

Note on the Condition of the People of Assam.

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by H. Z. Baruah

THE confidential Circular of the Government of India, No. 44F.—8-1, dated the 17th August, was transferred to me for necessary action. In this Province no enquiry was made in 1878-79 by the Famine

Commission, it being then generally admitted that famine here was impossible. We had not therefore, the reports and evidence on the economic condition of the agricultural classes, which were then collected in other parts of India (and are referred to in paragraph 3 of the Circular), to work on as a basis, and it became necessary to take up the subject from the beginning. I accordingly looked through the Famine Commission's Report and selected the questions (numbered 1 to 8 in Appendix A) as the most suitable for indicating the general line which the enquiries were to take. Two more questions, those numbered 9 and 10, were subsequently framed by the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, and sent to me in December. The following officers were selected, and several copies of the Circular and questions were distributed to all but No. 6.

1. Mr. H. Luttman-Johnson, Judge and Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts.
2. „ A. C. Campbell, Deputy-Commissioner, Kamrup.
3. „ George Stevenson, Deputy-Commissioner, Sylhet.
4. „ J. Knox Wight, Deputy-Commissioner, Sibsagar.
5. „ J. J. S. Driberg, Deputy-Commissioner, Lakhimpur.
6. Rai Sharat Chandra Banerji, Bahadur, Extra-Assistant-Commissioner, Nowgong.

Each officer (except No. 6) was asked to select those persons in the area under his jurisdiction whose opinion he considered it of importance to ascertain, and to obtain from them notes to the questions distributed.

2. In reply, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Campbell, and Mr. Knox Wight have sent the notes printed in Appendix B. Mr. Stevenson was unable through

press of work to write a regular note, but forwarded the replies and examples of Babu Raj Mohan's marginal commentaries of his own. Mr. Johnson sent with his own note and examples the examples collected by Rai Gunabhiram Sarma Barua Bahadur, (No. 22 of Appendix C). Mr. Campbell, besides his own note, furnished answers by Babu Guru Prasad Das, Sub-divisional Officer, Barpeta, and Babu Kali Chandra Barua and Radha Nath Barua, Tahsildars. Rai Sharat Chandra Banerji furnished the materials for Examples No. 23 to No. 29 of Appendix C. The replies to my own enquiries, assisted by the unprinted replies above mentioned, are given in the note below. Examples 1 to 10 of Appendix C were also collected during my recent tour.

In Appendix D has been given a list with vernacular and scientific names of the vegetables and fruits ordinarily eaten in the Brahmaputra Valley, either alone, or as an addition or flavouring to the daily meal of rice. These have been divided into three classes:—

- (1) Cultivated vegetables.
- (2) Wild „
- (3) Cultivated fruits.*

The specimens sent were, with the exception of Nos. 37, 39, 40, 42, and 44 (which were obtained by Rai Sharat Chandra Banerji Bahadur), all collected and despatched to Calcutta personally by me. Dr. Prain himself identified them at the Royal Botanical Gardens, Seebore, so that I think no errors have crept in, as sometimes happens through labels going astray and the carelessness of clerks. Where a doubt has been expressed as to the scientific name, the fact is due to the imperfection of the specimen forwarded. It was not always possible to obtain, as is required generally for correct botanical identification, a specimen of the flower or fruit.

4. In the following remarks the most important parts of Assam, viz., the five upper districts of the Brahmaputra Valley and Sylhet, have alone been dealt with, though a great deal of what has been said will apply equally well to Cachar and Goalpara. It was found impracticable to compile within the time the necessary information with reference to these two and the three hill districts. Consequently, the completion of the enquiry must be left to another time. With these preliminary remarks I proceed to deal with the questions *seriatim*.

* There are practically no fruits found growing wild which have not also been cultivated.

A.—The Brahmaputra Valley.

5. The main food of the people everywhere is rice. There are three principal kinds of this, which are again sub-divided into numberless varieties not distinguishable from each other by any one but a native.

Main staple.

a. *Sali, or transplanted winter rice.*—This is sown first in seed-beds about May and June, transplanted about July and August, and harvested in December and January. Sali rice is always transplanted, and always grown on land known for assessment purposes as "rupit." It is never sown broadcast, except in the seed bed. It is the most valuable of the three species of rice grown, and generally yields the heaviest crop. The average outturn from 1,896 experiments gives 1,512 lbs. of threshed but unhusked rice per acre, but in good land the return has been as much as over 5,000 lbs.

Rain in moderation is required for the seed-bed, but copious rain is essential while transplanting is going on and for some time afterwards. Drought during July or August would probably be fatal to the crop. Sali is grown on land subject to moderate inundations. It cannot be transplanted unless the soil into which it is to be moved is of the consistency of mud more than ankle deep. Consequently, very high and very low lands are equally unsuitable. The fields into which it is transplanted are distinguished from most other rice fields by the existence of innumerable small divisions from 6 to 10 yards square bounded by small banks a foot or a foot and a half high, intended to keep up the water. The assessment on rupit is 10 annas a bigha (0.3308 of an acre). In 1886-87, 55.05 per cent. of the whole cultivation of the Brahmaputra Valley, including Goalpara, was under sali and bao rice.

b. *Bao, or broadcast winter rice.*—This species is sown in April and May and harvested in October, November, and December. It is sometimes, but not generally, transplanted. It is sown on lowlying lands, which in the rains are too covered by water to allow of sali being transplanted. The fields are never distinguished by the small divisions which mark the presence of sali rice, and in many cases the owners are obliged to put in stakes here and there to enable them to recognise the land they have themselves sown. Drought in April or May prevents sowing, and very heavy floods in July or August kill the rice outright. After sali, this is the most valuable species of rice grown. It is sometimes sown with ahu, especially in the Chapari mauzas, and in lowlying plots in other mauzas. The ahu is gathered first and the bao allowed to grow. The assessment is 10 annas a bigha, as the land on which it is grown is classified as rupit.

c. *Ahu or early rice.*—This species is sown broadcast in February, March, and April, and harvested in June, July, and August. It is occasionally transplanted, and when this is the case is known as kharma or farina, and reaped a little later, in August or September. It is grown on land too high and too dry for sali or bao, and known for assessment purpose as "faringati." It can bear drought better than either of the other species and can exist with but little rain in the sowing season. The average outturn from 708 experiments gives 1,322 lbs. of threshed but unhusked grain per acre. But individual experiments have yielded as much as over 3,200 lbs. It is generally considered the least valuable of the three kinds of rice. The assessment on faringati is 8 annas per bigha. In 1886-87, 20.2 per cent. of the whole cultivation of the Brahmaputra Valley, including Goalpara, was under early rice.

6. After the staple rice come the various pulses grown in the cold weather, known by the generic name of dal. These are of several kinds:—

Pulses.

- (a) Arhar or Rahar (*Cajanus Indicus, Spreng.*)—Grown generally as a border to a cane field, and never as a separate crop.
- (b) Masur (*Ervum Lens, Linn.*)—Sown generally on early sali fields after the rice is taken off. The field is very roughly ploughed, rapidly fenced in, and the grain sown broadcast mixed with peas and kasari.
- (c) Peas (*Pisum sativum, Linn.*)—Usually sown with masur and kasari [cf. (b)].
- (d) Kasari (*Lathyrus sativus, Linn.*)—Usually sown with peas and masur [cf. (b)].
- (e) Matikalai (*Phaseolus munge, Linn.*)—Generally sown alone in September and gathered about January. There is a superstition that matikalai must be sown in the last four days of Bhadra (September 12th to 15th) and first four days of Aswin (September 15th to 18th); frequently sown after ahu. The average outturn from 319 experiments shows a yield of 434 lbs. per acre. In 1886-87, 3.2 per cent. of the whole cultivated area of the Brahmaputra Valley, including Goalpara, was under these pulses.

7. In places where the pulses are not grown, they are not very generally used, except amongst the more well-to-do cultivators. Similarly, though mustard oil is a common article of diet in some places, it is

Vegetables.

not in others where mustard is not largely grown. But certain species of vegetables are cultivated in almost every homestead in the Province, and others found wild everywhere are very universally used. These species of vegetables have been described in Appendix D. Scarcely a meal is taken in which some one or more of them does not form an indispensable adjunct to the staple commodity, rice.

8. The methods of cooking are very numerous. When an Assamese says he has

Cooking.

eaten a certain vegetable as "curry," he does not mean that after boiling it he has covered it with haladi, or other spices and used it to flavour his rice. He simply means that he has boiled it either alone, or with tenga or with salt or in khar water. Boiled with "tenga," means boiled with something tart or acid, as Nos. 50, 53, and 66 of Appendix D. When boiled with salt, a little of this commodity is dropped into the water. Khar water is prepared by straining water through a basket of wood ashes (generally made of burnt plantain stems and leaves). The water so prepared has a flavour which is supposed to impart a pleasant taste to vegetables boiled in it, and to render the use of salt almost unnecessary. Hence, in very poor households, khar water is largely used to avoid the purchase of salt. When not used as a curry, the vegetable is often eaten "bhaji." This means that it is fried in oil. The use of ghi is almost unknown in the Province. When used as "sag" the meaning is that the vegetable is boiled and eaten as spinach.

9. Manure is practically never used in the Brahmaputra Valley, except amongst

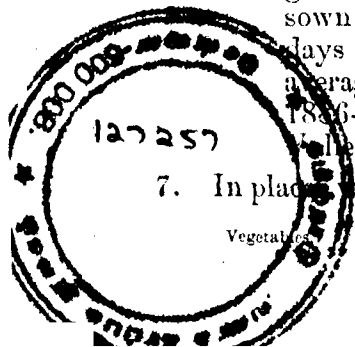
Manure.

the vegetables of the basti or at the root of young betel palms. Cattle manure is never applied to rice fields, unless the fields are specially close to the cowshed. The people will everywhere admit the value of cattle manure in increasing the fertility of the soil, but when asked why they do not use it invariably say it is too much trouble. Cattle manure, where the basti is small, is always looked on as a nuisance, and in many villages lies in heaps here and there, having been flung away as rubbish. Large herds of buffaloes are kept in some mauzas, and it is a common thing to find "Mohkhutis," as the places where the buffaloes are tied up at night are called, in the Chapari mauzas along the banks of the Brahmaputra. The buffaloes are brought here on account of the excellent grazing. They feed during the daytime and at night are tied up. Quantities of manure necessarily accumulate at these mohkhutis, but no use whatever is made of it. It is neither applied to the land nor used as fuel. When the Brahmaputra next rises the whole of the valuable material that has been accumulating for months is swept away by the flood. Although cattle manure, however plentiful, is not applied to the rice fields, it is not uncommon for the rice stubble to be burnt and the ashes ploughed in. This is especially done on bao lands, where, often mixed with the remains of the bao there are quantities of dal grass, and the ashes produced are therefore very copious in quantity. In the same way mustard may be said to be partially manured, for the remains of the ahu crop that generally precedes it, as well as the jungle that has grown up in the interval, are usually burnt. This burning, however, is more probably done to assist the plough in subsequently turning up the soil, than with a view to increase the outturn of the crop. Practically, therefore, it may be said that manuring of fields is unknown in Assam. But, though the fields are thus left in a great measure without any artificial stimulus to production, cattle manure is applied direct from the cowshed to the roots of young betel palms and plantains, and used for land on which the household vegetables are grown. Tobacco and cane are almost invariably manured, the former being always, and the latter frequently, grown on the basti.

10. There is no regular rotation of crops, but ahu is generally put down when

Rotation of crops.

land is first broken up. In faringati land this is sown about March and reaped about July. The land lies fallow then till September, when it is ploughed and a crop of mustard taken off it about January or February, another crop of ahu is then sown, and after the third year the land is abandoned, as its fertility has been exhausted. A long fallow is then allowed, but there are no statistics to show its length. In sali or transplanted winter rice lands, it is not uncommon to grow two crops. This is almost always done if the soil is good. Ahu is sown about March and reaped about July, and the sali seedlings transplanted in August. Sometimes a crop of peas or matikalai is taken off the same land during the cold weather. Land so occupied gets practically no rest at all. The practice of double cropping sali land would appear to prevail most in upper Assam, where the rainfall is greater and more evenly distributed than in Nowgong and Kamrup. After cane a fallow of two or three years is generally allowed. Sali land is not supposed to be benefited by a fallow. Good faringati land, like good rupit, also grows two crops. Ahu is put down at the beginning of the hot weather and a crop of mustard or matikalai grown during the cold.



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11. The examples given in Appendix C, Nos. 1 to 29, sufficiently illustrate the general economic condition of the people of the Brahmaputra Valley, and show better than any report could do that the assertion "that the greater portion of the population suffer from a daily insufficiency of food" is incorrect as far as the most important parts of this Province are concerned.

Some remarks by Mr. Luttman-Johnson, Commissioner of the Division, are here very apposite. Writing in January 1888 he says "A late Commissioner doubled the revenue rates in Assam Proper with a view to making its inhabitants more productive. The result is the extension of the cultivation of mustard for export. I have lately travelled through a somewhat remote part of my division. My porters—paid 8 annas per journey of ten to twelve miles (besides a small present, say, one rupee among eight or ten for opium)—were all impressed, and the impressment was the use of real force. They were all clad in silk attire, and they were the paupers and outcasts of the villages I stopped at. It is fair to add that the same people would do the same work for Marwari traders for the same pay. Force is required in my case, because I am a Government servant and service as porter to a Government servant confers social obloquy."

12. As a general rule it may be laid down that every family that cultivates at all has enough land to supply it with food, that, very little actual cash is required by the great majority of the cultivators, and that the small amount needed is always very readily obtainable. Further, it may almost invariably be said of any instance of poverty produced that disinclination to labour is the cause of the distress. A few cases have been noted (Examples 5, 24, and 25) in which the poverty was the result of sickness, but the ordinary staple of life is so cheap and so universally procurable, and the means of earning money so very easily obtained, that a little neighbourly help, never denied in Assam, is enough to enable a man to tide over a period of illness till returning strength shall enable him to start fair again. It is then generally his own fault if he does not find himself very shortly free from debt.

13. There are several advantages which cultivators in Assam enjoy above those possessed by the inhabitants of most other parts of India. One of the most important of these is free grazing. There are a few closely-cultivated mauzas (like Khata in Kámrúp) where there is scarcely any waste land available, but even there the grazing-grounds are not very distant, and most villages have some and very many excellent pasture lands almost at their doors. No charge is ever made for grazing, except in part of the Lakhimpur district, where several families of Nepalese have settled down with a view to the breeding of buffaloes. A small fee of four annas per buffalo is there levied. But elsewhere no charge of any kind is made, even when large herds of buffaloes are driven down to the banks of the Brahmaputra and grazed during the cold weather on the extensive wastes which there abound.

14. In this connection attention should be drawn to the miserably small breed of bullocks and cows which the Assamese possess, and this notwithstanding the fact that amongst most of the aboriginal tribes, such as Kacharis and Lalungs, the milk of the cow is left to the calf. It would be natural to suppose, that where free grazing, frequently of excellent quality, is obtainable in almost unlimited quantity, the breed would be something superior to the puny stunted creatures seen in such numbers in the plains of Assam. The miserable character of the breed is the more remarkable in that the buffaloes of the Brahmaputra Valley are peculiarly fine. These latter animals are as superior to those of Bengal as the bullocks and cows of Assam are inferior to the bullocks and cows of the neighbouring Province. It is not easy to account for this difference, as it is almost impossible to obtain reliable information from the cultivators. It has been more than once said that where cattle are fed on rice straw they are always poor. During the rains rice-straw is often the main food, as most of the grazing-grounds are then under water. But during the greater part of the cold weather the grazing, especially where the land lies within reach of the Brahmaputra floods, is excellent in quality, and exceedingly plentiful in quantity, and it would not seem that want of food had much to do with the puny size of Assamese cattle. A suggestion has been made by Mr. A. C. Campbell, a Deputy-Commissioner whose experience of Assam is unrivalled, which probably explains to a certain extent the anomaly above referred to. He believes that the inferiority of the breed of bullocks and cows is mainly due to want of maturity in the sires. The cattle are allowed to run free over the fields and pasture lands, and the younger and more active bulls succeed in covering more cows than older and more unwieldy males. The result is deterioration in the offspring. Amongst buffaloes, on the other hand, the cows are constantly covered by wild bulls, and when one of these has attached himself to a herd he suffers no other male to approach it until he has been himself overcome in a fight, or has served all the cows. The wild buffalo of Assam is a very fine animal, and the intermixture of his strain with that of the tame species must very effectually tend to prevent the latter from degenerating.

15. Besides free grazing, another advantage enjoyed by the majority of Assamese cultivators is the use of most building materials free of all charge. Under the Forest Department Rules, each ryot's household is allowed annually for its own use gratis the following articles:—

Bamboos	400
Cane	10 bundles.

In most parts of the valley thatching-grass costs no more than the labour of cutting and carriage. In some places, it is found in great abundance, and is cut and sold as in the neighbourhood of Dibrugarh and Nowgong. Similarly, reeds and stems of the long elephant-grass, used by the Assamese for making the walls of their huts, are everywhere obtainable in unlimited quantities. There is no restriction whatever on the quantities of thatching-grass or reeds that may be cut by a ryot. Cane, used instead of cord for binding the rafters and fixing the thatching-grass, is either found in the jungle, or grown on a small piece of the basti. Bamboos, so universally used, not only for building, but for innumerable domestic purposes, have to be grown on the homestead itself, when not found growing wild. They, and canes when cultivated, form almost the only exception to the rule that building materials in Assam cost nothing but the labour of cutting and carriage.

16. Another incidental advantage enjoyed by the Assamese consists in the amount of food that grows wild, sometimes on their homestead land, sometimes along their roads, and always on the areas of waste. These are mentioned in detail in Appendix D. It will be seen that the methods of cooking are various, and the advantages of having so extensive a choice of vegetables wherewith to season free of cost their ordinary meal of rice are not amongst the least important of those enjoyed by the Assamese. Firewood also is practically unlimited. Each household is annually entitled to 200 maunds free of charge from a district forest, but there is really no possible check on the consumption.

17. Again, the Assamese are accustomed to make for themselves almost all the implements they require for household or agricultural purposes. Wood such as they want is procurable almost everywhere. Each ryot's household is allowed gratis four unreserved trees annually for its own use. Every man makes for himself all but the iron point of his plough. He buys the iron parts of his hoes and daos (bill-hooks) and fixes them in wooden handles. The hammer with which he breaks the clods of his rice-fields is cut in the nearest jungle. Every part of his loom, except the parts made of bamboo, is prepared by himself from logs cut on Government waste, when he does not wish to use a tree from his homestead. The granary generally rests on heavy logs of timber to keep it from the ground, and these very rarely cost their owner anything but the labour of felling and carrying. Those who use boats, and in Assam nine-tenths of the people do, make them out of the trunks of single trees, and no royalty is charged in some places and only a trifling sum in others for such trees when unreserved and used only for domestic purposes.

18. The tenures of the Assam Valley are neither very numerous nor very complicated. They have been described at length in Mr. Baden Powell's Manual of the Revenue Systems of India, and it is unnecessary to go into details concerning them here. Practically, it may be said that every one who has a lease of any land in the Brahmaputra Valley, no matter whether annual or periodic, can transfer that land as he feels disposed. Under the Land and Revenue Regulation for Assam this right of transfer has only been given to those who before it came into force, July 1st 1886, had been in possession of any land for ten years or upwards, or who now hold on a ten-year lease. But the right of transfer has always been practically recognised, and the people have altogether failed to appreciate the change of status involved by the ten-year lease. At the present moment the great majority are perfectly indifferent to the nature of the lease they hold, and would as soon have one for a single year as one for ten. As long as the tenants are allowed to abandon any piece that does not suit them, to take up fresh land when they want it, and to sell or otherwise dispose of what they hold at their pleasure, they are utterly indifferent to the character of the lease. These privileges they have all up to date enjoyed, and transfers made have been regularly recognised by both civil and revenue courts.

There are symptoms that the practical recognition of this right of transfer is gradually having its natural effect in some of the more-densely-populated areas, and that leases are being accumulated where land is valuable in the hands of men, some of them aliens and the majority not cultivators of the soil. That this process has not gone far would seem to be proved by the fact that when enquiries were made in 1882-83 on the subject of the proposed Rent Law for Assam it was estimated that there were but few under tenants in the Province except those on *nisj-khirdj* and *lá-khirdj* estates. Exact figures as to the

numbers of undertenants and the area held by them on estates assessed at full revenue rates are not available, as the *dág chittás* kept by mauzadars outside cadastrally-surveyed areas have no column for this class of tenants. The cadastral survey is collecting statistics on the subject, and the figures, when complete, will be interesting. It may, however, be accepted as a fact that in places where population is dense and land valuable there is a tendency towards the accumulation of leases in the hands of those who have ready money available, and that many of these are men who, from the nature of their employments, cannot possibly attend to the cultivation of the land for which they hold leases. Some are clerks in the various district offices. Many are pleaders. It would seem that very few are Kayas or Marwari merchants. It is not quite clear why these latter have not become possessed of more land than they appear to hold. Their opportunities for acquiring leases, by fair means or otherwise, must be at least as great as those of the clerks in a Deputy-Commissioner's office, but they do not seem to have availed themselves of them. Possibly, they do not want to acquire in the country any interest which they cannot bodily remove when they themselves leave Assam.

19. It is not for a stranger quite easy to understand why, in a Province where land is so plentiful, cultivators should voluntarily abandon their rights and become the undertenants of others. But to any

Cause of undertenancy.

one who knows the excessive indolence of the Assamese, and his strong dislike to anything involving the least labour, the matter will contain nothing surprising. There is nothing which the Assamese detests more than trouble. Anything which causes the slightest inconvenience is "bor dukh." It is "bor dukh" to apply manure to fields distant from the homestead. It is "bor dukh" to go the catcherry and point out errors in the lease which has been given him. It is "bor dukh" if he is obliged to pass noon without his midday meal. It is "bor dukh" to go out at all if rain is falling. Consequently, when any one comes between him and the mauzadar and undertakes to pay his revenue for him he will sometimes close with the offer for the sake of the indulgences he hopes to gain from the middle man. He assumes he will be allowed to retain his land, he assumes that his rent will not be raised. He knows he can abandon any part of what he holds at any time. He believes that the same punctuality in paying his revenue will not be required from him by the lease-holder as used to be demanded by the mauzadar. He knows that he will often be able to arrange for a payment in kind instead of a payment in cash, and that though the payment in kind will probably be a really higher rent, he will nevertheless escape the trouble of having to carry his produce to market. His ideas as to what rights he possesses or abandons are vague in the extreme. Referring to this, the Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, writes "I have known instances where a number of ryots, to save themselves the trouble of paying land revenue direct, for protection too against exactions of mauzadars and mandals, with a view to escape impressment, have made over their land to some influential persons. They had no idea they were losing their proprietary rights, as they understood proprietary rights."

20. In Assam cases relating to the rent of land are not dealt with by the Revenue but by the Civil Courts; this fact did not come to my notice sufficiently early to enable me to gather from the records of

Rent of undertenants.

such cases statistics of the actual rent paid, nor probably would time in any case have permitted of an exhaustive enquiry into the matter. This subject must therefore lie over for future investigation at leisure. Meanwhile it may be stated, on the authority of most of the persons consulted, that the majority of undertenants pay only the regular Government rates, the same that they would pay if they were Government tenants themselves, and in these cases the landlord gains little advantage from his lease beyond the fact that he can occasionally exact service from his tenant. If he is in the habit of visiting the villages where his land is, this service is something tangible and valuable. Otherwise it is not. But there is a considerable number of undertenants who hold on what is called "adhi" (the French *metayer*) tenure, and from these the advantages are very real indeed. When an undertenant holds on adhi tenure, he agrees to cultivate the land of the leaseholder, and to give him half the produce, on condition of his paying the revenue. Sometimes the landlord has to supply seed as well as pay the revenue. The undertenant finds the labour and the cattle. It is easy to calculate the profit on one acre of rupit, almost the only class of land so held. The revenue to be paid is Re. 1-14. The total outturn is known by a large number of experiments to average something over 1,500 lbs. paddy. Therefore, if he had no seed to supply, the leaseholder would receive 750 lbs. of paddy, or 9 maunds, delivered in the village. This would be worth Rs. 5-10. If so, his profit would be Rs. 3-12. If he had supplied the seed (30 seers per acre), he would get Rs. 3-4-6 profit. Therefore 174 per cent. is probably the lowest profit he can make. If the field is at all above the average (and he need not keep it if he does not find it profitable), he can easily get 200, or even more, per cent. Besides the above, it is now pretty generally

limited that some tenants pay in cash at more than the Government rates. This is the case more especially in those mauzas where land is of very great value indeed, and where signations are all but unknown. There many undertenants who are too well off to render service to their landlords, are generally believed to pay, rather than abandon the fields they hold, cash rates higher than those charged by Government.

21. When the more well-to-do Assamese employ hired labour, the payment is generally in kind. There are several systems of payment in kind, many of them approaching a species of undertenancy, and the rates of payment vary somewhat from district to district. The following account is from the pen of Rai Gunabhiram Sarma Barua Bahadur :—

Hired labour.

"Field labourers are paid in kind and sometimes in money. In the latter case advances are made sometimes on a written agreement and sometimes without it. This is called the Bondha system. The grower tills the owner's land, and works as a domestic servant, getting a deduction of not exceeding annas a month from the principal sum, as also the interest, which is generally an anna per rupee per month. If the borrower is fed and clothed by the lender he gets nothing deducted from the principal, it is credited with the interest. He must in this case leave the service after repaying the original sum. If he is fed only, and not clothed, he gets a deduction of not less than 8 annas a month from the principal. If he is neither fed nor clothed he gets a deduction of not exceeding 2 rupees a month from the original amount advanced. Interest at one anna per rupee per month is always allowed, plus the deduction from the principal. The calculation is always made according to the capacity of the man to work, the wages not exceeding in all Rs. 4-8.

"An adhi labourer is one who tills the owner's land with his own cattle and seed and gets an equal share of the produce.

"A morakiya labourer is one who ploughs the owner's land with the owner's cattle two days the owner's field and one day in his own field. In all, the ploughing time is three months, of which the owner gets his services for two months, and the labourer one month. He works only in the morning the owner's land and the remainder of the day he spends in doing his own work. The rate of wages, if calculated in money is 2 annas a day, the total sum is Rs. 3-12 a month. He further gets from the owner nothing in the shape of jolpan, or tiffin, which in money value would amount to 4 annas a month. Adding to the Rs. 3-12 he earns in all Rs. 4 a month. When the labourer does not get the services of his master's bullocks to till his lands, he gets the produce of 1 or 1½ bighas of land, which he ploughs, at the ploughing time. The quantity thus obtained is about 30 or 40 puras of paddy, worth 7½ to 10 rupees.

"A Gorukia, or cow-keeper, gets 4 annas a cow for nine months. He generally keeps 40 cows a day. The total amount of his wages is Rs. 10 for the whole period. Sometimes he gets paddy of a bigha of land from the owner. Sometimes a female calf aged about 3 years, worth about Rs. 3, is given to him for his labour. A buffalo-keeper gets on the average 3 annas per month. A man can keep 20 cows. A buffalo khuti contains 150 to 200 buffaloes of several owners. The owners or their men and others keep them by turns. Sometimes a keeper gets one-third share of the milk in lieu of wages, the owner getting two days' and the keeper one day's milk. Sometimes a female buffalo calf, aged 2 to 3 years, is given to the owner. The calf must be one born during the time the man keeps the buffaloes. Taking all into consideration, it may be fairly stated that his monthly income does not exceed Rs. 3-12 a month.

"A Rowani, or woman employed in planting paddy, gets the produce of half a bigha of land for her remuneration. The woman does the work at intervals. The produce of half a bigha of land is about 1 maunds, worth Rs. 4. A woman may thus be employed by four or five persons during the season, as she only works at intervals. She works in her own field also. A Duani or reaper (male or female) employed in reaping paddy, gets about 4 maunds of paddy as above. Persons employed in weeding paddy and sugarcane get paddy, about a maund, for the work. Generally persons who have no other members in the family or are too poor, and have no lands sufficient to produce crops to maintain them and their families, seek for such work. The earnings made by these labourers are not enough to maintain them. This kind of labour is only a source of their income, though itself it is not sufficient to maintain the labourer.

"Generally young boys keep cows and young men keep buffaloes. Planting and reaping women plant or reap paddy as much as they can daily. The contract is made for the season. People who cannot afford to do the work themselves employ rowanis, duanis, &c. In some places the owners have the work done by others out of eneh (affection). Each helps his neighbour, taking only something in the shape of jolpan. Mauzadars, mandals, gaonburas, and other influential men of the locality enjoy a privilege. It is only in a few instances that paddy is borrowed, which is again repaid in season or money value paid."

The following account is given by Rai Sharat Chandra Banerji Bahadur, Extra-Assistant Commissioner :—

"Monthly wages are an exception rather than the rule; when, however, labour is hired on the monthly system, it is paid at from Re. 1 to Rs. 2 and Rs. 2-8 according to the age and strength of the labourer. A boy will get Re. 1, an adult Rs. 2, and a strong man Rs. 2-8, besides food.

"If the arrangement is one for paying in kind, it consists of a share of the produce at harvest time. It may vary from 1-10th to 1-5th, according to the supposed value of the labour given.

"But the most usual arrangement is that whereby the labourer, who is usually a man that has got into debt over a bad harvest, marriage expenses, sickness, or the like, takes an advance of say from Rs. 20 to Rs. 100, and gives his labour to work this off.

"An able-bodied man who takes a loan of Rs. 20 will have to work for 20 months before the debt is paid off. He gets his food from the landowner in the meantime. This means that his labour is worth Re. 1 per month, besides the interest on the Rs. 20 lent.

"If he borrows Rs. 40 he is credited with 12 annas per month, as the interest on the debt is larger.

"If over Rs. 40 he will sometimes be credited almost nothing, and he has to work in lieu of interest alone. His only hope of getting out of it lies in borrowing in another place on easier terms or on a bumper harvest, which we will suppose his brother, father, or some other member of the family is looking after all this while. If he has none such to help him, his condition differs little from that of a permanent bondsman."

22. The variations in the systems of payment above described are innumerable, and depend generally on the circumstances which affect each particular bargain. The two limiting species of under-tenancy tenures are Chukani and Adhi. In the former the central idea is fixity (Chukana = settled). A fixed amount, either in kind or cash, is settled as the amount of the rent, generally this is in cash, and usually it is simply the amount of the Government revenue on the land. If the land is good the cultivator will sometimes agree to give more, but the lowest rent the leaseholder can take is clearly the amount of the Government revenue. Similarly, the highest rent which a cultivator will pay is that which he is bound to give on the Adhi tenure, i.e., half the produce. The highest form of this Adhi tenure occurs when the cultivator is bound to cut, thresh, and carry the landlord's share of the grain to the landlord's house. But generally this species of tenure is made to approach nearer the Chukani, by the landlord's supplying the seed, or paying for the cost of transplanting (calculated at 4 annas a bigha) or both, so that the apparent difference between the rents paid under the two systems is not always as great as it appears to be.

23. In the Kāmrup district day labourers are not uncommon amongst the members of large families. For cutting paddy the usual daily payment is one seer of rice and two dhuns (about 8 or 9 seers) of paddy, worth about 2½ annas, a day. For gathering mustard the daily payment is generally one seer of rice and two seers of mustard, equivalent to about the same. Labour on Government roads is everywhere paid for either by contract rates or at 4 annas a day. Coolies not engaged under the Emigration Act (I. of 1882) on a tea-garden are paid all over the valley at from Rs. 7 to Rs. 10 a month, according as they choose to do extra work or not. Sometimes a man will do enough extra work to earn Rs. 20 in the month. The minimum rate of wages fixed by law for imported tea-garden coolies is Rs. 5 a month. This can be earned by all who work regularly, and many by extra work earn double and treble this amount. But some do not care to work regularly, and therefore earn less than the minimum. Probably, therefore, the average earnings may be put down roughly at about Rs. 4-8 a month. With the exception of the imported tea-garden coolie and the Kacharies of Kāmrup and Darrang, there is no class of professional labourers in Assam. All those who at the reaping or planting seasons take up job work have their own land or belong to families who have their own land. Owing to idleness or thriftlessness, they find themselves without sufficient rice, and they take the opportunity to acquire some. Or else the family to which they belong is numerous, and the aid of all its members is not required for its own cultivation. Some are therefore sent out to work for hire.

24. As a general rule, the only holders of land in Assam who carry out any improvements whatever are the tea-planters. By them roads are made, jungle cleared, machinery introduced, and immigration encouraged. Their presence has raised prices enormously to the great good of the producer, and many a village in the valley of the Brahmaputra owes its prosperity to the vicinity of a tea-garden and its coolies. But, excluding the tea-planter, there is no cultivator in Assam who ever carries out a material improvement of any kind. In the first place, the people get everything they want from the land. Sometimes, when its fertility is exhausted, they migrate elsewhere. It is unnecessary from their point of view to effect any improvements at all. Rivers and pools abound and wells are not required. The rainfall never fails, and there is no irrigation needed, except in a few submontane villages, where narrow channels have been led from the hill streams. No advances for land improvement are ever made by Government, and none are ever required.

25. There is no such thing as an average price of land in Assam, and if there were there are no statistics from which it could be worked out. The value varies enormously, from Rs. 300 and more an acre in the neighbourhood of a town to nil in the riparian mauzas. In the latter, land is frequently occupied only for a time, and has therefore no selling value. There are no annual returns of any kind which show the areas sold or the prices obtained, but the following statement is given on the authority of Rai Gunabhiram Sarma Barua

Bahadur, Extra-Assistant-Commissioner, who states that he obtained them from Civil Court and Registration Office registers in Nowgong:—

	Year.	Kind.	Taxed area in bighas.				Price.
			Basti.	Rupit.	Faringati.	Total.	
Civil Court decrees in Nowgong ...	1886 ...	Revenue paying.	14	142	53	209	Rs. As. P. 562 12 0
	1887 ...	Ditto ...	31	181	18	230 53	2,951 4 0
By private parties.	1886 ...	Fee-simple. Revenue paying.	93	490	134	473 717	2,400 0 0 7,921 0 0
	1887 ...	Ditto ... Fee-simple ... Other tenures.	63	216	200	479 1,497 1,972	12,586 0 0

Rai Sharat Chandra Banerji Bahadur estimates the value of land as follows:—

"Basti land in villages near towns will sell for Rs. 15 per acre. In other villages it will go for Rs. 6 or Rs. 3 an acre.

"Rupit land of good quality will fetch Rs. 15 an acre, of average quality Rs. 6 an acre, of inferior quality Re. 1-8 an acre.

"Faringati land is hardly ever sold, but when there is competition, Re. 1-8 per acre, or one year's revenue, is the usual price."

26. The trading community consists of Europeans, Bengali shopkeepers chiefly from Dacca, and Marwari merchants. The last mentioned is the most numerous and influential class, with the exception of course of the tea-planters. In addition, a few native-born Assamese are taking to trade, but the numbers are small as yet. The trade is almost entirely with the Province of Bengal, and annually amounts in value to between 600 and 700 lakhs of rupees. A very insignificant amount of traffic is carried on with the neighbouring border tribes, the total value rarely reaching 10 lakhs.

The Marwari traders, or Kavas as they are more generally called, are to be found in almost every important village. They keep supplies of salt, cotton twist and piece-goods, brass vessels, undrained sugar, &c., and exchange these commodities for money, but more generally for paddy, rice, mustard, silk cocoons, silk thread and silk cloth. When required they make advances to the cultivators, and the rate of interest charged is usually one anna per rupee per month, or 75 per cent. But these advances are by no means common, as the Assamese prefer apparently to borrow from each other. In some cases in February and March the Kavas are indebted to the cultivators. Those of the latter who grow mustard are not always willing to accept the then market price offered by the Kaya, and prefer to wait till the rise of the rivers enables the Bengali boats to come up, hoping that a better price will then be obtained. The mustard is in such cases stored for safety in the Kaya's granary, the amount being credited to the cultivator until the price is finally fixed and the transaction closed.

The Marwaris are an energetic and enterprising race. They do not mix with the Assamese except for purposes of trade. They bring their families with them to Assam, but send their children back to their native villages to be educated. Every few years also they visit their homes, much as Europeans do.

27. The incidental and collateral sources of income possessed by the Assamese are mentioned in some detail in the Examples in Appendix C. It is necessary, however, to group them together, so as to give a clear general idea of what they are. The following list includes almost all these sources of income, but it must be remembered that all are rarely possessed by any one family. Some families, for instance, grow eri silk, some muga. Some families live close to a market or in the vicinity of a tea-garden, and have a ready sale for their surplus live stock and vegetables. Some are close to a Government road, and are not precluded by social prejudices from working for Government, and so on. It is very rare to find a family to whom all these collateral sources of income are open. It must also be borne in mind that an Assamese strongly dislikes to leave the neighbourhood of his home. Almost the only class who can be induced to migrate in search of work are the Kacharis. They can be sometimes induced by recruiters to go from Lower to Upper Assam to work on road or other contract jobs. They get an advance, generally in October, which enables them to pay the revenue that may be due, and then start for the scene of their labour. They can usually earn Rs. 7 to Rs. 10 a month. They generally return, when it is necessary to look after their cultivation, in March or April. Other

Assamese, if they take work at all, will only do so in the neighbourhood of their homes.

(1) *Sale of milk and ghi.*—Hindus and Mahomedans use and sell the former. The latter is hardly ever made or used by the Assamese ryot. A few men, called "Doihars," make ghi in the neighbourhood of Barpeta in Kámrúp from buffalo milk. In parts of the Lakhimpur district some Nepalese have settled down with the object of rearing herds of buffaloes. They are chiefly in the neighbourhood of the large station of Dibrugarh, and supply that station with milk, butter, and ghi. There is a similar but much smaller community near Nowgong. But these are insignificant exceptions, and it may be broadly said that milk and its products are rarely sold by the Assamese. The breed of cattle, too, is a miserably small one, owing to causes mentioned above. A cow giving half a seer of milk daily is considered a fairly good one. The Kacharis and Lalungs regard milk as an excrement, and never use it under any circumstances.

(2) *Rearing of eri silk.*—This is the produce of the worm *Philosamia Ricini*, which feeds on the castor-oil plant. Small patches of this plant are to be found on almost every ryot's homestead, more especially in Lower Assam. Kacharis, Lalungs, and Mikirs (the latter from the island of hills in the Nowgong district) are the principal growers. As the silk cannot be reeled it is spun, and a coarse, tough, uneven thread produced. This sells at about Rs. 5 a seer, and is largely bought up by the Bhutias, Tibetans, and other border tribes. The women of the family generally weave it into cloths, and the enduring quality of these is much prized. Sometimes these cloths are sold, and every Kaya in the eri-rearing tracts is sure to have a supply which he has formed by buying up odd cloths from time to time. Sometimes the cocoons are sold. These are nearly always empty, the chrysalides having been extracted to make a curry, of which Kacharis are very fond. The extraction of the chrysalis in no way injures the cocoon, which is meant, not for reeling, but for spinning. The cocoons are bought by the Kayas at prices ranging from Rs. 25 to Rs. 60 a maund. About 3,200 empty cocoons go to a seer. The price varies with the colour, some being a brick red and some a creamy white. No one can say from the appearance of the worm what the colour of the cocoon will be. The red are less valued than the white, and the proportion of red to white generally determines the price. The cloth is sold by the piece, not by the yard. The pieces vary considerably in size. A piece 8 feet by 4 feet would cost about Rs. 10. There are no statistics to show the produce in eri silk of an acre of castor-oil plants.

(3) *Rearing of muga silk.*—This is the produce of the worm known as *Antheraea Assama*, which feeds on the sum (*Machilus odoratissima*) and the snalu. It is largely grown in the Lakhimpur district on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, where natural forests of sum-trees exist. It is also largely grown in the sadr and Jorhát sub-divisions of Sibságar, around Jagi in Nowgong, and near Palasbari and Nalbari in Kámrúp. In all these latter places the sum-trees have been planted. The cocoon is reeled, not spun, and therefore it must remain unpierced. The price is generally about Rs. 2 per thousand. The thread costs Rs. 10 a seer. One square yard of the cloth usually costs about Rs. 2. The colour of the silk is dark amber. When the worm is fed on the mezankuri tree (*Tetranthera polyantha*, Linn.) the silk produced is light grey in colour and is called mezankuri. Cocoons are largely brought to the neighbourhood of Palasbari from Nowgong, and there reeled. The thread is there sold to Kayas, who export to Calcutta. Cocoons are exported from Sibságar. The sum-trees grow on land which is assessed at Re. 1-8 an acre. There are no figures to show the produce of an acre of sum either in cocoons, thread, cloth, or coin.

(4) *Rearing of pat silk.*—This is the produce of a *Bombyx*, whose species has not been exactly determined. It is probably identical with the *Univoltine* and *Multivoltine Bombyx*, of Bengal. There are two varieties, one called Borpat (the large pat) which is *Univoltine*, and one called Horupat (the little pat), which gives about 6 or 7 broods in the year. The silk is a fine creamy white and is much valued. It is rarely grown except in the Jorhát sub-division of Sibságar and the Mangaldai sub-division of Darrang. The silk is of no commercial importance whatever. The value is three and sometimes four times that of eri. It is so rare that, though it is undoubtedly sometimes a source of income, it can hardly be said to be included amongst the resources of the ordinary ryot.

(5) *Work in tea gardens.*—There is scarcely any limit to the demand for labour in tea-gardens, and in Lower Assam this demand is being largely met from local sources. Kacharis, Lalungs, Rabhas, Gáros, and Mikirs are to be found in gradually increasing numbers on tea-plantations. Many of the gardens in the Mangaldai sub-division of Darrang import no labour whatever. The few in Kámrúp are manned almost entirely by local coolies. So are many in Nowgong. It is chiefly in Sibságar and Lakhimpur that

foreign labour has to be imported. The pay that an Assamese (Kachari) coolie can earn on a tea-garden varies from Rs. 7 to Rs. 10, according to whether he does extra work or not. Besides those who have regularly taken to working all the year round on gardens, there are a very large number who work for a few months in order to make up some requisite sum of money. They work generally from the end of the rice-planting season in July or August till the harvest begins, in November, but those who can arrange to have their crops gathered frequently remain on till the planting begins again. It is to these that this species of employment affords an additional source of income.

(6) *Work on roads.*—This being work for Government is generally considered beneath the dignity of the Hindu or Muhammadan Assamese. But aboriginal tribes near whose villages Government roads run can be easily induced to take up road work. The rates paid are generally 4 annas a day or Rs. 7-8 a month. There is more work generally available than there are labourers to do it.

(7) *Rubber-cutting.*—This is an auxiliary source of income, to which recourse is not very largely had. Nevertheless, during the cold-weather months, when field work is light, the ryots near a rubber *mahál* engage to cut rubber for the lessee at a fixed rate per maund, which varies from Rs. 30 to Rs. 50.

(8) *Work for Kayas.*—The Kayas find no difficulty in obtaining local labour either for transporting their goods or for their household necessities. No degradation appears to be involved in working for them. During the latter half of the cold weather, January, February, and March, considerable numbers of Kacharis cross over from Darrang to the chapari mauzas of Nowgong and get employment there from the Kayas as porters. They are employed to bring mustard from the ryots' threshing-floors to the Kaya's granaries. During the rains many cultivators, besides professional watermen like the Doms, hire themselves out with their boats for the transport of goods from one place to another. Transport is always easiest during the rains, owing to the very large number of creeks and channels which cover the country then with a network of watercourses. Many villages which are only accessible during other parts of the year by jungle tracks, are easily reached when all the rivers are in flood.

(9) *Cutting thatching-grass and firewood.*—Besides the amounts required for their own household requirements, large quantities of thatching-grass are cut and brought to the more important stations for sale during the cold weather. No charge is made by the Forest Department for the right to cut this grass, whether for sale or home consumption. It is sold in the cold weather at prices varying slightly above and below Rs. 5 per 1,000 bundles, each bundle being 4 to 6 inches in diameter. In the same way firewood is sold in all station bázárs. No charge is made by the Forest Department for small quantities, nor is there any check on the amount a man may bring in, except when very large quantities are collected in the cold weather to be stored against the rains. In the latter case time licenses are sold at Re. 1 a month, or Rs. 9 a year, and there is no limit to quantity.

(10) *Breeding live stock.*—Almost every Assamese household keeps a supply of live animals. Ducks, goats, and pigeons are universally bred by all classes. Fowls are kept by Kacharis, Lalungs, Rabhas, Mikirs, &c., by all but Hindus in fact. Pigs are kept by the above and other aboriginal tribes and by any hillmen who have settled in the plains. Most families have cows also, but the milk is not used by all the races which inhabit the valley. Kacharis and Lalungs will not drink it at all. Goats are used mainly for food and sacrifice. The milk is considered bad flavoured in general, but it is sometimes taken medicinally. Muhammadans frequently geld the male young ones and fatten them up for food. Female buffaloes are occasionally kept by men not professional breeders, but they are not very common except in particularly well-to-do families. Eggs, both ducks' and fowls', are also frequently sold. Almost all the above commodities change hands at the weekly or bi-weekly village markets held all over the Province. The ordinary prices at which the above animals are sold are given below:—

Pigeon	...	...	...	...	1 anna.
Duck	...	...	...	...	4 annas to 6 annas.
Kid...	...	...	...	...	1 rupee to 2 rupees.
Full grown female goat	...	...	...	...	3 rupees to 4 rupees.
Gelt male goat, fattened	...	...	...	...	4 " to 5 "
Fowl	...	...	...	...	2 as. 6 p. to 4 annas.
Pig...	...	...	...	...	3 rupees to 5 rupees.
Ducks' eggs, 3 for	...	...	...	...	1 piece.
Fowls' eggs, 2 for	...	...	...	...	1 "
Milk per seer	...	...	...	...	2 annas.

These prices obtain in Lower Assam only. In Upper Assam they are sometimes double as high. Dibrugarh is probably the dearest and Mangaldai the cheapest of the stations in the Brahmaputra Valley.

(11) *Catching fish.*—Many cultivators supplement their income by catching and selling fish. Doms, or professional fishermen, are not referred to above, as these

men take leases of rivers and bils, and make a regular business of fishing; but there are a large number of small rivers, bils, and pools, all over the Province which are not let on leases, and these are regularly and carefully fished by the surrounding villagers. The net is not very generally used in these small fisheries, except the round kind, which is thrown by one man from a boat, and the triangular one, which a man carries into the water and lets down and raises at intervals. Both these nets have very small meshes. The traps used are generally of bamboo or cane, and are nearly always of the following kinds:

- (i.) *Sora*.—This is a funnel-shaped cage of bamboo, with the narrow end closed. It is placed, mouth up stream, below small rivulets of water, and examined night and morning. Only very small fish are caught in this.
- (ii.) *Seppa*.—This is a cigar-shaped cage of thin bamboo splinters closed at one end, and furnished with an entrance hole so studded with pointed pieces of bamboo that any fish which enter fail to get out. It is also placed where small rivulets of water are found or artificially made.
- (iii.) *Jakoi*.—A four-sided cage of bamboo with triangular sides, and four equidistant points, one side left open, for the entrance of fish, and furnished at one point with a short pole two feet long. This implement is used mainly by women, and mostly for the catching of fish which burrow in mud. The operator walks into the water, and puts her jakoi suddenly down in front of her with the open side towards her. She then tramples up the mud with her feet, and when she imagines a fish has taken shelter in the jakoi, raises it to see. The water escapes through the plaiting of the cane or bamboo, and the fish, if any, remain. The latter are taken out, put into a narrow-necked basket, at the fisherwoman's waist, and the operation repeated. A long line of women may thus be seen fishing in a bil. It is an operation seldom carried out alone, for the larger the number of persons there is to trample up the mud, the greater the number of fish caught.
- (iv.) *Pollu*.—This is a hollow cone made of split bamboo with an opening at the apex, wide enough to admit a man's arm. It is used mostly by men. The operator walks with the pollu into the water, and presses it down in front of him with the broad part of the cone below. Then he puts his hand through the top, and feels about for any fish that may be within.

Besides the use of these traps, the following is a very common way of fishing. It is adopted in the cold weather, and only in small pools. The area of the pool is made into small divisions by low mud boundaries, a little above the level of the water. The water is then laboriously laded from one division into another with miniature jakois, and as each division becomes empty in turn, the fish are caught.

Kacharis, Lalungs, and Miris are all peculiarly clever in the practice of the above methods of catching fish.

(12) *Hunting game*.—Many of the Assamese, especially Kacharis, Lalungs, and Mikirs, supplement their ordinary meals by shooting or snaring deer. Some of them contrive to shoot or snare wild ducks, peafowl, geese, and florikan. But their main source of income from game comes from deer. Considerable numbers of these, female and male alike, are killed during the cold weather, when the grass is low. The large swamp-deer is worth about Rs. 25, and even the small hog-deer will fetch Rs. 4 to Rs. 5.

(13) *Weaving*.—Every household in Assam has its own loom, and it is hardly possible to find a woman who cannot weave. The silk grown on the premises is generally used, but in addition, or when this is not procurable, English spun cotton thread is bought and made into dhories, pagris, &c. When not required for home use, all these cloths are made for sale. Much of the cotton cloth seen in the Brahmaputra Valley is English, but there is still a fair proportion of the native-made article. In silk, however, everything is of local manufacture. Almost all well-to-do men wear silk in some part of their attire, whereas with respectable women almost the whole clothing is of the same material. There is a superstition against married women wearing cotton cloth for their lower garments. Large eri cloths, very thick and heavy, and called Bor Kapors (lit. large cloths), are very generally used instead of blankets during the cold weather. It is rare to see the poorest coolie without one of these.

On the whole, therefore, there is a very large demand for locally-woven cloths, and a ready means of making a little money is in the hands of almost every woman in Assam.

(14) *Religious fees*.—A considerable portion of the income received by Gosains, Brahmins, priests, &c., in Assam is derived from fees paid by their disciples and others on the occasion of marriages, deaths, religious festivals, &c. Sometimes the tribute is given in

kind, sometimes in cash. An interesting note on this subject will be found in Appendix E.

(15) *Manufactures*.—A considerable number of cultivators carry on a regular trade in the intervals of their agricultural operations. There is a caste of Muhammadans called Morias, who are braziers by profession; they are all almost without exception cultivators too. All the goldsmiths and ivory carvers of Jorhát hold land and grow some of their food. The wealthiest goldsmith in Barpeta (a place celebrated for its jewellery) is a large landholder. Many cultivators make mats and baskets for sale. Some have taken to iron work, and forge daos and small betel-cutting knives. Many are potters and eke out their cultivation by the sale of tekalis, kalsis, &c.

(16) *Growing lac*.—Lac is grown by many cultivators, who sometimes take up a piece of faringati land simply for the lac trees growing on it. The cultivation does not give much trouble, or involves much expense, and is a very convenient means of adding to income.

(17) *Miscellaneous*.—Besides the above more or less recognised means of adding to their incomes, there are a few others which are available at intervals. Thus, those who live by rivers frequently collect drift wood, and sell it in the nearest market. Others at the proper season go out into the Government waste and collect long pepper. This commodity fetches from Rs. 45 to Rs. 60 a maund. About 175 maunds are annually sold in the bazar at Rangia, about 20 miles north of Gauhati. Various kinds of vegetables are also to be bought in the local markets, and these are the produce of the cultivators' garden lands. The sorts most commonly sold are the beans known as Urohi and Bengali Mah. The women of the poorer classes, who have little ripit land of their own, are largely employed by the wealthier cultivators in transplanting paddy. In Kámrúp the boys and young men of a village earn something almost every year by turning cane mills. Larger cultivators regularly employ their poorer neighbours in cutting paddy, and sometimes in ploughing. The women of the Dom caste collect whelk shells, and make the lime which is so largely eaten with betel-nut and pan. Most men can obtain employment, if they wish, in repairing houses, making ropes, cutting building materials, &c.

28. Amongst other results of British rule affecting the economic condition of the people to a very large extent has been the rise in the prices of local produce which has taken place to a marked extent within the last thirty years. Complete statistics for the whole of this time are not available, but the following two statements have been compiled from the volume of Prices and Wages in India published by the Department of Finance and Commerce:—

STATEMENT 1.—Quantity sold per rupee in seers and decimals of a seer of 80 totals.
AVERAGE ANNUAL PRICES.

		1861.	1884.	Percentage of increase or decrease in quantity.	
				Increase.	Decrease.
Rice, Common	Sylhet	32.66	15.65	.....	52.10
	Cachar	49.89	14.55	.....	70.81
	Goálpára	27.99	12.56	.....	55.12
	Lakhimpur	14.93	11.41	.....	23.57
Wheat	Sylhet	11.19	13.62	21.71	.....
	Cachar	9.07	10.79	18.96	.....
	Goálpára	32.66	17.44	.....	87.27
	Lakhimpur	11.19	9.12	.....	22.69
Salt	Sylhet	9.00	12.36	37.33	.....
	Cachar	7.29	10.85	48.83	.....
	Goálpára	9.00	12.16	35.11	.....
	Lakhimpur	5.5	9.12	65.81	.....

STATEMENT 2.—Average Monthly Wages.

		1873.	1884.	Percentage of increase or decrease.	
				Increase.	Decrease.
Able-bodied agricultural labourers.	Sylhet	Rs. 8 0 0	Rs. 7 0 0	.....	12.50
	Cachar	4 0 0	5 0 0	25.00	.....
	Goálpára	4 12 0	6 8 0	36.84	.....
	Lakhimpur	9 6 0	11 8 0	22.66	.....
Syce or horse-keeper.	Sylhet	5 8 0	6 8 0	18.18	.....
	Cachar	7 0 0	7 8 0	11.43	.....
	Goálpára	6 12 0	8 8 0	25.92	.....
	Lakhimpur	8 0 0	12 8 0	56.25	.....
Common mason, carpenter, or blacksmith.	Sylhet	10 0 0	21 0 0	110.00	.....
	Cachar	15 0 0	17 8 0	16.66	.....
	Goálpára	15 0 0	18 8 0	23.33	.....
	Lakhimpur	17 8 0	21 0 0	20.00	.....

For the sake of comparison, four more statements are given below showing the changes that have occurred in prices in the district of Nowgong during the memory of Rai Gunabhiram Sarma Barua Bahadur, Extra-Assistant-Commissioner, who entered the subordinate executive service in 1859:—

STATEMENT 3.

Name of article.	Quantities obtainable for one rupee.			
	1857-58.	1867-68.	1877-78.	1887-88.
	Mds. S. C.	Mds. S. C.	Mds. S. C.	Mds. S. C.
Paddy.....	3 30 0	1 35 0	1 20 0	1 0 0
Rice (common)	1 10 0	0 30 0	0 24 0	0 14 0
Rice (white)	1 0 0	0 25 0	0 20 0	0 14 0
Mugkalai (a pulse)	0 35 0	0 25 0	0 20 0	0 13 0
Mati „ (ditto)	1 20 0	1 0 0	0 30 0	0 18 0
Kasari (a pulse).....	1 10 0	1 0 0	0 30 0	0 25 0
Mustard-seed.....	0 35 0	0 30 0	0 20 0	0 12 0
Cotton (uncleaned)	0 12 0	0 10 0	0 10 0	0 8 0
Shell lac.....	0 7 0	0 6 0	0 6 0	0 6 0
Stick* lac	0 9 0	0 7 0	0 8 0	0 12 0
Til (sesamum)	0 30 0	0 25 0	0 20 0	0 11 0
Eri cocoons (pierced)	0 3 0	0 2 0	0 1 8	0 0 8
Eri thread	0 0 8	0 0 7	0 0 7	0 0 4
Muga thread	0 0 4	0 0 3	0 0 2	0 0 2
Oil* (mustard)	0 2 0	0 2 8	0 2 8	0 2 12
Ghi.....	0 2 0	0 1 8	0 1 4	0 1 0
Gur (molasses)	0 20 0	0 16 0	0 12 0	0 8 0
Sugar* (refined)	0 2 0	0 2 4	0 2 4	0 2 8
Dahi (whey)	0 30 0	0 16 0	0 12 0	0 8 0
Milk	0 16 0	0 16 0	0 14 0	0 9 0
Jute	0 24 0	0 20 0	0 16 0	0 16 0
Fish	0 32 0	0 16 0	0 8 0	0 5 5

* These articles alone have fallen in price.

STATEMENT 4.

Name.	Prices of single articles.			
	1857-58.	1867-68.	1877-78.	1887-88.
	Rs. As. P.	Rs. As. P.	Rs. As. P.	Rs. As. P.
Muga dhoti	5 0 0	7 0 0	8 0 0	10 0 0
Eri Borkapor (large cloth)	4 0 0	6 0 0	7 0 0	12 0 0
Kid	2 0 0	1 0 0	1 8 0	2 8 0
Khási (gelt male goat)	1 8 0	2 0 0	3 0 0	4 0 0
Milch goat	0 8 0	0 12 0	1 4 0	2 0 0
Milch cow	3 0 0	4 0 0	6 0 0	9 0 0
Plough bullock	5 0 0	8 0 0	10 0 0	16 0 0
Milch buffalo	40 0 0	50 0 0	60 0 0	80 0 0
Male ditto	12 0 0	16 0 0	25 0 0	40 0 0
Cotton cloth	0 12 0	1 2 0	1 8 0	2 0 0
Khania cloth	1 0 0	1 2 0	1 8 0	2 4 0
Cotton Riha* or Mekla†	1 0 0	1 8 0	1 10 0	4 0 0
Muga silk Riha or mekla	5 0 0	6 0 0	8 0 0	10 0 0
Sal post	3 0 0	.....	.....	20 0 0
Opium per seer	14 0 0	.....	.....	32 0 0

* Riha=scarf worn by women over the head and breast.
† Mekla=petticoat.

STATEMENT 5.

Name of articles.	Number obtained for one rupee.			
	1857-58.	1867-78.	1877-78.	1887-88.
	No.	No.	No.	No.
Ducks	14	8	6	3
Pigeons	32	16	10	8
Fowls	16	8	6	3
Eggs	500	300	120	70
Betel-nuts	1,280	1,000	840	840
Mats	25	16	12	9
Pati (cane mat)	8	6	5	3
Kalti (sola mat)	7	5	4	3
Gamcha	12	8	8	8
Bamboos (long and thick)	70	50	30	16
Oranges	100	70	50	40
Grass (bundles)	800	600	300	200
Ekra (reeds in bundles)	60	48	40	16
Canes (bundles)	100	50	40	25

STATEMENT 6.

Post.	Monthly pay of			
	1857-58.	1867-68.	1877-78.	1887-88.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Khansamah.....	6	8	9	10
Khidmatgar	5	7	7	8
Paniwalla (water-carrier)	3	4	5	6
Sweeper	3	4	5	5
Sycc	4	5	6	8
Peon	4	5	6	6
Burkandaz (overseer).....	3	6	7	7
Lowest Police muharrir	6	9	9	8
Sheristadar	50	60	...	150
Peshkar	30	..	...	60
School pandit	7	...	...	15
Munsif.....	80	...	...	200 to 600
Vernacular clerk or muharrir (lowest pay)	6	...	...	25
An English clerk (lowest pay)	15	...	...	20
A native servant (excluding food and clothes)	0-8	1	1-8	2
Coolie	1-14	2-13	5-10	7-8

Statements 1 and 2 are based on definite statistics which were prepared by the Government of India, and show for 3 articles and 3 classes of servants the changes that have taken place in prices and wages. The remaining four have been compiled from information obtained from old and respectable Kayas and other traders of Nowgong, and are probably as reliable as the two that precede them. Rai Gunabhiram Sarma Barua Bahadur is one of the most trustworthy of the Extra-Assistant-Commissioners of Assam, and the information he supplies may be accepted as fairly accurate. All the above statements indicate very clearly the nature of the rise in prices that has taken place. The quantity of common rice obtainable for a rupee in the Brahmaputra Valley has fallen, according to Statement 1, by nearly 40 per cent., according to Statement 3 by over 60 per cent.; the quantity of wheat* by over 53 per cent. Salt, which is a foreign product, has naturally got cheaper, as the duty was lowered, and the means of communication improved. The wages of agricultural labourers, horse-keepers, masons, carpenters, and

* Wheat is not grown anywhere in Assam except in the Goalpara district on the shores of the Brahmaputra south and west of Dhubri, and for this description of wheat, which is of inferior quality, there is only a local demand. The wheat quoted elsewhere in the price lists is chiefly imported, and is consumed only by foreigners.

blacksmiths are shown by Statement 2 to have risen about 30 per cent. in Assam Proper. The quantity of paddy now obtainable in Nowgong for Re. 1 is over 70 per cent. less than it was some 30 years ago. The only substances that have fallen in price are those which, like mustard oil and refined sugar, are imported. It is a curious anomaly to see mustard-seed getting dearer, and the oil pressed from it getting cheaper. This, however, is partly due to improvements in manufacture and partly to the greater facilities that exist in the way of means of communication. If the list given in Statements 3, 4, and 5 be examined, it will be seen that a rise has taken place in the price of every article ordinarily produced and sold by the people, and a fall in only three, two of which (lac and sugar) the people neither produce nor consume to any extent, and one of which (mustard oil) they rarely produce, and only occasionally consume. Therefore, on all sides the changes have been beneficial to the ordinary peasant of the Province.

Statement 6, which deals with wages, does not much affect the Assamese ryot. Wages have risen, because the means of subsistence have become more costly. A few of the Kacharis have become syces and peons, some Assamese have taken to our law courts and district offices, and become muharrirs and clerks, many are school pandits. But the majority of the people are unaffected by the changes that have taken place in wages. The money obtainable by those alone has been increased who have been reduced by poverty to take service with a Kaya or a wealthy cultivator, or who, to earn the cash they must gain in the year, do not object to temporary employment as coolies.

29. The causes of this increase in prices and wages is not far to seek. Both are the natural result of the opening out of the country and the considerable increase in the numbers of the alien population.

Causes of rise in prices.

which followed the discovery of the fact that tea would thrive in Assam. When tea-coolies were first introduced, prices were low, and the surplus produce of the neighbourhood was found amply sufficient for all their wants. Local markets were established at all centres of tea cultivation, and the surrounding villagers encouraged to bring in their produce for sale. Soon the Assamese awoke to the fact that these markets afforded a very convenient means of disposing of their surplus produce, and weekly and bi-weekly markets were established at all important villages. Then gardens increased in numbers, Kayas and Dacca traders became more numerous, and the demand for local produce rose. With it, as an inevitable consequence, prices sprang up. The local markets have increased considerably in numbers of late years, and there is probably now not a single large village which is not within easy reach of one. The movement in the opening out of the country, which began with the arrival of the tea-planter, has been going on steadily ever since. Almost every change introduced in this direction has tended to add to the number of those who are not agriculturists, at a rate faster than that at which the agriculturists have themselves increased. That is to say, the consumers of country produce have increased faster than the producers. Almost every tea-garden opened has added its small quota to the number of aliens. The railway and coal-mines in Lakhimpur, the tramway at Jorhat, the increase in the number of the steamers plying on the Brahmaputra, the arrival of Nepalese buffalo-breeders, the strengthening of the staff in district offices, the introduction of foreign troops, the development of the trade with foreign tribes, the importation during the cold weather of labourers for the roads, the operations of the cadastral survey, have all aided the tea-gardens in the same direction, and increased everywhere the value of local produce. Owing partly to the insidious climate, partly to the real difficulties of colonization, we have comparatively few agricultural immigrants in Assam. It might naturally be supposed that time-expired and acclimatised tea-garden coolies would settle down in a province where the soil is eminently fertile, and where unlimited quantities of land are available. But, as a matter of fact, we find that the number of such settlers is apparently less than might naturally be expected. The statistics as to this are, however, admittedly imperfect, and it is probable that many settlers have escaped enumeration. It has been suggested that more would remain if the land were given revenue-free in the beginning; but this is probably a mistake. It is more likely that the labour required to clear jungle and the notorious unhealthiness of new clearings, deter settlers than that the amount of the revenue is objected to. A late Deputy-Commissioner of Nowgong long endeavoured to induce settlers to occupy the land on each side of a road, running out 25 miles from the sadar station to the Brahmaputra. The jungle was grass, and therefore there would have been few trees to fell. The land was offered revenue-free for three years, and it lay on each side of an excellent raised and bridged cart-road. Notwithstanding these advantages, and the temporary settlement of a few cultivators, who have since returned to their old homes, the land still lies waste, and there is apparently no prospect of its being occupied within any measurable period of time. This is a single instance, but many more unsuccessful efforts to extend cultivation might be brought forward. It is, therefore, natural to find that, while the increase of agricul-

turist producers has been slow and that of consumers rapid, the prices of all local produce have very largely increased, and that the cost of living, to persons who do not consume their own produce, is considerably higher than it was thirty years ago.

B.—Sylhet.

30. The information received from this district is meagre, and my own personal acquaintance with it is limited to one visit in the cold weather and one in the hot. Some former administration reports have, however, been consulted, and the statements made are believed to be reliable as far as they go.

Sylhet information.

31. As in the Brahmaputra Valley, the main staple of food with the people is rice. Although the varieties are somewhat more numerous than those known in Assam Proper, the three main divisions consisting of early, winter transplanted and winter broadcast rice, prevail. The áhu of the northern valley is almost identical with the áus of Sylhet. Sáil is practically the same as sáil, and bao as áman. The principal varieties as described by Mr. Stevenson are given below:—

Main staple.

a. *Áus*.—(1) In the low-lying parts of the district, *i.e.*, in Sunám-ganj and the northern part of Habiganj, áus is sown in Mágh—Phálgun, say 15th January to end of February, and cut in May or beginning of June. It is never transplanted.

(2) In the higher parts of the district, *e.g.*, in the south and east, it is generally sown broadcast, but is sometimes transplanted. It is sown in the latter part of March or in April, and is transplanted (if transplanted) in May and June. It is harvested in Bhádra (say, 15th August to 15th September).

b. *Muráli*.—Is sown from 15th February to 15th April, and is cut in Asár (15th June to 15th July). It is sown in lower land than “áus” proper.

c. *Sáil*.—A winter transplanted rice, is sown April-May, transplanted July-August and reaped November to January.

d. *Áman*.—(1) In the higher part of the district is transplanted, being sown in March-April, and reaped October to December.

(2) In the lower parts of Sylhet it is always sown broadcast. An early flooding of the land gives no time for transplanting. This is the well-known long-stemmed variety. In parts of Bengal they call the long-stemmed variety “boro,” because of its length of stem. But that rice is not the Sylhet boro, which is an entirely distinct variety. Áman in the low lands grows with a steadily-increasing flood, unless swamped by a sudden rise of water.

e. *Kátária*.—Is a kind of áman grown in the higher parts of Sylhet only. It is sown April-May, transplanted May-June and cut in October-November.

f. *Sáil Bura*.—Is grown only in the low-lying tracts and therefore chiefly in Sunám-ganj and adjacent parganas. It is always transplanted. It is sown in October-November, transplanted December, January, and February, and cut April-May. It is usually irrigated. A flood ruins it. It does not rise with the water.

32. The relative elevation on which the land is generally occupied by these crops is given in the statement below, beginning with the highest on which rice can be grown, down to the lowest which is clear of water:—

Soils.

1. Sáil land.
2. Áus land in the higher tracts.
3. Muráli land.
4. Kátária land.
5. Áman land.
6. Áus land in the lowest tract.
7. Sáil Bura land.

33. Rice lands are not manured in Sylhet any more than in Assam Proper. The annual floods do away with the necessity for manure in most parts, as they leave a rich silt deposit. The stubble, too, is generally burnt on the land and ploughed in. Sugarcane is almost always manured with oil cake at the rate, according to Raj Mohan De, of 30 maunds to the acre. Land used for growing vegetables is manured with cow-dung. There is no regular rotation of crops.

34. The remaining questions have been dealt with as follows by Babu Raj Mohan De and Rai Joges Chandra Chatterji Bahadur.

Remaining answers.

Mr. Stevenson's opinion as to each is also given, but it must be remembered that this officer's remarks were recorded as marginal notes on the statements of Babu Raj Mohan De, and not as separate replies to the questions asked. Babu Raj Mohan De is in charge of the Habiganj sub-division, and Rai Joges Chandra Chatterji of that of Sunámganj.

35. QUESTION 3.—Babu Raj Mohan De says—

"Almost the entire population of the Habiganj sub-division is agricultural. Dhán is the staple produce, and this and a little mustard are the only things produced in the northern half of the sub-division. In the southern half, vegetables, sugarcane, &c., are grown, but yet paddy is the principal crop upon which the whole population depends.

"An ordinary agriculturist (peasant proprietor) grows dhán in about 8 acres in the northern half, and about 4 acres in the southern half; but in the latter tract a good deal of vegetables and sugarcane is grown for sale.

"8 acres of land in an ordinary year yields as much as 200 maunds of dhán. With the present market price of paddy, this enables the man just to maintain his family and pay his land revenue and rent. By selling the surplus produce he meets the cost of purchasing clothes and necessities which he cannot grow, and he also pays the rent, &c.

"If he has no other sources of income, any extraordinary expenditure necessary for marriage or purchase of cattle forces him to go under the clutches of money-lenders.

"In the southern half an agriculturist ordinarily grows about 100 maunds of dhán, but he supplements that by growing sugarcane, vegetables, &c., all of which he sells. If the dhán is sufficient for a year's consumption of his family, he makes a little by selling sugarcane, &c.; but in that case he cannot grow much of vegetables and sugarcane, which requires a good deal of labour. Sugarcane requires money, too, for manuring the crop with oil-cake, so generally sugarcane and good deal of vegetables are grown by such families as have several male members. This means a large family, and the dhán grown is insufficient for annual consumption, and the result is what is made by other crops goes in buying dhán and paying rent, &c., so materially there is not much difference in the economic condition of the people of the two tracts.

"In southern tracts many earn some money by working in tea-garden at times when their own agricultural operations do not require their labour, so in the north persons who have cattle earn something by selling milk or ghi, and those who have no cattle by keeping cattle in the rains.

"From the enquiry I made, I think the economic condition of the agricultural people here cannot be called prosperous. I annex herewith the facts connected with some families. I think their statement is not very far from truth." (See Appendix C.)

36. Rai Joges Chandra Chatterji Bahadur says—

"The ordinary economic condition of the people directly engaged in the cultivation of land is good. There is abundance of land for tillage. Population is sparse. No luxuries have yet come among the people. Their wants are few,

and easily satisfied, and they are generally a contented lot. They have plenty of facilities for adding to their incomes by labour.

(a) Their wealth—

"Their wealth consists of land and cattle principally. For cattle there is plenty of fodder at all seasons. Every village or group of villages have their pasture-grounds for the winter, and these are abundant for all present purposes. For the rains, when cattle are stall-fed everywhere in the sub-division, groups of villages have their haors and wastes, where the tali "Jhará-grass" grows in abundance, and supply plenty of fodder for any number. It is for this reason that no stores of fodders are kept and the people have not yet come to feel the necessity for such stores. Reeds (khágs) also grow in abundance and in many places cattle are fed on the ends of these. Regarding land I have already said that the population is yet much below the point at which it can be said to press close upon the heels of subsistence. There is plenty of virgin soil for cultivation within the sub-division, and enough land is always available for tillage."

(b) Their resources—

"In ordinary years they grow enough for a year's consumption, and to leave some margin beside for purchase of necessities, payment of rents, &c., &c., and for expenses of next year's operations. Their houses are all bamboo structures. Building materials are cheap and easily procurable. The cost of labour is very little. In villages there is generally a system of mutual assistance which renders cost of labour on buildings unnecessary. There is a mutual exchange of labour, and their houses are built and repaired expeditiously and cheaply without any paid labour. They have means within easy reach of supplementing their incomes from other sources. The northern hills supply bamboos, fire woods, timbers, and building materials in abundance, and in the intervals of leisure from agricultural operations they go to work there. The lime-quarries also furnish them with additional work. The haors and wastes supply reeds and sun-grasses. With the reeds they prepare mats, which they sell in bázárs. The sun-grasses which they bring over and above their requirements they sell.

(c) Disturbing elements—

"There are, however, disturbing elements, and these are almost all traceable to variations in season and consequent excesses or failures of rain. There is no artificial irrigation followed, and whenever the rainfall is either insufficient or capricious the people suffer. Such accidents affect crops

most injuriously, cause scarcity of fodder now and then, and not unfrequently cattle deaths also. One bad year they can tide over somehow or other, but the majority generally succumb to a succession of bad years.

(d) Their debts—

"The main causes to which their debts are due are the accidents of seasons, and the expenses necessary on religious and ceremonial occasions, with an unsympathetic and extortionate class of money-lenders and landlords trying to suck the life blood out of them. Once in debt, they find it difficult to extricate themselves, and hence they virtually become the serfs of either the one or the other. A succession of three bad years, ending with the last, has already reduced some to the aforesaid condition, but their percentage is very small.

(e) Proportion in debt—

"In ordinary years the proportion of agriculturists in debt is about 50 to 60 per cent. The whole district, and not this sub-division excepted, is, however, just now passing through a rather severe strain, caused by a succession of bad crops, and the present proportion would be about 75 to 90 per cent. I myself collected statistics from some villages with the following result.

In village Goráshpur, pargana Duháliá, out of 50 houses, I found 5 houses only free from debts. In Kalakalka, pargana Kismatpetal, out of about 90 houses, some 8 or 9 houses. In Dewannagar, pargana Lakshanisri, out of 20 houses 2 houses only are free from debts. In pargana Chaumará out of some 250 houses in each, some 50 houses free from debt. In Ghágtiá and Ilámgaon, pargana Láur, the majority of the people are fishermen who follow agriculture in addition to fishing, hence the proportion of indebted is so small. It is generally admitted that the fisherman class in this sub-division is much better off than the pure agriculturist. I took the statistics of nearly 20 villages selected at random, and made enquiries from trustworthy sources, and the proportion I have given can be taken as approximately correct.

(f) Average indebtedness—

"This question is much more difficult to answer than the question of proportion. From, however, statistics collected as above, I think the proportion can be fairly laid down as ranging between one-fourth to three-fourths of average yearly income; say, half of average yearly income.

(g) Some other statistics collected in the course of enquiry—

"The average area of the holding of an ordinary agriculturist I have found out to be 8 to 12 kiyars.* Say, 10 kiyars. An average family consists of 6 to 7 members. The average earning of an agriculturist is about Rs. 3 per every adult, exclusive of his fooding and clothing. This income can without much difficulty be nearly doubled from the supplemental sources of incomes which are within easy reach of almost everybody. Of the 50 to 60 per cent. indebted in ordinary years, about 3 are hopelessly involved in debts. The debts of about 35 stand at one-fourth to half their average incomes. In about 10 cases debts and incomes are equal and in about 7 cases debts exceed income. The intention to evade payment seldom exists. The agriculturist class here, in fact, the lower class people here, are very indolent and improvident. They are extremely averse to labour. If they can grow enough for a year's consumption, they will sit at rest, and go on whiling away their leisure in vain pursuits and litigation. They will never utilise their leisure in earning enough for the rainy day. This is simply because they can earn a living here with less labour than their brethren in Northern and Southern Bengal. They also love independence much more, and are, in fact, more independent in spirit than their southern and western brothers. The difficulty generally of getting voluntary hard labour is also a good index to their well-off condition.

(h) I have obtained the opinions of intelligent landholders, pleaders, and mukhtars, who are landholders also, petty landed proprietors, zemindárs, agents, and village mandals, too, and although the notions of the majority on the subject were rather confused and hazy, there was in the main some sort of consensus of opinion, and where these agreed with the statistics I collected, I think the result can be accepted as fairly reliable and correct.

37. Mr. Stevenson says—

"The present state of the people of the district at large is not so good as it was a few years ago. Then a succession of bumper crops, coupled with a great demand for

rice in Bengal and Madras supplied the cultivating class with plenty of ready money. Recent bad harvests forced them to spend all they had as a reserve, in buying paddy for food and for sowing, and though last year's crop was good, yet prices rule at present so low that a cultivator cannot sell his paddy to advantage. So ready money is scarce, and both Government and zemindárs have found much difficulty in realising land revenue and rents respectively. It is not usual for the people here to invest their surplus in ornaments, &c. The great object of every man is to own his homestead and a piece of land. When, therefore, they are flush of cash, zemindárs reap a large profit by selling small defined parcels of land at many times the ordinary market value, in fact at fancy prices. When hard up for money, the purchasers of these could not of course re-sell them at anything like what they paid, if at all, as naturally such parcels of land were not valuable except to themselves or perhaps a *nisf-khirdj* ryot who was equally hard up. Interest on money lent has ruled very high of late, even up to 10 per cent. per mensem. It must not be forgotten that fish is most plentiful except in the very south. Villagers, as a rule, can catch fish for their own use from somewhere.

"I don't think the information given to Babu Raj Mohan De and Rai Joges Chandra Chatterji Bahadur is always correct. As the former sub-divisional officer says in his covering letter, 'the Sylhetia is now very suspicious (i.e., since income-tax was introduced) of Government questions, and constantly gives crooked answers.'"

38. QUESTION 4.—Babu Raj Mohan De says—

“There are not many kind of tenures in the sub-division of Habiganj. Almost all agricultural population are either themselves proprietors or hold their land under ryotwari arrangement. These ryots acquire occupancy rights under the existing laws. But most of the cultivated land is held by agricultural people from the proprietors themselves. In some parts of the sub-division the ryots have an unlimited right of transferring their jotrigh; it is also sold by the civil courts in execution of decrees. The ryots of those tracts where they have this right of transferring their jote are no doubt better off than those of the other tracts; they can always show a strong front to the exactions of zemindars, and are often independent of them. There cannot be any sudden change in their position for the worse, unless there be a total failure of crop. They generally pay lower rate of rent, and can always, at the time of need, get loans at lower rates of interest. All these contribute to give him a status among his class. The facility which it gives them of getting loans is considered mischievous, but practically no such mischief has yet arisen from it.”

39. Rai Joges Chandra Chatterji Bahadur says—

“There are not many tenures in the sub-division of Sunámganj, and there is no complication in the system of land tenures obtaining here. The proprietary tenures known here are Patni, with its subordinate tenures, Dorpatni and Sepatni, and Izará. Even these are not common. About 1-25th or less even of cultivated lands are held under these tenures.

“The occupancy tenures can be broadly divided into two classes:—

- (a) Holdings with rights of occupancy.
- (b) Tenancies at will.

“The majority of the ryots here are tenants-at-will. Very few ryots have any idea even that by length of possession any right of occupancy can be acquired in any holding. It is a general saying among ryots here that the land belongs to the mirásdár; he has of course every right to deal with it just as he likes. The principal reasons, however, why the ryots do not care much for occupancy rights are—

1st.—that land has not much value; and

2nd.—there are plenty of cultivable lands to be had without much difficulty. In my experience of this sub-division I have come across three instances only of sale of occupancy rights, and these in parts of the sub-division most thickly peopled, and consequently where lands are held in some estimation. Here ryots do not compete for land so much as landholders for ryots, and the result is that, though the latter do not care for occupancy rights, the former, except under exceptional circumstances, seldom try to deal with tenancies according to their will. This necessarily compels most mirásdars to impliedly admit occupancy rights. Cases are rare, however, in which such rights are asserted against mirásdars by ryots.

“About 80 per cent. of the ryots are tenants-at-will.

“Besides the aforesaid tenure-holders, there is a large number of petty landholders here holding petty estates directly from Government. Their status is mostly that of well-to-do ryots in other parts of Bengal. The conditions of the tenures held directly from Government require no description.

“The character of the tenure does not much affect the economic condition of the holder here. As I have already said, here ryots do not seek lands, but lands ryots.

“Ryoti tenures are seldom sold here, and unrestricted freedom of transfer exists in theory only. In practice it works no injury whatever, as it is seldom exercised.

“On the general question also, I do not think any interference with freedom of transfer is needed.”

40. Mr. Stevenson says—

“We have no means of ascertaining cultivated area or even the total area included in each kind of estate. The decennial settlement in Sylhet Proper was like that of Chittagong in Bengal, i.e., after a regular measurement.

I say of Sylhet Proper because Taraf and some other parganas of Habiganj were decennially-settled at Dacca, not as part of Sylhet, though they were afterwards transferred to this district. Settlement was made in these cases without a measurement. But the areas allotted to each estate at decennial settlement are not kept to, each estate by degrees encroached on Government waste adjoining, so that at the revenue survey the dimensions of estates were found often times enormously increased.

“We have some 99,000 estates in this district [which pay revenue, or local rate plus revenue, or local rate only (revenue free)] held direct of Government. They may be roughly classified as under—

(1) Zemindári paying from Rs. 100 to Rs. 3,400 per annum land revenue.....	472
(2) Zemindári paying from Rs. 100 or less	49,600
(3) Estates held by peasant proprietors, say	46,000
(4) Revenue-free estates.....	2,600
(5) Waste land grants.....	170

Total..... 98,842

“No estate in Sylhet pays over Rs. 3,400 as land revenue a year. Nearly every ryot in a zemindári has the right of transfer of his jote. Tenants-at-will are very few, as land is so plentiful.

“The usual selling price of a jote is about one-fourth that of land held directly of Government.

“There being very few large landlords in the district, there is not that friction or well marked class animosity that so often exists in Eastern Bengal districts between the landlord and the tenant.”

41. QUESTION 5.—Babu Raj Mohan De says—

“No holders of any kind of tenure are seen to do any material improvement to the land. Improvement works. Irrigation is necessary for sál bura crop, but no wells or tanks are sunk for that purpose. People depend on natural reservoirs of water for the purpose. Bils and marshes are so abundant here that sinking wells for the purpose of irrigation was never considered necessary, and hence nothing is done in that way.

“The Land Improvement Act has been a dead letter as far as the sub-division of Habiganj is concerned, and in the present state of the sub-division advances are not necessary.”

42. Rai Joges Chandra Chatterji Bahadur says—

“Very seldom do the tenure-holders carry out any material improvements. Low and marshy and waste or jungle lands are sometimes reclaimed by draining and clearing, but such instances are rare also.

“Where this is done, their actions are affected by the security or insecurity of the tenure and by their wealth or poverty. Long-term leases with remissions for a number of years in the beginning (generally from three to seven years), and then a graduated scale of rents, are generally given. Such considerations are also occasionally shown to Government tenants in temporarily-settled estates.

“The recent Land Improvement Acts have produced no perceptible effects as yet in the sub-division of Sunámganj. The fact is the existence of Act XIX. of 1883 and of Act XII. of 1884 is not known to about 99 per cent. of the population. Act XIX., I think, has not yet been introduced into Assam by the Local Government, at least I could not find it out. I cannot say that the necessity for such loans does not exist at all. The improvements mentioned in Section 4, sub-Section 2, Clauses (c) and (d) can be and are sometimes made in this sub-division, and applications for loans for these purposes are likely to be made, if only the existence of the Act is known, and the Act is extended to Assam. Bunds (dams) for protection of bura lands from floods are very common in this sub-division, and the Local Board has commenced to receive applications for aid in these works. Perhaps applications would have been made to Government for loans if it had been known that such loans were obtainable. Similar remarks apply to Act XII. of 1884. Persons or villages suffering from temporary calamities require loans now and then in order to be able to tide over distress. They have to go to the inevitable money-lender and borrow at exorbitant rates of interest. These interests, the minimum of which is two pice in the rupee per mensem, cause about half the misery of the agricultural population.

“I think these Acts have tended rather to enlarge the making of advances by Government. The only occasion on which we had to make an advance was the year before last after the destruction of the áman crop by floods. The amount advanced was, however, very small, about Rs. 150, or thereabouts. In making these advances even the initiative had been taken by us, and not by the ryots.

“I do not think any action in the way of improving the Acts necessary. The scope of the Acts seem to me sufficiently wide to embrace all objects and classes of people requiring loans, and the condition of the district does not render any more extension necessary.

“Far from the rate of interest being prohibitory, the people would most gladly pay 6½ per cent. per annum if only they can obtain loans at such rates. I have already said that the minimum rate of interest obtaining on private loans by agriculturists is ordinarily about 2 pice in the rupee per mensem. Compared with this, the Government rate of interest is almost nothing. The power again of reducing the interest to 4½ per cent. and of remitting interests and advances even under special circumstances leaves very little room for any further improvements or facilities.”

43. Mr. Stevenson says—

“No Land Improvement Acts are needed here. As already stated, the yearly floods maintain the natural fertility of the soil. We sometimes have too much water, but never within the memory of man have we had a drought.

“Bura dhán is grown in the low land of ‘háors’ round the bils in their lowest parts, which never dry up entirely. Small ‘ails’ are run up round fields, and water raised from the bil and poured into them by irrigation channels.”

44. QUESTION 6.—Babu Raj Mohan De says—

“The average price of dhán land may be put at Rs. 90 per acre. In the southern half of the sub-division good land sells for as much as Rs. 150 to Rs. 200 and in the northern half Rs. 60 to 90.

“The amount of land sold in the sub-division of Habiganj for arrears of revenue is not immediately connected with the prosperity or otherwise of the actual agriculturing class. Big estates are often brought to sale by co-proprietors with fraudulent motives, and very few estates are sold for mere inability to pay. Average area of land sold in a year for arrears of revenue would be about 15,000 acres.

“No land of this sub-division has passed into the hands of non-agricultural and non-resident landlords; but, on the other hand, land is by and by passing from the hands of landlords to the agricultural population.

“Bad crops of last three years has checked this sort of transfer for the present, and the value of land has also gone down.”

45. Rai Joges Chandra Chatterji Bahadur says—

“The average price of land per acre is Rs. 45 to Rs. 50, or thereabouts. From figures taken from the registration office, I find the average was Rs. 30 to Rs. 35 per acre.

From the figures of the last five years, I find that on an average about 2,500 acres of land are sold every year for arrears of revenue. I have not been able to get such information from the civil court. The average sale price of land sold for arrears of revenue was about Re. 1-8 to Rs. 2 per acre, and the main reason for such a low average is that maháls sold for arrear

of revenue are generally those which are not worth retaining. Other reasons also operate to reduce the price. The general opinion is that about five-eighths of the entire area of the sub-division has been transferred to non-agricultural and non-resident landlords, and this opinion is approximately correct."

46. Mr. Stevenson says—

"I should put the average price at not over Rs. 60 an acre. It varies according to the part of the district and the kind of tenure. Thus, in the submontane tracts to the north, especially Sunámganj, where jungle is gaining on the cultivated area and villages being gradually abandoned from increasing unhealthiness of the locality, land is very cheap. In the densely-populated parganas in the south of the district land is much dearer. Revenue-free estates sell for about twice as much as revenue-paying ditto. It is absolutely impossible to give even approximately the amount of land sold for revenue arrears."

47. QUESTION 7.—Babu Raj Mohan De says—

"There is no such class of people who solely depend upon their earnings as hired labourers. Almost every one has land to grow dhán therein. One who has no land at all can easily get land from others under bhági arrangement, if he has plough and plough cattle. On the other hand, one who has land, but no plough, can easily have dhán grown in it by giving half the produce of the land to some who likes to rent it. This is one system prevalent here in getting field labour. One who has share plough cattle can have the service of a ploughman for two mornings by allowing the service of his own bullocks for the third day. When one has a share plough, he does ploughing for others ordinarily at 4 annas a day. Servants for ploughing are employed for six months from April, or for three months from June at Rs. 3 a month, plus fooding. A plough boy at Re. 1 to Rs. 2 per month plus fooding. But in harvesting time the wages rise up to 5 annas a day, but ordinarily harvesting is done by labour remunerated in kind for every 20 bundles of dhán cut. The person who does the cutting takes 3, sometimes 4 bundles. A clever, hard-working man cuts as much as 60 to 80 bundles, and gets from 12 to 16 bundles, as stated before. There are not many persons who solely depend on grains or other payments earned by daily labour. But a man in need does this sort of work willingly. At the time of harvesting bura crops men from all parts of the sub-division flock to the place, and do the work for remuneration in kind. The work of harvesting is finished in many places within 15 to 20 days, and within that time a man sometimes earns from 7 to 10 maunds of dhán."

"Chárál women do sowing for 6 pice per day, grown-up men Cháráls get 3 annas a day, and Musalmans 4 annas for doing similar work."

48. Rai Joges Chandra Chatterji Bahadur says—

"Ordinary wages are four and five annas per diem when paid in money. These wages are, however, mostly paid in kind, and the general proportion is one-sixth to one-seventh. They are never less than one-seventh of the produce. Circumstances, however, raise them not unfrequently."

"The principal rates are as follows:—

(1) Field labourer	4 and 5 annas per diem.
(2) House work { unskilled.....	4 annas per diem.
skilled.....	6 and 7 annas per diem.
(3) All works connected with lime-burning	4 to 5 annas per diem.
(4) Carpenter	8 annas to 10 annas per diem.
(5) Boatmen	5 and 6 annas per diem.
(6) Baggage coolies	6 annas per diem.
(7) Domestic servant	Rs. 2-8 to Rs. 3 per mensem.
(8) Earthwork	5 annas per diem.

"There are no regular hired labourers here. I mean there is no class of people here who work for hire throughout the year. Such labourers are available in abundance during harvesting seasons, but these over, they go and do their own works. All these people can and do maintain themselves with fair ease. Females form no inconsiderable part of the labourers during the harvesting season, and they are always paid in kind."

49. QUESTION 8.—Babu Raj Mohan De says—

"There is no activity in trade or commerce. The only trading class are the Sáhás. As long as they have not made enough money to invest in lands and become zemindár of their village they continue in trade. As soon as they have acquired a little status as land proprietor, they want to throw off all connection with shop trade, which is considered as an undignified thing for a land proprietor. Habiganj does not subsist mainly on its resources. It imports almost all pulses, good deal of oil. Sugar, chilly, turmeric, onions, garlic, and tobacco are all imported."

50. Rai Joges Chandra Chatterji Bahadur says—

"The sub-division of Sunámganj depends mainly on its own resources as regards the supply of rice, its staple food. In ordinary years it exports some rice and paddy also. For all other necessities it depends upon importation."

"The Sahas are an energetic trading class here, but they are not enterprising. The import trade is mostly in their hands, there being here and there a sprinkling of foreigners."

"In lime the export trade is very active. Dry fish are also exported in great abundance. The first is largely in the hands of the Sáhás, and the second entirely in the hands of fishermen."

"The import trade is also almost constant. It being mostly confined to the necessities of life, there cannot be much ebb and flow in it. The value of the export trade is much greater than the import."

51. Mr. Stevenson says—

"The exports of (1) paddy, (2) lime form the chief transactions of commerce as far as the natives of the districts are concerned. Tea is separate. The trade in both these staples has been getting worse and worse. This in the case of paddy is due—

- (1) to bad crops in Sylhet for a term of years, leaving no surplus to export: lately indeed paddy was imported instead of being exported;
- (2) to good crops in Bengal, and a less demand there.

"In the case of lime, it is due to the abolition of the monopoly, and consequently smaller gains; also to several large failures in the trade, which caused much loss to the lime-burning class."

52. QUESTION 9.—Babu Raj Mohan De says—

"The people of the northern half of the Habiganj sub-division have a good deal of cattle. Since some years, on account of extension of cultivation of paddy, there is great difficulty about fodder. These fields which used to supply fodder for cattle are now converted into rice-fields; so the people have to look for fodder in the low háors of the Mymensingh district and of Sunámganj sub-division of this district. The cattle are often in rains fed miserably, and hardly any milk is obtained at the time, and not unfrequently by continued insufficient food, cattle often become very weak and a good deal of them die from exhaustion when they have to pick their food in November by wading through mud and water. This has seriously affected the prospects of the agricultural people. Most of the milk cows give birth to calves generally in November and December, and they yield milk up to May, and sometimes to June. Cattle have generally so far degenerated that not many cows in a village give even as much as a seer of milk. The owners of the cows always sell milk to goálás in the cold-weather months, and get perhaps 2 pice (6 pies) a seer, which is equal to 1½ seer of ordinary seer of 80 tolas; and when the milk is not sold they make ghi, and on an average ¾ to 1 seer of ghi is made in a month out of the milk of an ordinary milk-cow. In five months 4 seers of ghi is made, and it is worth Rs. 3. Thus a cow gives Rs. 3 a year and a calf. The average price of such a cow is Rs. 10, and it costs at least Re. 1-8 to feed it in rains, if hired labour is employed in supplying fodder."

"Excepting goálás, a well-to-do agriculturist sometimes has as much as five to six milk cows; but the average would not be more than two per house. A poor man, who has not many cattle, but can collect fodder for more than he has, generally keeps cattle of others in the rains for Re. 1 to Re. 1-8 per head and in this way earns a few rupees."

53. Rai Joges Chandra Chatterji Bahadur says—

"Milk is not much sold in Sunámganj. Ghi is, however, largely manufactured and sold. Fowls and eggs, &c., are also sold. The preparing and selling of reed mats sitálpatis, bamboo works, cutting and selling of sun-grasses and firewoods, canes, &c., from the hills and places near the hills, trading in miscellaneous articles with the hill people, i.e., exchanging produce of the plains with hill produce, all these form the incidental and collateral sources of income of the people of this sub-division."

54. Mr. Stevenson says—

"The breed of cattle is degenerating greatly, chiefly from in-breeding, bad keep at certain seasons, and covering by immature bulls. These, up to the age of two years or so, run about freely, and, being more active than older bulls, spoil the breed all round."

55. QUESTION 10.—Babu Raj Mohan De says—

"People near the tea-gardens have the facility of adding to their income by hiring out their labour to tea-gardens, when their own agricultural works do not require it. So people living on the border of hills make something by bringing down fuel, bamboos, and sun-grass for sale."

"People in the north do boat-rowing, and manufacture reed mats; but reed is getting scarce, and so this industry is day by day diminishing; a lot of them also go to hills in the south and bring down rafts of bamboos for sale; but the proportion of such people as take to all these works is very small."

56. Rai Joges Chandra Chatterji Bahadur says—

"The lime trade in its different stages form capital means of employment to a large number of people. The orange and the tezpát* trade also give employment to a considerable number. There are extensive wastes in the submontane tracts north of the sub-division, and several people temporarily migrate there for the purpose of cultivating mustard and paddy also. The fishermen temporarily migrate to different places within the sub-division for the purpose of fishing. They remain out for about 5 or 6 months in the year, generally from November to April. With so many facilities within, and in the confines of, the sub-division for adding to their incomes, it is natural that there is very little migration to any distance. An inconsiderable portion of their population work elsewhere as crews and lascars of both inland and sea-going steamers and as boatmen."

57. Mr. Stevenson says—

"Like the people of parts of Tipperah, the common peasant has a great idea of his importance, and will rarely condescend to do earthwork. Only the máli as a rule does this for hire. If employed on road work two men between them carry, on a bamboo stretcher, if I may call it so, as much earth as an up-country labourer will carry in a basket on his head. This causes great waste of time and labour, but the Sylhetia Musulman thinks to carry any—

* Tezpát=bay-leaves, used as a spice, and sold now at about 10 annas as maund.

thing on his head is *infra dig.* On roads or tea-gardens it is all the same. The Sylhetia makes a very bad worker, often leaving and going home after taking advances, and not caring, and always lazy. The Sylhetia does not as a rule leave the district except as a boatman or as a lascar. Many lascars on steamers, both sea-going and river, are Sylhetias. One Hindu caste in Habiganj make cold-weather trips to the Sundarbans where they spend a month or two, killing otters for skin and crocodiles and porpoises for oil.

"Cloth-weaving as an industry has been nearly killed by the competition of English cloths. Lately it has been reviving. But Manipuri women all weave and supply their families and also sell."

58. The general result of the present enquiry is to show that the people who inhabit the Brahmaputra Valley and the district of Sylhet cannot be said generally to suffer from a daily insufficiency of

Summary.

food. The vast majority, especially in the northern tract, are in very comfortable circumstances, and though they have seldom any store of wealth accumulated, never experience anxiety as to their resources, and rarely have to deny themselves anything they need or desire. The average cultivator, of the various types of whom Nos. 2, 8, 9, 10, 11, 20, and 29 of Appendix C are very typical examples, is not in debt. He has as much land as he can conveniently cultivate with the aid of his family or his poorer neighbours. He has no need of much cash, as his land supplies him with almost all necessities but salt, opium, and cotton thread. He rarely works for hire, and when he does, it is seldom necessity that drives him to it. He is able to take frequent holidays and to spend much on festivals and merry makings. His land tenure is such that he can retain as much or as little as he pleases. He may at his own pleasure take an annual or a periodic lease of his land. If he selects the latter, he is not compelled to retain the whole of it during the period of settlement, but may give up what he pleases at any time, and is thereupon allowed an abatement of rent. Nevertheless, Government is bound by the periodic lease, and cannot enhance revenue during its currency. His own lands are surrounded generally by those of the Government, upon which, though he pays nothing for the privilege, he is allowed to graze his cattle without molestation. Similarly, Government lands supply him with firewood, building materials, and timber for his house free of charge.

The soil is fertile, and the revenue too light for the better lands. If it were not so, the assessment would not work, for the rates are not differentiated, except in the roughest manner; and, therefore, must be light enough not to drive the worst lands out of cultivation; consequently, the rates are too low for the better lands. Land is everywhere abundant, and in some places can be had revenue-free for a term of years. The climate is sub-tropical, and the rainfall sufficient in quantity, equable in distribution and almost invariable in character. A drought has never occurred within the memory of man, and famine is absolutely unknown.

Nevertheless, notwithstanding all these advantages of climate, soil, tenure, and revenue, some Assamese cultivators contrive to become poor. This is partly due to the naturally indolent character of a race upon whom nature has heaped her favours, and who have never known the meaning of toil. It has already been pointed out that labour is the thing an Assamese most abhors. This is well shown in Examples 6, 7, 15, 18, 26, and 28. But in some parts of Assam the ryot has another enemy besides his own indolence. This is sickness. Portions of the Brahmaputra Valley are now being depopulated steadily by the fever known as *kāla-azār*. Very many parts of the valley are more or less subject to malaria, and when illness attacks the members of a family, it is not easy to avoid debt and its consequences. Sickness at a critical time, such as the rice-planting season, may easily involve a household in difficulties. A loan has to be obtained, and though this is usually got without trouble, the interest generally charged is 75 per cent. per annum, a rate which very quickly doubles and trebles the principal sum. Sometimes opium is had recourse to, owing to the disease, sometimes it is itself the cause of the trouble. In any case, it generally aggravates the original difficulty. Then, the indolence of his nature attacks the debtor. Instead of resolutely meeting his difficulties when returning health gives him the strength to do so, he more frequently gives up the game as lost, and either continues living from hand to mouth, as shown in Example 7, or sinks into a life of slavery to his creditor, as described in Example 6. Happily, however, such cases do not form a very large proportion of the population, and even in them there is never any danger of a daily insufficiency of food. On the whole, then, it may be said that real poverty is unknown in the Brahmaputra Valley, and that it would require a careful search to discover a single case in which indigence was not almost entirely the fault of the family itself, and due to circumstances almost always under its complete control.

9. In conclusion, I would invite attention to five significant facts, which throw a strong side-light on the general condition of the people of this Province. They are these—

Conclusions

- (a) The revenue is collected with ease everywhere but in Sylhet, and scarcely any arrears remain over after the close of the official year. In Sylhet, where the assessment is lightest of all, the difficulty is due to the litigious character of the people, not to their poverty. The Sylhetia has the strongest objection to paying his revenue, and exhausts all the resources of subtilty to avoid doing so. The people of Assam Proper are much simpler, and, having the money at hand, pay it with readiness.
- (b) Every district possesses extensive areas of culturable waste, consisting largely of grass land, which could be reclaimed with comparative ease. In other words, the land available is far in excess of the population. Therefore, it is impossible that there should be the slightest difficulty as to the means of subsistence.
- (c) Beggars are almost unknown in the Province. I have only seen one during a residence of four years and tours in every district but the Garo and Naga Hills.
- (d) Coolie transport is not to be obtained by Government anywhere but in the Khasi Hills without impressment. It is impossible to associate the idea of poverty with a people who cannot be induced to work voluntarily for Government at even more than the ordinary rates paid by private persons.
- (e) Regular employers of labour are compelled to import at very serious cost the labour they require. This is the difficulty which has from the beginning so prejudicially affected the tea industry of Assam. There can be no want of the means of subsistence amongst a people who by refusal to work oblige the planter to import his labour at an initial cost sometimes exceeding Rs. 100 a head.

Z. DARRAH.

APPENDIX A.

QUESTIONS.

1. What grains form the staple food of the people? When are they sown and harvested, and what are the critical times at which rain is essential to each of them, or at which a failure or excessive fall of rain may be mischievous or ruinous?

2. What proportion of cultivated land, and what class of crops is manured yearly, and what is the average weight of manure given to the acre (1) in land constantly manured, (2) in land occasionally manured? If there is any customary rotation of crops and fallows, state it.

3. What is the ordinary economic condition of the portion of the agricultural population directly engaged in the cultivation of the land and possessing any proprietary or occupancy interest in the land? Illustrate your reply by giving the actual facts as to a few typical instances of such persons taken from four or five different villages in several portions of your district. State, with regard to each, what area of land he holds for tillage or grazing, what his family consists of, what amount of food grain and what value of other produce he raises on an average off his land in a year, what rent or revenue or cesses he pays for his land, what expenses he incurs in hired labour (other than his own labour and that of his family), what amount he spends in a year in purchases of necessities, which he cannot produce on his land, what kind of house he lives in, how many rooms it possesses, and how many outhouses, what quantity of cattle or other live stock he possesses, what other property, and what stock of grain. How does he dispose of any surplus income, whether by hoarding or lending money, or investing it in ornaments, or spending it on marriage ceremonies, or otherwise? What are his debts, and to what are they commonly due? State what proportion of the agriculturists of your district you believe to be in debt, and what proportion their average indebtedness bears to their average yearly income. Endeavour to obtain the opinions on these points of well-informed and trustworthy native residents of different sub-divisions, and, in submitting such opinions, explain the position of your informants, and the probable means at their command of forming correct conclusions.

4. Describe the tenures of land (proprietary and occupancy) which are most common, and as nearly as you can the area of cultivated land held by each kind of tenure. How far does the character of the tenure appear to affect the economic condition of the person holding it? Are there any conditions of tenure (such, for instance, as unrestricted freedom of transfer) which might be changed with advantage to the holder and without injury to other parties?

5. Are the holders of the above tenures in the habit of carrying out material improvements, such as digging wells or channels, necessary in order to use the water in a canal? Are their actions in this respect affected most by the security or insecurity of their tenure, or by their wealth or poverty? Or are there any other reasons which hinder such investments of their labour and capital? What have been the effects of recent Land Improvement Acts? Have they tended to enlarge or narrow the making of advances by Government? Does the condition of the country render it desirable that the operation of these Acts should be facilitated, or their scope enlarged, and are there any apparent difficulties in the way of doing this that could be removed? Is the demand for interest on Government advances obstructive or prohibitory?

6. What is the average price of land per acre? What amount of land on an average is sold every year for arrears of revenue and for decrees of court? What quantity of land has been transferred in your district to non-agricultural and non-resident landlords?

7. What are the wages usually paid to hired field labourers? Are they paid in kind or money? Give the rates as far as you can for the chief kinds of labour in ordinary years. Is the hired labourer usually able to subsist with fair ease on the grain or other payments he receives at harvest and other periods during the intervals between such payments, or is he frequently forced to borrow and fore-stall future payments?

8. What is the state of your district as to the activity of commerce? Has it an energetic and enterprising trading class? Do any of the districts subsist mainly on their own resources, and export and import little? Or is there an active and constant ebb and flow of trade?

9. What incidental and collateral sources of income do the people possess, which are not taken into account in assessing revenue, *e.g.*, milk and ghi, breeding of livestock, fowls, silk-worms, &c., weaving of cloths for domestic use, and the like?

10. What facilities have they for adding to their income by labour, either in the neighbourhood of their homes or by migrating to a distance, and to what extent do they avail themselves of them?

APPENDIX B.

NOTE 1.—By H. LUTTMAN-JOHNSON, Esq., C.S., Judge and Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts.

I AM asked to give a concise and clear record of the views which I have formed of the condition of the people within the area of my jurisdiction. Like the rest of Eastern India, my division suffers from excess of the means of subsistence. In my division, a living is so easily earned that the people are demoralised; that is, they are too contented, have few ambitions, develop no new wants. If I were not limited to the area of my jurisdiction, I should go on to say that the same phenomena are observable in Burma. In Eastern Bengal and Sylhet, where also the people are extremely well off, the population has enormously increased, and this increase has rendered exertion a necessity. But even in Eastern Bengal and the Surma valley the people are too well off to accept work which they consider beneath their dignity, such as earthwork on roads, portage, work in tea-gardens. We import into the Province annually some 20,000 to 30,000 labourers, because our people will not work for the liberal wages offered. None of these people come from the neighbouring districts of Bengal. When these questions were sent to me, I thought they were sent by mistake. What we want in my division is increased population and competition for the means of existence. Upper India suffers from excess of population and excessive competition for the means of existence. No one has even for a moment suggested that my division—that Eastern India generally—suffers from the want of the means of subsistence. This assertion is made, not about this part of India, but about Upper India and Central India; and about these parts of India it is as true as it is untrue of Eastern India, of Gujarat, of the deltas of the Godavary and the Cauvery, of the Malabar coast and of some other favoured tracts.

NOTE 2.—By A. C. CAMPBELL, Esq., Deputy-Commissioner, Kamrup.

I send the answers of three influential native gentlemen acquainted with English who have been consulted by me, viz.:—

- (1.) Babu Guru Prasad Das, Sub-divisional Officer, Barpeta.
- (2.) " Kaliram Chaudhuri, Extra-Assistant-Commissioner.
- (3.) " Radhanath, Tahsildar.

2. I have also conversed on the subject with other native gentlemen of experience, viz. tahsildars, mauzadars, ministerial officers, and others. I have also availed myself of my personal knowledge of the country for over thirty years, and I think I may hazard the following remarks on the subjects referred to in Sir Edward Buck's Circular of the 17th August last.

3. It would have been very desirable if the Government of India had specified the local areas in which the population of India were alleged to suffer from daily insufficiency of food, and of the classes more particularly affected by such privation. In Assam, I am aware of no classes who are unable to provide themselves with at least two cooked meals per diem. The only exceptions are Brahmin widows, who by way of continual penance are restricted to only one cooked meal during the day. This privation not being caused by want of means to provide two meals, and being, moreover, religious observance, may be left out of consideration, except that it illustrates forcibly that two cooked meals during the day is considered the normal food supply of the population, and that one such cooked meal is deemed a penance.

4. Referring to the third paragraph of Sir E. Buck's letter, I would point out that the labour of the Famine Commission did not extend to Assam, and the conclusions which they arrived at are susceptible of considerable modification as regards their application to this province. It appears to me that the enquiry set on foot by the Government of India is rendered somewhat difficult by the vagueness of the assertions to be sifted, and contradicted or admitted as results might justify. The term "insufficiency of food" may be variously interpreted. Many classes, however wealthy, live ordinarily on rice and pulses or other vegetables, varied occasionally by fish or meat diet. To some this may be deemed insufficient food, but it is what the people are accustomed to, and even if they had means they would select no other diet.

Two wholesome cooked meals for a family of, say, five persons, consisting of two adults and three juveniles, can be secured for about two annas or ten pice per diem, supplemented by home-grown vegetables, self-captured fish, &c. The Director of Land Records is aware from his knowledge of the country that no adult male need find any difficulty in earning from three to four annas per diem by personal labour, so that if any one chooses to suffer from insufficiency of food, it is entirely his own wish.

I have nothing very particular to say on the series of questions which have been sent me. They have been answered by the native gentlemen who have been consulted. I have only to repeat that the enquiry seems singularly unsuited to the conditions of the agricultural population of this Province and I do not consider any further action called for.

NOTE 3.—By J. KNOX WRIGHT, Esq., C.S., Deputy-Commissioner, Sibsagar.

The confidential Circular No. 44F.—8-1, dated the 17th August 1887, of the Government of India, has little or no concern with the state of this district. Some of the gentlemen consulted by me did not answer the questions at all, but contented themselves with stating that such a thing as famine or want in Sibsagar was impossible. The peasantry here are, I suppose, as well off as anywhere in the world. They have as a body means enough to supply all their wants. The result of my enquiries convinces me that in 80 per cent. of cases there is enough paddy stored for a year's supply. In the large majority of cases a more abundant supply is in stock. However poor the ryot, he is sure to have some money buried, and some grain in stock; as a rule, ryots do not sell their grain, but store it. When they have several years' supply in hand, they begin to sell.

The following replies are made to the questions sent:—

Question 9.—Besides the usual trades, such as those of carpenters, goldsmiths, potters, braziers, blacksmiths, &c., the Assamese have many means of earning money. For instance, the rearing of silk-worms, the breeding of stock, cattle, buffaloes, fowls, ducks, &c. Large herds of cattle and buffaloes are kept, from which enormous profits are made by the sale of milk. The weaving of cloth, both for home use and for sale, is very common.

Question 10.—So well off are the Assamese here that there is no such thing as hired labour, speaking generally. Formerly, when labour was more scarce on tea-gardens, i.e., when there was less importation of coolies from Bengal and the North-West, and fewer Kacharis and hill tribes came to work, Assamese labour was much used by managers of gardens. But the number of Assamese now employed is much smaller than before. They are found to be lazy, to go and come when they like: it is found that much reliance or dependence cannot be placed upon them, and so other labour is preferred. In the same way, with the labour under the Public Works Department. Not much Assamese labour is used. Coolies from Bengal and Kacharis from elsewhere do most of the labour, though of course the Assamese also work.

Did the Assamese here really need to work, they could get any amount at their very doors almost. In the very few exceptional cases where hired labour is used, the minimum is Rs. 7½ per mensem, or 4 annas a day. This fact alone speaks volumes.

Question 1.—The staple food in this district is as follows:—

Name of crop.	When sown.	When harvested.	When rain wanted.	When rain injurious.
Ahu paddy	February, March, April.	June, July, August	One month after sowing	Never damaged except occasionally on the banks of the Brahmaputra.
Sak paddy	May, June, July.	November, December, January.	May to June for preparing the ground, but from July to September, especially September, much rain is wanted.	Only damaged by floods from the Brahmaputra, not by rain.
Sugarcane	April, May	February, March, April.	Time of sowing	From May to August there must be rain for the crops.
Pulses ... { Mung { Kalai { Matikalai.....	{ August, Sep- { tember.	{ December, Ja- { nuary.	Sun is wanted for sowing, then light rain.	Excessive rain in September, or at time of cutting in December, January, spoils the crop.
Mustard	October, November.	February, March...	Ditto	Ditto ditto.

Such a thing as the general failure of crops in this district is, I am told, unknown. The only scarcity ever known was in the time of the Burmese invasions, when land had to be left untilled, and the people were constrained to eat even "Bangutees" (spear grass), otherwise called "Chaukanthas," but when the lands are tilled and sown, crops are the necessary result.

Question 2.—The land apparently needs no manure, as the saying goes "the soil is so rich, that it has only to be tilled with a harrow and it bursts forth into a smiling harvest." Of course, if the land were deep ploughed, no doubt it would yield heavier crops; but it might then become exhausted, and need manure. With its present management no manure is used: it is not wanted. Sugarcane alone is manured, and very heavily. Most lands are manured three times in the year. 4 to 5 maunds of manure are used per acre. The total area under sugarcane is only 6,590.

Rotation of crops in the same land is ahu and mustard, ahu and pulses, or ahu and sak. No land is allowed to lie fallow, if the cultivator can help it. It is a mere question of the season. If the season is favourable, the land will be sown with any kind of crop suitable, and as often as possible. It is only under exceptional circumstances, such as illness of the cultivator, or an unfavourable season, that any land is ever allowed to remain fallow. In short, the Assamese ryot is as inconsiderate to his brothers. He takes all he can out of his land (consistently with not overworking himself) without any thought for the future.

Question 3.—The ordinary economic condition of the Assamese agriculturists is exceptionally good. I give below four instances taken from life:—

Name.	Area of land held.	Number of people in house.	Amount of paddy reaped.	Other crops.	Value of other crops.	Land revenue and local rate.	Amount spent on necessities.	Number of houses.	Number of cattle.	
	B. K. L.		Mds.	Mds.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.			
Pábar, Deori ..	39 4 4	19	275	13 kalaf. 12 mustard.	56.	L.R. Rs. 32-15 & local rate Rs. 1-7.	35	1 large house. 2 out-houses.	9 cattle. 3 buffaloes.	Employs no hired labour. Hoards all savings. Has no debts.
Jizoi, Deori....	82 1 13	12	220	15 matikalai 2 mustard.	35	L.R. Rs. 17-14 local rate Rs. 1-2.	25	1 large house. 3 out-houses.	14 cattle. 1 buffalo.	Employs no hired labour. Owes Rs. 30 on account of purchase of cattle.
Surumon, Ahom	31 3 4	6	125	....	....	L.R. Rs. 19-7 local rate Rs. 1-3.	45	1 large house. 3 out-houses.	4 cattle.	Employs no hired labour. The expenditure, Rs. 45, is large because he takes opium. Has no debts.
Maniram, Ahom	13 3 0	8	75	....	....	L. R. Rs. 9-0 local rate Rs. 0-2.	30	1 large house. 2 out-houses.	2 cattle.	Employs no hired labour, has no debts. Hoards savings.

The ordinary house of an Assamese has four compartments, one is used for cooking, another for eating, another for sleeping, and the fourth is kept as an empty room for the reception of friends and keeping articles. It is only the very poor who have not this fourth room. The out-houses consist of a cattle-shed and a granary. These three houses (i.e., the house for the family and the two out-houses) are to be found in all ryots' homesteads. The property owned by the above ryots consists of the usual stock of clothing and cooking utensils and ornaments. The stock of grain in hand is not known, from one to three years' supply. The general practice is to hoard savings. No ryot is happy unless he has money buried and a good supply of grain in stock. The expenditure in marriages has increased. Formerly in the Raja's time common people were not allowed to ride on elephants, in *palkis* (*dolas*), or on horseback. As this is now allowed, the practice is often indulged in, elephants are hired, so are ponies. But with regard to *palkis* only Bengali coolies can be hired, as the Assamese consider it degrading to do the work. Even those whose fathers actually used to work as *palki*-bearers and who are by caste *duliya*s refuse on any consideration to carry a *palki* now. In the same way Assamese do not like to work on roads (Bengalis and Kacharies have to be imported), because in the Raja's time only the commonest coolies did the work. They were called *kári*. This term is now used as a term of abuse. Hence the dislike of Assamese to do road work.

Among the agriculturists I doubt whether so large a percentage as even 20 are in debt. The small proportion who are in debt are so only temporarily. They have borrowed small sums on account of marriage expenses or for the purchase of stock. The debts are small in amount, and do not exceed one year's income in the very large proportion of cases. I have consulted some of the most educated and intelligent Assamese on this subject. Besides the office staff (one of whom has been in Government employ for 33 years and has been Revenue Sheristadar or Superintendent for 22 years), I have derived my information from mauzadars, who are in constant contact with the agriculturists, who realise the revenue regularly from them, and who know their daily life, their means, &c. intimately.

Question 4.—The general tenures are under decennial and annual leases. Under the former the area is 279,839 acres. Under the latter it is 46,721 acres.

The total area held under these tenures is 326,560 acres. Roughly speaking, the whole of the decennial area is cultivated.

The only question of interest to the ryots in the matter of these tenures is that annual leases are not transferable. They differ from decennial leases in that when cancelled, no compensation is allowed for the land, only for houses and crops.

There are very few sub-tenants, so few as not to be referred to.

Question 5.—The holders of the above tenures are most distinctly not in the habit of carrying out material improvements. The rain supplies all the wants of the agriculturists in the way of water. Advances to agriculturists by Government are unknown, because not required.

Question 6.—It is not easy to strike an average for the price of land. Good land, in a good situation, fetches from Rs. 50 to Rs. 100 per *purá* (4 *bighas*). In bad localities it fetches from Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 only per *purá*. In some exceptional cases it is unsaleable. More or less land is seldom or never sold for arrears of revenue. Last year only 7 acres were so sold. The price realised was high, being Rs. 388.

The area sold for civil court decrees was 20 acres for Rs. 365-8. I cannot hear of any instance in which land has been transferred to non-agricultural or non-resident landlords. One or two cases are known of Marwari traders buying land for the purpose of making tea-gardens, but they are resident, and though not agricultural themselves, they propose to work the gardens through other agency.

Question 7.—The practice in this district, when a man cannot himself cultivate the whole of his land, is as follows:—

In very few exceptional cases hired labour may be employed, but the cases are very few indeed. The price paid is 4 annas per diem, or Rs. 7½ per mensem. The general custom is on *khandua** terms. By this arrangement the non-owner pays the whole of the land revenue due to Government, and, in addition, pays to the owner Re. 1 or Re. 1-8 per *bigha*.

* "Khand" means "crop season." In Nowgong to let land on "Khandua" terms means to let it for one crop. Thus, if a man cannot grow *ahu* on a piece of his *faringati* land, he may let it to a neighbour for the *ahu* season, and take it up himself for a cold weather crop. In such a case the lessee will pay half revenue to the owner. Rupt land is hardly ever given on "Khandua" terms.—H. Z. D.

The other system is known as *adhi*, which is twofold. Under one, the non-owner pays no land revenue to Government, but merely gives one half of the produce to the owner. Under the other, the non-owner pays no revenue to Government, but merely gives a fixed quantity, from 1½ to 2 maunds, of paddy to the owner.

Able-bodied agriculturists can make from Rs. 7 to Rs. 12 per mensem.

Masons, carpenters, blacksmiths make from Rs. 15 to Rs. 40 a month. Even natives have to pay as much as Rs. 4 to Rs. 5 for domestic servants.

No servant can be had under Rs. 8 a month.

Question 8.—Commerce is fairly active in the principal marts of this district. It is chiefly in the hands of Marwari traders. Some Musalmans are also engaged in the trade.

Paddy is exported upstream. Mustard, muga silk, and cloths are exported.

The imports are chiefly cloths, oil of sorts, thread, brass wire, salt, and rice chiefly for gardens. The traders in the *sadr* alone are assessed to income-tax on profits estimated roughly at Rs. 40,000. So the trading profits for the district would exceed one lakh of rupees.

The existence of a very large number of tea-gardens makes the trade considerably greater in volume than it otherwise would be.

NOTE 4.—By RAI GUNABHIRAM SARMA BORUA BAHADUR, Extra-Assistant-Commissioner, Nowgong.

(All the notes and most of the words in brackets have been added by me.—H. Z. D.)

As a nation the Assamese are neither too rich nor too poor. There are neither zemindars and wealthy merchants, nor too poor people who eat what is left of a meal. They all live in houses made of bamboos and grass. It is only the well-to-do who care for wooden posts in their houses. Their dress is simple, a dhoti and khania (embroidered shawl) or cheleng (plain shawl). They must have a *gamcha* even of a *gamcha* (towel) on their heads when they visit each other on festivals, or when they go to cutcherry. Their clothes are principally made at their homes. The well-to-do have a sola (shirt) or coat or angu (waistcoat) either of cotton or eri. They have generally a *gamcha*, in which they keep their tamul, pan, chunam, tobacco, knife, pice, and a lot of other things. This answers the purpose of a pocket, as also of a handkerchief. They have little sympathy for foreigners, whom they call Bengalis. By Bengali is meant all but the Assamese and the hill tribes. If there is anything unclean or bad it is the Bengali. The Europeans, the Sahibs and other foreigners are Bengalis. In the times of the Ahom kings the Bengali was not as much hated as he is now. Very probably this hatred began from the time the British came to this country, for the Bengalis and others who came at first behaved themselves badly. It is the Bengali who is unclean, but his things are good, and his acts copied. A Bengali boat, Bengali cup, Bengali dhoti, and Bengali dress are approved, but the poor Bengali is hated to the extreme. Our young men consider the Bengalis as usurpers of their just rights, and this has made us so that we adopt artificial means to show that we are not Bengalis, and this we do, notwithstanding our unconscious copying of Bengali habits and manners. Our old ideas and notions of mode of life are giving way. Our caste system is not strict. The occupation of one caste is quietly and usefully followed by another. Land and women can be easily obtained in this country. The Bengalis who settle here are easily admitted into society, and find a Gosain (or religious teacher) and a priest. The Assamese are very liberal in this respect.

The well-to-do Assamese ryots have five houses, borghar where he sleeps and cooks, moralghar where he keeps his things and the women sit, chauraghar where he sits, a store-house or bhoral, where he keeps his paddy, a cow-shed where he keeps his cows, and a shed for his tantsal or loom. He takes rice, and the two principal curries are *khar** and *sag* or *adkhariya* and *tenga*, i.e., one curry softened by *khar* (alkaline substance), and another mixed with something that is sour, such as tamarind, oranges, &c. They have two meals, one at midday and the other at night. Fish is the principal animal food; chillies (*jalakia*) is the principal condiment. Pulses, such as *matimah* and *kolamah*, are now and then cooked. They have not as many pujas or fasting days as the Bengalis have; Magh Bihu, Baisak Bihu, Kartik Bihu, are three principal festivals when people visit each other and give feasts. In the Baisak Bihu cows are taken to the nearest bil or river, and there washed. From the Magh Bihu till the Baisak Bihu

The cattle graze in the fields. There is no fixed spot for grazing. They are watched by boys or men after the Baisak Bihu.

cattle are *udang* (free), i.e., not kept during day. The Magh Bihu is *bhogali* (enjoyable), where people enjoy in cakes and eatables, because it falls after the crops are harvested. The Baisak Bihu is *rangali* (merry); because the people amuse and dance and sing, and the Kartik Bihu *kongali* (poor). Besides the Bihus there are the festivals of Janmistami (birth of Krishna), and Guru Kirtan† in honour of Sankar and Madhav. The villagers also perform the tithes of the principal Mohunts§ when they pray and perform Bhaona (theatrical amusement). This sort of prayer or Nam|| and Bhaona are performed on other occasions also. The Fagua or Doljati (and powder festival) is performed by Gosains and the well-to-do people, but not by the people generally. Ambubachi is another festival. It occurs on the 7th Assar and ends on the 11th Assar. The earth is said to be unclean on these days and to menstruate, on the next day old pots and pans are thrown up, and new ones taken. The houses are cleaned and clothes washed. During the Ambubachi the earth is not ploughed over, and the temple idols are not touched.

Muhammadans have very few festivals. Mohurram is not observed. They fast in the Ramazan. The Muhammadans in the interior observe Hindu festivals. Lalungs, Kacharis, Mikirs, and other hill tribes observe Bihu festivals|| and have their pujas, in which they give feasts, by killing pigs and fowls and offering grog made by them to the guests. By the Hindu ryots *sewas* (religious services) are performed as often as they can. People are invited to prayer meetings. Religious books are read, and offerings distributed to the guests. In some cases opium-eaters are invited, and opium given to them, with eatables. This is called *ahua* *sewa*.

* Curry is a boiled vegetable, but it is made of vegetables boiled in *khar* water (see page 30). *Sag* (curry) means vegetables boiled without *khar*. *Adkhariya* (curry) means vegetables half or slightly flavoured with *khar*. *Tenga* (curry) means vegetables seasoned with some acid.

† See page 54.

‡ See page 54.

§ Religious teachers.

The cultivator goes to his field early in the morning and returns at noon. Sometimes he goes to the nearest bil, and returns home with fishes. He bathes and goes to the place where he has his puthi (religious manuscript). He quietly repeats "Krisna Hori Ram Ram," sitting for a while, and then takes his midday meal. He takes rest for a while, and again works in the field. In the afternoon the elderly members sit in the village Namghar or under some big tree in the village, and enquire into cases. Sometimes they arrange how to perform certain ceremonies and impose fines on recusant ryots who neglect to join their meetings or work. In the evening some of them go to the Namghar and have rehearsals of Bhaona. They arrange for the reception of a Gosain or supply things to the Mohunt or the village elders. Sometimes they go to the houses of the mauzadars, and join in enquiry of disputes concerning land or other matters.

The women join their husbands in weeding, planting, and reaping, catch fish with the Jakoi,* fetch water, cook, and work in the loom or spin. Imported threads have, however, diminished the labours of spinning. Young boys and girls who can work keep cows and buffaloes and work in the field. Sometimes they play and dance and sing.

The Assamese are, in fact, cultivators, from the highest Dangoria† and the Mohunt to the lowest Maganiya (beggar) and Charal (potter). They are all cultivators. Other professions or occupations are but ornaments. Those who do not cultivate themselves, do so by employing haloat‡ or morakiya ploughmen, and the common ryot cultivates his own land. The descendants of old houses are, on account of their laziness and indifference, being absorbed in the general population. Their wealth consisted of slaves and paiks (servants) of the khels to which they presided. They supplied them with their necessities. They had no thirst for making money. As soon as they lost their appointments they became useless. After the British conquest the tenure of holding appointments changed. The emancipation of slaves interfered with their mode of life, the Mohunts lost their Church Government. They cannot exercise that power which they used to do before. The upper class cannot work themselves, and are obliged to employ others for the purpose. As, however, their means are scanty, they can ill afford the same. In order to keep their position, they are in many cases obliged to borrow money at high rates of interest, pledging their ornaments and valuables, which they cannot redeem. On account of a common belief that the Company's Raj would not last long, as well as the idea of a vain glory, the first generation of Assamese noblemen and Mohunts did not think of educating their children. They thought it beneath their dignity to be educated in schools or to work like other people. Many of them declined pensions offered, to them. Some of them were satisfied with mauzadarships of petty mauzas. It was the Brahmin and the Kolitas, who occupied less honourable posts under the Ahom Government, who got appointments under the British Government. Hence it was that Katki, Kakoti, Khaund, Bordalo, Hazarika, Mazumdar, Boruah, and Borah held responsible posts after the British conquest. Want of wealth, combined with ignorance and vanity, made the upper class indifferent, and their children have now dwindled into nothing, having lost their old influence and power. They have, however, been convinced of their ignorance and helplessness, and have now come to see the right path. Hence it is that we find young Mohunts and members of Assamese nobility trying their fortunes by following the occupations of tea-garden muharrirs, mandals, and petty contractors, as well as petty traders. Hence it is that we find in our present schools the children of the old upper class.

The lower or the labouring class, on the other hand, benefited by the change of Government. All along they were merely labourers. The Slave Emancipation Act added a good number to this class. Formerly they worked, but the work did not give them anything besides satisfying their wants. At present when they work, they get something which they can see and enjoy. Constant contact with foreigners and the increased means of communication and supply have caused to increase their wants. Emancipation from an iron rule is itself sufficient to make a nation active. This, with the gradual increase of wants, have made the people more active. They are trying hard to rise up and better their conditions, and in many cases they have succeeded. They labour hard and have no family pride to dissuade them from any kind of work. They have a disliking for rendering menial service, unless compelled by necessity. They seldom come to work as common labourers. Land is cheap, and the soil fertile. They would till the land, and enjoy independence rather than render service as coolies, or labourers. Hence it is that the price of labour is very dear here. We pay a day labourer or coolie four annas a day.

The class of artisans is dying out. We get imported articles cheaper, and they are also better. For this reason indigenous artisans and manufactures are neglected. In former times there were *khels* of Kamars (blacksmiths), Sonari (goldsmiths), Barhai (carpenters), &c. They used to do work, because they had to supply the wants of the king and the masters of the khel. By this means the public used to be benefited. They held and enjoyed land under a sort of service tenure. The service system has now been given up, and the land revenue is the only demand now made. In former times artisans never worked for the sake of the art; they worked for the sake of supplying the king's wants. As the Government does not now require any articles, and as imported articles are being supplied, they gave up the work. They see that by payment of the revenue, they stand on an equal footing with those who were their masters. Compulsory labour has been abolished, and the people who have not yet forgotten the hardship of such labour, have at once sought and found ease. They dislike to follow their former occupations, as well as to render service to others. They regard rendering menial service to others, especially to Government and Government officers, as a kind of slavery.§

Caste system is very lax. We are our own barbers, basket-makers, washermen, oilmen, drummers, &c. We have an adage "Serve the crowned (king) or the crooked (plough)!" They are not now required to serve the king, and they therefore serve the plough.

* A kind of trap. See page 11.

† During the Ahom Rajas' time none but the three Prime Ministers could assume the title of Dangoria. Now any man of wealth or position takes the title.

‡ Haloat, ploughman (for halo, plough), a servant generally engaged on the bondha system, whereas a morakiya ploughman is a free labourer, who in return for the use of a pair of bullocks on his own land does ploughing two days out of three on the land of the owner of the cattle.

§ cf. pages 4 and 51.

The facilities afforded to trade have shown them the way how they can profit by disposing of their surplus proceeds of the field. The labouring class has been thriving and improving a good deal. Many have become rich enough to help the sons of old families pecuniarily, keeping ornaments and things as collateral securities. A new class from the cream of the labouring class is being formed, and it will in time be the upper class in wealth, position, and education. The unexpected rising of the lower, and the falling off of the higher class have been acting in a peculiar way. The former have become independent and active, and at the same time insolent; and the latter lazy and indifferent, as well as poor and worthless.

Just about when the British power settled in the country, few people had brazen ornaments and utensils. Almost all the utensils and pots were either earthen or wooden, § lao (a fruit) and bamboo chungas were their lotas. Silver ornaments, such as earrings, rings, and necklace with common corals were the jewellery of the well-to-do ryot. Muga and eri mekha (petticoats) and dhotis and khania were the marriage dresses. Times have changed; gold ornaments, gold moni (beads), brazen gharras and cups, plates, and silk cloths may now be seen in the houses of common ryots. They have now found out means of investing their savings and disposing of their surplus proceeds of their fields; they utilize them by purchasing such things as soon as they can. Sonaris or Haris (goldsmiths) are the only artisans who are usefully employed. The other classes have declined.

In an Assamese village there are one or two khels (divisions). Each khel has its own officers. They manage their own public affairs, holding councils in the Namghar of the village or in the shade of a tree, generally in the afternoon. They exercise power, which keeps the people under control. There are drummers and players of musical instruments in Bhaona parties, as well as distributors of offerings and presents. Village elders decide petty disputes, keeping those of a serious nature for the Gosain or the mauzadar. Excommunications, parachit (atonement), and fines are the punishment. They build their own Namghars and make their own cow-paths. They have a sort of Government of their own. They seek our courts as courts of appeal, only when there is a difference of opinion, or when the matter is of a serious or heinous nature.

The land is fertile, and the population sparse. Famines are scarce, and a little labour gives the people a good crop. There has been no case of death by starvation. Every family can almost maintain itself. If the people can manage to pay the king's revenue and the guru's tribute, they are free. The people are rich enough to spend yearly nearly a sum equal to the land revenue for purchasing opium. They are neither rich nor poor, and are all happy and contented. The people of the plains can afford to have two meals a day throughout the year. Only about two per cent. of the population cannot afford to eat rice twice for about two months in the year. Of the hill tribes, 5 per cent. subsist on kochu,* alu, meat, and vegetable produce for about two months, and cannot afford to eat rice. The people of the plains seldom leave their houses even for acquiring money. They never wear lengti,† and we have very few people who are beggars in the strict sense of the word. The ignorant and the indolent only suffer. The resources of the country are so that any one who can work can reap a good harvest.

* See Appendix D.—No. 51. † A narrow waist cloth worn by hill tribes.
§ Lao is a gourd, the dried fruit of which is largely used as a bottle.

APPENDIX C.

I.—EXAMPLES COLLECTED BY MR. H. Z. DABRAH.

EXAMPLE I.—PHAKIALGAON.

A village inhabited by Phakials close to Jaipur in the sadr sub-division of Lakhimpur and situated on the Dihing; generally known as Phakialgaon. A curious type of community, found only in this district, and almost always close to the border. (Visited 14th January 1888).

1. The community consists of ten families occupying as many separate sets of premises.

1. Family.

There are 15 men, 17 women, 15 boys and 13 girls, 60 souls altogether. All these are more or less connected by blood. But the community is probably not long enough settled in its present quarters to show signs of the evil effects of inter-breeding. The original fathers of the little colony had abandoned their own hills owing to constant quarrels with their neighbours, the Singphos, but the people could not say how long ago the migration had taken place. It had probably occurred in the time of the previous generation.

2. The holding* of the whole community is in one lease and consists of the following land:—

2. Holding and revenue.

						B.	K.	L.
Basti	...	...	...	...	...	5	3	0
Rupit	...	...	...	...	...	45	3	4
Faringati	...	...	...	...	...	7	1	7
Total	...	...	...	...	...	58	2	11

The revenue payable is Rs. 37-11-9 and local rate Rs. 2-6, total Rs. 40-1-9.

(a) *Gardens*.—Practically there are none, though tobacco is grown in patches. Each house is not, as is generally the case in other parts of Assam, surrounded with a plot of fenced-in land growing vegetables, betel-palms, and fruit-trees. There is no division here between the grounds of one house and those of another, the houses being dotted about irregularly all over the basti area mentioned above. There were no betel-palms and only a few fruit-trees, such as plantains and papitas. There were one or two small patches of sugarcane.

(b) *Fields*.—The rupit area of bighas 45-3-4 was said by the people to have yielded 1,400† puras of sali or late rice paddy. One pura=10 seers, so this is equal to 350 maunds. The yield was said by the people to be 7 maunds paddy a bigha. This is equivalent to 1,722lbs. per acre, and is probably fairly correct. A part of the rice is used in the manufacture of a fermented liquor, a kind of rice-beer.

3. The houses are all built on posts, high enough above the ground to allow of the cattle

3. Houses.

being kept underneath. This space below is fenced in, to form cattle pens. The posts on which the houses stand are timber, the walls matting and reeds, the floors bamboo. Each house has a sort of platform in front, open to the sky. Behind this and separated from it by only a few posts of bamboo is a sort of antechamber, behind which again are the two living apartments. The antechamber contains the fire, made upon earth spread on the bamboo floor. There is one house for each family, and in addition a building called, in imitation of the Assamese, a "Namghar." This was inhabited by two Phoongyees, whom I found seated on the floor reading when I went in. The Namghar has only two rooms, one used as a place of worship and one as a living apartment.

4. The community owns, I was told, 72 buffaloes and 60 head of bulls, cows, and bullocks.

4. Live stock.

These figures are in round numbers, and probably below the truth. Some of the buffaloes and most of the bullocks are used for ploughing, the former singly and the latter in pairs. The buffaloes are also occasionally killed and eaten. The cattle are also sold as occasion arises for a good bargain, or there is a necessity for money. The increase in the herds is a source of profit. The milk, when there is any, is consumed in the village.

The community also keeps goats, pigs, fowls, ducks, and pigeons, and uses all these animals, as required, for food. A considerable number, especially of pigs, were to be seen in the village.

5. (a). *From land*.—From the waste lands the people obtain most of the wild vegetables

mentioned in Appendix D. Waste lands and Government forests are all around the village. Firewood is obtained for the fetching. The materials required for the building of their houses and the construction of their fences cost nothing beyond the labour of cutting and carrying. Grazing is free, so their cattle cost nothing but the trouble of herding. Their blue dye is obtained from the Rum (*Strobilanthes flaccidifolius*, Rees.) and their green from Bhoom rathi (*Symplocos Spicata*, Roxb.), both of which I found growing close to the village. The wood for their ploughs, the handles of their daos, their looms, boats, &c., is obtainable everywhere. Fish are procured in the Dihing, which flows past the village.

* Figures ascertained from the mauzadar's books.

† Four karas=1 lessa; twenty lessas=1 kottah; 5 kottahs=1 bigha=14,400 square feet, 3.025 bighas=1 acre.

‡ Our statistics give as the average of 1,896 experiments an outturn of 1,512lbs. of paddy per acre. I have taken in this note, to facilitate calculation, 1,500lbs. as the average. The 350 maunds of paddy would give 157 seers of rice per head per annum. The usual allowance per adult is one seer raw rice per diem. There were 32 adults and 28 children in this community. Allowing for children at the breast, it might be assumed that 50 seers of rice would be required daily. Therefore, besides the sali, about 335 maunds of ahu would be needed. To grow this would require about 6½ bighas more land. And the amount of rice required for the fermented liquor has not been considered. Therefore although a good portion of the sali dhan land was probably double cropped, and there was also the faringati land, it is likely that the community bought annually some of its rice or paddy.

(b). *Otherwise than from land*.—The men of the community assist in elephant-catching. The season before last they built two stockades and received Rs. 200 for each. Under the arrangements usually made they get Rs. 120 for each elephant caught. If a herd of ten or more is caught, they get one elephant given to them as well. Last year six men only went from the village to assist in building stockades. They were paid Rs. 80 for their labour and promised Rs. 120 for each elephant caught. Notwithstanding this, and the fact that they caught seven elephants, they only received Rs. 400. There is a tea-garden close by, but the people never go there to work for hire. They sometimes catch fish in the river that flows past the village, and sell the fish to the tea-garden coolies. They never lend money on interest. Tartans are made in the village by the women and often sold. Ornamental bags are also sometimes made and sold. Dogs are not sold, but are sometimes given to Nāgas, who take them away and eat them. They do not grow any kind of silk.

6. The community appears to owe no money at all. I was told that no one was in debt.

6. Debt.

7. It is clear from the above that the people of this village buy rice or paddy during part of the year. They also buy raw sugar, salt, tobacco, English cotton cloths, brass and iron vessels, eri and muga silk cloths, daos from the Singphos, dyes for some of their cloths, cotton thread, iron for their ploughs, silver ornaments for their women, oil for cooking, thread for their fishing-nets, and a few other trifles. They also had bought an elephant for Rs. 460 a couple of years before, but this had been accidentally shot. Clearly the community never experiences any difficulty in obtaining money. Its lands are insufficient for its support, and it does not consider it necessary to extend them, though plenty of waste is available around. Pecuniary pressure is evidently never felt, for two Phoongyies are supported in the village, and although a tea-garden is close at hand no one ever goes to work there. The main sources of revenue are elephant-catching and cattle. The elephant mahal is close at hand, and the work evidently remunerative. Cattle would naturally be found profitable considering the large area of free grazing available. Buffaloes always sell well in Assam, and their milk is a steady source of income where they are kept in any numbers, or in the vicinity of a tea-garden. Besides the above, the people also occasionally sell their tartans, plain cloths, ornamental bags, and fish. The Jaipur bazar lies on the opposite side of the river, and affords an easily accessible market for the sale of anything they care to part with.

EXAMPLE 2.—ALOM, CHUTIYA.

An average specimen of a cultivator in mauza Sissi, in the sadr sub-division of the Lakhimpur district. (Visited 27th January 1888.)

1. Alom Chutiya, son of Lai Dhion, about fifty years old. The family of Alom consists of

1. Family.

himself, his old wife, his married son and this son's wife, two grown up but unmarried sons, two younger sons, and two small grandsons. Therefore, in all two women, four men, and four children. In his homestead also lives his brother, occupying half of it. His brother has his own family, and lives quite separate from Alom.

2. Alom holds the following land in his own name:—

2. Holding and revenue.*

Periodic—

			B.	K.	L.
Basti	...	...	2	4	16
Rupit	...	...	17	0	0
Total	...	...	19	4	16

Annual—

Rupit	...	...	3	2	5
Faringati	...	...	0	1	17
Total	...	...	3	4	2

Revenue—

			Rs.	As.	P.
Periodic	...	...	12	10	0
Local rate	...	...	0	13	0
Total	...	...	13	7	0

Annual

Local rate	...	...	2	5	0
	...	...	0	4	0
Total	...	...	2	9	0

Although the periodic lease is in Alom's name, his brother cultivates half of every field entered in it and pays half the revenue.† The land had belonged to their father, and on his death had

* Figures ascertained from the mauzadar's books.

† Land is ordinarily held on either a periodic or an annual lease in Assam. The former is for ten years and confers a right of transfer. The latter is for one year and gives no right of transfer. This method of dividing ancestral property into annual shares is very common.

been divided between the two brothers field by field. Consequently, the total land held by Alom and the total revenue payable by him is as follows:—

	B.	K.	L.
Basti ...	1	2	8
Rupit ...	11	4	15
Faringati ...	0	1	17
	13	4	0
Revenue and local rate ...	Rs. 9	4	6

(a) *Gardens.*—His garden land, Alom said, contained a good deal of tobacco and two young betel-palms. The former is eaten, not smoked. I was unable to visit the place. The manure obtained from their cattle is used in the garden land for tobacco and any vegetables that may be grown on it. It is never sent to the rice-fields..

(b) *Fields.*—The rupit area was said to be insufficient to supply the whole family with food. This is possibly the case, though if the land is good it would be hardly necessary to buy rice. The area is nearly 4 acres. This would yield certainly 3,000 seers of paddy, or 2,000 seers rice, in the season. There are ten members in the family, and allowing one seer for each per diem there would be a consumption of 3,650 seers of rice in the year. Probably, however, 8 seers a day would be enough, or almost 3,000 seers of rice, or 1,000 seers more, would be required. A considerable quantity of the rupit is no doubt double cropped.* To produce 1,000 seers of early rice a very little over 2 acres would be required, so that if half of Alom's rupit area were sown first with early and then with late-rice, he would have enough for the support of his family. He rarely grows mustard† and still more rarely cane.

3. I was unable to visit this man's homestead.

3. House.

4. Alom owns two cows, two calves, and one pair of plough bullocks. He uses the milk of his cows. Last year he had to borrow a pair of plough bullocks and paid Rs. 15 for the use of them for the season. He has no pigs,‡ or ducks or fowls or pigeons. Now and then he buys pigeons for food, also ducks' eggs.

4. Live stock.

5. (a). *From land.*—The village is an isolated patch of reclaimed land entirely surrounded by forest, consequently firewood and thatching-grass are to be had for the trouble of fetching and also wood for domestic implements. The ordinary jungle vegetables which are eaten with rice are also to be had in any quantity. The trees commonly known as the tepor, the dewar, and the lalong, supply bark, which is chewed in place of betel-nuts.§ A variety of pan is found also in the forest and used instead of cultivated pan. Grazing is to be had free in unlimited quantities. Fish also are plentiful, as streams and pools abound in the mauza.

(b). *Produce otherwise than from his own land.*—Besides supplying them with thatching-grass for their own use, the neighbouring forest affords Alom's sons work by giving them the means of making money at Dibrugarh. This cold weather the sons went away to a Miri village, cut a quantity of thatching-grass in the neighbourhood, hired a boat from the Miris and went to Dibrugarh. They got two rupees per thousand bundles of thatching-grass, each bundle being about six inches in diameter; also the sons got work with a contractor for cutting sleepers required for the railway at Dibrugarh. They get paid four annas for each sleeper.

Another source of revenue is rubber.¶ The sons frequently go on rubber-cutting expeditions and sell their rubber at Rs. 40 to Rs. 50 a maund. They do not grow any kind of silk.

6. Alom stated that he owed Rs. 20 to the Kaya, but he was unable, he said, to say how much exactly he owed.

6. Debts.

7. Alom and his family would require cash to pay his revenue (Rs. 9-4-6 a year). Also to buy salt, cotton thread, mustard oil (occasionally), opium (Alom is an opium-eater to the extent of requiring one anna's worth per diem), sugar (occasionally), cotton cloths (occasionally), brass vessels, eri and muga silk cloths, daos, iron for ploughs, and lime¶ for eating. Also mustard is sometimes bought and pressed** at home.

7. Cash.

* Considering how generally land is double cropped in this sub-division, I think it probable that Alom never requires to buy paddy at all, but that on the contrary he is able to sell some every year. Paddy in this mauza and those around it is the main article with which the people purchase the things they require from the village trader.

† Two and a half acres of early rice would, at 1,313 lbs. paddy per acre, average of 336 experiments, yield 1,094 seers of rice; and four acres of late rice would yield, at 1,500 lbs. paddy per acre, 2,000 lbs. rice. This would be more than enough to give the family eight seers of rice a day for a year.

‡ Mustard is not at all common in this and the neighbouring mauzas, except on the lands near the river.

§ No Hindu or Mahomedan will keep pigs. No Hindu will keep fowls. No Kachari or Rabha or Lalung will use milk. This man, being a Hindu, had neither pigs nor fowls.

¶ It is a curious fact that the betel-palm is rarely seen in the villages of Sissi and Demaji. I was told that it would not grow properly, but the real reason perhaps is that the people are to a certain extent nomadic and shift the sites of their villages bodily. I found that several villages shown on the Revenue Survey map of 1874 no longer existed, and that others had since sprung up.

¶ The traffic in rubber is probably to a certain extent illicit, as the Inner Line, beyond which British subjects are not allowed to go without permits, runs close to this village. It is more than probable that the rubber-cutters go beyond this line and bring rubber surreptitiously from Abor territory.

¶ Lime is prepared from whelk shells picked up on the borders of streams and bils. The shells are burnt by the women of the Dom caste, who moisten the lime with water and sell a small lump for a pice.

** The pressing is very primitive, and illustrates admirably the character of the Assamese. A hole is made in a tree about 1½ feet from the ground. This hole is large enough to admit the end of a heavy wooden bar, about 6 feet long and 3 or 4 inches wide and thick. Beneath the hole is placed a heavy block of wood nearly as high as the bottom of the hole and scored to allow of the flow of oil in one direction. On this block and immediately under the bar are placed two small cane baskets filled with bruised and heated mustard seed. Two or three men then seat themselves on the free end of the bar, and the leverage thus produced crushes out the oil, which exudes from the interstices of the cane baskets and flows over the block of wood into a pan placed below to collect it.

He admitted that he bought no paddy last year, as his fields supplied him with enough. On the contrary, he admitted he paid for his opium and for some other things he bought from the village trader with his paddy.* He was of course unable to tell me what amount of money he required for expenditure during the year. But the following estimate is perhaps near enough to the truth to give a fair idea of the circumstances of the family:—

	Rs.	As.	P.
Revenue	9	4	6
Salt† (about 4 seers a month)	8	0	0
Clothes, at Rs. 10 each for women and Rs. 5 each for men	40	0	0
Cotton thread	8	0	0
Mustard oil	4	0	0
Opium	23	0	0
Sugar	4	0	0
Gosain's fees	8	0	0
Miscellaneous, such as iron for ploughs, daos, &c.	8	0	0
Total	112	4	6

This would necessitate his obtaining ready money in the course of the year to the extent of nearly Rs. 120. Clearly, there would be no difficulty in his obtaining this much. Three maunds of rubber would supply the whole, or 60,000 bundles of thatching-grass, or 420 sleepers.

EXAMPLE 3.—MOHAN, GOHAIN. §

A well-to-do Ahom of Ali Kukria, mauza Demaji, sadr sub-division of district Lakhimpur. (Visited 29th January 1888.)

1. Mohan, Gohain, son of Hud Ram, about 30 years old. The family consists of Mohan himself, his two brothers, and their two wives, therefore, in all, of two women and three men.
2. The holding‡ which is held in partnership by the whole family, consists of the following land:—

2. Holding and revenue.

Periodic—				B.	K.	L.
Basti	...	...	...	2	0	16
Rupit	...	...	...	12	0	15
				Rs.	As.	P.
Revenue	...	...	...	9	12	0
Local rate	...	...	...	0	10	0
Annual—				B.	K.	L.
Faringati	...	...	...	3	3	18
				Rs.	As.	P.
Revenue...	...	...	...	1	14	0
Local rate	...	...	...	0	2	0
Total				B.	K.	L.
Land	...	...	...	18	0	9
				Rs.	As.	P.
Revenue and local rate	...	...	...	12	6	0

(a) *Gardens.*—The basti land consisted of an enclosure well guarded by bamboos. One portion of it was covered by castor-oil plants which had evidently come up self-sown. There were about a dozen small betel-palms, none old enough to bear, also a number of plantains. One enclosure contained some of the vegetables grown by the Assamese, such as laffa, lai, sukha sag, &c. (see Appendix D), another was full of tobacco. The manure from the cowshed was lying outside at the roots of the young betel-palm and plantains. It is never used for the rice lands, as Mohan said it was too much trouble to carry it so far. It is applied to vegetables, tobacco, &c., growing in the homestead land. There was a small patch of cane, grown for gur, close to one of his houses. The homestead had a generally prosperous appearance. It had belonged to his father, and Mohan and his brothers had been born here.

* I went into the trader's shop and had a talk with him. He said that the village people generally paid him for the salt, opium, cotton thread, and cloth, &c., they bought, with either paddy or rice. The former he purchased, he said, at 10 annas a maund and the latter at Rs. 2 a maund. They also sometimes sold him eri cloth. He sells the cloth and rice to the Abors. Sometimes he makes loans to the Assamese, and they pay him by obtaining money for cutting sleepers in the jungle and for rubber.

† The average daily jail allowance in Assam for a labouring Assamese prisoner is—

Rice	...	...	...	10	chattacks.
Dal	...	...	...	1	"
Vegetables	...	...	...	1	"
Animal food	...	...	...	1	"
Oil	...	...	...	1	"
Salt	...	...	...	1	"
Condiments	...	...	...	1	"
Total weight	...	...	...	13½	"

The allowance of salt is equivalent to 7½ chattacks a month, or something less than half a seer.

‡ Figures ascertained from the mauzadar's books.

§ Gohain is the caste appellation of certain families of Ahoms, a tribe of Shan origin.

(b) *Fields*.—The rupit area of Bs. 12-0-15 is equivalent to, say, 4 acres. This, Mohan said, yielded him 200 danguris last year.* Taking Mohan's calculations, he got 50 maunds of paddy, or 34 maunds of rice, from his rupit fields last year. This would have given him nearly 7 maunds of rice for each member of his family for the year, or less than enough, as the amount consumed, he said, was five seers a day. Then he had his faringati land of more than an acre, from which he got ahu, or early rice, last season. He never grows mustard. He was unable to say how much ahu he had got. But it was clear from his own statement that he gets enough rice for all his wants.†

Then, again, there is the double-cropped land, the extent of which Mohan was unwilling or unable to mention. In this mauza, as already explained, there is a good deal of double-cropped land. Altogether, therefore, it is very clear that this family has a considerable amount of rice or paddy annually to dispose of.

3. The houses are all large and substantial, though built, as usual, of reeds plastered with mud. The Borghar, or family living house, is a roomy structure. There is a separate hut close to it, partly occupied by the dheki, or rice-husker. The Bhoral, or granary, is filled with danguris of paddy. It is a very capacious hut. There is a separate shed for the loom,‡ and a large cowshed near the Bhoral.

4. Mohan has one pair of plough-bullocks, three cows, one young bull, and two calves. He has also one bull and one cow too old for work or breeding. He has no buffaloes or goats or ducks, and of course no pigs or fowls. He has a few pigeons. When he wants an additional pair of plough bullocks, he borrows from his friends. He borrowed a pair last year towards the end of the season. He did not pay anything for the loan.

5. (a) *From land*.—The village is situated in the middle of forests and open wastes. There is a wide stretch of water, called the Kania bil, close by, from which fish are obtained. Firewood and building materials, as well as wood for household and agricultural implements, are obtained free, and there is an unlimited supply of grazing.

(b) *Otherwise than from land*.—Mohan would not admit that he had any sources of income other than his land. He said he did not work anywhere for hire, and that none of his family did. He admitted he went to Dibrugarh two years ago to sell thatching grass, but said he had not gone since. He pays for everything he buys in rice or paddy. He grows eri, and has the cloth made by the women of his household.

6. He is not in debt to any one, nor is any member of his family in debt.

7. Mohan admitted that he required not less than about Rs. 100 a year in cash. One of his brothers is an opium-eater and requires 8 annas worth a week, or Rs. 26 a year. The family uses about two seers of salt in the month, which

at six seers for the rupee, the price in January 1888, comes to 5 annas 4 pies and amounts to Rs. 4 in the year. Mohan's estimate for clothing for the family for the year was Rs. 50.‡ Very little mustard oil is bought, as it is not generally used, except when guests come. Similarly, a few betel-nuts and lime are then bought, not otherwise. The revenue is Rs. 12-6, so the total comes to Rs. 92-6. Adding Rs. 17-10 for miscellaneous items, such as iron for ploughs, daos, brass vessels, &c., we get Rs. 110, which is possibly near the truth. The question is, how does Mohan get this sum? We have seen that his sal and ahu land would yield about 62½ maunds of rice. This would leave him a balance of nearly 17 maunds over and above what his family would consume. This, if sold at Rs. 2 a maund, would bring Rs. 34. To pay off the account in rice Mohan would require 55 maunds; to pay it off in paddy he would need 176 maunds; add 45 maunds rice, or 68 maunds paddy, as the amount required by his household, and we find that he must obtain altogether either 100 maunds rice or 244 maunds paddy. Now, if the whole of his rupit land be double cropped, and the produce added to that of his faringati land, the outturn will be 104 maunds rice or 156 maunds paddy. Consequently, if he sells his rice he would have enough, but if he gives his paddy to the Kaya he would not. It is unlikely, however, that he double crops all his rupit land, and it is unlikely that he husks all his paddy before selling.

On the other hand, it is probable that his land, which is situated in a fertile mauza, and one in which double cropping is very general, yields more than we have estimated, and it is likely that he has sources of income, such as lac, which he would not reveal. It is also probable that the Rs. 50 estimated for clothing for the five members of the family for a year is somewhat high, as cotton and eri cloths are generally made by the people themselves, cotton thread being bought and eri silk being grown. On the whole, therefore, it seems probable that his land supplies him with all he requires, and that he sells the surplus produce and thus provides most of the necessary amount of cash.

* The danguri is the bundle of paddy and stalks made up in the field for convenience of carriage. The reaper takes the stalks in his left hand a little below the ears, and cuts below his hand. When his hand is full, he makes its contents up into a bundle called a muthi (handful). Then the muthis are bound up into japs, and these into danguris. Thus, 8 muthis=1 jap; 5 japs=1 danguri; 2 danguris=1 bhar. The two pointed ends of a pole (hula bari) are driven into a couple of danguris, which are then carried home on the shoulder. Each danguri is supposed to yield one pura of paddy, one pura=3 dhuns, one dhun=about 4 seers paddy. I weighed the contents of a dhun in Dibrugarh and found only 3½ seers of paddy. It is supposed to hold 5 seers of rice, but its contents vary from place to place (cf. page 41). Generally a danguri yields 10 seers of paddy.

† Taking our average figures of 1,500 lbs. paddy per acre for winter rice and 1,300 lbs. for early rice, we find that Mohan must have got 50 maunds of winter and 12½ maunds of early rice. Our figures are below the average for good land, such as Mohan's ancestral rupit most probably is. But even from them it seems that the yield is sufficient to supply the family with more rice than it requires.

‡ The loom is generally placed under one of the projecting eaves of one of the houses, or else in a separate shed with open sides. The four posts forming the main framework, as well as the seat for the weaver and the treadles, are usually permanently fixed. The rest of the structure is daily rolled up and put away, generally in the rice-husking house.

§ This was Mohan's own statement. It is probably somewhat under the mark.

|| This was probably a little high. Respectable women use silk very generally, and an estimate of Rs. 10 a year for a woman's clothes and Rs. 7 a year for a man's, would be rather over than under the mark.

EXAMPLE 4.—BALI BOR, KACHARI.

A typical Kachari of Udalguri in the Mangaldai sub-division of the Darrang district. (Visited 5th February 1888.)

1. Bali Bor Kachari, about 50 years old. His family consists of himself, his son-in-law, his married daughter, a young son (six years old) of this couple, his own son about twelve, and his elder brother's widow. In all two men, two women, and two children.

1. Family.

2. The family holds land in Udalguri and Nowraghor both. The former is in the name of Bhadow, son-in-law, above mentioned, of Bali Bor. The latter is in Bali Bor's own name. Both are held on periodic leases.

Holding and revenue.*

In Udalguri—

Basti ...	...	...	...	...	B. K. L.
Rupit ...	...	...	...	...	3 2 14

In Nowraghor—

Basti ...	...	...	...	...	14 0 11
Rupit ...	...	...	...	...	1 0 4

Revenue—

Bhadow pays Rs. 12-5, with 13 annas as local rate.

Bali Bor „ „ 4-4 „ 4 „ „ „

Bali Bor two months ago abandoned his lands in Nowraghor on the death of his brother there, and came to live with his son-in-law, Bhadow, in Udalguri. The lands in Nowraghor have not been formally relinquished, so revenue will have to be paid for them during the current year. The Nowraghor lands are about 3 or 4 miles from Udalguri.

(a) *Gardens*.—The homestead is only partially fenced all round with twigs. It has 2 or 3 clumps of bamboos at one side, 4 betel-palms, a sau tree (*Albizia stipulata*, L.), a ber tree (*Ziziphus jujuba*, L.), and one or two others. The manure from the cattle-shed is spread out as found convenient on the homestead land, on the roots of the betel palms and amongst the vegetables, a few specimens of which were growing. When more accumulates than is required, it is flung away outside. It is never taken to the rice-fields. It would be too much trouble, Bali Bor said. There was a little castor growing in the homestead, and the eri worm is cultivated.

(b) *Fields*.—Bhadow has no faringati, and does not grow mustard. He has a little over 4½ acres of rupit, which at 1,500 lbs. of paddy to the acre would yield over 58 maunds of rice in the year. Remembering that there are two old people and two children, 5 seers of rice a day may be considered a fair allowance for the family. At this rate, there would be for each person 464 seers in the year, or more than enough, Bali Bor says he eats about 1 seer of rice in the day. Bali Bor also states that he never sows any early rice on his late rice fields, as it would not be worth the trouble. He makes his own modh,† a fermented liquor made from rice.

3. The houses are small, and consist of two living houses, two Bhorals,‡ and one cattle-shed. They are, as usual, built of reeds and plastered with mud, except the cattle-shed, which is open at the sides. There is a loom under the eaves of one house.

3. Houses.

4. The family possesses two pair of plough bullocks, five cows, two calves, some ducks, fowls, two pigs and two goats. The milk of the cows and goats is never drunk, as the people are Kacharis.§ The kids are sold at 4 annas each when young as food and for sacrifices. The family eats ducks, fowls, pigs, goats, pigeons, and fish.

4. Live Stock.

5. (a) *From land*.—Udalguri is surrounded by extensive grassy wastes, which afford admirable grazing. Trees are dotted about these wastes, and firewood is abundant. Thatching-grass and reeds can, of course, be had everywhere for the cutting and carrying. Wood, as material for making ploughs, the different parts of looms, handles of daos, rakes, and other agricultural instruments, is abundant and costs nothing. Cane abounds, and is very largely used instead of cord or rope. Fish are caught in considerable numbers in the neighbouring shallow pools and bils, and form a very favourite and nutritious article of diet. All Kacharis are fish-eaters, and every bil, pond, and even ditch, in the neighbourhood is being constantly exploited, especially by the women and children. The fish thus caught are frequently only small fry; but they form good eating, and, of course, cost nothing but the trouble of catching.

(b) *Otherwise than from land*.—Eri-silk cloth is made at home, and occasionally sold. Bali Bor and Bhadow were both clothed in eri. When money is wanted, one of the two men goes to a neighbouring tea-garden, and works there for a while. He gets four annas a day at the garden, but can earn more by working extra hours. He gets four annas a day for doing Government work on roads.‡ The work is continued until the requisite amount of money is collected. The garden where the men generally go to work is about 8 or 9 miles off.

5. Debts.

6. No member of the family owes anything.

* The figures have been ascertained from the mauzadar's books.

† This is very largely consumed by Kacharis. It is prepared by steeping rice in water for two or three days, after which it is boiled with the addition of certain condiments, and drunk while warm. It is sub-acid in flavour, and not very intoxicating.

‡ The Bhoral, or granary, is a curious feature in an Assamese homestead. It is a structure the size and shape of a small hut, with very projecting eaves, under which the ploughs, hoes, fish-traps, nets, and other implements are kept. The walls are made of reeds carefully plastered with mud, and the floor is always raised about two feet off the ground on upright posts or horizontal logs. Access is had to the interior through a trap-door about 1½ feet square and about 4 feet from the floor, this door being closed by a shutter of wickerwork. In Upper Assam, the paddy is stored as it comes from the field in danguris, and is threshed by the feet of the women as wanted. In Lower Assam the paddy is generally threshed by cattle before being stored. Robberies of Bhorals are very rare, though the structure is quite distinct, and separate from the other houses, and absolutely unprotected.

§ Most Kacharies and Lalungs look on milk as excrement, and refuse to touch it. Udalguri lies at the junction of four Government roads.

7. The family does not make very extensive purchases. It grows more than enough rice for its own consumption, also sufficient vegetables for curry, and betel-nuts for chewing. Eri silk cloths are made by the women, and ploughs, harrows, and other instruments of husbandry by the men. The iron for the plough and the ras (large comb) of the loom are purchased, as well as the hoes and the daos. All fishing traps are made by the men. Two tomtoms, which I found Bali Bor putting in order for a festival, had been made by himself. He was getting two men from a neighbouring village to come and play for him. He would have to supply them with modh; but no other payment was required. No member of the family eats opium. They require cash for the following :—

	Rs.	As.	P.
Revenue	17	10	0
Salt about 2½ seers a month, therefore for year	5	0	0
Tobacco	2	0	0
Sugar	3	0	0
Religious ceremonies	5	0	0
Mustard oil (rarely)	2	0	0
Cotton thread	5	0	0
Clothing	30	0	0
Miscellaneous, e.g., iron for ploughs, daos, dal, ras	5	0	0
	74	10	0

To obtain this amount of cash the family has several sources of revenue. First it has its live stock, some of which is disposed of annually. Then, the men work in tea-gardens, where they can earn from Rs. 7 to Rs. 10 a month. Even at the lower rate, if each man works for five months, they will between them earn almost the total cash expenditure of the family for a year. Thirdly, they have eri silk and can either sell the cocoons or the thread or the cloth. All three are readily purchased at remunerative prices by the Kāyas. Then again if more fish are caught than are required for home consumption, the surplus is sold on market days, and readily purchased by Hindus and tea-garden coolies. Lastly 12 maunds more rice is grown than is required. Altogether there is no difficulty in accounting for the manner in which this family obtains the amount of cash it annually requires.

EXAMPLE 5.—HUDO, KOLITA.

A poor man. I asked to be shown the poorest man in the village of Rampura, and Hudo was produced. (Visited 5th March 1888).

1. Hudo, Kolita, son of Andul, of village Rampura, mauza Rani, in the sadr sub-division of Kāmṛūp. An old greyhaired man almost entirely deaf. Might be 60 years old. His family consists of himself, his wife (an old woman) and his son about 17 years old, three in all.
 1. Family.
2. The holding* consists of one field of bao-dhan (rupit) of B. 1-0-6 in extent. The revenue for this is 11 annas and the local rate 1 anna. This is held on an annual lease. Hudo lives on the homestead of his cousin, where he has a hut.
 2. Holding and revenue.
 - (a) Gardens.—He has none.
 - (b) Fields.—The small area he holds is evidently quite insufficient to supply him, his wife and son with food. Taking the yield of bao-dhan (which is said, when sown broadcast, to be somewhat less profitable than sali) at 700 seers of paddy to the acre, the outturn of Hudo's land may be counted as 233 seers of paddy or 156 seers rice. Assuming the old couple to consume 1½ seers a day, their bao dhan would only last them for about 3½ months. The son does not live with his father.
3. The old couple live in a small reed and thatch hut, next to which, and with a continuous roof, is a small shed with open front for the cattle. The hut and shed together occupy about 10 × 4 yards of ground. The hut has only one room. It was occupied when I saw it by Hudo's wife, a very feeble, greyhaired old woman. The premises are on the homestead of Hudo's father's brother's son, Bhogjur, to whom Hudo says he pays a proportionate amount of rent for the amount of ground he occupies. This is unlikely, Bhogjur's basti land is in all Bs. 6-0-8.
 3. Houses.
4. Hudo still owns two young bullocks and one full-grown bullock. These are relics from better days. He has no plough-cattle nor goats nor ducks nor pigeons. Being a Hindu, he has no fowls or pigs.
 4. Live stock.
5. (a) From land.—Hudo gathers firewood anywhere he can about the waste lands around, and he finds dried twigs in the village. Also he gets grazing for his cattle free, and plucks wild vegetables for curry. He is too old to catch fish.
 5. Produce otherwise than from his own land.
 - (b) Otherwise than from land.—Hudo's main source of income he says is odd jobs and begging. He can work still at making ropes and repairing houses, fastening the reeds with cane and putting on thatch, &c. He is paid for these odd jobs by being given fish, vegetables, salt, and oil. His son Komaru is a servant of Lohar, formerly a mandal of this village. Komaru lives in Lohar's house. Lohar gives him food, clothing, 2 bighas of faringati land and Re. 1-8 a year in cash. Komaru also has the use of a pair of Lohar's bullocks for ploughing the 2 bighas of faringati land he cultivates himself, and for ploughing his father's land. For these emoluments and privileges he cultivates Lohar's land, looks after his cattle, and acts as his servant in all matters connected with the crops. Komaru grows ahu and would get, therefore, about 450 seers of paddy from his two bighas. This would be equivalent to nearly 300 seers of rice. He gives all the rice produced to his father and mother, who have thus 456 seers about in the year or nearly enough for their support. The revenue for Hudo's land is paid out of the Re. 1-8 a year which Komaru earns. The old wife was formerly able to make clothes for her husband, but she is too feeble to do so now. They have enough clothes to last them some time longer.

* Figures ascertained from the mandal's books.

6. Hudo says he owes Re. 1-8, no more.
7. It is clear that Hudo and his wife live on their son's earnings, supplemented by charity. Hudo no doubt makes a little by doing odd jobs, but it is improbable that he receives cash for these services. He cannot require very much in the year. Probably the following estimate is over the mark :—

	Rs.	As.	P.
Revenue	0	12	0
Salt, about one seer a month	2	0	0
Miscellaneous	2	0	0
	4	12	0

Hudo gets his revenue paid by his son, and could no doubt earn the equivalent of Rs. 4 in the year. In a well-to-do village like Rampura, full of comfortably-off Kolitas, there is no chance of an old couple like this, whose wants are few, finding any difficulty in living.

EXAMPLE 6.—TOKURU, KOLITA.

A curious instance of voluntary slavery. The poorest man in the village of Balasidhi, except one, who is said to subsist entirely by begging. I asked to see the poorest, and Tokuru and the beggar were brought forward. (Visited 6th March 1888).

1. Tokuru, son of Agoni, Kolita, of Balasidhi, mauza Choygaon, sadr sub-division of Kāmṛūp. About 25 years old, appears robust and in good health, but apathetic. The family consists of Tokuru himself and his mother, also of a brother, Boga, who shares his meals with the family, though he does not sleep on the premises. Tokuru has another brother, who works as a servant in the Tahsildar's house, where he lives.
 1. Family.
2. Tokuru holds* in his own name, with his two brothers as sharers, 2 rupit fields amounting to Bs. 2-3-16. He has no basti or faringati. The revenue is Re. 1-12, and the local rate annas 2. Revenue and local rate are paid by the three brothers conjointly.
 2. Holding and revenue.
 - (a) Gardens.—Tokuru and his mother live in a hut in Pania's homestead. Pania is brother of Tokuru's mother. No doubt Tokuru and his mother are allowed to use some of the vegetables, plantains, and betel-nuts growing on Pania's homestead land. Also one dheki serves the purposes of both families. Tokuru pays 4 annas a year to Pania for the share of basti land he occupies. The homestead is irregularly fenced in, and contains four betel trees, many plantains, a lot of castor plants, a pomegranate, some tobacco, and a ridge of bamboos. A white lao was climbing over Tokuru's house.
 - (b) Fields.—The annual produce from Tokuru's small piece of winter rice land cannot much exceed 1,380 lbs. of paddy, or 460 seers of rice. At 3 seers a day (for Boga shares his meals with his mother and brother) this would only last the family for about five months. Even if double cropped it would only yield 862 seers altogether, or enough for about nine months. But double cropping is not common in this part of Kāmṛūp, and Tokuru appeared too apathetic to attempt the additional labour that double cropping would involve. Consequently, it is unlikely he gets more than four or five hundred seers of rice annually from his rupit land.
3. Tokuru's hut is a small one with two rooms, built of reeds and thatch and freshly plastered with mud. Like most Assamese huts, it stands on a plinth of hardened clay about 1½ feet thick. Under the same roof as the hut, but separated from it by an open space containing fishing utensils, a plough, &c., is a small granary. Pania has a similar hut at right angles to Tokuru's. The only other building on the premises is a cattle-shed, one end of which is enclosed altogether and contains the dheki.
 3. Houses.
4. Tokuru has one pair of old feeble plough bullocks. They are not able to plough more than his small area of rupit. He has no other cattle. He has one female goat and two kids, one pair of ducks, and some pigeons.
 4. Live stock.
5. (a) From land.—Grasing, as usual, costs nothing, nor does firewood, building materials, or thatching-grass. There is plenty of waste land close to the village, and fish to be caught in numberless pools and streams.
 5. Produce otherwise than from his own land.
 - (b) Otherwise than from land.—There is plenty of work to be had on Government roads in the neighbourhood, and two tea-gardens are close by, where labour is always in demand. Tokuru is, however, too lazy to work in the tea-gardens and only rarely earns anything on Government roads. During the rice season, he cuts paddy for hire, getting as his wages food for the day and two dhuns paddy.†
6. Tokuru's two brothers have practically sold themselves into a species of slavery, under the following circumstances:—Tokuru's father left behind him at his death, about 7 or 8 years ago, three bonds proving debts amounting in all to about Rs. 100. Tokuru could not give me the exact figure. Tokuru about a year ago, with his brother Boga, borrowed from a Kaya, Giridhar, of the neighbouring village of Choygaon, Rs. 100 to pay off these bonds. A stamped bond was drawn out, and it was stipulated that in exchange for the loan Boga was to become Giridhar's cartman and general servant until the loan was paid up. In return for Boga's services Giridhar was to deduct Rs. 12 a year from the amount of the loan, and to charge no interest. Boga was to feed and clothe himself. He lives at the Kaya's, but goes home daily for his food. Both Tokuru's and Boga's names were attached to this bond.

* Figures ascertained from the mandal's books.

† I weighed the paddy in a Choygaon dhun and found that the contents of one dhun were five seers and one handful. The dhun is a basket commonly used all over the valley for measuring rice. It is so made that a straw running from the edge down the side, across the bottom and up to the opposite edge will measure from 20 to 22 fingers. For measurement the fingers are placed closed together, and four fingers are the width of the hand. The dhun is made to hold as much as possible consistent with this measurement. Kayas buy paddy and rice in dhuns and sell by weight. The 20 finger dhun is considered the correct standard one. The paddy is poured in and heaped up till the dhun will hold no more.

The other brother, Kola, had made a somewhat similar arrangement with the tahsildar. About two months before, in Mágh,* Tokuru borrowed Rs. 40 from the tahsildar, entering into a bond together with his brother Kola. Kola was to become the tahsildar's servant until the loan was paid up. He was to carry the tahsildar's things when so required, to look after the cattle, to bring water, wash dishes. He was to receive in return, food and clothes, and to have Rs. 6 a year deducted from the amount of the debt. No interest was to be charged on the loan. The money was borrowed, Tokuru said, to provide some necessities for himself, his mother, and his brother Boga. The following articles were bought for the Rs. 40 :—

	Rs.	As.	P.
Borkapors (thick cloths), three at Rs. 4 ...	12	0	0
Meklas (petticoats), three at Re. 1-8 ...	4	8	0
Gatla (cotton shawl), one at 8 annas ...	0	8	0
Dollia (shawl), one at 12 annas ...	0	12	0
Pagri, red and flowered one, As. 8 ...	0	8	0
" " " " " 7 ...	0	7	0
Gamcha (used as a dhoti) " 12 ...	0	12	0
" " " " " 10 ...	0	10	0
To native doctor when the mother was ill for 1½ months ...	3	0	0
Oil, salt, betel-nut, tobacco ...	3	0	0
Revenue ...	1	14	0
Paddy, 32 dhuns (four maunds) ...	2	0	0
Owed formerly for paddy ...	12	0	0
	41	15	0

These were the items as given to me, but Tokuru may have forgotten some of the details, or may have had Re. 1-15-0 to add to the loan. A stamped bond was prepared for this loan of Rs. 40, and Tokuru's name entered with Kola's in it. Tokuru does not know how his father got into debt, but says he was an opium-eater.

7. The land of the family is insufficient to supply them with rice. Tokuru is an opium-eater, and must obtain cash in some way. He has to buy salt, oil, and clothes. He grows no silk, not even eri. His mother is no longer able to weave. We have seen how by going in debt† he supplied himself, his mother, and brother with clothing and laid in a stock of paddy. He probably also bought opium, though he would not admit the fact. He was evidently provided with necessities for some time to come. When asked how he would obtain a fresh supply, he said that he would borrow more, and could always arrange to go himself as somebody's servant. Also he could cut paddy and get a living in that way. The cash requirements of the family of three might be roughly estimated as follows :—

	Rs.	As.	P.
Revenue ...	2	2	0
Salt, 1½ seers a month ...	3	0	0
Opium, ½ annas worth daily ...	17	0	0
Oil (occasionally) ...	2	0	0
Clothing at Rs. 5 for the men and Rs. 10 for the women ...	20	0	0
Tobacco ...	2	0	0
Miscellaneous (daos, plough iron, &c.), ...	3	0	0
Total ...	49	2	0

Besides this, he would require about 1,095 seers rice in the year. His land probably only yields him 460 seers. Therefore, he must buy 635 seers of rice, or 952 seers (=24 maunds) paddy. He states he bought four maunds for two rupees. If so (the price is rather low) he would get his 24 maunds for Rs. 12. This, added to his expenditure above, would make the cash required amount to Rs. 60 in round numbers. To obtain this amount, there is first of all the Rs. 18 a year which his brothers receive. It is perfectly possible for them to obtain the amount in cash if they wish it, instead of having it deducted from the total debt. Then there is work on the neighbouring tea-gardens, where Tokuru could earn from Rs. 7 to Rs. 10 a month. Similarly, there is road work, the rate for which is four annas a day, or Rs. 7-8 a month. Six months in a tea-garden or 8 months on the roads would give him the whole amount he required. Of course, on the roads he could not get work for eight months, but he could for four or five, certainly, and he could eke out the rest of the time in a tea-garden. When asked how he proposed to live when his present store was exhausted, he said he would borrow more, and that he could, if necessary, arrange to go as some one's servant.

* January 15th to February 15th.

† In connection with this matter the following remarks of the tahsildar are of interest :—
"Tokuru is an opium-eater whenever he can get hold of any money. He is a lazy and good-for-nothing fellow, does not care to work. If he did, there is plenty of work to be had on the roads and in the two neighbouring tea-gardens. The rate for road work is Rs. 7-8 a month. My servant Kola will probably ask me at the end of the year to give him the Rs. 6 promised instead of allowing it to be deducted from his debt. If he does I shall give him the cash. It pays me to make the arrangement, for if I had not advanced the Rs. 40, I should have been obliged to get a servant who would, besides his food and clothing, have cost me at least Rs. 12 a month. So that by making the advance, I gave Rs. 18 a year, but lose the interest on Rs. 40. Similarly the Kaya, Girihar, would have to pay a servant at least Rs. 7 a month to look after his cattle and cart. He also will probably be asked to give the annual twelve rupees in cash, instead of taking it against the debt, and he will be sure to agree. He saves Rs. 72 in the year but loses the interest on his Rs. 100. Paddy and rice are rarely sold in this neighbourhood, but there is a considerable traffic in jungle cocoons, which are brought from Nowgong, spun into thread here and sold. Practically, the Kaya, if he paid Bhoga Rs. 12 a year, was getting 72 per cent. per annum on his loan. The tahsildar in a similar way was clearing 45 per cent. per annum on his loan."

EXAMPLE 7.—HADI, RABHA.

A poor Rabha of Koliabari, mauza Luki, sadr sub-division of Kámrúp. I had asked for a few of the poorest men in the village, and Hadi was amongst those produced. The man was in excellent condition. (Visited 8th March 1888.)

1. Hadi, son of Rina, Rabha of Koliabari. The family consists of three, Hadi, his wife, and their son, a boy of about 12. But the son does not live with his parents.

2. Hadi holds land in two villages*—

2. Holding and revenue.

In Koliabari.

	B. K. L.
Basti ...	2 1 4
Rupit ...	4 0 12

The revenue payable is Rs. 4-13-0, with 5 annas local rate.

(a) Gardens.—I was unable to visit this man's homestead.

(b) Fields.—The rupit area is capable of yielding 2,046 lbs. paddy, or 682 seers of rice. This is almost enough for Hadi and his wife. If a very small area were double cropped, the land would yield quite enough. But, as a matter of fact, the land lay fallow last season, as Hadi had no cattle to cultivate it with. Nor did he succeed in letting it out to any one on any terms. The season before he had made an arrangement with one Tengor to cultivate the land. Tengor was to give him half the produce, on condition he paid the rent.

3. I could not go to Hadi's homestead.

4. Houses.

4. Hadi has no cattle at all. He has two ducks, one hen, no pigs or pigeons. He is keeping one goat for a friend on condition of having one of the kids. The friend will take back the goat and one kid, when the young ones are

old enough.

(a) From land.—Hadi gets little but firewood, building materials, and odd vegetables from the waste lands about the village. He has no cattle to benefit by the grazing. Fish, however, are as usual to be had everywhere for the catching.

(b) Otherwise than from land.—Having no crops and no cattle, Hadi and his wife earn their living by odd jobs. The wife works at planting winter rice, at tying up paddy and cutting it, she also does odd household jobs, such as clearing the house, cattle-shed, &c., for Sukuna, a former mandal of this village. Hadi also works for hire in this way, doing odd jobs. He cuts building materials in the jungle and repairs houses; he carries loads when required; works on the earthwork of roads, &c., &c. His own words convey perhaps the best idea of his desultory kind of life. "The day before yesterday I carried a load for Sukuna to Batakuchi (about 4 miles away) and returned. I got enough rice for a meal, about ½ seer, also some salt and baingans, and two dhuns (about 10 seers) paddy. I ate the rice and baingans and salt when I went home. The same day my wife had been out doing odd jobs, and had brought home some rice too. Yesterday I put up a machant in the house of the post-office peon. He gave me four pice for the job, and half a day's food in rice. I ate this rice to-day at my midday meal. Yesterday, the rice we ate was made from the paddy Sukuna had given me. To-day I was working all day repairing a house for the village Kaya. The job is not yet done. When I am going home the Kaya will give me enough rice for a meal. It is not settled yet what I am to get for the repairs to the Kaya's house."

Hadi cultivates eri worms. He sells the empty cocoons at the market at 80 for one pice.† The chrysalis is always extracted before sale and eaten. It is a favourite article of food with Kacharis, Lalungs, Rabhas, and other non-Hindu tribes.

6. Hadi owes Sukuna Rs. 22. The debt was originally Rs. 30 and was recorded on stamped paper. It was incurred about 10 years ago and only Rs. 8 has been paid off.‡ At first the arrangement was that Hadi was to give the mandal 5 dhuns of paddy each year for each rupee in the debt. But for the last three years Hadi's son has been minding the mandal's cattle and doing odd jobs for him, and so the interest was let off, and the mandal agreed to pay the boy Rs. 4 a year. Now that the boy is older Sukuna is to pay Rs. 5 a year as well as give up interest. The boy will have been three years in the mandal's service next Baisák. Sukuna deducted Rs. 4 for each of the first two years. This year he paid Hadi's revenue for him instead of making any deduction from the debt. Hadi's son lives at the mandal's house, and is supplied with food and clothing. Besides minding the cattle he cuts firewood and does odd jobs.

7. Hadi and his wife apparently rarely see cash. The arrangement made with Sukuna enables them to get their revenue paid. They are paid for their services with rice, salt, vegetables, &c. They are probably paid with opium too, as both are opium-eaters, though Hadi was loth to acknowledge the fact. They are sometimes of course paid in coin, and they get coin for the eri cocoons and perhaps thread, which they sell. A

* Figures ascertained from the mandal's books

† Sleeping-place formed by a shelf made of bamboos.

‡ This shows the large profit the Kaya sometimes make. At 80 for one pice the rate is Rs. 25 a maund, for about 3,200 go to a seer. This rate in Gauhati is from Rs. 60 to Rs. 100 a maund, and in Calcutta considerably over Rs. 100 a maund.

§ Taking 10 annas a maund as the average price paid for paddy by a Kaya to a villager and 5 seers as the equivalent of a dhun, we find that the mandal received as interest 6½ annas per annum for each rupee, or roughly 59 per cent. The usual rate of interest is 1 anna per mensem for each rupee, or 75 per cent. per annum.

| April 12 to May 12.

rough estimate of the value of their services may be made by seeing what amount of cash they would require to spend in the year, supposing they obtained their income solely in coin:—

	Rs.	A.	P.
Revenue	...	5	2 0
Opium at 1½ anna a day for both	...	34	4 0*
Salt about 1 seer a month	...	2	0 0
Oil (occasionally)	...	1	0 0
Clothing { Rs. 5 for man " 10 for woman }	...	15	0 0
Sugar	...	2	0 0
Cotton thread	...	2	0 0
Tobacco...	...	1	0 0
Miscellaneous (daos, &c.)	...	2	0 0
Paddy, a little over 27 maunds	...	17	0 0†
Total	...	81	6 0

If Hadi worked regularly at Rs. 7 a month at a tea-garden he could earn this sum. If he chose to do extra work he could earn more. Apparently he prefers the hand-to-mouth system on which he lives, for he could easily get work at a tea-garden if he cared to have it.

EXAMPLE 8.—DHONRAI, LALUNG.

A fairly well-to-do Lalung of Nokla, in district Nowgong. (Visited 14th March 1888.)

1. Dhonrai, son of Khoramura, Lalung of Nokla, aged about 35 years. The family consists of the following members:—

1. Family.

Gaidhar, Lalung, married to Dhonrai's sister. The sister.
Three boys from 8 to 12, and one girl about 5, the children of the above two.
Bur Singh, brother of Dhonrai.

These seven, one woman, two men, and four children live on Dhonrai's homestead land. But Dhonrai himself, his wife and two children live in another much smaller homestead, about half a mile away. In this other basti, Dhonrai is known by the name of Dhonkona, and, so recorded in the mauzadar's books. He explained that he was not present when his name was first recorded in the mauzadar's books, and that a friend entered him as Dhonkona, and he did not think it worth while to have the name changed!

2. In Dhonrai's name the following land is held on periodic lease:—

2. Holding and Revenue.

	B.	K.	L.	K.
Basti	...	0	3	7 2
Rupit	...	5	3	2 2
Faringati	...	0	3	18 3
		Rs.	As.	P.
Revenue	...	4	9	0
Local rate	...	0	5	0
In Gaidhar's name the following land is held on annual lease:—				
Rupit	...	2	3	17 2
		Rs.	As.	P.
Revenue	...	1	12	0
Local rate	...	0	2	0
In Dhonkona's name the following land is held on annual lease:—				
Basti	...	0	3	7 3
Rupit	...	6	3	1 1
		Rs.	As.	P.
Revenue	...	4	13	2
Local rate	...	0	5	0
The total holding of the whole family is given below, with revenue and local rate:—				
Basti	...	1	1	15 1
Rupit	...	15	0	1 1
Faringati	...	0	3	18 3
Total	...	17	0	15 1

Rs. As. P.

Revenue	...	11	2	2
Local rate	...	0	12	0

(a) *Gardens.*—The basti land occupied by Gaidhar, his wife and children, and Bur Singh, is in Dhonrai's lease. It is the old home of Dhonrai's father, and descended to him and Bur Singh and their sister. According to Lalung custom, when Gaidhar married Dhonrai's sister, he came to live in his wife's house, and all his children were born there. Similarly when Dhonrai married his present wife, about five years ago, he left his paternal home and went to live in his wife's house. After

* This is probably excessive, as the pair could not afford to eat 1½ annas worth a day.

† This is the price at which generally sold to Kayas in this neighbourhood.

‡ Figures ascertained from the mandal's books.

a time Gaidhar may go back to his old basti, and Dhonrai may come back to Bur Singh. Dhonrai's basti as entered in the lease consists only of the land occupied by the houses in which Bur Singh and Gaidhar live. But the piece of faringati shown in the same lease is really a piece of basti too. One continuous bamboo fencing surrounds both plots. A portion of the plot called faringati grew rice seedlings last year. It contains plantains and bamboos, but not many. The other half is almost entirely occupied by houses, but has 11 betel-palms, 4 or 5 heavy clumps of bamboo, some jack-fruit trees, guavas, plantains, and mangos, also a well. There were, strange to say, no vegetables at all. The manure from the cowshed is apparently not used on the basti land, except very sparingly, for I saw a considerable quantity lying outside flung away on a piece of waste land.

The basti occupied by Dhonrai, and entered in the name of Dhonkona, contains, besides, a couple of houses, a san tree, a few plantains, a couple of clumps of bamboos, and an open space on which last year a variety of Indian-corn was grown.

(b) *Fields.*—It was difficult to ascertain to what extent Dhonrai shares the produce of the land entered in his name, with Gaidhar and his brother and sister. Similarly, it was not quite clear how far Gaidhar and his household shares the produce of the land entered in Dhonkona's lease. On the whole, however, I gathered that the two families shares pretty evenly according to their necessities the produce of the whole land entered in all their names. Taking this view, there were evidently five adults and six children to be daily fed, two of the latter being very small. Probably 9 seers of rice would be daily required. This would mean an annual supply of 123 maunds of paddy. But the 15 bighas of rupit would yield but 94 maunds of paddy, or $\frac{2}{3}$ of the required amount. If, however, two out of the five acres were sown with early rice before the winter crop were put down, the outturn would be sufficient for the whole family.*

3. A diagram on the scale of 20 feet to the inch of the basti area occupied by Gaidhar and Bur Singh is given on the opposite page. It will be seen that there are five houses:—

2. Houses.

- (1) The one occupied by Gaidhar, his wife and children.
- (2) The one occupied by Bur Singh and in which the dheki is kept.
- (3) The cattle-shed with projecting eaves at one end to cover the loom.
- (4) A shed without walls for keeping the firewood dry.
- (5) A similar shed for keeping the thatching-grass in.

No. (1) and (2) stand on plinths of hardened mud about 1½ feet above the level of the ground outside. Both these houses, as well as the cattle-shed, have deep projecting eaves. The walls of No. (1) are plastered with mud. There are no machans (platforms of bamboo) in the houses, as Lalungs are said to sleep on the ground, using rice straw as bedding. No. (4) is well stocked with firewood and No. (5) with thatching-grass. A number of fishing baskets and traps were hung up to the houses under the eaves, in different places. The most marked point was the absence of a granary. The family said it never had enough grain to store, but this was an obvious lie, as every member was in good condition and the custom of storing paddy is universal in Assam. The fact probably is that Dhonrai's granary in the basti he holds under the name of Dhonkona is used by both families. This granary was well stocked with paddy when I saw it. Also Gaidhar had some paddy stored in large cylindrical baskets plastered with mud. Another curious thing about Gaidhar's homestead is the well. Water is generally procured by the Assamese from rivers and pools. They rarely dig wells. In Gaidhar's well the water was 12 feet from the surface and about 15 inches deep. Live fish were in it, purposely put in, as they tend, the people said, to keep the water good. The water was extremely muddy in appearance. Dhonrai himself has 3 houses on his piece of separate basti:—

- (1) The one occupied by himself, his wife and 2 children. This is on a mud plinth and the walls are plastered with mud. There are deep eaves at one end for sheltering the loom.
- (2) One house for husking rice, containing the dheki, and also a lot of thatch and wood.
- (3) One Bhoral or granary. This is 5' 3" × 4' 0" × 5' 11". The height of the bottom of the door is 4' 0" and the paddy, ready threshed, filled it to within 4 inches of this door.†

4. Dhonrai himself has no cattle. He said he borrowed a pair of bullocks, last year, on condition of ploughing up the lender's land in exchange for the loan. He has no ducks or goats or pigs or pigeons. He has a few fowls. Gaidhar and Bur Singh have two plough bullocks and two cows, one of the latter has a calf. But the milk is all given to the calf, as the Lalungs do not use milk.‡ There is also one sow and six young ones. No ducks, no pigeons. About ten or twelve fowls and several chickens.

5. (a) *From land.*—Firewood, grazing, and building materials are to be had in abundance every where. Fish are also to be obtained in fair quantities, as there are number of small pools in the neighbourhood, and the Lalungs are, like the Kacharis, very expert in their use of fish-traps.

(b) *Otherwise than from land.* All three, Gaidhar, Dhonrai, and Bur Singh, work occasionally on the roads. The regular rate is 4 annas a day. They also work in tea-gardens§ in the neighbourhood. They also do work as coolies, carrying loads, &c. The regular rate is 4 annas a day. At the tea-

* The question of double cropping, however, is one about which definite information is very hard to obtain in the valley of Assam. The mandal generally omits to record the second crop, and the owner of the field almost invariably denies that he has cultivated it twice.

† This is equivalent to 113.89 cubic feet of paddy, say 114 cubic feet, and at 1 cubic foot 37.293 lbs., the weight of grain would have been nearly 52 maunds. But 66 3/4 k. 11. would only yield 41 maunds, therefore either the yield is greater than I have estimated, or some of the paddy from Dhonrai's ancestral land is kept in this Bhoral. (I found in one experiment that the paddy contained by a box the interior of which was 1,262½ cubic inches, weighed 97½ lbs. Therefore the weight of 1 cubic foot would be 37.293 lbs.; similarly I found that the weight of a cubic foot of rice was 46.5516 lbs.)

‡ Like the Kacharis, they regard it as excrement.

§ There are some European gardens near Nally, about 9 miles from Nokla.

gardens the pay is Rs. 6 a month. Last year Bur Singh worked as a coolie, carrying things about for a merchant for about a month. He got 4 annas a day. None of the three men worked on roads last year. Bur Singh was at a garden also for a month. They sell pigs and fowls and goats and pigeons and ducks when they have them to spare, and when in want of money. They will get Rs. 3 for a grown sow and Rs. 5 or Rs. 6 for a grown boar. They have no Sum or Sualu trees, and never grow the muga worm. They also never cultivate the eri.

6. Only one member of the family is in debt, viz., Dhoprai, who says he borrowed Rs. 6 at 1 anna per rupee per month from Ahina Koch of Bamungaon, to enable him to pay his revenue. No bond was drawn up.

7. The amount of cash required by the family might be roughly estimated as follows:—

	Rs.	A.	P.
Revenue	11	14	2
Salt, about 4½ seers a month	9	0	0
Tobacco	3	0	0
Clothes at Rs. 10 for the women and Rs. 5 each for the men	35	0	0
Sugar	2	0	0
Oil (rarely)	3	0	0
Cotton thread	5	0	0
Religious ceremonies	5	0	0
Miscellaneous (iron for ploughs, daos, &c.)	5	0	0
Total	78	14	2

This is most likely more than is required, as the clothing item is probably too high. Lalungs do not indulge in the same amount or quality of clothing that other Assamese appear to require. However that may be, the means of obtaining this amount of money annually is well within the reach of the family. On most gardens a coolie can earn Rs. 10 a month by working extra hours, so that if each of the three men had worked for a little over 2½ months they would between them have earned almost enough. But according to their own account only two months' work was done during the previous year; consequently, it is not easy to ascertain where they obtained the cash they required. Their live-stock helped them no doubt to a certain extent. They also very probably sold fish in the weekly Nokla market. Then, again, it is probable that, with their constant introduction of fish and flesh into their diet, they did not require for their use an average of nine seers of rice a day. Bur Singh said they used only one dhun, or about five seers, of rice a day for his household. This would give for the seven members of the family living with Bur Singh an average of 11½ chattacks each, a possibly fair allowance, when we remember that the jail ration, which is not supposed to be a full meal, is only 10 chattacks per diem. Similarly, Bur Singh said that his household bought each week four pice worth of salt in the market, and received 10* tolas less than half a seer, for the sum. This is 1½ seers a month for seven persons, an almost incredibly low amount, considering that the jail allowance is almost half a seer per head per month. However, khār-water† is largely used, and is to a certain extent a substitute for salt. So that my estimate of 4½ seers a month for the eleven members of the family is probably a little high.

EXAMPLE 9.—KOLA RAM, GONOK.‡

A very well-to-do Gonok of Bokagaon, near Dharmtul, in Nowgong. It should be noted that the information entered below was elicited with the greatest difficulty. The answer to almost every question was given with unwillingness and after delay, and it was clear that the members of the family questioned were considering each question, not with a view to giving a correct answer, but with the object of ascertaining what was the most expedient reply to make. This is a very typical case, and admirably illustrates the general prosperity which prevails amongst the cultivators of the Brahmaputra Valley. (Visited 15th March 1888.)

1. Kola Ram, Gonok, son of Kisto Ram, a small old man, about 55 or 60, in perfect possession of all his faculties. The family consists of Kola, his adopted son Rangai (a Koch), Rangai's wife, their four sons, and one daughter. One of these sons, Manpur, is married, and he and his wife live with the family; but he has no children. One son and the daughter are children. The total, therefore, consists of two women, five men, and two children.

* This is quite right. At 6 seers of salt for the rupee Bur Singh should get 30 tolas of salt for 4 pice, which what he says he got.

† See page 8.

‡ A Gonok is a kind of Brahmin of inferior type. Gonoks in Assam, however, enjoy much more honour than in Bengal.

2. The following land* is held by the family in different villages:—

a. Holding and revenue.

				B.	K.	L.	K.
(1) In Kola's name—				1	4	17	1
Periodic—				1	3	10	2
Basti	...	...	...	Rs. A. P.			
Faringati	...	...	...	2	13	0	
Revenue	...	...	...	0	3	0	
Local rate	...	...	...				
(2) In Rangai's name—				2	3	6	3
Periodic—				Rs. A. P.			
Faringati	...	...	...	1	6	0	
Revenue	...	...	...	0	1	0	
Local rate	...	...	...				
(3) In Manpur's name—				3	1	13	0
Periodic—				Rs. A. P.			
Faringati	...	...	...	1	11	0	
Revenue	...	...	...	0	2	0	
Local rate	...	...	...				

Besides this, Rangai holds about Bs. 4 of newly-broken-up land, on which he grew mustard this season, and for which he has received no lease as yet.

				B.	K.	L.	K.
(3) In Manpur's name—				11	1	15	2
Periodic—				9	1	2	1
Rupit	...	...	...	Rs. A. P.			
Faringati	...	...	...	11	11	0	
Revenue	...	...	...	0	12	0	
Local rate	...	...	...				
Annual—				6	2	2	3
Rupit	...	...	...	6	0	14	1
Faringati	...	...	...	Rs. A. P.			
Revenue	...	...	...	7	2	0	
Local rate	...	...	...	0	7	0	

Also Kola is in occupation of part of the land held in the name of one Bhejia, who has sold his rights to Ason. Kola says he pays Ason Re. 1 for the use of Bhejia's land.

This portion of the land is entered as follows in the lease:—

				B.	K.	L.	K.
Basti	...	...	...	0	1	0	0
Faringati	...	...	...	0	2	5	0
Revenue would amount to	...	...	...	Rs. A. P.			
				0	6	9	

Therefore, the total amount of land from all sources held by the family is as follows:—

				B.	K.	L.	K.
Basti	...	...	...	2	0	17	1
Rupit	...	...	...	17	3	18	1
Faringati	...	...	...	27	2	11	3
Total	...	...	...	47	2	7	1

				Rs.	A.	P.
Revenue	...	...	...	27	11	0
Local rate	...	...	...	1	11	0

(a) Gardens.—A sketch on the opposite page on the scale of 40ft. to the inch shows all the land in Kola's periodic lease. It should all have been classed as basti, but, owing to the connivance of the mauzadar, a portion of it was recorded as faringati. There is no distinction on the ground itself between the portion entered in the books as faringati and that recorded as basti. Similarly, all the land belonging to Bhejia's lease should have been classed as basti. Consequently, the basti area possessed by the family is really Bs. 4-1-12-3.

One portion of this is of course occupied by houses; one is set apart for sugarcane crushing; one is occupied by castor plants, one by young betel-palms, one by sugarcane (B 0-2-5-0) and one by tobacco (B 0-1-0-0); a number of betel-palms, mangos, jack-fruits, guavas, plantains, and sualu trees (for muga worms) are scattered over the garden land. There is a small patch of rheea and another containing a few vegetables. The whole of the periodic area held by Kola Ram is surrounded by a low bamboo fencing, and in places bounded by heavy clumps of bamboos. Three of the largest trees are used as buffalo stalls. The ground around is all covered with their excrement, which is never removed until it accumulates too much, when so much of it is flung away outside as is not required for the young betel-palms and vegetables on the homestead.

(b) Fields.—The rupit area is capable of producing 108 maunds of paddy if once cropped, at the rate of 1,500 lbs. per acre. But at 9 seers of rice a day the family would require 123 maunds paddy.

* Figures ascertained from the mandal's books.

Therefore if 3 bighas were double cropped, or if 3 bighas of faringati were occupied with ahu, the family would have enough grain. Similarly, if we suppose the rupit land to be at all better than the average the same result would arise.

It was almost impossible to ascertain what had been done with the faringati land. If the statements of the family were to be believed, almost all the faringati area had lain waste. A small portion may have lain waste, but not much, for faringati land is easily procurable almost everywhere, and there would be no object in paying revenue for the area the family holds unless it was all, or nearly all, under cultivation. If we assume that half was planted with ahu and half with mustard, the produce would be as follows:—

Ahu, 75 maunds at 10 annas per maund	...	...	...	Rs. 75
Mustard at 500 lbs. to the acre, 29 maunds at Rs. 2-8-0 per maund	...	...	...	72 8

The mandals' books give the following crops for the faringati land:—Bao on Bs. 11-4-9. Ahu on Bs. 5-0-8. Ahu and mustard on Bs. 3-1-13, ahu and pulse on Bs. 1-0-6. Bamboos and plantains on Bs. 1-3-10. The actual produce, therefore, may be calculated to have been as follows:—Bao = 70 maunds; ahu = 51 maunds; pulse (probably matikalai) = 2 maunds; mustard = 7 maunds. The value would be: bao and ahu = Rs. 75-10-0; matikalai = Rs. 6; mustard = Rs. 17-8-0; total = Rs. 99-2-0. But mandals' crop returns are generally unreliable.

3. The buildings are shown on the sketch opposite the preceding page on a scale of 40 feet = 1 inch. There are three living houses, a cooking house, a cattle-shed and a Bhoral. The dimensions of the latter up to the bottom of the trap-door in the side, which is 4½ feet from the floor, are 16' x 9' x 4½'. The Bhoral was half full of paddy, ready threshed.*

4. The family possesses, Kola said, 3 plough bullocks, and one that is at present too young for work. There are no cows,† or pigs, or fowls. There are a number of pigeons and six or seven ducks. Also one female goat. Also there are three buffaloes used for ploughing.

5. (a) From land.—As usual, the family gets its grazing, building materials, and firewood‡ free to an unlimited extent. Also wood for making such implements as ploughs, handles of hoes and daos, &c.

(b) Otherwise than for land.—Eri worms are largely cultivated, as was proved by the patch of castor on the homestead. Muga worms are also fed at the proper season on the sualu trees. Eri cloth is made by the women of the household, and used generally by the family itself. Rangai had a coat of eri on. I was told that the muga had failed last year,§ that the family had made no cloth, and had sold only 400 cocoons. They received Re. 1-4-0 for this amount.

Work is to be had in Mr. Cargill's tea-garden a few miles off. Rangai goes sometimes and sometimes Manpur. The pay is said to be only Rs. 5 a month.¶ One man goes and works for a while, and while he is away the other looks after the field work. Manpur worked last year for 4 or 5 months. Also the family makes something out of its live stock. Ducks and duck's eggs when to spare are sold. So are kids and pigeons sometimes. Kola expressly denied that rice or paddy were ever sold.¶

Fish of course form a favourite article of diet, and are constantly caught in the manner described on page 11.

6. Kola admitted that no member of the family was in debt. He said that when he was temporarily in want of money he was in the habit of borrowing from the Kaya a few rupees, at the rate of 1 anna per mensem per rupee of loan.

7. If we assume, and we shall not be far wrong in doing so, that the rupit area is sufficient to supply the family with rice, the faringati fields may be taken as cultivated for cash profit. The amount of cash required by the family may be estimated as follows:—

	Rs.	A.	P.
Revenue	...	...	...
Salt about four seers a month	...	...	...
Tobacco	...	...	...
Clothes¶ at Rs. 8 for each of the women and Rs. 4 each for the men	...	...	...
Sugar	...	...	...
Oil	...	...	...
Brass vessels	...	...	...
Cotton thread	...	...	...
Gossain's fees	...	...	...
Miscellaneous (iron for ploughs, &c.)	...	...	...
Total	...	...	...

* The cubic contents of the Bhoral to the level of the bottom of the trap-door were therefore 648 cubic feet. Taking the weight of a cubic foot as 37-293 lbs. (see note on page 45), the Bhoral was capable of holding 362 maunds, and as it was half full it must have contained about 181 maunds.

† There were probably some cows, though their existence was denied. I gather this, because I was at first told there were no buffaloes, and it was only when, on going round the homestead, I saw the tying-up places of 3 buffaloes that the possession of these animals was admitted. Similarly, I was told there were no muga worms, but I found some on one of the sualu trees outside. The custom of using single buffaloes for ploughing is very common in this district. They are never so used in the adjoining district of Kamrup.

‡ Small wooden rollers are largely used in this neighbourhood for bringing firewood, showing that the quantities brought at a time are large, and that it has to come from some distance. I have not noticed these rollers in other districts.

§ All this was probably only a part of the effort consistently made through the interview to underrate the means of subsistence, and to represent the family as badly off.

¶ This for reasons already given was almost certainly false.

¶ The women make both muga and eri cloths, and do not therefore need to buy so much ready made.

Say Rs. 130 a year. This is probably below the amount, as the family is evidently very well-to-do. From paragraph 26, we saw that the value of the produce of the faringati could, without straining anything, be assumed to be about Rs. 120. Besides this, the family has the young of its live stock to sell, and eri and muga cocoons and cloth occasionally. Mr. Cargill's tea-garden affords work to the men when they want it, and a Government road passes through the village. It is quite manifest that here there can never be difficulty in getting any amount of coin that may be required.

EXAMPLE 10.—PURA, BOR KOLITA.*

A fairly well-to-do Kolita of manza Panduri in the sadr sub-division of Kamrup. A very typical case. (Visited 12th April 1888.)

1. Pura, son of Sonko, Bor Kolita, of Pub Sitara, a young man of about 25, in good condition, but lazy and apathetic in manner. The family consists of Pura, his younger brother Bati Ram, their two wives, and Pura's mother, therefore of three women and two men. There are no children.

2. The area held by Pura is recorded in different leases.†

a. Holding and revenue.

(1) One periodic lease in his own name,—

	B.	K.	L.
Faringati	...	...	...
Revenue	...	...	...
Local rate	...	...	...

(2) One periodic lease in the names of Bhogia and Pura, the former owning ½ and the latter ½ (Bhogia pays Re. 1-0-9 for his share)—

	B.	K.	L.
Faringati	...	...	...
Revenue	...	...	...
Local rate	...	...	...

In Gog Malacha—

(1) One annual lease held by Durga Ram, Pura, and Bhuyan in equal shares:—

	B.	K.	L.
Basti	...	...	...
Faringati	...	...	...
Revenue	...	...	...
Local rate	...	...	...

(2) One annual lease held by Pura, with a share of ½, and Kirti Ram (a school teacher) with a share of ½:—

	B.	K.	L.
Faringati	...	...	...
Revenue	...	...	...
Local rate	...	...	...

(3) One annual lease held in his own name:—

	B.	K.	L.
Faringati	...	...	...
Revenue	...	...	...
Local rate	...	...	...

(4) Pura also cultivates 3 bighas of khiraj rupit as an under-tenant, merely paying the revenue. From the leaseholder of this land, a nisf-khirajdar, he also holds 12 bighas of nisf-khiraj rupit on payment of the usual rent of 10 annas a bigha, and 8 bighas more of nisf-khiraj rupit on condition of giving half the produce. Calculating out these various shares and adding them up, and assuming that revenue, not produce, is given for the 8 bighas last mentioned, we find Pura's land and liabilities to be as follows:—

	B.	K.	L.
Basti	...	...	...
Rupit	...	...	...
Faringati	...	...	...
Revenue	...	...	...
Local rate	...	...	...

(a) Gardens.—The sketch opposite, plotted to a scale of 20 feet to the inch, shows the manner in which Pura's land is occupied. There are several patches of cultivation, in which tobacco, baingans, chillies, young betel-palms, a ginger plant of two, and some other vegetables are growing. A pumpkin has been started to climb over one house. A betel vine has been trained round the stump of a

* There are three classes of Kolitas; Bor Kolitas, the most esteemed; Horu Kolitas, who rank next; and Nat Kolitas, who are lowest in the scale.

† The manner in which Pura's rights are mixed up with those of others is a good example of the complications which can by a perverse ingenuity be made to result from one of the simplest revenue systems in the world. The figures have all been verified from the mandal's books.

madar tree. A row of plantains divides the portion of the premises occupied by the houses and small vegetables from the remaining half of the basti land. This latter has just had a crop of mustard. The rest of the land is lying waste, except where a few young betel-palms and plantains have been planted.

The land occupied by Pura as his basti is B. 1-4-0 in extent (623 of an acre). It forms part of the land he holds with Bhogia, and was classed as faringati and settled for ten years before the houses were erected on it. Bhogia's premises are next door. The manure from the cowshed is flung over the basti land, and never taken to the rice fields.

b. *Fields*.—The area recorded as basti was taken over from a family which was migrating. The three leaseholders, Durga Ram, Pura, and Bhuyan, took it up for mustard cultivation, thinking it would be classed as faringati. But according to orders, periodically settled land, when given up and retaken, must be settled with the second occupant at the same rate at which it was originally settled. When asked why they did not give it up, Pura said that while they were getting the revenue together the period for relinquishment passed away.

The following crops were grown by Pura in the year just closed:—

Cane on 1 bigha of his own faringati land.

Sali or winter rice on 21 bighas, leaving 2 bighas fallow through inability to cultivate more owing to growing cane.

Mustard on Bs. 3-2-13 of basti and on Bs. 5-4-17 of faringati, or Bs. 9-2-10 in all.

The produce was probably as follows:—

The cane, at 1,600 lbs. an acre, yielded 6½ maunds of gur (533 lbs.) The price of gur at Rangia was said by Pura to be probably one and a half annas a seer.* Therefore 6½ maunds would be worth Rs. 25. But according to Pura the one bigha only gave 12 kolas of gur. Each kola† holding 4 or 5 seers and selling at 4 to 6 annas.

The sali or winter rice at 1,500 lbs of paddy to the acre must have yielded 87½ maunds rice. Out of this the family had to give half the produce of 8 bighas as rent. That is he had to give 25 maunds of paddy (equivalent of 17 mds. rice). This left him 70½ maunds rice for his household consumption. But he would only use, at 5½ seers of rice a day, 45½ maunds in the year, therefore the land he occupied would give him all he would require for his family and leave a surplus of 25 maunds rice over, worth Rs. 50. The mustard on 9½ bighas would at 500 lbs. to the acre yield 19½ maunds, worth at Rs. 2-8 a maund about Rs. 49.

3. There are three houses besides the granary as shown on the sketch. All but the cattle-shed are carefully plastered with mud, the walls being made of reeds. The largest is the house occupied by the whole family; it has 3 rooms. The next to it contains the loom and the rice husker, and several miscellaneous household and fishing implements, such as old baskets, ploughs, daos, &c. The third is the cattle-shed, extremely dirty and with a very bad smell.

3. Houses.

4. The live stock consists of one pair of plough bullocks, one cow (the calf died 15 days before), two goats, and one duck. No fowls or pigs. Pura had two pair of bullocks last year, but one died from some disease this year, and the other, which was seen to have caught the infection was let loose in the jungle to die. This second bullock was let loose, because it was considered that the trouble of keeping it would be too great.

4. Live stock.

5. (a) *From land*.—As usual, grazing, building materials, and firewood are to be had free in any quantity. Also wood for agricultural implements and cane for baskets, &c. Fish are caught, but chiefly in the rains.

5. Produce other than from his own land.

(b) *Other than from land*.—Apparently little is made by the family except from its land. Eri worms are not cultivated, and there are no muga. There are no tea-gardens near. The men of the family consider it degrading to work for Government, either on the roads or on repairing rest-houses. They only occasionally work for hire in their own or neighbouring villages and only for private persons. Cloth is not made for sale, and consequently the family may be said to subsist almost entirely upon the produce of land, unsupplemented by any other source of income.

6. Pura owes Rs. 60, borrowed three years ago on account of his brother's marriage, and Rs. 10 borrowed a few days ago to pay part of his revenue. The wedding cost Rs. 140 altogether. Towards this he had a hoard of Rs. 80, part of a sum which his father left him. Then he borrowed Rs. 30 from a sister, who is married to a rich man, and Rs. 10 from an uncle and Rs. 20 from a Kaya. No bond was entered into and no interest is to be paid for any of these sums. Most of the money was borrowed from relatives, and that which was not was lent by a personal friend. Last month (Chait—March 12th to April 11th) Pura borrowed Rs. 10 more from the same Kaya to pay his revenue. If this sum is paid off before the end of Baisak (May 12th) no interest is to be charged, but if not the rate will be one anna per rupee per mensem. But Pura lends money as well as borrows it. Three years ago he lent Rs. 20 to one Pua, Kachari, who executed a bond to give interest at half an anna per rupee per mensem (37½ per cent.). This money has not been paid up yet.‡ Also three years ago Pura and Bhogia his brother-in-law bought

* The usual price in Gauhati is 2½ annas. So this estimate is probably below the mark.

† A kola, or kalsi, is a small earthen vessel in which gur is generally sold in Assam. It is supposed to hold 4 to 5 seers. The price varies with the solidity and whiteness of the gur and the size of the vessel. The tekeli is a smaller vessel of the same kind, holding about one seer of gur.

‡ Pura himself stated this to be the amount which the five members of his family would consume each day.

§ An almost literal translation of Pura's words in this connection is interesting:—“We do not carry loads for others, we are respectable men (bhal manas). We do not mind carrying our own rice or water or mustard banghy fashion on our shoulders, but we cannot do this for hire. When we work for wages we sometimes do earthwork or build reed houses or put on thatch. We do this for the big men of the village, we do not work for Government at all. If we did, we should be considered coolies, whereas we are respectable men (bhal manas). I know that the work we do for private persons in the village is the same as that required for Government roads and Government rest-houses, but we can work for private persons without losing our respectability, whereas if we worked for Government, we should become coolies and no longer remain respectable men. Government pays its coolies four annas a day. From private persons we get sometimes three, sometimes four, annas.”

|| It amounts now with interest to Rs. 42-8.

the lease they jointly hold (see above) for Rs. 25 from Horu Nath, the former mandal of the village Pura paying ¼ and Bhogia ¼. Further, Pura bought the services of the nephew of his friend, Banchit Kolita, of Pubsitara, by the loan of Rs. 12 a year ago. This nephew is a boy of about 14, and it was arranged that the boy was to serve Pura for the Bengali year 1294 (April 12th 1887 to April 11th 1888). Pura was to give him food and clothes, and for the year's services deduct Rs. 7 from the debt. The Banchit at the end of the year was to pay back Rs. 5 and take back his nephew. But as a matter of fact the boy was taken back in Magh (January 15th to February 15th) and the balance of the debt not paid up. A bond was executed embodying the conditions above mentioned. No interest was entered. Consequently, Pura was still owed about Rs. 8 of this debt. Therefore though he owed Rs. 70, he was himself owed Rs. 50-8-0.*

7. The amount of cash required by Pura in the course of a year may be roughly calculated as follows:—

	Rs.	As.	P.
Revenue	...	...	...
Salt, about 2½ seers a month	21	7	0†
Tobacco	5	0	0
Clothes, at Rs. 10 each for women and 5 for men	2	0	0
Brass vessels	40	0	0
Mustard oil	10	0	0
Cotton thread	3	0	0
Gosain's fees	5	0	0
Miscellaneous	10	0	0
	5	0	0
Total	101	7	0

If we assume that he used half his gur himself and sold the rest he would get Rs. 12. The balance of his rice, if husked by the women, would bring in Rs. 50, and the mustard would probably sell for Rs. 49. Therefore his land would bring him in Rs. 111. But then he left Bs. 5-0-3 of his faringati and Bs. 2 of his rupit fallow. If he had sown mustard on the former, he would have added 10 maunds of mustard to his produce, or Rs. 25 to his profit. Similarly, the two additional bighas of rupit would have yielded him 8 maunds of rice or Rs. 16 of profit. If he had cultivated both areas he would have made Rs. 152 in all, or much more than the calculation above shows that the family requires.

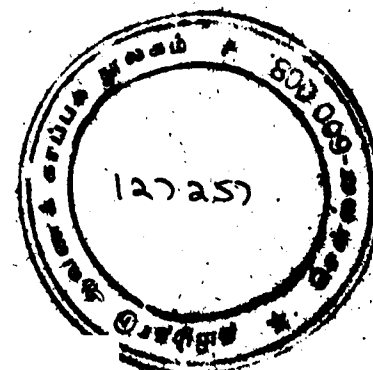
But Pura kept a boy to work as a servant during part of the year, and his arrangements included the keep of this boy for twelve months. The additional rice required would have amounted to about 1½ maunds, worth Rs. 9, and his clothes to Rs. 4. The additional salt would have cost Re. 1. Therefore he boy would have cost him about Rs. 14. This, added to his previous expenditure, would make Rs. 115-7. To meet this with his actual cultivation, he had only Rs. 111. But he borrowed Rs. 10. Therefore he had Rs. 121, or more than enough.

* It is probable, from the fact of his father's having hoarded more than Rs. 80, from the existence of the two loans admitted by Pura, from the obtaining of a loan without interest from the Kaya, and from the purchase of the basti by him and Bhogia three years ago, that Pura is a moneyed man, and has other loans, besides those admitted, out at interest. † Only learned of these loans owing to the accidental burning of one of Pura's houses a few days before, in one of which two of his bonds, he said, had perished. When questioned about these bonds he had to admit what they were. ‡ Not Rs. 26-7, because Pura saved Rs. 5 on the Bs. 8, for which he gave half produce.

MEMO.

The above cases are most of them fairly typical examples of the various castes of cultivators met with in the valley of Assam. They have been taken mostly at random, as opportunity offered. Examples 5, 6, and 7 were alone in any sense selected, and these show that even the poorest find no difficulty in paying their way in a country where the ordinary staple of food is cheap, and where the demand for labour is great. Examples 6 and 7 show that it is often a man's own fault when his circumstances are not prosperous. The Phakials are Buddhists of Shan origin, very few of whom have settled in the plains. The Chutiyas are Hinduized remnants of some of the oldest inhabitants of Upper Assam. They, with the Kacharis, Rabhas, Lalungs, and Kochs, form the bulk of the non-Aryan Bodo race which constitutes more than one-third of the population of the Brahmaputra Valley. The Kolitas are the highest of the Aryan castes native to the valley, and formed the ancient priesthood of Assam. They are the most numerous of the Aryan castes, as, with the exception of Kola Ram, Gonok, none of the men I have mentioned had any but the vaguest ideas as to the area held or the revenue payable. In the vast majority of instances no cultivator can state correctly the extent of his holding or the amount of his revenue. I once met a case of a Kachari who had, without enquiry, paid double the revenue due, owing to a slip of the pen on the part of the mandal, and did not discover the error till long after it had been made.

H. Z. DARRAH.



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II.—EXAMPLES COLLECTED BY RAI GUNABHIRAM
SARMA BORUA BAHADUR, EXTRA-ASSISTANT-
COMMISSIONER.

EXAMPLE 11.—JIN RAM KAKOTI.

(The marginal Notes below have been supplied by me—H. Z. D.)

Jin Ram Kakoti is a cultivator. He cultivates about 40 bighas land in all, and pays Rs. 35 revenue. He cultivates áhu, sáli, mah, sugarcane, and mustard, and has fruit gardens in which he has tamul, oranges of several kinds, mango and jack-fruit-trees, besides other trees used for fencing and firewood purposes. His basti land is about 4½ bighas, in which he has gardens. He has no land for grazing purposes.¹ He has 16 persons to maintain. He himself and a brother, two wives, four daughters, all unmarried, old mother-in-law, an elder brother, four boys, and two daughters. Half the members of the family live at the principal dwelling-place, and the other half in another place. In one place he has a borghar (principal house where he cooks his food and eats and sleeps,—three rooms in this), one moralghar² where junior members of the family have their beds, one chaura-ghar where he receives visitors, keeps mats, certain implements, &c. He has his dheki for husking rice in the moralghar. One gosainghar where he prays and holds religious meetings and ceremonies, one store-house, or bhoral, where he keeps his paddy. He keeps his mustard and mah in the moralghar and borghar. He has one cow-shed and one chali³ for tant-sal (loom), where the women weave cloths. In a room of the store-house he boils paddy,⁴ which is dried in the chotal or yard. He keeps his ploughs, harrows, and certain other implements in the store-house.⁵ In the second or part house⁶ he has no gosainghar. He has his other houses. His elder brother lives in this house. His wife is an elderly woman. He himself is about 46 years of age. He cultivates 26 bighas sáli paddy, gets about 500 puras of paddy, and has to give about 100 puras to labourers. The value of his paddy at 4 puras a rupee is Rs. 100.⁷ He cultivates 4 bighas⁸ of áhu paddy, gets 60 puras paddy, giving 20 puras to labourers of the field. The price of the áhu paddy he gets is about Rs. 15 at 4 puras. His mustard cultivation is in about 3 bighas⁹ and he gets 2 maunds of mustard only worth Rs. 5-8. He gives about 12 puras paddy worth 3 rupees to the labourer. His mah cultivation in three bighas was totally unsuccessful. This year the mustard season, as also the sáli and mah seasons, were bad, owing to want of rain; hence there was less produce in the fields. In his sugarcane cultivation of one bigha he got 100 tekalis,¹⁰ about 2½ maunds, worth Rs. 12. From the tamul trees (300 in number) he got about 200 pans¹¹ of tamul. He expects about 16 to 20 rupees by selling the same during the rainy season; besides these he will have enough for his own use. The pán, as well as oranges, plantains, mangoes, and other fruit are chiefly spent for his own use. A few jack-fruit-trees are sold to Paharis (hillmen) for salt, at 4 fruits for a seer of salt. By this he cannot get more than 5 or 6 seers of salt a year. In his vegetable garden adjoining his store-house, he has his laffa, lahi, palang, baberi, jalakiya, baingan, lao, and kumdra, as also some kochu and ranga lao. Lao and kumdra creeps smoothly in the roof of his moralghar, as well as in the changs¹² he has erected for them. ¹³Tyah, banghi, mahi-joha, and chinral also formed parts of his garden in the summer and rainy seasons. All these supply him with vegetables and fruits, not only for

1. Because the Government waste around affords him limitless free grazing.

2. Moralghar is the house generally built between the Borghar and Chauraghar, and is used by the family to sit in and by the women for ordinary household duties.

3. Chali is a shed, often without walls.

4. This is very unusual. The Bhoral rarely has more than one room.

5. More properly "under the eaves of his storehouse."

6. That is, the house built close to his temporary or cold weather cultivation.

7. The outturn from 26 bighas would be, at 1,500 lbs. to the acre, about 162 maunds, or worth Rs. 100, so the Extra-Assistant-Commissioner's estimate of outturn is rather low.

8. The outturn of 4 bighas of áhu, at 1,300 lbs. to acre, would be about 21 maunds, hardly worth more than Rs. 13.

9. He should get treble this, unless the land is very poor.

10. See page 50 above. He should have got more than double this.

11. One pan=4 score ∴ 200 pans=1,600 nuts.

12. Bamboo trellis.

13. See Appendix D.

1 See page 36 above.

2. See Appendix D.

3. Tulsi (*Ocimum Sanctum*, Linn.) is a sacred plant commonly found in all Hindu homesteads in Assam. There are two varieties, the white and the black, named from the light and dark colour respectively of the leaves.

4. Mola tobacco is made by powdering the leaves, and mixing them with gur. This is used for smoking. Dhopat is a corruption of Dhuat pat, lit. smoke leaf, but the raw leaf is generally used for chewing, not smoking.

5. This is 6 seers a month, which for 16 persons is nearly right. It is perhaps a little below the average.

6. This is an unusually large consumption of oil, which is regarded rather as a luxury than as a necessity in Assam.

7. Guru Kirtan is the festival on the commemoration of the death of Sankar and Madhav, the founders of the Mahapurusa sect of Vaishnavas. Almost all Hindus in Nowgong belong to the sect. Sankar is said to have been born in 1449 at the Bardoa in Nowgong, and to have lived for 120 years. He and his disciple Madhav are regarded as incarnations of Krishna and Siva. They were Kayasths not Brahmins. Their followers regard Krishna as the supreme being.

8. Janmastami—the festival celebrating the birth of Krishna. Religious and dramatic performances are held.

9. The Chait or Baisak Bihu is a festival held on the last day of the year (last day of Chait, April 11th). The cattle are taken down to the nearest water, washed, and beaten with twigs of Tara (*s. cardamum*), Bakari kok (*Flemingia Strobilifera*, R. Br.), and Digloti (unidentified). The Kartik Bihu is held on the last day of Aswin (October 15th), a lamp is lighted near the Tulsi tree, and religious services held to celebrate the commencement of the harvest. The Magh Bihu is held on the last day of Pus (January 15th), a fire is lighted, which is kept burning and is considered sacred all through Magh. The feasting is generally very hearty and prolonged, as the harvest has usually been gathered before this date.

his own use, but also for that of his priest and gosain, who receive the first fruits of his labours. He has a rude oil-mill¹ in one of his kathal-trees, where his wife and children press the oil by sitting on the horizontal piece of wood that passes through a hole made in the tree. The oil he presses from the mustard which he gets from his field. He has got clusters of eri-trees here and there in his garden. Their leaves are used for breeding eri-worms, and the shady places under the trees, as well as bushes in the garden, are used as latrines. ²Kochu, dhekia, kalman, monoa, chengeri, morolia, doron, mati gaduri, and several other wild plants are used as vegetables for curries. His garden is a kind of living dispensary, whence he gets a good number of vegetable roots, leaves, fruits, and bark for his and his family medicines. For instance, letaguti, which is febrifuge and expectorant and laxative, dukkhari, which is antidyenteric, and the aprajita, the leaves of which are used as plaster when children are ill. Besides these, there are numerous other such plants and shrubs in the garden, as also in the gardens of his neighbours.

He has a few tulsi³ plants near his gosaingarh. He throws the cowdung of the cows he has near the cowshed, whence it is thrown here and there in the garden. In a small bit of land he has a few tobacco-plants, the leaves of which, about 4 seers, are not sufficient to supply him with his mola⁴ tobacco for smoking and dhopat tobacco for chewing.

He uses his own bamboos, about 6 or 7 clusters, in repairing his houses, making baskets and implements. The small twigs and dry bamboos, as well as branches of other trees of his garden supply him with firewood. This is not sufficient for his year's consumption. He goes to the unreserved forests, and thence he brings his firewood.

He has not purchased paddy or rice. He requires 1 maund 32 seers⁵ salt, worth about Rs. 9, 20 seers oil over and above what he gets from his own mustard, worth Rs. 7-8.⁶

He wants 1½ maunds of cotton, worth Rs. 12. His female members spin and weave cloths for the use of his family.

He has 2 buffaloes, 2 bullocks, and 14 cows, but has neither goats, fowls, pigeons, ducks, or geese.

He has performed funeral ceremonies of his mother, father, and sister-in-law, who died of cholera in the preceding year. He had to borrow money for making shradh as also for paying revenue. He has spent about Rs. 45 worth ornaments, and 9½ rupees worth cloths for shradh. A part of this sum was from his last year's savings, and a portion of the amount was borrowed.

He pays Rs. 2-8 cash to his guru and performs sewa, or religious service, every month, when he spends about 8 annas worth rice, mah, tamul, pan, plantains, &c. He has to perform two shradhs every year, and spend Rs. 4 worth of things. He has to purchase gakhir (milk) for about Rs. 4. He has to give his subscriptions to the Guru Kirtan⁷ and Janmastami⁸ festivals in the village Namghar in kind,—rice, mah, &c. He has to give feasts on the occasions of the three Bihus,⁹—Chait, Magh, and Kartik.

He has a one month share of a female buffalo, and gets about 10 seers of milk in the year. He uses his own milk for about 9 months of the year. He has purchased 15 to 16 seers tobacco worth about Rs. 2.

1. Raj Posa—general subscription.—Each village or set of contiguous villages forms one or more "khels" or communities. Each khel has its office bearers, such as cook, treasurer, musician, deori or distributor of articles of food, &c., &c. The community raises funds by contributions (posa) or by levying fines on offenders against the rules. Sometimes the contributions are voluntary, as when the Praschit or atonement ceremony is performed. The funds are used in prayer meetings, festivals, and theatrical performances (bhaona). The funds are kept by the Bhorali or treasurer.

2. A kap is a bundle of cane containing 5 whole canes split lengthwise into halves called "Chiras."

3. A kind of cake prepared of powdered rice, gur, and til.

4. A kind of cake made of powdered rice and gur.

5. Specially prepared powdered rice, eaten with milk and gur. A purely Assamese article, unknown to Bengalis.

6. Rice made by soaking paddy then parching it and lastly husking it.

7. Kharu—Bracelet.

8. Karya—Earring.

9. Sipatmani—a necklace, consisting of round and oval gold beads strung alternately.

10. Thopamani—necklace consisting of a large oval gold bead in the middle, and small coral or glass beads at each side.

11. Riha—a scarf worn by women about the head and bosom.

12. Khaniya—an ornamented shawl often with a fringe of muga or gold thread.

13. Baotali—land suitable for the growth of ba.

14. This is only 80 maunds, but 13 bighas should have given him about 80 maunds.

15. They are fishermen by caste and Hindus, though not of Aryan origin.

16. Aswin—September 15th to October 15th. Chait—March 15th to April 15th.

17. Batinal—net with large meshes. Ghanjal—net with small meshes.

18. A small allowance for 10 persons and an infant.

19. Poa—quarter of a seer.

20. Gamcha—a kind of towel used sometimes as a loin cloth, sometimes as a turban, sometimes as a bag.

21. A meagre allowance; it comes to about 7 seers rice daily for 10 persons and the infant.

He has purchased kodalis (hoes) worth Rs. 2-10. He wants Rs. 5 or Rs. 6 for implements, pots and pans, and paid 12 annas Raj Posā¹ (subscription) to the village fund.

He has purchased 50 kaps² cane for Rs. 2-4, and grass worth Rs. 5 for repairing his houses.

Whatever money he saves he invests in making ornaments. He has borrowed Rs. 40 this year. He expects to repay the amount next year if the crops are successful.

He and the elder members of the family have two meals, rice and curry, sometimes milk, generally one curry. His children have generally three meals, one of the meals consists of rice and a little salt or gur. On Bihus his wife prepares for him ³til pitha, ⁴khola chapari pitha, ⁵chewa and ⁶chira. He has about 100 puras paddy in store over and above the quantity got this year. Expects to sell the paddy, as no other means exist to pay the debt. He has a pair of silver kharu, ⁷gold karya, ⁸a few silver rings of 2 and 4 anna pieces, gold sipatmani⁹, and corals and thopa¹⁰ mani, in all of the value of about Rs. 140. These were all earned by him and his brother. His mother had none of these. They have also muga riha,¹¹ and mekla and khaniya,¹² also muga dhutis worth about Rs. 46.

EXAMPLE 12.—JUVAN DOM.

Juvan, Dom, aged about 56 years, has a wife, two grown-up sons, two young boys, and an infant. One of the grown-up sons has a wife and two boys and a girl, all minors. He has one borghar where he sleeps with his wife and the young children, as also cooks his food; one moralphar where his son and daughter-in-law and their family sleep;—in the other moralphar they sit and keep things; one store-house where he keeps his paddy; a cowshed where he keeps his cow, only one. He has a bigha of basti land in which he has his dwelling-houses, has no garden with bamboos, nor any nut and other fruit-trees. His paddy-field consists of 13 bighas of baotali¹³ low land. He pays in all about Rs. 4-4 revenue, and Rs. 2 gur's tribute for the whole family. He has two bullocks also. He has neither mah, mustard or kalai cultivation. His son cultivated land, and got only 120 puras of paddy,¹⁴ worth Rs. 30. He and his sons catch fish in the Rupohi bil paying Rs. 6 rent.¹⁵ On the whole, they catch fish 15 days in a month, they get paddy, cotton, and other articles of food for fish. Sometimes they go to the Samaguri Hat, and sell fish there. The fishing season commences in Aswin¹⁶ and ends in Chait. They have two nets, one batinal¹⁷ for large fishes and one ghanjal for small fishes. Has a debt, Rs. 20, contracted to pay rent and buy paddy. Requires 3 dhuns, or 15 seers, paddy daily, also ¹⁸3 seers salt and 6 poas¹⁹ oil a month. The family require 6 dhotis, 2 borkapor, 4 gamchas,²⁰ 8 meklas, 4 dhotis for children. The cotton obtained for fish is spun and cloths made by the man's wife and daughter-in-law for the whole family. He has to perform three shradhs in the year at an expense of about Rs. 3. He has to pay 4 annas to 1 rupee a year village subscriptions on festivals and other occasions. His boys keep cows and bullocks, and also help him when he is out in catching or selling fish. The paddy obtained is sufficient to maintain the family for four months, or thereabout. The rest of the year the family is fed by paddy obtained from people for fish. Fish curry is the principal curry. He gets some fish and cooks some. Rice and fish, and also vegetables bartered for fish, are his food. Cannot afford to have two meals a day throughout the

year. The adult members of the family have only one meal a day for about a month and the rest they spend with two meals. Has no means to pay his debts, unless he sends one of his sons as morakiya labourer or cow-keeper. He has not invested anything in ornaments or cloths. He has a pair of gold karyas (earrings), two silver four-anna rings, muga riha and mekla, silver moni,¹ muga dhoti and khaniya, in all worth about Rs. 53. His mother had only silver rings and thopamani with silver madali (beads).

EXAMPLE 13.—SAMBURA, LALUNG.

Sambura, Lalung, aged about 42 years, has a wife and a young daughter, aged three years; owns basti land, 18 lessas, where he has bamboos and sum-trees, as also his houses, three in number, one borghar with three rooms, in one of which he cooks his food, in the other he sleeps, and on the third he has his things; one moralghar which he uses as his sitting and working room. He has also a cow-shed, where he keeps his two pairs of bullocks and two female calves. He has three bighas sali land and 7 bighas faringati land. Pays in all Rs. 5-8 rent. In the sali land he got only 80 puras of paddy, cultivated 2 bighas mustard, and 2 bighas mah, got only 2 puras mah this year, as also 6 dhuns mustard. The weather was bad, and no good crops could be had, cultivated tobacco and vegetables, baberi, dhania, laffa, &c., in all about 2 kottas of land. He could not plough the whole quantity he possesses. His bamboos supply him with materials for repairing his house as well as firewood. He gets firewood from the neighbouring jungles. He breeds fowls, ducks, pigs, and pigeons, sells these. His wife has a tant-sal, or loom, outside the house, where she makes cloths, getting cotton on adhi terms and sometimes on her own account; adhi contract is one by which the man who gives cotton gets a half share of the cloths made. He catches fish from the nearest waters. He purchases three seers² salt a month and three seers oil in a year. His wife makes cloths, and sells them. Though he has got only 80 puras³ of paddy, yet he has not had occasion to borrow. The earnings from the loom and the sale of pigs, &c., were sufficient to maintain the family. He takes grog, which he makes with dhan in his own house. A kulsi⁴ worth annas 6, weighing about 10 or 12 seers, is made. It is sufficient to last for a week. He purchases gur about 12 tekalis a year. Has to give feasts to about 40 to 60 persons on the Bihu festivals with grog and rice. He has to kill fowls and pigs then. He also performs father's ceremony by feasts, and pays 8 annas to the gosain and about Re. 1-4 to the Lalung priest in kind. He rears eri and muga, the former with his garden eri leaves, and the latter in the trees of his garden. He brings leaves from other places for his eri-worms. He gets about 12⁵ tolas eri and $\frac{3}{4}$ seer muga a year. He utilises them when he can make a sufficient quantity. He has silver earrings and mani with common corals, as also muga riha and mekla, as also eri-mekla and dhoti, in all worth about Rs. 36. He gets his own grass and reeds from the jungle for his houses, and tills his own land himself. His pigs, fowls, and ducks are kept in sheds, and pigeons in the corners of his houses. Takes his breakfast and dinner every day, and now and then rice and salt as tiffin. Lao, kumra, vegetables grown wild and cultivated, supply him with materials for his curry. Sometimes he buys fish and meat, and eats the same. There is no land specially for grazing cattle. They graze in the fields. They are kept by boys or men.

1. Moni=mani=bead.

2. This must be wrong, as it would give one seer a month to each member of the family, one of whom is a child of three. The right amount is probably a little over one seer a month for all.

3. The allowance is 100 seers paddy or 66 seers rice a month, or a little over two seers a day, which is about right.

4. Kulsi—an earthen vessel, holding from a quart to two or three gallons.

5. Thread is probably meant. It seems hardly worth cultivating the worms for such a small result.

EXAMPLE 14.—KANTHER, MIKIR.

1. A family of hillmen inhabiting hills in the centre of Nowgong.

2. Farma=kharma=transplanted early rice.

3. A "mantun" is a bag made of cloth and used by the Mikirs to carry paddy in from the field to the house of the owner. It generally contains nine dhuns, or about 30 seers. The Mikir dhun is said to contain about $3\frac{1}{4}$ seers paddy.

4. Should be about 4 seers for 8 persons.

5. About Rs. 4 a month.

6. No ploughs are used in these hills.

7. Another family of hillmen from the Mikir Hills.

8. The houses of hillmen are almost always built on raised platforms called changs.

9. A hat—the distance from the elbow to the top of the middle finger.

10. He should have got 75 maunds.

11. This is about right, at the usual rate of 1 seer a day for each person.

12. This must be a mistake for month. Seven persons would require about $3\frac{1}{4}$ seers salt in a month.

13. The bark of some wild trees used by the hillmen in place of tamul and pan.

14. Lengti—a narrow waistcloth worn by hillmen. It corresponds with the dhoti of the plains.

Kanther, Mikir,¹ aged about 47 years, has two brothers, one son-in-law, wife, two sisters-in-law, and a young daughter. Pays Rs. 3 revenue. Cultivates about four bighas farma² land, gets about 60 puras or 15 maunds from it; has sali, 8 bighas, and gets about 50 mantuns,³ or 450 dhuns, or 38 maunds paddy nearly. No other crops. Has also yams, kochus, lao, and kumra, beside his houses (two in number). Takes his breakfast and dinner daily with one or two curries, which are prepared of yams, kochus, or kumra, or meat and fish, dried or fresh. No oil. Requires about three seers salt.⁴ Has 3 pigs and 10 fowls. He and his brother take opium, $9\frac{1}{2}$ tolas a month.⁵ Prepares his own grog with dhan, for his consumption as well as for festivals. Young brother is a dealer in dried fish and tamul. Takes these up to the hills, and gets cotton and eri, &c. He sells extra paddy, though this year he does not expect to do so. The female members of the house prepare cloths for the use of the family, as also for sale. Sometimes they purchase coats and pagri, as well as dhoti and chudder. He is not in debt. He has hereditary silver, coral, and brazen ornaments, worth about Rs. 15. The family cannot have two meals for about $1\frac{1}{2}$ months during the year. They subsist upon alu, kochu, meat, &c., during the time they have no rice to cook. Has neither cows nor bullocks. Tills his land by means of⁶ hoes. He purchases gur. His wife prepares pitha or cakes for him on occasions with powdered rice. He has not contracted any debt of a permanent nature. He gets his opium on credit, and repays the same after a month or so, when his brother gets money in the dried fish and tamul trade.

EXAMPLE 15.—DAK, GAONBURA.

Dak,⁷ Gaonbura, of Rungkheng, is a widower, has a brother, two grown-up sons, one sister-in-law and two daughters. Pays khana or house-tax Rs. 3, lives in a⁸ chang house 20⁹ hats by 10 hats and 10 hats high. This house has four rooms. Bachelors sleep in another house, where several bachelors sleep. He keeps his 3 pigs under the chang; fowls and pigeons, 6 and 2 respectively, had accommodation in the chang. Cultivated sali, in 12 bighas and mustard in 2 bighas near the Kopili river. He got 60¹⁰ maunds paddy, of which he requires $7\frac{1}{2}$ ¹¹ maunds a month. He has neither cows nor bullocks or buffaloes. Tills his land by means of the hoe, consequently the yield is small. He requires 3 or 4 seers salt a year,¹² as also gur, tamul and pan and opium, as well as pots, fish, and other things. He borrowed Rs. 5 in the last year, and unless he borrowed Rs. 20 this year, he will not be able to go on well with his creditor. He has to purchase cotton with his paddy. The jungly yams, kochu, &c., help him in his meals a good deal. He makes his grog with paddy. Instead of tamul and pan he has his pan-bark¹³ and tamulbark of trees grown wild. He wears lengti¹⁴ and a coat and has a sheet. The female members of the family make cloths. They always keep a fire in their house. He has to perform two pujas in the year, and give feasts of rice, grog, and meat. His brother's wife has tinkets worth about Rs. 3. The adult male members of the family work hard. He is an opium-eater, and consumes opium about 6 tolas a month, with his brother and sister-in-law. After the crops are harvested he gives feasts to his friends and relations. He cannot afford to have 2 meals a day for about 3 months, and for about a month he subsists on kochu, yam, meat, &c., having no paddy in store.

EXAMPLE 16.—SONPA, CHUTIYA.

Sonpa, Chhutyia, of Noakhali, a man aged 52 years, has got 4 puras=16 bighas, rupit land, basti 1½ bighas and faringati land. Pays revenue Rs. 15. Has a borghar, moraghar, bhoral, and a cow-house, as also two bullocks, two cows, and damara¹ one. He has neither buffaloes, ducks, pigeons, &c. Himself, his wife, and five daughters, are the family, and he has an adopted son about two years old. The eldest daughter is grown up. Two others can assist their mother in the work. He takes quarter tola opium daily, smokes once, and takes twice. His wife takes half a moha (2-anna weight) daily. Has cultivated 12 bighas ali paddy, and obtained 360 puras² of paddy. Has obtained 14 puras ahupaddy in half a bigha of land. He has neither mustard, mah, or til, nor any vegetable garden, with the exception of a jhar (bush) of bamboos, ten tamul trees, and a jara³ tree, he has no other fruit-trees. Requires about 50 dhans⁴ paddy monthly, salt 4 seers, oil one poa. Sometimes catches fish, and sometimes barter for paddy. Has neither ploughman nor morakiya. Cultivates his own land, pays two to three rupees for cow-keeping, sometimes paddy of half a bigha of land. Has a debt of Rs. 80. Had an opium shop, and was fined for selling opium without license. Requires one maund raw cotton worth Rs. 4 or Rs. 5 a year. Also 4 dhotis, 1 borkapor, 1 gamcha, 4 meklas, 2 ribas, 14 small meklas for children. Not purchased any cattle, cloths, ornaments; sold cattle and borrowed and paid fine imposed. The interest has accumulated a good amount, sells paddy, and purchases opium at 7 annas a tola, makes baskets for his own use and also for sale. His wife and grown-up daughters make cloths, surplus number is sold. He gets 20 seers⁵ gur from sugarcane in about a kotta of land. Pays 4 annas to his guru, besides other presents. Sometimes his wife gets cotton on adhi contract, and gets cloths. Gathers his firewood from his pan garden and the neighbouring jungle. He gets his grass from the jungle. He sells paddy to the shopkeepers in the neighbourhood at 3 to 4 pice a⁶ dhun.

He has suffered a good deal on account of the fine. Gold earrings, sipatmani, gold and silver rings, and a few muga dhotis, ribas and meklas, pat and muga, also khanyas of the value of Rs. 60 are the jewellery and dress of the family. Takes two meals a day, has to perform sewa almost every month for his welfare. The sewa consists of offerings of rice, mah, salt, ginger, plantains, and gur. The cost in money value about 10 annas a sewa. He gets his gakhir (milk) from his own cow, and it is on Bitas that he purchases milk, about 10 seers at about 1 rupee expense.

EXAMPLE 17.—AHKALU, KACHARI.

Ahkalu, Kachari, of Borkondoli, has a wife, one son (with a wife and one young boy and one infant and one young girl), another son who can plough. Had another wife who died, leaving a daughter about 10 years old; has 15 bighas of rupit land. Redeemed 10 bighas paying Rs. 67 three years ago with his own money. Cultivates the whole quantity of land, and gets only 100 dhans or 200⁸ puras of paddy. Has no mustard, til, cotton, or vegetable garden. He cultivated also 2 bighas farma and got only 30 puras paddy. Has five bullocks, 12 or 13 cows; no cows milked, for he does not take milk (Kacharis, Lalungs, and bhahen seldom take milk). Cows are utilized by ploughing lands. Catches fish or barter for paddy. Sometimes purchases from the hat. He pays fish-cry rent 2 to 4 annas a month. He has one pig, 4 fowls, one duck. He has to purchase paddy in

1. Damara—a young uncastrated bull.

2. This is 90 maunds, which is a fine but not impossible outturn. The average would be 75 maunds for 12 bighas.

3. Probably the jara tenga, see Appendix D. No. 71.

4. Very much less than 1 seer of rice per head per day probably rice is meant, not paddy.

5. He should have got 53 seers, as experiments show that the outturn of gur per acre is 1,588 lbs.

6. This is about 9 to 10 annas a maund.

7. Just under the Mikir Hills.

8. This is only 50 maunds. He should get 94 maunds from 15 bighas. As before 1 bhâr=2 danguries, and each danguri=10 seers—one pura

Kartik, before the harvesting season, for about a month for Rs. 4 or Rs. 5. He purchases 4 seers salt a month. He makes his own quantity of grog with rice, 7 or 8 kulsis in a month. Whenever there is a festival, he has to make or get from his neighbours, paying 4 annas a kulsi. Grog and roasted fowl with khar are given to the guests. He got 35 puras¹ of farma paddy from his 2 bighas of farma land. He has to purchase cloths also, as his wife and daughter-in-law cannot make cloths. He has four houses, borghar, moraghar, cow-house, and store-house. Cannot keep any vegetable garden for pigs, has to depend on the wild eatable plants and yams, kumras,² &c. Pays about Rs. 15 revenue. No hired field labourer was employed by him. Neighbours help each other in the planting and reaping season on their giving them grog and rice and fowls. Has two clumps of bamboos which supply him with bamboos. He has to pay a tax,³ Re. 1, to the proprietor of the Tubuhi grant for cutting grass, gathers firewood from the hills and jungle, has to pay Re. 1 for firewood, purchases tamul, pan, chunam, fish, &c.; dried fish and meat are now and then eaten. In village pujas he has to pay his share of grog, fowls, &c., and in his own house he performs pujas, killing ducks, pigs, fowls. Takes three meals when they work in the field. Rice, salt, and some curry, mostly khar or tenga, are given to the working people. Has silver earrings and mani, a few brazen utensils, and muga dhoti worth about Rs. 30. Has not a pice debt. Whatever savings he can make, he invests in purchasing cattle, pigs, and land; but he does not expect any for some time.

EXAMPLE 18.—AHARU, LALUNG.⁴

Aharu, Lalung, of Baginguri, has a wife, three young girls, the eldest being six or seven years. One house with two rooms only. In one he sleeps, and in the other he cooks his food. About a bigha basti land with one jhar of bamboos, five bighas of rupit land. No faringati land. Pays Rs. 5 revenue. Has not cultivated land. His wife husks paddy for others, and gets paddy. His brother has been serving in the house of another person⁵ for Rs. 20 borrowed about five years ago, getting only food and clothes. The interest has accumulated, and the total demand now is Rs. 40. He has neither bullocks, buffaloes, nor cows, pigeons, or ducks. Requires 20 dhuns rice, about 2½ maunds, two seers salt, and a poa oil a month. Sometimes he begs and sometimes works. When he works, he gets 4 to 8 pice a day according to the time of rendering service. His wife gets a dhun of dhân for planting and reaping paddy in the season.⁶ He requires 7½ tolas of opium, at 7 annas a tola a month. He chews rice given to him for work done. Whatever he earns he buys opium, and is in debt, about Rs. 7, for opium. His utensils and the cattle he had were seized and sold for arrears of revenue. He is now and then employed as morakiya and can till about two bighas of land. His wife makes cloths, taking cotton on adhi contract. He gets his firewood and grass from the neighbouring jungle. Nothing invested. Has to perform pujas but no means. Not sufficient clothes to warm the family, a fire is always kept in the house. People do not trust him. For about nine months he takes two meals a day and three months one meal a day. The food is, however, below the average quantity. The curry is made of vegetables grown wild, as also of kochu, kumra, and lao, in the land. Sometimes little salt and cold rice complete the breakfast, and sometimes only rice eaten with khar. His wife has a common moni and a two-anna silver ring, worth about one rupee. No surplus clothes.

1. Differs from statement on previous page; he should have got 450 instead of 350 seers.

2. Yams and Kumra are cultivated plants.

3. The neighbouring jungle is evidently all on a grant.

4. An instance of the effect of opium-eating.

5. Compare Example 6.

6. Probably the payment for a day's work.

1. The Ahoms are descendants of the Shans who came across from Burma in the 13th century. The Ahoms ruled for 500 years, and becoming Hindus, abandoned their language and religion. They were conquered by the Burmese in the beginning of the present century, a few years before the British annexation in 1826.

2. Not a typical case, but a curiously interesting account of one of the results of the annexation of the country.

EXAMPLE 19.—HATI BORUA, AHOM.¹

² Hati Borua is an Ahom, and a member of the Borgohain family, and a resident of Pathari. Has 12 bighas rupit land, 6 bighas basti land, and about 6 bighas faringati land. Pays revenue in all Rs. 15. There is some dispute about the quantity of land. Has four houses: borghar in which he sleeps and cooks, moralghar where his two sons sleep in different rooms, chauraghar where he sits and keeps things, and a store-house where he has about 40 puras of paddy. No female member in the family. Had 4 wives, all died. Has two sons, one aged about 34, and the other about 25 years old. They are step-brothers. In the basti land there are bamboos, mango, jack-fruit, tenga, jara, and other fruit-trees, also about 60 tamul trees. The tamul and the fruits are sufficient for his year's consumption. Has two male buffaloes for ploughing purposes. Neither cows, bullocks, goats, pigeons, ducks, nor damaras. His sons till lands, and get about 200 puras sali dhán. Each son has a separate mustard field, each has got Rs. 10 worth mustard-seed this year. Has a small vegetable garden, which has lao, kumra, yams, and other vegetables of the season. Has not been able to marry his sons for want of ornaments and clothes. The man possesses ornaments and clothes worth Rs. 50 only. His first son espoused two women, both died. His second son brought a woman, who has been enticed a way by a Muhammadan neighbour. He gets his firewood and grass from the jungle, repairs his houses with bamboos grown on his basti land, purchases two seers salt and one seer oil every month. His sons catch fish in the neighbouring jolabs (bils). Takes two meals every day. He does not eat the food cooked by his sons. He does not sell his paddy. If there is any surplus, he keeps in his store-house. His sons cannot work as much as others do. Can't afford to keep servants. Sometimes he employs morakiya ploughman. Itowáni (transplanting) and reaping women are retained at times. He has in that case to give about 40 puras of paddy.

His father was the principal officer of the Roña³ Chauki during the Ahom Rája's time. He is now about 70 years of age. After the British conquest his father was supposed to be a rebel, and confined at Gauhati for about three years. He rendered assistance to British troops. After his release he was offered a munsifi, and he declined "to eat Company's rice." His son Hati was made a manzadár after his death. He was two lazy and weak to collect the revenues. He was convicted of resisting the Collector's process, and dismissed from the mauza. Whatever collections he made he thought it was his own, and thus the revenue was not paid. His property was attached, and sold to the extent of the revenue in arrears. He had yet good number of gold and silver ornaments, no cash. After the passing of the Slave Emancipation Act all his slaves left him. He has now not a single person to do his work. Some of his slaves and other people who were his dependents are now well-to-do persons. He does not mix with them. His elder son is illiterate, younger son knows only to read and write. They were sent to school, where they did not learn much. In fact, the elder boy, Tula, left the school on the death of his mother, which event took place soon after he was sent to school. He was disgusted with the people, for they seldom come to work in his house when asked to do so. They are impertinent, even the children of his slaves and dependents do not pay any attention to him. His sons have, therefore, left asking people to do their work, and work themselves. He pays his guru

3. Roha is an important village about 11 miles from Nowgong.

in kind. Holds religious meetings, four or five every year. Sold his ornaments that were first pledged for debt; could not redeem any. This occurred when he had his wives and other children and when his sons could not work. He used to spend good deal in village subscriptions and feasts, since the last 20 or 25 years he is under straitened circumstances. He has, however, not a single pice. He paid his last pice by selling his lands, cattle, and jewellery. He had to send a son to work as a servant on Rs. 6 a month. His son would gladly be a peon,¹ but as under the rules a peon is required to read and write, he cannot get the peonship. They have now employed themselves to serve the (crooked) plough² leaving all hope of serving the (crowned king) Government.

EXAMPLE 20.—DHIRESWAR SARMA, BRAHMIN.

Dhireswar, Sarma,³ of Chalchali, has a wife, but no child, a younger brother, his wife with an infant, a boy about 6 years of age, and a girl married, but not gone to her husband's house, aged about 13 years. Also his elder brother's widow and three boys, the eldest being about 14 years of age. Of the 2 others, one is about 9 years, and the other 3 years old. He has a borghar with three rooms where he sleeps, and is the principal house of the family, one moralghar, where his elder brother's widow and children sleep. One chauraghar with three rooms. In one of these rooms his younger brother sleeps with his wife and children, the other rooms are used as sleeping rooms. One gosainghar where he makes pujas, one store-house where he has about 50 puras paddy. One cow house and two sheds where he has two looms. He has 4 bullocks, 2 cows with two calves, one young damara and one male buffalo used in ploughing lands, one female buffalo he has at the khuti.⁴ None eats opium. Has one bigha basti land, where he has his houses and fruit-trees, one mango tree, one jack-fruit-tree, 10 tamul trees, 4 clumps of bamboos. He has a few flower trees near the gosainghar, also tulsi. In about $\frac{1}{2}$ kotta he has a little vegetable garden. He does not cultivate mah, mustard, til or cotton. He has 5 puras (20 bighas) of rupit land at Bamun. Has let $\frac{1}{2}$ bigha land on chukani⁵ to a ryot, who pays him Re. 1-5 as rent. He has given 4 bighas of land to his ploughman. This man has cultivated for him about 14 bighas of land. Another man has been engaged on Rs. 6 for the ploughing season. Employed 56 planting women at R. 0-2-3 each, total Rs. 7-14-0. In about 3 bighas he got 27 puras paddy a bigha and in the others 25 puras each, the total quantity obtained being 340 puras worth Rs. 85. This paddy will be sufficient for his 6 months' khoraki⁶ (food). He has performed lately shrads of his brother, sister-in-law, and another relative, and has given in marriage a daughter. Pays about Rs. 3 to cow-keeper. His brother keeps the female buffalo at the khuti with others. Gets about 3 maunds milk for six months in the year, worth about Rs. 12-4. He is a Bez, or village medical practitioner, and gets about Rs. 3 a month, sufficient to purchase salt, oil, and other necessities, as also to pay revenue. His sister-in-law weaves cloths. His brother generally performs pujas in the village (besides keeping buffalo), and gets dakshina or offerings in money and kind. All these give him his second six months' dhán. Is not in debt. Though he has temporary debts for necessities, which are repaid soon. He has two pairs of silver kharu, three pairs of gold thuriya (earrings), sipatmani, thopamani, and gold and silver

1. The pay of a peon is Rs. 6 to Rs. 8 a month.

2. Compare page 32.

3. A Brahmin, as the name Sarma implies. A well-to-do landholder, who employs labourers.

4. See page 3.

5. See page 8.

6. It ought to be a good deal more than sufficient, as the allowance is more than 12 seers rice a day for a family of 5 adults and 6 children.

rings, silk riha, mekla, dhoti, in all worth about Rs. 190. The debts contracted in performing shraddhs and his daughter's marriage have been repaid from what he had in his hands. In the marriage he got ornaments, eatables, milk, rice, &c., from the man to whom the girl was given. The ornaments and dress of the girl have not been taken into account. If the man had not been a Bez, his condition would have been worse. He saved in cash and invested in ornaments. His cash savings were all spent in the shraddh. His mother had only silver rings and gold thuriya¹ and nothing else. He takes two meals a day. The young children three.

1. Thuriya=earrings, also sometimes called keru.

EXAMPLE 21.—JARBE, MIKIR.

Jarbe, Mikir, of Rangkhong Hills, Pays Rs. 3 revenue. Has one chang house with three rooms. Three brothers with wives, three nephews, one son, one daughter; youngest brother has two daughters and a son. They all live in that house. Two boys can keep cows. Some of them live in ar² or pam cultivations. Cultivates land by hoeing 10 puras, (40 bighas). Cotton 2 puras. 12 maunds cotton obtained this year. Sells cotton at Rs. 3³ a maund. Gets 200 mantuns⁴ of paddy, in all 150 maunds. Cultivated til with paddy, and obtained 5 maunds, which he disposed of at Rs. 3 a maund at Kolonga; borrowed Rs. 3 to pay revenue, agreeing to pay three dangs⁵ of cotton (1½ maunds). Had an old debt of Rs. 50, contracted for purchasing paddy. Price of paddy 6 dhuns,⁶ nearly half maund, a rupee. Requires 3 kulsis grog, which he makes in his own house. The money, Rs. 50, to be paid by til, 100 maunds. He has no lac. He has neither bullocks nor cows or buffaloes, only 3 pigs, 6 fowls. This man has removed to this village two years ago. In fact, the whole village settled about two years ago. Two brothers eat opium, worth Rs. 6 a month. He purchases opium for cash or paddy or til. He requires 6 seers⁷ salt a month, but no oil. Keeps a fire in the house day and night. He has lengti, coat, and sheet, female petticoats, a few trinkets of brass, worth in all about Rs. 9. His paddy is sufficient to maintain the family for about nine months only. The rest of the year he subsists upon yams, kochus, meat, and dried fish and jungle vegetables.

EXAMPLE 22.—NAMAL, SHEKH.

Namal, Shekh, aged about 65 years. Is a widower. Has a son, about 20 years old, and daughter-in-law, and a minor daughter. Has one borghar for his use with two rooms, one moralghar with two rooms for his son's use. He has a cow-house. Has one damara and a bullock, two fowls only, several killed by jackals. No goats or other poultry. Has 2½ bighas rupit land which yields 60 puras⁸ paddy; baotali, 6 bighas, which gives him 80 puras⁹ paddy. Neither mustard, sugarcane, ahn, til, &c. Pays rent Rs. 8. His son cultivates land with borrowed bullocks on equal shares. Paddy sufficient to maintain him for eight months. The rest he begs or borrows. He has a debt of Rs. 8 or Rs. 9. He is a basket-maker and an opium-eater, and wants two tolas opium a month. He cannot afford to have two meals a day throughout the year; for about ten months he has two meals, and for about two months only one meal. His valuables are worth Rs. 17 only.

GHUNABHIRAM SARMA BORUA.

III.—EXAMPLES COLLECTED BY RAI SARAT CHANDRA BANERJI BAHADUR, EXTRA-ASSISTANT-COMMISSIONER.

Cold season of 1887-88.

EXAMPLE 23.—KERKON SUT.

A well-to-do man. Village Halirgaon, mauza Chachali.¹ A gaonbura. Kerkon Sut, cultivator. His family

consists of—

Himself age about 60 years.
His wife, Budai " 35 "

Four sons—

1. Thanoo	25	"	} All by his first wife, dead.
2. Bhanoo	20	"	
3. Tanu	16	"	
4. Gogoi	12	"	

Four girls—

5. Suvan	8	"	} By his present wife.
6. Dabohi	3	"	
7. Cheni	2	"	
8. Under one year.	1	"	

One boy and two girls died between 5 and 6. One daughter-in-law, Thanoo's wife, Alagi, married about a year ago. In all 11 members.

11. Holding. In the village (Halirgaon) in which he lives he has—

Bigha 1-1-8 of basti land.
" 7-2-7 rupit "
" 5-3-1 faringati land.

Besides this, he holds in the name of his second son about 7 bighas of faringati land in mauza Bheluguri.² All his sons and the daughter-in-law are there at present, while he with his wife and other children (girls) live at home.

He says he pays Rs. 12-10 as both revenue and local rates on his holding.

The old man with his wife and girls sleeps in the borghar. The sons stay at the pam during the months of Aswin,³ Kartik, and part of Aghan. Then they come home, and stay there for Pus.⁴ They are again at the pam during Magh, Phagun, Chait, Baisak, and Jeth.⁵ In Assar⁶ they come home, and stay for two months more, Sravan and Bhadra.

(a) In the basti land there are—

* Betel-nut trees 60 (bearing) a few with betel-vines on them.

Mango 1 "
Jack 3 "

Bamboos—

Bhaluka⁷ ... 1 clump=40 about.
Jati..... 3 " =100 "
Lime 3
Pummelo 1

and some plantains.

Betel-nut is the only article of garden produce that is sold. The selling takes place in Baisak to Assar, when boats come up with salt for barter. Last season there was an enormous crop of betel-nuts all over the country, and there was nobody to purchase. The rates were very low, 60 pans⁸ per rupee = (60 + 80 = 4,800). So what was not consumed was allowed to get spoilt.

In the season before last Rs. 2-worth of betel-nuts was sold, besides 4 seers of salt got by barter.

Pan is not sold, but used only for home consumption; bamboos, too, are not sold.

(c). The rupit land is close to his house, and besides the 7½ bighas above, he cultivates 2 bighas more in the same village, mortgaged to him by the owner for a loan of Rs. 44. It is a usufructuary mortgage.

1. Gaonbura=village headman, therefore sure to be well off. Not a very typical example.

2. This is what is called pam cultivation. The land is only occupied during the cold weather. When the crop is gathered the cultivator goes home.

3. September 15th—November 30th.

4. December 1st—January 15th.

5. January 15th—June 15th.

6. June 15th—September 15th.

7. Three kinds of bamboos are commonly grown:—
(a) Bhaluka=a large thick-stemmed bamboo. The most valuable.
(b) Jati, somewhat thinner than Bhaluka, but valuable.
(c) Bijli, a small thin variety.

8. One pan=4 score.

2. Ar=pam=temporary cultivation, occupied at a distance from the home, and only during the cold weather.

3. Uncleaned cotton at Rs. 3 is very cheap.

4. Mantun, see Note 3 on page 57.

5. Dang, a bale of cotton weighing 20 seers.

6. These are Mikir dhuns. They contain only 3½ seers. The rate, Rs. 2 a maund, is very high for paddy, but right for rice.

7. About right for 14 persons, 3 of whom are children.

8. This is 15 maunds. The average yield would have been about this.

9. This is 20 maunds. The average yield would have been about 37 maunds.

1. See page 38. The amounts vary with the district, the nature of the grain, and the length of stalk cut, but 3 danguris will rarely yield one maund of grain, generally a danguri yields 10 seers of paddy.

2. At 1,500 lbs. to the acre, the yield would be about 56 maunds.

3. Hardly so much,—one puras=10 seers as near as may be, therefore 5 puras=1½ maunds.

4. The pulse was boiled and eaten as dāl.

5. At 1,300 lbs. per acre, the outturn would be 37 maunds from 7 bighas.

6. One seer of rice per diem for each person is about the rate which is believed correct as a good allowance all over the Brahmaputra Valley.

7. More probably Rs. 35. This rate is nearly the same as the 500 lbs. an acre brought out by experiments.

Thus there are 9½ bighas of rupit land on which the food of the family, rice, is grown. The produce is usually about 24 danguries¹ (it is by no means easy to find out what an average danguri comes to, but I think 3 danguries to a maund may be taken as the nearest estimate) per bigha but in the present year the yield was less, only about 20 danguries per bigha. This the gaonbura explains was owing to the baby coming at the wrong time, when his wife could have otherwise helped him in transplanting paddy. His boys were otherwise engaged, and could not render much help.*

This gives $9\frac{1}{2} \times 20$
3 maunds=63½ maunds² of

paddy for the 9½ bighas of rupit land.

(c) The faringati land is in two places as above:—

Bigha 5-3-1 in the village on the banks of the Kullung, which is sandy, and on which no rice is raised: it produces matikalai (pulse). This year the crop came to nothing for want of rain, and what came up was spoilt by cattle.

In the year before the crop was poor also: it produced 5 puras (nearly 2 maunds)³ of matikalai, which was eaten dālī,⁴ &c., but not sold.

(d) The 7 bighas of faringati land in the pam yields both rice and mustard.

I could not get the old man to give me an estimate of the crop of either kind on this land. He has not been on good terms with his boys since his eldest son's marriage, who suspect him of hoarding money with their stepmother, and want to separate. The old man never goes to the pam, has nothing to do with the work there or the produce of the land, at least he says so.

Taking, however, the average yield of newly-taken-up faringati land at 5 maunds per bigha, we get the following total of paddy raised:—

63 maunds from rupit land.
35½ " " faringati land.

Taking 27 seers of rice (husked) per maund of paddy (unhusked rice) we get about 66 maunds of rice for the family.

*If this just lasts the family for a year, we get 7½ seers of rice per day for 7 adults and 3 children (leaving out the infant in arms), which is probably about right, leaving a margin for seed, guests, &c.

All that he could tell me about the produce was that the sālī dhān raised on the rupit land, together with āhu dhān from the pam, just lasted the whole family for the whole year. He scarcely ever had to purchase any rice, nor had he any surplus to sell. About 3 years ago he purchased only one rupee worth of dhān.

Mustard seed.—As I have said, I could not get the produce. At the lowest estimate, it would come to 14 maunds (at 2 maunds per bigha), which would sell on the spot at at least Rs. 28.⁷

Of course the man pays his way, or he would not be a gaonbura. He has no debts but one, and that a good one. Feecho Bamoni owes him Rs. 44, and has pledged to him 2 bighas of rupit land as above for two years to be enjoyed in lieu of interest.

* The fact is that transplanting is peculiarly woman's work here, and the men seldom lend a hand in it, if women are available. The women do a good deal of the cutting too.

V. Clothing and jewellery. Has the following:—

(1) For himself—

	Rs.	A.
(Foreign) Dhotis 2 (8 and 6 cubits).....	1	4
" Sola (shirt) 1	0	12
" " (of drill) 1	1	0
Home-made borkapor worth about	2	0
" cheleng	0	12
" gamcha (shawl) (eri silk)....	0	8
	6	4

(2) His wife and daughter-in-law—

(a) Jewellery—

	Rs.
1 pair silver kharu (bracelet).....	18
1 gold moni (necklace of beads)	20
1 " madoli (neck-bead).....	23
2 chains of small madoli (gold).....	23
1 pair karia (earrings)	15
1 " "	15
1 gold moni	6
	120

(b) Clothing: the wife's—

	Rs.	As.	
Muga 1 pair mekla 7 8 Used on ceremonial occasions. }			Home made.
and riha. }			
Eri 1 pair " " 3 0 }			
Cotton 1 pair " " 0 12 }			In daily use. }
	12	4	

(2) The daughter-in-law's—

	Rs.	A.
3 pairs as above	11	8
Plus 1 ditto of silk	7	0
Total	18	8

(3) Thanoo, the eldest boy—

	Rs.	A.	
Cotton dhotis 2.....	1	8	Foreign.
" cheleng 1.....	0	8	
" pagri 1.....	1	0	
" Sola 1.....	1	0	
Total.....	4	0	

(4) Bhanoo—

Dhoti 1.....	0	8	Home-made.
" 1.....	0	8	
Sola 1.....	1	0	Foreign.
Cheleng 1.....	0	8	
Total.....	2	8	

(5) Ianoo—

Dhoti 1	0	4	Home-made.
Chadar 2	0	14	
Sola 1	0	12	Foreign.
Total.....	1	14	

Gogoi—

Dhoti 1	0	4	Home-made.
" 1	0	8	
Chadar 1	0	4	Foreign.
Sola 1	0	12	
Total.....	1	12	

(7) Of the four girls, the eldest alone has any clothes, viz., a home-made cheleng worth about two annas.

	Rs. A.
Total value of jewellery	120 0
„ „ clothing	47 4
Total.....	167 4

VI. Utensils and agricultural or other implements. *Utensils. Of kaph (bell-metal).*

	Rs. A.
Bata ¹ 1.....	2 8
Kahi ² 2.....	1 8
Terahi (small kahi) 2.....	1 4
Batis ³ 6.....	4 0
Lota 2.....	3 0
Total.....	12 4

Of brass.

	Rs. A.
Koloh ⁴ 2.....	1 8
„ 2.....	0 8
Ghoti ⁵ 1.....	1 8
Botloi ⁶ 1 small	2 0
Tou ⁷ 1.....	6 0
Korahi ⁸ 1.....	1 8
Ghagori 1 (big koloh)	1 8
Horai ⁹ 2	1 8
Karahi ¹⁰ 1	0 12
Total.....	16 12

Total value of utensils ... 29 0

Agricultural Implements.

	Rs. A.
Plough, &c. 1	1 0
Daos, 2	0 6
Spades, 2	1 4
Axe, 1	0 12
Chisel, 1	0 2
Total.....	3 8

There are three houses besides the granary and cowshed. There are, besides these, a couple of huts in the pam. The posts are all bamboo, and these and the thatching have to be renewed every three or four years.

Two cows (not in milk), one plough buffalo (in the pam). The milk, when there is any, is not sold, but consumed at home.

This consisted for the day of two usual meals of rice and a curry of lao with salt and turmeric. He uses turmeric where others would use salt and khar or tenga (acid), being well to do, and khar and acid do not agree with him as he suffers from asthma.

Besides the two meals, however, jolpan, or tiffin, is taken in the afternoon, and sometimes in the morning too. This consists of pithaguri (rice flour) with molasses, salt, or plantain, or of karai (parched rice) with ditto.

About three¹¹ seers of salt is consumed per month, and three seers of oil per year. The salt is purchased, but the oil is produced at home. The gaonbura does not use kerosine for the gosainghar lamp, but mustard oil, so that very little of the oil can be used with food.

* I must include, however, articles of furniture, &c.

	Rs. A.
1 Bhutia blanket	2 0
1 * Bazar dolicha	8 0
1 Mora (seat made of cane).....	0 4
1 Koth (mat)	0 8
	5 12
Total.....	167 4
Total.....	178 0

N.B.—Depreciation has, however, to be allowed for the clothing at least for use.

1. Bata=a plate with a stand, on which betel-nut is kept.
2. Kahi=a plate off which rice is eaten.
3. Batis=cup.

4. Koloh=a large water jug.
5. Ghoti=a small vessel for bringing water.
6. Botloi=a vessel for cooking.
7. Tou=a cooking vessel flatter than a botloi.
8. Korahi=a small flat vessel used for washing rice in.
9. Horai=very like a bata, except that the stand is higher from the ground.
10. Differs from a botloi and tou only in shape.

11. This is a small supply for eleven members, and is probably below the true amount, which would be about 5½ seers.

* Dolicha=carpet.

1. Pithaguri, prepared by steeping rice in water and when dry pounding it into powder. The resulting powder is known as pithaguri.
2. A cadastral survey was going on in the village at this time.

3. Dheki=rice husker.

4. Not in this instance a separate house, but a corner of one of the rooms in the Borghar.

The old man had his bath in the river in the early morning, after which he took half a pao of pithaguri¹ with plantain, and then went out to look after the amín² at work.* Coming home at noon, he had his midday meal and rest for three hours. In the afternoon he went and lounged at a friend's, when others like him joined. In the evening he is going to have his second meal, and then go to bed.

His wife rose early, swept the court-yard, and then had her bath, and brought four kolohs of water from the river 200 yards off. Then husked the paddy in the dheki³ for the day's rice, had a second bath, and then cooked the rice and curry. This she distributed to her husband and children, and when they had done, took her own meal.

She had rest for about a couple of hours in the middle of the day, after which she took to the loom for a couple of hours, i.e., till about 5 p.m. Now she has again to fetch water (after another bath), four kolohs, from the river, cook the evening meal, feed the children, take her own food, and go to bed at about 9½ p.m.

The only light used at night is a lighted faggot of reeds, except in the place of worship (gosain⁴ ghar) where there is a lamp.

I forgot to ask what amount they have to pay annually as guru-kar (dues paid to the religious instructor, guru), but it is paid in cash as well as in kind.

When not engaged at the loom, she goes to some neighbour's place in the afternoon, and has a friendly chat and possibly a quarrel.

The eldest girl helps her mother in the household work, as fetching water, taking care of the infant, &c.

The rice produced is consumed, but the mustard is mostly sold, as well as matikalai, when any is left over.

Then the gaonbura gets Rs. 6 per annum⁵ from the mauzadar for helping him in realising revenue. This is not paid in cash, but a deduction allowed in the revenue.

Then the eldest boy, before he married and settled down, was in service, chaprasi to a European gentleman in Tezpur, and got Rs. 7 per month. He brought home Rs. 40 (besides some utensils, &c.) after two years' service, which went towards his marriage expenses.† Another Rs. 20 was borrowed, but this was paid off by the boy going into service again for six months more. He had then to come away, as the wife was a grown-up girl.

One of the other lads will now probably go into service.

EXAMPLE 24.—BOLAI, KEWAT.⁶

⁷A poor man in mauza Chalchali village Bahkata. There, 3 other poor men live in the village of 50 houses, though they are comparatively able bodied—

1. Bolai, Kewat, about 50 years. (2 girls)—
2. Golai 16 years.
3. Amil 10 „

Golai is engaged to be married to Dhoni Kewat in a few months. Dhoni Kewat comes and occasionally helps them, but does not form a member of the family.

* When not so employed, he realises revenue from the ryots for the mauzadar, who allows him Rs. 6 per annum for the work.

† Both husband and wife do devotion in the gosain ghar for a few minutes, morning and evening. The family, like most Hindus in the Nowgong district, belong to the Mahapurusha sect of Vaishnavas.⁴

‡ It had to be paid to the father of the girl.

Accurate actuals were not forthcoming, but

II. Holding. the man said he had 5 bighas of rupit land, and paid about Rs. 4 as revenue (with rates). His basti, I found, was about 6 × 80 yards, or 1 kotta 10 lessas. The revenue (with rates) for this and the rupit comes to Rs. 3-10 9. Details subsequently obtained from the mauzadār show that his holding consists of—

	B.	K.	L.	
Basti	0	1	17	Revenue with local rates=Rs. 3-14.
Rupit	3	2	10	
Faringati ...	2	0	0	
Total ...	5	4	7	

Besides these he had got a small patch of faringati, area uncertain.

(a) In the basti land there are three huts viz.:—

III. Houses, agricultural and garden produce.

One small cookshed.

One hut in two compartments, one of which is used as the sleeping apartment, and the other for storing grain.

One hut without walls (incomplete), built by future son-in law, and intended for the storing grain in, instead of hut No. 2.

The remainder of the land is a garden with—

- 1 rabab tenga.
- 20 betel nuts,* no betel-vines.
- 1 mango.
- 3 clumps of bamboos (slender ones.)

Pan or betel-vine requires fencing to protect it from cattle, and the man is not able to put a fencing round his garden, hence no pan.

(b) Rupit.—Having no cattle of his own, has to cultivate his land on what is called morakiya terms with some well-to-do neighbour. That is to say, he is allowed to use the plough 1 day on his own field for every two days he ploughs his neighbour's land.

The only idea he could give of the produce was that it lasted him for about 6 months in the year. He then has to beg or borrow or work as a labourer, though, not being strong enough, he cannot work regularly.

(c) Faringati.—Sown with matikalai. There was no yield this year. He got about 2 dhuns (8½ seers) the year before and used it as dali.

Has not been able to pay the year's revenue yet. Last year had to borrow

IV. Debts. Rs. 3 of one Bapooram, mukhtar, on a bond, for paying revenue. The interest stipulated was 1 anna in the rupee per month (or 75 per cent). The mukhtar has just got a decree against him for Rs. 7 odd, so he is going to be sold up.

In years gone by, he was a strong man, and hence incurred no debts. Had some disease three years ago, and then took to opium, in consequence of the disease he says. Has seen better days, as he comes of a rather respectable family.

On going to the man's house three or four days afterwards, found a civil court peon with the mukhtar's brother in the compound, and a crowd of people assembled about them. The decree was going to be executed. Ultimately, it was arranged by the debtor borrowing the amount of the judgment-debt from a well-to-do neighbour

* Produce annually about Rs. 3 worth of betel-nuts. They are not sold for cash, but exchanged for salt and opium (though it is irregular in the latter case).

whom 1 bigha of rupit land had to be given on mortgage for two years in lieu of interest

V. Clothing, &c. Bolai—

		Rs.	As.	P.
Cotton	1 Gamcha	0	4	0
	1 Borkapor	0	8	0

His bed is dhan kher (straw), there are no mats.

Golai—

		Rs.	As.	P.
Cotton—	1 pair mekla and riha ...	1	0	0
Amil—	1 mekla and 1 gamcha...	0	4	0
		2	0	0

		Rs.	As.	P.
VI.—Utensils, &c.	1 brass lota	1	3	0
	1 bell-metal bati ...	0	12	0
		1	15	0

They dine off plantain-leaves, and the poor man, who does not see well at night, has made a hole in the floor to shove the plantain-leaf into, so that the curry-water may not escape.

Implements, &c.—

		Rs.	As.	P.
VII. Dwelling house, above.	1 loom	1	0	0
	1 dao	0	8	0
	1 kuthar (axe)	0	12	0

VIII. Cattle. Nil.

Bolai himself had no meal last evening, nor this morning, but is going to have one this evening; the girls had rice with salt only.

The reason why Bolai did not have his meals is this. He is a Kania (opium-eater), and cannot take rice without some curry to wash it down.

He was himself, during the greater part of the day, watching and helping in a partition of property, in the expectation of getting a present when it was over.

On coming home in the evening, he found nothing ready for a meal except rice and salt there being no sort of sag or curry. It had been raining, and the girls had not got together any sag. So he went to bed without food. This morning, too, it was raining, and no vegetables were brought together.

The sag is simply boiled in water, with either a little salt or with khar (potash) or tenga (acid).

About two seers of salt is required monthly.

IXa.—Salt, oil, and opium. This is got mostly by exchange for betel-nuts. No oil is used either as food or for lighting purposes. The man takes one anna worth of opium daily when he can get it, but has to go without at times, and at others has to content himself with a little of it.

When not engaged in the field he works for hire, i.e., accompanies Gosains

X.—The day's work. as a servant when they go on tour, carrying their loads of clothing, utensils, &c.

There is no fixed rate of hire, but he gets his food and a small present occasionally.

XI.—Cash. Nil.

For the Rs. 3 he borrowed of the mukhtar, the latter (who is a Brahmin) expected him to accompany him in his tours (in lieu of interest) till the money was paid off. And it was because he could not always go, that the mukhtar put him into court.

The elder girl is not allowed to do the cooking, since she came of age, as after this she is considered unclean till she gets married. The cooking is done by the younger girl, the elder doing the other household work, and both helping in the field (transplanting, &c.).

EXAMPLE 25.—MIHIRAM, KEWAT.

Between poor and well-to-do; a sufferer from sickness, the law, and improvidence.

I. Family. Mihiram, Kewat, of mauza Bheluguri, village Bheluguri—

Mihiram himself aged about 45 years.
His wife aged about 35 years.
A girl aged about 5 years.
A boy aged about one year.

These are the only two children living out of twelve. The others, nine girls and one boy, all died young, or shortly after birth, and almost always of convulsions.¹ This is attributed to some malignant spirit having taken his abode in the land.

Mihiram came to live in the family as a ghor-jia* when a young man. But no regular marriage ceremony took place till last Baisak, after he had got twelve children. As his children were always dying, he at last grew sick of it, and talked of leaving his wife and going elsewhere. This brought matters to a crisis, and the wife insisted on a marriage ceremony. This was accordingly gone through about a year ago, though at the sacrifice of the only two plough-bullocks of the family, which were sold for Rs. 30 for expenses.²

He had a large area of land, basti, rupit, faringati, from his father, as much as to pay Rs. 15 as revenue for. It was about four bighas basti, ten bighas rupit, and six bighas faringati. But with this, his father left him a debt of Rs. 10 also. Towards this debt he paid Rs. 5 in cash, besides giving him a milch cow and calf. But nevertheless, his basti and faringati land were sold up in execution of a decree by the creditor (one Krishnaram Medhi) for the balance with interest and costs.³ This was about 20 years ago, and Mihiram, being homeless, came to live in his wife's house.

The rupit land remained to him till about six years ago. He had, however, incurred a debt himself for paying revenue, and for miscellaneous expenses* of Rs. 20 from one Bogi Brahmin. In lieu of interest for this, he had to work in the Brahmin's shop as a servant. He grew tired of this, and a village panchayat was held who found that in a year the interest had come up to Rs. 30, making him the debtor of Rs. 50. He borrowed Rs. 50 of another man (Chanaram Barua), and had to work as a slave in lieu of interest. This was too much for him, and he at last squared matters by mortgaging his rupit land to one Rustomgoria. So the rupit, too, went.

Now he has got only his wife's land, which consists of a strip of basti, being about one half bigha in area, besides four kottas of rupit.

About a third of this to the north has been given up to a monk to live in as a tenant, though no rent is exacted. It is more as a counterpoise, it appears, to the evil spirit, who is also supposed to have his quarters on the land.

1. Peculiarly heavy infant mortality

2. An extraordinary instance of improvidence.

3. This story is a good example of the enormous rates of interest charged, and the consequences which frequently result.

The rest contains two huts for the family and a garden with—

Bamboos	3 clumps.
Jack	1
Tenga (lime)	2
Rabab (pummelo).....	1
Mungo	2 not bearing.
Thekera (an acid fruit)	2 ditto.
Betel-nuts	25 not all bearing

The three clumps of bamboos, on the monk's portion, are used by the family, and not by the monk.

The betel-nut produced is not enough to leave any over for sale.

A few tobacco plants and plantains and brinjals, besides, the lao (gourd) trailing over the roof of the huts.

Rupit.—Of course he has none of his own. But last year he got three bighas on Chukani terms (rent at ordinary revenue rates), from one Biheli. Then there were the four kottas of his wife's; and having yet his two plough-bullocks (not yet sold to discharge the expenses incurred in the marriage ceremony) he was able to break up five bighas of land for bao across the river, mauza Khatwalgaon. Thus he had nearly nine bighas in all of rupit or bao land.

The produce was 100 danguris, which has lasted him from the month of Aghan last, and will carry him through to the month of Jeth.

Then he also took up some pam land (faringati), in mauza Bheluguri, eight bighas, year before last. Having had rice enough to last him till the cold weather, he did not grow áhu dhán on this, but sugarcane.

This year his cold-weather paddy crop was not a good one, and so he will sow this faringati land with áhu dhán, which will be available for use in Sravan.

During the intervening two months (Jeth and Assar) he will have to borrow or buy. This is unlucky, as he has foolishly handicapped himself by selling his plough-bullocks for an idea. He will only be able to plough whatever land he now takes up on morakiya terms (see ante, Example 24), and this means reduced produce. So his chances of paying off whatever he borrows are likely to grow less and less, unless he is helped by a bumper crop.

He has so far paid his way by sacrificing his homestead and rupit lands, finally his plough-bullocks.

So there are no heavy debts. He owes, however, a few rupees (about Rs. 5) in small items. Indeed what attracted me to the man's place was hearing from an evidently well-to-do neighbour calling out to him significantly from the road and saying "When shall I come?" To which he replied meekly, as a debtor generally does until brought to bay, "You need not come. I shall myself see you in a few days." I asked him how he came to be in debt, and then he gave his history as above.

His own—

		Rs.	A.	P.
V.—Clothing and jewellery.	Cotton 1 Dhoti	0	8	0
	" 1 Pagri	0	2	0
	" 1 Borkapor	1	8	0
	" 1 Sola (shirt)	0	8	0
	" 1 Chaddar	0	8	0

His wife's—

Cotton 1 pair mekla and riha.	1	0	0
Muga 1 pair ditto	7	0	0
1 Khania borkapor	1	0	0

Children's—

2 pieces of cloth ...	0	4	0
-----------------------	---	---	---

Total..... 12 6 0

No jewellery except one pair of earrings
(Karya) gold ($\frac{3}{4}$ th tolah) worth about... Rs. 15 0 0

At the marriage ceremony, jewellery was borrowed of neighbours for use.

VI.—Utensils, Agricultural and other implements.	Brass lota	3
	Bell-metal batis	3
	„ kahi	2
	Dao	1
	Loom	1

Plough, nil; borrow it on morakiya terms with the bullocks as above.

VII. Dwelling-house. The two huts on basti land as above.

VIII. Cattle. Nil now.

In the morning the family had rice with kochu

IX. Food. and Khuturia and Dhekia sag (all growing wild) with thekera tenga (acid fruit) and a pinch of salt and a little oil.

For the evening meal they will have rice with urohi beans (of which is a plant growing in the garden, not wild), with khar (potash) and chillies.

Besides this, the children have jolpan (tiffin), which consists of pithaguri (rice-flour) or boka-chaul (soft rice). The former is taken with plantains, and the latter is soaked in water and then taken with plantains or molasses.

The wife, however, has been sick, and has not been able to prepare either for some time.

About 2 seers of salt is required monthly. Of late the price has gone up from 8 to 10 pice per seer; they don't know why, none of the people, of whom quite a number were assembled. Oil is seldom used.

Has done working for a few days, as he has

X. Occupation. been feeling seedy. Before that his wife was sick, and he used to go and plough his pam land in Bheluguri chari in the morning with the gaonbura's plough. For this he had to plough the gaonbura's field on two days for every day he got the plough for his own field.

Coming home at noon, he would have his bath in the river, and then his midday meal. After this he would fetch fuel (reeds) from the jungle, and water from the river (when his wife was unable to do so), and in the evening he had to cook as well. The cooking was only done once (when the wife is sick) in the evening for both meals, the evening meal and the next midday meal.

EXAMPLE 26.—(NAME OMITTED).

Another poor man, blessed with an inconve-

I. Family. niently large number of children (there are three others in like circumstances in a village of 40 houses).

Mauza Kachamari, village Rangagora.

Himself about	40 years.
Mother	60 „
Wife	30 „

6 children—

Boy	16 „
„	7 „
„	4 „
Girl	3 „
Boy	2 „
Baby (girl)	in arms.

Basti.—His kotia (rice seedling) land

II. Holding.	Got by exchange for 2 bighas of his rupit land ...	0 2 11
		0 4 0

Total 1 1 11

Rupit—	(a) 1 plot (high)...	2 4 10
	(b) 1 „ „ ...	2 1 2
	(c) 1 „ low ...	3 0 0
Total.....		8 0 12

Faringati—	(a) 1 plot	1 2 3
	(b) held as tenant in a grant.....	2 0 0
Total.....		3 2 3

Says he has to pay Rs. 9 as revenue and rent (including rates), which is very near the mark.

One portion is the old basti, the other has been

III. Houses, agricultural and garden produce. recently acquired by giving up in exchange a plot of rupit (2 bighas) in a distant part of the village, where the crop could not be watched. This was the more necessary, as the family felt cramped for space.

One is the borghar (principal hut) in three compartments, viz.—

- (a) mother's room.
- (b) his own sleeping room.
- (c) cookshed.

The second contains the dheki, and is used as the dining room.

The third is the sitting room, and paddy is steamed here preparatory to husking.

The fourth is the granary, with very little grain, except about 3 danguris (1 maund) for kotia (seed).

The last is the cowshed, thatching-grass (200 bundles) is stored here.

The rest is a garden with the following trees, &c.

Betel-nuts	25 bearing, but not good ones, with pan (betel-vine) on two of them.
Mango.....	2 not bearing.
Jack.....	4 (2 bearing).
Tenga lime ...	2 not bearing.
Plantains ...	a few.
Small betel...	2
Semul	1
Eri (castor oil), a small patch 8 yards square.	
Tobacco ditto ditto	30 plants.

Four lao plants (gourd) are trailing over the roofs of the huts, all bearing.

Basti.—Of the garden produce, the betel-nuts are sold to traders from the station at 4* gundas per pice, or exchanged for salt. He also purchases cotton from the produce for making into cloth for the family.

Rupit.—Two of the plots are both comparatively high land, and there was no crop of sáli dhán raised on either during the past season, as there was not rain enough for this class of land. Áhu dhán was grown on one of them, however, and it has been again sown with áhu.

He tried sáli dhán on bao field last year, but it failed; and this year he tried amona bao, which, too, did not succeed well, there not being water enough.

Faringati.—One plot yielded very little áhu dhán, and less mustard seed. The other plot also produced a poor mustard crop.

It is not at all easy to get from these men an idea of the produce; but, so far as I could gather, the man said that he got his crops as follows:—

Áhu or early rice—	
Rupit land	4 mds. (2 bighas)
Faringati (a).....	1 „ (2 $\frac{1}{2}$ „)
„ (b).....	3 „ (3 „)
	8

This was reaped in Jāthi¹ and carried him through three months, As-sar,² Sravan, and Bhadra (so the estimate of produce must be below the mark, as it evidently is).^{*} However, his statement that this lasted him only for three months is apparently correct.

There remained at least two months for the cold weather crop to be available. So during Aswin and Kartik³ he had to beg or borrow. The way in which he said he managed was (a) either begging of friends and acquaintances, (b) helping others on field work and getting some paddy as consideration, and (c) gathering from other's fields what is known as do-dalia (second crop) from the shoot of the áhu dhán after it is reaped. This is, of course, extremely poor, and does not repay the labour and trouble of gathering it to the ordinary ryots.^{*}

^{*} I found this on having the do-dalia cut once in a rice field attached to a jail when in charge. The fact is, it is never reaped but by those in indigent circumstances. It is left to them.

From Aghan⁴ he began utilising his bac crop (about 10 maunds in all) which lasted him till the end of Magh⁵ (three months more). Since then he has been again begging, and this time there is no do-dalia to stand him in need (as it comes of áhu only). With so many mouths to feed begging must be a difficult process. I found on enquiry that he had, during the past few days, managed as follows.

One Rakoh, a well-to-do neighbour whom he had helped in cutting dhán in the cold weather, gave him—

On one occasion	2 puras of paddy (about 25 seers). ⁶
On another occasion	Ditto.
Ahom Sing	Ditto. } These men
Ghino	Ditto. } he helped
His mother-in-law ...	Ditto. } in the field.

The two puras he had of his mother-in-law was what he was subsisting upon when I visited him.

He has now two months more before him, before the áhu crop will come to hand.

In order to pay his revenue, he has to borrow⁷ about Rs. 8 every year in the month of Pus or Magh from a trader, who is paid off by his mustard crop at the rate of Rs. 2 per maund of mustard delivered at his home. There has, however, been a succession of two bad seasons for mustard, and this cold weather he got only half a maund in all. Thus he is in debt by the amount of two year's revenue, Rs. 16. He has only one plough bullock, and cannot take up enough mustard land to carry him through bad seasons.

Besides this, he owes about Rs. 4 worth of paddy.

He sees no way of extricating himself from these debts.

V.—Clothing and jewellery.	All cotton.	{ His own—	
		Gamchas.....	2 home made
		Borkapor.....	1 ditto.
		Mother's necklas	2 ditto.
		chadar.	1 ditto.
		Wife's ditto	1 ditto.

Eldest boy goes naked yet, but has got a chadar cotton (for the cold-weather) and an eri sheet as well.

1. May 15th—June 15th.
2. Assar—Bhadra—June 15th—September 15th.

3. Aswin—September 15th—October 15th. Kartik—October 15th—November 15th.

4. Aghan—November 15th—December 15th.

5. February 15th.

6. This seems too much: a pura 10 seers.

7. The debt seems to have originated in the revenue demand having to be paid during bad seasons. The man himself is probably one of those thriftless beings best described by the term "ne'er-do-weel."

No bedding except two mats made of sugar-cane stalk (after pressing). No jewellery.

	Kahi (bell-metal) (small) ...	1
	Batis ditto ...	2
	Ditto ditto (small) ...	2
VI.—Utensils, agricultural and other implements.	Lota (brass)	1
	Koloh do. (broken)	1
	Loom	1
	Plough	1

VII.—Dwelling house. Dwelling-house as above.

Only one plough-bullock. Has to get another on morakiya terms, i.e., gets its use for two days for working the third day in the owner's field.^{*}

Last evening's meal consisted of rice with curry of lao (gourd) with khar, and with a pinch of salt added during eating, as there was not enough to put into the curry itself.

Oil is hardly ever used.

This morning the children have just had a meal on the rice and curry left over from last evening.

Yesterday's morning meal consisted of rice with only a little salt and chilly. No curry was prepared, as one of the children is sick, and the mother had to look after it. She could not gather the wild vegetables or leaves. There is an immense variety of these, but they are, of course, not affected, when there is some real vegetable handy:—

- (1) Dhekia tops,
- (2) Kochu leaves,
- (3) Bhotua stalk leaves,
- (4) Khoturia ditto,
- (5) Morolia ditto,
- (6) Kath alu root, &c., &c.,

used when there is no lao or kumra or other vegetable that is grown.

The children are allowed to have their fill of rice, but the father, mother, and grandmother have not always as much as they can eat, when they are borrowing or begging.

Himself.—Was ploughing in the áhu field till about noon, then had breakfast, and rested for two hours; went to the field in the afternoon for cleaning it. Came home in the evening, and looked after sick child while the wife went to cook. Then dined and went to bed.

The wife was mostly taken up with the sick child till evening.

The mother is too old for much work.

The eldest boy (10) is just able to plough, and does so occasionally. He came home with the plough at 10½ a.m. while the father was engaged with me at home.

XI.—Cash. N.N.

EXAMPLE 27.—GOPAL, KATONI.

Mauza Gonthagan, village Teliagam.

An able-bodied (strong) young man beginning life for himself.

Gopal, Katoni.—Gopal belongs to Kámrúp, but not being able to agree with his brothers, he came and settled here as a Ghorjia. A widow, with her only daughter and hardly any means, welcomed him into her house, and he is engaged to the young girl. Though

^{*} This is the case when one bullock is taken morakiya; the reverse is the case when two bullocks are taken.

not yet married, he is the head of this little family. It consists of—

Himself, age about.....	28 years
The mother	45 "
The daughter	12 "

Gopal has been in the family for five years like this.

Basti.— This is not his own land nor the widow's.

II. Holding. They have rented a bit of basti land of a relative for eight annas per year.

There are two huts, one is the borghar in three compartments—(a) the kitchen, (b) dining and sleeping room, and (c) contains the dheki.

The second hut is in two compartments (a) the sitting-room, and (b) where the grain is stored.

The loom stands between these houses. On one portion of the basti, kotia is (rice seedlings) raised. The rest has a few plantains only, and a patch of castor-oil plants for rearing eri; also a few chillies.

There are, as usual, lao plants trailing on the roofs of the two huts.

So there is, nothing much in the basti; no garden produce to sell.

Rupit.—He has none of his own, but holds as a sub-tenant-at-will the following, paying at the ordinary rates:—

B. K. L.

2 0 0	of one Bhisnu, who has more land than he can cultivate.
1 1 0	Bao land of one Durga Kachan.
1 0 0	Bao land of Bhol Sarma, a charitably-disposed neighbour to whom he makes himself useful.
1 0 0	Bao land of a relative.

5 1 0

Faringati—

2 0 0	Rented of a relative.
2 0 0	Newly broken up and revenue paid for, but has not yet borne a crop. This is because there was some competition for

the land. But he will have to give up now two bighas bao land, being a mere tenant-at-will.*

The revenue and rent payable comes to about Rs. 6 (with local rates.)

III. Agricultural produce. In the month of Sravan was gathered the Ahu dhan, about ten maunds.

Then came the early bao (called rupohi bao) in Kartik; but the crop came almost to nothing, being damaged by birds (jokora or choa). The yield was only about 1½ maund.†

* N.B.—About six years ago, one Monee sold bighas 3-3-3 of faringati land to the family for Rs. 2. This Gopal held and cultivated till within two years ago, when Monee sold the land a second time to another person, and he had to give it up. The first sale was evidenced only by an endorsement on the back of the patta for the year (I saw it), and was of course irregular. This was taken advantage of, and the second sale deprived Gopal of the land. Of course, he is too poor to think of going to law over it.

† It was curious to note how the people connected this with the Forest Department Circular recently abrogated. The restrictions temporarily put in consequence of that circular on cutting thatching-grass and fuel were said

Then came the bao and sali, which aggregated to about 40 maunds.

Before he got his cold-weather crop he had to borrow about two maunds of paddy, but now he ought to be able to get through till next ahu crop, he said.

IV. Debts. None so far, except the two maunds of paddy, which he will probably be able to pay off from his store.

V. Clothing and jewelry. His own—

		Rs.	As.	P.
(Foreign) Dhoti	2	0	12	0
(Home-made) Gamcha	1	0	2	0
Borkapor	1	2	0	0
Bhutia blanket (borrowed)				
(Foreign) Cheleng	2	1	0	0
" Sheet	1	1	2	0
"	1	2	0	0
" Sula	1	1	8	0
		8	8	0
Has a string of beads round his neck		2	4	0
Silver ring		0	4	0
		2	8	0

The mother—

Home-made mekha and riha	2	0	0
" cheleng	1	0	0
	3	0	0

The daughter—

Home made mekha and riha	2	0	0
Purchased ditto (of Muga)	6	0	0
	8	0	0

Total 22 0 0

VI. Utensils, Agricultural and other implements.	Kahi 2	These belong to the family from of old.
	Bata 2	
	Hlorai 1	
	Ghoti 2	
	Lota 1	
	Koloh 1	
	Tou 1	
	Loom 1	
	Plough 1	

VII. Dwelling-house. As above.

Nil, has to cultivate his field on morakiya terms, but being a strong young man, and not many mouths to feed, is just able to hold his own, though thus handicapped.

A she-goat is, however, being reared on adhi terms. It belongs to a neighbour who cannot look after it. The girl in this family takes care of it on the understanding that the kids are to go alternately to either family. The goat has now a kid, a month old.

The meals are cooked twice. The morning meal yesterday consisted of rice with a curry of lao with khar

IX. Food. and salt; evening, rice with the tops of ranga lao stalk fried in oil.

Yesterday Gopal was engaged in ploughing his field from morning till about 11 a.m., came home and had his mid-day meal, had a rest of two hours; went to the field again at 3 p.m., and cleaned it of stubble, roots, &c. Then came home in the evening, had his meal, and went to bed.

The mother cooked food on both occasions and went to her neighbours to beg for lao, &c.

The daughter cleaned the compound, fetched water, and cleaned the utensils,¹ steamed dhán, and did other household work.

To-day is a holiday (the day before the Baisák Bihu) when no ploughing is done. There are generally five holidays in the month, viz., one Amabashya (new moon), one Purmina (full moon), one Sankranti (the last day of the month), two Ekadasi (11th day of the moon) when ploughing is forbidden, and when people fetch firewood, grass, go fishing, or do extra jobs, or simply lounge.

Sold Rs. 7 worth of thatching-grass and fuel in the town,² and with this he

XI. Cash. paid his revenue. By working hard he could make Rs. 10 or Rs. 12 out of this.

EXAMPLE 28.—GOJENDRA, KATONI.³

While taking down details in the last-mentioned case, was told of a family in distressed circumstances in the same village:—

Gojendra, Katoni, was once a peon in the Deputy-Commissioner's Court, and, as his neighbours said, lived like a Bahadur.

About 3 years ago he lost his post, and since then he had had no continuous employment. He never was a cultivator or a field labourer,* and somehow he cannot betake himself to such a life now. Of course, there is the initial difficulty that he has neither plough, bullocks, nor land. He has therefore been doing odd jobs, sometimes as a thika (contract) peon.

At present he is away in a distant mauza, Bokoni, where a fishery contractor took him to help him in realising rent from the sub-lessees of the fisheries, promising to pay him something when the rent was realised.

Meantime, his wife and children (4)† were left to shift for themselves, and the poor woman has been managing by begging dhán of well-to-do neighbours and working for them. They have a single hut on another man's land.

Yesterday news came to the effect that the man was lying ill in mauza Bokoni, with nobody to look after him.

The children did not have their evening meal, and looked very hungry. This day they are going to have their midday meal, though the mother had made no move for it yet (11 a.m.). She is too much distressed with the news, coming as it did at a time when all the neighbours are making merry on the occasion of the Bihu festival.

The man, who had been all his life a peon, and is addicted to opium besides, finds his occupation almost gone, now that he is turned upon his resources. He never qualified himself for the life of a cultivator. He did not evidently lay by against a rainy day, though I noticed what appeared to be a pair of gold earrings on the woman's ears.

The situation was not such as to enable me to get all the details.

EXAMPLE 29.—SATRAM, KOLITA.⁴

Mauza Gonthagan, village Teliagam.*

An average ryot.—Satram, Kolita—

I. Family.	Himself, aged about	30
	Wife	22
	Children (girls) 2, aged 3 and 1 year, respectively.	

* Taking the number of ploughs as the test of prosperity, as is usually done by the people themselves, there were in this village.
3 householders with 3 ploughs. | 35 householders with 1 plough.
2 ditto ditto 2 ditto. | 10 ditto ditto 0 ditto.
This example was taken from among the 35.

1. A process necessary before husking.

2. Being close to the town, he is rather exceptionally situated in the matter of selling jungle-produce like this.

3. This is not a very typical case.

4. A very typical and good example of the vast majority of the cultivators of the valley.

II. Holding.	Basti—		B. K. L.	
	Ancestral	(Purchased for Rs. 5-8.)	0 3 11	1 0 10
			1 4 1	
Rupit			1 0 17	
Bao land			1 0 15	
			2 1 0	
			4 2 3	
Faringati			8 4 15	
			2 2 13	
Total			13 1 9	

Except the plot of basti land purchased by him and a plot of rupit, the rest of his lands constitute a third share of ancestral land, for which there is a joint lease yet in the name of three brothers. I have put down his share only. He pays Rs. 9-12 as revenue.

III. Houses. Agricultural and garden produce. The houses stand in the ancestral plot.

One is the borghar (principal hut) in three parts, viz., (a) eating-place, (b) sleeping-room, (c) cooking-room with the gosain-ghar (place for devotions) in a corner.

The second hut is also in three parts, viz., (a) which contains the dheki, (b) where miscellaneous articles are stowed away, (c) sitting-room, and used by guests or relatives.

The third hut is where the grain is kept.

The fourth is a mere shed for the loom.

Between the huts is an open space or chotal, and the rest is a garden, with the following trees and plants:—

Bamboo, 2 clumps { 1 jati	very few
{ 1 bhaluka	bamboos.
Betel-nut	20
" vine	3 young plants.
Plantains, a good many, about	100
Sualu	2 } young trees.
Pomegranate	2 }
Mango	1 bearing.
"	1
A small patch of tobacco.	

None of the garden produce is sold.

Rupit and bao.—Got about 160 dangurjs (about 53 maunds), which, he says, will take him on to the next sali crop (as it surely ought to). He tried kolamah (peas) on a patch of the rupit; but it did not come to much, and he got only 5 seers.

Faringati.—He did not sow ahu dhan, as a child was sick (and, moreover, it was not essential to him), but sowed mustard-seed. This crop was a comparative failure for want of the usual cold-weather rain, and the yield was only about 1 maund.

Had no debts before; but the bad yield of mustard for two seasons running has made him a

debtor to a Kaya to the extent of Rs. 16. In the past year, he borrowed Rs. 6, to pay revenue, and this year he borrowed another Rs. 10. When the demand for revenue comes, the amount (or part of it) is borrowed, and this is paid off from the proceeds of the mustard crops. But the poor crop of the past two seasons has obliged him to leave the debt outstanding.

Clothing and jewellery. His own—

			Rs.	As.	P.
Home-made	Dhoti	3	1	8	0
"	Cheleng	2	2	0	0
"	Sola (eri)	2	3	0	0
"	Pagri	1	1	8	0
"	Berkapor	3	6	0	0
Foreign	Ghari (a sort of gown for dancing at festivals)	2	2	8	0
			16	8	0

The wife's—

Home-made	1 Pair riha and mekla of muga	8	0	0
"	1 Ditto of eri	6	0	0
"	1 Ditto of cotton	1	8	0
		15	8	0

Jewellery—

1 Pair gold karya (earrings)	16	0	0
2 Moni (necklets of beads)	20	0	0
	36	0	0

VI. Utensils.	Kahi	2	4	0	0
	Bata	4	5	0	0
	Koloh	1	3	0	0
	" smaller	2	4	0	0
	Horai	1	1	8	0
	Ghoti	1	0	12	0
	Total		18	4	0

Loom

(Did not ask about plough, daos, &c.)

VII. Dwelling house.	As above—	Rs.
VIII. Cattle.	Plough bullocks 3 (1 old) ...	30
	Cow..... 1	10
	Calves..... 2	12
	Total.....	52

Dhan in stock 120 danguris, or about 40 maunds.

Rice is cooked in the evening for both meals.

IX. Food. Yesterday's evening meal consisted of rice and ban puchali (a curry made of several wild plants with salt and oil and khar). The plants were morolia, mati gaduri, kansi, to which a few ginger leaves were added. Oil is not generally used. This morning there will be same menu left over from last evening, the rice having been kept soaked in water and turned slightly acid. This requires an extra allowance of salt.

Between meals.—Rice flour (coarse) is taken with gur or plantains by way of tiffin, but not always.

Morning ploughing in the field up to about 11 a.m. Then he comes home,

X. Daily occupation. has a bath and takes his mid-day meal. Rests or lounges for a couple of hours, then fetches fuel and brings home the cattle. Looks after children while his wife cooks the evening meal, eats, and goes to bed.

The wife in the morning sweeps the chotal and the huts, has her bath in the river, brings water. Looks after the children, feeds them, serves out the midday meal to the husband. Takes a little rest at midday, then works at the loom till it is time to fetch water again and cook rice, cooks it feeds the children, serves it out to the husband, then eats herself, and goes to bed.

Besides all this household work, the transplantation of sali dhan solely belongs to her. She also helps in cutting dhan and bringing it home.

gathers mustard, and the other cold weather crops.

XI. Things purchased.	Salt about 2 seers per month.	All this is purchased with the surplus produce of dhan, and what is left over from the proceeds of the cold-weather crops, mustard chiefly, after paying revenue.
	Oil " 1 " "	
	Kerosine 2 annas per month.	
	Cotton yarn Rs. 4 per year.	

SHARAT CHANDRA BANERJI.

IV.—EXAMPLES COLLECTED BY RAJ MOHAN DE, EXTRA-ASSISTANT-COMMISSIONER, SYLHET.¹

EXAMPLE 30.—CHANDRA NATH DAS.

Chandra Nath Das, son of Shib Ram, of Baldi Pargana Baniyachung, states—"I have two brothers, all live in same mess. We are three brothers, family consists of—

- 3 brothers.
- 1 widow of eldest brother (deceased).
- 2 wives of two brothers living, one unmarried.
- 3 boys, one aged 11 years, one aged 10 years.
- 5 girls one aged 10 years the others less than 10 years.
- 14

"I grow dhan on two hals² land, sail bura; got nearly 200 maunds dhan, value about Rs. 160, have no land for grazing.

"I pay rent Rs. 24, grow no other crop, employed no hired labour, spend about Rs. 60 a year in purchase of necessaries.

"The house we live in is 15 by 13 feet, a part of it is partitioned off as a cook-room. There is no other partition. I have six bullocks, nine milch cows, nine young bulls, one heifer, nine calves, and one boat worth about Rs. 40.

"No surplus income, made no ornaments or saving within last seven years, for want of money. The youngest brother, aged about 40 years, not yet married. My debts amount to Rs. 40, borrowed from a relative, he will charge interest at 4 annas or 6 annas³ for a year per rupee.

I sell clarified butter worth about Rs. 25 a year. Almost all inhabitants of our village are in debt. Sold dhan worth Rs. 45.

EXAMPLE 31.—MAIM ULLA.

Maim Ulla, son of Uzir Muhammad of Pirergaon, pargana Taraf:—

I have about 1½ hal lands in my jote,⁴ including my homestead:—

- Grow dhan on 1 hal.
- Sugarcane, 1½ kiar.
- Chilly, 1½ kiar.
- Brinjals, 2 kiar.
- Radish, ¾ kiar.
- Linseed 1½ "
- Potato, ¼ kiar.

I have got 88 or 90 maunds of dhan. Sugarcane.—I have got 45 kulsis of gur. It may sell for Rs. 31 or Rs. 32.

Chilly.—I may get about 3 maunds, value Rs. 12.

- From brinjals I got Rs. 16.
- " radish I got Rs. 15.
- " linseed " " 3.

1. The following examples are given almost as they were sent in by the Extra-Assistant-Commissioner, who was evidently unable to make a careful enquiry. The answer with a native so largely depends on the terms in which a question is put that I have given the questions as entered by Raj Mohan De. As most natives apprehend a sinister motive in questions asked by an official, direct enquiries put point blank generally elicit direct lies. Consequently, the examples here given are not of as much value as they would have been had the enquiry been conducted more judiciously.

2. The ordinary measure is the nal, which is 12 cubits. The cubit varies, but in the Government nal cubit=21½ inches; one square nal=1 jait; 7 jait=1 poyá; 4 poyá=1 kiar or kidar; 12 kiar=1 hal or kulba. Therefore 1 kiar = 13,157 sq. ft. nearly, or nearly equals the Assam bigha of 14,400 sq. ft. The outturn of 200 maunds was large; 140 maunds would have been fair.

3. Which is 25 or 37½ per cent. per annum.

4. Jote means here cultivation.

Our family consists of three brothers; all married. Four children, nephew, and his wife and a child; in all 13 souls. Paddy grown is not sufficient for year's consumption.

Pay Rs. 43-12 rent of land.

We have nut-trees, jack-fruit-trees, mango-trees, bamboos, cocoanut-trees. Did not get a ¹ pice for the same, on account of the mischief done by kata (an animal exactly like weasel).

I have two pairs of bullocks, a cow, and a calf.

The cost of purchasing necessities is met by selling vegetables in the market. Paid part of rent by selling vegetables, &c.

I was indebted to the extent of Rs. 150, but I paid Rs. 40 by selling a boat with which I used to trade formerly; but now the trade is not profitable. The debt was incurred when I made the boat.

My income from vegetable, sugarcane, and other crops would not enable me to get on with ease. Now I have paddy; but I shall have to buy dhan for August, if I cannot grow aus. We do no service. Brothers are busy in growing vegetable, and selling the same in Muchikandi and Gaziganj bazárs. Used oilcake as manure, cost Rs. 12. Met this cost sometimes by taking loans, sometimes by selling vegetables. All our produce would not barely enable us to meet our expenditure. I myself do no work now.²

EXAMPLE 32.—SAFATULLA.

Safatulla, son of Gadai, of Aralia, pargana Kusba Banyachung.

How many members does your family consist of?

"14, sometimes 15.

- 1 self,
- 1 wife,
- 4 sons, one married,
- 1 wife of eldest son,
- 1 granddaughter,
- 5 daughters,
- 1 servant, sometimes 2."

What area of land do you hold for tillage or grazing?

- "2 hals,³
- 1 hal, own property,
- 1 hal holds of mirásdár on payment of rent."

What amount of food-grains and what value of other produce do you raise on an average off your land in a year?

- "Dhan 100 maunds,
- grow nothing else,
- grow little chilly for home consumption."

What rent a year do you pay?

- "Pay revenue Re. 1-10 for 1 hal,
- Rent to Zemindár Rs. 10-8,
- In all Rs. 12-2."

What expenses do you incur in hired labour?

- "The servants are boys, they eat with me,
- and I give them 8 annas each a month."

What amount do you spend in a year in purchase of necessities,⁵ which you cannot produce on your land?

"Rs. 75."

What kind of house do you live in?

- "3 huts,
- 1 cow-shed,
- 1 principal house,
- 1 extra house."

1. An absurd exaggeration.

2. Answers altogether too vague to allow of any fair idea being formed of the economic circumstances of the examinee.

3. Nature of tenure not given.

4. A low outturn. It ought to have been nearer 150 maunds of sail. But names of crops not given, nor how much sown with paddy.

5. Quite hopeless to expect a correct answer to such a question. The reply given is valueless without case details.

1. Hat=length of arm from elbow to top of middle finger.

2. No other answer could be expected to a question so put. It would be very difficult to get a Sylhetia cultivator to admit he had any surplus income.

3. A transparent falsehood.

4. No other answer could have been expected to such a question. cf. note to page 51 where the existence of money out at interest was only discovered by accident. In no other example of the 34, except No. 23, has such a fact been admitted by the examinee.

5. Almost the same as the Brahmaputra Valley rate of 10 annas a bigha for rupa land.

"The principal house is 14 hats¹ by 11 hats; a part of it is partitioned off for cook-room, no other partition walls."

What quantity of cattle or other live stock do you possess?

- "4 bullocks,
- 1 cow and a calf."

What stock of grain have you?

- "As much as would take us till the reaping of sail bura."

How do you dispose of any surplus income, whether by hoarding, lending, or investing in ornaments?

"No surplus income."

What money did you spend on your son's marriage?

"Near Rs. 100 by borrowing from Sundar Raya."

What are your debts, and to what are they due?

- "Nearly Rs. 125, or 150—
- To Sundar Raya Rs. 50.
- By mortgaging land Rs. 30.
- To Jamaldi Rs. 25,
- small debts and interest on debt Rs. 30 or 40.

My debt began for my son's marriage it is now increasing every year."

How much dhan did you sell?

"None."

Did you sell or buy any cattle?

"No."

Did you do any trade?

"No."

Did you or any of your family do any service and earn anything?

"A boy of mine ploughed another's land for a month and got Rs. 2."

How did you meet your cost of bazár?

"By selling 1 or 2 poa of oil."

How did you pay your rent?

"By selling rice."

Have you borrowed any money this year?

"No."

Have you saved any?

"No,⁴ I have not a rupee in my house to-day."

(In year before last there was some distress but since then there was no difficulty about food.)

EXAMPLE 33.—ANCHAB, MALI.

Anchar Mali, son of Tahir Mali, of Bari Nabiganj.

How many members does your family consist of?

"Self, wife, 6 children, altogether 8."

What area of land do you hold for tillage or grazing?

"On 10 kidar I grow sail bura, on 2 kidar mustard seed, 1 kidar mula (radish) seed, no land for grazing."

What amount of food grains and what value of other produce do you raise on an average off your land in a year?

"Last year I got about 64 maunds of dhan, Rs. 4 worth mustard, Rs. 2 worth mula (radish) seed."

What rent and revenue do you pay?

"I pay rent at 10 annas per kidar have not paid rent for this year yet."

What expenses did you incur in hired labour?
 "No hired labour employed."

What amount do you spend in a year in purchase of necessities which you cannot produce on your land?

"Rs. 2 a month, including clothes."

What kind of house do you live in?

"One house to live in and one cowshed."

What quantity of cattle or other live stock do you possess?

"Two bullocks."

What other property do you possess?

"Small boat for cutting grass worth about Rs. 4."

What stock of grain have you?

"About one month's supply."

How do you dispose of any surplus income, whether by hoarding, lending, or investing in ornaments?

"Nil. No ornaments."

What amount have you spent on your children's marriage?

"None married yet."

What are your debts and to what are they commonly due?

"I owe Rs. 25 to Madhu Barui of Adityapur; the debt was contracted to buy the pair of bullocks."

How much dhan did you sell?

"Rs. 12."

Did you sell or buy any cattle?

"No."

Did you do any trade?

"No."

Did you or any of your family do any service and earn anything?

"My two boys earn about Rs. 2 a month in some months (6 months)."

How did you meet your bazar cost?

"By the earnings of my sons and also occasionally selling rice."

How did you pay your rent?

"Not paid for this year, but for last by selling dhan."

Have you borrowed any money this year?

"No."

Have you saved any?

"No."

"There are 12 houses in our village, 4 are better off than I am. There are some poorer than I am."

EXAMPLE 34.—SHUTO.

Shuto Dunga, son of Gunai, of Barakandi, pargana Baniachung.

How many members does your family consist of?

"10 members—

3 brothers.

3 wives.

1 mother.

3 children."

What area of land do you hold for tillage or razing?

"2 hals, held ryotwari, land not good.

Grow dhan on 20 kidars, mustard-seed on 4 kidars, sold mustard-seed worth Rs. 15.

What amount of food grains and what value of other produce do you raise on an average off your land in a year?

"Dhan got about 80 maunds, mustard sold Rs. 15 worth and kept seeds."

What rent and revenue do you pay?

Annual rent including local rate is Rs. 18.

What expenses have you incurred in hired labour?

"No hired labour employed except in cutting dhan, 3 bundles taken for every 20 bundles cut."

What amount do you spend in a year in purchase of necessities which you cannot produce on your land?

"In all Rs. 5, including cost of clothes, &c."

What kind of house do you live in?

"Two houses, one for cattle, and one for ourselves, the latter is 14 hats by 11 hats, a part of it is partitioned off as a cook-room."

What quantity of cattle or other live stock do you possess?

"4 bullocks, 1 cow and a calf."

What other property do you possess?

"A small boat worth about Rs. 12."

What stock of grain have you?

"Have dhan likely to take us till Kattik."

How do you dispose of any surplus income, whether by hoarding, lending, or investing in ornaments?

"Nil."

What money have you spent on your son's or daughter's marriage?

"Nil."

What are your debts and to what are they commonly due?

"I have debts to the extent of about Rs. 150:—Myajan Rs. 65, Taz Muhammad Rs. 36, rest all small debts of Rs. 2, 4, 5, &c."

How much dhan did you sell?

"None."

Did you sell or buy any cattle?

"None."

Did you do any trade?

"No."

Did you or any of your family do any service and earn anything?

"One of my brothers does service, he gets Rs. 24 to Rs. 30; another goes in a boat as a partner in trade of dhan."

How did you meet your bazar cost?

"From what was earned by service, and also sometimes by borrowing."

How did you pay your rent?

"Paid rent by selling mustard seed."

Have you borrowed any money this year?

"None by borrowing."

Have you saved any?

"No."

RAJ MOHAN DEB.

APPENDIX D.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES, WILD AND CULTIVATED, USED BY THE ASSAMESE.

A.—Cultivated Vegetables.

1. PALANG (BETA VULGARIS, LINN.)—An annual grown in patches of homestead. The leaves and young shoots are boiled generally in khâr water and eaten with rice as a spinach.
2. SUKHA SAG (RUMEX VESICARIUS, LINN.)—The name literally means dry spinach. An annual grown in patches of homestead. The leaves and young shoots are boiled generally with salt and eaten with rice as a kind of spinach.
3. PUI=BOZ: PURAI=PUROI (BASELLA ALBA, LINN.)—A twining perennial plant with a succulent red stem, grown in patches of homestead and generally made to climb up a trellis of bamboo; The leaves and stalks are sometimes boiled and eaten as a spinach with rice, and some fried in oil.
4. NAHUR (ALLIUM SP. probably SATIVUM, LINN.)—The common garlic. Grown in patches of homestead, but not very commonly. The bulb is eaten raw or boiled as a condiment, but it is more generally used as a medicine for cattle.
5. PYAZ=PONARU (ALLIUM probably ASCALONICUM, WILLD.)—Grown in patches in homestead land. This and the nahur are the only onions I have found grown by the ryots in Assam, none of the species appear to be very common. The bulb is eaten raw or boiled.
6. SOAN BAKHAR=SUROLI=BHOJIRA=JIRA (FOENICULUM VULGARE, LINN.)—Found in patches in homestead land. The seed is eaten boiled as a condiment with other vegetables. Not very extensively grown.
7. KALAJIRA (NIGELLA SATIVA, LINN.)—An annual grown in patches on homestead land. The seeds are eaten with other vegetables, but whether as a condiment or whether as a medicine for colds is not quite certain.
8. LAHI=LAI (BRASSICA NIGRA, KOCH.)—A tall annual with flowers exactly like that of the common mustard of commerce, grown in patches everywhere in homestead land. The leaves and tender shoots are boiled in khâr water and eaten with rice as a spinach.
9. LAFFA (MALVA VERTICILLATA, LINN.)—An annual grown in patches in homestead land. The leaves and tender shoots are boiled and eaten as spinach with rice. Very generally used.
10. (a) JATI BENGANA=BOR BENGANA,
(b) BENGANA,
(c) POL BENGANA, } (SOLANUM MELONGANA, LINN.)—

Three varieties grown separately or together on patches of homestead; sometimes in a small field of faringati land. The Jati Bengana has large fruit, the Bengana small fruit, and the Pol Bengana still smaller fruit, often white and growing in clusters. The fruit is eaten fried in oil, or roasted and with salt, or boiled in khâr water, or boiled with salt. The ordinary English name is Brinjal, or egg plant. Very widely cultivated.

11. BELATI BENGANA (LYCOPERSICON ESCULENTUM, MILLER.)—Grown in patches of homestead, but not very common, except near towns. The fruit is eaten, and always in some one of the ways mentioned under 10. The English Tomato.

12. BHAGURI (SOLANUM INDICUM, LINN.)—Grown on patches of homestead land and also in faringati. The fruit is eaten in the same way as that of the Jati Bengana, often chewed by itself to prevent coughing.

13. BHAYALU=JALUKIA (CAPSICUM ANNUM, WILLD.)—Red pepper, grown generally on patches of homestead, but sometimes also on faringati land. In Lower Assam red pepper is called Bhafala and in Upper Assam Jalukia. The fruit is used generally as a condiment in curries, but is also eaten raw with rice. There are many varieties.

14. KAKRAL=KAKIRAL (MOMORDICA CHARANTIA, LINN.)—A creeper grown over trellis work or houses in the homestead. The fruit is bitter and considered wholesome. It is eaten fried in oil or boiled in khâr water.

15. BOGA LAO (LADENARIA VULGARIS, SERINGE.)—A creeper trained over the roofs of houses or on bamboo trellis work. The fruit, which is a kind of gourd, is cut up and eaten fried with oil, or boiled in khâr water, or boiled with salt. The young tops are also sometimes fried in oil, or boiled in khâr water. It is one of the commonest additions to the ordinary meal of rice.

16. RANGA LAO (BERINCA, CHINPRA, SAVI.)—Similar to the above, but darker in colour. Grows and is eaten in the same way as Boga Lao.

17. KUMRA (CUCURBITA PEPO, WILLD.)—A creeper constantly grown over the roofs of houses or over the valley. The fruit, which is large and heavy, is usually stored on the roof and it is common to see rows of these gourds ripening along the tops of the houses. The fruit is often cut up into small pieces, and boiled with salt, or in khâr water, or fried in oil. The young tops of the tender shoots are also sometimes fried in oil or boiled in khâr water. There are two varieties of this plant, growing and used in the same way, but differing slightly, one called Boga Kumra and the other Ranga Kumra or Chal Kumra.

Specimens of the following were not sent to Calcutta, and were therefore not identified there. Nos. 13, 17, 26, to 34, 56, 57, 59, 74 to 76. They were either too well known to require identification or specimens were not procurable.

18. BHOL=BHATKERELA=BHATKAKREL (*LUFFA AEGYPTIACA*, MILLER).—A creeper grown over the roofs of houses, and also sometimes in sugarcane fields, but frequently found wild. The fruit is eaten sometimes boiled as a curry, and sometimes in khār-water. Occasionally it is cut up and boiled into a mash like spinach, or fried in oil. This is a very favourite vegetable.

19. UROHI (*DOLICHOS LABLAB*, LINN.).—A creeper grown everywhere on the homestead, chiefly over bamboo trellis work, but sometimes over houses, on boundary fences and over trees. The fruit is a kind of bean, and is generally consumed, sometimes boiled plain, sometimes in khār water, sometimes fried in oil, and occasionally cooked in boiling rice. There are a large number of varieties of this bean, differing mainly in the shape, size, and colour of the pod.

20. BENGALI MAH (*PHASEOLUS LUNATUS*, LINN.).—A creeping bean grown like the Urohi and used in exactly the same way. Sometimes, however, the seeds only are eaten, either raw or fried in oil or boiled.

21. JOAN=JOANI (*CARUM CARNI*, LINN.=*CARUM COPTICUM*, BENTH.).—Grown in patches in homestead land. The seed is used as a condiment in curry, also in the preparation of Laru, a sweetmeat made of rice and molasses.

22. DHANIA=MEMEDHU (*CORIANDRUM SATIVUM*, LINN.).—Grown in patches on homestead land during the cold season. The leaves and tender stalks are fried in oil, or roasted, or boiled in khār water or boiled with salt as a spinach. The seeds are also used as a condiment with curry.

23. BABOOI (*CHRYSANthemum CORONARIUM*, LINN.).—An annual grown in patches in homestead lands during the cold weather.

24. BABERI (*MYRIACTIS WALLICHII*, LESS.).—An annual grown in patches in homestead lands. The leaves and tender shoots are generally eaten boiled in khār-water and also fried in oil.

25. PÁN (*PIPER BETLE*, LINN.).—A creeper commonly called the betel vine, which is generally trained up betel-palms on the homestead. The leaves are chewed together with a paste formed of lime and with a piece of the betel-nut.

26. TAMUL (*ARECA CATECHU*, WILLD.).—A handsome palm which yields the common betel-nut almost universally grown all over the valley. The kernel of the fruit is eaten as a relish, either green or dry, at any time except at meals.

27. MORISA (*AMARANTUS GANGETICUS*, LINN.).—Grown in patches on homestead land. The leaves and stalks are fried in oil or boiled as a spinach with some acid fruit or vegetable, or with salt.

28. HALIM (Scientific name unknown).—Grown in patches of homestead land. The leaves and stalks are generally fried in oil.

29. DHOPAT (*NICOTIANA TABACUM*, REICHB.).—The common tobacco, grown very generally in patches. The leaves are both chewed and smoked, but the former method of using them is the more common.

30. ÁDÁ (*ZINGIBER OFFICINALE*, ROSCOE.).—Ginger, occasionally grown in patches on the homestead. The root is used as a condiment.

31. TIYAH (*CUCUMIS SATIVUS*, WILLD.).—The common cucumber, widely grown and cut up and eaten boiled as a curry.

32, 33, 34.—BANGHI, MAHIGOHA, and CHINRAL are species of melon I was unable to get identified.

B.—Wild Vegetables.

35. KONSÍ=PICH KATÍ (*SOLANUM NIGRUM*, LINN.).—The leaves and tender tops are eaten generally with Bhotua or Khuturia, boiled as a spinach. The berries, which are called Mohpoha, are when ripe eaten by children. Often found growing wild in the homestead itself.

36. MANI MUNI (*HYDROCOTYLE ASIATICA*, LINN.).—The leaves and tender shoots are boiled with other vegetables as a flavouring substance. It is believed to be beneficial in cases of diarrhoea. Grows luxuriantly in the rains.

37. KALMAU (*IPOMŒA ERIOCARPA*, BR.).—A water plant of which the leaves and stalks are boiled as a spinach or eaten fried in oil.

38. MATI-GADURI=NETHENI (*ALTERNANTHERA SESSILIS*, BR.).—The young shoots are eaten usually fried in oil. Sometimes it is cooked with Khuturia.

39. MAIMATI=MARMARATI (*VITIS CARNOSA*, WALL.).—The young tops are boiled as a spinach and eaten either by itself or with other vegetables, or with fish.

40. AGARA (*XANTHIUM STRUMARIUM*, LINN.).—The young top and the two leaves immediately below are alone eaten. It is generally boiled in khār water.

41. KHUTURIA (*AMARANTUS CAUDATUS*, LINN.).—The tender tops are eaten boiled as spinach or fried in oil. It is eaten either by itself or with Konsi or Bhotua.

42. MEDELU=DADIGDIGA (*CASSIA TORA*, LINN.).—The young shoots and a few leaves are eaten in small quantities boiled in khār water with other vegetables. It is not used by itself.

43. KATH ALU=PATNI ALU=MATI ALU (*DIOSCOREA BULBIFERA*, LINN.).—The plant is a yam, and derives its first name from the resemblance of the root to a piece of wood. The root is eaten boiled in khār water or with an acid, or fried in oil.

44. BHOTMULA=SUBLATH (*GYNANDROPSIS PENTAPHYLLA*, D.C.).—The tender shoots are boiled in khār water in small quantities with other vegetables. It is also used as a medicine in headache and diarrhoea.

45. MOROLIA=THOTHANI (*STELLARIA MEDIA*, LINN.).—The leaves and tender stalks are eaten boiled in khār water, either by themselves or with fish.

46. DRON (*LEUCAS LINIFOLIA*, SPRENGL.).—The young tops are usually fried in oil. It is not eaten by itself as the flavour is bitter, but generally with Khuturia and in small quantities.

47. BHOTUA (*CHENOPODIUM ALBUM*, LINN.).—The young shoots are sometimes fried in oil, and sometimes boiled as a spinach with some acid fruit or vegetable or with salt. Sometimes cooked by itself, sometimes with Khuturia or Konsi.

48. KHAT KHUTURA=HATI KHUTURIA (*AMARANTUS SPINOSUS*, LINN.).—Constantly found wild in, and around the homestead. The leaves and tender shoots are generally boiled with some other vegetables and with an acid or salt. Not very common as an article of food.

49. DHEKIA (*ASPLENIUM ESCULENTUM*, PRESL.).—The young tops of this fern are universally used either fried in oil, or boiled as a spinach with an acid fruit or vegetable. It is probably the most generally eaten of all the wild vegetables.

50. CHENERI TENGA (*OXALIS CORNICULATA*, LINN.).—The leaves and stalks are acid and are boiled with many other vegetables to give them a flavour. The plant is never used by itself.

51. KOCHU (*COLOCASIA ANTIQUORUM*, SCHOTT.).—The young leaves and tender parts of the stalks are boiled by themselves or with an acid fruit or vegetable. Sometimes eaten by itself with rice and sometimes with fish. This vegetable is in very general use.

52. LARBORUA=BIH AGNI=BIH LANGANI=PATHARUA (*POLYGONUM GLABRUM*, WILLD.).—The leaves and young shoots are eaten boiled, always with other vegetables, and with an acid or with salt, or in khār water. It is pungent in taste and is only used in small quantities. In Kamrup it is used as a medicine in fever and is not eaten otherwise, being believed to be poisonous.

53. MADHUFULONG=MADU SULENG (*POLYGONUM MICROCEPHALUM*, DON.).—The young tops are sparingly used as an acid much in the same way as Chengeri Tenga, boiled with other vegetables. The plant is never cooked or eaten alone.

54. MESANDARI.—The young tops are boiled, sometimes with Kochu, in small quantities as a spinach. It is eaten chiefly with rotten fish.

55. PHUL=BAHKA TITA (*PHLOGACANTHUS THYRSIFLORUS*, NEES & E.).—A tall plant with branches of red flowers, grown often as a hedge to the homestead, but generally found wild in the jungle. The flowers, which are bitter, are eaten in small quantities boiled in khār water or fried in oil. They are generally eaten with rotten fish.

56. JANGALI BIH LANGANI=BIH DHEKIA (*ASPLENIUM* SP.).—The young tops of this fern are boiled in small quantities with other vegetables and generally in khār water. The flavour is pungent, and it is never used by itself.

57. MONOA.—I was unable to identify this. It is said to grow in marshy land and to be used in curry.

58. DORON (*FAGOPYRUM ESCULENTUM*, MOENCH.).—The leaves and tender shoots are boiled as spinach.

C.—Cultivated Fruits.

59. KOL (*MUSA SAPIENTUM*, WILLD.).—The common plantain, of which very numerous varieties exist. The best are the (a) Malbhag (b) Pura and (c) Ban Tulsí Kol, in none of which are seeds supposed to be found. Universally grown everywhere. Besides the ripe fruit, the following parts of the plantain are eaten:—

(a) The interior of the stem. This is cut up and boiled either alone or with other vegetables as a curry.

(b) The immature fruit. This is removed when each fruit is not much thicker than a man's thumb, cut up into slices and boiled as a curry.

60. KATHAL (*ARTOCARPUS INTEGRIFOLIA*, WILLD.).—The common Jack-tree. Largely grown in almost all homesteads, and the fruit a favourite article of diet.

61. AM (*MANGIFERA INDICA*, WILLD.).—The common mango. This tree is not so generally grown in Assam as it is in Upper India, but the fruit, when it ripens, is generally contains one or more beetles. The unripe fruit, however, is very largely eaten, sometimes raw with chillies and salt, sometimes boiled.

62. JALPAI TENGA (*ELÆOCARPUS SERRATUS*, LINN., probably).—Occasionally grown in homesteads. The fruit when ripe is eaten alone, but when unripe is boiled with other vegetables to give them an acid flavour.

63. DALIM (*PUNICA GRANATUM*, LINN.).—The common pomegranate. Occasionally grown in the homestead for its fruit.

64. LITEKA (*BACCAUREA SAPIDA*, MUELL-ARG.).—The ripe fruit is eaten by itself.

65. ATEPHOL (*ANONA RETICULATA*, LINN.).—Two varieties of Atephol are grown in homestead lands, but a specimen of only one was sent to be identified. In both the ripe fruit is alone used and generally eaten by itself.

66. BOR THEKERA TENGA (*GARCINIA PEDUNCULATA*, ROXB.).—A large tree found wild as well as often grown on the homestead. The fruit is used unripe, ripe, and dried. It is acid and is sometimes boiled with vegetables to give them a flavour, and sometimes eaten uncooked with fish.

67. KUJI THEKERA TENGA (probably only a variety of *GARCINIA PEDUNCULATA*).—This is a smaller tree than No. 66, and its fruit is more generally used. The ripe fruit is frequently cut into slices and dried and used as an acid to flavour vegetables and fish.

* The specimen sent to Calcutta was insufficient for identification.

† This was the specimen sent to Calcutta to be identified, but there is another variety, which is probably *Anona squamosa*, Willd., and identical with the custard apple of Upper India.

68. O TENGA (*DILLEZIA INDICA*, LINN.).—Occasionally planted in the homestead, but more often met with wild. The fruit is eaten raw, sometimes with salt, sometimes with molasses. It is also boiled with salt and taken with rice.

69. *RABAB TENGA (probably *CITRUS DECUMANA*, LINN.).—If *Citrus decumana*, L., then this is the pommelo, commonly grown for its fruit.

70. SANTHIRA TENGA=SANTARA TENGA (probably *CITRUS AURANTIUM*, LINN.).—If *Citrus aurantium*, L., then this is the orange, commonly grown for its fruit.

71. JARA TENGA (*CITRUS MEDICA*, LINN., probably var. *ACIDA*).—A large lime grown for its fruit.

72. †NIMU TENGA (*CITRUS MEDICA*, LINN., probably var. *LIMONUM*).—A lime grown for its fruit.

73. PONIAL—(*FLACOURTIA* SP.—probably *F. CATAPHRACTA*, WILLD.).—Found on the homestead and also wild. Cultivated for its fruit, which is generally eaten alone.

74. MADHURIAM (*PSIDIUM GUYAVA*, L.).—The guava, grown for its fruit very generally all over the valley.

75. MATI KATHAL (*ANANASSA SATIVA*, LINN.).—The pine-apple. Very largely grown in homesteads. The Assamese name means ground jack-fruit.

76. TETELI (*TAMARINDUS INDICA*, WILLD.).—This is the tamarind, occasionally found on homestead land, but not very common. The fruit is acid, and is used as a flavouring in curries and with other vegetables.

77. MODHPHAL=AMRITA=(*CARICA PAPAYA*, TOURNEF.).—The Papia. Largely grown for its fruit. Modhphal is the name in Lower Assam, and Amrita in Upper Assam.

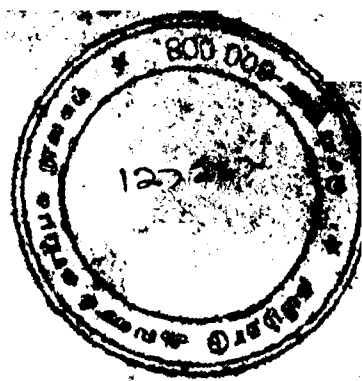
* There is no doubt that the Pummelo is *Citrus decumana*, L., and the orange *Citrus aurantium*, L., but it is not quite certain whether the latter is not sometimes called Rabab Tenga. I sent to Calcutta a specimen which had been given me as Rabab Tenga, and which had been formerly identified by Mr. C. B. Clarke, and re-identified by Dr. P. as *Citrus aurantium*.

† There are two more varieties of *Citrus medica*, LINN. (1) var. *nera*, the citron, and (2) var. *limonum*, the lime, which are also probably grown on homesteads, but I was unable to procure specimens.

NOTE.

The different ways in which vegetables are generally cooked are given below:

- (1) Fried in oil (Bhaji).—The oil is always mustard, but this method of cooking is only generally adopted by the who are well off.
- (2) Boiled, generally in boiling rice and then eaten with salt or oil.
- (3) Boiled in water with some acid fruit or vegetable (*tenga*) or with salt only. Eaten like spinach (*sig*).
- (4) Roasted in a covering of leaves, then eaten with oil and salt, or with salt alone.
- (5) Boiled in khair water, which is prepared by filtering water through ashes, generally those of the plantain.



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