villagers had mustered with drums, &c., and managed to drive him away—too late, however, to save Buxoo's life, who, despite all attention

paid to him, died from lockjaw that evening. Vengeance was vowed against the tiger, and Amicus on an elephant, accompanied by about 50 men and his native jockey, armed with a spear and riding a first-rate pig sticker, proceeded to call the destroyer to a reckoning. Amidst great rejoicing and tumult the whole party arrived on the spot, and presently a rustling of the grass showed that the lair was not deserted. Crack went Amicus' rifle, the smoke from which had not cleared away before the tiger dashed through the bushes and made off across country. To the horror of all present, the native Jock, who had shown decided symptoms of nervousness previously, now uttered an unearthly yell, and with spear at the charge cleared a stiff ditch with a mud wall on the other side, and sticking spurs well in, gave chase as hard as his horse could gallop. "Mind my horse, for G——d's sake," was the immediate cry of its owner; but impervious to abuse or appeals of any kind, away rode the jockey with the tiger well in view. It appears that feeling he wanted a little extraneous courage, he had plied himself well with *gánja*, and this was the result of the action of the drug. I regret to say that this man-eater's career was not finished

on that day, but he fell some time after to Mr. A. N. Stewart's unerring rifle. But as cultivation increases, so do tigers and leopards decrease, and in a short time their existence will be a thing of the past. In places where, a few years since, one might have seen four or five tigers in a week, now a solitary one, driven by hunger from the hills, is seldom to be met with. Of all animals, a Royal Bengal is the most dangerous to attempt to kill on foot. Even with a steady hand and a sure eye, pluck and a good gun, the odds are against the adventurous biped. About three* months ago news was brought in of a tiger having killed a buffalo near Jungipore, just outside the Sonthal Pergunnahs. A party at once started to bag him, and they found the brute's whereabouts in a grass jungle of three or four feet high. This covered two or three acres, but had a clear patch in the middle, where stood a tree surrounded at the bottom with a few creepers. Although the beaters twice traversed the grass, yet no animal appeared. A cowherd who was minding his buffaloes drove them in a line also through without any success. One of the beaters,

* These last chapters are extracts from letters.

however, seeing the creepers at the bottom of the tree move, hit the place with a big stick. Unluckily for him, he must have hit the tiger on the head, for he immediately sprang out and with one claw scalped him clean, the hair falling over his face. Away went the buffaloes with their tails in the air, bellowing furiously, and the two elephants soon followed their example, one choosing for his course a mango grove, the boughs of which conveniently hung down, so as to sweep everything off his back while he ran under unscathed. Providentially, he got through without damaging the skulls of either the mahout or his rider, the latter of whom had wisely slipped off the pad and was hanging by the ropes behind, much as one used to see carpet bags and baskets of fish swinging behind the old stage coaches at home. When stopped, it was found that no persuasion, forcible or mild, would cause the elephant to return to the scene of combat; so Mr. A. N. Stewart, determining to have the brute, mounted a South American horse and, armed with a double breech-loader, proceeded to the spot. After some trouble his horse entered the grass, and before long the usual symptoms of the enemy, in the shape of a peculiar wavy motion of the top of the

jungle, were apparent. My friend rode up to within two yards of the place, and the tiger still retreated, but at the edge of the grass, which was higher just there, he disappeared. A shriek and a yell from an unfortunate cowherd on the other side soon, however, gave notice of his whereabouts. It took but a second to dash into the open and to find another victim to the brute's claws lying on the ground, his back ripped up, and the tiger just on the edge of the jungle. But his career of butchery was brought to a close by a ball from the breech-loader which hit him just under the shoulder. He turned round to the charge, hitting a little boy, the son of the cowherd, a blow on the head with his paw, which stunned him. Although desperately wounded, the noble beast, disdainful of the youngster, dashed down towards Mr. Stewart, who with unerring aim and steady nerve dropped his rifle on his bridle arm and sent ball No. 2 into the brute's chest. This rendered him *hors-de-combat*. Both of the men attacked died, and although the child lay senseless, he had not a mark upon him, and soon came to consciousness. For a long time after, it was feared he would go out of his mind, as he would often start up in his sleep, cry out

“Tiger, Tiger,” and wander about in the most insane manner, seeking rest, but finding none. Time, however, brought strength and calm to his shaken nerves, and the last time he showed himself, all traces of his fright had left him. He was but 12 years of age. In after days he will probably look back on his little adventure as some hideous nightmare. To his grand children, should he live long enough to be blessed or cursed with them, as the case may be, he might describe the scene, but will perhaps have to explain the form and nature of the fierce brute that attacked him. For there is every chance of tigers disappearing altogether from his part of the country, and with them a good deal of the excitement of shooting in the vicinity.

CHAPTER XXI.

Snakes and reptiles in the Pergunnah—One man saved from bite of a Krite—Active measures taken—Present scarcity of game—Elephants and Rhinoceros—Sonthals as Poachers—Their hunting parties—Signal for hunting—Customs on the road—Fire effectually used as a beater for game—Attempts to extinguish it successful—Exaggeration—Farewell hunting party—Conclusion.

SNAKES and scorpions abound all over the Pergunnahs, and many of them are of a deadly kind. They consist of the cobra, krite, cheeti or spotted snake, demna (the cow-sucker), and many others whose chief delight appears to consist in getting into the thatch of old houses. One of the bungalows at Godda went by the name of "Snake's Castle," from the number of those reptiles found in it. I have never been able to find that the natives know any antidote for their bites, and consequently a large number of deaths occur yearly. In one instance two men and a boy were sleeping in a house in the Pakour division, when a krite crawled under their

sleeping mat, and the next morning all three were found dead. I have seen a man recover from the bite of a krite, or whip-snake, in one instance only, and he was working in my own garden at the time. Hearing a shriek, I ran out and found him bitten on the back of the hand by a krite. Some of his companions were busily employed in killing the reptile, while others crowded around him, desiring to know his last wishes, as they kindly informed all in his hearing that a quarter of an hour was the longest time he could possibly live. Luckily, when disturbed, I had a razor in my hand and ran out with it.

Seeing the marks of the bite on his flesh, I told him to turn his head away, and before he could remonstrate, I cut out the whole piece from his hand with a deep incision. I then told my servant to heat a knife in the charcoal fire, which was in the verandah, as I was just going to breakfast, and after allowing the wound to bleed freely for a little time, I applied the knife almost red-hot to the incision. This active treatment proved successful, and only left the man with a bad hand to cure.

Tradition says that wild elephants and rhinoceros were abundant some twenty years ago; now the latter are quite extinct, and of the

former but three specimens remain—the last remnants of the many herds of days gone by. One of these three is, by common report, a magnificent animal. While riding through the jungle at the beginning of this year, I came across his tracks, and measured the size of their marks in the mud with a pocket handkerchief. The circumference of the print of one footstep measured was over four and a half feet, which would make him above nine feet high; for twice round the foot is a sure standard of the height. The neighbouring villagers informed me that the three were inseparable, and had contracted a liking for parched grain. They used, therefore, to enter a village at one end, which was the signal for the inhabitants to vanish at the other, and after inspecting the shops for any delicacies that might tempt them, they would finish up by pulling down a house or two for recreation, and then quietly retire. These unwelcome visits might generally be looked for twice a year, at the spring and autumn seasons.

A few peacocks and numbers of deer still offer inducements for shooting, but the inveterate non-preserving instinct of the Sonthal is aiding to eliminate from the jungle the little game left. These poachers—for I can hardly

term them anything else—collect in numbers, averaging from two or three hundred to five thousand, and armed with clubs, bows and arrows, and spears, they form themselves into two lines, and march for days through forest and glen, over swamp and high land, killing indiscriminately every bird, beast, and reptile they may meet with.

Their mode of conveying intelligence of a proposed gathering is by sending out a branch of Rohur or Sál with a wisp of straw twisted round it. This is carried from the village where the project may have originated to the next, and there put up (generally) near the Manjhee Stan. On its being seen and the question answered as to locality and time of assembly, the branch is handed over to some able-bodied youth of village No. 2, who rushes off with it to the next village, and so on, until the news and the signal has been passed to the whole tribe with a marvellous rapidity. On the day appointed, the villagers armed and carrying dried rice or pulse as provision for four or five days, with their heads decorated with feathers and with their flutes stuck in their waistbands, assemble at the place of “rendezvous.”

The time on the road is generally beguiled

by playing practical jokes, or by a tune on their flutes and a roll on the drums carried by the village drummers. Thus, light-hearted and merry, they often travel jounies of one hundred miles, stopping at night near some convenient tank, or where a clump of trees offers a grateful shelter. Then commences the cooking for the evening meal, which generally consists of rice and dhal seasoned by a few rats, an old crow or two, and perhaps a fine snake caught by the way. The Pergonites and heads of the villages having the privilege of getting drunk whenever they like, are generally luxurious enough to bring beer bottles full of country spirit with which they regale themselves, while the young men are preparing the supper. Long into the night their laughter and singing may be heard, until sleep gradually gains its ascendancy over the band of perhaps 4 or 500 men, who with the shelter of the trees for a coverlet, and the ground for a bed, sleep as sound as if they were on beds of down. Some people say the more uncultivated the mind, the greater the sense of animal enjoyment. The feeling of rude robust health which their savage life gives them, must of itself be a luxury; not to mention the delight

of being able to kick about their limbs in a hot climate, with unclothed freedom and untrammelled by the conventional armour of a Poole or a Ranken. When a savage looks upon our black chimney-pot hat he may well laugh, and, if he thinks at all, reflect, that even savage life has its delights which as a civilized man he could never enjoy.

Black and brown partridges are still plentiful in the uplands, and hares were numerous near Godda. When I last stood, gun in hand, at the cover side, I had an opportunity of viewing the number of the latter there were; for after beating for a couple of hours and not getting a shot, the thought struck me that the most effectual and cheapest beater I could employ would be fire. So getting a light, as there was a strong favorable wind blowing, I applied it to a long ridge of grass which, dry as timber, ignited like so much gunpowder. Fanned by the wind, it extended in a second into some large brier trees well dried; they soon shrivelled and sent out such myriads of sparks, that very soon the destructive element was extending its ravages in every direction.* For a few seconds

* I misjudged the direction of the wind.

I stood feeling as a very small boy might be supposed to feel when he has set in motion some huge engine which is beyond his power to control. I must say I felt very small indeed as I recollected the flames were speeding towards my camp every minute, and threatened a large village on the way. The Sonthals who had been acting as beaters for me had squatted in the shade to enjoy a hubble-bubble and talk over the Sahib's bad luck, but no sooner did they hear the flames crackle, and saw them mounting up and licking the tops of the brier trees, than they gave a yell, and throwing off all sloth and apathy, howled out that the jungle was six koss in extent, holding in its centre numerous villages, and, worst of all, their own houses were not far off, with the wind blowing the flames straight for them. This was a lively situation for the unwitting causer of the mischief. It seemed hopeless to attempt extinguishing the evil, and the heat was so great that it made the very leaves under our feet curl up and smoulder. We had not any time to lose, for the long dry grass was burning all around us, and as it composed the lower part of the jungle, while the upper part consisted of brier trees, thorns, and bushes, averaging from 8 to 10 feet in height,

well prepared by an April's sun for fire, there was a probability of our all being well baked before we could get into the open. We ran as hard as we could. The man carrying the powder begged to be allowed to throw it away, and kept unpleasantly close to me; but heeding nothing, we dashed down a narrow track until we got into a comparatively cleared space, free from trees, and held there a council. An old Pergonite, who was luckily in the way to join us, came up with some of his young Sonthal villagers, and, knowing the country well, informed me that unless the fire was extinguished one thousand houses would be in ashes, one thousand women and children burnt, and an unheard of number ruined; but, said the old man, we can put it out—here he stopped. I caught him by the shoulders and shook out of him that some distance ahead of the fire there was a space without trees and only covered with long grass, and if we could get there with his "Jawans," we might form a line and beat it down, and thus arrest the flames. The words were hardly out of his mouth, when I seized him by the top-knot (answering to the eccentric knob of hair ladies carry at the back of their heads), and although he was about the size of a hog'shead, and had

long given up violent exercise, yet, by dint of my dragging, and a Sonthal pushing behind, whose house was near, judging from his zeal, we got him into a shambling trot. He started with a roll like a Dutch galliot in a gale, but when he had once got his steam up he seemed to gain impetus by his weight, and we soon reached the desired spot. The old gentleman, however, dropped down immediately, exhausted and quite horror-struck at the undignified manner with which he had been treated. Unfortunately, instead of giving sage counsel as to how the fire might be extinguished, he sat with his mouth at its widest stretch, and merely mumbled some unintelligible ejaculations. However, a shrewd son of his, who had bounded along without any effort, and without so much as starting a single bead of perspiration on his polished black skin, suggested that some large leaves of Sakwa should be cut down, and as the fire approached the grass, we should beat it out. As a Sonthal is seldom without his hanger, in a few seconds every man was armed with a branch, and we stood in line to receive and beat back the enemy, who was crackling and roaring away like an infuriated demon with a dark canopy of smoke over

head. It seemed to find some difficulty in passing a long line of green hill bamboos that providentially intervened. This gave the men leisure, by walking close together, to trample the grass well down, on the edge of the thicker jungle. About 300 Sonthals had assembled and extended in an unbroken line, each armed with a green-leaved bough. Unlike other natives, they never uttered a cry, but, expectant, stood still with their eyes directed on the flames, which soon licked up the dry brier trees, and drove the whole line back, the heat being unsupportable. We then derived benefit from having trodden down the grass as it slackened the fury of the fire, and enabled us to sweep over it our green boughs as we gradually retreated. What with the smoke, dirt, and fire, we must have looked like so many demons engaged in playing a peculiar kind of Hockey. While thus employed, I heard a shout, and found that some daring salamanders had got in behind the line of fire after it had left the higher jungle, and were sweeping and beating away in grand style; this gave the *coup de grace*. Swept and beaten down on both sides, the flames were at last smothered before they got hold of the higher brier, which again rose

behind us, and after half an hour's hard beating in front, we were enabled to confine our attacks to the sides, where we soon had the pleasure of pounding out the last spark. I can attest to the efficacy of fire as a beater for turning out game, for when we were ahead of it, large numbers of partridges, two or three peacocks, and innumerable hares passed us as they retreated before the flames. A few of the hares were knocked on the head, but not one fell to my gun, as my ammunition man, thinking a close proximity to the devouring element unpleasant, under the circumstances, had relieved me of my weapon and disappeared. The Thermometer was 98° in the tent on my return, but that was quite cool to the heat in the jungle. Bathed in perspiration and covered with dust and smoke—Oh! the delight of a plunge into a cold-bath, followed by a cup of cold tea and a pipe. I observed that for some time afterwards there was considerable caution shown by all the camp people with regard to bringing a pipe light, and a general fear of the element shown by all. It is the custom to burn the jungles yearly in April and May, for by so doing the young grass grows the stronger for cattle grazing, but my mistake consisted in not carefully noting

the direction of the wind before I ignited the herbage. The statements made by the Manjees regarding the extent and population involved in the probable catastrophe, were much exaggerated, as there were cleared spaces every two or three miles, sufficiently wide to have stopped the flames, and but very few villages in the vicinity.

When I made known to old Seeboo and several Manjees my intention of leaving the Sonthal Pergunnahs, the former, mindful of the walks he and I had performed together, and of the many "pegs" he had imbibed at my expense, proposed a hunting party on a large scale as a farewell gathering. To this I gladly assented, at the same time taking the opportunity of asking two or three friends to join. But to my surprise I found, in a couple of instances, a decided backwardness in accepting my invitation from men who were both tried and good sportsmen. It appears that so vigorous and active had been Seeboo's issue of the sal branch, that it had travelled from Peallapore to Raneegunge (about one hundred and ninety miles) in an incredible short time, and a rumour had spread that 20,000 men would be the number collected. This would have been as fine a body of beaters

as one could wish, but my friends having a lively reminiscence of the Sonthal rebellion, rather mistrusted their own safety amidst such a large body of Sonthals, and excused themselves, advising me to be on a good horse and outside the force. As even ten thousand would have been unmanageable, I informed the Commissioner, Mr. Money, who at once let me know that five thousand would be quite sufficient for the purpose. So my leisure hours were employed in sending out orders to stop their advent, and I am glad to say that on the day appointed not more than three thousand made their appearance. Six deer, forty hares, and a large number of partridges and peacocks, with sundry poor doves, formed the first day's bag. The sun was so overpoweringly hot, and the jungle so unhealthy, that I was compelled to give in and let them follow their forty miles beat by themselves. It was impossible to carry tents, and bivouacing under trees or small shrubs in a malarious district, with the Thermometer at 110° in the shade, caused the difficulty and danger of the shooting to counterbalance the pleasure to be obtained.

Looking over my rough notes, I find records of the keeping of Chinese pigs in India, accounts

of many an unsuccessful day after tigers and deer, prescriptions for ague, notes of cases, with here and there a memo. of some very pleasant days while out in camp during the cold weather, but no more concerning the Sonthalian tribe, and therefore, Reader, to tire your patience no longer, I conclude, with the hope that the Government may never be cursed with an adviser who may recommend the absorption into the Regulation system of a tribe so capable and desirous of improvement, for, writing as regards this tribe alone, I fear such an absorption may prove a "tragic" mistake.

As my pen creeps to the finish, the unwilling hand guides it slowly, for Memory is pouring into the storhouse of the brain the recollections of all that was good in the Tribe and its Rulers. The harsher tints are already mellowed by the hand of Time. The imperfections are toned down. The good stands out in a stronger light. Sonthalia! in wishing thee and all thy belongings prosperity, I also indite a Farewell!

FINIS.

APPENDIX.

SONTHIAL SONGS.*

1st SONG.

1. Burure richido dayagi rah eday.
2. Ayogo tala guindare Buru chetan chotante.
3. Pinchar maradoh harah latar latarte.
4. Sikiyam Baha Bareng rohor darere.
5. Mirudo hopon akatko.
6. Heyo liting me kaki Ba Budo heyo liting kaki se-
tahre simdoh rah ledai.
7. Bargi pothamdo tuh kahkan.
8. Nayogo dela gnel jong.
9. Buru lodam lodamte juri tiriyo.
10. Harah latar latarte dundha sadekan.
11. Setai doko mena achil pochil gnelketodo dai jange
jhanti dai.
12. Lippi kumbah muthul duar.

১ সেরেং।

- ১ বুরুরে রিচিদো দায়াগি রা: এদায় ;
- ২ আয়োগো ভালাখিন্দারে বুরুচেতান চেতানতে ;

* These translations are by the Rev. F. Lehman, to whom I am indebted for them.

- ৩ পিন্‌চার মারা: দো হারা: লাতার লাতারতে ;
 ৪ সিকিয়াম বাহা বারেং রহড় দারেরে ;
 ৫. মিরুদো হোপোন আকাত কোএ ;
 ৬ হোয়ো লিতিং মে কাকি বাবুদো হোয়ো লিতিং
 কাকি সেতা: রে সিমদো রা: লেদায় ;
 ৭ বাড়গি পোথামদো তু: কা: কান ;
 ৮ নাযোগো দেলা ঞ্গেলজং ;
 ৯ বুরু লোদাম লোদামতে জুরি তিরিয়ো ;
 ১০ হারা: লাতার লাতারতে ছুন্ধা সাডেকান ;
 ১১ সেতায় দেকো মেনা আচিল পাচিল ঞ্গেল-
 কেতাদো দায় জাঙ্গে বাস্তি দায়.
 ১২ লিপ্পি কুম্বাহ মুত হল দুয়ার ;

 2ND SONG.

1. Dosh manse kukhimay rakalom Baro manse danda-
 may rakalom ebekaise rackabo madhiya, duyar rahi
 lagigelare thesh, dosh manse kukhimay rakha-
 lom Baro manse danda, may rakhalom ebekaise
 rakabo madhiya yayokera mayakoise chhora Bore ;
2. Utho dhanichala dhanige yuth dhanichala dhani
 ghorge, chala dhani yuthi chali jay, tilayaka tandi
 purbhu ghora Jhini laga, yayokera mayakoiso
 chhora Bore ;
3. Baba hipaoyalang mutha Bhari taka oyajo Bhayahi
 paoyalang surusingya Barada, mayahin paoyalang
 kanchura kapra jore ;

4. Mutha bhari taka paoya yudali jay gel surasingya Barada gada shote jay gelo, kanchura kapra jo chhitali jai gelo, matha Bhari sindura jo jonome jonome dagbhel.

২ সেরেং ।

- ১ দশ মাসে কুখিমায় রাকালোম, বারো মাসে ডাণ্ডামায় রাকালোম, এ বেকাইসে, রাখাবো মাখিয়া, দুয়ার রাহি লাগি গেলারে চেশ.
দশ মাসে কুখিমায় রাখালোম, বার মাসে ডা-
ণ্ডামায় রাখালোম, এ বেকাইসে, রাকাবোমা-
খিয়া, য়ায়োকেরা, মায়াকাইসে ছড়াবরে.
- ২ উঠ খানিচালা খানিগে, যুঠ খানি চালা খানি
ঘরগে চালা খানি চালা, যুটি চালিজাই.
তিলামাকা টাণ্ডি পুর্ভু ঘোডা জিনি লাগা য়া-
য়োকেরা মায় কইসে ছড়াবরে.
- ৩ বাবা হিঁপাওয়লাং মুঠা ভারি টাকা ও য়ায়ো
ভায়াহি পঁাও ওয়লাং, মুরু সিঙ্গা বারাদা
মায়াহিঁ পঁাওয়লাং কানচুরা কাপড়া জরে.
- ৪ মুঠা ভারি টাকা পাওয়া য়ুদালি জায় গেল, মুরু
সিঙ্গা বারাদা গাডা শতে জায় গেল ;
কাংচুরা কাপড়া জো ছিটালি জায় গেল, মাখা
ভারি সিন্দুরা জো জোনোমে জোনোমে দাগ
ভেল.

APPENDIX.

3RD—MARRIAGE SONG.

1. Baring teko disomdo seyalom dah ho seyalom dah ;
2. Najing teko disomdo nagi gando dahhon nagi gando dah ;
3. Kochare koerado lewer kodor kaerado, lewer kodor kaerado
4. Bargere matkomdo lokom duri matkomdo lokom duri matkom
5. Puthi hako guelte sasanging lalakana sisingye tor kedingyai
6. Naki kohme maina rotkohme koyalire mai toya Baha mai rebetchongme.
7. Juri juri day surjom kandir akando, dai kandir akando.
8. Nit mana mit khala tikinma Bar khala gupi aing Baing siyo : a
9. Kasi tandi tiriyoing poyora, Baing poyora.

৩ বাপলা সেরেং ।

- ১ বারি তিকো দিসোমদো সেয়ালোম দা: হোঁ
সেয়ালোম দা:,
- ২ নাজিং তিকো দিসোমদো নাগি গাঙো দা: হোঁ
নাগি গাঙো দা: ;
- ৩ কোচারে কাএরা দো লেওয়ের কদর কাএরা দো
লেওয়ের কদর কাএরা.
- ৪ বাড়গিরে মাতকোম দো লকম ছুরি মাতকোম
দো লকম ছুরি মাতকোম ;

APPENDIX.

- ৫ পুঠিহাকু ঞ্জেলতে সাসাজ্জিং লালাকান সিসিঙ্কে
তর কিদিঙ্কা ;
- ৬ নাকি ক: মে মাইনা রতকোমে কোয়ালিরে মাই,
তোয়া বাহা মাই রেবেৎ জোং মে.
- ৭ জুরি জুরি দাই জুরি সার্জোম কাণ্ডির আকান
দো দাই কাণ্ডির আকান দো.
- ৮ নিত মানা মি:খালা তিকিন মা বার খালা গুপি
আইং বাইং সিয়ো: আ.
- ৯ কাসি টাণ্ডি তিরিয়োইং পোয়োড়া বাইং পয়োড়া

4TH SONG.

1. Kutumeto aile baba kutume aile baisal agu agu machi
pirha dehore tahin pichnu guti jol huka anore puta
chilim anore huka tamakur borore beohar khauya
piya solore sonjog.
2. Purub so poschim so ayela jugiya baiseho jugiya
dhoromo duyariyaho dhorome duyariya kina kina
lebe puta kina kina lebe kina kina lebe puta kina
kina lebe jugike debo yeho aruwa chaula jugeke
debo yeho kacha duta nahami lebogo baba yeho
yarwa chaula nahami lebogo baba yeho kacha duda
hamiyayo lebogo baba saunwa sinir bitiya ho saun-
wa sinir bitiya.
3. Sikirike sikiri sone kiri sikiri banarsige banarsige
go baba rupa kiri banarsi tire juge lagi baba sone
kiri sikiri tire juge lagi baba rupe kiri Banarsi
kata lomachhindalom go baba sone kiri sikiri

kaṭaloma chhira lom go baba rupe kiri banar ko-
nahin choralang sona kiri sikiri konahin siri jalang
rupe kiri banarsi ishorahin siri jalang hon sone
kiri sikeri ishorahin joralang rupe kiri banarsi
rupe kiri banarsi.

৪ সেরেং।

- ১ কুটুমেতো আইলে বাবা কুটুমে আইলে বাইসাল
আগু আগু মাচি পিড়হা দেহরে তাহিঁ পিছু
ঘুটি জল হুকা আনরে পুতা হিলিম আনরে
হুকা তামাকুর বোড়োরে বেওহার খাওয়া
পিয়া সোলোরে সঞ্জোগ.
- ২ পুরুব মো পশ্চিম মো আয়েলা জুগিয়া বাইসে
হো জুগিয়া ধরমে ছয়ারিয়া হো ধরমে ছয়া-
রিয়া কি না কি না লেবে: পুতা কি না কি
না লেবে: কি না কি না লেবে: পুতা কি না
কি না লেবে যুগিকে দেবো যেহো আরুওয়া
চাউলা যুগিকে দেবো যেহো কাচা ছতানা-
হামি লেবোগো বাবা যেহো আরুওয়া চা-
উলা নাহামি লেবো গো বাবা যেহো কাচা
ছুদা হানিয়ায় লেবো গো বাবা সাঁওয়া সি-
নির বিটিয়া হো সাঁওয়া সিনির বিটিয়া,
- ৩ সিকিড়িকে সিকিড়ি সোনে কিরি সিকিড়ি বা-
নাড়সিগে বানাড়সিগে গো বাবা রুপে কিরি
বানাড়সিতিরে জুগে লাগি বাবা সোনে কিরি

সিকিড়িত্তিরে জুগে লাগি বাবা রুপে কিরি
 বানাডুসি কাটা লোমা হিণ্ডা লোম গো বাবা
 সোনে কিরি সিকিড়ি কাটা লোমা গো বাবা
 রুপে কিরি বানার কোনাহিঁ চড়ালাং সোনে
 কিরি সিকিড়ি কোনাহিঁ সিরি জালাং রুপে
 কিরি বানাডুসি ইশ্বরাহিঁ সিরি জালাং হেঁ
 সোনে কিরি সিকিড়ি ইশ্বরাহিঁ জোড়ালাং
 রুপে কিরি বানাডুসি রুপে কিরি বানাডুসি.

5TH SONG.

1. Ul dare tale dare rohoiben jabaring rohoiben Bandh-
ben pukhriben guitumben jabaring gniutben
2. Pukhri pindero kadam darire sasang chenne do dalahi
latarere Edel darire hende piyo do ;
3. Buru chetan tirom thelka latar lipido anjom meso
hiliho manjam akan birdo dayagi ragai
4. Sing Bongaraj do hejuhte senohte chiya lidingjai
pandara rajdo sindur sarire atang letingjai.
5. Gada are arete rote barudung duludung bai gue guela
nai are arete icha haku chauriya bakdo bai gue-
guela.

৫ সেরেং ।

- ১ উলদারে তালেদারে রোহোইবেন জাবারিং
রোহোইবেন,

APPENDIX.

- বাঁক্বেন পুখুরিবেন ঞ্চিউতুমবেন জাবারিৎ
ঞিউতুমবেন.
- ২ পুখুরি পিঞ্চেরে কাদাম দারেরে সাসাৎ চেঁডেদো,
দালাহি লাতারেরে এদেল দারিরে হেঞ্চে পি-
য়োদো.
- ৩ বুরু চেতান টিরোম টেল্কা লাতার লিপীদো,
আঞ্চেমমেসে হিলিহো মাঞ্জান আকান বীর্দো
দারাগি রাগায়.
- ৪ সিংবোঙ্গা রাজদো হেজু:তে সেনো:তে চিয়া
লিদিঙ্গায়,
পাঞ্জারা রাজদো সিন্দুর সাড়িরে আতাং লে-
দিঙ্গায়.
- ৫ গাড়া আড়ে আড়েতে রোটে বারুডাৎ ডলুডুৎ
বাই ঞ্চে-ঞেলা,
নাই আড়ে আড়েতে ইহা হাকুটাউরিয়া বা-
কদো বাই ঞ্চে-ঞেলা,

6TH SONG.

LAMENTATION FOR THE DEATH OF A CHILD.

1. Jare jare dullarya tingdo, ardo okare tahenkan
tingia ?
2. Ingdo men keda bugegi menai tinya.
3. Haire haire dhon tingdo okarbo.
4. Tin dine jom leda !

5. Jare jare dullarya tingdo okakoreye suroh baraikan tingya
6. Ingdo menkodaing jahan lekateye beret ketingya.

৬ সেরেং ।

- ১ জারে ২ ছল্লাডিয়া তিংদো, আরদো ওকা-
কোরে তাহঁন কান তিণ্ডায়.
- ২ ইংদো মেন কেদা বগেগি মেনায় তিঙ্কা.
- ৩ হায়রে হায়রে খন তিংদো ওকোর বা.
- ৪ তিন দিনে জোম লিদা.
- ৫ জারে জারে ছল্লাডিয়া তিংদো ওকাকোরেয়ে
মুরোহ বাডায় কান তিঙ্কা.
- ৬ ইংদো মেনকেদাই০ জাহাঁ লেকাতেয়ে বেরেৎ
কেদিঙ্কায়.

7TH SONG.

ON A HUSBAND.

1. Jare, jare, jare! tingdo goih endom jare jonomer para jurim Bagiya dingdo
2. Haire, haire, haire! juri tingdo okabam jôm let sukh baha lekam heh lenam bar sing gan lagitge
3. Haire, haire, hare! juri tingdo oka konrre babaing danra lering oka dhartire babing senlenro jurireya rupdo going gnel guamtaya.
4. Haire, haire, haire! juri tingdo okare baba jurireya rup dooing gnel guam taya.

5. Bir Sahan ato sengelge nuya hormo doi metau ket tamdo
6. Haire, haire, haire ! bar sing lagitge nuya dhartire juri arsi leka hormo dom agu let tamdo.
7. Jare, jare, jare ! kopal bhangare !
8. Haire, haire, haire ! hiyatingdo !
9. Tala tandire jurim bagiyadingdo
10. Jare, jare, jaro ! kupal bhangare !
11. Haire, haire, haire ! hiyatingre oting oyanglerehon oth onh ketehgeya.
12. Sermaing koyoh lerehon sermahon chotge
13. Jare, jare, jare okahon Bangem Budh Bhorsa oto atingya okahon bain budh adingya
14. Jare chekate jiwidoing tina chekating rareh tingya

৭ সেরেং ।

- ১ জারে জারে জারে তিৎদো গোই: এন্দোম জারে জনমের পারা জুরিম বাগিয়া দিৎদো.
- ২ হাইরে হাইরে হাইরে জুরি তিৎদো ওকা বাম জোমলেত মুখ বাহা লেকাম হে: লেনাম বার সিংগান লাগিৎ গে.
- ৩ হাইরে হাইরে হাইরে জুরি তিৎদো ওকা কোঁডরে বাবাইং দাডা লেরিং ওকা ধাতিরে বাবি• সেনলেনরে জুরিরেয়া রুপদো গোই• ঞ্গেল ঞ্গাম ভায়া.
- ৪ হাইরে হাইরে হাইরে জুরি তিৎদো ওকারে বাবা জুরিরেয়া রুপদোইং ঞ্গেল ঞ্গাম ভায়া.

- ৫ বির আতো সাহান সেগুলগে নুয়া হড.মো
দোই মেতাই কেত তাম দো.
- ৬ হাইরে হাইরে হাইরে বার সিংলাগিৎ গে নুয়া
ধাতিরে জুরি আর্সিলেকা হডমো দোম আ-
গুলেত্ তানদো.
- ৭ জারে জারে জারে কোপাল ভাঙ্কারে.
- ৮ হাইরে হাইরে হাইরে হিয়া তিংদো.
- ৯ টালা টাণ্ডিরে জুরিম বাগিয়া দিংদো.
- ১০ জারে জারে জারে কোপাল ভাঙ্কারে.
- ১১ হাইরে হাইরে হাইরে হিয়া তিংরে ওতিং ওয়োং
লেরেহেঁ অথহেঁ কেটে:গেয়া.
- ১২ সের্মাইং কোয়ো:লেরেহেঁ সের্মাহেঁ চটগে.
- ১৩ জারে জারে জারে ওকাহো বাংগেম বুধ ভরসা
ওটো আটিংঙ্গা ওকাহো বাম বুধ আদিঙ্গা.
- ১৪ জারে চিকাতে জিত্তিদোইং তিনা চেকাতিং
রাডে. তিঙ্গা.

DANCING SONG.—No 1.

1. Engaing banuh ane, apuinghon banuh ane, jankari
darere tol, gojuh !
2. Luti terom rasate gnui jiwedoh
3. Rachalang losot ena, patelangdo dulahi chiti telang
tundang !

4. Bhtelangdo losot ena, chiti delang tundang !
5. Ina mina lar nari Bandu naki ina telang tundang.

১ এন্নেরেয়া° সেরে° ।

- ১ এক্সাইং বানু:আনে আপুইং হোঁ বানু:আনে
বান্কাড়ি দারেবে তল গোজু.
- ২ লুতি তেরোম রাসাতে ঞ্জ জিয়ে দো.
- ৩ রাচালা° লসতএনা পাটেলান্দো দালাদি চি-
তিতেলা° টুগ্গা°.
- ৪ বাটেলান্দো দো লসতএনা চিতি দেলা° টুগ্গা°.
- ৫ ইনা মিনা লাড় নাড়ি ইনা মিনা বান্দু নাড়ি ইনা
তেলা° টুগ্গা°.

DANCING SONG.—No. 2.

1. Jaipur nangarho jathe sut dahho kiring lang chil-
land relang tikeyalang
2. Dahu jomgela dahu sebel geya dahu !

২ এন্নেরেয়া° সেরে° ।

- ১ জাইপুর নানাগাহোঁ জাথে স্মুত দা: হো কিরি°
লা° চিল্লা° রেলা° তিকেয়ালা°
- ২ ডাহ্ জোম গেলা ডাহ্ সেবেল গেয়া ডাহ্.

Extracts from Revd. J. Phillips' Sonthal Grammar.

“What however appears singular in the Sonthal is, the word itself is often entirely changed in the vocative case: thus, **আপুইং**, *my father*, is used when speaking of, but never in *addressing*, one's father; in the latter case, **বাবা**, or **বাবা হো**, or **এ বাবা**, would be used. So also, instead of **এক্কাইং**, *my mother*, **আয়ো**, or **আয়ো গো**, *O mother*, is used. The same also of other words.”

1 মিঃ, 2 বারেআ, 3 পেআ, 4 পোনেআ, 5 মণে, 6 তুরুই,		7 এআএ, 8 ইরান, 9 আরে, 10 গেল, 20 মিঃ ইসি,
----------------------------------------------------------------	--	-------------------------------------------------------

Extracts from Oxford Essays, Max Muller, &c.

	SANSKRIT.	ZEND.	GREEK.	LATIN.
Father :	pitár	patar	πατηρ	pater
Mother :	mátár	mátar	μητηρ	mater
Brother :	bhrátar	bráta	φρατηρ	frater
Sister :	svásar	kanha	soror
Daughter :	dubita	daghdhar	θυγάτηρ	

	SOUTHSLAVIC.	GOTHIC.	SLAV.	IRISH.
Father :	apat or baba	fadar	...	athair
Mother :	engat	...	mati	mathair
Brother :	boiha	brôpar	brat	brathair
Sister :	misera	svistar	sestra	siur
Daughter :	hophonéra	dauhtar (Lith.)	dukte.	dear

SANS. ZEND. DORIC.

I am	asmi	ahmi	εμμι	im	em	menaing or g naing
Thou art	asi	ahi	ἔσσι	is	es	menama
He is	asti	asti	ἔστι	ist	e	menais
We are	'smas	hmahi	ἔσμεσ	sijum	eneq	menale
You are	stha	stha	ἔστε	sijun	ûg	menapea
They are	sânti	nenti	ἔντι	sind	eu	menakoa

A list of words and phrases to be noted and used as test words for the discovery of the radical affinities of languages, and for easy comparison.

KINDLY SENT ME BY THE HON'BLE G. CAMPBELL.

SONTHAL NUMERALS.

Mi,	Barea,	Pea,	Ponea,	Monre,	Turui,	Eae,	Iral,	Are,	Gel.	Mi	Isi,	Bar	Isi	Gel,	Mi	Sac.
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	20.	50.	100.				

I, *ing*.

Of me, *ingren*. (Form used for living creatures.) Mine, *tingya*.
ingya. (Form used for things.)

DUAL.
We, *aling*.

PLURAL.
ale.
abo.

DUAL.
Of us, *alingya*.
alingren.

PLURAL.
aleya.
aleren.
aboya.
aboren.

Our, *taling*.
taleya.
taboya.

Thou, <i>am</i> .	Of thee, <i>amreya</i> . <i>amren</i> .	Thine, <i>tama</i> .
DUAL. You, <i>aben</i> .	DUAL. Of you, <i>abenreya</i> . <i>abenren</i> .	DUAL. Your, <i>tubena</i> .
PLURAL. <i>ape</i> .	PLURAL. <i>apereya</i> . <i>aperen</i> .	PLURAL. <i>tapeya</i> .
He, <i>uni</i> , <i>huni</i> .	Of him, <i>uniyang</i> , <i>huniyang</i> (things.) <i>uniren</i> , <i>huniren</i> (living creatures.)	His, <i>taya</i> .
DUAL. They, <i>unkin</i> , <i>hunkin</i> .	DUAL. Of them, <i>unkinreya</i> . <i>hunkinreya</i> .	DUAL. Their, <i>takin</i> .
PLURAL. <i>unko</i> , <i>hunko</i> .	PLURAL. <i>unkoreyang</i> . <i>hunkoreyang</i> . <i>hunkoren</i> . <i>hunkoren</i> .	PLURAL. <i>takoya</i> .

Hand, <i>ti</i> .	Father, <i>apat</i> .	Sun, <i>sing chando</i> .
Foot, <i>jang</i> .	Mother, <i>engat</i> .	Moon, <i>guinda chando</i> .
Nose, <i>mu</i> .	Brother, <i>boika</i> .	Star, <i>ipi</i> .
Eye, <i>me</i> .	Sister, <i>misera</i> .	Fire, <i>sengel</i> .
Mouth, <i>mocha</i> .	Man, <i>manuya herel</i> , (male).	Water, <i>da</i> .
Tooth, <i>data</i> .	Woman, <i>majjiu</i> .	House, <i>ora</i> .
Ear, <i>lutur</i> .	Wife, <i>aimai</i> .	Horse, <i>sadom</i> .
Hair, <i>up</i> .	Child, <i>gidra</i> .	Cow, <i>gai</i> .
Head, <i>boko</i> .	Son, <i>hopon</i> .	Dog, <i>seta</i> .
Tongue, <i>alang</i> .	Daughter, <i>hopon era</i> .	Cat, <i>pusi</i> .
Belly, <i>lai</i> .	Slave, <i>guti</i> .	Cock, <i>sim sandi</i> .
Back, <i>deya</i> .	Cultivator, <i>chasa</i> .	Duck, <i>gede</i> .
Iron, <i>neurhet</i> .	Shepherd, <i>gupi</i> .	Ass, <i>gadka</i> .
Gold, <i>sona samanom</i> .	God, <i>Chando</i> .	Camel, <i>unth</i> .
Silver, <i>rupa</i> .	Devil, <i>Bonga</i> .	Bird, <i>chenre</i> .
Go, <i>cha</i> .	Come, <i>hiju</i> .	Die, <i>goju</i> .
Eat, <i>jom</i> .	Beat, <i>dal</i> .	Give, <i>de</i> .
Sit, <i>durup</i> .	Stand, <i>tingo</i> .	Run, <i>daur</i> .
Up, <i>chetan</i> .	Down, <i>latar</i> .	Before, <i>laha</i> .
Near, <i>sár</i> .	Far, <i>sanging</i> .	Behind, <i>tagom</i> .
Who, <i>okoe</i> .	What, <i>chet</i> .	Why, <i>chet lagit</i> .
And, <i>ar</i> .	But, <i>menkhan</i> .	If, <i>khan</i> .
Yes, <i>ken</i> .	No, <i>bang</i> .	Alas! <i>hai! hai!</i>

<p>A father, <i>apat</i>. Of a father, <i>apatneang</i>, <i>apatren</i>. To a father, <i>apat the</i>, <i>then surtepherre</i>. From a father, <i>apatkhon</i>, <i>apat thenkhon</i>.</p>	<p>Two fathers, <i>apatkin</i>.</p>	<p>Fathers, <i>apatko</i>. Of fathers, <i>apatkoreyangren</i>. To fathers, <i>apatko the</i>, <i>then surtepherre</i>. From fathers, <i>apatko khon</i>, <i>apatko then khon</i>.</p>
<p>A daughter, <i>hoponera</i>. Of a daughter, <i>hopon erareyang eraren</i>. To a daughter, <i>hopon era the</i>, <i>then surtepherre</i>. From a daughter, <i>hopon erakhon thenkhon</i>.</p>	<p>Two daughters, <i>hoponerakin</i>.</p>	<p>Daughters, <i>hopon erako</i>. Of daughters, <i>hopon erakoreyang hopon erakoren</i>. To daughters, <i>hopon erako the then surtepherre</i>. From daughters, <i>hopon erako—khon hopon erako then khon</i>.</p>
<p>A good man, <i>buge hor</i>. Of a good man, <i>buge horreyang—ren</i>. To a good man, <i>buge hor the then surtepherre</i>. From a good man, <i>buge horkhon thenkhon</i>.</p>	<p>Two good men, <i>buge horkin</i>.</p>	<p>Good men, <i>buge horko</i>. Of good men, <i>buge horkoreyang, horkoren</i>. To good men, <i>buge horko the, then surtepherre</i>. From good men, <i>buge horkokhon, thenkhon</i>.</p>
<p>A good woman, <i>buge aimai</i>. A bad boy, <i>bari kora</i>.</p>		<p>Good women, <i>buge aimai</i>. A bad girl, <i>bari kuri</i>.</p>

Good, <i>buge</i> . High, <i>usul</i> .	Better, <i>ana khon buge</i> . Higher, <i>ana khon usul</i> .	Best, <i>adi buge</i> . Highest, <i>adi usul</i> .
A horse, <i>sadom</i> . A bull, <i>dangra</i> . A dog, <i>seta</i> . A he-goat, <i>boda merom</i> . A male deer, <i>boda jil</i> . A mare, <i>enga sadom</i> .	A cow, <i>gai</i> . A bitch, <i>enga seta</i> . A she-goat, <i>enga merom</i> . Female deer, <i>enga jil pathi jil</i> . Horses, <i>sadomko</i> . Bulls, <i>dangrako</i> .	Dogs, <i>setako</i> . Mares, <i>enga sadom</i> . Cows, <i>gaiko</i> . Bitches, <i>engase tako</i> . Goats, <i>meromko</i> . Deer, <i>jil</i> .
I am, <i>ingkanaing</i> .	Thou art, <i>am menama</i> .	He is, <i>huni menaia</i> .
DUAL. We are, <i>aling, menaling</i> .	DUAL. You are, <i>aben menabena</i> .	DUAL. They are, <i>hunkin menakin</i> .
PLURAL. <i>ale, menale</i> . <i>abo, menaboa</i> .	PLURAL. <i>ape menapea</i> .	PLURAL. <i>hunko menakoa</i> .
I was, <i>ing taken kanaing</i> .	Thou wast, <i>am taken kanam</i> .	He was, <i>huni taken kanaia</i> .
DUAL. We were, <i>aling taken kanaing</i> .	DUAL. You were, <i>aben taken kanaben</i> .	DUAL. They were, <i>hunko taken kanako</i> .

PLURAL.
ale taken kanale.
abo taken kanabo.

PLURAL.
ape taken kanape.

Be, *hoyu.*

I may be, *hoyu, chonging.*

Beat, *dai.*

To be, *hoyu, te.* Being, *hoykate.*

I shall be, *hoyu, aing.*

To beat, *dudalte,* Beating, *dalkate.*

I beat, *delasing.*

DUAL.

We beat, *delasing.*

PLURAL.

dalale, dalabo.

I am beating, *dalkanaing.*

I may beat, *dalkhoing.*

I am beaten, *dalochokanaing.*

I go, *chala, aing.*

I went, *chalaunaing.*

Go, *chala, me.*

Thou beatest, *dalam.*

DUAL.

You beat, *dalaben.*

PLURAL.

dalape.

I was beating, *dalkedaing.*

I shall beat, *dalaing.*

I was beaten, *dalochoenaing.*

Thou goest, *chala, am.*

Thou wentest, *chalaunam.*

Going, *chalaunkate.*

Having been, *hoyen, hoyu, kha.*

I should be, *hoykooing.*

Having beaten, *dallette.*

dalkette.

dalakatte.

He beats, *dalai.*

DUAL.

They beat, *dalakin.*

PLURAL.

dalako.

I had beaten, *dallodaing.*

I should beat, *dalkhoaing.*

I shall be beaten, *dalochoaing.*

He goes, *chala, ai.*

He went, *chalaunenai.*

Gone, *chalaunena.*

1. What is your name?

2. How old is this horse?

3. How far is it from here to Kashmir?

Ama guitutum chili ama?

Nui sadom tin sernarenkanai?

Nondekhon Kashmir disom tin san gingya?

4. How many sons are there in your father's house?
 5. I have walked a long way to-day.
 6. The son of my uncle is married to her sister.
 7. In the house is the saddle of the white horse.
 8. Put the saddle on his back.
 9. I have beaten his son with many stripes.
 10. He is grazing cattle on the top of the hill.
 11. He is sitting on a horse under that tree.
 12. His brother is taller than his sister.
 13. The price of that is two rupees and a half.
 14. My father lives in that small house.
 15. Give this rupee to him.
 16. Take those rupees from him.
 17. Beat him well and bind him with ropes.
 18. Draw water from the well.
 19. Walk before me.
 20. Whose boy comes behind you?
 21. From whom did you buy that?
 22. From a shop-keeper of the village.
- Amren apum ora re tina hopon menakoa?*
Ing teheng adi sanging khoi jangate ing he ena.
Ingren kakaing hopon nuiren miserae baku kedeah.
Ora re pour sadomreang balan mena taya.
Balan huni sadomre tôlme.
Ing huniren hopon ading dal kedeah.
Huni dungri chotre gai ating etkoai.
Huni sadom de kate ona dare budare tingo akanai.
Huniren boiha huniren misera khonang barti usul geai
Nuareang dam bar taka bar sika kana.
Ingren apuing ona huding ora re berel akanai.
Nua taka huni emaimé.
Ona taka huni the khon idime.
Hunido khup dalkate baberte toleme.
Nuga khuni khonang da lo rakapme.
Ing lahate chala me.
Okoeren gidra ing tayomte keju kanai?
Okoe then khon nuam kiring heda?
A tore mi dokan hor then khon.

*Extract from Sir George Yule's Report on the
Sonthal Pergunnahs, for 1858.*

With regard to the no-Police system, public opinion cannot be called as a witness, for it knows nothing about it. I might cite the residents in these Districts as witnesses in favor of the new plan; but they will in time speak for themselves. I shall only say at present that their reporting costs nothing but the journey of the Chowkeedar and of the sufferer, if he so pleases, to the Hakim; that investigation and trial of crime also costs nothing but the time spent by the people themselves in investigating and in going to and returning from the Hakim's station, and they are paid from the day they leave their homes till their return. No Police or Amlah have to be feed, enmity and rascality are deprived of their friends, they have nobody to fee; the villagers, therefore, that is, at least nine-tenths of the population, are free to do what they think best, to report or to conceal a crime. They are not deterred from reporting by the fear of a Government Officer concerned in concealing it or by fear of the Zemindar, who, without the aid of that Officer of Government, always at his service for a sufficient consideration, loses great part of his power for evil. There is no general influence at work to keep a matter secret. One Zemindar wishes, we will say, to conceal a murder; he may prevent his own ryots from reporting, but he has not the influence of the Police to assist him in preventing the

ryots of neighbouring Zemindars letting out the secret openly or quietly to the Hakim.

Granting, then, what I have said of both systems to be correct,—and I do not think any one really acquainted with the ways of the Natives will say I entertain too strong a prejudice on either side,—what is the probability that crime will be better reported where there are Police or where there are none? Of course I suppose the Hakims in each system to be of average abilities and character, and in doing so I give up a great deal to the opponents of the new system.

It is true the Mahajun, under the Regulation system, did not trouble himself with referring to the Courts to any great extent. He simply sent his people and swept off the whole of his debtor's cattle, selling or keeping them as best suited himself. The people, ignorant and timid, and aware of the hopelessness of redress against their wealthy oppressor in any Civil Court or Magistrate's, with a Native Executive, seldom complained. If they did, a deed of sale or mortgage generally, I verily believe forged for the occasion, was the ready reply. What could a poor ryot, with his sole wealth, his cattle, gone, do? He could not fee Mooktears, Amlah, Vakeels, &c., and without feeing them handsomely, did anybody in India, European or Native, rich or poor, ever get justice, if justice indeed it can be called, in a Civil Court? In a Magistrate's they might by chance. Since the introduction of the new system, the complaints against Mahajuns for this forcible carrying off of cattle have been numerous and well-proved. I did not consider we should be justified in interfering in cases which had occurred before the insurrection; there were plenty after it, however, and indeed the practice had become so much a matter of course that even yet a case

occasionally happens, some sharp lessons have been required regarding this and the Kamiotee system (hereafter described) by the Hindoo Rajpoots and other high castes settled in the Sontal Districts with reference to their treatment of the lower castes and wild tribes, for whom they have not one atom of feeling. A more inhuman set in this respect it is not possible to conceive.

In former Reports I have described the Sontal Districts at so much length that I need say little now. A wonderful change has come over the people ever since last year. They all, and the Sontals in particular, have become so fat and sleek, and they have entirely lost the look, either sulky or anxious, which most of them at first had. Their complaints too now are individual, not general. Two deputations of Sontal Manjees—one from Khurruckpore, the other from Chukye, both in Monghyr—came to us at Deoghur to complain of the exactions and oppressions they suffered at the hands of the Mahajuns and Zemindars. I had enquired into their complaints while passing through Khurruckpore, when the Manjees were all absent, having gone to consult Mr. Robinson, whose name is great in Sontal-dom. The complaints resolved themselves into two general subjects. The Sontals had pottahs for short periods only; they had settled in the jungles at low rents at first; these had been gradually increased, and were about to be increased still more. The Sontals wished to revert to the first jumma, or if that could not be done, then they hoped Government would take all their villages into its own hands and retain the present rents without further increase. I could not give them any hope of compliance with either of their requests. The Zemindars had the right, by law, under the circumstances, to increase their rents, and were doing no

more than Mr. Pontet did in the Damun, and received praise and thanks and a gold watch from Government for doing. The second subject of complaint was the cheating of Mahajuns and Zemindaree Agents in their accounts with the Sontals. Here the inability of the Sontals to read and write, their ignorance and timidity, and the constitution of the Regulation Courts, present obstacles in the way of redress not easily overcome. The Sontals have knotted strings and memory only to trust to, and the Manjee of the village has to do the recollection for all its inhabitants. The other side have their accounts nicely kept and plenty of witnesses to answer to their correctness. Other complaints related to cheating in weights and measures, &c. We explained to the deputations with much repetition that we in the Sontal Districts could not help them; that they lived under another system, and must be guided by the rules of that system; in endeavoring to obtain redress, that they should not, on suffering any injustice, sit down and hope that things would somehow improve, but they should at once proceed to the Magistrate or to the Collector of Monghyr, according to the nature of the complaint, and tell their tale: and I wrote to the officers named, requesting them to take up personally, or to make over to their best European Assistants, all Sontal complaints, to keep them away from the Amlah and hangers-on of Courts, and to watch carefully the proceedings in cases of distrainments.

Another matter on which I shall make a few remarks, is the stoppage put to the Kamiotee and Hurwahee systems of bondage by Mr. Robinson. Under the Kamiotee system, a poor man, borrowing Rupees 5, 10, or 20, binds himself to work for the lender till the loan is re-paid, sometimes with the condition of getting food (one seer of paddy a day) for

sometimes with no such condition. A Hurwahee bond is the same, except that the borrower has to plough the lender's fields, whenever required, until the loan is repaid. Of course the loans are never repaid. Where is the Kamiot to get money when he has to work for the lender always gratis? The Hurwahee is no better; he is always wanted to plough the lender's fields when he ought to be ploughing his own, and, of course, he is soon reduced to the lowest level. When the father dies the son becomes a Kamiot in his place, and so it goes on—slavery under the pretence of hired labor. Mr. Robinson's attention was attracted to the subject, I believe, by the number of thefts committed by Kamiots on their masters, and their common reply, when asked if they had committed the theft—"What could I do, Saheb, he made me work all day and gave me nothing to eat." I have not Mr. Robinson's Report on the subject with me, but it will be submitted shortly, together with a copy of my orders to the officers in general on the subject. As the Kamiotee system was in great favor with the Rajpoots and other Hindoo castes, who will not put their own hands to plough or other works, and as these people are tolerably numerous in Mr. Robinson's division, the stoppage of the practice caused a little excitement, and some bitter appeals were made to me on the subject, particularly when Mr. Robinson fined a wealthy Hindoo severely for starving his Kamiot. The system is now dying out. Those who have not complained don't want to be released, their masters now treating them better; and the Deputy Commissioner has had the satisfaction of putting a stop to a system of slavery as thorough as ever existed, and has never said a word about it except to myself; the late slaves though, know him well.

Without such officers as Robinson, Taylor, Wood, and

Braddon, I fear the new system would have succeeded but little better than the old Regulation one. If this is true, what important inferences must be drawn from the fact, no less than the incapacity, of a close service and Regulation Law to give satisfaction to the people.

