

CHAPTER XIX.

MONGHYR TOWN.

LOCATION.

Situated in 25°-23' N. and 86°-28' E. it is the headquarters of the district. The town is practically surrounded by the Ganga on three sides, viz., south, west and north and the Kharagpur hills forming the eastern border. It is situated in the heart of the district and its particular location has made portion of the town a beauty spot. The situation was once considered to be strategic. Monghyr has a beautiful townscape.

ORIGIN OF THE NAME.

There are different theories as to the origin of the name of the town. It has been identified with Modagiri of the Mahabharata. The Buddhist traditions refer to one Maudgolyagiri, after a disciple of Buddha named Maudgolya and this is taken to be Monghyr. General Cunningham suggested that the place used to be called originally Mudgalapuri, Mudgalasram or Mudgalagiri, after a *rishi* named Mudgala who was supposed to have been a contemporary of Jarasandha.* According to the *Haribansa*, the name had been derived from a certain Madgal Raja, one of the sons of Vishwamitra, son of a Gadhi Raja, who received this part of his father's dominions. Madgal Raja is, at best, a mythical hero. Dr. Buchanan† who had visited parts of the Monghyr district in 1810 mentions that in an inscription seven or eight centuries old found at a place and perhaps more ancient than the *Haribansa*, the name is written Mudgagiri, or the hill of Mudga, and not Mudgalpuri, or the abode of Mudgal. The existence of the saint and prince of that is perhaps, therefore, problematical, as Mudga is the Sanskrit name for a kind of pulse, the *Phaseolus mungo* of Linnæus, from whence the vulgar name of the place probably derived. The last *District Gazetteer of Monghyr* published in 1926, however, mentions that Col. Waddell had a doubt about the derivation of the name from *mudga* or *mung* and he has been quoted to have written thus: "The *mung* bean does not affect hilly or rocky sites, and its cultivation is widespread throughout the Gangetic plain. It seems not unlikely that the vulgar name of the fort, viz., Mungger, is merely a Muhammadan perversion of the old name, somewhat like the change by which Navadwip was converted into Nadia. The fact that the Sanskrit *mudga* can become, in Prakrit, the colloquial *mung*, is almost equally favourable to a derivation from the sage Mudgal, as in ordinary parlance many letters of the old names are eluded:—thus, the classical

* Reports, Arch. Surv. India, XV, 15, 16 and 18.

† Buchanan's Bhagalpur Report (B. & O. Research Society, 1939).

Kashtaharini Ghat close at hand is popularly called Katharini, and the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsiang in the seventh century also mentions the sage Mudgalaputra in connection with this neighbourhood; and the hermitage of this sage here is still a favourable place of Hindu pilgrimage. It seems, therefore, more probable that the place derives its name from this sage than from the species of pulse called *mung*.* All this discussion of the name being derived from "Mung" appears rather far-fetched. It is not that "Mung" is the most important crop in the district or the town.

The *District Gazetteer of Monghyr* (1926), further puts in regarding the derivation of the name which was gathered from an intelligent local Brahmin who gave the following account of the origin of the name:—"In the sixth century after Christ, a Hindu sage, named Mudgal Muni, appeared in the city and established two shrines, one at a rock at Kashtaharini, and the other on the rock known as Manpatthar. On the former religious rites were performed during the rainy season, and on the latter, during the dry season. Both these places are still esteemed sacred by the Hindus. In course of time the rock at Kashtaharini was called Madgal Munigir (the rock of Madgal Muni), which was subsequently abbreviated into Munigir and eventually corrupted to Mungir, from which the modern town took its name." The Gazetteer adds: "It will be noticed that all these legends agree in saying that a *muni* or sage lived here in olden days; and Mr. C. E. A. W. Oldham, I.C.S., a former Collector, who first brought the above local legend to notice, suggests that it is possible that the original name was Munigriha, i.e., the house or abode of the *muni*—without any specification of his name—that this was corrupted to Mungir just as Rajagriha has been corrupted to Rajgir, and that the modern Monghyr is a further corruption." Dr. Buchanan says that Major Wilford suggested Sagala to be another ancient name for Mungger, but Buchanan found no support for it. The Pala inscriptions found at Monghyr called the place Mudgagiri. General Cunningham has another source of origin to suggest, for he says: "I have strong suspicion, however, that the original name may have been connected with the Mons or Mundas, who occupied this part of the country before the advent of the Aryans..... It is, however, not impossible that this name may have been derived from the Sanskrit *Muni*, the hill is said to have been the residence of the *Muni* Mudgala, and is, therefore, known as *Muni* Parvata, as well as Mudgagiri". Monghyr is said to have had another name, that is Guptagarh, after the great Chandragupta of the Guptas, who built up the town, according to the stone inscription found at Monghyr.

Hiuen Tsiang, the Chinese traveller who came to India in seventh century A. D. has left an account in which a place named

* "Note on an old inscription from Mungir", *Proc. A. S. R.* 1890, pages 191-192.

Hiranya-Parvata (I-lan-ha-po-fa-to according to Chinese dialect) has been mentioned, which has been identified as the place where Mudgalaputra, a Buddhist disciple lived. The description of the location resembles to the location of Monghyr town.

It will be seen that the plethora of theories about the origin of the name at least suggests that Monghyr is an ancient town.

HISTORY OF MONGHYR.

Monghyr town does not find specific mention in the *Vedas*. But in the 26th *Adhyaya* (chapter) of *Adi Kanda* of the Valmiki's *Ramayana*, it is mentioned that both Ramchandra and his brother Lakshmana on their way back from the encounter with Taraka, the demoness, took rest at the spot. The relaxation they had, gave rise to the name of Kashtaharini or comfort from relaxation. This is the spot where Kashtaharini Ghat stands. At Sitakund, Lakshmana is said to have drawn water from depths of the earth to quench the fire after Sita had come out unscathed and successful from her fire-ordeal. The name of Sitakund is highly suggestive. It is only four miles from Monghyr town. In the *Digvijay parva* of the *Mahabharata*, it is mentioned that Bhim on his adventure to the eastern regions fought at Modagiri and defeated the local chief. The description given by Bhim coincides with the one in the 32nd *Adhyaya* of *Adikanda* of the *Ramayana* and both these descriptions indicate the present location of the town of Monghyr.

Dr. Buchanan provides an interesting information about that adventure of Bhim. He writes : "The remains of antiquity, which according to tradition goes farthest back, are on a hill called *Nauyagarhi*, south-east about four miles from Mungger. It is said to have been the prison where Jarasandha, king of Magadha, had confined 80,000 of the princes of India, whom in pursuit of universal monarchy he had taken prisoners, and intended to sacrifice to the Gods; but fortunately he was killed by Bhim, the brother of Yudhishtir, who afterwards contested the sovereignty of India with his kinsman Duryodhan." Another tradition is that the fort in Monghyr was built by Jarasandha. Even now many villages mention the Monghyr fort as Jarasandha *Kila*. Another popular belief is that Monghyr was the capital of Anga during the reign of Karna of *Mahabharata*. The hillock inside the eastern part of the fort called Karanchatra may have led to this. Dr. Buchanan is disinclined to identify Karna of Karanchaura to Karna of *Mahabharata*. He says : "Next to this I find celebrated in this division a Karna Raja, who, as I have said, is by the traditions here made contemporary with Vikrama, sovereign of India and who is here supposed to have attempted, but without success, to have seized on the power of that monarch. With respect to Vikrama such confusion prevails, as appears from Major Wilford's valuable treatise on the subject, in the 9th volume of the *Asiatick Researches*, that no attention need be paid to any traditions

concerning a person of such dubious existence. This very Karna is indeed one of the persons, who according to Major Wilford is styled Vikrama. Karna, as I have said, paid particular attention to the worship of the tutelar goddess of Mungger, and built a house on the hill now occupied by the elegant quarters of the Commandant, and in the time of Major Rennell's survey by a saluting battery. This hill is still called Karnachaura, and the house upon it was not intended for the residence of the prince, but for the distribution of alms. Two tanks near the hill, are considered as the work of the king and of his wife".

The *District Gazetteer of Monghyr* (1926) mentions:—"It is mentioned in the *Mahabharata* under the name of Modagiri, and a passage in the *Sabhaparva*, describing Bhim's conquests in Eastern India, says that after defeating Karna, king of Anga, he fought a battle at Modagiri and killed its chief." Here we find Karna of the *Mahabharata* being identified probably with the Karna of Karan-chaura. In spite of the various references and theorisation it is not possible to glean much about Monghyr town in the epic period.

Later we find Monghyr being annexed by king Bimbisara after defeating king Brahmadatta during the life time of Gautama Buddha. One Gupta inscription of 488 A. D. was found in Monghyr. It has been mentioned earlier that Chandragupta had built the town which was named after him as Guptagarh. In the 5th century A. D. Fahian, the noted Chinese traveller, passed through this town but has left no account of a place called Modagiri identified with Monghyr. Then Monghyr appears to have passed under the Palas of Bengal. From different inscriptions issued from Monghyr by different Pala kings and emperors, it is gathered that Monghyr had at least been their capital for military purposes. Monghyr is also associated with Rampal who is said to have drowned himself in the Ganga on hearing the death of his maternal uncle while he was residing at Monghyr. Indradrumnabal, the last of the Palas, left Monghyr for Orissa on the arrival of the Moslem hordes from north-west.

In the 12th century A. D. Monghyr passed under the hands of Moslems when Bakhtiyar Khilji defeated the last Pala king in Bihar. Though Bihar (Bihar Shariff) became the capital of the new rulers, Monghyr retained its former importance. Records mention that Monghyr was attacked and plundered by the lieutenants of Mahammad Khilji, son of Bakhtiar Khilji. In 1330 A. D. Monghyr was annexed to Delhi Sultanat by Muhammad Tughlaq. Till that period Monghyr remained under the continuous occupation of the Sultans of Bengal. It passed under the Jaunpur kingdom from 1337 onwards. Sikandar Lodi, after the death of his father Bahlol Lodi, conquered Bihar in 1488 A. D. and occupied Monghyr. Monghyr, however, again passed under Bengal when in 1494 A. D. Hussain Shah, the Sultan of Bengal defeated the Delhi Sultans and captured Bihar. With this

monarch and his son prince Danyal, Monghyr's history is intimately connected. Dr. Buchanan writes about Hussain Shah's contribution to the town of Monghyr: "Hoseyn Shah, the greatest of the kings of Bengal, extended his dominions on both sides of the river, as far at least as Mungger, and is said to have built the present fort, which although not strong, has been very magnificent structure". He gives a detailed account of the fort and says: "In the northern gateway, which is built of stone, are many materials, that have evidently been taken from ruins, as the ornamented stones are built into the wall without any attention to symmetry, and these ruins have evidently been Hindu, as on a stone of hornblende in mass, which appears to have been the lintel of a door or window, there are figures in the human form, concerning which the men of Hindu lore are not agreed. One end of the stone is hid by the wall, but in the accompanying drawing (no. 20), will be found a representation of what projects, which is the most elegant design of Hindu sculpture that I have yet seen. The execution is however less neat than the design, and the drawing therefore looks much better than the original. On the inside of this gate is also a figure carved on granite, and representing the human form (*see* Drawing no. 21). Although this is very rude, I refer it to the same period with the other, and attribute the difference in execution to the difference of materials; for so far as I have seen in their works, the natives, of the north of India have never possessed means of cutting granite with any tolerable neatness".

"Near a sally port, on the inside of the rampart, the fall of the plaster, by which the building was encrusted, has discovered two stones of almost exactly the same pattern with that at the water-gate, but smaller. These have probably been part of windows; and it is probable, that an accurate examination of the whole wall would discover many such. A very cursory view disclosed several in different parts of the wall, two of which are represented in Drawings nos. 29 and 30. The former represents the five great gods of the orthodox Hindus with four nymphs. The latter in a foliage has a human head between two sheep, of which the Pandits give no explanation. I do not think that the ruins, from whence these carved stones have been taken, can be referred to any other era with so much probability as to that of the Karna Rajas. The other gates of the fort have been covered with carving, but this is evidently Moslem work, carving consisting entirely of foliages, and every stone being suited by its ornaments to fit the place which it occupies with symmetry. The stone employed in these gates is very different from either of the former and is a material of very small durability."

Hunter in his *Statistical Account of Monghyr* (1871) mentions on the authority of Stewart's History of Bengal, that two noblemen of Sultan Sikandar Lodi of Delhi, met the Prince (Danyal) in the town of Barh, and concluded a treaty, the terms of which were that the

Emperor should retain Behar, Tirhut and Sarkar Saran, provided he did not invade Bengal. Prince Danyal most probably was the Governor of Eastern Bihar on behalf of his father. He repaired the fortifications of Monghyr, and built, in 1497 A. D., the vault over the shrine of Shah Nafah, the Muhammedan patron of the town.* In 1521 Nasrat Shah, or more popularly known as Nasib Shah, son of Hussain Shah, breached the above treaty and invaded Tirhut. He put his son-in-law, Makhdum Alum as the Governor and stationed him at Hajipur.

After this Monghyr became the headquarters of the Behar army on behalf of the Bengal kings and was for a considerable time under the command of Kutab Khan, a general of high repute, whose defeat by Sher Shah in A. D. 1533 was the first great success of that chief in the struggles which afterwards placed him on the throne of Delhi. Monghyr then passed under Sher Shah's control, where he defeated Humayun, on his retreat from Bengal. In this engagement, Dilawar Khan, son of Daulat Khan Lodi, and ancestor of the renowned Khan Jahan Lodi in the reign of Shah Jahan, was captured by Sher Shah. From A. D. 1545, Mian Sulaiman, an Afghan of the Kararani tribe, took possession of Monghyr on behalf of Islam Shah, son of Sher Shah. Later Sulaiman entered into an alliance with Bahadur Shah, king of Bengal and defeated and killed Adil Shah near Monghyr in 1557. In 1563, Sulaiman became ruler of Bengal and Bihar but acknowledged the suzerainty of Akbar. Later Monghyr remained under the occupation of Todar Mall, who was sent by Akbar to bring into submission the 30,000 horse, military rebels of the Bengal army of Mughals. Todar Mall ultimately was successful in reducing the rebels. He encamped near Bhagalpur by sealing off their lines of supply and repaired the fortifications at Monghyr. Buchanan mentions: "Akbar took Mungger after a severe battle in the vicinity; but so ignorant of history are the people here, that they imagine the prince who lost it, to have been Hoseyn Shah, who preceded Akbar by at least a century." During the period of the Mughal Government, Monghyr continued to be a place of importance both strategically and for commerce. The river front of Monghyr was fully exploited for these purposes.

In A. D. 1657, Monghyr became the headquarters of revolt against Delhi, when Shah Sujah, the second son of Shah Jahan, on hearing of his father's illness raised the standard of revolt, and

* Vide Hunter's *Statistical Account of Monghyr*, 1877, p. 64. "This is shown by an inscription put up by Danyal on the eastern wall of the *darga* or shrine of the saint, which lies on an elevated spot, reached by a flight of steps, near the old wall of the town. At the foot there are many tombs in a dilapidated state. The *khadims* of the *darga* say that when the fortifications were being repaired, Danyal dreamed that a grave near the wall emitted a smell of musk. The grave was discovered, and the Prince built a vault over it, for the tenant of the tomb was clearly a saint. From this circumstance, the saint up to this day is called Shah Nafah, from the Persian *nafah*, a pod of musk".

claimed the imperial title. He repaired the fortress and at the same time erected lines to the west of it, extending from the hills to the Ganga, and about six miles in length. The channel called Dakranala strengthened these lines towards the west, but the prince built over it a bridge, which according to Dr. Buchanan was the largest he had seen in the course of his survey. Shah Sujah retired to Monghyr after his defeat in 1658, at Bahadurpur, near Banaras, by Sulaiman, the son of Dara Shikoh. Monghyr held out against the victor, till he was summoned back to Agra to assist his father against Aurangzeb. In 1659, Monghyr again afforded Shujah shelter after his defeat at Kudwa by Aurangzeb till Mir Jumla turned his position by sending troops through Sherghatti passes, and forced him to retire on Rajmahal.

Mirza Safi, retitled Saif Khan, was the husband of Malka Banu, eldest sister of Mumtaj Mahal, the lady of the Taj. When Saif Khan became the Governor of Bihar in 1628 A. D. he undertook construction of public utilities. Peter Mundy speaks very highly of them. The inception of Safiabād township near Jamalpur and Safiasarai and a big well in Monghyr are commonly attributed to Saif Khan.

A Dutch physician, Dr. Nicholas Graft, was brought down to Monghyr as a prisoner in the early 17th century. He has left an account of the town and especially of the fort, the massive walls and bastions which impressed him much. The arrangements for fortification were quite adequate for those times. The fort though not as well maintained had its attraction to all the visitors and continued to hold a strategic role.

In 1745 A. D. Mustafa Khan, the rebel General of Alivardi Khan, attacked Monghyr while on his way to the north. He sent his relative Abdul Rasul Khan with a small contingent to secure the fort. The invaders sealed off the walls against heavy odds and captured the fort. But, as one soldier was getting up the wall, one stone slab slipped from the top and fell upon the head of Abdul Rasul Khan, who died of the injury. In spite of the loss of this brave commander Mustafa Khan celebrated his victory with much gaiety and returned to Patna after three days. He carried away some of the guns and ammunitions from the fort.

Regarding Monghyr, *Ain-i-Akbari* has large references. It will be worthwhile to refer to Hunter, who mentions that according to *Ain-i-Akbari*, Monghyr was the chief town of *Sarkar Monghyr* which consisted of 31 *mahals* or *parganas*. *Pargana Monghyr* itself was assessed at 8,08,707½ *dams* (40 *dams* being equal to 1 *Akbarshahi* rupee) as per Todar Mall's rent roll. Raja Man Singh had his residence at Monghyr for some time, when a pious Muhammadan, named, Shah Daulat, a friend of the Raja tried to convert the latter to Islam. Kassem Khan was in charge of *Sarkar Monghyr* during

the reign of Jahangir. Two *jagirdars* of Monghyr are also mentioned—Sardar Khan and Hassan Ali Khan (1619 A. D.). In 1628 A. D., Saiyyid Muhammad Mukhtar Khan was appointed *tayuldar* of Monghyr in the first year of Shah Jahan's reign. He distinguished himself in war with the Ujjainih Rajas of Dumraon in Gaya about A. D. 1637. Another *tayuldar* of Monghyr was Mahaldar Khan. The historians of Aurangzeb's reign mention one Mullah Muhammad Sayyid, who wrote under the nom-de-plume of 'Ashraf'. He was a poet of repute and enjoyed the favours of Prince Azim-us-Shan, Aurangzeb's grandson. He was also the teacher of Zebunnissa Begam, the daughter of Aurangzeb and a renowned poetess. The poet died at Monghyr in 1672 on his way to Mecca and was buried there. His grave is within the fort.

Monghyr's previous position was restored by Mir Kasim when he made it his capital to drive out the British from Bengal. His favourite Armenian General Gurgin Khan established an arsenal in the fort underlining the skill in gunsmithy and trade in firearms which must have been at a high incidence at that time. Trade and commerce flourished through the river and caused a good deal of heart-burning between the Company and their rivals.

The town continued to hold its pre-eminence till Mir Kasim's defeat at Udhua Nalah in October, 1763 A. D. A spot is shown near Kashtaharini Ghat on the river side, from where Raja Ramnarayan, the Seths, wealthy bankers from Bengal and others were thrown in the Ganga with pitchers full of sands, under the orders of Mir Kasim.

Mir Kasim brought all his treasures, troops and elephants from Mursidabad to Monghyr. Gurgin Khan imparted military training to the soldiers. Shortly after his shifting to Monghyr, Mir Kasim fell out with the East India Company and chafed at the repeated breaches of the British agents regarding payment of taxation and customs. Mir Kasim lodged a strong protest to the British Governor at Calcutta against the highhandedness of British merchants and their agents. On receiving this protest Governor Vansittart personally came down to Monghyr when he halted at the palace built by Gurgin Khan for his own use on the top of Pirpahar. He was lavishly entertained and presents of ornaments, etc., and lakhs of rupees were made to him. Vansittart's mission did not, however, produce a lasting solution. Mir Kasim, out of disgust, withdrew all kinds of taxation even from Indian merchants. This action resulted in a huge loss to the Company and was looked upon as an open breach of their relationship. Many English prisoners were brought by Nawab's troops to Monghyr fort. Mir Kasim sent his family and children to Rohtas Garh and himself marched to Udhua Nala along with General Gurgin Khan. He met his defeat at Udhua Nalah as already mentioned.

The fort at Monghyr was renovated and repaired by Mir Kasim, who resided in it for nearly two years. The accommodations in

the fort, then occupied by Mir Kasim as his public palace must have been very large, but later a substantial part had been pulled down. Dr. Buchanan, therefore, could not have judged as to the form of style, in which the fort was built. The ladies of Mir Kasim's harem were said to have occupied the buildings outside the gate leading to Patna. The building was of a considerable size but rather clumsy. The chief mosque, in Major Rennell's time, had been converted into a powder magazine; but as a building more appropriate for that purpose had been erected, the mosque had become the storehouse of an European trader. Dr. Buchanan also mentions a private chapel, vastly superior to that at Rajmahal. Buchanan could catch a good picture of what Monghyr was in Mir Kasim's time.

The fort of Monghyr which Mir Kasim had left under the Governorship of Arballi Khan, ultimately capitulated on 2nd October, 1763, to the British troops under Major Adams, but not before the fort had been subjected to furious cannonade by the latter for full two days.

About Mir Kasim and his exploits detailed records have been made in *Shair-ul-Mutakharin*, by Ghulam Hussain. It is said that apart from losing his kingdom and the country's independence at Monghyr, Mir Kasim also lost his beloved children, shot by Britishers near the fort. Some put the number of children to be four, two sons and two daughters. But others make it two, one daughter and one son. There are pathetic stories about his children.

It is said that Princess Gul and Prince Bahar used to hide under the tunnels by the riverside in order to wreak vengeance upon the British officers. They used to clothe themselves with tiger skins during the nights. Once Bahar, on his round in a dark night, was caught sight of by a British officer, who instantaneously shot the Prince dead. The truth was revealed next morning and the Prince was said to have been buried by the *darga* of Pir-Shah-Nafah-Gul. The Princess was found dead in a man's attire by the side of her brother's tomb, where she was also buried. The officer, responsible for Bahar's and incidentally Gul's death ordered for a daily salute of guns in the evening to mourn the loss of these children.

About the subsequent history and development of Monghyr and the references to the natural beauty and trade and commerce of the town by European travellers a few paragraphs from the *District Gazetteer of Monghyr* (1926) with necessary changes will be of interest :—

“The fort was for some time occupied by some of the troops of the East India Company, and in 1766 was the scene of an outbreak among the European officers, known as the White Mutiny, which was effectually quelled by Lord Clive. After this, the fortifications were gradually allowed to fall into disrepair, and it is clear from the account given by the artist William Hodges in 1781 that it was no

longer an important position. Hodges visited Monghyr twice in that year—on the second occasion as a guest of Warren Hastings, who was on his way to meet Chait Singh at Benares; but his description of the buildings is, on the whole, so inaccurate that it is not worth quoting.

Towards the close of the 18th century we find that Monghyr was merely a station for half-pay and invalid officers and men, who formed 'a little garrison, sufficient at least for the protection of a depot of military stores, and of a powder magazine established there. The latter was said to cause sometimes no little uneasiness to the veterans, accustomed as they were to gunpowder. For the most vivid lightning often falls about Monghyr, attracted by the iron ore which abounds in the neighbouring hills, and, if it fell upon the magazine, the whole fort would certainly be destroyed by the explosion'.* The place, however, was noted for its salubrious climate, and Warren Hastings speaks in one of his letters of the delightful change of atmosphere from that of Bengal.

Later visitors also wrote in high terms of Monghyr and of its manufactures, but one and all appear to have been much annoyed by the crowds of beggars that infested the place. Bishop Heber, who visited Monghyr in 1823, writes :—"Monghyr, as one approaches it, presents an imposing appearance, having one or two extremely good European houses, each perched on its own little eminence. . . . The fort occupies a great deal of ground, but is now dismantled. Its gates, battlements, etc., are all of Asiatic architecture, and precisely similar to those of the Khitaigorod of Moscow. Within is an ample plain of fine turf, dotted with a few trees, and two noble tanks of water, the largest covering, I conceive, a couple of acres. Two high grassy knolls are enclosed within the rampart, occupying two opposite angles of the fort, which is an irregular square, with, I think, 12 semi-circular bastions, and a very wide and deep wet-moat, except on the west side, where it rises immediately from the rocky banks of the river. On one of the eminences of which I speak is a collection of prison-like buildings; on the other a very large and handsome house built originally for the Commander-in-Chief of the district at the time that Monghyr was an important station, and the Marathas were in the neighbourhood; but it was sold some years since by Government. The view from the rampart and the eminences is extremely fine, Monghyr stands on a rocky promontory, with the broad river on both sides, forming two bays, beyond one of which the Rajmahal Hills are visible, and the other is bounded by the nearer range of Kharagpur." Elsewhere the Bishop with his inveterate love of comparing Indian with European places, describes these hills as being "not inferior to the Halkin mountains and the range above Flint and Holywell".†

* Twining, *Travels in India a hundred years ago*, 1893.

† R. Heber, *Narrative of a journey through the Upper Provinces of India*, 1872.

A quaint account is also given in *Up the Country* by Miss Emily Eden, who came to Monghyr in November, 1837. She was met by all the English residents, six in number, "and that is what they call a large station". She was much struck by the inlaid tables and boxes; "and there was the prettiest doll's furniture possible, tables and cane-chairs, and sofas and footstools, of such curious workmanship". Like other visitors, she drove off to Sitakund. "The drive there was a real refreshment. It is the first time for two years I have felt the carriage going up hill at all; and this was not a simple slope, but a good regular hill. Then we came to some genuine rock-great, bleak, grey stones, with weeds growing between them, and purple hills in the distance. I felt better directly."

Fanny Parkes visited the place in 1836 and 1844, when she wrote:—"The moment we anchored we were assailed with hundreds of beggars; their clamour and cries were most annoying; they were a complete pest; driving them away was useless. The people selling pistols, necklaces, bathing chairs, baskets, toys, shoes, etc., raised such a hubbub, it was disgusting." She wrote, however, in great admiration of the view from the river: "The fort is a good object, but on turning to the corner how much was I charmed to see the most picturesque cluster of *bairagi* temples imaginable. The *maths* are surrounded by fine trees; the ruined bastion of the old fort juts out into the river, and has fragments of rock at its base. The high spires of the white temples seen among the trees, the slender bamboos with their bright red or white flags, and a sort of Hindu altar in front, are beautifully grouped. The Directory tells you of the articles in the *bazar* but omits these gems of oriental beauty, which are invaluable to a lover of the picturesque. Beyond this stretch the walls of the old fort, which are of very great extent, and the view of Monghyr is good from this part of the Ganges. Among the articles manufactured here, the black vases for flowers, turned in white wood, and lacquered whilst on the lathe with sealing wax, are pretty. The necklaces and bracelets in imitation of jet, at two or three rupees the set, are beautifully made; necklaces of St. Agnes' beads, monkeys, chameleons and male bamboos—everything is forthcoming in the *bazar*, with the exception of ducks. The steamer's passage is from ten to fourteen days to this place—398 miles by the Bhagirathi, 686 by the Sundarbans, and 304 by *dak*; the latter runs in two days and three-quarters."

A later traveller, Sir Joseph Hooker, describes Monghyr as "by far the prettiest town I had seen on the river, backed by a long range of wooded hills, detached outliers of which rise in the very town. The banks are steep, and they appear more so owing to the fortifications, which are extensive. A number of large, white, two-storied houses, some very imposing, and perched on rounded or conical hills, give a European aspect to the place. Monghyr is celebrated for its iron manufactures, especially of muskets, in which respect it

is the Birmingham of Bengal. Generally speaking, these weapons are poor, though stamped with the first English names. A native workman will, however, if time and sufficient reward be given, turn out a first rate fowling-piece. The inhabitants are reported to be sad drunkards, and the abundance of toddy-palms was quite remarkable."

"Monghyr did not become an administrative centre till 1812, though the old fort was occupied long before that date by a regiment of the East India Company. At present, it is a purely civil station, and, in some respects, one of the most picturesque in Bengal. It consists of two distinct portions, viz., the fort, within which the public offices and the residences of most of the Europeans and the town outside it stretching away to the east and south. The fort is formed by a great rampart of earth, faced with stone, which encloses a rocky eminence projecting some distance into the Ganges. On the west, the river comes up to the walls and forms a defence on that side; landwards, a deep and wide moat surrounds and protects it. The fort, being built on a foundation of quartzite rock, effectually keeps off any encroachment by the Ganges, but the river oscillates like the pendulum of a clock, taking, it is said, about 80 years between each oscillation. Thus, we find that in 1875 it arrived at its southern limit close to the temple of Chandisthan, and the priests then pointed out the marks made 80 years before by tying ropes on a palm tree imbedded in a *pipal* tree. Old maps show the width of the Ganges as only a mile and a half, but a few years before 1908 it cut away a large expanse of sand near the East Indian Railway* station, and the now crossing from the station to the embankment of the Bengal and North-Western Railway branch line† to Monghyr Ghat is fully three miles. In September, 1908, the Ganges encroached still further, cutting away the river bank near the railway station and forming a deep pot-hole below it. Huts on or near the bank were carried away, and trains had to stop at a level-crossing about a quarter of a mile from the station."

"To one entering the fort from the railway station by the main gate, known as the Lal Darwaza or Red Gate, Monghyr presents a picturesque appearance. The main road runs southwards between two large tanks, behind each of which there is a low hillock. On one of these is the Karnachaura house built by General Goddard, which was originally the residence of the general in command. Subsequently it was acquired by the Maharaja of Vizianagram, and now it is the property of Kumar Kamalaranjan Rai of Cossimbazar.‡

* Now Eastern Railway.

† Now North-Eastern Railway.

‡ The building had some very fine antique furniture and paintings. The oldest sketch of the building in the Proprietors's possession is one dated 1804. "Country Life" in November, 1959 published a sketch of the building by Henry Salt in 1803.

On the other was a fine building, known as the *Damdama Kothi*, which has been demolished. Beyond the latter is the palace of Shah Shuja, which has been converted into a jail, and between them lie the Government gardens. The Karnachaura site is a natural rocky eminence in the north-east corner of the fort. The other hillock is an artificial rectangular mound, which was the citadel or acropolis of the fort. Most of the public buildings are also inside the fort, the most important being the civil, revenue and criminal courts, which consist of three parallel rows of buildings.* They were built more for utility than for beauty and mar the effect of the picturesque surroundings. The district board office appears to have been built on the same principle, and the municipal office building is no better. To the west of the courts a trim little ivy-clad church is seen, and to the east of them the English church of the Baptist Mission, built in 1898 to replace a more costly structure erected on the same site in 1863, which was destroyed by the earthquake of 1897. At the eastern gate of the fort was a red brick clock-tower over a horse-shoe arch presented to the town by the late Mr. Herschell Dear." This clock-tower fell down during the earthquake of 1934 and has not been raised again.

"Near the north gate of the fort is an old cemetery which is full of the obelisk tombs, erected at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century, which Bishop Heber noticed as 'almost distinctive of European India'. The earliest of these monuments consists of a massive black stone pillar, probably once part of a temple, which was erected to the memory of a youth named Stewart, who died at Monghyr in 1769, aged 19 years. The next grave is that of John McCabe, Deputy Commissary-General at Monghyr, who died here in 1789. Perhaps, however, the most interesting monument is that of Captain John Williams, presumably the author of *The Rise and Progress of the Bengal Native Infantry*. He is described as having commanded the invalid battalion of the garrison for many years, and as having died, on board the Hon'ble East India Company's ship *Northumberland* near the Western Islands, on 20th June 1809, aged 68." A visit to the cemeteries recalls the old days in Monghyr when there was a sizeable European Christian population in the district.

The oldest building inside the fort is a Muhammadan shrine built on an elevated piece of ground near the southern gate. It is supposed to contain the grave of a *pir* or saint, whose name is unknown. He is said to have come from Persia to Ajmer and to have directed his steps thence to Monghyr, under instructions from Khwaja Moin-ud-din Chishti, an early Muhammadan missionary in India. The saint lived here for many years and died about the year

* Another massive two-storied building has been built (1959) after the above was written to accommodate the administrative offices of the District Magistrate. There have also been other additions to some other Government offices. (P. C. R. C.)

596 A. H., corresponding to 1177 A. D. He was buried in an obscure place near the ramparts, and with the lapse of years his burial place was forgotten. Ultimately, in 1497 A. D., when the ramparts of the fort were being repaired by the Governor, Prince Danyal caused a mosque to be built over it, and ever since that day it has been known as the *darga* of Shah Nafa, *nafa* being a Persian word meaning a pod of musk. Over the gateway there is an inscription set up by Prince Danyal, and round the shrine are many old tombs in a dilapidated state." The poet Ashraf's grave has been referred to.

"Coming to historic times, we know that when the British first occupied Monghyr, they found the remains of a building on the hill and afterwards erected a saluting battery on it. This seems clearly the hill of which the capture by Captain Smith played such an important part in the White Mutiny of 1766, as related in Chapter II. Subsequently a house was built on it, which William Hodges, accurately enough in an otherwise inaccurate account, mentions as having been built by General Goddard and as being the residence of the Commanding Officer. General Goddard, it may be mentioned, took part in his young days in the White Mutiny at Monghyr. At the close of the 18th century General Briscoe lived in this house, which is referred to as follows by Mr. Twining in *Travels in India a hundred years ago* :—"General Briscoe was the oldest General in the Company's service. He had a noble mansion, situated upon the summit of a small hill within the fort, near the lower angle. It commanded a beautiful view of the river and of the country opposite, and also of the small bay in which our fleet was moored. All boats proceeding up the river were here obliged to cross to the other side, opposite the fort, in order to avoid a bastion which advanced into the river, and opposing the current—here very strong—threw it off with a violence that made it impossible for any boat to pass on this side."*

The *Damdama Kothi* already referred to was another old building, which was demolished in order to make room for the residence of the Collector. Hardly any impression could be made on the solid brick walls by ordinary methods, and they had to be blown up by gunpowder, bit by bit. When the debris was removed, numerous holes were discovered showing the former existence of underground rooms. Inside a well in the compound, just above the water-level, two arched passages were found, one leading towards the house, and the other, in the opposite direction, towards the ground now occupied by the jail. The latter occupies one of the finest sites in the town, and consists of a number of detached buildings with a high wall on three sides and the river on the fourth.

* Another old house still existing is the wood-brooke house, now a hospital of P. T. Factory. Mrs. Hooby, commonly known as Mother Hooby, a widow rana boarding house here referred to by E. B. Eastwick in his *Handbook of Bengal Presidency* (1882). This house is first outside the southern gate of the fort.

One of the buildings, now included in the jail and used as a sleeping ward, was the magazine in Muhammadan times, and the building with its massive walls is still intact. The hospital is said to have been the palace *zanana*, and the godowns include a building believed to have been a small mosque. "In the floor of this mosque", writes Colonel Crawford, "underneath the centre dome, is a dry well or pit, some ten or twelve feet deep. From this well four subterranean passages lead off in different directions. These passages had all been bricked up, a few yards from their entrances, many years before I went to Monghyr. There was a tradition that some prisoners had made their escape from the jail (it is not likely that they ever got out at the other end) along one of these passages, years before. I believe that one of these passages went down to the river bank, which is just outside; a second to a large well in the garden; a third to the subterranean rooms at the Point. Where the fourth may go, I am not prepared to hazard any suggestion; tradition says to Pirpahar, but three miles is rather a tall order for a practicable underground passage."*

At the north-western corner of the fort is an ancient bathing *ghat* known as the Kashtaharini Ghat. This name means "the bathing place which expels pain", the tradition being that all people afflicted by grief or bodily pain were at once cured by bathing here. There is a cluster of six temples here which attract crowds of pilgrims during the Rakhi Purnamashi festival. Three of the temples were built about 100 years ago; viz., the shrine of Gangaji, erected by Lalji Sahu, father of Babu Ganga Prasad, a resident of the town, and the shrines of Siva and Rama-Janaki both erected by Kanhai Sahu Halwai, also of Monghyr. The temple of Jagannath was built about ten years later by one Baijnath of Bari Bazar, the temple of Radha-Krishna by Babus Bulaki Lal and Ganga Prasad about 50 years ago, and the temple of Lakshmi-Narain about 40 years ago by Shri Kamaleshwari Prasad Singh, a public-spirited zamindar of Monghyr. On the wall of the gateway here is an inscription of about the 10th century A. D. which mentions a king Bhagirath and refers to the building of a temple of Siva. There is also an old idol with a mutilated nose lying neglected outside one of the temples, apparently of Buddhist type, but having four arms. The view of the *ghat* from the river is charming, particularly on a festival day, when it is crowded with pilgrims in their holiday dresses, or at night, when it is illuminated. Near this *ghat* is a park now known as Sri Krishna *Batika* after the name of Dr. Sri Krishna Sinha, the present Chief Minister of Bihar who comes from Monghyr district and spent his early years as a lawyer in the town of Monghyr.

There is another bathing *ghat* which was built fifty years ago by Shri Ram Prasad Das, father of Sri Kamaleshwari Prasad Singh. This is generally called the Babua Ghat or the Welcome Ghat and

* Col. Crawford's, Some Notes on Monghyr, Bengal: Past and Present, July, 1908.

it was used as a landing place by Viceroys and Governors when coming to Monghyr by river. Both names have a quaint origin. The Indian name is due to the fact that Sri Kamaleshwari Prasad Singh was known popularly as Babuaji, that being a pet name given to the eldest sons of Indian gentlemen. The name Welcome Ghat is due to the fact that, on both sides of the *ghat*, the word "Welcome" used to be inscribed in large letters.

It remains to note the improvements effected in the fort in more modern times. In a letter, dated 1859, addressed to the Collector of Monghyr, the Magistrate, Mr. Birch, speaks of the "unhealthy state of the south and south-west portion of the fort, which is densely crowded with native huts and *kutchas* houses surrounded by low jungle and in the most filthy state". The conservancy carts cannot remedy the evil, as there are no roads to penetrate the labyrinth of huts". The Commissioner submitted in 1867 proposals for the improvement of the fort, reporting that Mr. Dear "a liberal and public-spirited gentleman, resident of Monghyr, who is much attached to the place, and who has at his own expense carried out the measures of improvement", and an Indian gentleman, Shah Wajid Ali, were "willing to buy out the occupants of the huts over 18 *bighas* 14 *kathas* and 17½ *dhurs* of land, and to build thereon European houses, if a fifty years' lease of the land be granted to them". This proposal was accepted, and the scheme successfully carried out. Mr. Dear built a number of good bungalows, many of which still exist and house Government offices. Dear also presented to the town a clock-tower over the eastern gate of the fort. The fort became the most fashionable residential quarter, but the number of houses inside is limited. At present there are more than 100 residential houses and a large number of Government buildings and institutions. Mention should also be made of a park near the Circuit House which has some rare plants and trees.

In concluding this account of the fort, reference may be made to its picturesque position and historical associations. These have been well described by Mr. H. Beveridge:—"Few things are more more beautiful or impressive than to sit on a moonlight night on one of the bastions and listen to the Ganges lapping against the foot of the rampart. The great river still flows quietly on, careless whether she be crowded with shipping or is, as she has now become, an almost deserted highway. But how many stirring events have taken place at this promontory since the day when Sita landed at the Kashtaharini Ghat close by, and went to meet her doom at Sitakund. Hindus, Buddhists, Muhammadans and Christians have successively come here, and erected their places of worship, and now all have more or less passed away. It was here that Todar Mal contended with the rebels against Akbar. It was here that Ellis and his companions were brought after the disaster at Manjhi, and before they were taken back to Patna to be massacred. It was from a bastion

of the fort, it is said, that the Seth and his faithful servant were flung into the river. It was from the Patna gate that Mir Kasim's wife and huge train of followers set out for Rohtas, when the news came of the defeat at Gheriah."*

Little is known about the history of the portion of the town outside the fort. The earliest mention of value in the Collectorate records appears to be in a letter from the Commissioner of the Bhagalpur or 12th Division to the Secretary to the Sadr Board of Revenue at Fort William, dated the 29th May, 1850. He writes: "It appears from the records that the native town and *bazar* of Monghyr have for a long period (ever since our first occupation of the country) been considered Government property, denominated the Military or Campoo Bazar. This, though constituting one *mahal*, was divided into 12 *tarafs*, viz., (1) Bara Bazar, (2) Deorhee Bazar, (3) Goddard Bazar, (4) Wellesly Bazar, (5) Moghal Bazar, (6) Gorhee Tola, (7) Batemanganj, (8) Topkhana Bazar, (9) Fanok Bazar *urf* Dalhatta Bazar, (10) Belan Bazar, (11) Rasoolganj, (12) Begumpur Mandaye". It would appear from the above that the Military Bazar Government estate represents the lands attached to and more immediately adjoining the fort. There have been considerable additions, and the Government estate at the present time extends over a little more than two-thirds of a square mile, or less than an eighth of the entire municipal area (7.6 square miles). There are quite a few fine houses in this area besides a large tobacco factory erected by the Peninsular Tobacco Company at Basdeopur, the Zila School, and the hospital, which is built on an eminence facing the fort on the eastern side. There is a small Marwari *dharamshala* close to the Purabsarai Railway Station, and a more commodious one near the Monghyr Railway Station was recently built by Babu Baijnath Goenka, a Marwari resident of the town.

The quarter known as Dilawarpur contains the residence of a leading Muhammadan family known as the Shah family. It traces back its descent to Hazrat Maulana Shah Mustapha Sufi, a man of great learning, who was a native of Seistan in Persia. The fame of his learning reached the ears of Akbar, who invited him to his court in Delhi, where he became one of the Emperor's most trusted counsellors. When Akbar marched south to crush the rebellion of the Afghans in Bihar and Bengal, he was accompanied by Shah Mustapha Sufi, who distinguished himself in the field and made it clear that he possessed supernatural powers. Hearing of the holy life led by a saint of Monghyr, called Hazrat Shah Allahdad Arafin, and of the miracles he wrought, he gave up the idea of a worldly

* *Notes of a Holiday Trip to Malda and Bihar*, Calcutta Review, 1891. The writer explains that the legend of the Seths being killed at Monghyr is probably incorrect (cf. Chapter II), but that the unfortunate Ram Narayan, Governor of Patna, was certainly drowned here.

On the fort as it existed in 1670, see *An old description of the fort* by Mr. C. E. A. W. Oldham, Bengal: Past and Present, Vol. XXVII, Part II.

career and came to Monghyr to meet the saint. As soon as Shah Mustapha Sufi looked upon the saint, he became insensible, and, when he revived, found himself in possession of divine secrets. He became the disciple of the Hazrat, who made him Sajjada-nashin, and on his death in 1050 A. H. (1650 A. D.) he was buried in Dilawarpur, where his tomb may still be seen. He was succeeded by his son Shah Sharaf-ud-din, to whom Aurangzeb, hearing of his holy life, gave various presents and grants of land. His descendants still reside at Dilawarpur.

Three miles east of the town is a hill called Pirpahar, from the top of which a fine view of the surrounding country is obtained. The hill is called after an old Muhammadan saint or *pir*, whose name is no longer remembered, though devotees occasionally come to worship at his grave. There are two old tombs side by side at the foot of the hill, on one of which there is an inscription to the memory of one Mary Anne Beckett, who died in 1832, while the other has a damaged inscription showing, till a few years ago, that it is in memory of a person named D'Oyly; the portion containing the name has now disappeared. The former is somewhat unconventional in form and character, consisting of a mausoleum surrounded by four walls open to the sky, and has a memorial tablet inserted in the northern wall, with the uncommon and not unaffecting inscription "Be still, she sleeps". It is not known who Mary Anne Beckett was, but several legends are current about the manner in which she met her death. One is to the effect that she was a young girl who was killed when riding down the hill; another is that she threw herself down the hill owing to some love trouble; while another account says that she was the Kashmirian wife of a Colonel Beckett. Nothing is known about the person to whom the other tomb was erected, but Sir Warren Hastings D'Oyly, formerly Collector of Monghyr, to whom a reference was made, states that it is possible that he or she was a relative of a D'Oyly, who was formerly an indigo planter in the district. The inscription which is now obliterated shows that he or she died in 183—, i.e., between 1830 and 1840.

On the top of the hill there is an old house which may be identified with the residence which, according to the *Sair-ul-Mutakharin*, was erected for himself by Ghurghin Khan, the Armenian general of the Nawab Kasim Ali Khan. This is referred to in the *Sair-ul-Mutakharin* as the house on the hill of Sitakund, though the sacred springs of Sitakund are two miles away and we learn that when Vansittart, the Governor of the East India Company, visited Monghyr in 1762, it was assigned to him for his residence. Thirty years later it appears to have been known as Belvedere and a pleasing description of it is given by Mr. Twining in "*Travels in India a Hundred Years Ago*". "Today", he writes, "the Commander-in-Chief and his party dined with General Ellerker at an elegant

mansion situated upon the summit of a hill near the river, about two miles from the fort. The name Belvedere given to this charming villa, was justly deserved by the extraordinary beauty of its situation. The Ganges, escaping from the gorge on which Monghyr stands, assumes the expanse of a lake, bearing on its northern extremity the picturesque battlements of the fort, and bounded to the west by an amphitheatre of verdant hills. The current being thrown on the opposite side by the bastion above mentioned, and by the southern angle of the fortress, all boats ascending the stream keep near the western shore, passing almost under General Ellerker's windows; while the great cotton and other boats, coming suddenly into view from behind the fort, and borne rapidly across the middle of the bay, impart incessant animation to this fine river scene". Former Collectors of Monghyr resided in this house, which commands one of the finest views one can obtain along the Ganga. Both house and hill are now the property of the sons of the late Babu Upendra Nath Mandal of Chandernagore. Close by, on the summit of another small hill, is a house belonging to Babu Ram Lal Mukerji, a public-spirited Bengali gentleman, who placed a large sum at the disposal of Government for the relief of the distressed in times of famine and flood.

About a mile from the railway station is a shrine known as Chandisthan, regarding which Buchanan quotes a legend closely resembling that already given above regarding Karnachaura. Another place of interest is a rock in the bed of the river, about half a mile off from the fort, containing a carving on stone representing two feet, which are supposed to be the impression of the feet of Krishna, when he touched the rock in crossing the Ganga. The rock is submerged when the river is in flood, but comes out in winter. It is called Manpathar, and is one of a group of temple-crowned rocks cropping out from the river bed, which are known as the Beacon Rocks.

Three miles south of Monghyr is a stream called the Dakra Nala, where there may still be seen the massive ruins of a bridge which was blown up during his retreat by Mir Kasim Ali in 1763 in order to retard the pursuit of the British army.* Lines of earthworks, probably thrown up or added to by Shah Shuja, extend from the bank of the Ganga to the hills near Dakra Nala and may still be traced to the south of the town. Sitakund recently renovated by Sri Sri Prakasa, now Governor of Bombay and the State Government has been referred to elsewhere.

Coming to the town its population according to 1951 census was 74,348 against 59,698 in 1872. The rise and fall of the population of Monghyr town has been discussed in a separate chapter.

There is no doubt that the ensuing 1961 census will record a larger population. With accent on the development projects by the

* A. Broome, *History of the Rise and Progress of the Bengal Army* (1850), p. 390.

Welfare State of Bihar there had been a large increase in the number of Government offices in the town. The Tobacco Factory in Monghyr and the Railway Workshop at Jamalpur continue to ensure a sizeable population that is engaged in these industries. The ravages of the epidemic of plague have been not known for a few decades now. The town has an important trade centre, being favourably situated for trade, both by rail and river. It contains a number of Indian bankers (*Mahajans*). The State Bank of India and other banks have got full-fledged branches at Monghyr. Formerly the trade was carried almost exclusively by river but the greater part has been diverted to the railway. It is connected by a short branch of the Eastern Railway loopline and by steamer ferry with the North Eastern Railway in the north of the Ganga. The details regarding the trade and commerce, communication, educational institutions and other factors in the town have been given in separate chapters.

The Municipality is run by elected executives with a Chairman and Vice-Chairman at the head. The details about the Municipality will also be found elsewhere. It may be mentioned here that the bulk of the population are not rate-payers and the funds of the Municipality as they are at present cannot cope with the required amenities for the town of Monghyr. This is partially responsible for an oblique growth of the town. People had built houses in a haphazard manner mostly within the limits of the Municipality and some outside. There are no specified slump areas and the palatial houses at one place may have a few slum dwellings within hundred yards. The previous beautiful townscape of Monghyr is on the decline.

The civic life of Monghyr town is not the civil life exactly throughout Bihar. There was a great change because of the earthquake popularly known as the Bihar Earthquake of 1934. The province was shaken by an earthquake with its intensity and extent as severe as any recorded in history. The shake was felt over an area of some 8,50,000 square miles in India; throughout Nepal and even as far north as Lhasa and Tibet. Within the province the badly affected area comprised practically the whole of Bihar, north of the Ganga and a strip of varying depth running from Arrah to Monghyr on the south. The whole of this area was not affected with equal severity, and infrequently zones of great distress occurred side by side with zones where the shake was of comparatively low intensity. There were two zones of very severe intensity. The one an irregular ellipse some 6,000 square miles in extent stretching east-south-east from end of Motihari to Purnea and from the Nepal border to the south of Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga, the other zone between Patna and Monghyr along with the stream of Ganga.

The official report of the Relief Commissioner was summarised in J. S. Wilcock's report on Bihar in 1933-34. Very serious

damage occurred to a few towns in Bihar and Monghyr was one of the worst. The main shake occurred on the 15th January at 2-13 P.M. and lasted for a period varying from $2\frac{1}{2}$ minutes in some places to 5 minutes in others. In Monghyr the shake was supposed to be for about 3 minutes. Within these few minutes a havoc had been created and the total number of deaths in Monghyr was reported to be 1,260. The death roll was worse in narrow and congested *bazar* portions. The main *bazar* was reduced to a jumbled ruins of masonry in which side-road and lanes were completely obliterated. Over 40 bodies were recovered from a portion of the main road only ten yards in length. The great majority of Government buildings were damaged. The clock tower on one of the gates of the fort crashed down. Many of the official residences tumbled down or were badly damaged. Very serious damage was done to the Workshop and buildings of the Railway at Jamalpur which is only 5 miles from Monghyr.

The damage to Monghyr was so intense that a telegraphic message, "Monghyr city is no more" was flashed to Calcutta on January 18 by *Statesman* representative who made a tour of the earthquake zone. In the Appeal by the Governor of Bihar and Orissa (Sir James Sifton) for support for the Viceroy's Earthquake Relief Fund it was mentioned :—" In the towns of North Bihar, there is probably not one masonry house which is altogether undamaged, while thousands of houses are completely destroyed with not a wall standing. In one congested *bazar* of Monghyr, the ruin was so complete that for days it was not possible to see where the lines of the street had been amid the acres of destroyed houses. Some thousands of lives have been lost and those thousands might well have been tens of thousands if the shock had been at night instead of mid-day. The urban population affected is not less than half a million souls, some of the towns having a population of from fifty to sixty thousands, while altogether there were twelve towns with between ten thousand and sixty thousand inhabitants which have been wrecked. The people of these towns are for the most part camping in open spaces close to the towns in grass and bamboo sheds or other make-shift shelters, and must continue so to exist for months to come, till money and material are made available for them to rebuild their homes. The towns people who are in the greatest distress are mostly small shopkeepers and people of the professional classes. The richer men have some reserves to fall back upon. Artisans and labourers will have work in plenty at remunerative rates. But a large majority of the middle class people who have escaped with little but their lives, must have substantial help to rebuild their homes and start life again."*

* "*Statesman*" has kindly allowed the Editor to draw liberally from their book and also gave permission to use some of their photos published in the *Earthquake Records*, a valuable and rarely available book. (P. C. R. C.)

In the speech of Sri Nirsu Narayan Sinha, Finance Member of the Government of Bihar and Orissa in the local Legislative Council, it was mentioned :—"The first thing that the District Officer saw at Monghyr after the earthquake occurred was that the Civil Surgeon's house and the jail wall had collapsed. He found that the Civil Surgeon with his wife and children had escaped and then went to find the Superintendent of Police who was injured and was being taken to hospital. At the hospital the injury cases were already coming in. Then the District Magistrate went to the Sergeant-Major, saw that the armed police were mobilized and put an extra guard on the treasury. He found the main bazar in ruins and the people paralysed by the shock. He then visited the jail where he found that the jailor had had the presence of mind to secure 280 prisoners in a shed. Arrangements were made to put an armed guard on them. The available police and officers then went to help in rescue work in the town. The assistance of the staff of the Tobacco Factory was invaluable; the officers at the time were under orders of transfer, but the Company kindly agreed to postpone the date of their transfer at considerable inconvenience to themselves in order to facilitate the work of clearance.

The first task was to make a way into the main *bazar* which was badly blocked. The side roads and lanes were completely obliterated and indistinguishable in the jumbled heap of ruins. From a portion of the main road about twelve yards in length over 40 bodies were recovered. Gangs of coolies were working wherever there was a prospect of recovering living persons.

On January, the 20th, a special train sent by Messrs. Tatas as a splendid act of charity arrived with 120 tons of iron sheets, 5 trucks of rice, and mechanics and tools, and at once started putting up temporarily buildings for the hospital and other housing work. Four relief centres were organised for distribution of food, blankets, etc., with medical aid attached to each. Dr. Mukherji with the assistance of Mr. Bhide, the Town Engineer, sent by Messrs. Tatas started a sanitation centre. By January 24, the Red Cross Hospital unit from Calcutta had started work."

In his article on the Reconstruction of Bihar in the Statesman Earthquake Records, Dr. Rajendra Prasad had mentioned :—"It is difficult to estimate the cost of rebuilding the towns. For example, I may indicate its extent by referring to Monghyr. The population of Monghyr was 52,000 and assuming that no more than, say, 40 per cent of the population will have to be given some sort of help in rebuilding their houses, either by way of loan or gift, we shall have to assist in providing housing accommodation to something like 20,000 persons, because a large number are not in a position to rebuild their damaged or destroyed houses. Calculating five persons to a family and one house to each family, we shall have to provide

some 4,000 houses and if one house costs something like, say, Rs. 300 which is by no means an extravagant sum—no less than Rs. 12 lakhs will be needed to meet the expenses under this head. I do not include the public buildings which will have to be built by the Government, nor do I include in this estimate the cost of land which I am assuming may be available without payment of premium. I have also left out of account in the estimate the well-to-do people who may be expected to rebuild their houses either with their savings or by independent borrowing. There is no item of expenditure included in this for the improvement of the town. It is the barest necessity of giving shelter to the homeless that has been taken into account and even that of a most simple and not very durable type. When we remember that we have big towns like Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga and smaller towns like Madhubani, Samastipore, Jamal-pore, Sitamarhi, Motihari, more or less in the same condition as Monghyr and a city like Patna and the towns of Chapra, Barh, Behar, Arrah, Gaya, Bhagalpur, Purnea, more or less seriously damaged and requiring rebuilding on an extensive scale though not as much as the first mentioned towns, we can form an idea of the magnitude of the cost of rebuilding the towns and the vast sums required for that purpose."

Quick measures were taken and a certain amount of normalcy was restored within a few days. One of the first anxieties of Government was lest there might be outbreak of disorder and looting in the town. One hundred and thirty police from Bhagalpur started for Monghyr on the 15th January some of whom arrived that day and some on the following morning. On the 16th January 128 armed police were ordered to Monghyr from Barhi and the Constable Training School at Nathnagar. A further large force was kept ready to move at a moment's notice. This great precaution did not allow the menace of looting to mature. As mentioned in the Statesman Earthquake Records partly owing to the panic and partly to the arrival of the police there was almost total absence of crime and the extra police were available for giving whatever assistance might be required. On the 17th January a telegram was sent to the Military authorities asking them to despatch a party of Sappers and Miners to Monghyr to supervise the work of clearing the *bazar*. A party was immediately sent from Midnapore by a special train and work of this establishment commenced in Monghyr from the 19th January. The Governor was in contact with the General Officer Commanding, Eastern Command and a Detachment of the territorial wing of the 11th—19th Hyderabad Regiment was despatched to Monghyr to assist in the relevant work and had subsequently relieved the police of certain guard duties. The Military also provided lorries which proved invaluable in clearing the *bazar* at Monghyr. They also sent a large number of tents.

The various humanitarian bodies were already working in complete collaboration with the Government. The Ram Krishna

Mission, the Central Relief Committee with Dr. Rajendra Prasad as the Chairman, the Red Cross Society, parties of volunteers from Calcutta sponsored by the Mayor of Calcutta who had issued an appeal and was able to raise a considerable amount of money and various other organisations were seen working to bring relief to the stricken people of the town. The publicity in the Press, particularly the Calcutta Press, brought large sums of money to the Central Relief Fund.

The following extract from the Government communique issued on February 27, 1934 is of interest :—" His Excellency the Governor visited Monghyr on the 22nd February, 1934. In this town the congested Chawk area had formed a death trap in which many lives were lost owing to the collapse of the high buildings on the persons collected in the narrow lanes. A decision was reached that this portion of the town could not be rebuilt in its original condition. The area will be opened up by the construction of wider roads and the displaced inhabitants accommodated on new sites in the immediate vicinity. The Committee have given half a lakh to assist in financing this measure and have further made a grant of Rs. 10,000 to enable the owners to remove their building materials from the site which has to be cleared. This decision will greatly hasten the work of reconstructing the town of Monghyr."

Regarding the medical relief work the following quotation from the Statesman Earthquake Records is of interest :—" As soon as it was understood in Calcutta that the earthquake had brought disaster on Bihar those in a position to do something set to work at once. Lieutenant-Colonel Stewart and Colonel Craddock put their heads together for St. John Ambulance and the Red Cross; Colonel K. K. Chatterji got trained men ready; Army, Police, and Railway helped with supplies and services; and Colonel Chatterji led to Monghyr a field unit of 33 men, fully equipped, resolute and competent, most of them university students in medicine and arts. He settled the unit in, set the work going, and obliged to return to his professional duties in Calcutta, handed over charge to Major Marshall, I.M.D. who remained until the unit was released from duty by the establishment of more permanent relief arrangements. Here we can say only that the unit had no lack of ghastly and difficult work to do for men, women and children, and that its enthusiasm and competence were equal to all demands. Some of the 33 had to return to their duties as students, others travelling from Calcutta to relieve them; in all, between January 22 when the unit left Calcutta to February 19 when it ended its labours 61 men had done service in it.

To this camp gravitated others, men and women, eager and competent to help. Within the unit, so to say, was developed a small unit of women doctors and nurses to look after the women among the sufferers, under Dr. Alice Headwards and Mrs. C. V. Smith, and

anyone who goes near Monghyr will hear glowing stories of what they did. Inevitably this band from Calcutta, that looked so well supplied and gave out what it could in general as well as medical relief, was looked on by some as treasure trove or milch cow. The blankets it gave away were, some of them, found piled up in toddy shops, the naked, until they became known at sight, were clothed more often than even Bihar's chill winds justified, and one baby boy was presented for clothing by six mothers in turn.

These things must be, even in earthquake time. All we need say is that the patience of these devoted men and women survived this sort of strain on it, and that the work they did honours their generation. The women lived as hard as the men in canvas camp where amenities were none. They included an English nurse from Jamalpur who, herself a sufferer from the earthquake, went over every day to serve those who had suffered more, and an Indian nurse who heard call at Krishnagar, went at once to Monghyr, was put in night charge of the women's ward of the camp hospital, and, writes an English woman who saw her at work, was greatly beloved by her patients."

The earthquake did some good to the town of Monghyr. Better type pucca houses were built by people of higher income group and some of the roads have been broadened and the index of urbanisation has suddenly had an impetus in the last five or six years and in spite of the economic stress more and more buildings are being added. It may, however, be mentioned that the State Government forms the largest builder now. A number of new Government buildings, offices and residences were built. The hospital has been extended, aerodrome has been built, new additions to the civil and criminal courts have been made, new constructions for the colleges have sprung up, the massive Sri Krishna Seva Sadan has been added and so on. In a way a new look has been given to the town. This, however, has been a strain on the local municipality and most of the roads have been neglected and are fast deteriorating. The conservancy arrangement is far from satisfactory. The pipe water-supply is inadequate. Monghyr which was once a health resort has occasional outbreaks of cholera and other diseases. The *ghats* which were once a place for a visit are deteriorating. The once well maintained municipal park within the fort area is losing its previous elegance. There has been an enormous increase in the population of the town and a consequent mounting housing difficulty. This has been responsible for the deterioration of the public health and conservancy. The problem has been receiving attention from the authorities and in spite of the handicaps it is expected that there will be an improvement soon. The comparative better outlook of Jamalpur within five miles of Monghyr is in a pleasing contrast.

In the Chapter under "Education and Culture" some descriptions have been given of the temples, mosques and churches. There

are two Christian cemeteries in Monghyr which are well worth a visit to appreciate the contribution of the Europeans and Indian Christians towards the civic and cultural development of the town. The Christians and particularly the European families in Monghyr town who have almost disappeared never remained as an isolated group. Along with the Hindu and Muslim brethren the Christians also spent their money for building a better Monghyr.

In the *District Gazetteer of Monghyr* by L. S. S. O'Malley (1909) it was mentioned: "The Baptist Mission is said to have been established at Monghyr in 1816, and the translation of the Hindi New Testament at present in use is the work of one of the Monghyr Missionaries." This matter was investigated with a view to establish whether the Hindi translation of the New Testament done by a Monghyr Missionary is the first in the field or not. An unconfirmed report is that the first translation of the New Testament was done at Srirampur near Calcutta by Carey and had to be abandoned. Catalogues of the Hindi, Punjabi, Sindhi and Pushtu Printed Books in the Library of the British Museum, prepared by Blumhardt and published from London in 1893, have an entry for a Hindi translation of the New Testament by the Baptist Missionaries headed by A. Leslie in collaboration with native assistants. This translation was published from Calcutta in 1848. At page 24 of Rev. B. H. Badley's *Indian Missionary Directory and Memorial Volume*; rev. ed. Lucknow, 1881 (available in the National Library), there is a reference to one Baptist Missionary named Andrew Leslie who came to India in 1824, was stationed at Monghyr and died in 1870. Incidentally, it may be stated that another Baptist Missionary bearing the name John Parsons, who was associated with the work of Hindi translation of the New Testament, came to India in 1840, was stationed at Monghyr and died in 1869 (vide Rev. B. H. Badley's *Indian Missionary Directory and Memorial volume*, rev. ed. Lucknow, 1881—pages 13 and 25). The cemetery towards Sitakund has the grave of the Rev. John Parsons and it is mentioned on the grave that he had made the Hindi translation of the New Testament. Rev. John Parsons was born at Loparton, Somerset (England) and died at Monghyr in 1869. This will rather indicate that it was probably Parsons and not A. Leslie who made the first Hindi translation of the New Testament which is in use.

Incidentally this cemetery has the grave of Herschell Dear, born at Dobrzyou (Russian Poland) who spent most of his life in Monghyr. He died in October, 1887 at Mussoorie but his remains were brought and re-buried at Monghyr. References to Dear's large charities have already been mentioned. The cemetery has also the grave of Major General Charles Murray. Born in London in 1827 he had served in Gwalior campaign (1843-44), Punjab campaign (1848-49), battle of Chillainwalla, Kohat expedition (1850), insurrection of 1857 and Bhootan War. Charles Murray was a resident

in Monghyr from 1871 and till his death at Monghyr in 1893 he was devoted to the civil interests of the town. Dear and Murray contributed largely to the development of Monghyr.

An interesting account of early Monghyr had been left by Edward Lockwood, a former District Magistrate of Monghyr in his *Natural History Sport and Travel* (1878), a copy of which with brittle pages is available in National Library, Calcutta. Lockwood has given a pen picture of the people, famine of 1873-74, food products, plants, birds, insects, landscape, roads, etc. He had compared Monghyr with Birmingham.

Monghyr with her tradition and culture of centuries has a future particularly when the Barauni area will be developed industrially.*

* For further account of Monghyr District and Monghyr town please see:—

- (i) F. Buchanan's Account of Bhagalpur, 1810-11 (Bihar Research Society, Patna).
- (ii) Hunter's Statistical Account of Monghyr, 1877.
- (iii) The Mahua Tree in Monghyr, Statistical Reporter, December, 1875.
- (iv) The Natural Productions of the Monghyr District. North of the Ganges, Statistical Reporter, March, 1876.
- (v) The Forest and Flora of Monghyr, Statistical Reporter, March, 1887.
- (vi) An old Description of the Monghyr Fort by C. E. A. W. Oldham in Bengal. Past and Present, Vol. XXVII.
- (vii) S. C. Grier's—The letters of W. Hastings to his wife, 1905.
- (viii) Final Report of Last Survey and Settlement Operations, Monghyr.
- (ix) A Monograph on the Iron and Steel Work in the Province of Bengal (1907) by E. R. Watson.
- (x) A Monograph on Gold and Silver Work in the Bengal Presidency (1905) by D. N. Mookerji.
- (xi) Monograph on Wood Carving in Bengal (1903) by C. O. Ghilardi.
- (xii) The Good Old Days of Hon'ble John Company (Reprint, 1906), Vol. I and II.
- (xiii) The Kurrukpur Hills by J. A. S. B., Vol. XXI.
- (xiv) Up the Country, by Emily Eden.
- (xv) Bengal Past and Present, Vol. II, October, 1908, pp. 524—525.
- (xvi) Bengal Past and Present, Vol. XXVII, Part II.
- (xvii) Minden Wilson—History of Bihar, 1905.
- (xviii) Sri Krishna Abhinandan Granth (Sri Krishna Seva Sadan, Monghyr).
- (xix) "Armenians in India" by Mesroob Jacob Seth (Calcutta).

Appendices

MONGHYR MUNICIPALITY.

APPENDIX I.

Receipts.

Heads of receipt.			
1957-58.	1958-59.	1959-60.	
<i>Receipts.</i>			
<i>Municipal rates and taxes</i>			
Rs. 4,49,932	Rs. 4,16,320	Rs. 3,59,613	..
.. 15,657	17,431	16,867	Realisation under Special Act ..
16,444	47,426	46,344	Revenue derived from municipal property and powers apart from taxation.
7,89,269	5,64,130	15,86,986	Grants and contribution for general and special purposes.
72,405	90,257	58,152	 Miscellaneous
60,201	3,66,709	6,22,254	 Extraordinary
14,03,928	15,02,273	26,89,206	Total
<i>Expenditure.</i>			
<i>Heads of expenditure.</i>			
1957-58.	1958-59.	1959-60.	
<i>General Administration and collection charges.</i>			
Rs. 36,393	Rs. 38,499	Rs. 47,611	..
13,985	23,681	17,582	Public safety
9,73,342	10,30,322	11,03,786	Public health and convenience..
1,29,123	1,77,931	2,06,552	Public instruction
..	..	..	Contribution for general purposes
43,161	57,298	17,310	 Miscellaneous
1,68,153	1,44,755	1,76,844	 Extraordinary and debts
13,64,757	14,42,486	5,69,685	Total

[See text on Local Self-Government at page 335.]

APPENDIX II*

DISTRICT BOARD, MONCHYR.

Year.	Total Revenue.	Total expenditure.	Total expenditure on education.	Total expenditure on medical health.	Remarks.
1	2	3	4	5	6
1937-38	Rs. 19,24,338	Rs. 15,15,733	Rs. 2,847	Rs. 2,14,475	
1938-39	Rs. 17,05,822	Rs. 13,08,687	Rs. 5,472	Rs. 2,14,029	
1939-40	Rs. 18,51,708	Rs. 13,52,815	Rs. 11,201	Rs. 2,09,548	

*Please see text on Local Self-Government at page 314.

APPENDIX III.

*List of Blocks and Anchals with location.**General Administration Chapter.*

Serial no.	Name of the subdivision.	Name of Block-cum-Anchal.	Name of the Anchal.	Location.
1	2	3	4	5
1	Sadar ..	.. Muffasil ..	..	Baghwa Fulwari.
2	Do.	.. Kharagpur ..	..	Kharagpur.
3	Do.	.. Tarapur ..	..	Tarapur.
4	Do.	.. Sangrampur ..	..	Sangrampur.
5	Do.	.. Sheikhpura ..	..	Sheikhpura.
6	Do.	.. Barbigha ..	..	Barbigha.
7	Do.	.. Ariari ..	..	Hussainabad.
8	Do.	.. ..	Jamalpur ..	Piperpanti.
9	Do.	.. ..	Tagged Dharhara	Ditto.
10	Do.	.. ..	Lakhisarai ..	Lakhisarai.
11	Do.	.. ..	Tagged Barhia ..	Ditto.
12	Do.	.. ..	Surjgarha ..	Surjgarha.
1	Jamui	.. Lakshmipur ..	..	Lakshmipur.
2	Do.	.. Sono ..	..	Sono.
3	Do.	.. Chakai ..	..	Chakai.
4	Do.	.. Halsi ..	..	Halsi.
5	Do.	.. ..	Jamui ..	Jamui.
6	Do.	.. ..	Tagged Khaira ..	Do.
7	Do.	.. ..	Jhajha ..	Jhajha.
8	Do.	.. ..	Sikandra ..	Sikandra.
1	Khagaria	.. Parbatta ..	..	Parbatta.
2	Ditto	.. Gogari ..	..	Gogari.
3	Ditto	.. Choutham ..	..	Choutham.
4	Ditto	.. Beldaur ..	..	Beldaur.
5	Ditto	.. Alauli ..	..	Alauli.
6	Ditto	.. ..	Khagaria ..	Khagaria.
7	Ditto	.. ..	S. Bakhtiarpur ..	S. Bakhtiarpur.
8	Ditto	.. ..	Tagged Koparia ..	Ditto.

Serial no.	Name of the subdivision.	Name of Block-cum-Anchal.	Name of the Anchal.	Location.
1	2	3	4	5
1	Begusarai ..	Sahebpur Kamal	..	Sahebpur Kamal.
2	Ditto ..	Balia ..	..	Balia.
3	Ditto ..	Bakhri ..	..	Bakhri.
4	Ditto ..	Cheriabariarpur..	..	Cheriabariarpur.
5	Ditto ..	Khodawanpur ..	..	Khodawanpur.
6	Ditto ..	Bhagwanpur ..	..	Bhagwanpur.
7	Ditto ..	..	Begusarai ..	Begusarai.
8	Ditto ..	..	Chhetror ..	Chhetror.
9	Ditto ..	..	Teghra ..	Teghra.
10	Ditto ..	..	Tagged Baraouni	Ditto.
11	Ditto ..	..	Bachhwara ..	Bachhwara.

All the Anchal centres are likely to be upgraded into Blocks in the course of two or three years.