

CHAPTER II.

HISTORY.

EARLY HISTORY.

The territory now included within the district of Monghyr formed part of the Madhya-desa or "Midland" of the first Aryan settlers. It has been identified with Modagiri, a place mentioned in the Mahabharata, which was the capital of a kingdom in Eastern India near Vanga and Tamralipta.* In the *Digvijaya Parva* of Mahabharata we find the mention of Muda-Giri which seems to be the same as Modagiri.† *Digvijaya Parva* suggests that Monghyr was a monarchical State during early times. A passage in the *Sabha-parva* describes Bhima's conquest in Eastern India and says that after defeating Karna, king of Anga, he fought battle at Modagiri and killed its chief. It was also known as Maudagalyagiri after Maudgalya, a disciple of Buddha, who converted a rich merchant of this place into Buddhism. Buchanan says that it was the hermitage of "Mudgala Muni"‡ and this tradition of Mudgalrisi still persists. Monghyr is called 'Mudgairi' in the Monghyr copperplate of Devapal**.

At the dawn of history, the present site of the town was apparently comprised within the kingdom of Anga, the capital of which was at Champa near Bhagalpur. Anga was the country to the east of Magadha and west of the chieftains who dwelt in the Rajmahal hills (*Parvatavasinat*). A portion of the west of the present district was included within the limits of the kingdom of Magadha. According to Pargiter@, Anga comprises the modern districts of Bhagalpur and Monghyr and also extended northwards up the river

* A. Cunningham—"Ancient Geography of India" (1871), p. 476.

† "Mahabharat". Chapter VI, 29.

‡ Martin—"Eastern India", II, 45.

** I. A. XXI; Tradition ascribes the foundation of the town of Monghyr to Chandragupta, after whom it was called Gupta Garh a name which has been found inscribed on a rock at Kastaharni Ghat at the north-western corner of the present fort. It is asserted that Mudgalrisi lived there. The derivation of the name Monghyr has found the subject of much speculation. General Cunningham says "I have strong suspicion, however, that the original name may have been connected with 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 as the hill is said to have been the residence of the Muni Mudgala!" (Reports, Archæological Survey XV, 15, 16, 18). Col. Waddell says "the place derives its name from this sage (Mudgal)". (Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1890, p. 191-92.) Mr. C. E. A. Oldham, I.C.S., a former Collector, 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 name corrupted to Mungir and modern Munger is a further corruption.

@ J. A. B. 1897, 95.

Kausiki and included the western portion of the district of Purnea. The area lying north of the Ganga was known as Anguttarap*. Kasyapa Vibhandaka had his hermitage on the river Kausiki. His son Rishyasringa was beguiled by the courtesans of Anga into a boat and brought down the river to the capital—Modagiri and Kausiki-Kachcha had rulers who are distinguished from Karna whose realm (Anga) clearly lay between the Magadhans and the Parvatavasins. The Anga dominion at one time included Magadha and the Shanti-parva refers to an Anga king who sacrificed at Mount Vishnupada. In the epic period Modagiri finds mention as a separate State. The success of Anga did not last long and about the middle of the sixth century B. C. Bimbisara of Magadha is said to have killed Brahmadata, the last independent ruler of ancient Anga. Henceforth Anga becomes an integral part of the growing empire of Magadha. The Raja of Anga, in the time of Buddha, was simply a wealthy nobleman, of whom nothing was known except that he granted a pension to Brahman†. Its history is merged in that of the Magadhan Empire. An epigraphic evidence of the Gupta period proves that Monghyr was under the Guptas. To the reign of Buddhagupta (447—495 A. D.) belongs a copper-plate‡ of A. D. 488-9 originally found at Mandapura in the Monghyr district.

HIUEN TSIANG'S ACCOUNT.

The first historical account of the district as now constituted appears in the Travels of Hiuen Tsiang, who visited the portions of it towards the close of the first half of the seventh century A. D. Travelling north-eastward from the Gaya district, the Chinese pilgrim arrived at a large and populous village to the south of the Ganga which contained many Brahmanical temples adorned with fine sculptures, as well as a great *stupa* where Buddha had preached for one night. Both the distance and direction mentioned in his account point to the vicinity of Sheikhpura. Leaving Sheikhpura Hiuen Tsiang travelled for 100 li, nearly 17 miles, to the east through forest and hills to a monastery in the village of Lo-in-ni-lo, before which was a *stupa* erected by Asoka on a spot where Buddha had preached the law for three months. This place has been identified by General Cunningham with Rajaona, two miles to the north-west of Lakhisarai, a township with several Buddhistic antiquities. Thence the pilgrim proceeded to the east through "forests and gorges of wild mountains" (presumably Kharagpur hills) into the country of "I-lan-ha-po-fa-to" (Hiranyaparvata, the golden mountain) of which he left a detailed account. Hiuen Tsiang observed: "The country is regularly cultivated and rich in produce, flowers and fruit being abundant, the climate is agreeable and the manners of the people are simple and

* Rahul Sankritayan—"Buddha Charya".

† Rhys-Davids—"Buddhist India" (1903), pp. 23-24. Also see "The Age of Imperial Unity" p. 20.

‡ "Epigraphia Indica" XXII, 52.

honest. There are 10 Buddhist monasteries with about 4,000 priests, and a few Brahmanical temples occupied by various sectaries." The pilgrim's "I-lan-ha-po-fa-to" country is identified with the modern district of Monghyr. The pilgrim says, "in recent times the king of a neighbouring State had deposed the ruler and given the capital to the Buddhist brethren*. Its proximity of Magadha perhaps, justifies identifying this generous king of the 'border country' with Harsha. The capital, Hiranyaparvata, lay, on the southern bank of the Ganga, and close to it stood mount Hiranya, which "belched forth masses of smoke and vapour that obscured the light of the sun and moon." The position of this hill is determined from its proximity to the Ganga, to be Monghyr; and though no smoke now issues from any peak, the numerous hot springs in the hills within a few miles of the town point to former volcanic action. These hot springs were mentioned by Hiuen Tsiang. On the western frontier was another hill with two peaks, where Buddha once stayed in retreat during the three months of the rainy season, and overcame the demon Vakula; and to the west were some springs, the water of which was "extremely hot". General Cunningham identified this place with the hill of Mahadeva, the hot springs being those of Bhimbandh, but the other authorities locate the site at Uren, three miles west of the Kajra railway station.

The kingdom described by Hiuen Tsiang has been held by recognised authorities to have coincided approximately with the south-eastern portion of the district of Monghyr with its capital at the site of the present town of Monghyr. It was bounded by the Ganga on the north, by forest-clad mountains on the south, probably extending in the latter direction as far as the Champa on the east. Probably the king of Champa had established two monasteries in its capital†.

MONGHYR UNDER THE PALAS.

There is a gap in the history of the district for a few centuries after Hiuen Tsiang's visit. In the ninth century A. D., it passed under the rule of Pala kings, of whose dynasty there is an interesting relic in a copper-plate known as the Monghyr plate, which was discovered among some ruins at Monghyr about 1780, and translated by Sir Charles Wilkins in 1781. The inscription, which is in Sanskrit opens with the name of Gopala who was a pious Buddhist. It mentions his son Dharampala, who according to Dr. Hoernle‡, resided in Monghyr about 830 A. D., and records the conquests of Devapala, the third of the line. It eulogizes all three as powerful monarchs who conquered almost the whole of India. The immediate

* Watters II, p. 178; Beal II, p. 187.

† S. Beal—"Buddhist Records of the Western World" (1884), Vol. II, pp. 184—191; A. Cunningham—"Ancient Geography of India" (1871), pp. 576—78, Reports Archaeological Survey, Vol. XV, pp. 13—19.

‡ Hoernle and Stark—"History of India" (1903), p. 72.

purpose of this inscription seems to have been to record the grant by the king last named to a Brahman of certain land in Srinagara (the modern Patna). The place where it was executed was Mudagiri, i.e., Monghyr, "where is encamped his victorious army, across whose river a bridge of boats is constructed for a road, which is mistaken for a chain of mountains, where immense herds of elephants, like thick black clouds, so darken the face of day, that people think it the season of the rains; whither the princes of the north send so many troops of horse, that the dust of their hoofs spread darkness on all sides; whither so many mighty chiefs of Jambudwipa resort to pay their respects, that the earth sinks beneath the weight of the feet of their attendants".

Monghyr was an important centre during the Pala period of our history. The Monghyr copper-plate of Devapala is an important source of Pala history. We learn from this copper-plate that Dharampala (C. 770-810) proceeded far beyond Kanauj in course of his military campaigns. It refers to a campaign of Dharamapala along the foot of the Himalayas*. Tripartite struggle for the supremacy over Kanauj was a dominant factor in the history of northern India after the dismemberment of Harsha's empire. The main participants in the struggle were the Rashtrakutas, the Gujara-Pratiharas and the Palas. Even after the collapse of the power of Vatsaraj, the Pratiharas had not given up their political ambitions. His son Dabghutt II made strenuous efforts to recover the lost grounds. Having consolidated his position, he decided to try his strength against his mighty adversary Dharampala†. According to Mr. Das Gupta‡, Dharampala was defeated by Rashtrakuta Govinda III shortly before his encounter with Nagbhata. The matter is still controversial. Nagbhata marched against Kanauj where Dharamapala had placed his protege Chakrayudh on the throne. Chakrayudh was defeated** and fled to Dharampala. A battle between Dharampala and Nagbhata was now inevitable. The Jodhpura inscription of the Pratihara Chief Banka@ informs that his father Kakka gained renown by fighting with the Gaudas at Mudagiri (Monghyr). It appears that a pitched battle was fought at Monghyr. It is assumed that Kakka proceeded as far as Monghyr only to help his Suverain in a conflict to decide the fortunes of the Pratiharas in Kanauj.@@

Verse 15 of the Monghyr copper-plate describes the empire of Devapala (C. 810-850) as bounded by the Himalayas in the north and Ramesvara Setubandh in the south. So far as we can judge from available records Devapala does not seem to have exercised

* Indian Culture IV, 266.

† R. C. Mazumdar—"Gujara-Pratihara", pp. 40-44.

‡ J. B. and O. R. S.—XII, 361 ff.

** E. I. XVIII, 108, Verse 9.

@ Ibid Verse 24

@@ "The History of the Gujara-Pratiharas", pp. 46-47. "The Age of Imperial Kanauj", p. 53.

any direct administrative control over any territory outside Bengal and Bihar. The imperial territories outside these two provinces were governed by local rulers who acknowledged the sovereignty of the Palas. This is corroborated by verse 8 of the Monghyr copper-plate. The glory and brilliance of the Pala empire did not long survive the death of the Devapala. He was succeeded by Vighrapala (850-54) or Surpala. He abdicated the throne in favour of Narayan Pala (854-908). The Bhagalpur plate of Narayan Pala was executed at Monghyr. The Pratiharas and Rastrakutas had made their advance in Bihar. The disintegration of the Pala empire set in. Up to the 17th year of his reign, Mudagiri was in his possession as his grant was issued from that place in that year. From this grant we learnt that at least a part of Tirabhukti or Mithila continued to be in the possession of Narayan Pala*. The Pratihara Kakka most probably gained renown during the siege of the famous fort of Mudagiri or Monghyr†. This Bhagalpur grant was issued when the King was staying at Mudagiri and records the grant of the village of Makutika to the temple of Shiva Kalaspotu, which was situated in the Kaksa Visaya of Tirabhukti. In Bhagalpur plate Narayan Pala is spoken of in the highest terms of praise, but his only notable work described in this record is the construction of a bridge of boats across the Ganga near Monghyr. Before his death he had recovered North Bengal and South Bihar from the Pratiharas. ("The Age of Imperial Kanauj", p. 53.)

While we have sufficient information about South Monghyr there was practically no historical knowledge of North Monghyr, i.e., Begusarai subdivision till recently. The two newly discovered Pala inscriptions at Nawlagarh‡ and some rare images of the Pala period at Jaimangalgarh point to the existence of Pala rule in North Monghyr also. The Nawlagarh inscription no. 1 throws a flood of light on Pala history in North Bihar. An inscription indicating the location of Krimila Visaya has recently been discovered in South Monghyr. The Nawlagarh inscription no. 1 also throws light on the Krimila Visaya in the Begusarai subdivision of Monghyr district as it is constituted today. The Nawlagarh inscription no. 2 shows that there was a Buddhist Vihara at Nawlagarh. The Nawlagarh inscriptions belong to the reign of Vighrapala II or Vighrapala III. By the time of Rampala, the empire of the Palas had definitely broken into pieces. Up to the end of Vighrapala III's reign Mithila and consequently North Monghyr was included in the Pala dominions. How long the Palas continued to rule in that region is difficult to

* Indian Antiquary, XV, p. 306, 1.30.

† R. D. Banerjee—"Palas of Bengal", p. 59. Bhagalpur plate commemorates a great meeting of the princess armies subject to the Pala King in his victorious camp at Mudagiri.

‡ Discovered by Prof. R. K. Choudhury of G. D. College, Begusarai. An article on Nawlagarh inscription has been published by Dr. D. C. Sarkar in the "Journal of the Bihar Research Society" (1951).

say. Nanyadeva of the Karnata dynasty began his rule in 1094 A. D. and his dynasty ruled over that area for a long period. ✓

Another power with which Rampala had come into conflict was the Gahadwalas. As the boundary of the Gahadwala kingdom probably touched that of the Palas, hostility between the two was natural. The first reference to the conflict occurs in the Rahan grant (1109 A. D.) which describes Govinda Chandra, son of reigning Gahadwala king Madanpala, as 'terrific in cleaning the frontal gloves of arrays of irresistible mighty large elephants from Ganda'*. This was probably due to the decadent state of the Pala monarchy, whose power had been considerably weakened by the rise of the Senas of Bengal and the Karnats of Mithila. The Gahadwalas took advantage of the death of Rampala and the consequent weakness of the Palas. It is evident from the Lar plates† that Gahadwala Govinda Chandra was in occupation of Monghyr in 1146 A. D. When in residence at Mudagiri after bathing in the Ganga on the occasion of Akshyatritya festival, he granted the village of Patacavada in Pandala Pattala to Thakkura Sudhare. It seems that Madanpala recovered Monghyr about 1157-58 A. D. and in his war with the Gahadwala he received valuable assistance from his kinsman, Chandradeva, Lord of Anga. The Yaynagar image inscription shows that in the fourteenth year of his reign, he ruled over the Monghyr district‡. How and when the Pala rule came to an end cannot be definitely stated.

The Pala kings were earnest Buddhists, and the dynasty appears never to have relinquished its allegiance to Buddhism. Owing to their patronage, Bihar, including Monghyr remained the last refuge of Buddhism in Northern India up to the time of Muhammadan conquest, and numerous Buddhistic remains dating back to the time of Pala kings are still extant in the district. According to tradition, the last Hindu ruler was Indradyumna (Pala), who was reigning at the time of Muhammadan conquest; and forts attributed to him are still pointed out in the district. The Pala inscriptions also contain reference to the worship of Shiva. In the Bhagalpur plate of Narayan Pala, executed at Monghyr, there is record of a gift made by the king to Shivabhattacharak and his worshippers, the Pasupatas. As is evident from this grant, Saivisnu was of the Pashupata sect. A rare image of Shiva-Parvati unearched at Jaimangalgarh is a very important specimen of the Pala period**. Parvati with her right hand placed on the right shoulder of her consort is seated on the Sukhasan pose on the left thigh of Shiva. This image shows that Buddhism, Sakti and Tantra cults held sway in the district.

* "Indian Antiquary", XVIII, 16, 18, line 9.

† E. I. VII, 98-99.

‡ A. S. R. III, 125. Recently a new inscription of Madanpala has been discovered by Dr. D. C. Sarkar and published by him in the "Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal" (1951).

** G. D. College Bulletin no. 22, pp. 18-19.

MUHAMMADAN RULE.

Till the advent of the Muslim rule in India, Monghyr was under the sway of the Hindu rulers. As the eastward expansion of the Muslim power through North Bihar was at this time barred by the powerful Hindu Kingdom of Mithila under the Karnatak dynasty, the momentum of the Muslim offensive under the leadership of Muhammad Bakhtiyar acquired a greater driving force in South Bihar*. Muhammad Bakhtiyar's starting point in Bengal expedition was Bihar. As regards his possession in Bihar, we must hold that from the foot of the Vindhya hills in the Mirzapur district along the southern bank of the Ganga right up to the Rajmahal hill his authority was predominant in greater part of South Bihar; and in addition he perhaps also held the riverain tracts on the north bank of the Ganga from the mouth of the Gandak river to that of the Kosi. Throughout this riverain tract of Bhagalpur and Monghyr lying north of the Ganga lay the highway of communication between Bengal and Oudh down to the middle of the fourteenth century†. It is evident that Monghyr came under the control of Muhammad Bakhtiyar. In 1225 A. D. Sultan Illtutmish sent force against Bihar to wrest it from Sultan Gyasuddin Khilji of Bengal and he himself appeared with the intention of conquering Bihar and Bengal. The progress of Sultan was arrested probably at Monghyr. A treaty of peace was concluded between the two. Malik Alaudin Jani was put in charge of Bihar. The Lakhisarai Inscription‡ gives us the name of an officer of Shamsuddin Firuz Shah of Bengal and on the basis of this particular evidence we can say that Monghyr was under the control of the Bengal Sultan between 1301 and 1322. It is likely that Shamsuddin Firuz Shah after having become Sultan of Lakhnawati transferred his loyal servant, Zaiuddin Ulugh Khan (of Lakhisarai inscription) from Monghyr to Satgaon. Shamsuddin reigned over the whole of Bihar. Mohammad* Tughluq annexed Monghyr to Delhi for sometime.

The whole of Northern India about 1342 was in a state of turmoil owing to the violences and caprices of Mohammad Bin Tughluq. Samsuddin Illyas Shah of Bengal took advantage of this opportunity and he established his sway over Bihar.** He was succeeded by his son Sikandar Shah. Firoz Tugulak invaded Bengal in 1359 but had to conclude a treaty with Sikandar Shah favourable to the latter. Rukmuddin Barburk (1459—1474) brought under

* Sir Jadunath Sarkar—"History of Bengal", Vol. 2, p. 127.

† *Ibid*, p. 13.

‡ An interesting relic of the rule of the Bengal Sultan still exists at Lakhisarai, in a basalt state of stone with an inscription bearing a date corresponding to 1297, which mentions Rukmuddin Kaiquas (C. 1291—1302), and a Governor named Feroz Aitagin who is referred to as second Alexander and as the Khan of Khans of the East and of China.

** See article on him in "Essays presented to Sir Jadunath Sarkar" edited by Dr. H. R. Gupta, p. 56 and "History of Mithila" (pp. 406-407).

his sway some portions of Bhagalpur and Monghyr. The districts west of Monghyr lay within the Jaunpur Kingdom as is proved by Muhammad Shargi's inscription found in the Bihar district. A portion of Monghyr was under Shargi's kingdom. Monghyr was already a flourishing town then. After 1489 Sikandar Lodi overran Bihar as far as the frontier of Bengal. In 1494 Sikandar completely defeated Hussain of Jaunpur and sent him flying for refuge to Bengal. Lodi Empire extended up to the border of Bihar. Hussain Shah of Bengal sent an army under his son Danyal to intercept the advancing Lodi invaders and the two armies stood facing each other at Barh. Very soon negotiations for peace were opened. Inscriptions found in Monghyr and Bihar prove that in South Bihar Hussain's control extended to within a few miles of Patna. The occupation of the whole of North Bihar including the trans-Gandak area is proved by an inscription in Saran*. Prince Danyal appears to have represented his father as Governor of Eastern Bihar. He repaired the fortifications of Monghyr and built in 1497 the vault over the shrine of Shah Nafah, the Muhammadan patron of the town. This is shown by an inscription put up by Danyal on the eastern wall of the *dargah* or shrine just within the southern gate of the fort.

Nasrat Shah succeeded Hussain Shah in Bengal in 1519. He conquered Tirhut and made his brother-in-law, Makhdum Alam, Governor of Hajipur. He then crossed the Ganga† and took possession of the fort and the district of Monghyr which he entrusted to one of his best generals, named Kutub Khan. He possessed an unusual amount of diplomatic ability. He exerted himself to build up an eastern kingdom and make Bihar a centre of resistance against the Mughals. Monghyr became the headquarters of the Bihar army of the rulers of Gaur and we learn from the Memoirs of Babar that when Babar invaded Bihar, Monghyr was under the charge of a prince. By professing neutrality, he took care to disarm Mughal hostility. Babar sent envoys to Nasrat's court for peace, after the battle on the Gogra (1529-30). The Mughal envoy returned and brought letters from Wazir Hussain Khan and the Sahzada of Monghyr who signified their consent on behalf of Nasrat, to Babar's term of agreement. Another king of this dynasty, Mahmud lacked imagination and failed to make a correct appraisal of the situation. Kutub Khan appears to have remained at Monghyr until the accession of Mahmud.‡ Kutub was one of the best generals of his time. In 1533, he was the Governor of Monghyr. Mahmud despatched him for conquering the country of Bihar. Makhdum Alam raised the standard of revolt in concert with Sher Shah. Kutub Khan was

* J. A. S. B. 1874, 304 (Inscription found at Saran). A later inscription found at the same place bearing Hussain Shah's name is noted 1503.

† Recently an inscription of Nasrat Shah was found at Mathian, P.-S. Begusarai and noticed by Prof. R. K. Chaudhury. It was kept in the court compound. It may be assumed that Nasrat Shah crossed Ganga in the Begusarai subdivision.

‡ Sarkar's "History of Bengal", Vol. II, p. 159.

directed to advance against the rulers. Sher defeated and slew Kutub Khan. It immensely damaged the military prestige of Mahmud. In 1534 again a powerful army in command of Ibrahim Khan moved out of Monghyr against Sher. The battle took place in the narrow plain of Surajgarha, a few miles east of Barh, bounded on three sides by the Ganga, the Kiul and the Kharagpur hills. Mahmud's army was routed and Ibrahim Khan was slain. He occupied territories up to Kiul river. The battle of Surajgarha placed Sher firmly on the road to kingship.* By 1535 Sher completed his annexation up to Bhagalpur. He captured the fort of Rohtas and marching to Monghyr, put Humayun's noblemen there to the sword. He raced towards Bengal with only 500 men by the route along the Ganga, bypassed Humayun near Patna and rowed away from Monghyr in 48 hours only. When Humayun reached Monghyr he received intelligence of the occupation of the passes at Garhi by Jalalkhan†. During the subsequent war between Sher Shah and Humayun, Monghyr was the scene of a battle between the Afghans and the Emperor, in which Sher Shah captured Dilwar Khan, son of Daulat Khan Lodi, and ancestor of Khan Jahan Lodi.‡

From before 1545, Monghyr was under the control of Mian Sulaiman, an Afghan of the Kararani tribe, who held South Bihar for Islam Shah, son of Sher Shah. Under Islam Shah's successor, Muhammad Adil Shah, Sulaiman Kararani, desirous of establishing his independence, entered into an alliance with Bahadur Shah, king of Bengal; and when Adil Shah retired before the advancing army of Akbar, Bahadur Shah and Sulaiman attacked him near Surajgarha, west of Monghyr, and defeated and killed him (1557). In 1563, Sulaiman became the ruler of Bengal and Bihar, but acknowledged the suzerainty of Akbar. Daud Shah succeeded Sulaiman in 1572 and refused to pay tribute to the Mughal Emperor. In 1574 Akbar invaded Bihar and conquered it. Surajgarha, Monghyr, Bhagalpur and Kahalgaon fell in succession and the Mughals reached near the Teligarhi Pass. Daud fled to Orissa. He was defeated at the battle of Tukaroi (3rd March 1575 A. D.). Mughal rule was substituted for Afghan rule.

In 1580, the great Bengal military revolt commenced, and Monghyr was for some time the headquarters of Akbar's officers in their expeditions against the rebels. Bengal and Bihar were formerly cut off from the Empire of Akbar. Patna was recovered. A vast force of loyalists came together near Patna. Tarsum Khan and Todar Mal were their supreme commanders. The imperialists reached Monghyr on 19th May, 1580 and their first success was the capture of enemy boats laden with munitions west of Monghyr. Raja Todar Mal took possession of Monghyr.

* Dr. K. R. Quanungo's "Sher Shah", pp. 115-116, regarding the importance of this battle which sounded the death-knell of Muslim monarchy in Bengal.

† "Akbarnama", p. 333 (Eng. Translation).

‡ S. K. Banerji's "Humayun Padshah", pp. 221-223.

Of three powerful semi-independent zamindars of Bihar in Akbar's time, viz., Raja Gajapati of Hajipur, Raja Puran Mal of Gidhaur, and Raja Sangram Singh of Kharagpur, two belonged to the district of Monghyr. Gajapati was totally ruined by the imperialists whom he opposed; but Puran Mal and Sangram wisely submitted, and assisted Akbar's generals in the wars of the Afghans. When the great mutiny of Bihar and Bengal broke out, Sangram Singh joined the rebels secretly but submitted later on when Shahbaz Khan marched against him. He handed over to Shahbaz the strong fort of Mahda, a place about six miles north of Kharagpur. His son was detained as a hostage at the court. After the final occupation of Bihar, Raja Man Singh was appointed the Governor. He administered the province well*. His hand first fell upon Raja Puran Mal of Gidhaur (in Jamui subdivision), who had declared independence. Man Singh marched to Gidhaur and easily captured its mud fort with all the Raja's treasure. Puran Mal submitted and gained his pardon by offering a tribute. In 1596 Puran Mal built the great temple of Baidyanath, wherein Sanskrit inscription refers to him a Tripati.

KHARAGPUR.

Kharagpur was at one time a great principality extending from the south of Monghyr to the south of Bhagalpur and Santhal Parganas. We have seen above that Sangram Singh had submitted. He was beaten into making submission and paying tribute by Man Singh. Sangram remained submissive till Akbar's death (1605). The accession of Jahangir and rebellion of Prince Khusru led him to make a final attempt to recover his independence; and he collected his forces, which according to Jahangir's memoirs consisted of about 4,000 horse and a large army of foot-soldiers. Jahangir Kuli Khan Lala Beg, Governor of Bihar, lost no time in opposing him, and Sangram, whilst defending himself, was killed by a gunshot (1606). Sangram's son, whom Jahangir called his favourite, was not immediately installed but had to wait till 1615, when on his conversion to Islam, he was allowed to return to Bihar. Like several other Rajas, he retained after his conversion the title of his ancestors and was known as Raja Rozafzun (i.e., daily growing in power). He remained faithful to the service of the emperor and in 1628, when Jahangir died, was a commander of 1,500 foot-soldiers and 700 horse. On Shahjahan's accession, Raja Rozafzun entered active service. He accompanied Mahabat Khan to Kabul, in the war with Nazr Muhammad Khan, King of Balkh, and served later in the expedition against Jhujhar Singh Bundela. In the sixth year of Shahjahan's reign he took part under Shuja in the siege of Parendah, and was promoted in 1634-35 to a command of 2,000 foot and 1,000 horse. He died soon afterwards in the same year and was succeeded by his son Raja Bihruz, who served in the siege of Kandahar and was

* "Akbarnama", III, 872.

Commander of 700 foot and 700 horse under Shahjahan. He added to the already large estate being rewarded for his services by the grant of Chakla Midnapur in which he built a town and named it Kharagpur. There is a ruined palace built by him, adjoining which is a three-domed mosque. A marble slab in one of the walls shows that it was built in 1656 A. D. during the reign of Emperor Shahjahan. He died in 1665.

CIVIL WAR (1657-58).

Shah Shuja was the second son of Shahjahan, and Governor of Bengal. On hearing of the serious illness of his father in 1657, he raised the standard of revolt and claimed the throne. His capital was at Rajmahal, but Monghyr formed the centre from which he directed his preparations and to which he returned next year after his defeat. In June, 1658 Aurangzeb made an attempt to conciliate Shuja by granting him the province of Bihar in addition to Bengal. Thus the old Presidency of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa as known in British Indian History from 1804 to 1911 was first formed in Shuja's time. Monghyr came into prominence during this period of civil war. On the basis of Jaipur records Prof. Qanungo* says that soon after the march of the imperial army Shuja wrote to Dara asking for the grant of Monghyr which formed a part of Dara's province of Bihar. Dara was prepared to give away the fort of Monghyr provided that the fortress was dismantled and Shuja's son did not reside there. Murad's letter refers to the designs of Dara to deprive Shuja of Monghyr showing that this part of Bihar was virtually in the hands of Shuja†. Shuja being pursued by the imperialists, pushed on to Monghyr where being protected by the strong defences, he held out till the adverse circumstances of Dara compelled him to send urgent letters to his son to make peace with his uncle. As a result of the treaty of 1685 though Monghyr was added to Shuja's viceroyalty, he was not allowed to reside there. In 1659 Daud Khan took charge of the province of Bihar. Mir Jumla and Prince Muhammad pursued Shuja to Monghyr. Shuja was forced by the treachery of Raja Bihruz Khan of Kharagpur and Khaja Kamal of Birbhum to abandon Monghyr in 1659.‡ Daud Khan himself proceeded to neutralise the increased activity of the Shujaits in Monghyr and Bhagalpur. Raja Bihruz was made in charge of the whole country up to Monghyr. He carried the imperial army through the hills and jungles south-east of Monghyr fort. Shuja lost grip all over Monghyr. Raja Bihruz also helped the Mughal Governor against the Cheros of Palamau and other parts of Chotanagpur.

FOREIGNERS' ACCOUNT.

During the reign of Governor Ibrahim Khan, there was a devastating famine which continued from 1670 to 1672. The Dutch

* "Dara Shikoh".

† Quoted by Prof. Askari in J. E. R. S., XXXI, Pt. IV

‡ Dr. J. N. Sarkar's "Life of Mir Jumla" for details.

traveller, De Graafe, who journeyed from Monghyr to Patna in November, 1670 gives a picture of the horrible scenes. J. Marshall got the first evidence of the famine at Dunra, west of Jaintpur, in Monghyr where he saw a great number of corpses in the Ganga and on its shores and on the following day he was begged to purchase a Muslim land for half a rupee. He gives us some interesting details about Monghyr. From Bhagalpur it took him a week to arrive at Monghyr. At Monghyr he inspected Shah Shuja's palace built on the west side of the fort. He describes it "as a very large house where the king (Shuja) lived, walled next to the river, for about $1\frac{1}{2}$ kos with bricks and stones with a wall about 15 yards high". He entered the first gate but was stopped at the other within which he saw "two elephants carved in stones and very large and handsomely". He inspected the palace more closely during a second visit in the following year for he was not suffered to go within as on the first occasion. This was due to the recent misadventure of two Dutchmen, De Graafe* and Oasterhoff, who paid the penalty of their antiquarian interest by being taken as spies. They were imprisoned for making a plan of the palace and noting details regarding fortifications. They were released after seven weeks in November, 1670 by paying to the Nawab of Patna a fine of one thousand rupees. At the north end of the town, Marshall found a great garden and at the south end he saw several thatched houses and several tombs and mosques. He says "The town stands upon an ascent, the river bank by it being eight or ten yards high. The brick wall by the river side at the south end of Monghyr was about 5 yards high and 20 yards long with a little tower at each end and each wall is a fortification to put guns in it. Towards the close of the 18th century† we find that Monghyr was merely a station of "power magazine established there for the most vivid lightening 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". It was noted for its good climate and Warren Hastings speaks of the delightful change of atmosphere from that of Bengal. About the first, Bishop Heber wrote: "Monghyr presents an imposing appearance. The fort. is now dismantled. Its gates, battlements, etc., are all of Asiatic architecture, and precisely similar to those of the Khitairagorod of Moscow"‡. Miss Emily Eden was much struck by the inland tables and boxes of such curious workmanship.** Fanny Parkes wrote: "Among the articles manufactured here, the black vases for flowers turned into white wood, and lacquered whilst on the lathe with

* Regarding Graafe's imprisonment at Monghyr and his account of the Fort see Mr. C. E. A. W. Odham—"An old inscription of the Monghyr Fort"—Bengal, Past and Present, Vol. XXVII, Part II.

† "Travels in India a Hundred Years Ago" (1893).

‡ R. Heber—"Narrative of Journey through the Upper Province of India" (1827).

** Miss Eden—"Up the Country".

sealing wax, are pretty." Joseph Hooker describes Monghyr as "by far the prettiest town..... Monghyr is celebrated for its iron manufacture, especially of muskets, in which respect it is the Birmingham of Bengal".

MUHAMMADAN GOVERNORS.

There is little other information regarding Monghyr at this time. There are however a few references to the district in the *Ain-i-Akbari*, according to which Sarkar Monghyr consisted of 31 *mahals* or *parganas*, paying a revenue of 10,96,25,981 *dams* (40 *dams* being equal to one Akbarshahi rupee), and furnished 2,150 horses and 50,000 foot-soldiers. These numbers, however, are perhaps nominal rather than real, for south of Monghyr the country was mostly in the hands of the Rajas of Kharagpur. *Pargana* Monghyr itself was assessed at 8,08,907½ *dams*. Monghyr was also for some time the residence of Raja Man Singh, who reconquered Bengal and Orissa; and it was here that a pious Musalman, named Shah Daulat, whom Man Singh favoured, tried his best to convert him to Islam. During the reign of Jahangir, Kasim Khan, brother of Ali-ud-din Islam Khan, was in charge of *Sarkar* Monghyr, and on the death of his brother, became Governor of Bengal. Two *jagirdars* of Monghyr are also mentioned, Sardar Khan and Hassan Ali Khan (1619). In the first year of Shah Jahan's reign (1628) Saiyad Muhammad Mukhtar Khan was appointed *tayuldar* of Monghyr. He distinguished himself in a campaign against the Raja of Dumraon about 1637. Another *tayuldar* was Mahaldar Khan.

The historians of Aurangzeb's reign mention only one other event in connection with Monghyr, viz., the death and burial at Monghyr of the poet Mulla Muhammad Saiyad, who wrote under the *nom-de-plume* of Ashraf. He was the son of Mulla Muhammad Saleh of Mazadaran, near the Caspian Sea, and stood in high favour with prince Azim-us-Shah, Aurangzeb's grandson, who was Governor of Bihar. He had also been for a long time the teacher of Zebunnissa Begum, Aurangzeb's daughter, herself a poetess of repute. In 1704, while on his way from Bengal to Mecca, the poet died at Monghyr, where his tomb is still pointed out.

LAST DAYS OF MUHAMMADAN RULES.

In the seventeenth century Monghyr appears to have been a well fortified town with fine buildings, and Nicolas Graafe, a Dutch physician who visited it in the beginning of that century, was struck with admiration at the sight of its white walls, towers and minarets. In 1745, however, when Mustapha Khan, a rebellious general of Ali Vardi Khan, advanced against it in his march northwards, the fort was "a ruinous fortification which though quite neglected had some renown". Mustapha Khan found it sufficient to detach a brigade under his nephew Abdul Rasul Khan for its capture. "The Governor and his little garrison put themselves upon their

defence; but as the fortifications did not seem to deserve much ceremony in that officer's opinion he alighted and putting himself at the head of his men, mounted to the assault. In an instant the besiegers got upon the wall, and seized the fort; but their leader was killed outright by a stone that fell upon him, on its being loosened by one of the garrisons who stood above. The place was not such an acquisition as could compensate the loss of so valiant an officer."* Mustapha Khan, following the custom of those days, had music played to celebrate his success, took some guns and ammunition from the fort, and after a halt of three days marched off towards Patna.

The Chakwars.

In the period of the break of the Mughal Empire, Bihar came to be joined to the Subah of Bengal, which had become practically independent of Delhi. Nawab Shujauddin had appointed Ali Vardi, so long Fauzdar of Rajmahal, the Deputy Governor of Bihar. The provinces had begun to raise their heads and within every province local chieftains took advantage of the chaotic political situation. The Chakwars of Sambho† (Begusarai subdivision) had asserted their independence. The Company records mention Bakhtawar Singh as the king of the Chakwars.‡ They stopped payment to the Government. Their strength lay in the fact that they controlled the river route from Monghyr to Patna. They extorted a huge amount from the European traders. There was a fierce engagement for sometime between the European traders and the Chakwars. From the Company records, it appears that the old brave Raja of Chakwars died in 1730. Raja Bakhtawar Singh issued various grants which were later on honoured by Ali Vardi and respected by the Company. In 1730, Raja Ruko Singh Chakwar plundered the Pharkiyā Pargana and treacherously murdered the Raja. Ali Vardi thoroughly suppressed the Chakwars. Monghyr formed his base of operations for the recovery of Bihar.

Maratha Raids.

Monghyr did not escape Maratha raids. The second Maratha invasion under Raghujī Bhonsla occurred in 1743.** Balaji marched into Bihar. Advancing through Tekari, Gaya, Manpur, Bihar and Monghyr he reached Bhagalpur, where the brave widow of Sarfaraz's general, Ghaus Khan, was determined to defend herself and defied the respective sphere of influence of the Peshwa and the Bhonsla.

* *Sair-ul-Mutakhirin*, Raymond's translation (Vol. I, p. 491).

† G. D. College Bulletin, no. 3, edited by Prof. R. K. Chaudhury.

‡ Wilson—"Early Annals of English in Bengal", Vol. III, p. 371 of Riyaz-us-Salatin, pp. 36, 296; Gladwin—"A narrative of the Transactions in Bengal", p. 79; Holwell—"Interesting Historical Events", pp. 68—70; K. K. Dutta—"Allivardi and His Times", pp. 14-15, pp. 137-138.

** Dr. Jadunath Sarkar—"Bihar and Orissa during the fall of the Mughal Empire", p. 47.

During the fourth Maratha invasion in 1744 Raghuji passed through the hills of Kharagpur.

Eyre Coote's Expedition.

In 1757, Eyre Coote came to Monghyr at the head of a British force on his way up the Ganga in pursuit of Jean Law, the French adventurer and partisan of Siraj-ud-daula, who was flying northwards after the battle of Plassey. Major Coote reached Monghyr late at night on the 20th July and requisitioned a number of boats, which the *Diwan* or Governor of the place supplied. He was not allowed, however, to enter the fort, for when he approached the walls, he received a significant hint, the garrison lining the ramparts with their matches and port-fires lighted. Coote, accordingly, was obliged to resume his march without making any further attempt to examine the fort.

Caillaud's Campaign.

Nearly three years later, in the spring of 1760, the army of the Emperor Shah Alam marched through the south of the district, pursued by Major Caillaud and Miran. In this, his second invasion of Bihar, the Emperor had been defeated by Caillaud and Miran at Sirpur on the 22nd February. The Emperor withdrew to Bihar town, while the victorious army remained between Barh and Patna. When on the 29th of February the allies began to follow up the army of the Emperor, marching on Bihar through Chandi, Shah Alam doubled in a northerly direction to the Ganga, with the intention of capturing Murshidabad in Bengal. Caillaud pursued him; and the Emperor fearing that if he attempted to reach Bengal by the Ganga road he would be overtaken and intercepted at Sakrigali, turned towards the south-east at Lakhisarai, and made for Bengal through Malepur, Chakai and Deogarh, through hills and jungles never before traversed by any army, little known to either his own or the Nawab's troops, and to the English a perfect *terra incognita*. Major Caillaud, who dared not leave the young Nawab unsupported, was compelled to follow the same course, and disembarking his troops once more, joined Miran and commenced the pursuit. The route was most difficult, through thick jungle of the wildest description, across unbridged streams, over hills and valleys, and through difficult and unknown passes. For days together a road had to be made for the field pieces, and the troops suffered extreme fatigue and privations, which they bore without a murmur; their zeal and exertions, coupled with the energy and resource of the commander and his officers, surmounted all obstacles and enabled them to keep so closely on the track of the enemy, that on the 22nd March, having passed through one of the most difficult defiles, they arrived on the ground which the Emperor had quitted only two days before*.

* A. Broome—"History of the Rise and Progress of the Bengal Army" (1850), Vol. I. pp. 288-289.

Stables' Campaign.

At the end of the same year another small campaign was fought out in the Kharagpur hills. John Stables, then an Ensign and subsequently a Member of Council, had been left by Caillaud at Monghyr, and was now directed to attack the Kharagpur Raja, who had openly defied the authority of the new Nawab, Kasim Ali Khan. His detachment consisted of three companies of sepoy; a party of about 50 or 60 pseudo-Europeans in the Nawab's service, composed of renegade deserters, Armenians, Portuguese, and "Topasses"; and two troops of Mughal horse, making a total of about 550 men. Hearing of his intentions, the Raja sent a force of 2,000 men, which encamped about three miles from Monghyr. At one o'clock next morning Stables marched out, hoping to surprise the enemy's camp, but the alarm had been given, and he found them strongly posted under cover of an old entrenchment. He did not hesitate, however, to attack, and finally succeeded in forcing the camp at the point of the bayonet. By this time day was beginning to break, and he determined to follow up his blow by advancing at once upon the Raja's position at Kharagpur, a distance of about sixteen miles. He accordingly sent forward his cavalry in pursuit of the fugitives, and advanced more steadily with his infantry. After about four hours' march, they arrived within three miles of Kharagpur, where they found the Raja had drawn up his whole force to oppose them. Attaining the enemy's flank, Stables soon put them to flight, and followed them to Kharagpur, when they rallied and made a desperate stand in the Raja's palace. Here also they were again completely defeated, and the British troops having dispersed them, set fire to the town and palace, and reduced the whole to ashes. The following morning they returned to Monghyr, having in one day marched upwards of twenty miles, been engaged three times, and completely destroyed the force of an enemy tenfold their own number—a proceeding that speedily resulted in the submission of the Raja and the restoration of tranquillity in the district.*

Mir Kasim Ali Khan's Rule.

Monghyr again came into prominence in 1762, when Kasim Ali Khan made it his capital instead of Murshidabad, from which he removed his treasure, his elephants and horses, and even the gold and silver decorations of the *Imarbara*.† He built himself a palace with a breast-work before it for thirty guns, and had the fortifications strengthened; while his favourite General Gurghin (Gregory) Khan, an Armenian who had formerly been a cloth merchant at Ispahan, reorganized the army, had it drilled and equipped after the English model, and established an arsenal; the manufacture of fire-arms, which still is carried on at Monghyr, is said to date back to this

* A Brome—"History of the Rise and Progress of the Bengal Army" (1850). Vol. I, p. 320.

† Nandlal Chatterji "Mir Qasim", p. 127, pp. 134—138.

period. A picturesque account of the Court of the Nawab at Monghyr has been left in the *Sair-ul-Mutakharin*. Two days a week he sat in a public hall of audience and personally dispensed justice listening patiently to the complaints and grievances of everyone, however humble his position, nor dared anyone in his court touch a bribe or advocate an unjust claim. The poor, defenceless landholders who had been dispossessed of their villages and hereditary estates by rapacious zamindars, now found that the day of redress was come; for their claims were heard, and, if proved, mace-bearers were sent to see the oppressed reinstated in their estates and the defenceless righted. The Nawab, indeed, was a terror both to his enemies and to wrong-doers. He also honoured learning and the learned, and welcomed scholars and savants to his court, so that friends and foes alike respected him. The author of the *Sair-ul-Mutakharin* admits, it is true, that his temper had been soured and rendered suspicious by perpetual treasons, duplicities and infidelities, and that he was "ever prone to confiscation of properties, confinement of persons and effusion of blood. Nevertheless, it was acknowledged on all hands, that he had admirable qualifications that balanced his bad ones", and made him "an incomparable man, indeed, and the most extraordinary prince of his age".

Soon after he had established himself at Monghyr, Mir Kasim Ali came into collision with the English. The first quarrel appears to have been caused by the tactless conduct of Mr. Ellis, who was in charge of the English factory at Patna. A vague report having reached the latter that two English deserters were concealed at Monghyr, he sent a company of sepoy's under a sergeant to search the fort. They were refused admission, and this was construed by Mr. Ellis into an act of hostility, while the Nawab complained of the insult offered to his authority. A long dispute followed, which was finally compromised by Lieutenant Ironside, the Town Major of Calcutta, being specially sent to search the fort with the permission of the Nawab. No deserters were found, the only European in the place being an old French invalid. About the same time (April, 1762) Warren Hastings was sent up from Calcutta to arrange terms between the Nawab and Ellis, and was favourably received by the former in his camp at Sasaram. Ellis, however, refused to meet Warren Hastings at Patna and stayed in his house at Singhia, fifteen miles away, saying that he could not be expected to pay him the compliment of travelling such a distance in the hot weather.

Trade Disputes.

A more serious dispute now arose. The East India Company had long enjoyed exemption from the heavy transit dues levied on inland trade. After the battle of Plassey the European servants of the Company began to trade extensively on their own account, and to claim a similar exemption for all goods passing under the Company's flag and covered by a *dastak* or certificate signed by the

Governor or one of the factory agents. The English had then a great advantage over their rivals and most of the trade passed into their hands or was carried on under their name. Great abuses followed, for the English in some cases lent their names to Indians for a consideration and the latter used the same *dastaks* over and over again or forged them. If the Nawab's collectors attempted to check these malpractices, they were seized by the nearest English agent, confined and punished. Everyone who could hire a *dastak* or fly the Company's flag, did so; and matters were made worse by the rascality of their Bengali employees, who had previously been walking about in rags at Calcutta, but now assumed the dress of sepoys, and flogged and imprisoned those who refused to buy from or sell to them at their own price. On his way to Patna in 1762, Warren Hastings says that every boat he met on the river bore the Company's flag, and became aware of the oppression of the people by the *gumashtas* and the Company's servants. "Most of the petty towns and sarais", he wrote, "were deserted at our approach, and the shops shut up from the apprehension of the same treatment from us".

Vansittart's Visit.

Mir Kasim bitterly complained that his chief source of revenue had been taken from him and that his authority was completely disregarded. Eventually, in October 1762, Mr. Vansittart, the Governor, left Calcutta in order to try and conclude a settlement that would be satisfactory to both parties. He found the Nawab at Monghyr smarting under the injuries and insults he had received; but at length it was agreed that the servants of the Company should be allowed to carry on the inland private trade, on payment of a fixed duty of nine per cent on all goods—a rate much below that paid by other merchants—and that, to prevent abuses, *dastaks* should be signed by the agents of the factories through whose circles the goods passed, and also countersigned by the Nawab's collectors. Mir Kasim agreed to those terms very unwillingly.

A picturesque account of Vansittart's visit is given by Ghulam Husain Khan, the author of the *Sair-ul-Mutakharin*, who held a *jagir* in the district. The Nawab advanced six miles to meet Vansittart and assigned for his residence a house which Gurghin Khan had erected on "the hill of Sitakund". He gave him a public reception in the hall of audience, where he seated him on his own *masnad*, entertained him with a *nach*, paraded troops in his honour, and, last but not least, "complimented him with a variety of curious and costly presents suitable to the occasion". It is said, indeed, that Vansittart received five lakhs of rupees, of which three lakhs were paid to him at Monghyr, and that he allowed two ladies who accompanied him to go into the zanana of Mir Kasim Ali and receive presents of jewelry.*

* "Armenians in India" by Meshroob Jacob Seth (Calcutta).

• *The Company's Claims.*

After staying a week at Monghyr, Vansittart returned to Calcutta in January, 1763, only to find that the agreement concluded with the Nawab was repudiated. The Nawab, however, had sent copies of the Governor's agreement to all his officers directing that it should be acted upon at once. The consequence was that the English goods then in transit were stopped and duty claimed upon them. The Council were indignant, and at once declared that all goods, except salt, covered by an English *dastak*, should pass free of duty. The Nawab, on the other hand, protested at this breach of faith and passed orders abolishing all transit duties and throwing open the whole inland trade. The English regarded this as an act of hostility, and preparations were made to resist his measures and declare war against him, if he persisted. But, as a last resource, it was agreed that a deputation, headed by Messrs. Amyatt and Hay, should be sent to Monghyr to endeavour to arrange terms with the Nawab. Mr. Ellis was informed of this measure and warned to commit no act of aggression, even should the mission be unsuccessful, until Amyatt and Hay were well out of the Nawab's power.*

Negotiations with the Nawab.

The party reached Monghyr on the 14th May 1763 and opened up negotiations, but it was soon seen that they were unwelcome. At the first interview the Nawab, offended at the rough and overbearing manner in which he was addressed by the English linguist, refused to speak to him. At subsequent interviews he himself never failed to do something to offend the English and he steadily refused to come to terms. The envoys were kept under strict surveillance, and on one occasion, when some of the party wished to ride out from Monghyr, they found their way barred by the Nawab's soldiers with lighted matches ready to fire. Unfortunately too just at this time, English cargo boats from Calcutta were detained at Monghyr, and five hundred muskets intended for the factory at Patna were found hidden under the cargo. The Nawab insisted that the English intended to seize the fort and the city of Patna, and demanded that their detachment at the factory should be withdrawn to Monghyr, where they would be checked by his own troops; otherwise, he would declare war. In the meantime, he permitted Mr. Amyatt and others of the party to leave for Calcutta, but detained Mr. Hay and Mr. Gulston as hostages for the safety of his officers who had been arrested by the English.

Outbreak of War.

A final rupture was now imminent, and this was brought about by the precipitate action of Mr. Ellis, who, in the belief that war was in any case inevitable, seized the city of Patna, on hearing that a

* "Armenians in India" by Meshroob Jacob Seth (Calcutta) has extracts of letters from the Chief and Council at Patna (Ellis Lushington and Howitt) to the Governor and Council in Calcutta.

detachment was advancing from Monghyr to reinforce the Nawab's garrison. The Nawab retaliated promptly, reinforcements were hurried up, and the fort quickly recaptured. The news of this success gave Kasim Ali the keenest delight. Though it was the middle of the night, he immediately ordered music to strike and awaken the whole town of Monghyr. At daybreak the doors of the public hall were thrown open, and every one hastened to offer him congratulations. He now proclaimed the outbreak of war between himself and the English, and directed his officers to put the latter to the sword wherever found. In pursuance of this general order, Mr. Amyatt was killed at Murshidabad, and the factory at Cossimbazar was stormed. The survivors surrendered, and were sent to Monghyr to join their unfortunate companions from Patna.

The Nawab's Prisoners.

A British force under Major Adams quickly advanced against the Nawab, and defeated his troops at Suti. On hearing of this defeat, he sent his Begams and children to the fort at Rohtas and set out himself, accompanied by Gurghin Khan, to join his army that was now concentrated on the banks of the Udhua Nullah near Rajmahal. Before leaving Monghyr, however, he put to death a number of his prisoners, including Raja Ram Narayan, till lately Deputy Governor of Bihar, who was thrown into the river below the fort with a pitcher filled with sand tied to his neck. Gurghin Khan not satisfied with this butchery, also urged the Nawab to kill his English prisoners, but this the Nawab refused to do.

Jagat Set Mahtab Rai and Sarup Chand, two rich bankers of Murshidabad, who had been brought from that place by Mir Kasim Ali, as they were believed to favour the British cause, also appear to have escaped; though tradition says that they were drowned at the same time, and that a servant of Jagat Set, Chuni, begged in vain that he might be drowned with his master, and thereupon flung himself into the water after him. This picturesque tradition appears, however, to be untrue, for not only does the author of the *Sair-ul-Mutakharin* say that they were hacked to pieces at Barh but Major Grant, who was one of the avenging force which hurried up under Major Adams, states that they found the bodies buried in one of the rooms of a house at that place. The tradition is, however, an old one, which must have sprung up soon after their death; for the translator of the *Sair-ul-Mutakharin* (Raymond alias Haji Mustapha) wrote about 1789: "Out of 10,000 boatmen who pass every year by a certain tower of the castle of Monghyr, there is not a man but will point out the spot where the two Jagat Sets were drowned, nor is there an old woman at Monghyr but would repeat the speech of the heroical Chuni to his master's executioners."

The Nawab's Flight.

Before the Nawab could join his army at Udhua Nullah, he heard of a second decisive defeat that it had sustained, and he there-

upon returned to Monghyr. He only stayed there two or three days, and then fell back on Patna, taking with him Mr. Hay, Mr. Ellis, Mr. Lushington and other English prisoners. Before leaving, it is said, one of his noblemen Ibrahim Ali Khan (brother of the ancestor of the Husainabad family in this district) urged him to release the English prisoners, or at least send the women down the Ganga to Major Adams; but the Nawab simply referred him to his evil genius, Gurghin Khan, who put him off by saying that it would be impossible to find boats for so many.

On the way Mir Kasim halted on the banks of the Rahua Nullah, a small stream near Lakhisarai. Here Gurghin Khan met his death, being cut down by some troopers who demanded their arrears of pay. A scene of wild confusion followed. Makar, another Armenian General, seeing the murderers were making their escape beyond the reach of muskets, fired off some guns loaded with grape. The army thought that the English were upon them and fled in terror, Mir Kasim himself trying to escape on an elephant. They rushed to the bridge of boats over the Rahua, which was densely crowded with fugitives, carts and elephants, all trying to cut their way through; and as soon as they had crossed over, made ready to resist their imaginary pursuers. The uproar did not subside till midnight, and the alarm having been proved to be a false one, Mir Kasim marched on next day to Patna.

Capture of Monghyr.

In the meantime, the British army continued to advance upon Monghyr, which Mir Kasim had placed under the command of Arab Ali Khan, a creature of Gurghin Khan. As they approached the place, a strong detachment was sent forward to invest it and commence approaches. On the 1st of October, 1763 the main body arrived, and the batteries which had been thrown up were immediately opened. A heavy fire was maintained all day and the following day, when the breach was reported practicable, and arrangements were made for an assault. But in the evening the Governor capitulated, and surrendered himself and his garrison prisoners of war. The English at once set to work to repair the breaches and improve the defences. The sick and wounded were disembarked from the boats and brought from Rajmahal and a comfortable hospital established. A depot of stores was also formed, and a detachment of sepoy was left as a garrison under the command of Captain John White, who was further directed to raise locally another battalion of sepoy. The news of the capture of Monghyr infuriated the Nawab, who as soon as he heard of it, gave orders that his English prisoners at Patna should be put to death. This order was carried out by the renegade Samru, and resulted in what is known as the Massacre of Patna.

Three years later (in 1766) there was a mutiny of the European officers of the Bengal army in consequence of the orders regarding

the reduction of *bhatta*. The meaning of this term may be briefly explained. The officers received fixed pay, but when they took the field, were allowed an extra monthly sum to cover their increased expenses. This allowance was known as *bhatta*, and half of it was granted when they were garrisoned at a detached station but not actually in the field. After the battle of Plassey, Mir Jafar Khan had granted an extra allowance called "*double bhatta*" and this had been continued during the Nawabship of Mir Kasim. In pursuance of a policy of rigorous retrenchment, the Directors of the Company now passed orders that this allowance should be abolished, except in the case of the Brigade stationed at Allahabad, but conceded the grant of half *bhatta* to the troops stationed at Patna and Monghyr. The officers bitterly resented this curtailment of their emoluments and determined to resign their commissions. On the 1st May 1766 a letter to this effect was signed by the officers of the First Brigade, which was then stationed at Monghyr under Sir Robert Fletcher, who transmitted it to Lord Clive at Murshidabad.

Clive at once determined to proceed to Monghyr in person by forced marches and in the meantime sent forward some officers to deal with the situation as well as they could. His confidence in them was not misplaced. Arriving at Monghyr late at night on the 12th May, they heard much to their surprise, drums beating and other signs of disturbance, and on going to Sir Robert Fletcher's quarters saw half the European regiment drinking, singing and beating drums. Next morning two of them went to Kharagpur, where the sepoy troops were encamped, and returned with two battalions to Monghyr. On the 14th May the European battalion broke out in open mutiny; but this proved abortive owing to the prompt measures taken by Captain Smith. Expecting such a mutiny, he had already determined to seize the saluting battery, which being situated upon a hillock completely commanded the barracks and from its situation, and the guns mounted upon it, was a position of importance.*

Captain Smith marched the sepoys to the back of the hill without being observed, and making a sudden rush, gained possession of it. The European battalion had got under arms, and were preparing to leave the fort and follow their officers, and the artillery were about to do the same. But the unexpected appearance of the firm line of sepoys, with their bayonets fixed and arms loaded, threw them into confusion, of which Captain Smith immediately took advantage, warning them that if they did not retire peaceably to their barracks he would fire upon them at once. Sir Robert Fletcher, who came up at this juncture, also harangued the troops, and distributed money amongst them. They now became quiet, and said that they had expected he would have placed himself at their head; otherwise they would not have thought of turning out. If

* This hillock is now known as Karnachaura hill. See the article on Monghyr in Chapter XIV. "Country Life" in November 1959 published a sketch by Henry Salt in 1803.

such was not the case, their officers might go where they pleased, but they would stay, and live or die with him alone. While Sir Robert was on the parade, several of the officers who had resigned came up, hearing that the men had mutinied, and offered their services to assist him. This offer he declined and ordered them all to leave the garrison within two hours, under pain of being sent off in charge of a guard. In the evening they had all left the fort except three, of whom two were confined to their beds by sickness.

Clive's Visit.

Next day (5th May) Lord Clive reached Monghyr and held a parade of the troops. He explained the circumstances under which the *bhatta* had been withdrawn, applauded the loyal conduct of the sepoys, and pointing out that the combination of the officers was an act of gross insubordination and positive mutiny, declared that the ring-leaders would suffer the severest penalties of martial law, and the inferior offenders be sent to England by the first available ships. After this address the Brigade gave three hearty cheers and marched off quietly to the barracks and lines. The resigned officers had all encamped at a short distance from Monghyr, intending to wait for their comrades of the other Brigades; but Lord Clive ordered them all to proceed to Calcutta forthwith and sent out a detachment of sepoys to take them down by force, if necessary. This measure had the desired effect, and the detachment soon returned with a report that the whole were on their way in small parties of three and four, some marching and others proceeding by water. Those officers, chiefly subalterns, who were at the outposts, and whose commissions had not been sent in, owing to their absence, were now directed to proceed to Monghyr, where, warned by the example of the others, they exhibited no inclination to resign, but on the contrary, readily undertook the duties of station, until they were relieved by officers sent up from Calcutta.

EARLY BRITISH ADMINISTRATION.

The threatened mutiny was thus quickly quelled; but it is clear that the danger was very real. One officer indeed, had proposed that he and the other mutinous officers should throw dice to decide who should take Lord Clive's life, and that when he held a review, they should carry muskets instead of swords in order to enable them to carry out their purpose. It remains to note that Sir Robert Fletcher was subsequently tried for fomenting and encouraging the mutiny and was cashiered.

For some time John Maccabe was the Deputy Commissioner, Government of Monghyr before 1789. The subsequent history of the district is uneventful. With the extension of the British dominions the town of Monghyr ceased to be an important frontier post. Although there was an arsenal, no regular garrison was kept up and no attempt was made to bring the fortifications up-to-date. It was, however, noted for its fine situation and salubrious air, and

was used as a sanatorium for the British troops. So great, and indeed was its reputation as a health resort that the journey up the Ganga, followed by stay there, was regarded as healthy as a sea voyage. We find that a trip to Monghyr was prescribed for the wife of Warren Hastings when she was in ill health. In 1781, when Warren Hastings was on his way to meet Chait Singh at Banaras, he left her here assured that she would be in the surroundings most likely to be of benefit to her.* In the early part of the nineteenth century, the place was degraded to a lunatic asylum for sepoys, a depot for army clothing and an invalid station for British soldiers, Monghyr being, according to Bishop Heber, generally chosen by the more respectable of the latter, while the reprobates preferred Murshidabad.

THE SEPOY MUTINY.

During the Mutiny of 1857, the tranquility of the district was not broken, largely owing to the prompt measures taken by the Commissioner, Mr. Yule. On the outbreak of the troops at Dinapore there was a panic in the town, but Mr. Yule, realizing the importance of its position on the Ganga and the likelihood that the native troops stationed in the Division would rise, detained 150 men of the 5th Fusiliers, who happened to be passing up the Ganga, and sent a hundred of them to Bhagalpur and the remainder to Monghyr. This prudent measure secured the important highway of the Ganga and enabled Outram to go up country unmolested. Eventually, it was found possible to withdraw the detachment from Monghyr by the end of 1857, and the district remained quiet. There was, it is true, a certain amount of crime, but this was attributed to the scarcity which prevailed at the time and to the distress caused by the stoppage of railway and other works during the disturbances.

FORMATION OF THE DISTRICT.

The existence of Monghyr as a separate executive centre is believed to date from the year 1812. It appears from a letter, dated the 15th July of that year, that Mr. Ewing was appointed to have charge of the Monghyr Criminal Court, called the Court of the Joint Magistrate of Monghyr, and that he was subordinate to the Magistrate of Bhagalpur, bearing to him somewhat the relation of a modern Subdivisional Officer. The language of the above letter and subsequent correspondence seem to show that the appointment of Mr. Ewing was the first step taken; but the original orders directing the formation of the new jurisdiction cannot be traced in the records of either Bhagalpur or Monghyr. A letter also from Mr. Dowdeswell, Secretary to Government, dated the 22nd October 1811, proves that at that time no magisterial authority existed in Monghyr except that of the Magistrate of Bhagalpur, to whom it is addressed. "I am directed", it runs, "to acquaint you that His Excellency the Vice-President in Council considers it of importance that you should

* S. C. Grier—"The Letters of Warren Hastings to His Wife" (1905), p. 123.

revert to the practice which formerly existed, of holding the *kachari* during a part of the year at Monghyr, and that he desires that you will make the necessary arrangements for that purpose." The extent of the Monghyr jurisdiction is not mentioned in the local records till September, 1814, when it is stated to comprise five thanas or police divisions, viz., Monghyr, Tarapur, Surajgarha, Mallepur, and Gogri.

No change seems to have been made in the powers or jurisdiction of the Monghyr Court till 1832, when it was determined to erect it into a revenue-receiving centre under the name of a Deputy Collectorship, the new office being conferred on the then Joint-Magistrate. From that time this officer, although he did not obtain the title, exercised most of the powers of a full Magistrate-Collector, and for the first corresponded directly with the chief executive and revenue authorities, and not through the Collector of Bhagalpur, whose deputy he nominally was. In order to form the new revenue district, *parganas* Surajgarha, Monghyr, Chandanbhuka, Kajra, Pharkiya, Abhaipur and Gidhaur were transferred from the district of Bhagalpur; *parganas* Amarthu, Roh (in part), Narhat (in part), Maldah, Bihar (in part) and Samai (in part) from the district of Bihar; and Malki, Ballia, Masjidpur, Akbarpur Rani, Bhusari, Badaphusari, Naipur, Imadpur, Kabkhand and Utarkhand from the district of Tirhut.

The earliest of value in the Collectorate records appear to be in a letter from the Commissioner of Bhagalpur to the Secretary to the Sadr Board of Revenue at Fort William, dated the 29th May, 1850. He writes "it appears from the record 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 Camp Bazar. This, though constituting one *Mahal*, was divided into 13 *Tarafs*, viz., (1) Bara Bazar, (2) Deochi Bazar, (3) Goddard Bazar, (4) Wellesly Bazar, (5) Monghyr Bazar, (6) Gorhee Bazar, (7) Batemanganj, (8) Topkhana Bazar, (9) Fanok Bazar, (10) Dalhatta Bazar, (11) Belan Bazar, (12) Rasoolganj and (13) Begampur".

Since that time the district has gradually grown to its present dimensions with various changes of jurisdiction. In 1834 *pargana* Chakai was transferred from the district of Ramgarh and in 1839 *pargana* Bishazari from the district of Patna. Numerous minor changes followed but the greatest change was effected in June, 1874, when *parganas* Sakhrabadi, Darra, Singhaul, Kharagpur and Parbatpara were transferred to Monghyr from Bhagalpur together with *tappas* Lowdah and Simrawan and 281 villages from *parganas* Sahuri and Lakanpur comprising in all an area of 613.62 square miles. The subdivision of Jamui was formed in 1864, at first with headquarters at Sikandra, but in 1869 they were transferred to Jamui. The Begusarai subdivision was established in 1870, the headquarters

of that subdivision (formerly known as the Ballia subdivision) being fixed at Begusarai. In recent years the most important administrative change has been the transfer in 1904-05 of the Sheikhpura thana from the Jamui to the Monghyr subdivision. In 1943-44 Khagaria subdivision was established with headquarters at Khagaria.

FREEDOM MOVEMENT.

The role of Monghyr in the recent freedom movement has been very important and deserves much more than a passing reference. The people of Monghyr, of course, did not carry on an isolated movement, but as a part of the general movement in India as a whole.

The influence of the great social and political reformer, Raja Ram Mohan Roy was distinctly felt in this district. In 1864, branches of the Brahmo Samaj were established at Monghyr and Jamalpur. These two branches of the Brahmo Samaj worked as the nucleus for the renaissance movement which quickly caught the imagination of the people and there were a number of social and religious institutions organised which were in a way the fore-runners of the freedom movement in this district. Monghyr was visited by leaders like Swami Ramkrishna Paramhansa, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Pandit Lekhram and others. In 1897 a branch of the Arya Samaj was opened at Monghyr and quickly smaller centres of the Arya Samaj were formed at Jamalpur, Khagaria, Gogri, and other places. Monghyr received a number of visits from earnest Arya Samaji preachers like Swami Nityanand, Swami Visheshwaranand and others. The activities of the Arya and Brahmo Samaj centres helped a great deal in the social and national awakening of the people of Monghyr and in a way helped the struggle for freedom from 1885 when the first session of the Indian National Congress was held at Bombay. Keshab Chandra Sen lived in the fort area at Monghyr and at Jamalpur and attracted a large number of men and women.

Representatives from Bihar started taking interest in the activities of the Indian National Congress from the very beginning. Towards the end of the nineteenth century some of the enlightened men of Monghyr like Gopal Chandra Som, Tara Bhushan Banerji, Bhupal Chandra Mazumdar, Chhedi Prasad Choudhury, Jagannath Prasad, etc., began to take interest in multifarious social and political activities with a leaning towards the Indian National Congress. The annual political conferences held in different parts of Bengal were regularly attended by representatives from this district. The annual session of the political conference held at Bhagalpur in 1901 was largely attended by some of the leading citizens of Monghyr including Shri Tajeshwar Prasad.

Then came the Swadeshi movement which had its roots in the partition of Bengal in 1905. Monghyr was quickly drawn into the whirlpool of agitation in connection with the Swadeshi movement.

Surendra Nath Banerji, the uncrowned king of Bengal, visited Monghyr in 1906 and gave the slogan for the boycott of foreign goods and the exclusive use of Swadeshi goods. The Swadeshi movement was actively participated in by men like Gopal Chandra Som, Tara Bhushan Banerji, Bhupal Chandra Mazumdar, Chhedī Prasad Choudhury, Parmeshwari Prasad, Kamla Prasad and Deokinandan Singh. The movement attracted a band of selfless students who were destined to take later a very important part in the struggle for freedom. Prominent among them were Sri Krishna Sinha, at present the Chief Minister of Bihar, Tajeshwar Prasad, Radhika Prasad, Ram Kishore Singh and Ram Prasad. Monghyr came to a certain extent under the influence of bomb-cult of the Revolutionary Party of Bengal. Many of the young revolutionaries of Bengal used to visit Monghyr frequently and distribute pamphlets and leaflets and were trying to enlist young students of Monghyr to their fold. Sri Krishna Sinha, the present Chief Minister of Bihar, had also some connection with the Revolutionary Party and once took a vow touching the water of the Ganga river that he would serve his mother-country for his whole life. Young Sri Krishna from 1910 started organising the student community of Monghyr and quickly reached a popular position in the midst of young Bihar. There was an offer to him for becoming a member of the Servants of Indian Society but he did not join it as he wanted to serve his mother-land without being tied down to smaller institutions. In 1921 he published a weekly paper named 'Desh Sewak'. While a student in Calcutta he took an active part in the students' demonstrations in connection with the Swadeshi agitation. Young Bihar was moving fast. Biharī Students' Federation established at Calcutta through the efforts of young Sri Krishna and others had its branches at various places in Bihar including one at Monghyr. A largely attended session of the Federation was held in 1913 at Monghyr under the Presidentship of Dr. Rajendra Prasad. In 1917 the annual session of Bihar Provincial Political Conference was held at Monghyr under the Presidentship of Khan Bahadur Nawab Sarfaraz Hussain Khan in which a number of leading citizens of Bihar including Dr. Sachchidanand Sinha took a prominent part. Another popular body functioning as the People's Association had been set up at Monghyr which was nursed by men like Tajeshwar Prasad, Murlidhar and others. All these institutions led to a certain participation in the wider upsurge current in the country and helped a great deal in the national awakening of the people of the district.

The year 1917 is an important landmark in the history of the country. A fresh momentum had been given to the political awakening by the Home Rule Movement of Mrs. Annie Besent, the school of politics of Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak and the Champaran Satyagraha which was Gandhiji's first struggle in India. It was no wonder that Monghyr with the ground that had already been prepared quickly took her part in these movements.

Political events with wider implications to the whole of the country followed quickly. The repressive policy adopted by the British Government to crush the movement brought in the measure known as the Rowlat Act. Soon after in 1919 Mahatma Gandhi started his Satyagraha movement. The Satyagraha movement swept the district. *Hartals* were observed, fasts were undertaken, prayers were held, unauthorised processions and meetings were organised throughout the district and the towns like Monghyr, Jamui, Begusarai, etc., and it was an anxious time to the British administration. The martial law that was promulgated in the Punjab was followed by the Khilafat movement and both the communities (Hindu and Muslim) in Monghyr district actively participated in the Khilafat movement. There was a great unrest among the people accentuated by the economic distress. The additional taxes that were imposed and the spiral rise in the prices of essential commodities led to a great agrarian unrest in Bihar. The unrest was common throughout the district. For the first time the political leaders of the district started making whirlwind tours on foot, *ekka* and the country boats and the messages of all-India leaders quickly reached the masses through the roving sincere workers. A large number of students gave up their studies and joined the Congress camp of volunteers. They began to use Khadi cloth and propagate the ideas of the Indian National Congress.

When Mahatma Gandhi with alliance with the other leaders and the sponsors of the Khilafat movement declared his desire of launching a non-co-operation movement on all-India basis, the district of Monghyr offered a sincere co-operation. In August, 1920 a widely attended provincial conference was held at Bhagalpur in which a large number of people from Monghyr took active part. The conference passed the resolution of non-co-operation. In September, 1920 a session of the Indian National Congress was held at Calcutta in which a resolution was passed for starting an all-India non-co-operation movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. It was decided to open branches of the Indian National Congress throughout the country and the resolution was quickly implemented in the district of Monghyr. During his whirlwind tours Mahatma Gandhi along with Shaukat Ali visited Monghyr and addressed a huge meeting attended by people from different corners of the district. From this point the political history of this district was in common with the history of the country. The people of Monghyr faithfully followed the different phases of the Indian National Congress. From 1920 the Congress at its Nagpur session had declared the demand of Purna Swarajya and not mere dominion status as the goal till 1924 when the non-co-operation movement spread like a wild fire. This district recorded her faith in the Congress. Titles offered by the Government were abandoned, lawyers left their practice at the bar, students observed *hartals* in schools and colleges, *panchayats* were formed in the villages, boycott of the foreign cloth

and goods was undertaken and the use of Charkha and Swadeshi goods became common. Burning of foreign cloth was quite common. The Swarajya movement found a band of faithful followers in Monghyr district.

It is not possible to mention the names of all the persons who were leading the Congress movement in Monghyr. Some of them were Shah Mohammad Zubair, Sri Krishna Sinha, Tajeshwar Prasad, Radhika Prasad, Dharma Narain Singh, Maulana Ali Azim Saheb, Maulvi Zafiruddin, Baldeo Singh, Sri Krishna Mishra, Hari Shankar Das, Suresh Chandra Mishra, Karyanand Sharma, Nand Kumar Singh and Kumar Kalika Prasad Singh. A District Congress Committee was established under the Presidentship of Shah Mohammad Zubair with Tajeshwar Prasad as its Secretary and Sri Krishna Sinha was entrusted with the work of organising the Congress throughout the district. Thana Congress Committees were established at important thanas.

The programme consisted of the well-known activities like the establishment of Gram Panchayat, preaching of Swadeshi cult, establishment of national schools, promotion of Hindu-Muslim unity, prohibition and ending of untouchability.

It was obvious that Government would not have brooked all these activities. A large number of leaders were arrested and imprisoned. They included men like Shah Muhammad Zubair, Sri Krishna Sinha, Dharma Narain Singh, Tajeshwar Prasad and others. The torch was kept aflame by others like Namdhari Singh, etc., when they were in prison. Adverse circumstances threw up leaders from unexpected quarters and there was never a cessation of the Congress activities. Dr. Rajendra Prasad in the course of his tour in Bihar visited the subdivisions of Monghyr district and addressed several meetings. Monghyr was selected as one of the three centres in Bihar for starting a collective non-co-operation movement according to the programme of Mahatma Gandhi at Bardauli which had to be postponed owing to the Choura-chauri riot in Gorakhpur. In 1922, the first session of the Monghyr District Political Conference was held at Lakhisarai. On the 13th April, 1923 in connection with the Satyagraha movement a large number of men from Monghyr were arrested at Nagpur. When Jamuna Lal Bajaj established Gandhi Sewa Sangh there were two members from Monghyr, namely Suresh Chandra Mishra and Gadadhar Prasad.

In September, 1923, the Swaraj Party supported the programme of entering the legislatures with a view to mend or end the constitution of 1919. Shah Muhammad Zubair was elected to the Council of State from the Muslim constituency. In 1924 Sri Krishna Sinha and Kumar Kalika Prasad were elected to the Provincial Assembly. In 1926 Sri Babu was elected the Leader of the Opposition. His dignified and fiery oratory was an invaluable asset to the country.

In 1928 when Sir John Simon visited Patna a large number of people from Monghyr went to Patna to participate in the demonstration to show their position to the Simon Commission. In 1929 the Provincial Political Conference was held at Monghyr. One of the participants in this Conference was Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. When the Congress decided to observe the Independence Day on the 26th January, 1930 Monghyr took up the programme solemnly. The later phases of the civil disobedience movement and salt satyagraha were also fully organised. Sri Babu resigned from the Legislature and threw himself in the movement of salt satyagraha. On the 20th April Sri Babu and his associates started making salt at Garhpura village and were arrested. On the 23rd April Sri Babu was awarded three months' rigorous imprisonment. The arrest of Sri Babu, however, did not abate the movement of salt satyagraha. The work was entrusted to Nand Kumar Singh and others and simultaneously salt satyagraha was started at more than 100 places within the district. The fear complex of the people had completely liquidated. In a similar manner the other phases of the programme, namely, boycott of foreign cloth and encouragement of prohibition were being pushed through. On the 16th November, 1930, Jawahar Day was observed in the town of Monghyr and a large unauthorised procession was taken out which was broken up by the police and a number of organisers received *lathi* injuries. Some of the arrested persons were Devendra Narain Singh, Dharma Narain Singh, Nemdhari Singh, Nirapada Mukherji and Baldeo Singh. Gogri, Begusarai, Teghra, Tarapur, Barhaiya, Jamui and the town of Monghyr were important places of Satyagraha movement in which a number of ladies also had taken part. It is calculated that in 1930-31 about 1,500 persons had been arrested in the district and 6 persons had become martyrs being the victims of the police bullets. When the Congress was declared a proscribed organisation in January, 1932, the Congress offices, Ashrams, national schools, buildings, properties, etc., were confiscated by the Government. All the top leaders were arrested and many of them were awarded more than one year's imprisonment. But the mass arrest of the leaders and a visit by the Governor of Bihar to Monghyr on the 15th January, 1932 did not prevent the people of Monghyr in celebrating the 26th January as the Independence Day and a big unauthorised procession of about 10,000 persons was taken out on the road. The crowd was dispersed by the police with the help of *lathis*. On the 15th February, 1932 the Congress volunteers at the point of police bayonets hoisted the national flag on the courts of the Judges and Munsifs at Monghyr. Observance of National Week and other important days were always implemented. On the 25th July the Tilak Maidan Congress Office was raided by the Congress volunteers, the lock was broken and the national flag was hoisted. Baldeo Prasad Singh led a number of volunteers from Monghyr to take possession of Sadaqat Ashram at Patna. Proscribed leaflets and pamphlets used to be cyclostiled and

distributed secretly. Mention has also to be made particularly of four ladies of the town, namely, Shrimati Sona Devi, Thakur Devi, Murti Devi and Yasoda Devi who were arrested while picketing the post offices. With the Congress as a proscribed organisation the work was controlled by the dictators appointed from time to time. In 1942, one after another, Baldeo Singh, Ram Charitar Singh, Mahendra Singh, Krishna Mohan Pyare Singh were selected as dictators. These were the days of naked repression when not only heavy jail sentences were awarded but also punitive fines were realised with torture.

At the Patna Conference of the All-India Congress Committee held in the month of May, 1934 it was decided to abandon individual Satyagraha. The Congress for the time being postponed this struggle of independence by means of civil disobedience movement and turned to secure its objective by constitutional means. For the purpose of fighting elections a Parliamentary Board was formed. The Government also removed its ban on the Congress and restored the confiscated properties. The Congress organisation in Monghyr was reorganised and by the middle of 1934 civil disobedience movement abated for the time being. In 1935, elections were held both for the Central and Provincial Assemblies. In the district of Monghyr Sri Krishna Sinha, Nirapada Mukherji, Ram Charitar Singh, Kumar Kalika Prasad Singh and Dr. Raghunandan Prasad were elected members of the Provincial Assembly. When in 1937 the Congress formed the first Ministry of Bihar under the Act of 1935 Sri Krishna Sinha of Monghyr was elected to lead the Ministry as Chief Minister.

In September, 1939 when the Second World War broke out political circumstances again changed. Since the British Government in India did not clearly express their intention for joining the war and refused to accept the complete independence of India as its ultimate goal the Congress executives at Wardha in October passed a resolution ordering the Congress Ministries in the Provinces to resign. Shri Sri Krishna Sinha's Ministry resigned and this ushered in another phase of struggle for freedom. In March, 1940, the Congress had its session at Ramgarh in Hazaribagh district. The demand for complete independence was reiterated at Ramgarh and it was decided to start Satyagraha against the war policy. Mahatma Gandhi threw up a plan of individual Satyagraha and permission was given only to confirmed supporters of the Congress to offer individual Satyagraha. The slogan adopted was "Hai Samrajyabadi yeh larayee, na denge ek pie, na denge ek bhai" (It is an imperialistic war, we shall neither give any money nor any man). In accordance with this programme Sri Krishna Sinha became the first Satyagrahi. He offered Satyagraha at the Lawn in Bankipore (Patna) and was immediately arrested. At Tilak Maidan of Monghyr Nemdhari Singh was the first man to offer Satyagraha in Monghyr

district and was arrested. After him, one by one, Ram Charitar Singh, Sayed Rafiuddin Ahmad Rizvi, Shri Narain Lal, Ramgovind Prasad Verma, Ram Prasad and Nurulla Saheb offered individual Satyagraha and courted their arrest. The movement spread throughout the length and breadth of the district and a large number of persons were arrested in this connection.

The quick changes of fortune in the war in the course of which the Allied Armies suffered some serious defeats could not but make the people more restive. The Japanese invasion was in the air. Subhash Chandra Bose had become a legend and the idea of Bose invading India at the head of an Indian National Army was viewed with mixed feelings. The countryside was filled up with British and American soldiers. At various places of the district military barracks were built. All this meant to the politically conscious people the last gasp of British imperialism in India. The Quit India Movement sanctioned by the Congress Executive Body on the 14th July, 1942 and the resolution passed by the All-India National Congress Committee on the 7th August, 1942 that a general popular movement based on non-violence be immediately started had its quick repercussions. On one side the all-India leaders were quickly put within the prison bar and the leaders in provinces were followed up. But the great August movement of 1942 spread and there was a practical cessation of Government in many parts of the country including parts of this district for a few days. The people were permeated with the spirit of resistance for the achievement of the goal of independence. It is true that the movement took shapes like dismantling of the railway lines, cutting down roads, tampering with telephones and telegraphs and even attacks on Government buildings and an attempt to damage them. *Hartal* was observed and processions actively demonstrated by the girls and boys. Public meeting, hoisting of national flag, looting of trains, destroying liquor shops, burning of Government papers at the railway stations, at the registration offices, etc., raiding of post offices and railway stations were some of the phases of this movement. It is true that in some cases foreign soldiers were killed and their arms and ammunitions were snatched away. Mob fury once aroused is difficult to be controlled. The pivot of Government is prestige and with the removal of the prestige it is no wonder that the movement took a peculiar turn. For a moment it almost looked that the British Raj had come to an end. Quickly a network of Gram Panchayats were set up, local courts started functioning and even convicted persons were sent to the newly created prisons. But the heavy hands of the administration came down quickly on the people. Military were let loose throughout the district. British and American soldiers and Baluchi military units were distributed and there was a ruthless campaign of mass arrests, carnage and shooting on the part of the military. Unarmed mobs were charged with *lathis* and fired upon. At several places machine guns were said to have been used from aeroplane.

Heavy fines were imposed on the people. The Congress offices and Ashrams were confiscated and sealed by Government. In the movement of 1942 it is understood that about 3,000 persons were arrested and at several dozen places firing was resorted to. It is said that more than one thousand persons had been wounded and at least 25 persons had been killed by bullets.

Towards the end of 1943 the movement gradually abated and the Congress took up a constructive policy. The Government also gradually relaxed their repressive measures. In 1944 Sri Krishna Sinha and Anugrah Narain Sinha were released. In June, 1945 Mahatma Gandhi and the members of the Congress Executive Committee were let off. The Second World War came to an end. In the month of September the Government removed the ban on the Congress. Political prisoners were released and the Congress offices and Ashrams were restored. The District Congress Office at Tilak Maidan and the offices of Thana Congress Committees started a programme of reorganisation again.

At the beginning of 1946 elections to the both Central and Provincial Assemblies were held. A Congress member of the district was elected a member in the Central Assembly from Monghyr-cum-Gaya constituency. In the Bihar Assembly Sri Krishna Sinha, Ramcharitar Singh, Nirapada Mukherji, Kumar Kalika Prasad Singh, Sarjog Singh, Kamleshwari Yadav, Bhagwat Paswan and Dr. Raghunandan Prasad were elected from the non-Muslim constituencies. A Congress Ministry was formed again in Bihar and Sri Krishna Sinha was elected the leader and became the Chief Minister of Bihar. Another Minister, Ram Charitar Singh also belonged to the district of Monghyr. Nirapada Mukherji, another member from Monghyr was made a Parliamentary Secretary while Shyama Prasad Singh was elected a member in the Bihar Legislative Council and was later made its Deputy Chairman. One of the first act of the Congress Ministry was to release the political prisoners who were still in jails. In the month of August, 1946 a series of communal riots broke out throughout the country, and some parts of Monghyr had the full blast of them. On the 15th August, 1947 India secured her freedom and the same day everywhere in India Independence Day was celebrated. The people of Monghyr participated in the celebration amongst great joy and pleasure.

ARCHAEOLOGY.

The district contains several remains of antiquarian interest. The last *District Gazetteer of Monghyr* published in 1926 has the following paragraph :—

“ In addition to the great fort at Monghyr, there are the ruins of other forts at Indpe (near Jamui), Naujakhagarh (near Khaira), Chakai, Jaimangalgarh in the Kabar Tal, and Naula in the Begusarai subdivision. Buddhist

remains are to be found at Rajaona and Hassanganj near Lakhisarai and at Uren near Kajra. There is an inscription of about the tenth century at Kashtharani Ghat and another referring to the Bengal Sultan Rukn-ud-din Kaikaus (1297 A. D.) at Lakhisarai. The oldest extant building of the Muhammadan period is the *dargah* of Shah Nafah, built in 1497-8 by Prince Danyal, son of Ala-ud-din Husain, king of Bengal."

There has been a certain amount of research regarding the antiquities at Naulagarh, Jaimangalgarh, Shamho Chak and Ranigodhna. Prof. Radha Krishna Chaudhury has been researching on these lines and the archaeological records of Begusarai published by him in the Ganesh Dutta College Bulletin series contain some of his valuable articles on the subject.

Dr. D. C. Sarkar has also published an article on Naulagarh inscription in the Journal of the Bihar Research Society (September—December issue of 1951). All these researches show that this area played a very important part particularly in the early Pala period.

Naulagarh, 16 miles north-west of Begusarai is surrounded from all sides by fortifications with gates and a canal on the western side. There are a number of mounds. Some excavations were done and some fine sculptural remains in black stone, big earthen jars, broken pieces of ancient pots, small beads and earthen seals, one silver coin and a broken Vishnu image with an inscription on the pedestal and other terra cottas have been found. The date of the Vishnu image has been placed in the latter half of the eleventh century A. D.

✓ Jaimangalgarh, 13 miles north of Begusarai town is still an important religious centre and on every Tuesday and Saturday hundreds of people assemble there to worship the goddess Jaimangala. Surrounded on all sides by a moat and then by a lake known as Kabar Tal, the area with high mounds present a picturesque site. There was a patch of jungle which has been recently cleared and the Kabar lake drained out for reclaiming the submerged lands. The mounds have been levelled down and the area is being used for agricultural purposes. Ordinary agricultural ploughing up has led to the discovery of ancient bricks, clay balls, remains of old structures and a brick wall. An inscribed gold plaque was said to have been found but it is now missing. On the north-eastern side there are distinct mounds called *Daitahā dih*. These mounds are still preserved.

The origin of the temple of goddess Jaimangala is believed to be very ancient. Some very fine black stone images of Varaha, Badrinarain, Ganga, Shiva Parbati, etc., and one artistic column in black stone have also been found. All this shows that Jaimangalgarh was also like Naulagarh, an important centre during the Pala period. The theory that Jaimangalgarh was the centre of Sakti cult during the Pala period has been advanced but requires further investigation.

The Pandas of Jaimangalgarh had been granted rent-free land which they enjoyed during the Hindu and Muslim periods. The Pandas are in possession of three *sanads* dated 1794 A. D. Not only Jaimangalgarh was allowed to remain revenue-free but Government made an annual grant for the purpose of feeding monkeys and keeping alight a lamp which was to be burnt day and night in the temple. In 1852 on the discovery that the obligations were not being fulfilled the grant was stopped.

Shamho Chak, a group of villages on the bank of the river Ganga, parts of which have been eroded by the river, presents another ancient site of antiquity.

Uren, an ancient Buddhist site is at a distance of only 6 miles from Shamho. It is believed that Lord Buddha spent one of his rainy seasons at Uren and had also visited Shamho.

Before the erosion of the villages there were a number of mounds and some antiquities have been found: An inscribed image of Buddha was discovered and is preserved in a temple. A big incised brick near a well was discovered. The inscription was that one Dhiraj Singh had repaired the well in Fasli 760 (1351-52 A. D.). This brick is now missing. It is said that the Collector of Monghyr had removed the brick in 1925-26 when he visited the place with Sir Ganesh Dutta Singh, a Minister.

The Chakwars of Shamho Chak have already been referred to. The Chakwars, a sub-caste of Bhumi-har-Brahman traced back their genealogy to one Chirain Mishra who migrated from Tirhut to Begusarai subdivision in the tenth-eleventh century. He established a small kingdom which slowly extended and comprised the area from Rajmahal in the east to Tekari in the west and from Darbhanga in the north to the borders of Orissa in the south.

Grants of land by Raja Bakhtawar Singh and Raja Shiva Dutta Singh have been traced. In Fasli 1126 (1719-20 A. D.) Raja Shiva Dutta Singh made a grant of 5,229 bighas of land at village Balia to the Muslim saint Hazarat Sayed Shah Mohiuddin Bokhari. This grant was respected by Ali Vardi and his successors and later on confirmed by the East India Company in 1828 A. D. The East India Company records have frequent references to the Chakwars of Shamho. They had become very powerful and were putting the European traders to heavy annual expenditure for armaments to assure a safe passage of their boats carrying merchandise from and to Patna.

The village of Rani-godhna, 16 miles west of Begusarai has finds of ancient bricks and potteries. Tradition has it that Akbar once stayed at this village with his two wives and the name of the village is associated with Akbar's queens.

Bhimbandh, situated about 12 miles south-west of Kharagpur was identified by Cunningham as the site where Buddha overcame the Taksa Vakula. Waddle, however, doubts this identification.

The village Indpe, 4 miles south of Jamui has the ruins of a large fort attributed by local tradition to Indradyumna. Dr. Buchanan has left an account of this area. Mr. Beglar visited the place in 1872 and observed that a thorough examination of the many mounds should be worth an excavation.

Jainagar, a small village close to Lakhisarai has given us an inscribed Vishnu image which indicates that about 1154 A. D. Madanpala recovered Monghyr from the Gahadwals.

Another site of antiquity is at Kiul (Brindaban). To the south is the small village of Kawaya with a number of mounds. Cunningham had excavated one of the mounds and had discovered a small chamber. According to General Cunningham the building belonged to ninth-tenth century. Two thousand and seven hundred seals were discovered. On the western bank of the Kiul river is Lakhisarai with several brick mounds and undoubtedly an ancient Buddhist site. A number of statues were discovered and some of them are preserved in the Indian Museum and Ashutosh Museum of Calcutta. An inscribed image of Avalokiteshwara was discovered here and an account of the same has been published in the G. D. College Bulletin series no. II. There is an inscription at Lakhisarai referring to the Bengal Sultan, Rukn-ud-din Kaikaus (1297 A. D.).

General Cunningham had made some excavations at Noongarh, a village in Jamui subdivision and found a broken inscribed image and the remains of a monastery were discovered.

Rajauna, 2 miles north-west of Lakhisarai has given us a number of important old Buddhist and Brahminical images which have been carried to different temples and the Indian Museum, Calcutta.

There is an inscription of tenth century at Kastharini ghat in Monghyr at village Semiria (Jamui subdivision). There is a large inscribed statue of Buddha at Sringirishi (Kharagpur hills). Cunningham found several Buddhist and Brahminical figures and inscriptions. Cunningham had also identified Sheikhpura, a village visited by Hiuén Tsiang in the seventh century A. D. The Dargah of Shah Nafah built in 1497-98 by Prince Danyal has already been referred to. Alauligarh in Khagaria subdivision is a promising archaeological site. Of the many more recent historic remains mention may be made of Hastings fort at Chakai, a growing township in the extreme south of the Jamui subdivision. It was built by Capt. Browne, the first representative of the British rule in this corner of the district.*

*See "Some notes on Monghyr"—D. G. Crawford (Bengal : Past and Present). July 1908. Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report, 1926-27, Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report, 1922-23.