

HISTORY.

EARLY HISTORY.

The early history of Palamau is not authentic but we have legends about it. It is, however, certain that Kbarwars, Oraons and Cheros, the three aboriginal races practically ruled over the tract. The Kbarwars claim to be Suryavanshi Kshatriyas¹. They trace their descent from Ajanagara or Ayodhya. Karusa was the sixth son of Manu Vaivasvata and he was assigned the eastern territory. The descendants of Karusa, were called Karusas who subsequently come to be known as Karwars or Kharwars. According to tradition they were the rulers of Rohtasgarh. The Kharwars point to the days of Pratapadhal, one of the line of chiefs who ruled there in the twelfth century A.D., during the time of their greatest prosperity.

The Cheros have been spoken in very high terms in the *Aitareya Aranyaka*² along with the Vangas and Magadhas. They did not observe the Vedic sacrifices and still they are termed as revered Cheros '*Cheropadas*'. There is not much evidence to show that the Cheros came to this region from Kumaun as some think.

The Mundas claim descent from Karusas. The *Ramayana* records their flight to the south. Some say that these aboriginals played the band at the time of Rama's coronation at Ayodhya and they were assigned this region in lieu of their meritorious services. The Pandavas killed Jarasandha-an ally of the Mundas. Naturally in the *Mahabharata* War the Mundas sided with the Kauravas and were in the army of Bhishma. Sanjaya³ says that on the left wing of Bhishma are the Karusas with the Mundas, Vikarna and Kundivarsa. Satyaki⁴ compares the Mundas with the demons and boasts that he would put an end to them just as Indra ended the demons. Arjuna is said to have married a Naga princess from this region and Babhravahana was born of this lady.

LAND OF BUDDHISM.

.Amarnath Das⁵ propounds a novel theory regarding the course of the river Ganga and the life story of Lord Buddha. According to him the Ganga river flowed through the Vindhya, passing by Palamau and entered the sea through Mayurbhanja, at some distance to the west of the present outlets. He fixes the head of the Ganga delta at Ramgarh, south of Chaibassa and indicates the alignment of the river connection from Chaibassa to the Ganga in the valley to the north of the Vindhya. According to Das, a connection from Varanasi southwards penetrating the Vindhya was existing. The two rivers North Koel and South Koel. Coalescing at the same point gave him the key and he

thinks that the two Keels were one river at one time but had split into two sections later on. From Ramgarh, the Suvarnarekha channel went up very near the channel of the South Koel where the connection must have existed and then the river entered the Vindhya, following the course of the South and North Koel and joined the Son river near Rohtasgarh. According to him the name of the river near this locality was known as the Ganga even so late as 1665 A.D. as Tavernier mentions in his travels. As to why Koel should lose its name in the Ganga, it is suggested that Tavernier might have been misled by Pliny's account that the Ganga yielded precious stones and mistook the Son with the Ganga. Soncum- Koel was formerly, according to Das, a section of the Ganga river flowing past Sasaram, Rohtasgarh and on to Rajbara, Garhikbas, 4 miles north of Daltonganj, North Koel bed, ancient town of Netarhat, Chechhari and ancient ruins of Tamolgarh. Obstructed in its course at Daltonganj, it spilled its water eastward passing by the channel of the Amanat up to Ambakara, then through the valley of Chako river passing to the north of Levalong, close to Chatra to its north, and then close to Chauparan to its north, it reached Monghyr.

Amarnath Das had also come out with the bold theory that Gautama Buddha's birth place and travels lay within the Palamau district. He gave reasons and identified the places connected with the life of Buddha as follows:-

Palibothra— Palamau.

Kapilavastu— Rajkhetta lying 60 miles south of Palamau.

Kusinagara— Kerava near Paharbul where a neglected tope still exists.

Pava— Paharbul lying 100 miles south-west of Palamau.

Mahabodhi— A place 40 miles south-west of Palamau or 20 miles west of Netarhat.

Varanasinagara— Baravenagar, 20 miles south of Netarhat.

Kotigama—Kutti village on the bank of river Koel.

Vaisali— Vesariya Kalan, 2 miles north-east of Kutti village.

Nadi—Chandika— Chando, between Kutti and Basariva, distortion of Chandika or Chandikakanana.

Mallakuta—Kutti.

Bhandagama—Bhandaria.

Amdanda—Ambagama or Amargawan.

Hathigama—Hatami.

Bhojnagara—Bhoja on the confluence of Gulafula and Mahan.rivers.

Jaluka Mahanna— Sal forest of Jaladega.

1. Pre-Mauryan History of Bihar by Dr. D. S. Trivedi.

2. Aitareya Aranyaka 2-1-1.

3. Mahabharata Bhishma Parva.

4. Mahabharata Bhishma Parva.

5. India and Jambou Island by Amarnath Das, I.S.E., Book Company, Calcutta, 1931

Hiranyavati— Rehara river.

Saraswati—Sarasotia near Bhandaria.

Savitri— Satabaha.

Bhargava Chyavana's Ashrama— On the confluence of the Son and Koel rivers.

Yastigrahaka or Yastivana— Latehar.

Champanagara— Chanpikallan, 5 miles east of Palamau.

Devadaha— Deorwaha, 30 miles west of Rajkbeta.

Sravasti—Saravath, 10 miles north-west of Rajkbeta.

Achiravati river or Saravati river— Ajher, a tributary of the Rehara river.

Gridhrakuta— Harilaong hills.

Saptaparni— Satbarwa.

Niranjana river— Buda river.

Kukkutapadagiri—The hill extending from Kukud hill to north west of Mahuadanr.

Budhavanagiri— Kumandi forest.

Kusagrapura— Rajagriha— Daltonganj.

Nalanda— A site within a radius of 8 miles from Ambabara.

Das identified the road from Yastivana to Kusagrapura as the road from Latehar to Satbarwa which still exists.

The theory advanced by Amarnath Das is rather ingenious and some of the similar names of sites with places well-known in Buddhist history are intriguing. But archaeological evidence is against the assumptions and later research and excavations at Vaishali and other

Places have thrown up a lot of additional evidence. No reliance, therefore, can be put on the theory of Das. But, his researches do show that Palamau had a hoary past and there was at one time clear Buddhist influence on this district. Even now at a village Murtia near Latehar

a large number of Buddhist relics could be seen.

We have no positive evidence to prove that the district was under the direct rule of the Mauryas, the Sungas and other imperial dynasties of India ruling at Pataliputra. Palamau, helped by her difficult mountains and terrains, seems to have maintained its independence during the height of imperial glory of Pataliputra. It is just possible that the people owed allegiance to the mighty rulers only when the suzerain power was strong enough to exact tributes from them. But as soon as they left, the mountain chiefs of Palamau re-asserted themselves.

ARCHAEOLOGY.

It is unfortunate that there has not been much of archaeological exploration in this district. There are quite a number of sites of archaeological importance which might have thrown up important relics some of them may be mentioned. The hill called Bahuraj situated in the village Juruahar is said to be the native place of Muchuk Rani of the Kharwars. Chainpur, two miles south-west of Daltonganj and Hussainbad, the present Japla (Sanskrit *Japila*) are other archaeological sites. Manatu, 36 miles south-east of Daltollganj, Narainpur at Mankeri Tappa, Ranka, 14 miles south of Garhwa, Untari and

Tamolgarh in Mahuadanr police-station have old forts. At village Saguna, P.-S. Paton, 14 miles from Daltonganj, a copper axe-head was found. Hamigarh, P.-S. Mahuadanr, 75 miles from Daltonganj and 9 miles from Mahuadanr has yielded some more copper relics. Belaonja Pargana is a strategic area bounded by Mirzapur, Shahabad and Gaya districts and we have very little knowledge of its antiquarian remains. This portion held out for a long time. As Palamau formed a semi-independent tract both in pre-Muslim times as well as during the Muslim rules, it is quite, possible that there may be important relics, inscriptions, etc., in this area. It has to be remembered that during the Muslim rule in India, Palamau formed a part of Kokar or present Chotanagpur and although the small rulers of the area used to pay occasional tributes whenever there was any invasion or a threat, they maintained their independent. It is a pity that history of this area was little known till the beginning of the 16th century. That itself shows that the mountainous nature of the area, the deep forests, the bad communications, the wild animals and the sturdy tribes, experts in guerilla warfare, had kept away the invaders.

EARLY SETTLERS.

The Marhattas are one of the early settlers in the area and they appear to have come after the Cheros. Apparently, they formed then portions of the Marhatta army. There is a village known as Marahatiya near Garhwa. According to tradition the Marhattas migrated to Surguja from this area. As there is no trace of them as such in Palamau district now, there could be an interesting investigation as to bow the Marhattas have merged into the indigenous population. There is a big open field at Daltonganj known as Shivaji Maidan. The Rakshel Rajputs appear to have come to the district after the Marhattas and they were able to supplant the Marhattas. The Rakshel Rajputs were more of free booters and they retained possession of Palamau until 1613 when they were driven by the Cheros under Bhagawant Rai.

THE CHEROS.

The Cheros trace their descent from the sage Chyavana. It is not certain as to when the Cheros had invaded Palamau. According to one tradition, the Cheros came in company with the Kharwars while according to other the Kharwars were already there when the Cheros came. There appears to have a mingling of common interest between the Cheros and the Kharwars and their allegiance is said to have numbered 18,000 Kharwars and 12,000 Cheros. Even today the Cheros and the Kharwars speak of themselves belonging to the *Attharah Hazari* or the Barah Hazari. According to another story the Kharwar chiefs had to give way before their superior Cheros but the Cheros in order to stabilise their position quickly conciliated them and allowed the Kharwars to remain in a position of partial independence in the southern part of the district.

RAMCHANDRA.

The Chero chiefs were the most powerful rulers in South Bihar during the first half of the sixteenth century. Sher Shah, the Sur King, wanted the white elephant named Ramchandra from the possession of the Chero Raja as its possession was considered to be a sign of goodluck. But the Chero Raja would not part with it easily. It was only with great difficulty that Khawas Khan, a commandant of Sher Shah, could suppress the Cheros in 1538 and took over the elephant. The Cheros recovered their lost territory, shortly after the death of Sher Shah in 1545.

According to Bradley-Birt it was the recalcitrant attitude of the Chero tribes and the strategic importance of Palamau which forced Sher Shah to invade Palamau. So turbulent did they become under their chief Maharato Chero in the early part of the 16th century, that they held possession of the main road to Lower Bengal and practically blocked all communications. In 1538 Sher Shah sent one of his generals to subdue them and for the re-opening of the road which he rendered safe again for all travellers.

RAJA MAN SINGH.

Palamau felt the weight of the Muslim arms for the first time under Akbar. Raja Man Sing invaded and captured Palamau in 1574. He raided the passes and inflicted heavy losses on the defenders but treated all, who submitted, with consideration. By degrees, he settled his troops over the country. But soon after the death of Akbar in 1605 the Muslims were expelled.

Raja Durjan Sal was a powerful Chero chief but somehow the Mughals entrapped him and imprisoned him in the Gwalior fort. He, however, secured his freedom after twelve years by his wise discernment between a real and fake diamond by tying them on the horns of two deer when they fought. The fake one was easily broken.

The Chero Raja Sahabal Ray extended his sway up to Champaran. This conduct provoked the invasion of Emperor Jehangir (1605-1627). Sahabal Ray was defeated and captured in his own fort at Chainpur in Shahabad district. He was taken captive to Delhi. There he died fighting a tiger for the amusement of the Emperor.

BHAGAVAT RAY (1613-1630).

His son Bhagavat Ray, the next Chero Raja, was a dauntless hero. He was not in the least afraid of his father's sad fate. He continued his predatory raids on the imperial territories. Once he actually plundered a boat containing royal treasures. The imperial forces were

forced to take up the command. Bhagavat Ray took help from Deva Shahi of Dhavadanr near Tilothu in Shahabad district. Deva Shahi declared red him as his younger brother and to satisfy the Nazim they ate together. Deva Shahi gave him an introductory letter to Man Singh, the Rakshel Raja of Palamau, to Keephim in his servi"Ce. He subsequently occupiedthe Palamau area.--the gateway to Chotanagpur.l He brought Puranmalla, the younger son of Devil. Shahi, chief at Dhavadanr with him and made him his hereditary minister, i.e.,

Diwan. He ascended the throne of Palamau in 1613 after killing the relatives of Man Singh when the latter was absent in Sarguja for a marriage party. Man Singh did not return and capture the throne.

In 1629 Shahjehan appointed Ahamad Khan as a Subedar of Patna and gave him Palamau as the *Jagir* which included Japla, Belaunja, Deogan, Badam, Sarguja and Sherghati. Ahamad Khan imposed on all this territory an annual tribute of Rs. 1,36,000. This was the customary *peshkash* which Mughal Governors attempted to enforce.

ANANT RAY (1630-1661).

Palamau saw many changes during the 31 years of long rule of Anant Ray. During the reign of Shahjehan. the imperial forces attacked Palamau in October. 1641. Shaista Khan, Bihar Governor, marched from Patna on October 12,1641, at the head of an army of 5,000 horses and 15,000 foot soldiers and entered the territory of the Cheros through the Manatu pass. The march was under Shaista Khan who commanded the centre. Zabardast Khan was in the vanguard; Atash Khan Dhakhni and several other officers commanded the left wing and others commanded the right wing. Sayed Mirza, brother of Mukhtar Khan, with a few other officers commanded the rear.

Wherever Shaista Khan pitched his camp, he had trenches dug, the earth of which was formed into a wall surrounding the whole of the encampment and matchlockmen were placed as guards in the trenches to frustrate night-attackers. A large party was employed to cut down the jungles and make a road wide enough for the armies to advance. All settlements on both sides of the road were plundered and destroyed. The Cheros withdrew on every occasion to the jungles and hills.

By the end of January, 1642, the Mughal army had penetrated as far as Ara, and an advance was then ordered on the fort of Palamau. After a short but successful engagement, the Muslim troops pressed on to the fort, which was surrounded on all sides by thick forest, and here the advance guard was attacked by the Cheros when clearing the jungle for their encampment. Shaista Khan, on hearing of the engagement, sent at once a detachment to their assistance, and together with Zabardast Khan, took up a position on the bank of river Auranga which flows below the fort of Palamau. The Cheros, covered by the houses outside the fort, fired upon the Muslims. Many men of Shaista Khan were killed. The Mughal army dismounted and occupied the summit of a bill which commands

the fort. The firing lasted till evening and large numbers were killed and wounded. In the end, Anant Ray submitted and promised to pay a tribute of Rs. 80,000 and when this sum had been handed over, Shaista Khan left Palamau on February 12, 1642, in consideration of the heat and the approach of the rains.

SECOND INVASION.

Internal factions had now set in. A conspiracy against Anant Ray was started by his uncles Tej Ray and Durga Ray who secured the approval of Itihad Khan, the successor of Shaista Khan, as Bihar Governor for a project of imprisoning Anant Ray and seizing the *Gaddi* for themselves. In this enterprise Tej Ray, the younger of the two brothers, was successful. But he did not surrender Anant Ray to the Governor and gave *no* share, in the spoil to Durga Ray.

Durga Ray headed, another band of conspirators. They were disappointed with the new regime: They wanted to hand over the fort of Deogan if the Bihar Governor supported them with an army against, Tej Ray. This undertaking was faithfully carried out. The fort was surrendered to the Muslim force in October, 1643. Zabardast Khan, the Muslim commander, proceeded at once to prepare the way for a forward movement by cutting the jungle and widening the road to Palamau. Tej Ray set up an army of 660 horses and 7,000 foot to oppose his advance. This force was defeated in an engagement a few miles from Deogan. Shortly after this, Anant Ray was set at liberty by some of his adherents and put in possession of the Palamau fort.

Tej Ray fled Zabardast Khan then marched towards Palamau passing through dense jungles and forcing several difficult passes. When he was within six miles of Palamau, Partap Ray, grandson of Anant Ray, seeing the hopelessness of resistance, opened negotiations which ended in his going with Zabardast Khan to Patna. There he agreed to pay an annual

tribute of Rs. 1,00,000. On the recommendations of Itihad, Khan, Shahjahan conferred on Anant Ray a command (*Mansab*) of 1,000 horses and gave him Palamau as the military chief, its *jama* being fixed at Rs. 2 ½ lakhs.

1. *Some Sidelight on the Chero Rulers of Palamau*, by B. Verothama, Journal fo Historical Research, Vol. I, Part I, Ranchi 1958, pp. 44-46.

THIRD INVASION.

Up to this time the Muslims had succeeded, in spite of two invasions, in obtaining nothing but promises from the Palamau Chiefs who had practically continued the same

policy for two decades. Every year the Muslims demanded their tribute, the Palamau Rajas neglected to pay it and continued their cattle-lifting raids along the frontiers. They encroached upon the imperial lands adjacent to their country. Aurangzeb, therefore, ordered Daud Khan to invade Palamau early in 1660. Daud Khan, the Governor of Bihar, determined to teach a sharp lesson to the Chero Rajas and to subjugate their country completely.

PALAMAU FORT.

From the *Alamgirnama* we learn that the northern frontier of Palamau was only 50 miles from Patna. Palamau, the seat of the Chero Raja, was something of a City. It was fairly well populated with many *bazars* and protected by two strong forts, one on the summit of neighbouring hill, the other on the plain. There are two extensive forts of brick and stone which are well worth a visit. The walls, which are in fair preservation, are about five feet in thickness, and that the old fort bears marks of canon balls and bullets in many places. The gate leading to the old fort, the court room, temple and *zanana* quarters of the Raja as also the two deep but silted up wells in the old fort, are very interesting. Most interesting of all is the massive and beautifully caned stone gate (the *Nagpuri* gate) in the new fort and a round room, in which a well had been sunk to provide a supply of drinking water in case of a siege. The Auranga River flows close by. There are high hills and dense jungles all round. On the frontier, there were three great forts, viz., Kothi, Kunda and Devagan, and it was against these that Daud Khan proceeded to march.

He left Patna with a strong force on April 3, 1660. He reached Kothi, 6 miles south of Imamganj in the south of Gaya district on May 5, only to find that the enemy had abandoned it. He then moved on to kunda, a strong hill fort, 14 miles south-south-east, but this short distance took his army just a month to traverse. This shows how the area was covered with dense forests and wild animals. But Daud Khan was determined to advance methodically and to secure a safe line of communication. He set his army to clear the jungle and make a road. On June 3, he reached Kunda and found that this fort also had been evacuated. He razed the fort to the ground, and then he camped his army, as further advance was prevented by the approach of the rains. He fortified the encampments being built at short distances between Kothi and Kunda in each of which he placed a garrison.

On October 25, at the end of the rains, the army 6,400 strong, resumed its march, but the progress was very slow owing to the very cautious tactics of Daud Khan. A large body of pioneers was sent ahead to clear the forest and to make a road. Outposts were established along the line of March. Every evening entrenchment were thrown up round the camp to prevent surprise attacks at night. In nine days the army had only advanced twenty miles, reaching Loharshi near Amanat river on November 3. Here some time was spent in fruitless

Negotiations but by December 9, Daud Khan had penetrated within two miles of Palamau. The Cheros, advancing from the fort, threw up entrenchments and prepared to make a final stand.

Daud Khan then offered the Chero Raja the final terms of the, Emperor, viz., that he should submit, embrace Islam, and hold his State as a tributary chief. Before a reply was received, one of Daud Khan's captains, unable to suppress the eagerness of his soldiers, attacked the enemy's outworks on December 17. Daud Khan, hearing of the engagement, pushed forward with the rest of his force, threw up entrenchments within the enemy's fire, and commenced a bombardment which lasted, till sunset and put an end to the fighting. During the night, the Charos brought two large canons from the fort, and mounting them on their bastions completely dominated Daud Khan's trenches which were on a lower level. The Muslims were equal to the emergency, They spotted a hill overlooking enemy's position, and dragged their guns up the hill, opened fire and quickly silenced the enemy.

The fighting had now lasted three days, and the Cheros unable to hold their position, retreated to the banks of the river and proceeded to erect breastworks along the line of hills running parallel to them and to barricade the passes. Daud Khan following the same plan of clearing the country as he advanced, spent two or three days in felling the forest, which intervened between him -and the enemy, and then ordered a general advance. After a stubborn fight of six hours' duration, the Cheros filed into the fort.

It had been Daud's original plan to occupy the trenches dug by the enemy, and commence a siege. But the Muslim soldiers could not, check, their fury, and rushing to the river, they crossed it and attacked the fortifications which surrounded the town at foot of the fort. The Cheros withdrew to the higher fort, where the Raja, who had sent his whole family and valuables away to the jungles, continued the defence. The imperialists, in the meantime, had taken the lower fortifications and stood before the gate of the upper fort, where the fight raged, till the first watch of the evening. Half a watch later, the Raja fled to the jungle, when the whole fort was occupied by Daud's army. The town was cleared of the Hindus, their temples were destroyed and the prayer of Allah's glory filled the place. 1

The capture of the forts of Palamau in 1661 practically ended the struggle. The Cheros succeeded in maintaining the fort of Devagan *for some* time longer, But they were quickly expelled by a force sent by Daud Khan. The Muslim conquest was complete, Daud Khan remained for some time fortifying several strongholds and arranging for the administration of the country and then returned to Patna, leaving Palamau in charge of Mankli Khan, a Muslim Fauzdar.

1. Mammlal Library in Gaya has a painting on a large canvas indicating the deployment of Daud's army and the chero army. There are names of the chief bat had commanded the different sections on either side, Sri Shiu Prasad Mahaja, the public-spirited founder of the library procured this painting from the descendants of Daud Khan

at Daudnagar in Gaya district. Sri Mahajan is sure of the authority of the painting which is a rare find.

The latter was removed in 1666. Palamau was then placed under the direct control of the Viceroy of Bihar, Laskar Khan, the new Bihar Governor. Thus since 1666 Palamau came under the direct control of the Viceroy of the Emperor in Bihar. Muslim historians have made an error in supposing that these invasions were in the time of Pratap Ray instead, of Anant Ray. Bradley-Birt also followed the foot-steps of the Muslim historians, as he had also mentioned Pratap Ray and not Anant Ray. The error was due to the fact that Pratap Ray took the leading part in opposing the imperial forces and in offering the *Peshkash* (tribute). During the Muslim rule there was practically no interference. There were only some occasional risings.

Bhupal Ray came to the throne in 1661 only for four months. Many historians have missed him. Nothing untoward appears to have occurred during his short reign.

MEDINI RAY (1662-1674).

Medini Ray, the just, ruled for 13 years from 1662 to 1674. This Raja is, by far the most famous in the whole Chero line. He extended his sway over South Gays and large parts of Hazaribagh and Sarguja. He invaded and defeated the Maharaja of Chotanagpur in his capital city of Doisa, now called Navaratragarh, 33 miles from Ranchi. With its spoils, he built one of the Palamau forts (the lower fort) near modern Satbarwa, which played so important a part in the subsequent history of the district. Medini Ray's memory has survived

more for his justice than for his conquests. A popular Hindi couplet is even now current that in the reign of Raja Medini Ray, no house was without a churner and butter. This must be attributed to the widely extended economic prosperity during his reign. It is said he moved in disguise from house to house to see if anyone was without a cow or a buffalo. The wanting ones were given at least one on behalf of Raja Medini. He levied no tax on income. Once he

thought of exacting at least a shell from each headman as his tribute. Each headman presented him a gold shell instead as he had not demanded anything before. It is a popular story that this was due to the good influence of his queen who bathed on the lotus in the pond and the lotus did not sink due to her sweetness. He loved his subjects as his own children. There was complete peace and prosperity during his reign. There are many stories about his kindness and good rule.

OTHER CHERO CHIEFS.

Pratap Ray (1675-1681), the son and successor of Medini Ray, took up the second Palamau fort which was not complete. It remains, as it was left by the workmen, with

large heaps of stones piled up in the courtyard, some cut, others just as they came from the quarry-a fitting monument of the great power of Medini Ray, which after his death was undermined by quarrel and dissensions among his family members. He had a short and uneventful reign.

Pratap Ray was followed by Rudra Ray, his brother, for a very short period only.

*From an inscription in debased Sanskrit on a jamb of the second gateway of the new fort, it appears that the fort was built by Raja Medini Ray in *Sambat* 1619 Maghbadi 5 (8th January. 1634).

Drikpal Ray (1681-1697) was another brother of Pratap Ray. During his reign, Ibrahim Khan succeeded (1688 A.D.) Shaista Khan (1663-1688), Aurangzeb's maternal uncle, as the Subedar of Bengal and Bihar and the jagir of Paloon, etc. His Faujdar Biharidas raised the tribute from Rs. 1,36,000 to Rs. 1,40,000 by imposing an additional Peshkash Rs. 4,140 on the Jagirdars of Palamau. But the Subedar never succeeded in realising the demand with any regularity. The same difficulty was experienced after 1668 and in 1720. Ibrahim Khan claimed tributes as under in 1668:-

				Rg.
Sher	...	...	...	18,356
Sherghati	...	...	...	6,046
JapIa	...	...	...	3,895
Belainja	...	...	...	7,738
Devgan	...	...	...	3,553
Currumpur or Cohtee	...	...	...	9,120
Paloon	...	...	...	6,997
Coyra Orissa (Nagpur)	...	...	...	40,555
Sorgotcha (Sarguja)	...	...	...	20,000
Sayer of Paloon	...	...	...	10,963
Duty on hill merchants	...	...	...	4,000
Peshkash from Jagirdars of Paloon	...	...	...	4,140
Salami, etc.	...	...	...	5,560

Saheb Ray (1697-1716) was the son of Pratap Ray. Before him the Rajas of Palamau were independent sovereigns owing allegiance to none. During his reign the Delhi Emperor sent Nawab Abdulla Khan (1714) with an army to take possession of Palamau as a royal province. And from this time the Raja paid revenue to the kings of Delhi. Saheb Ray was followed by Ranjit Ray (1716-1722).

The Muslim emperors treated the country as a fief. They did not interfere so long as the tribute was regularly paid. To the south, the Chero Rajas retained their independence but the north was controlled by the Hindu or Muslim nobles.

According to Shitab Rai, nominally the Deputy of the Nawab, but in reality the Governor of Bihar, the rulers were still refusing to pay their tributes during the reign of

Muhamad Shah (1719-48). one of the feeble successors of Aurangzeb. Subedar Sarbuland Khan, after reducing Bhojpur, found it necessary to invade Paloon. This invasion must have coincided in time with the death of Ranjit Ray and the rise to power of the Babuan. It is possible that it was in some degree accountable for these happenings.

Nagbundi Singh of Nagpur, who is stated to have had at that time control over Palamau, Hazaribagh and Ranchi, finally paid Sarbuland Khan a lac of rupees- Rs. 45,000 in cash and the balance Rs. 55,000 in diamonds. Thereby Sarbuland Khan was induced to return with his troops to Patna. During the expedition Sarbuland Khan separated Sherghati and the parts below the ghats from the remainder of the *Jagir* and settled them with Mir Aziz Khan, a Rohilla adventurer, for Rs. 35,000. The succeeding Subedars were unenterprising and failed to realise the *Nazarana* from the hill tribes.

Ranjit Ray with the help of the Ramgarh Raja conquered Tori and held it for three years, probably up to the time of his death at the hands of Jai Krishna Ray. Rival factions had broken out. In 1772 a rebellion broke out in which Raja Ranjit Ray was defeated. He tied away but his place of concealment was quickly discovered by Amar Singh Diwan, by whose orders he was murdered and his place was taken by Jai Krishna Ray, the head of the Babuan. as the members of the younger branches of the ruling Chero family were called.

JAI KRISHNA RAY (1722--1770).

Jai Krishna Ray's long reign was eventful. It saw the decline of Muslim influence, rise of the Babuans to power, the inroads of the Marhattas and the insidious encroachment of the British power into Palamau.

In 1730, the Bihar Governor marched to Kunda and sent the Rohila ruler of Sherghati in advance to Palamau. This force was stopped at the passes by big trees that had been felled. There were guerilla fights as well. The Rohila himself was killed and his son subsequently met a similar fate in a later day. On hearing of this, Fughyr-ul-Dowlah, the Governor of Bihar, accepted a compromise by which the Palamau people agreed to pay an annual tribute of Rs. 5,000 and the *Ghatwals* of Ramgarh, a tribute of Rs. 12,000 on behalf of the Raja of Nagpur. These revenues were paid for three years only.

In 1734, Alivardi Khan, the new Subedar, after reducing the Zamindari of Tikari and Sonout marched to Kunda, dismantled the Chatra Fort and compelled the Ramgarh and Palamau *Ghatwals* (as they were then called) to renew their engagements. He gave pardon and restored the Rajas of Tikari and Sonout and rented Palamau and Ramgarh to them. These zamindars immediately invaded Ramgarh and captured Vishnu Singh, the *Ghatwal*, whom they compelled to disgorge Rs. 80,000 by way of arrears of revenue. From that time onwards Rs. 12,000 was realised from Ramgarh and Rs. 5,000 from Palamau.

In 1740, in expedition the Nawab undertook to subdue the chieftains of the hilly country. He was ambitious and thought that the Raja of Ramgarh should be curbed. This Raja was the most powerful of the Hindu Zamindars of the hills, and he had considerable influence. The Governors of the province had no control over him. He was joined in this design by Raja Sundar Singh and Raja Jai Krishna Ray both Zamindars of Palamau country, as well as by some other Zamindars of Siris, Kutumba and, Sherghati. Supported by such a confederacy, he laid siege to the fortress of Ramgarh and at last took it.

MARHATTA INROAD.

Suddenly news was brought that Raghuji Bhonsla had sent his own *Pradhnan* at the head of 40,000 horses to conquer Bengal and that in a few days they would pass close to him through the hills on their way to Bengal. He held consultations with his friends as the forces with him at that time, were hardly equal to the task of barring the passage to the Marhattas. They all advised him to quit the hilly country of Palamau. Accordingly, he got out fast of Palamau. In a few days the Marhattas rushed through it. Palamau, however, seems to have escaped much of the usual ravaged from the Marhattas. The Nawab raised troops to support the Emperor Shah Alamin his invasion of Bihar (1759-61). He founded the town of Hussainabad and for many years he lived there quietly until "he was pleased to depart to the merciful mansions of the Omnipotent Ring and was inhumed in the town which he had founded". On his death, Gulam Hussain Khan Shortly went to Murshidabad and there his family Jagir was confirmed in his own name (1765).

Diwan Amar Singh died shortly after the murder of Ranjit Hay in 1722. Sanat Singh, grandson of Amar Singh of Ranka, became the Diwan. Sanat Singh fell out with Jai Krishna Ray. Upon this Jai Krishna Ray ordered Gajraj Ray (ancestor of Bishrampur family) to put Sanat Singh to death. Accordingly, Gajraj went to Ranka and under pretence of talking to Sanat Singh, secretly beheaded him with his sword. The Thakurais, incensed at this treacherous murder of Sanat Singh, collected a force. They attacked Jai Krishna Ray, who was shot by a matchlockman in the fight.

Jai Krishna's son, Chhatrapati Ray with his two sons, Gopal Ray, and Karuna Ray along with Gajraj and Sugandha Ray, nephew of Jai Krishna, fled towards Sherghati in Bihar and took refuge in the home of Akhauri Udayant Ray, Kanungo.

BRITISH INTRUSION.

Jainath Singh, a cousin of the murdered Sanat Singh, *Dewan*, placed Chhatrapati Ray on the *gadi* and constituted himself the *Dewan*. In the meantime Udayant Ray, Kanungo went to Patna taking Gopal Ray with him to seek redress at the hands of the British.

Captain Jacob Camac was appointed in 1768 to command the Southern Frontier Detachment, which watched over a stretch of country extending from Kharagpur Haveli (in Monghyr) to the Son River. In 1769, he had to rescue Kharagdiha from the depredations of Ramgarh and in the end of 1770 he was sent to repress the activities of the people who were ravaging the company's territory.

At this time both, Jainath Singh, the Thakurai, who supported Chhatrapati Ray for the Palamau Raj, and Gajraj Ray, on behalf of Gopal Ray, were in negotiations with the Patna Council. The country had been mercilessly ravaged by three years of civil war, during which the Raja's own State extending for nearly 30 *kosas* from the fort almost to Kunda was much devastated and depopulated.

The Patna Council was much troubled by the defaulting zamindars who made a practice of retreating to the hills with their treasure when called upon to pay their revenue. The Council was also unable to realise during the disturbance, the contribution of Rs. 5,000 a year from Palamau. The Council decided that they must, at any rate, obtain and keep the fort for themselves as a guarantee against similar defaults in the future irrespective of the considerations whether they sided with Gopal Ray or Chhatrapati Ray in the family quarrel.

Jainath Singh was not willing to surrender the fort. Consequently in December, 1770 the Council ordered to attack Palamau, if necessary, while Lt. Barland was moved with two companies from Shahabad to Aurangabad. Jainath Singh was negotiating through the Faujdar Gulam Hussain Khan though in Company's service but a secret supporter of Jainath Singh. At length in January, 1771 he wrote boldly that he would not surrender the fort, nor give an estate worth Rs. 6,000 to Gopal Ray, and refused to attend in person at Patna and to give security. But he professed that he could only agree to a revenue of Rs. 4,000 to be fixed in perpetuity. The Council in reply offered to confirm Chhatrapati Ray as Raja and to fix the revenue of Rs. 5,000 for 10 years, but insisted that the fort of Palamau should be surrendered. It was mentioned "having come to Patna and requested our protection shall receive lands to the amount of Rs. 8,000 a year as a rent-free *jagir* on resigning all further claims to the zamindari". An answer was demanded within 10 days. No answer was received (Jan. 21, 1771). Captain Camac was ordered to proceed and he marched from Patna to Aurangabad in 22 hours. He met Gajraj on the way. Next day he pushed on and was met by Lt. Barland and Keating and Gopal Ray. Along with them he reached Kunda in two marches. The total strength of his detachment was 10 companies of infantry. Of these, he had to leave four in permanent posts. In addition, he was given one heavy gun. The principal zamindars held back as they did not like that Palamau should be in the Company's hands as it afforded them a good hiding place.

On January 26, 1771 Camac left Kunda and got through the first three passes and arrived before the fort without a shot fired. This he accomplished only by leaving his artillery and supply columns to follow later. The Raja abandoned the upper fort, on the

top of a hill, for want of water. Camac occupied *it* easily. A day or two later, he rescued his first supply column which was being escorted by matchlockman. For the next few days, he could only maintain a blockade, while he awaited the arrival of his heavy gun. During this interval he beat off two night attacks from outside and suffered the loss of the greater part of a column which had gone out under the guidance of Gajraj Ray and Budhan Singh.

Food, however, was running short. 'When the force left Kunda each man carried food to last for four days only. The first supply column brought in only three days' rations. Gulam Hussain Khan and Narayan Singh of Siris and Kutumba failed to send the promised supplies. Camac discovered that Narayan Singh had actually supplied 400 best fighters to the Thakurais. Ramgarh and Sarguja were also helping them with men and money. The troops had, therefore, to be put on short rations. From February 5, the camp followers and, servants received no food at all. On the 7th only one day's ration was left. On the 8th February Camac fell back to Jayanagar where he met Gulam Hussain Rban with a company of sepoys, 20 or 30 horses, 100 matchlockmen, 116 pack bullocks loaded with grain and Camac's own *bazaar* cattle. Here Gajraj joined the party.

Next day, Camac's Sergeant Major came in from Sherghati after overcoming the opposition in the passes on his way. He had the heavy gun, two tumbrels, two hackeries, 50 bullocks loaded with ammunitions and over 100 loaded with grains. Meanwhile Camac was negotiating with Jainath Singh who killed a messenger sent to him with a letter, and demanded that the invaders should retire from the country leaving him the fort and the district at the former revenue, to be paid in money and kind.

FORT CAPTURED.

On February 18, 1771, Camac again appeared before the walls of the fort, set up his heavy gun 150 yards from the wall, where it was made of brick and was thinner and more vulnerable than elsewhere. It is said that one Odwant Ray knew about a certain weak spot in one of the walls of the fort. He pointed it out to the British and the guns were directed to the spot. A breach was effected by a bombardment lasting for two days. On the third day storming parties advanced against this breach as well as against the Nagpur gate. The garrison within the fort did not wait for the assault but abandoned the fort in a body with a wild discharge of matchlocks and fled across the river. (Auranga) with such a speed that a company stationed only 80 yards away were unable to intercept their retreat. Thus the fort was captured on February 20, 1771. But guerilla warfare followed for four months. By June 21, the Thakurai quitted the country, Camac established a couple of outposts (thanas) on the Sarguja border to guard against his return.

GOPAL RAY (1771-1776).

Gapal Ray was made the Raja. On July 1771 his brother was sent to Patna where a settlement was concluded with Vansittart on a revenue of Rs. 12,000 a year. The term of settlement was three years. It was considered that the country could not pay more on account of its devastated condition. The company retained the fort and supplied three months reserve provisions.

Mukund Singh of Ramgarh was found making incursions into Bihar and helping the Thakurai and hence in July 1771, Camac proceeded to invade Nagpur. Meanwhile in February, 1772 the Thakurai's emissaries began to stir up troubles in the south-west of Palamau bordering on Sarguja. Camac fell ill and had to go to Patna. A rumour spread that the captain was dead. The whole district was soon in confusion. The Thakurai was strongly supported by Sarguja.

On April 24, 1772, Lt. Thomas Scott moved out two companies against him to the Udayapur *ghat*. After a reverse and obstinate dispute, the British troops broke up. Sergeant Pelvin was killed and Lt. Scott was shot through the leg. Scott retreated to Manatu on the extreme eastern boundary of the district. At Manatu, Scott was reinforced from Sherghati and thence returned to Jayanagar to keep up communications with the fort. In the meantime the Thakurai took Ranka from Gajraj's people. In May, Lt. Bateman joined Scott. They attacked the Thakurai in a strong position near Bishrampur where the Thakurai was pressing his special enemy Gajraj Ray and the Thakurai was routed on June 5. Next day they pressed him as far as Kaparmanda and hence he fled into Sarguja. This meant the exit of Jainath Singh.

But he continued his intrigues with Mukund Singh and the Marhattas to attack Captain Camac and his ally. The Marhattas attacked Lt. Scott and Campbell in Palamau but in vain.

In 1773, there was a rising against the Raja and the Thakurai's depredations made, it impossible for Raja Gopal to pay his revenue. Camac observed that an increase of revenue was not the object of the expedition but to form a barrier in the province by getting command

Of the hills and passes and winning over the people to the British. He wanted to secure the rich parganas from finding an asylum there without paying the revenue to the Government. Raja Gopal was hardly a success. Camac deemed it expedient to conciliate the southern Chero chiefs who had grown very powerful though holding aloof from the recent Palamau civil war, and to keep their quota of revenue very low. A revision of the three years settlement was, therefore, necessary.

In October, 1772, Camac Prepared to associate Gajraj Ray and Sugandh Ray with Gopal Ray in the new Settlement. The Council gave him full discretion in the matter.

On February 8, 1773, the new *Kabuliat* for a five-year settlement (1180-84 F. S.) was approved. This document describes the country as Poondag alias Palamau and Deogan. The revenue was fixed at Rs. 6,000 for the first year, Rs. 8,000 for the second and Rs. 12,000 for the remaining three years.

In 1775, the Thakurais succeeded in inducing Gopal to summon Kanungo Udayant Ray to join him at his new Chateau at Shahpur, now a picturesque ruin on the west bank of river Koel, opposite Daltonganj, and murdered him brutally. The relatives of Udayant Ray appealed for assistance to the small detachment of British troop at Lesliganj which marched to Shahpur where Gopal was arrested along with his brother Karnapal in 1776. Gopal was tried at Chatra and imprisoned in Patna where he died (1784). Thus the five-year settlement, like the one which preceded it, was not allowed to complete its course.

After Gopal's removal, a veritable scramble for power took place. Gajraj assumed the role of the Manager, but Sugandh Ray and the Thakurai, headed by Shiva Prasad Singh resisted him by farce. Gajraj called in the Collector of Ramgarh, who arrived with two companies of sepoy. Gajraj was confirmed as Manager and the Collector proposed to make Gajraj zamindar and Raja of Palamu.

At this moment Daljit Ray, brother of Chhatrapati Ray, attempted once more to re-establish the fortunes of the house of Medini Ray. In 1780, the Governor ordered that Basant Ray, the third brother of Gopal Ray, was left as the sole successor to the *gaddi*, to the exclusion of Gajraj and Sugandh. The order was resisted. Major Crawford was sent to Palamau at the head of a military force to restore tranquility, He succeeded in doing so. He captured Gajraj in Belaunja, and drove his sons, along with Sugandh and his family into Singrauli (1781).

Sugandh Ray was seen at Mankberi in Palamau. The ravages committed by Sugandh Ray prevented the Raja from sending in his *Diwan* to adjust the settlement. The return of the troops in 1784 induced him to retire to Sarguja.

In 1775, anonymous attacks were made on Captain Camac. It was urged that in order to improve the country and increase the revenue the administration should be transferred to a civilian. Mr. Heatley, the Collector of Pachete (Panchet) was appointed Collector of Ramgarh with Mr. Ramus as his assistant. The Southern Frontier Farce continued to be stationed at Hazaribagh. The revenue of these districts (called Balaghaut) with its headquarters at Ramgarh stood as under in 1775:-

				Rs.
Ramgarh	...	...	...	30,000
Nagpur	...	...	...	12,000
Palamau	...	...	...	12,000
Kendy	...	...	...	2,000
<hr/>			Total	56,000

The annual cost of the upkeep of Captain Camac's battalion at this time was over Rs. ,50,000 or nearly three times the revenue.

CIVIL COURT- BASANT RAY.

A Civil Court of judicature was established in 1781 for all these districts at Chatra for the administration of criminal and civil jurisdictions. The officer entrusted with the revenue became the judge in addition to his other work, subject to an injunction to keep his two duties

Distinct. In the circumstance of the, wildness of the country the regulations could not possibly have more than a nominal operation in the interior.

Raja Basant Ray died at the age of 17 in 1783. Although he was too young to manage his own affairs, yet no manager was appointed and matters were left in the hands of the 'Amla'. This was an opportunity for Shiva Prasad and the Thakurais, of which they took full advantage. The mother of Basant Ray maintained an opposition for three years (1783-86) against them, although her title to do so had practically disappeared with the death of her son and the succession of her step son Churaman Ray. This period is known as "the *amaldari* of *Tikaiteen*".

CHURAMAN RAY (1784-1813 A. D.).

Shiva Prasad Singh, nephew of Jainath Singh not only returned (1780) but succeeded in winning the favour with Gopal. From this time, for nearly 20 years, he was one of the most important persons in the district. In 1786 Mr. Leslie, the Collector, made the Settlement direct with Thakurai Shiva a Prasad Singh. There is no mention of Churaman's name in the *sanad* of 1786, but in the terms of Government orders at the time of the Decennial Settlement of 1789, the estate was to continue as heretofore in the management and responsibility of Shiva Prasad Singh on behalf of the minor Raja Churaman Ray.

Shiva Prasad who was pro-British first defied the Collector and took arms against him. The Thakurais recovered all their lost property and added to it. Churaman Ray grew negligent and incompetent.

Matthews Leslie attempted by the terms of the grant to guard against recurrence of some of the misfortunes of the past. Shiva Prasad bound himself in 1786 to satisfy the *rai-yats*, to maintain specified kinds of tenures, to abstain from collecting *Abwabs*, to repair bridges, to police the country and to give rent receipts.

Leslie fixed the amounts of the old jagirdars of Bisrampur and Deogan to be paid to the Raja. He confirmed Deogan to Sugandh Ray, while Gajraj was in prison as an

outlaw. Leslie gave his eldest son Chhatrapati Ray, the Bisrampur estate acquired by Gajraj, and the Baraon *jagir* to the second son Dharni Ray. The Thakurais were established in all they had previously held. Ram Bax Singh, son of the defeated Diwan Jagannth, returned from Sarguja and confirmed in the tenure of all the land that he was able to take possession of. The revenue payable to Government by the Raja was Rs. 12,182 after commutation of *sayer* charges, but the Raja had also to pay for the police. Of the total estimated assets of the pargana there is some uncertainty.

In 1789 the settlement stood as under :-

	Rs.	a. p.
Revenue payable by the <i>jagirdars</i> ...	9,217	13 5
Revenue payable by the <i>ijarars</i> ...	2,659	10 6
Lump sum payable by the tribes for jungle cultivation ...	1,585	8 0
Revenue from Koa and Kath ...	1,216	8 3
Value of Khas villages ...	3,942	6 0
Total	18,621	14 2

Raja Churaman Ray came of age in 1793. But before this his Manager, Shiva Prasad Singh of Ranks, had started a policy or commuting a portion or the rents payable by under-tenura-holders to the Raja in return for a lump sum. Seven such transactions took place during the minority, as a result of which the annual assets of the Raja had decrease by over Rs. 400. It was during the time of the minority too that the *jagirdars* had accepted an arrangement by which their service were commuted in return for an enhanced rental equivalent to $\frac{3}{8}^{\text{th}}$ of the gross annual value of their interest. In Palamau these services of the *jagirdars* had become unnecessary after the British occupation. Active military operations were still necessary in Palamau for the suppression of the Pindaris and the defeat of the Marhattas. But most of these military operations were directly caused by the turbulence of the *jagirdars* themselves.

But as Diwan Shiva Prasad Singh and all the head servants of the Raj were themselves the principal *jagirdars*, their interest was at variance with their duty, and each took advantage of the youth of the Raja to reduce the rent of his own lands, and increase their extent, whenever feasible, by placing, in the list of *jagirs*, villages that were held at will.

PERSONAL RULE (1793-1800).

For the first eight years of his personal management chura-man- Ray was able to meet his public obligations but not without difficulty. During and after this period he continued the policy of commuting rents for lump sums, until by about 1812 he had

reduced his annual rent roll by as much as Rs. 2,564 a sum which represented the greater part of his personal income. Meanwhile he resorted to other devices to keep his coffers full. But here he sometimes found himself restrained by the Courts, which were new for the first time making their powers generally felt. For example, he resumed the Deogan estate in 1797 on the death of Sugandh Ray, and held it for two years, but the Collector compelled him to restore it to the son of Sugandh Ray. Similarly he resumed the Lakeya estate (now known by the various names of Pathara, Lokeya, Narainpur and Narasinghpur. It appears that this property was held in service conditions by the family of Pati Singh, but the Raja had always bestowed it on whomever he pleased with the family. The family brought a suit against the Raja and recovered the estate. The resumption of 35 villages, which the Raja himself had previously bestowed upon the Kanungo, Akhouri Shiva Charan, was not allowed by the Court. Such resumptions had been freely made by all the Rajas before Churaman Ray.

In spite of these set-backs the Raja succeeded in resuming estates of his weaker tenants. Between 1789 and 1820 one-third of the Chero *jagirs* had been resumed. The Manatu estate was taken from its former owners on account of the arrears and sold. The greater part of the Nawagarh *jagir* and several other tenures went the same way.

CHERO INSURRECTION, 1800.

The recourse to resume subordinate tenures provoked a general indignation and led directly to the Chero insurrection in 1800. The whole country rose in revolt led by Bhukhan Singh, a Chero. British troops were called into operation against the insurgents under the command of Col. Jones with two battalions. Raja Fateh Narayan Singh of Dea and Shiva Prasad Singh of Ranka helped the British. Col. Jones spent two years campaigning in Palamau and Sarguja, where the insurgents found active support. The two battalions marched in to Sarguja to enforce reparation for their outrages. Bhukhan Singh died on the gibbet in 1802. But Lt. Higgat had still to keep a force in Belaunia to drive out the last of the rebels. When the insurrection had been quelled, things went from bad to worse. The Raja and the administration had been reduced to bankruptcy and disorder.

SAZAWAL SYSTEM.

Up to 1799 the British Government followed the system of collecting the revenue through a *Sazawal*. The Raja granted an *imdad* to a *Sazawal* appointed by the Government. The revenue, of specified estates and villages in liquidation were assigned. These *Sazawals* exacted as much as they could. The Chero insurrection must be attributed to the proceedings of the *Sazawal*. The system was at once ordered to be discontinued.

It was difficult to make collections from a dissatisfied tenantry. The Raja was debarred from exercising the arbitrary powers of resuming the *jagirs* formerly enjoyed by his predecessors. The country had been cruelly ravaged and the *jagirdars* were both

unwilling and unable to pay their quotas. There was a severe famine which added to the misery of the people.

ASSISTANT COLLECTOR, 1810.

Palamau which had been previously administered along with Chotanagpur, Ramgarh, Kendi, Chakai, Kharagdiha and Sherghati by the Judge-Magistrate-Collector of Ramgarh was transferred in 1800, along with these places to the revenue jurisdiction of Bihar from the Board at Calcutta. But the Civil and Criminal jurisdiction still remained in the hands, of the Magistrate at Ramgarh. The political control was divided between the Collector and the Commandant of the Ramgarh Battalion. The arrangements of 1800 did not prove satisfactory in practice. On 29th, July, 1808 with a view to facilitate collection of revenue of the hill and jungle estate on the western frontier of the provinces of Bengal and Bihar, the Government resolved that the Registrar of the Zila Court of Ramgarh shall likewise be Assistant to the Collector of Bihar. R. Walpole accordingly took charge at once. In January 1810 Walpole was deputed to the Palamau estate to effect the realisation of the arrears but he never reached there.

PARRY'S SETTLEMENT.

Parry succeeded Walpole and reached Palamau in 1811. Parry took from each *jagirdar* and *malguzar* separately a *kistbandi* on stamped paper binding them to pay the amount into the treasury at Chatra assessed on them at the Decennial Settlement. He annulled by proclamation the *sanads* of the Raja and re-established the settlement of Mr. Leslie.

Bikramajit Singh of Chainpur and Chhatrapati Ray of Bistrampur frustrated all his attempts to re-establish the Decennial Settlement. They resisted all orders and process of the Courts. The Raja of Palamau made over to him a portion of 'the rent equal to the amount of the annual revenue and promised to make over a further portion. The whole sum paid by the Raja amounted to Rs. 16,000 and thus *it* was thought expedient to reduce the arrears due to Government.

In 1812 very little alterations were made by Mr. Parry in the assessment of 1789. But he annulled all *sanads* granted by Churaman Ray and took over direct collection himself. The Board confirmed Parry's arrangement, whether it was Unauthorised or irregular. The Palamau estate was attached. The revenue was collected in accordance with Leslie's settlement. Only 10 per cent was allowed to the Raja for subsistence.

Captain Roughsedge, Commandant of Ramgarh Battalion and the most influential adviser of Government to political questions affecting this part of the country, was pressing vehemently for the sale of the estate. He complained that the Raja did not provide supplies and transport for Captain Higgot's force operating in the district at the time. Captain Roughsedge insisted on the sale of the Palamau estate granting it to his

loyal friend the Raja Fateh Narayan Singh of Deo, who accompanied him on campaigns against the Pindaris as well as against Sambalpur, Nawagarh, Sirguja and Rewa. The Governor-General in Council authorised the sale (14th November 1812) of the pargana arrears amounting to Rs.55,000 and sanctioned its purchase on behalf of Government. The intention of Government to buy the pargana Was kept a secret. The limit to which bids might be made was fixed at Rs. 1,05,000. The estate was sold and purchased by Government for Re. 51,000 only.

The following extract regarding this transaction is taken from Hamilton's description of Hindostan (1820) and mentioned in the last *District Gazetteer of Palamau*, 1926.

"In 1814, arrears having accumulated to the amount of Rs. 55,700 owing to the incapacity of the Raja Churaman Rai, and the refractory conduct of the disaffected *jagirdars* the *pargana* was brought to the hammer, and purchased by Government for Rs. 51,000. The general regulations for the public dues and administration of justice had before extended to this estate, in common with the other places dependent on the Bengal Presidency but in consequence of the wild state of the country, consisting chiefly of hills and forests, and the rude manners of its inhabitants, these regulations could not be said to have more than a nominal operation in the interior. In fact, the realization of the revenue partook more of the nature of voluntary contributions than of that active and punctual enforcement of the rights of Government which was practised in all the other old districts and from which the landholders or Palamau had no peculiar claims to exemption. Besides these reasons, being a frontier station, it became of importance to vest the possession of the *pargana* in a person possessed of sufficient firmness to coerce the *jagirdars* ,without oppressing them by illegal exactions or other severities.

"For the accomplishment of these purposes, Raja Fateh Singh was selected, but he died in 1814, while the arrangement was under discussion, and at the recommendation of Captain Edward Roughsedge, then commanding the Ramgarh Battalion, the rights of Government were transferred to his son Raja Ghansham Singh. In effecting this measure, Government made a considerable pecuniary sacrifice but the objects proposed to be carried into execution were important as, besides rewarding a loyal and meritorious family, it provided for the internal management of the estate, for the realisation of the revenue, and eventually for the general protection of a vulnerable frontier. It was at the same-time deemed of primary moment that the rights and immunities of the *jagirdars* should be maintained inviolate, for the furtherance of which object it was ordered that the amount of land-tax payable by *each jagirdar* respectively should be endorsed on the back of the document which transferred the district to Raja Ghansham Singh, in order to prevent future litigation and to give stability to the arrangement. Nor did the prior zamindar, Raja Chuaman Rai, sustain any real injury, by the. sale of his estate. He had long Deen a mere cipher in its management and nearly an idiot in understanding, dissolute, extravagant and thoughtless, a character which unfortunately applies with too much justice to almost all the jungle zamindars. He was so indolent as wholly to abandon his station and responsibility and was always ready to give *carte blanche* to any person

who would undertake to supply with 5 or 6 rupees daily, for his personal expense. This miserable chief of a distracted territory had no lineal heirs and the collateral pretender was utterly unfit for vocation."

Captain Roughsedge recommended a low revenue and summary power to oust the defaulting tenure-holders. The assessment of the State was reduced in 1814 to Rs. 9,000 when granted to Ghansham Singh, son of Fateh Narayan Singh of Deo in Gays district. It was a reward for services he and his family had rendered on several occasions in quelling the disturbances of the turbulent Cheros and Kharwars.

RISING OF 1817.

There was a great rising in which the smaller Chero tenure-holders appeared to take the leading part. But it was really organised by the great *jagirdars*. Thakurai Rambux Singh of Cainpur was perhaps one of the participants, according to some correspondence captured by

Major Roughsedge. They invoked the help of Sirguja. The disturbances were put down. The estates of Bikramajit Singh, son of Rarnbux of Chainpur, Shiva Prasad Singh of Ranka, Chhatradhari Singh (Pathara Narayanpura) of Lokeya, Gajpati Ray of Bisrampur, Jita Singh of Obra, Shiv Raj Singh of Kuraha, Pahalwan Singh and Puran Singh were attached. Jita Singh and Shiva Raj Singh were sentenced as *sardars* of dacoits to life imprisonment in Alipur jail.

RISING OF 1832.

In 1824 the Board had expressed apprehension that the *pargana* would never be peaceful until all agrarian questions were set at rest. The people rose in 1832, a year of serious disturbances also in the Ranchi district and the Cheros and Kharwars of Palamau had joined them.

The Kols attacked the Hindus, Muslims and others who were settled in their villages, drove them from the homes and property which were burnt or plundered. Those who fell in their hands were sacrificed.

The Company's troops were checked near Satbarwa where they marched from Lesliganj. Cuthbert and Captain Wilkinson sent four companies of Infantry, a squadron of cavalry and a gun from Ranchi and additional troops moved from Sherghati. Some *jagirdars* and Rana Bahadur Singh, son of Churaman Ray, joined the British. The insurgents were defeated and dispersed near Latehar.

The British rule, in this manner, slowly led to the extinction of Chero Kingship. But the idea based on the past tradition lingered and had a flare up some time later in the insurrections of 1857. Bradley Birt had thought that "the Cheros, deprived of their ancient line of chiefs, were no longer the prime movers". This was not very correct, as Dr.

Jagdish Narain Sarkar has observed in his article on Palamau *Jagirdar* in Bihar Research Society Journal, Vol. XLI, Part IV, 1955: "Indeed, it is not surprising to find that attempts to restore the Chero dynasty would be made in 1857. Further, the traditional Chero-Rajput animosity was fanned not only by this spirit of restoration but by the entente between the British Government and the Rajput Thakurais. Moreover this party alignment was also dictated by feudal agrarian discontent of the *Jagirdar* and their risings in 1800, 1817 and 1832 were but the faint presages of the coming storm a few years later.

"Regarding the socio-political organisation of the Kharwars who also joined the 1857 Movement Dr. Jagdish Narain Sarkar mentions in the same article: "unlike the Cheros, the Kharwars had very few *Jagirdars* among them. One section (*gosthi* or clan) of these, the Bhogtahs occupied an unassailable position in the area lying between the lowlands of Palamau and the uplands of Sirguja and possessed almost inaccessible mountain fastness. They were lawless freebooters, whose predatory habits were somewhat repressed by the British Government conferring one *jagir* on two brothers, Nilambar and Pitambar Sahi, who shared the headship of the Bhogtah clan after the death of their father, an outlaw."

1857 MOVEMENT.

Regarding 1857 Movement, it has been observed by P. C. Roy Chouahari in "1857 in Bihar (Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas)" :-

"But the district that was most severely affected was Palamau. In this district the whole countryside was aflame and it was a real national uprising. The common man and the landed proprietor made a common cause. There was less of the movement from the military but more from the civil population. It was in this district that one of the two causes of a rebellion, namely, a sense of power acted as the main inspiration. The Bhogtahs and the other tribal chiefs realised their helplessness in the present set up and really wanted to throw away the halter round their neck."

The following quotation from the same book '1857 in Bihar (Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas)' will indicate the trends of the 1857 Movement in Palamau district:-

"Regarding the course of the Mutiny the account from the Minute of the Lt. Governor on the Mutinies as they affected the Lower Provinces may be reproduced from the last *District Gazetteer* of Palamau:-

The population of Palamau district is composed chiefly of two tribes-the Cheros and the Kharwars, with a sprinkling of Kols and other savages, who took little part in the outbreak, and a few Brahmans, Rajputs and others, who were opposed to the insurgents. The Cheros, a spurious family Rajputs, said to have originally come from Kumaon a few centuries since, dispossessed the original reigning family and established one of their

own chieftains in their room. His descendants, continued long to hold the chiefship and the representative of the family, the last Raja died within the last few years, leaving no direct heirs. The Cheros having thus established themselves, strengthened their position, by conferring *jagirs* on their followers, and number of these *jagi'rdars* with impoverished and deeply mortgaged estates, still exist. The Kharwars are also settlers said to have come originally from the hills west of Rohtas. They are divided into several clans, of which the principal are the Bogtaks, with whom alone we are now concerned.

This tribe, inhabiting an elevated plateau between the high lands of Sirguja and the low country of Palamau, from which they are further separated range of hills, of which they hold the passes, and possessing almost inaccessible fastness have been long known as a race of turbulent free-boaters, and their late chief died an out-law. On his death it was considered a wise policy to confer this territory in *jagir* on his sons, Nilambar and Pitambar, with a nominal quit-rent, and the policy was long successful in suppressing the natural marauding

tendencies of these chiefs. Unfortunately, however, Pitambar was at Ranchi, when the outbreak took place and thinking that here was the end of British rule, and still further confirmed in this opinion by the behaviour of the two companies or the 8th N. I., who passed through Palamau on their way to join Amar Singh, the two brothers determined on declaring their independence, their first efforts being directed against the loyal Rajput *Jagirdars*, Thakurai Raghubar Dayal Singh and his equally cousin, Thakurai Kushum Dayal Singh, with whom they had long been at feud. Many of the Chero *Jagirdars* were induced to join them, partly on the promise made of placing a Chero chief on the throne partly, no doubt, in the hope of retrieving their now impoverished and decayed fortunes and late in October a force of about 500 Bogtaks, with others of the Kharwar clans and a body of Cheros, under the leadership of Nilambar and Pitambar, made an attack on Chainpur, Shahpur and Lesligunj. The attack on Chainpur, by the rebels on October 21, 1857, was directed as has been said against the loyal zamindars. Raghubar Dayal and Kushum Dayal Singh, on account of ancient enmities, was repulsed but at Lesliganj they succeeded in doing some damage, destroying the public buildings, pillaging the place, and committing some murder. Lt. Graham, who was at this time officiating-as Junior Assistant Commissioner in the district having advanced with a small body of not more than 50 men the Bogtaks retreated into the hills of Sirguja, whither, in consequence of the smallness of his force, he could not pursue them, and he was obliged to await reinforcements at Chainpur.

"By the end of November the whole country appeared to be up in arms, and Lt. Graham, with his small party, was shut up and besieged in the house of Raghubar Dayal, whilst the rebels were plundering in all directions. It had been proposed to send the Shekhawati Battalion into Palamau: but at my urgent request two companies of H. H.'s 13th

L. I., which were at this time quartered at Sasaram, directed to proceed under command of Major Cotter to the relief of Lt. Graham. I at the same time called upon the Deo Raja to furnish a contingent for service in the disturbed district. On the 27th November the station of

Rajhara had been attacked by a very large body of Bogtahs, and Messrs Grundy and Malzer, who were employed there on the part of the Coal Company, after holding their house as long as possible, at last with some difficulty made their escape.

Two companies under Major Cotter, with two guns, accompanied by Mr. Baker, the Deputy Magistrate of Sasaram, crossed the Son near Akharpur on the 30th November. Instructions meanwhile had been sent to Lt. Graham that on being relieved he was at once to fall back with the force, advancing again hereafter when he should have the means of doing so. The detachment reached Shahpur on the 8th December, and were joined by Lt. Graham. One of the principal leaders of the insurgents, Debi Baksh Rai, was at this time captured. On the advance of the force, the rebels retreated but burnt the village of Manika, near Palamau Fort, and destroyed the house of Bhikhari Singh, a zamindar of some influence, who had lent great assistance to Lt. Graham. Major Cotter was ordered to return to Sasaram *via* Sherghati to clear the *ghats* in the direction, and Lt. Graham accompanied him for some distances but the rebel force seemed to be breaking up, the capture of Debi Baksh Rai noted above had the effect of disheartening them, and the Deo Raja having now joined with his contingent of 600 matchlockmen and 100 sowars, I permitted that officer to return, and, advancing towards his former position, he reached Kishunpur on the 22nd December. Patan Ghat, which had been held by the Bogtahs, was abandoned on his approach. The rebels also withdrew from Chainpur, having made unsuccessful attack on Ranka fort, where they were repulsed by Kishun Dayal.

By this time Lt. Graham had received a further reinforcement of 600 men, supplied by the Sarbarahkar of Sirguja, and was able not only to maintain his position, but to act on the offensive, and nearing that Premananda, *Ilakadar* of Runda, was in the neighbourhood, he sent out a party which surprised this chief, the most influential leader of the Kharwar tribe, with four of his principal men, and 75 followers. Nilambar Sahi was still collecting men, and had lately plundered villages; he, however, kept most carefully to the jungles, and allowed no opportunity of attacking him. Sirguja, was also invaded by the followers of the Singhrauli Raja, a contumacious dependent of the Rewah Raja, from whom he had no authority for thus acting.

On the 16th January Captain Dalton himself started for Palamau with 140 men M. N. I. under Major MacDonell, a small party of Ramgarh Cavalry, and a body of matchlockmen under Perganait Jagat Pal Singh, a chief who on this and other occasions displayed very remarkable loyalty and attachment to the Government, and has been rewarded with a title, a *khilat* and pension. He reached Manika on the 21st, January, and being joined during the night by Lt. Graham, next morning after a reconnaissance of the Palamau Fort finding that it was held by the enemy, they determined on an immediate attack, and advancing in three columns, against which the enemy for some time kept up a brisk but ill-directed fire, succeeded in dislodging them, when they fled, leaving guns, ammunition, cattle, supplies, and baggage behind them. Ten bodies of the enemy were found; our loss amounted to only one killed and two wounded. Letters to Nilambar and Pitambar Sahi and Haklout Manjhi were found with the baggage, and amongst them communications from Amar Singh, promising immediate assistance from Kuer Singh.

Some leading insurgents were captured about this time. Tikait Umrao Singh and his *Dewan* Sheikh Bhikhari were convicted of being concerned in the rebellion, and executed.

The Commissioner remained at Lesliganj till the 8th February, collecting supplies and making preparations, and he now determined on forcing the passes into the Bogtah country, having with him a force of up wards of 2,000men, whilst that of Nilambar and Pitambar were said to be much reduced and not to number more than 1,000. Meanwhile, he had issued *parwanas* for the attendance of various *jagirdars*, most of whom readily responded to his call; but the most powerful and influential of them all, Babu Bhawani Baksh Rai, head of the Chero family, did not, for some time, make his appearance, and was said to be collecting a large force to oppose Captain Dalton, and to have entertained a number of the Ramgarh mutineers. On the 3rd of February, however, he too came in, and thus removed a principal obstacle to our onward movement. Having divided his force, Captain Dalton sent one body with Kishum Dayal Singh and others to Shahpur to advance against the Baghmara Ghat, whilst he himself moved to attack on the Tungari Ghat. As he approached this place on the 10th February, he learned that the insurgents, who had held possession of the pass, were plundering the village of Harnamanr in his immediate neighbourhood. Lt. Graham, with a party of sowars, dashed on, and succeeded in intercepting the enemy, and rescuing a band of captives and a herd of cattle which they were in the act of driving off. Three prisoners were also taken, one a leader of some consequence. Two out of the three were hanged, whilst the third was kept for the sake of information, which he seemed able and willing to communicate.

No opposition was attempted to their entering the Bogtah country, and on the 13th they reached Chemu, on the banks of the Koel, the principal residence of the insurgent brothers, where they had a fortified house. Captain Dalton crossing the Koel, the rebels did not await his attack in the village but retreated and took up positions behind masked breastworks of stones on the sides and ridge of a hill overhanging the village. These were carried in succession, and the enemy put to flight. A *dajadar* of the Ramgarh Cavalry was killed at the beginning of the flight. The village and the fortified house were afterward destroyed as was Saneya, another stronghold of the rebels close to Chemu, which was also found deserted. Large quantities of grain were seized, as well as herds of cattle; and several herdsmen who had been captured by the rebels, were released.

The Commissioner remained in the Bogtah country till the 23rd of February, but was not successful in capturing the ring leaders, Nilambar and Pitambar. Parties were constantly sent out in all directions, who penetrated to their bill and jungle fastnesses, in some instances, as was evident, just as the fugitives had made their escape. A few influential men were taken; but neither threats nor promises had any effect in inducing them to reveal the hiding-places of their chiefs. A full retaliation was, however, exacted for all the mischief done by them. Their villages were destroyed, their goods and cattle seized, and their estates confiscated to the State; but whilst stern justice was thus meted out to the inciters of this rebellion, every endeavour was made to conciliate their less guilty followers and the inhabitants of the country, which now seemed to be gradually settling down.

"In the Nowagarh hills a body of rebels was collected in the middle of March under Ganpat Rai and Bishunath Sahi. Captain Dalton proceeded to Lohardaga with the intention of attacking them, but falling ill was obliged to depute the duty to Captain Oakes, who with a party consisting of Madras Rifles, Ramgarh Irregular Cavalry, and 160 of the Kol and Santal Levy, under the command of Captain Nation, by a rapid march succeeded in surrounding the enemy, who were so completely surprised that they made no resistance. Bishunath Sahi was captured on the spot, and Ganpat Rai, who succeeded for the time in making his escape, was soon taken and brought in by some zamindars and matchlockmen, who had been sent in pursuit. These rebels were afterwards tried, found guilty, and executed.

"Nothing worthy of being recorded has since happened in the district of Palamau, and the restoration of complete tranquillity and confidence seems now only to be a question of time. Nilambar and Pitambar Sabi are still at large, miserable fugitives deserted by their followers, and the Commissioner is of opinion that no further danger need be apprehended from them. I must not quit the subject without recording my high admiration of the conduct of Lt. Graham, who, without another Englishman near him, surrounded by thousands of the enemy, never thought of retreat, and by maintaining his post, prevented the district from falling entirely into the hands of the insurgents."

To this narrative, the last *District Gazetteer of Palamau* by O'Mlley (1907) adds:-

"To the above account it will suffice to add that Nilambar and Pitambar Sahi were eventually captured, tried and hanged; and with their capture the district was tranquilized.

Thakurai Raghubar Dayal Singh of Chainpur, Thakurai Kishun Dayal Singh of Ranka and Bhikhari Singh of Manika were granted *jagirs* in recognition of the local services they had rendered".

TROUBLES IN 1858.

This lengthy quotation from the last District Gazetteer has been, given to present one side of the picture as the British administrator took the movement to be. It will not be, however, correct to state that the mutiny in Palamau was actually over by the beginning of 1858 with the arrest and execution of Nilambar and Pitambar. There are a number of letters in the Record Room of the Commissioner of Chotanagpur Division, Ranchi, which indicate that "the smouldering fire of the movement continued to be kindled by a favourable breeze". Dr. J. N. Sarkar in his article on "Palamau Jagirdars" already referred to mentions a number of such letters. Some more letters have been discovered and referred to later.

BACKGROUND OF THE REVOLT.

Apart from the opposition of the Cheros, Bogtachs and the Kharwars there is no doubt that the immediate cause of the movement in Palamau was supplied by the rise in Ranchi and Hazaribagh. Pitambar, as mentioned, actually saw the havoc in Ranchi by the outbreak of the

Ramgarh Battalion. On his return to Palamau and taking advantage of the advance of the Hazaribagh Regiment through Palamau towards Rohtas he gave the signal to the Bogtachs. It cannot be doubted that the slipping of the power had been nursed by the hilly tribes with great resentment and they wanted to utilise the opportunity to make a bid for independence. But the signal was not confined to the particular sections of the hilly tribes alone. The movement percolated to the masses. The Chero-Bogta alliance had their first target of attack on Thakurai Raghubar Dayal Singh who was taken as the common enemy and the protégé of the British. It is difficult to hold with Captain Dalton that the Cheros and Bogtachs merely wanted to supplant Thakurai for the old grudge. The move was deeper and Thakurai was attacked more as an agent of the British and the symbolic object of attack. The documents that are still available indicate a quick spread into the interior of the Palamau area in spite of the zamindar agents of the British trying to stem the tide. It is also possible that the economic condition of the Cheros added fuel to the fire. A large number of small Chero *Jagirdars* in the district had come into existence and they had mostly mortgaged their small estates. Dalton held that many proprietors might have joined the insurgents to avoid their incumbrances. This does not seem impossible.

The account to the movement that has been quoted from the last District Gazetteer could be supplemented by the details of the movement as mentioned by Dr. J. N. Sarkar in his article on "*Palamau Jagirdar's*". He has divided the details into two sections, one part from October, 1857 to February, 1858 and the other part from February to November, 1858. As the quotation from the District Gazetteer does not refer to the details of the movement in the second part (February to November, 1858) this period will be briefly referred to.

SHAHABAD AND PALAMAU.

The district of Shahabad, the home of the stormy petrel Kuanr Singh on the border of Palamau had always a great influence on the latter. After the death of Kuanr Singh on the 26th April, 1858, his brother, Amar Singh took up the standard and for some time held out and gave a stiff resistance. The Shahabad mutineers had spread and reached Palamau. The disaffected Bogtachs were contacted by messengers from Shahabad and an attempt was made to bring over the Bogtachs to the help of Amar Singh's army. On 30th September 1858 the Commissioner informed the Lt. Governor of Bengal that the Bogtachs and the Shahabad rebels must not be allowed to join up. For this reason the Commissioner wanted the approval of the Lt. Governor for keeping Captain Dales volunteers in Palamau and also Lt. Reeves to be left with a contingent of Kol and Santal levy. He further wanted that the officers of the detachment of the Ramgarh Battalion on their way back from Sambalpur should be furnished.

In November, 1858 some rebel sepoys from Shahabad had. Crossed the Sone and reached Majhiaon and were expected to attack Garhwa. This was the signal for a body of 500 insurgent Bogtaha to start plundering again Captains Davies and Dale were joined by Lt. Graham with reinforcement on the 9th November, 1858 and the insurgents were subdued. The Bhaya of Chechari professed submission. From Lesligunj the British forces were divided for a two-pronged pincer movement. Dr. J. N. Sarkar's description of the later events may be quoted *in extenso*:-

"While Captain Davies advanced towards Bunya (Saneya) near Chechari, Lt. Graham made a detour southwards via Ramkudah. The small guard and armed police of the Burgar thana, apprehending attack by a large body of insurgents, made a planned strategic retreat across the river Kunhar into Sirguja (18th November, 1858). At once the thana building was demolished by a section of the Bogtaha led by Bhoja and Bharat, who also started cutting the crops. The guard escaping to Sirguja across the Kunhar procured two Kols as guides to conduct them by a narrow path through a long great jungle right on the Bogtaha marauders". They were surprised and suffered heavy casualties, with 16 killed, 30 wounded, and 3 prisoners. The two leaders were, however, mounted and taken off, only three on the Government side were wounded.

On 24th November, 1858 a part of rebels under Ume Singh (Amar Singh) encamped at Kurondah (Koranda). Amar Singh's name is associated with one Durga Singh and both are remembered in the popular couplet.

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It is not known who this Durga Singh is. Some allege that he hailed from Belounja. Though the party was not very large, the Commissioner, suggested to the Government that reinforcements in the shape of two European companies be sent to Ranchi, either for arresting the advance of the rebels towards Chotanagpur or support Captain Davies, if necessary, and that the Madras infantry at Ranchi might then be sent to Singhbhum.

Up to 30th November, 1858, 1,100 rebels actually entered Palamau under Sedhua Singh (Soadha Singh). Another leader was probably Ram Bahadur Singh of Sunya (Saneya), the residence of the insurgent Bogtaha. 600 out of the above number had sepoys muskets. Another body of 900 was reported to be converging on Saneya.

In compliance with Lt. Graham's request to the authorities in Bihar, a portion of Brigadier Douglas's force was expected to reinforce Graham at Chainpur in Palamau, where his position was "defensible". Captain Davies at Chechari acted judiciously and correctly on first getting information of the advance of the Shahabad mutineers.

The strategy of the British was this. The rebels could not long remain in Maya hills without getting supplies and if they found the road to Chotanagpur open, they would certainly advance towards it. Captain Davies was holding a very strategic position to check them. He

must not attempt to join Lt. Graham. The small Palamau force should, however, be concentrated and interposed to block the escape of the mutineers from Saneya towards Chotanagpur. Hence the Commissioner urged on the Government the expediency of sending troops not only to Palamau but to Chotanagpur as well, and suggested that two companies

of H. M. 29th foot expected at Hazaribagh was at once ordered to Ranchi and another company or two sent to Hazaribagh in their place.

From 11th November to 1st December, 1858, Captain Davies acted judiciously in halting at Akoser (Aksi) village thereby preventing the mutineers from getting supplies therefore. It all occupied "an excellent position" for his force in co-operation with that of the Rai of Sirguja "to prevent the rebels from proceeding or retreating in southerly or easterly direction".

An army nearly 500 strong (H. Th. 29th Ry-300: Do. 37th-70; 3rd Regular Punjab Cavalry-116) joined Lt. Graham at Chainpur, on 13th November, they took post at Mayapore one march only from the rebel's position. Lt. Graham added to the force 110 sepoy of the Ramgarh Battalion and Kol and Santal Levy.

There are a large number of documents in the National Archives of India which throw a good deal of light on the facts indicated earlier as well as disclose fresh facts. It appears that the strategic importance of Palamau and the internal troubles were fully appreciated by the ruling authorities and they were, extremely anxious that Palamau should be kept in hand. The importance of preventing the rebels from entering Palamau after being driven from Shahabad south was repeatedly emphasised in different documents (Public O. C. 1st October, 1858, nos. 31-32 is a document to this effect). In Public O. C., 22nd October, 1858, nos. 26-32, a letter from the Secretary, Government of Bengal, to the Home Secretary, Government of India, dated 12th December, 1858 shows the unprotected state of Bihar and the possibility of an attempt by rebels from Shahabad and Oudh to escape into Palamau. The necessity of more troops being urgently required was emphasised in this letter. In Public O. C., 29th October, 1858, nos.31-33 the state of affairs in Palamau district was underlined and again the importance of the rebels being prevented at all costs from entering Palamau was emphasised. It was further mentioned in this document that the Bhogtahs were expecting help which will make things worse. An idea was expressed that Kols and Santhals might be recruited for help. Public O. C., 29th October, 1858, nos. 49-51 again repeated that there was every possibility of the rebels from Shahabad escaping into Palamau and this would add to the already existing causes of trouble and anxiety in Palamau.

That the movement among the Bhogtahs had caused a considerable alarm is also disclosed in Military O. C. 29th October, 1858, nos. 163-64 and it was mentioned that Madras troops were still unable to come. The employment of the Madras Rifles for

restoring peace in Palamau and Hazaribagh had been previously mentioned in Military O. C., 15th January, 1858, nos. 505-506 where it was emphasised that Palamau should not be abandoned at any cost and the drastic steps suggested were fully approved by the Government of India.

¹: Also, commonly described as Bogtahs.

The Palamau was a very big headache to the administrators is quite clear from the repeated mention, in several documents (Military O. C.,

10th September, 1858, no. 400, Public O. C., 17th December, 1858, nos. 40-41) in which it was clearly mentioned that Palamau and Burhee should not be placed under Brigadier Douglas as he will be unable to defend them. In Public O. C., 10th September 1858 it was mentioned, by Commissioner Dalton in his letter no. U. U. to A. R. Young, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, dated the 16th August, 1858 "I would, however, earnestly talk about how important it is that rebels, when driven from Shahabad should be prevented from taking the direction of Palamau which is a country rich enough to support them and strong enough to offer them a revolt against a large force.....".

"The mutineers and other rebels under a Bihar Zamindar Bhaunu Pratap, who gives out that he is Kooer Singh's.....for Palamau are with the Bhogtas at Sooree endeavouring to intimate the Kharwars to join them..... ". (Some of the words are now very indistinct and non-decipherable.)

Commissioner Dalton realised the importance of meeting the strategy of the hillmen. That is why he suggested in his letter 1444, dated the 30th September, 1858 that Captain Hale should command the Sikh volunteers in Palamau and that detachment of Kols and Santhals

Out of the detachment of the Ramgarh Battalion under Lt. Reeves should be retained.

The danger of infiltration of the rebels from Shahabad was indicated as the Deputy Commissioner at Sherghati sent a telegram on the 2nd December, 1858 to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal that 200 rebels had left Odur on the 27th ultimo and had gone to the direction of Palamau.

Commissioner Dalton in his letter dated the 8th December, 1858 preserved in Public O. C., 24th December, nos. 38-39 had reported that "rebels had actually entered Palamau under Sindhua Singh and another leader probably Ram Bahadur Singh had gone to join the Bogtahs. 600 of these rebels had muskets and Lt. Graham's position at Chainpur was a defensible one". Dalton held that the rebels cannot long remain in the Sumuya hills, without obtaining supplies from some quarters and if they, find the road open at Chotanagpur they are likely to proceed to that direction. Captain Davies was at Chechari at that time and Davies had already reported that the rebels had increased their number by the addition of a good many Kharwars besides the Bogtahs. Davies had

further reported that there was a strong rumour that another large party of rebels was on the road to join up the Bogtaks and the Kharwars.

Captain Dalton was well supported by the Court from the Extra Junior Assistant Commissioner of Korundah Subdivision who on the 27th December, 1858 had informed him that 800 rebel sepoys were already in Sirguja and Mirzapur districts. Not less than 300 rebels had come to Palamau. The Magistrate at Korundah had further informed that the rebels were plundering the country at their leisure and a party of 600 of them were marching on for Pratapur for the purpose of coercing the Karpardaz Lal Bindeshwari Prasad. The Korundah

Magistrate mentioned that without exaggeration he gave report that Sirguja district was in the hands of the rebels. He urgently wanted troops and more troops as, the small force of that district could give no assistance to the Sirguja chief. He further mentioned that there was an idea that troops were required elsewhere and could not be deployed for Palamau. From Lesliganj reports had come that 100 sepoy mutineers had plundered a village called Hootie and that their intention was to proceed to Sherghati. There was a further report from the

Deputy Commissioner of Sherghati that 700 mutineers from Palamau were in the jungles close to a place Gondra which was about 6 miles south-west of Korundah and were proceeding in northern direction.

The Military Department were convinced the necessity of sending troops to Palamau as will be apparent from Public O. C., 21st January 1859, nos. 85-86. It was thought that a military force should be posted to Palamau to disperse the rebel party collected in the district.

The military sections fanned out in different directions in Palamau district to suppress the insurrection. Public O. C., 11th February, 1859, a document from Commissioner Dalton to Secretary Young, dated the 25th January, 1859 gives a report on the operations against the Rebellions for only one week from 6th to 14th instant. This document covering the operations for one week is adequate to show that from different directions Captain Davies, Sirguja Managar, Rani of Koreah and Raja of Jaspur were operating against the insurgent Bogtaks and others.

Another letter of Commissioner Dalton to Secretary Young, dated the 8th November, 1858 mentions about the movement of the 8th Volunteers, Ramgarh Light Infantry, Ramgarh Irregular Cavalry, in the interior of Palamau to check the rebels. It appears that Lt. Graham

was carrying on the operations under the guidance of Brigadier Douglas and the Commissioner of Patna. The towns of Shahpur, Chainpur, Lesliganj and Garhwa had been attacked. Lt. Graham was put in officiating charge of the appointment of Junior Assistant Incharge of the Korundah Subdivision. The Darogah of thana Manika had confirmed the report that the rebels had considerably increased in number to about 5,000.

From a report of Davies; Deputy Commissioner at Sherghati, which has been forwarded by Lt. Graham, it appears that Soonpura Raja and Nawab of Russainabad and others were implicated in the Palamau disturbance; Lt. Graham was of opinion that Babu Bhawani Bux Rai of Bistrampore in Palamau was also implicated. Lt. Graham in spite of his success was cautioned against entering the fastnesses of the Bogtals with a small force. This is apparent from Public O. C., 4th December, 1857, no. 33.

The intensity of the movement will be disclosed from Public O. C., 14th January 1859 nos. 35-38. The Senior Assistant Commissioner of Lohardaga in the course of a letter to the Commissioner of Chotanagpur, dated the 23rd December, 1858, mentions:- "As you are aware the extent of country occupied by the rebels comprises some 40 miles square of impracticable hills and jungles, so dense that until the approach of the heat season when it becomes practicable to burn the grass, etc., enemy might be within a few hundred yards of the troops without being discovered.

To add to the difficulties of such a country the whole of the inhabitants without exception are, if not openly, on the side of the rebels, who receive every information of our movements, whilst it is with the utmost difficulty we are enabled to trace them and then not perhaps till they have plundered and burnt some villages in their vicinity.

LEADERS.

The restoration of tranquillity in Palamau area is disclosed by Commissioner Dalton's letter no. 59, dated the 14th March, 1859 (Home Department Public Consultation, 1st April, 1859, nos. 15-16). In this letter Dalton reports that the leaders of the insurgents, the brothers Pitamber Nilambar, son of the latter Kumar Sahai, Sivacharan Manjhi and Ratan Manjhi had either surrendered or had been captured. In another letter from Lt. Graham to Dalton, dated the 6th March, 1859 the name of Bhukha Sah in addition to those mentioned before are mentioned having been put into letters. Secretary Young in his letter no. 1783, dated the 18th March, 1859, reported to the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, that all the principal leaders among the Palamau insurgents either had surrendered or had been captured. Captain Dalton was requested to convey to Thakurai Kishun Dayal and Raghubar Dayal acknowledgement of the Lt. Governor for the assistance rendered by them

Before some of the letters preserved in the district record room are referred to, it is necessary to refer to the names of some of the persons actively associated with the movement. Among the Chero leaders who defied the British, mention should be made of Bhawani Baksh Rai of Bistrampur. He was almost the head of the Chero group and extremely influential. The Commissioner had considered his removal to Ranchi as "necessary". He was reported to be busy collecting a contingent but later attended the Commissioner's Conference at Lesliganj on the 3rd February, 1858. According to the Commissioner although there, was no overt act of treason against him "he must not be allowed to escape

the consequence of his not having rendered such assistance to Lt, Grabam as he was bound to do".

Ram Baksh Rai of Chukla and his son Hari Baksh Rai had two serious charges against them according to the Commissioner Dalton although the Commissioner thought that they had behaved well. The charges were that they did not give Lt. Graham proper assistance and some of their retainers were associated with the attack on Rajhara Coal Factory.

Devi Baksh Rai of Luckna had openly sided with the Bogtaks. The Commissioner thought that the Bogtaks Wished to confer the Raj upon him. Later on he came over to the side of the British.

Bhaya Bhagwan Deo of Untari gave little help to Lt. Graham but after the Commissioner's intervention supplied a body of matchlockmen.

Among the Kharwar and Bogtah leaders the most important were, of course, Nilambar and Pitambar enjoying the *Jagirs* of Chemu and Saneya and S. W. Palamau. Parmanand, the *Ilakadar* of Kunda, an influential leader of Kharwars fully sided with the brothers, Nilambar and Pitambar. Subsequently about November, 1858 the Bogtaks were led by Bhoja and Bharat and about December, 1858 by Ram Bahadur Singh of Saneya.

Naklout Manjhi, who was also a Kharwar gave a lot of troubles to the British. Raja Singh of Hamir was ultimately arrested and executed. His *Jagir* consisting of 5 villages was confiscated and given to Kunwar Bhikhari Singh of Manika, Tikait Unaras Singh and his Diwan Shaikh Bikari were captured in January, 1858 and executed on conviction because of their concern in rebellion.

LOYALISTS.

The principal loyalists were Thakurai Raghubar Dayal Singh, Thakurai Kishun Dayal Singh, Sheo Charan Rai of Nawagarh, Bhiktari Singh of Manika, Bhagwan Deo of Untari, Bhaya Deo Nath Singh of Untari, Devi Baksh Singh of Nowadag, Raja of Deo (Gaya) and Jagat Pal Singh of Pithallri (Ranchi).

UNPUBLISHED LETTERS.

"A few references to some of the unpublished letters which are available in the Record Room at Daltonganj will be helpful to appreciate the trend of events of the movement during 1857-58."

In his letter no. 4005, dated the 24th November, 1857, A. R Young, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, had informed the Officiating Commissioner of Chotanagpur

that the Lieutenant Governor had approved of the measures suggested by him for the repression of the disturbances in Palamau. The Commissioner seems to have been given an almost blank cheque for crushing the movement and a copy of the letter was forwarded to the Junior Assistant Commissioner of Korundah Subdivision. As large contingents of the people who had risen in arms from different districts had taken shelter in the more dense mountain fastnesses of Palamau, Capt. Dalton, Commissioner of Chotanagpur moved and was able to get the deployment of several sections of army into Palamau. Dalton, on his part, asked I. M. Graham, Junior Assistant Commissioner of Korundah Subdivision in his letter no. 191, dated the 28th November, 1857 that he should see to sufficient supply of *rasad* at Manika" Lesliganj, Chainpore and other places. Graham was also asked to see that good and plentiful water was procurable near the halting places and that he should send the Commissioner a route showing the best halting places. Two Companies of Her Majesty's 13th Light Infantry of Sasaram with their guns were ordered to proceed to Chainpore via Akberpore to the relief of Lieutenant Graham. The Raja of Deo (Gaya) was also called upon to co-operate with this force. This order was transmitted by the Secretary to the Government of Bengal in his letter no. 4060, dated the 27th November, 1857. A portion of the Madras Rifles at Raniganj was also ordered to march to Palamau via Shergatty. Different sections of the army would not have been deployed to the areas of Palamau unless the situation was rather acute. Lieutenant Graham was mildly reprimanded for needing relief as is shown in letter no 4803, dated the 30th December, 1857, from the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Officiating Commissioner, Chotanagpur. It was mentioned in the latter. "The Lieutenant Governor approves of the course pursued by Lieutenant Graham and of his spirited determination to maintain his position in Palamau but at the same time His Honour expects that he will use the greatest caution in all his proceedings as in the event of his being surrounded as before if may not be possible again to send a party to rescue him". It may be mentioned here that in an earlier letter, dated the 28th July, 1858 Captain Dalton had already moved that the Korundah Subdivision which includes Palamau, Sirgoojah, Oodeypore and the Subdivision of Burhee should be added to the district under the military charge of Brigadier Douglas.

There are also relevant documents to show that liberal offers of reward and promotion were held out to the police and civil population for giving active help by way of giving information or leading to the arrest of absconders. The Magistrate of Lohardagga was ordered in June 1857 to increase the horse or foot police in anticipation of the approval of Government. The Police Officers were also told in letter no. 987, dated the 26th June 1857 that they will receive immediate reward if their work is favourably commented upon. In his letter no. 3118, dated the 11th August, 1858, A. R. Young informed the Commissioner of Chotanagpur that the news of the collapse of a section of Thakurai Kissen Dayal Singh's people has been received with satisfaction. It was mentioned that this party of Thakoorai Kissen Dayal Singh had succeeded in carrying away a Havildar of Ramgarh Battalion.

Rewards were being broadcast for any news or help leading to the arrest of the 'rebels'. In his letter no. 252, dated the 22nd December, 1857, Captain Dalton informed

Lieutenant Graham, Junior Assistant Commissioner of Korundah Subdivision that he was authorised to offer Rs.500 for the apprehension of Bhowaney Bux Rai. The Junior Assistant Commissioner was also ordered to offer a reward of Rs. 200 for the apprehension of Mukut Manjhi.

Reference has already been made to Baboo Bhowaney Bux Rai of Bistrampore. Baboo Bhowaney Bux Rai ultimately gave himself up to Captain Dalton who asked Lieutenant Graham to complete his enquiry against Bhowaney Bux Rai after hearing and recording what he has to say in explanation. The indication was quite clear as the second paragraph of Dalton's letter to Graham, dated the 3rd February, 1858, will show. He mentioned "Whatever may be the result of this enquiry, it is necessary that the Baboo should be severely called to account for having so long disobeyed the orders issued to him to appear and in regard to his having failed hitherto to afford such assistance towards putting down the insurrection as you were entitled to expect from him and it was his duty to afford. I request that he may be proceeded against on these charges as soon as possible, and that the case when completed may be referred to me for orders with your opinion."

Bhaiya Koomar Singh of Checharee, as previously referred to had also incurred the displeasure of the authorities. He was placed under restraint and his estate was attached. A police thana was started in this area to stabilize the administration. In his letter no. 113, dated the 2nd October, 1858, the Extra Judicial Commissioner of Korundah Subdivision was further told that Rai Jagatpal Singh Bahaur, Parganait of Pithoria would be "a goodman to place a temporary charge of Checharee estate and the thana".

That the aftermath continued throughout 1858 is also shown from the contents of letter no. 21, dated 31st January, 1859, from Dalton, Commissioner of Chotanagpur, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal. In this letter he forwarded a copy of the report of Captain Davies detailing recent operations in Palamau which had resulted in the evacuation of that and the adjoining district by the mutineers and rebels who had flocked into them from Behar and Shahabad. Captain Nation was much commended. Dalton mentions in this letter:- "It was soon found that numerically strong as were the rebels, it was impossible to bring them to an engagement; every opportunity was then taken to surprise them. They got no rest, were driven from place to place in the barren hills till at length in despair they abandoned the district altogether and left the local people to shift for themselves. The local rebels under the chiefs Nilambar and Pitambar are now again reduced to a small and insignificant band whose complete subjugation will, I expect, be especially brought about by the vigorous and unrelaxing measures. Captain Davies and the Officers co-operating with him are carrying out." The Secretary to the Government of Bengal acknowledged the letter and it was mentioned that the plan of operations was the best that could have been adopted under the circumstances.

There is another important letter no. 1196, from the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Commissioner of Chotanagpur, dated Fort William, the 21st February, 1859 in which it was mentioned that a party of rebels from Palamau: was on the way to Singhbhum to effect a junction with the Porahat insurgents. This party was, however,

driven back by some of the Ramgarh Irregular Cavalry sent for the purpose by Captain Davies and afterwards followed up by detachment upner Captain Nation and Lieutenant Graham. The insurgents were very alert stop the coalition of Palamau insurgents with those of other districts.

The loyalists were being given substantial rewards for services rendered by them. The confiscated estates came in very handy and *jagirs* were carved out and made over to the loyalists. In his letter no .2859, dated the 13th August, 1858, A.R. Young intimated the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, Lower Provinces that certain awards were made. Thakoorais Raghubar Dyal Singh and Kissen Dyal Singh were given the titles of Rai Bahadur and a *khillut* including a double-barrelled rifle. Thakoorai Raghubar Dyal Singh was further

Given a confiscated service *jagir* of 12 villages bearing a quit-rent of Rs.13-11-9 a year. Sew Charan Rai was given a *Khillut* in addition to his existing *jagir*. Kuar Bhikari Singh was also given a *Khillut* and a small confiscated *jagir* of 5 villages paying an annual rent of Rs. 30 a year. These awards followed the recommendations of the Commissioner of Chotanagpore communicated in his letter, dated the 21st June, 1858, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal. The Commissioner placed Thakoorai Raghubar Dyal Singh as his chief help. He refenea to both of them in glowing terms and mentioned that "Thakoorai Raghubar Dyal Singh has been the principal brunt of the disturbances. His property has been plundered in all directions and his assistants murdered in several instances. He deserves great credit for the manner in which he held against the whole of the Bhogtas as well as for the assistance he has admirably rendered me and the good will he bad exhibited towards Government from the beginning". The Commissioner recommended that the *jagir* of Chamoo Singh lately belonging to the rebels Pitambar and Nilambar, already confiscated should be conferred on Raghubar Dyal Singh. Baboo Sew Charan Rai, *jagirdar*, Bugarh estate was referred to as the man who had protected the Government treasure, records and the officials who had Red from Lesligunje after the attack on them by the insurgents. He has also given, as Dalton mentioned, great assistance to Lieutenant Graham and to himself. Regarding Kuer Bhikari Singh, Dalton observed, "He is one of the Chero Zamindars and also the only one of that class who from first to last stood boldly aloof from all conspiracy against Government and exerted himself in every way to prevent the spread of disorder and disaffection. He was one of the first to join Lieutenant Graham and the information he gave was of great service to that officer. In consequence of this his house at Punka was attacked and burntNot far from Bhikari Singh's villages is the confiscated *jagir* of Rega Singh executed as a leader in the disturbance. It consists of 5 villages paying an annual rent to Government of about Rs. 30. "Commissioner Dalton recommended that this *jagir* along with the *Khillut* should be given to Bhikari Singh. This letter of Commissioner Dalton practically admits that the many small Chero Zamindars almost to a man took arms against the British. We have also seen that the Bogtahs did the same. This should mean that practically all the countryside must have been aflame.

The Old English Correspondence Volume for 1860 has some interesting letters which show that the aftermath of the disturbances was still there in 1860. The conduct of Bhaiya Bhugwan Deo of Nuggur Oontaree and the enquiry thereof form the

subject matter of an interesting letter from I. M. Campbell, Extra Junior Assistant Commissioner, Palamau Subdivision, to Captain Davies, Senior Assistant Commissioner, Lohardagga Division. From the charges it appears that Bbaiya Bhugwan Deo refused to render efficient military service to

Government although bound to do so under the *Sanad* on which he held his tenure and had allowed armed rebels to pass through his zamindary unmolested. He was further charged for having supplied provision or connived at the supply of provision to the rebels who encamped near Nuggur. It may be mentioned here that Bhaiya's duty was to guard some of the *ghats* leading into Palamau. Campbell's finding was that he had failed to perform his duty and that this failure rendered his estate liable to confiscation.

From a letter no. 1.56, dated Lesligunje, the 30th August, 1860, sent by the Junior Assistant Commissioner of Palamau Subdivision, to the Senior Assistant Commissioner, it appears that the thanas of Chutterpore Manika and Lesligunje were burnt by the villagers during the disturbances in 1857. The reference to the word villagers, in this context is important and would show that it was not the armed rebels alone who were destroying buildings. From the same letter it would appear that Burgurh thana was destroyed by the Bogtaks.

LIST OF REBELS.

From a statement giving a list of rebels since August, 1857 signed by J. M. Graham, Extra Junior Assistant Commissioner, we find the following names :-

Nilambar Sah, Ruttan Sah, Narayan Baniya. Pitambar Sah, Kutkun Sah and Bhooka Sah charged with rebellion, wilful murder and attack in the town of Chainpore. Nilambar Sah was further charged with plundering and destroying the factory of Bengal Coal Company and

burning Village Baree, Hehagurrah, etc. Koomar Sah, Ruttan Sah, Narayan Baniya, Shew Charan Manjhi along with two brothers Pitambar and Nilambar were also charged with wilful murder of several Government servants and rebellion. Bhooka Sah was charged with the

burning of Burgurh thana. Some of the other men who were charged with rebellion were Ganpat Manjhi, Kurtoo Manjhi, etc. There is no doubt that the statement mentions wilful murder of quite a number of persons, dacoity, arson and plunder against these men. It cannot be doubted that there was a considerable amount of bloodshed, plunder and arson. In many cases, however, it was also not possible to have any direct proof as to the individual who committed the crime.

Baboo Teekait Singh who was sentenced to 8 years imprisonment with the additional sentence of confiscation of his estate and property forms the subject matter of a letter no. 14, dated the 23rd May, 1859, from the Extra Junior Assistant Commissioner of Korundah Subdivision, to the Government of Bengal. It appears that a review of the case was called for because of a petition from his son Soorjnarayan Deo. Graham, Extra

Junior Assistant Commissioner, was of the opinion that Teekait Singh was the principal instigator for burning villages in Gurhwa area.

From several documents it is found that the zamindars and the principal men in the villages were openly helping or at least conniving at the depredations of, the insurgents. The Extra, Junior Assistant Commissioner in a letter, dated the 9th June, 1860 had mentioned that

There was no doubt that anybody of rebels could be lurking in any area unless the neighbouring zamindars connived-a frank admission which gave a correct picture of Palamau even in 1860.

A POPULAR MOVEMENT.

The narrative of the events will show that the movement at Palamau was of a very different character from a mere mutiny of the sepoys. The indigenous population of the district consisting of the Chero, Bogtals and Kharwars had taken to arms. Practically the bulk of the Jgirdars and zamindars had sided against the Government and against the very few loyal Rajput *Jagirdars*. The important places of the area, namely Lesligunj, Garhwa, Manika and Chainpur were pillaged. A number of Government thanas and *Abkari Kacheries* were pulled down and were burnt. The summit of the movement was in December, 1857 when "nearly the whole of the district of Palamau was apparently up in arms" (Prof. H. P. Chatterji in *Mutiny of Bihar*, SI. 140, *Bengal Past and Present*). By the first week of January, 1858 there was a turn in favour of the British. But the fact that Nilambar and Pitambar remained absconders and continued creating havoc for some months more shows that the civil population was in full support of the movement. In March, 1858 there was a fresh flare up under the leadership of Ganpat Rai and Bishnath Sahi both of whom were, however, eventually arrested and executed.

The revolt in Palamu was not so agitated as in Singhbhum nor was it more or less a sepoy mutiny as in Santhal Parganas. In the district the movement had assumed a fully popular character. The different sections of the civil population had thrown their lot together

and wanted to shake off the British authority. Here it was not the case of the sepoys rising with or without any support from the civil population. It was a case where the civil population led by their natural leaders the zamindars and *Jagirdars* took to arms. If it was a mutiny at all it was a mutiny which was taken up by the people."

The first great effect of the 1857 movement was an administrative reorientation so far as the district is concerned. Regarding the administrative changes the following quotation from "1857 in Bihar (Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas)", referred to before is relevant:-

"Prior to the year 1892, the present district of Palamau formed part of the district of Lohardagga. From 1852 to 1859 one of the Junior Assistants of Governor-General's

Agent, South-West Frontier, was in charge of what was then known as the Korundah Subdivision

with jurisdiction over the greater part of the present Palamau district. This Junior Assistant in addition to the charge of Palamau was required to act as Special Assistant to the Commissioner in superintending the affairs of Sirgooja and the charge of Odeypore, two tributary States in the South-West Frontier. The administrative headquarters was at Korundah or Jameera Pat, situated on a barren hill within the limits of Sirgooja.¹

After the flare up in 1857-58, on the recommendation of the Commissioner, Chotanagpur Division the Government of Bengal in 1859 sanctioned the permanent location of the headquarters of the; junior Assistant of Korundah Subdivision in Palamau. Lesligunj was selected as a civil station. It was, however abandoned later in favour of a more suitable site situated on the bank of Koel river opposite Sahpur. The new civil station which was made ready and occupied in 1863 was given the name of Daltonganj after Commissioner Dalton who was at the head of Chotanagpur Division during the stormy period of 1857 movement. The Subdivision of Palamau was upgraded into a district from January, 1892, according to the Bengal Government notification, dated the 30th October, 1891. Lt. Col. A. E. Gordon was appointed Deputy Commissioner of the second grade and Deputy Commissioner of Palamau, vide Government notification, dated the 27th October, 1891 published in *Calcutta Gazette*, 1891 (Part I, page 931).

This post had been sanctioned, vide Government of India Resolution no. 3263, dated the 5th April, 1892 the Deputy Commissioner of Palamau was vested with necessary judicial power held by the Deputy Commissioner of Chotanagpur Division. The immediate reason for the creation of a separate administrative unit and for placing the headquarters in Palamau in 1859 was that this area was a scene of widespread movement in 1857. It was felt that proper restoration of British authority could only be done after it was given a separate administrative status with full powers. Even when this subdivisional headquarters was located at Palamau the idea was that ultimately the unit will be further upgraded into that of a district."

1. Addition information on 1857 movement in Palamau district may be had in-

- (1) Dr. S. B. Choudhury's "Civil Rebellion in the Indian Mutiny, 1857-1859".
- (2) Dr. K. K. Dutta's "History of the Freedom Movement in Bihar".
- (3) Sri R. R. Diwakers "Bihar Through the Ages".

FROM THE 20th CENTURY.

The history of the district after the stratification of the administrative changes and since the beginning of the 20th century really merged into the history of the province and of India. The next event of public importance was the rapid political changes since 1919 and the inception of the Non-Co-operation Movement at the initiative of Mahatma Gandhi. Palamau along with other districts of Bihar played an important role during the Non-Co-operation Movement in spite of her comparative backwardness regarding education. The special session of the Indian National Congress in Calcutta in 1920 was attended by a number of Adivasis who walked all the way from Palamau district to Calcutta. Strangely enough the call of Mahatma Gandhi had a quick response from the Adivasis.

Some of the earlier non-Adivasis who took part in Congress work were Hiranand Ojha, Durga Nand Ojha, Vindeshwari Pathak, Sheikh Mohammad Hassan and Dee Narayan Mahta. A largely attended session of the Students Conference was held at Daltonganj on the 10th October, 1920 under the Presidentship of Rev. C. F. Andrews. This conference of the students was attended by Mazrul Haque, Chandra Bansi Sahay, Krishna Prassan Sen Sinha and others. Mazrul Haque in his speech on the resolution of the use of Swadeshi cloth expressed the desirability of the students participating in political matters and proposed an amendment that college students and other students above 16 years of age could participate in the political matters. There was another resolution regarding the withdrawal of students above 16 years of age immediately and unconditionally from Government aided or controlled institutions to national schools. Abdul Bari had moved this resolution and it was passed by an overwhelming majority of votes. A national school was started at Daltonganj in the house of Sheikh Saheb and Vindeshwari Pathak was the headmaster. It type mentioned that this national school was in a way the nucleus of the activities of the Congress movement in this district. Whenever any person of importance would visit Daltonganj, he paid visits to this national school where meetings used to be held. During 1921 and later a series of meetings were held at different places like Panki, Japla and other places where the cult of Charkha, Khaddar, anti-untouchability, prohibition, etc., used to be dwelt upon. In 1922, Manindra Nath Swami Banaras visited Daltonganj and delivered speeches and a notice under section 144, Cr. P.C. was at once served on him by the Deputy Commissioner of Palamau. Devaki Prasad Sinha, a reputed advocate of Palamau and Krishna Ballav Sahay were elected members of the local propaganda committee of the Chotanagpur Division in the meeting of the Bihar Branch of the Swarajya Party held at Patna on 2nd June, 1923. Both of them moved quite a lot in Palamau district to organise the Congress movement.¹

A momentous event was the visit of Mahatma Gandhi along with Dr. Rajendra Prasad to Daltonganj on the 11th January, 1927 during his second tour in Bihar. Thousands of villagers from distances of 20 to 30 miles attended the meeting and Mahatma Gandhi had to move, from place to place within the meeting to address the great mass. It may also be mentioned here that the Bihar Students Conference and the Local Branch of the Kayastha

Sabha took prominent part in shaping the advanced public opinion. The 25th Bihar Students' Conference was held at Daltonganj in 1932 under the presidentship of Kedar Nath, an eminent lawyer of Gaya. It has also to be mentioned that the Kisan Movement in Palamau district gave a wide support to the agitation against the constituted authority. The time-old

1. Dr. K. K. Dutta's "History of the Freedom Movement in Bihar, Volumes I, II, III" has additional information on the Congress movement in the district.

Kamia system and the economic backwardness of the labourers were the common target. The relationship between the landlords and the tenants had deteriorated badly. Many tenants had stopped payment of rent as a result of which the landlords were unable to pay the Government revenue and cess in time. The Congress took a good deal of interest in the improvement of the condition of the tenants and the agricultural labourers and there was an active Congress propaganda for filing suits for determination of rents. Congress activities in this connection were particularly concentrated in spots where there was more of oppression on the tenants and the agricultural labourers, for example, at pockets of Hussainabad, Chhatterpur, Garhwa, Ranka and Bhaunathpur police-stations. A well-attended political conference was held at Ranka in 1942 where Jadubans Sahay and other local leaders condemned the attitude of the landlords.

Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya visited Daltonganj in 1936 to inaugurate the Vishnu Mandir erected in the heart of the town. Malviyaji had accepted the inaugural ceremony only when the enlightened people of Daltonganj had made the commitment that the Vishnu Mandir will also be thrown open for the Harijans. An Annual Session of the Bihar Provincial Hindu Sabha was held in 1941 under the presidentship of Kamakhya Narayan Singh, Raja of Ramgarh.

The labour problem particularly at Japla had also attracted a good deal of attention. There was a labour strike at the cement factory at Japla in 1937-38 and since then the labour problem in this district could be said to move along with the labour problem elsewhere.

The August disturbances in 1942 had their echoes in Palamau as well Railway lines were dismantled telegraph lines were cut and a large number of men both at the district headquarters and in the interior were arrested. Since then as from before the district had actively participated in the various phases of struggle for independence.

Since independence was achieved the event of far-reaching importance was the abolition of zamindaris which has been dealt with separately. The partition of India and the creation of Pakistan was affected by widespread communal disturbances in the country. Luckily Palamau had escaped slightly. There has been an influx of displaced persons in this district particularly from the West Pakistan. This element has been completely absorbed in the population.

Regarding the abolition of zamindaris, it may be mentioned that it, was a very necessary step. The relationship between the zamindars and the tenants had deteriorated very badly and there was a lot of trouble in the different parts of the district over *Bakast*

and *Gairmajrua* lands, over lac and mahua trees, payment of rents, etc. The realisation of *abwabs* had become extinct sometime back but now the tenants had been refusing to pay their legitimate rent and the landlords, in their turn were harassing the tenants over their rights on lac and mahua trees. Agrarian troubles broke out in different pockets and at Kharaundi in Bhaunathpur P.-s. the tenants had resorted to *Satyagraha* for taking forceful possession of *Bakast* lands. Consequent upon the vesting of intermediary interests with effect from the 26th January, 1955 the tenants ceased paying rent, etc., to the outgoing landlords. The Land Reforms Act put an end to all this and after the usual aftermath of such a revolutionary steps things are becoming normal now.

An incidence of some importance took place in 1958 which was fomented by one Phetal Singh, a Kharwar. This local incidence attained much more publicity than what it deserved and even was loosely described in the Press as the Kharwar Movement.

As mentioned before the Kharwars form one of the major Adivasi elements in the district. A certificate sale of a bullock belonging to a Kharwar at village Khobi near Manpur in Sarguja district of Madhya Pradesh bordering Palamau district created an alarming situation. The Kharwars organised themselves under one Chuni Singh and the movement quickly went out of alignment and refusal to pay taxes became a slogan. Their party came to be known as the *Bharat Sarkar*. The so-called *Bharat Sarkar* Party was said to have the objective of creating and establishing an independent State of the Kharwars. The police in Madhya Pradesh naturally took steps to crush the movement and the movement spread to the south-western part of Palamau district where there is a large Kharwar population.

The first meeting of the Kharwars was held at village Saraidih in Bhandaria P.-S. Other meetings followed at Parasatand and Kutku in January, 1958. The leadership was of one Phetal Singh who moved quickly from place to place in the jungles. Phetal Singh came from village Bahahara, 8 miles from Ranka P.-S. and quite a number of villages in Ranka thana were badly affected.

It is understood that Phetal Singh's party had more than 300 strong adherents and a movement to create confusion and to benefit thereby won the sympathy from people of anti-social bias. As Phetal Singh and his party moved in the jungles, the forest contractors, Labourers and Tehsildars were terrorised. The Tehsildar engaged in collection of chaukidari tax at village Bankhetta was asked to leave the village, and exaggerated stories regarding Phetal Singh and his gang frightened a number of subordinate Government employees. One Mahadeva Singh, a Kharwar of village Ramchandrapur, P.-S. Sarguja was the chief adviser of Phetal Singh. The so called *Bharat Sarkar* of the Kharwars was quickly suppressed by the police. The village Bahahara, the centre of Kharwar activities was surrounded by the military police, reinforced from Ranchi and headed by the District Superintendent or Police of Palamau. The gang was surrounded up in the course of which one of Phetal Singh's men was killed

and injury was caused to a few others. Some policemen had also received injuries in the course of their round up. Phetal Singh was arrested along with 6 follower sand the chief adviser. They were ultimately tried and Phetal Singh was given rigorous imprisonment for three years.¹ Phetal Singh and all his associates were given pardon and released in 1959.

1. The following authorities were consulted:-

- (1) Hunter's Statistical Account of Lohardagga.
- (2) District Gazetteer of Palamau, 1907.
- (3) District Gazetteer of Palamau, 1926.
- (4) Old Records in the Record Room of the Deputy Commissioner, Palamau, Daltonganj.
- (5) Old Records in the Record Room of the Commissioner, Chotanagpur Division, Ranchi-File no. IT-5 of 1859-70.
- (6) Final Report of the Survey and Settlement Operations in the district of Palamau, 1918-20 by T. W. Bridge.
- (7) Judgment of Title Suit no. 11 of 1924 in the Court of Additional SubJudge, Palamau (Gopal Bux Ray v. Vinodini Devi).
- (8) Judgment of First Appeal 98/1984, Patna High Court.
- (9) P. C. Roy Choudhury's "1857 in Bihar (Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas)" second Edition, 1959.
- (10) H. P. Chatterji's "Mutiny in Bihar", Bengal Past and Present, s1. 140.
- (11) Jagdish Narain Sarkar's "The Mutiny of 1857-58 and the Palamau Jagirdars", Bihar Research Society Journal, Vol. XLI, pt. IV, 1955.
- (12) Amar Nath Das-"India and Jamboo Island". 1925.
- (13) K. K. Datta's "History of Freedom Movement in Bihar".
- (14) R. R. Diwakar's "Bihar Through the Ages".
- (15) S. B. Chaudhury's "Civil Rebellion in the Indian Mutiny, 1857-1859".