THE AGRARIAN SYSTEM OF MOSLEM INDIA

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A Historical Essay with Appendices

BY

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Preface

THE object and scope of this essay are described sufficiently in the Introduction, and here it is only necessary to mention a few points of detail which may be of assistance to the reader.

I have tried to write in English, and to get away from the polyglot, and often ambiguous, jargon in which agrarian topics are commonly treated in India. In order to do this, I have had to frame a precise terminology, choosing those names which carry the fewest misleading connotations. The terms which I have selected for use are printed throughout with an initial capital letter, as a tacit reminder to the reader that they bear the definite sense which has been explained at their first mention.

It has not, however, been possible to avoid altogether the introduction of Persian words and phrases, because the meaning of these frequently require discussion, and the subject of the discussion must be indicated. In transliteration I have used as a basis the system recommended by the Council of the Royal Asiatic Society, in which the vowels have the continental values, and the consonants are, where necessary, distinguished by lines or dots placed under them. Unfortunately, these lines and dots, which are indispensable to the linguistic scholar, are offensive to ordinary readers, and greatly increase the difficulty of accurate printing. Since I am writing mainly for students who are not interested in linguistic details, I have adopted the following compromise.

(1) In the text, the transliteration is simplified. The vowels have the continental values, and the long vowels are marked as such; but the consonants are not distinguished, except that the otherwise unemployed q is used to represent a parlicular Arabic guttural. An inverted comma denotes the Arabic latter *'ain*, in case where its indication has seemed to be desirable.

(2) The precise transliteration of the words so given in the text will be found in the glossary (Appendix H), following the simplified form.

(3) In the Appendices, the precise transliteration is used in cases where the terms or phrases under discussion seems to require it.

(4) Proper names are given only in simplified form. Linguistic scholars do not need to be reminded that the *h* in Muhammad, for instance, is different from the *h* in Humayun, while ordinary readers are not interested in the difference.

(5) I have retained the ordinary spelling of words such as Moslem or Mogul, and of names such as Calcutta or Lahore, which have become incorporated in the English language.

It will be noticed that my simplified transliteration is very nearly that which is used in Volume III of the *Cambridge History of India*; and the resemblance is not confined to transliteration, for the views taken of the principal characters, and the main authorities, of the period in the two books are substantially identical. It may be well therfore to explain that my chapters dealing with this period were ready for the printer before Sir Wolseley Haig's exhaustive volume was published; the similarity of standpoint, and even the occasional verbal coincidences, are not due to imitation or consultation, but are the result of independent study of the same authorities. In a few cases where Sir Wolseley Haig's interpretation of passages bearing on agrarian matters differs from mine, I have re-examined the evidence, but I have not found occasion to modify the views which I had previously formed.

The method of citing authorities is conditioned by the facts that the titles are commonly long, and frequently similar. In order to reduce the footnotes to reasonable bulk, I have selected arbitrary key-words to denote the principal authorities, the full titles being set out under these key-words in Appendix I.

In bringing together information drawn from so many heterogeneous sources, I have necessarily been dependent on the assistance of scholars working in many different fields.

For help on particular points I am indebted to the late Right Honourable Syed Ameer Ali, and to Mr. C. E. Carrington, Sir Atul Chatterjee, Mr. W. Christie, Mr. G. L. M. Clauson, Mr. U. M. Daudpota, Mr. E. Edwards, Sir William Foster, Professor S. H. Hodivala, Sir Walter Hose, Mr. S. G. Kanhere, Sir Edward Maclagan, Mr. C. E. A. W. Oldham, and Mr. G. Chenevix Trench. Dr. L. D. Barnett kindly read through the draft of Chapter I, and supplied me with valuable references to literature dealing with the Hindu period. Mr. R. Paget Dewhurst, besides contributing a substantial portion of Appendix C, has been most generous in interpreting obscure phrases in the Persian chronicles. Sir Richard Burn supplied me with a critical examination of the draft of Appendix E, and helped me in many other ways. Mr. B. C. Burt rendered me great assistance in the search for illustrative documents in India collections. I have drawn freely on some unpublished notes written in consultation with Mr. A. Yusuf Ali when we worked together some years ago on the authorities for the reign of Akbar. Lastly I must acknowledge the assistance so willingly rendered throughout my work by Mrs. R. W. Frazer and Miss F. H. Latimer, of the staff of the Royal Asiatic Society.

W. H. MORELAND.

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Introduction

THIS book may be described as an essay in itstitutional history. During the main period of Moslem rule in India, lasting from the thirteenth to the eighteenth century, a kingdom had three essential constituents, the Sovereign who ruled it, the Army which supported the throne, and the Peasantry which paid for both.; and the relation subsisting between these entities was aptly presented in an aphorism current in the early days, that "troops and peasants are the two arms of the kingdom" The dynastic and military history of the period is now tolerably accessible to students, but it is impossible to obtain from the existing literature a general or connected view of the position of the peasants in their relations with the State, and it is this gap which I now attempt to fill.

The contents of my essay will possibly come as something of a surprise to readers who are interested primarily in the agrarian questions of the present day, and who may expect to find it occupied mainly by discussions of the rights enjoyed or claimed by landholders and their tenants. The prominence of questions of right is, however, a recent development in Indian agrarian history, and belongs almost entirely to the British period: in Moslem India, as in the India of the Hindus, the agrarian system was a matter of duties rather than rights. At its root lay the conception that it was the duty of the peasants to till the soil, and pay a share of their produce to the State; so far as private rights or claims were recognised, they were subordinate to this fundamental obligation. The main subject-matter of my essay is consequently an examination of the methods by which the State's share of the peasant's produce was assessed and collected, and of the arrangements under which portions of it were alienated in favour of the classes whom I describe collectively as Intermediaries.

It is not part of my present purpose to trace in detail the transition from the Moslem system to that which now

exists, but a brief reference is required to the main factors which have operated, because it is only by consciously eliminating these factors that we can reach a just idea of the conditions which prevailed in the earlier period. It is a commonplace of history that the nineteenth century brought to Northern India a degree of internal tranquillity which had not previously been enjoyed ; and that the result was seen in a rapid growth of population, and the development of competition for productive land. In the Moslem period, such competition scarcely existed, outside relatively small areas ; and we have to bear in mind that, in most parts of the country, land was waiting for men with the resources necessary for its cultivation. Another gift of the nineteenth century was what is conventionally described as the Rule of Law, superseding by degrees the personal rule of the Moslem period ; while a third factor, which is perhaps less generally recognised, was the spread of benevolent or philanthropic ideals which characterised the century, not merely in India, but throughout the civilised world. To trace the operation of these factors is the task of the historian of the British period : my object in mentioning them here is merely to emphasise the point that, in trying to appreciate the Moslem system, we must be careful to exclude them from our estimate. In other words, we must get away from the ideas of competition for land, of respect for written law or precedent, and of modern administrative philanthropy.

Such is the scope of my essay, but in order to explain the method of study a few words must be said regarding its genesis. The importance of the subject was impressed forcibly on me some years ago, when I was collecting materials for a sketch of the economic situation of India in the time of Akbar. The fact that in the Mogul period the State disposed of from a third to a half of the gross produce of the land constituted it by far the most potent factor in the distribution of the national income ; while its action in regard to distribution inevitably reacted on production, so much so that we are justified in concluding that, next only to the weather, the administration was the dominant fact in the economic life of the country.

Accordingly, in two earlier books, *India at the death of Akbar*, and *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, I included condensed accounts of the relations which at the period subsisted between the administration and the peasants. These accounts were based mainly on the original authorities, but, in interpreting the obscure and crabbed texts, I followed the work of previous students, who I assumed had mastered the technical terminology of the subject; and, usually accepting their renderings, I offered a description of the main lines of the agrarian administration, reserving for subsequent study some difficulties which appeared to be matters of detail.

On returning to the subject, I found that these apparent details increased in importance when scrutinised more closely; and I was driven gradually to the conclusion that the guides I had accepted, Blochmann, Jarrett, Dowson, and other writers of the last century, busied as they were, in exploring an entirely unknown field, had not fully mastered the terminology employed in the literature of the period, but had borrowed from modern practice in India, or sometimes from medieval practice in Europe, terms of art, or picturesque phrases, which did not always give the precise meaning of the originals, and occasionally involved serious misrepresentation. It was necessary, therefore, to study the terminology afresh; and for this purpose I worked through the printed literature of the period, together with such relevant manuscripts as I found in this country, extracting every passage in which an apparently technical term occurred, and then bringing the passages together, and inferring from them the meaning, or meanings, borne by each term at different periods, or in different parts of India.

The results obtained in the course of this study form the basis of the present essay, and sufficient illustrations of my methods will be found in the notes and appendices; but at the outset it may be well to insist on the fact that the terminology employed in the literature is fluid, so that both time and place may condition the interpretation of a particular passage. The Persian language, as it was used in Moslem India, possessed a wealth of synonyms; and most of the authorities observed what may be described as

the canon of variety of diction, or, in other words, they would do almost anything in order to avoid verbal repetition. It is natural, therefore, that a particular thing should appear under various names ; but at the same time it must be remembered that bureaucracy was highly developed in India from the outset of the Moslem period, and, inside the public offices, words already in general use were adopted as precise terms of art, just as happens at the present day, so that general and technical senses might co-exist. Sometimes, indeed, we find that different departments might use a word in different senses, as in the familiar case of *mal*. An ordinary writer meant by that word "property" or "possessions," but in the military department it denoted "booty taken in war," while in the jargon of the financial offices it signified "land-revenue" ; its meaning in any particular passage has to be inferred from the context. These terms of art in some cases persisted, and in others changed with the centuries, so that from time to time old things appear under new names ; while, on the other hand, changes in practice might result in giving a substantially new meaning to an old-established term. Differences in respect of locality are also important ; and, in particular, it is noteworthy that, two centuries ago, the agrarian language of Calcutta differed materially from that of Delhi, a fact which later on was to contribute to the misapprehensions of the early British administrators in the North.

This fluidity of the terminology is a matter of such significance for the historian that it may be well to give here one illustration where the main facts are not open to dispute. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the Arabic word Diwan was used by Indo-Persian writers in a specific sense corresponding almost exactly to the modern terms "Department" or "Ministry". Thus the "Vazir's diwan" denoted the Revenue Ministry, because finance was the main business of the Vazir; and, when a new department was constituted, as happened from time to time, it was styled the diwan of the particular branch of administration with which it was charged.

The literature of the fifteenth century is scanty, and I do not know when the change occurred ; but, by the time of

Akbar, the word Diwan had come to denote a person, not an institution. In public affairs the Diwan was now the Revenue Minister; and, since the Vazir dealt with revenue-business, for a time the two words, Vazir and Diwan, became in practice almost synonymous. In private business, Diwan denoted, doubtless by analogy, a man who managed a high officer's financial affairs and is conveniently rendered as "steward." The Revenue Ministry was now called Diwani, a term which does not appear in the earlier literature; and at this period the word was not applied to any other Ministry than that which dealt with the business of the revenue.

As administrative organisation progressed, we find two further developments. Inside the Ministry, each departmental head came to be called Diwan. Outside it, a Diwan, or Revenue Officer, was appointed in each province; and when these provincial Diwans had been brought under the direct authority of the Minister at Court, a new implication was gradually imported. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, diwani, or the revenue administration as a whole, was contrasted with nizamat, or faujdari, terms which denoted the general administration, concerned primarily with the preservation of the peace.

The appointment of the East India Company as Diwan of the province of Bengal led to a further change: the new Diwan found it desirable to establish its own court of justice, which was duly named Diwani Adalat, or "the Diwani Court" and, as the result of subsequent developments, at the present day diwani has almost entirely lost its older meaning of revenue-administration, and in current use signifies the civil courts of law. Diwani, as a synonym for Vazir, has survived in some Indian States, where the Chief Minister is so designated; elsewhere it is an honorific title, conferred by the Government, or adopted by prominent men of some communities, as the case may be. The word has thus travelled a long way from the time when a minister could be described as "sitting in the diwan."

It does not appear to me to be necessary to justify at length the method of study which I have described: its justification is found in the facts, firstly, that there is no

alternative, and, secondly, that it is fruitful of results. There is, however, a practical difficulty in presenting these results in convincing form. To set out all the relevant passages, with, in each case, enough of the context to show their bearing, and to demonstrate how successive possibilities must be ruled out, until the certain, or probable, meaning is reached by a process of elimination—all this would require a substantial number of volumes before the subject was exhausted: while my object is to present the result as shortly as may be, and, if possible in a form which shall not be entirely unreadable. The course I have adopted is as follows. Having first ascertained the nature of a thing, I have chosen an English term to denote it, giving preference that one which carries the fewest misleading connotations, explaining each term at the point where it is introduced, and adhering consistently to a single use. Detailed discussions of the precise nature of various Persian expressions have been placed in footnotes or appendices, which indicate the crucial passages, where any have been found, or, failing them, a number of illustrative passages which I hope will be sufficient for the critical student, while the path of the general reader is encumbered by as few obstacles as the nature of the subject permits.

The arrangement of the essay is chronological, not topical. At one time I was tempted to adopt the latter course, giving first a connected narrative of assessment, then of assignments, and so on; but the various topics are closely inter-related, and so much depends on the personality of autocratic rulers, that, after a few experiments, I reverted to arrangment by periods, which, as its happens, are well defined. In course of Chapters VI and VII I have endeavoured to indicate the first stage in the transition from the Moslem to the British agrarian system, but, as I have said above, it is no part of my present purpose to describe the development of the latter in detail; and I have not dealt with the transition in those regions where a period of Sikh or Maratha rule intervened.

In bringing this eassay to a conclusion, I wish to make quite clear that I do not offer it as a final treatment of the subject. Probably there is still extant in India a body of

literature which, when collected and explored, will throw much additional light on some of topics where I have felt the lack of material most acutely; and, despite the pessimistic views prevalent in some quarters on the subject, I hold to the belief that, scattered here and there, mainly in private hands, there must be many documents relating to grants, assignments, and other forms of tenure, as well as to certain other aspects of agrarian administration, which, if they could be brought to light, would enable some future student to convert this essay into a history, by correcting my mistakes, and filling the gaps in my information. We know that such documents must have existed in literally, enormous quantities; we know that a few of them have come to light in the present century; we do not know howmany survive; and all we can be sure of is that the survivors are perishing year by year. I cannot now take an active part in the search for such documents, but I must not left pass this opportunity of appealing to the local historical societies and similar bodies at work in India, to grapple with this question in earnest, and to investigate in particular the treasures of the families which have a long tradition of service under the State as qanungos, or in other positions in the local administration. Discoveries may be few, but the value of such documents rises in proportion to their rarity ,and their location cannot be forseen. Our knowledge of the form and content of Akbar's charitable grants of land has been materially increased by the discovery of a bundle of old papers preserved by a Parsi family in Gujarat, a locality where one would scarcely have set out to search for Mogul documents; and it is still possible to hope for other discoveries of the same kind. The systematic collection and publication of such documents would furnish material of inestimable value for the future historian, not merely of the agrarian system, but of the whole life of the people of India.

Chapter I

Antecedents

1. THE HINDU SACRED LAW

A WRITER who attempts to describe the development of the agrarian system of Moslem India is confronted at the outset by a difficulty arising from the absence of any definite starting-point. It is clear that the first Moslem conquerors did not impose an entirely foreign system on their Indian subjects: the observed continuity of institutions shows that they took over portions, at least, of the system which they found in operation, and adapted it, as time went on, to meet changing needs. The ideal starting-point would thus be a description of the Hindu system as it stood in theory, and worked in practice, during the twelfth century; but nothing of the kind is known to exist, and the conditions of the period make it unlikely that such a description was ever prepared. It is conceivable that the progress of antiquarian research may eventually make it possible to write a historical account of the development of the Hindu system, based on precisely-dated documents and inscriptions, but I am assured by scholars that adequate materials for that task are not yet available.

Failing such accounts or descriptions, the most that can be done is to offer a statement of the fundamental features of the Hindu system, and indicate their logical, if not their historical, connection with the institutions which we meet under the early Moslem rulers. I attempt such a statement in this chapter; but at the outset it is necessary to explain that I am dependent on translations and secondary sources for the voluminous Sanskrit literature, and my experience suggests that translations may be dangerous guides in technical matters. Some of the greatest difficulties which present themselves in studying the Moslem period arise

from unrecorded changes in the relation between words and things; and in ranging over the available literature of the centuries which intervened between Asoka and the Moslem conquest, one is constantly assailed by the doubt whether similar changes may not have crept in to obscure the interpretation of the record. My statement of the elements of the Hindu system is thus necessarily tentative: in any case it is required in order to explain the terminology which I have adopted; and it may perhaps be of some service in directing the attention of specialists to aspects of the literature which have hitherto received inadequate examination.

For the durable or fundamental features of the Hindu agrarian system we must turn to the Dharma, or Sacred Law, the provisions of which could be refined or developed by successive writers, but not formally altered by legislative or executive action. The Sacred Law contemplates an agrarian position similar in essentials to that which we find at the opening of the Moslem period, and not very different from that which persisted to its close. There is the King in his capital, there is the Peasant in his village; and the relations between King and Peasant give us, at any rate, the skeleton of the system. Hitherto the Hindu King has usually been presented by modern writers as an absolute despot, divine in his person, bound by the Sacred Law, and subject to the influence of public opinion, but untrammelled by any human institutions. More recently some Indian scholars have depicted him as holding a position comparable to that of modern constitutional monarchs, responsible to, or controlled by, councils or assemblies. The difference, which I am quite incompetent to discuss, is immaterial to my present purpose. The important thing is that the Sacred Law postulates, under the title of King, a sovereign in the technical sense; whether the King acted independently, or by and with the advice of Ministers or Councils, makes no difference to the statement which follows.

I have chosen the word Peasant to denote the other party to the relation, because on the whole it seems to involve less danger of misconception than any substitute which

is available.[1] The Peasant is the man who, whatever the incidents of his tenure may be, cultivates a holding entirely or mainly by his family labour, for his own profit, and at his own risk. He must be distinguished on the one hand from the Intermediary, who claims a share of the produce, but does not himself take an active part in production, and on the other hand from the serf whom he feeds, or the hired labourer to whom be pays wages.

The Sacred Law[2] presents King and Peasant in a bilateral relation, which is defined more precisely in regard to duties than to rights. The duty of the Peasant is, firstly, to raise produce, and secondly, to pay a share of his produce to the King. Performing these duties, he can expect the King's protection, and he can enjoy the balance of his produce, subject, of course, to any rules for its expenditure contained in the Law. The King's paramount duty is to protect his subjects; and, while he does so, he is entitled to claim a share of the Peasant's produce, to be expended in accordance with the Law. In the statement the word "produce" is used in its natural meaning as the gross yield of the land, without deducting anything on account of the cost of production; in a later period we shall meet with a few cases where some allowance was made for exceptional expense, but I cannot trace any suggestion of assessing revenue formally on the net income further back than the period of British rule.[3]

It may be well to point out that the statement which has just been given is not concerned with rights to occupy

[1] The possible alternatives are farmer, cultivator, ryot. "Farmer" is too ambiguous in a country like India, where farming the revenue was for so long a prominent feature of the agrarian system. "Cultivator," the usual term in India, suggests to most English-speaking communities a modern implement of tillage. "Ryot" has changed its meaning in some parts of India since the Moslem period, and now connotes a particular form of tenure, while in others it has a more general signification, and it is thus ambiguous.

[2] The statements in the text are based on the following volumes of the translations published in the series *Sacred Books of the East:* Manu (XXV): Vishnu (VII); Apastamba and Gautama (II); Vasishtha and Baudhayana (XIV); Narada and Brihaspati (XXXIII).

[3] Since this paragraph was written, Dr. Bal Krishna has argued, in the *Indian Journal of Economics*, July, 1927, that in the Hindu system, assessment was made on the net income. His argument does not appear to me to be convincing, but I must leave its examination to students of the period.

land: the Law looks to the duty of production, and not to the right of occupation. Modern writers appear inclined to take sides, sometimes rather forcibly, on the question whether the land was owned by the King or by the Peasant; but I have not yet found any scientific discussion of what seems to me to be the antecedent question, whether the conception of ownership of agricultural land had been reached at the time when the Sacred Law was formulated. There is no doubt that individuals or families could hold heritable and transferable rights in particular parcels of land, because the texts deal with inheritance, and with transfer by gift, sale, or mortgage: the question is whether the rights which were inherited or transferred amounted to ownership in the ordinary sense of the word, or whether they were merely rights to occupy subject to the King's pleasure.[1] To put the matter in another way, the point on which I have found nothing definite is whether the process of disentangling the conception of private right from political allegiance had progressed so far as to justify the application of the word "ownership" to any of the agrarian institutions existing during the Hindu period. I can raise these questions, but it is not my business to answer them. If the rights in question amounted only to occupancy during the King's pleasure, there is complete continuity between the Hindu period and the Moslem: if ownership, in the modern sense, existed during the former, it will be necessary to explain how it was obliterated from the outset of the latter. Moslem despots could of course have annulled the institution of ownership while preserving other features of the Hindu agrarian system, but whether they could have obliterated the conception is a different matter.

[1] The texts discuss these private rights as between individuals, but say very little as to their precise nature, or their relation to the Sovereign. A few passages, however, indicate the existence of an over-riding authority, notably one in Brihaspati (XXXIII, 353), where the King's action in taking land from one man and giving it to another is placed on the same footing of inevitability as the diluvial action of a river. In the *Arthasastra* again (p. 50), there is a definite recommendation to eject peasants for laziness or inefficiency. I am not arguing that such passages are conclusive, but merely that they require to be taken into account when the question of ownership is discussed. Reference may also be made to a couplet quoted by a commentator on the *Arthasastra* (p. 140) to the effect that land and water were not objects of private ownership.

Whatever was the nature of the Peasant's right, his immediate interest under the conditions which have been described must have centred in the answers to two questions, What share of his produce was claimed by the King? and, How the share was to be assessed and collected? On the first question the texts differ, a fact which justifies the inference that practice was not uniform, but it may be said that the rate regarded by the text-writers as appropriate was one-sixth, falling possibly as low as one-twelfth, and rising in times of emergency to one-fourth, or even one-third.[1] On the second question the texts are practically silent, and it is permissible to draw the natural inference that these matters were regarded as lying outside the Sacred Law, and within the discretion of the individual King. Taking the texts as they stand in translation, it might indeed be contended that they contemplate the actual division of the produce, either by weighing or by measuring, but I do not think they can be interpreted as necessarily ruling out administrative expedients for simplifying the procedure such as we find in operation during the Moslem period.

The fundamental Hindu system, as I understand it, was, then, that the Peasants paid a share of their produce to the King, who determined, within certain limits, or conceivably beyond them, the amount of the share, and also the methods

[1] Manu (XXV. 236) has one-eighth, one-sixth, or one-twelfth of the crop, but further on (427) it is allowed that a King who in times of distress takes even the fourth part of the crops is free from guilt, if he protects his subjects to the best of his ability. Gautama (II. 227) has one-tenth, one-eighth or one-sixth. Vasishtha (XIV. 8), and Baudhayana (XIV. 199) have one-sixth. In Narada (XXXIII. 221) we read of "what is called the sixth of the produce of the soil," an expression which suggests that facts may have differed from theory, and that "the sixth" may actually have been some different fraction, just as the word tithe sometimes denotes a fraction different from one-tenth. A commentator on the *Arthasastra* (p. 108*n*) declares that the word rendered "one-sixth" includes one-fourth or one-third; and the text of that work provides (p. 291) for levying one-third or one-fourth in emergencies. The only statement of fact I have found regarding the Hindu period in the North is that, in Kanauj under Harsha, "the King's tenants pay one-sixth of the produce as rent" (T. Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, i. 176); but it is possible that the Chinese pilgrim reproduced his informant's statement of the theoretical figure of the texts, rather than the actual facts of the time. As regards the south, Mr. C. H. Rao has shown (*Indian Antiquary*, Oct. and Nov., 1911) that the proportion of one-sixth was exceeded substantially in practice.

of assessment and collection. This is precisely the groundwork of the system which we find in operation in Moslem India from the thirteenth century onwards; but we find also various developments of practice, which in fact furnish the origin of nearly all the tenures existing in Northern India at the present day. In the next section I attempt to set out the logical relations of these developments to the fundamental structure.

2. DEVELOPMENTS OF THE FUNDAMENTAL RELATION

THE primitive method of realising the King's share by dividing the produce of each peasant persisted in Northern India into modern times, as between landholder and tenant, on a scale which renders possible a precise appreciation of its advantages and drawbacks. It works best when the area to be covered is so small that the claimant can transact his business in person: its efficiency falls rapidly with the increase in the area over which his claim extends. This result follows from certain physical causes which have operated more or less steadily throughout the historical period, and owing to which crops ripen simultaneously over large areas, while the produce may deteriorate very rapidly between ripening and storing. It is quite safe therefore to infer that a King with an extensive territory had to face substantially the same difficulty as would confront a large landholder at the present day, either to employ expensive and wasteful staff for the few harvest-weeks, or to lose a substantial portion of his claim owing to deterioration of the produce while it is waiting to be divided; and nearly all the variations in practice with which we are concerned may be attributed to endeavours to find a more satisfactory method.

For the purposes of study it is convenient to classify the various developments into two groups. In the first, the direct relation between the State and the individual peasant is maintained, but the assessment of the State's share is separated from the collection: in the second, the State ceases to deal directly with individual peasants, and operates through Intermediaries of various kinds.

A. INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT

Under this head we have to consider two methods, Estimation and Measurement, which can be traced in the Indo-Persian literature back to the thirteenth century, and a third, Contract, which appears in the literature much later.

In Estimation, the amount of the State's share is determined by inspection of the growing crop, the peasant's liability is fixed before the produce is ripe, and its collection can be effected at the most convenient time. This method also has persisted into modern times as between landholder and tenant. Its advantage lies in the longer period over which operations can be spread; but, as in actual crop-division, the master's eye is an important factor in efficiency, and, when the operation is carried out by subordinates working over a large area, there is the ever-present risk of the assessors conspiring with the peasants to defraud the State, or the landholder.

The processes of Estimation and Division are very closely allied. I think it may fairly be said that, at the opening of the nineteenth century, wherever payments depended on the season's produce, Estimation was the rule, and Division was usually confined to the rare cases in which the estimate was disputed; and probably this practice was of old standing. It is convenient therefore to group the two processes under the label "Sharing," and I shall use this term, distinguishing between Division and Estimation only when the context requires.

Measurement appears to be in essence an attempt to eliminate the risks attendant on Sharing by adhering to verifiable facts. Under it an average, or standard, figure for the share of the State from the unit-area of each crop was determined once for all, or, more precisely, until the State should decide to recalculate it, and the actual demand was assessed by measuring the areas of the crops sown at each season; if, for instance, the State's share was fixed at 100 lb. of wheat for the unit of area known as a bigha, then each bigha sown with wheat would be assessed at that amount without reference to the actual yield. The accuracy of the measurements could be checked at any time while

the crops were on the ground, and the rest was a mere matter of arithmetic.

From the thirteenth to the nineteenth century we find these two methods of assessment, Sharing and Measurement, in competition, and sometimes existing side by side, a fact which suggests that, in actual practice, neither of them could claim any very definite superiority. Later in the period we hear of another method, which I shall describe as Contract: under it a peasant came to terms with the assessing officer to pay a fixed sum of money annually for his holding, whatever crops he might grow; and this method must be regarded as the origin of that which now prevails over the greater part of the country as between landholder and tenant.

B. Assessment through Intermediaries

I have chosen the term Intermediaries to denote all the various classes authorised or permitted by the King to collect his share, and to retain a portion or the whole. Intermediaries may be classed as Chiefs, Representatives, Assignees, Grantees, and Farmers.

Chiefs.—At the opening of the Moslem period, we find that large areas subject to the foreign kings remained in the hands of Hindu Chiefs,[1] who paid tribute for them in cash, and that the King's officers did not normally deal with the peasants in these areas, or meddle in their internal administration. In the earliest records the more important Chiefs are spoken of as Rana, Rai, or Rao, titles which still survive; their use at this period indicates that the Chiefs had been in theory, if not in practice, sovereigns in their own right, and that they had submitted to the new rulers, retaining most of their previous jurisdiction. As time went on, the Chiefs came to be designated collectively as *zamindars*, and there is historical continuity between them and some of the *zamindars* of to-day, though there have been important alterations in the conditions of their tenure. In the past the Chiefs' payments were determined

[1] I use the term Chief as the one least likely to mislead. The word zamindar has changed its significance in the course of history, and it now means different things in different parts of India, so it is better to avoid it in a general discussion.

on lines of which there is no precise record, but probably by agreement or by dictation, as circumstances might permit, while each Chief decided for himself in what way he should collect the State's share from his peasants; his tenure depended on his loyalty, which meant primarily the punctual payment of tribute; and here we meet the idea, which is, perhaps, not yet wholly obsolete in India, that default and disloyalty are the same thing. The consequence of default was ordinarily a punitive expedition; and, if it was successful, the Chief might either be dispossessed, or else reinstated on new terms.

Representatives.—During large portions of the Moslem period the amount to be paid by a village for the King's share was commonly settled, season by season, or year by year, between the official assessor and the headmen acting on behalf of the peasants. The area sown, or expected to be sown, was taken into account, along with other circumstances, but the assessment was a lump sum, which the headmen subsequently distributed among the peasants. This method, which I shall describe as Group-assessment, might approximate closely to the system of assessment through Chiefs, in cases where a Chief's authority was limited to a single village, and the approximation might be still closer if a Group-assessment was made for a whole pargana with the Chaudhri or pargana headman; but there was usually a distinction in point of duration. The Group-assessment was made for a season or a year only, while the Chief's payment was fixed, not in the sense that it was unalterable, but until the authorities decided to alter it.

Assignees.—The general idea indicated by this word is that, instead of paying cash, the State provided for future pecuniary claims by assigning to the claimant the King's share of the produce of a specified area, the assignment carrying with it the grant of executive authority sufficient, at any rate, to enable the assignee to assess and collect the amount due. This institution is the most prominent feature of the Moslem agrarian system. The area might be an entire province, or a single village: the claim to be satisfied might represent the cost of maintaining troops, or salaries for civil or military service; and in normal times the bulk of

the State's claim on the peasants was assigned in this way.

Grantees.—In the same way, the King's share due from a specified area might be granted to any one of large classes of claimants, by way of pensions for past service, rewards for good conduct, or for literary or artisic achievement, maintenance of deserving individuals, or of religious, educational, or charitable endowments, and the like. The position of a grantee was similar to that of an assignee, and the distinction between the two classes was that an Assignment was conditional on future service, while a Grant was not; but both classes were held during pleasure, in the literal meaning of the phrase, and either Grant or Assignment could be varied or summarily terminated by order of the Ruler.

Farmers.—The idea underlying the method of farming the King's share seems to have been that an officer appointed to administer a province, or smaller area, could effect a great administrative simplification by undertaking to pay a fixed annual sum representing the net revenue of his charge, thus relieving the executive of all detailed financial responsibilities in regard to it. So stated, the method should not be condemned offhand in the case of a large kingdom, in times when communication was slow and liable to frequent interruption; but in Moslem India, as in other countries, it tended to attract speculators, and administration suffered through their efforts to make a profit in their short term of office. In practice then we must distinguish between the Governor on-farming-terms, chosen primarily for his character and abilities, and the speculative Farmer, chosen mainly or merely because his bid was the highest.

Farms of all sizes might be given, from a province, or group of provinces, down to a single village; and we must recognise that in certain circumstances various other tenures tended to assume this form. From the purely fiscal standpoint, a Chief was a Farmer, holding for an indefinite term; and from the same standpoint headmen engaging for a village or pargana were also technically Farmers. Salaried assessors and collectors, again, might easily become

Farmers by arranging to pay a fixed sum instead of accounting for fluctuating collections; and thus various institutions, which must be distinguished for the purpose of analysis, might be blended in practice, so that at certain epochs the agrarian system presents a kaleidoscopic aspect, with Chiefs and Farmers, headmen and collectors, each assuming the appearance of the others.

Enough has perhaps been said to indicate the nature, and the logical, though not the historical, sequence of the developments from the primitive method of dividing the produce, but a word must be added regarding the form in which the State's share was actually received. Each of the methods enumerated could be worked, so far as the peasant was concerned, either in cash or in kind, the State's share of produce being valued, when this course was deemed convenient, at rates determined in various ways. The payments of Intermediaries, on the other hand, were ordinarily assessed, and made, in terms of cash, at any rate from the first century of Moslem rule.[1] I do not know the date when the cash-nexus between the peasant and the King (or his representative) first came into existence, but the view that it is a modern phenomenon must be rejected as unhistorical; as we shall see in the next chapter, the peasants of the country round Delhi normally paid their share in cash during, at any rate, the latter part of the thirteenth century.

The question when these various developments originated is one which must be left mainly to students of the Hindu period. I suspect that most, if not all, of them date from before the Moslem conquest, but all I can do here is to point to some features which are probably, or certainly, indigenous. The most obvious example is the grant for religious or charitable endowment, the existence of which is established by surviving inscriptions, recording title-deeds of dates far earlier than the Moslem conquest. Assignments in lieu of salary were apparently recognised

[1] There are a few cases on record where some part of the revenue of a province was stated in commodities, *e.g.*, elephants from Bengal, but they are clearly exceptional.

by the Sacred Law itself, for it is laid down in Manu[1] that the officer appointed to be in charge of 100 villages should enjoy the revenues of one village, and this provision seems to carry the *jagir*, the great agrarian institution of Moslem times, back to quite an early period of Hindu culture; but in any case service-assignments were the rule in Kanauj under Harsha, if we may accept the Chinese pilgrim's statement that "Ministers of State and common officials all have their portion of land, and are maintained by the cities assigned to them." According to Professor Aiyangar, the same system existed in the Chola administration in the South, "the higher officers as well as the lower ones being remunerated by gifts of land or assignments of revenue."

The practice of appointing provincial Governors on farming terms prevailed in the Hindu Empire of Vijayangar, and it is probable that the farming-system extended down from the province to the village[2] under the Empire, as it certainly did in this region after the Empire had collapsed. It is a noteworthy fact that in the seventeenth century the agrarian system of the Vijayanagar territory was practically identical with that of the Moslem kingdom of Golconda, and it is most unlikely that the former should have borrowed a new system from the latter: the more probable inference is that Farming had become established as the mainstay of the Hindu agrarian system in the South by the end of the thirteenth century, and that Alauddin Khalji took it over at the time when he acquired the territories which later became the kingdoms of the Deccan.

We may say then that grantees, assignees, and probably also farmers, belonged to the developed Hindu system. I do not know of direct evidence showing the existence of

[1] *Sacred Books of the East*, XXV. 234; Watters (*op. cit.*) i. 176; Aiyangar, p. 184. The author of the *Arthasastra* apparently objected to the system (p. 299), but he knew of its existence (p. 67).

[2] The position in Vijayanagar early in the sixteenth century is explained by Nuniz, a Portuguese visitor who recorded his observations in detail, (Sewell, *A Forgotten Empire*, 373). He does not carry us below the province, but in the next century the Hindu Chiefs who were then in possession of what had been Vijayanagar territory obtained their revenue mainly, if not exclusively, by farming, and I think it probable that this was a continuation of the system practised under the Empire. The facts are discussed in Chapter VIII of my book *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*.

subordinate Chiefs, or ex-kings, paying revenue to a superior; but the number of kings, and the frequency of war, during the Hindu period furnished the conditions in which such an institution would naturally arise, and the *Arthasastra* recognises the existence, or at least the possibility, of vassal kings, and of payments by them of taxes or subsidies.[1] The same work speaks of taxes levied from whole villages, an expression which points to something like the Group-assessment of Moslem times ; and, finally, the essential feature of Measurement, payment of a definite quantity of grain per unit of area cultivated, recurs in inscriptions[2] from Southern India, dating from a period earlier than the Moslem conquest of the North.

In this connection it may be appropriate to refer to the modern practice of the Rajput State of Udaipur-Mewar, a tract which was never subjected to Moslem administration, and where it is probable the Hindu institutions have survived in their integrity. Mr. G. Chenevix Trench, who has recently been employed in reassessing the State, informs me that he found the three methods of assessment, Sharing, Measurement, and Contract, in operation side by side, and sometimes within the limits of a single village. Sharing was ordinarily carried out by Estimation, at the rate of one-third or one-half the produce (apart from cesses), but the peasants had the option of claiming actual Division and weighment of the produce on the threshing-floor. In some villages, Measurement was the general practice ; while, as far back as the records go, it has been the regular rule in the case of crops such as sugarcane, poppy, or vegetables, which are not handled on the threshing-floor. The antiquity of the Contract system is proved by documents going back in some cases for four centuries, and indicating a long-established practice. Group-assessment is common in the State : Farming was discontinued only about half a century ago ; and Assignments to officials were until recently a normal feature of the administration.

Such is the position in that part of Northern India which has been least under the influence of Moslem practice; and,

[1] See Books VI and VII, and especially p. 109.
[2] Aiyangar, 150, 175.

taking into account along with it the facts which have been indicated above, the inference may fairly be drawn that, when we meet with an apparently new institution in the Moslem period, it would be rash to accept it offhand as a Moslem innovation. The possibility must always be borne in mind that it may have been in existence for an indefinite time before it happened to secure mention in one of the chronicles ; and a student who confined his attention to India might be tempted to infer that the Moslem rulers accepted in the lump the institutions which they found in existence at the time of conquest. We must, however, remember that the conquerors brought with them the ideas of an agrarian system of their own, the main lines of which were laid down by Islamic law, and were not, in theory, subject to alteration by Kings or Ministers. In the next section, I shall attempt a sketch of the ideas which the conquerors brought with them, and of the relation of those ideas to the institutions which they found in existence.

3. THE ISLAMIC SYSTEM

The most authoritative account of the early Islamic system is to be found in a book recording the views of Abu Yusuf Yaqub, who was Chief Qazi of Baghdad in the eighth century, during the caliphate of Harun-ul Rashid. At the root of the system, as described by him, lies the distinction between tithe-land and tribute-land. Tithe-land (*ushri*) was primarily the home-country in Arabia, and conquered territory was included in it only when the conqueror dispossessed the inhabitants and distributed the land among his Moslem followers. This process was not followed in India, at least to any appreciable extent; the Hindu inhabitants were left in possession, and consequently the country was technically *kharaji*, or tribute-land, that is to say, the occupants became liable for the payment of the personal tax (*jiziya*), and for the tribute (*kharaj*) due from the land they cultivated. The original idea was that this tribute was taken for the benefit of Moslems in general;

1 Abu Yusuf, *Kitab-ul Kharaj*. See also the article on *Kharadj* in *The Encyclopoedia of Islam*. I am dependent on translations for the Arabic authorities.

but, when independent sovereign State developed in Islam, the tribute realised by a particular State came to be regarded, in practice if not in theory, as the revenue of the Ruler, and, in India at any rate, the word *kharaj* can safely be translated as land-revenue, or more shortly "revenue."[1]

In essence, this revenue consisted of a share of the produce of the land. The precise share was not laid down by Islamic law, but the underlying idea was that the profits of cultivation should be enjoyed by Moslems, and the only limit recognised by Abu Yusuf (59, 95), was the danger of checking production by over-assessment. The actual claim was decided by the Ruler in accordance with local conditions, but he was free to demand the full economic rent, or Producer's Surplus, whatever it might be, provided always that such a demand did not cause the peasants to abscond, or reduce the area of their cultivation. The method of assessment also was left to be decided by the Ruler, and in the pages of Abu Yusuf[2] we meet with the two methods which have already been described under the names of Sharing and Measurement.

Abu Yusuf contemplated the maintenance of direct relations between the Governor (*Wali*) and the peasants, and he tells us little about Intermediaries. He condemned (159, 160) Farming as oppressive, but his observations show that it was familiar to him in practice; and he considered it to be legitimate in the case where the peasants put forward one of their number to engage for the total revenue due from them, an arrangement practically identical with that which I have called Group-assessment. I have not traced in his pages any direct authority for assessment through Chiefs, or for Grants or Assignments, but it is certain that these institutions were familiar to the Moslems who established the first kingdom of Delhi. Endowments for pious purposes are an integral part of Islamic law:

[1] A discussion of the various terms denoting land-revenue will be found in Appendix A.

[2] See (*e.g.*) p. 56; the land was measured and a charge, partly cash and partly kind, was made on each unit of area; this is what I call Measurement. So (p. 74, 76), he recommends a share of the produce, to be determined or estimated, and valued at current prices; this is Sharing.

Assignments were made regularly by the Afghan kings in the twelfth century; and the Chief of Ghur paid revenue (*kharaj*) to Ghazni, before he attained the status of an independent king.[1]

Thus the system which Moslem conquerors brought with them from Afghanistan to India was substantially identical with the system which they found in operation. They came prepared to claim a share of the produce of the soil, and they found the peasants accustomed to pay a share to whoever might be in a position to take it; they were prepared to assess either by Sharing or by Measurement, and they found that both methods were known in the country; they knew of Chiefs paying revenue for their territories, and they found Chiefs ready to do so; they were familiar with Grants and Assignments, institutions already known in India, as well as with Farming, which was probably practised there; and there can have been no great obstacle to a fusion of two systems so nearly identical, when once the Moslems had established their rule by force of arms.

Two differences only require to be noticed. In the first place, the Moslem claim to the full economic rent was at variance with the arithmetical limitation to one-sixth (or some other fraction) of the produce recognised by the Hindu Sacred Law; but, as we have seen, the limitation was somewhat elastic, and it would present no very serious obstacle to conquerors sufficiently strong to enforce their demands. In the second place, there was a difference in regard to the scale of the revenue-demand. If I understand the authorities correctly, the scale laid down in the Sacred Law was uniform, that is to say, the same proportion of the produce was claimed from all crops alike, while the Moslem scales were differential, making allowance for variations in the cropping and in the source of irrigation. To take one example. Abu Yusuf suggests (pp. 74-76), the following charges. Wheat and barley, 2/5 when naturally watered, 3/10 when watered by wheels; dates, vines, green crops, and gardens, 1/3; and summer crops, 1/4. Whether any

[1] T. Nasiri. For assignments outside India and before the establishment of the Delhi kingdom, see pp. 86, 87, 107, 121, 132. For Ghur as a revenue-paying chiefship, see pp. 40-49; we are told that when the Chief rebelled against Sabuktigin, he withheld the *kharaj* which was due.

early attempt was made to introduce such differential scales in the Moslem kingdom of Delhi is a question which I cannot answer, because I have found no record of the scales of Demand before the year 1300; but Alauddin Khalji about that year followed what I take to be the Hindu practice in demanding a uniform share of one-half in all cases; in later times Sher Shah and Akbar also followed the Hindu practice; and the earliest differential scale of which I have found clear evidence in Moslem India[1] was that which was introduced in the Deccan by Murshid Quli Khan in the middle of the seventeenth century.

It is true that a differential scale is recommended in a Sanskrit work, the Sukraniti,[2] the text of which has been used as an argument to establish the view that the practice was part of the Sacred Law. This work is, however, comparatively modern; the references to artillery which it contains show that, in its present form, it belongs to the Moslem period; and so far as I can find, there is nothing in it inconsistent with the view that it was compiled in the seventeenth century, when a differential scale had in fact been introduced in India. The passage is, I think, best read as an attempt to combine the two methods. The traditional uniform share of one-sixth is duly preserved, but its application is limited to barren and rocky soils; while for more productive land, higher shares, varying from a half to a quarter, according to the source of water, are recommended as the basis of assessment. That is probably the work of a writer who knew the Sacred Law, but at the same time was familiar with a modern practice.

In any case, the differences which have been described are matters of detail, and it may fairly be said that the agrarian system which we find in operation in the fourteenth century was, in its essential features, in harmony with the law of Islam, and also with the Sacred Law of Hinduism, so that the conquerors had little more to do than give

[1] Mr. Ishwari Prasad states (*Medieval India* p. 46) that a differential scale was introduced by the Arabs in Sind during the eighth century. I have not traced the details of this arrangement in the chronicles, and I do not know how long it lasted, but I think it must be regarded as an episode.

[2] Translated by S. K. Sarkar, Allahabad, 1914, p. 148.

Arabic or Persian names to the institutions which they found in existence ; and even this process was not carried out consistently, for in some cases the Indian names were adopted at once, while in others they eventually ousted the imported designations. Some details of this development must be given, because the fluctuating terminology is one of the chief difficulties in understanding the early chronicles.

To take the most important person first, there was at the outset no established term for the individual peasant, but peasants in the mass were regularly denoted by the Arabic word *ra'iyat*, now naturalised in English as ryot. This word meant a herd of whatever animals furnished subsistence, and consequently deserved protection,—camels in the desert, cattle in grazing-country, peasants on arable land : its transfer in Indian use from the herd to the individual did not occur, so far as I can find, until the eighteenth century at the earliest ; and throughout the Moslem period it must ordinarily be read as a noun of multitude, the plural forms being interpreted as "heads" rather than "peasants."

As regards the Chief, usage seems to have developed gradually. Writing in the middle of the thirteenth century, Minhaj-ul Siraj[1] used only specific Indian terms such as Rai or Rana : a century later, Ziya Barni[2] denoted the Chief usually by *khut*, a word which I have found nowhere else in the northern literature, and employed *zamindar* in only a few passages ; but Shams Afif, the next chronicler, used *zamindar* frequently, and thenceforward it is the regular designation.

For the village, we find the Persian word *deh* from the outset, supplemented later on by the Arabic *mauza* ; but the aggregate of villages known in Hindi as *pargana* was given different names. The earliest writers generally used the Arabic *qasba* (not yet specialised in the modern Indian sense of "town"), but the Hindi designation[3] appears in

[1] T. Nasiri : Rai occurs as early as p. 9, and frequently thereafter, as does Rana.

[2] Barni uses *khut* in too many passages for citation : *zamindar* appears on p. 326 referring to Chiefs outside the kingdom, and on p. 539 it denotes for the first time Chiefs subject to the King of Delhi. The word *khut* is discussed in Appendix C.

[3] Afif : the first use is on p. 99.

Shams Afif, and pargana becomes thenceforward the usual Persian phrase, though *qasba* retains its place as an occasional synonym.

In Hindu times there were headmen and accountants for parganas and for villages. These positions continued to exist under the Moslems, but while two of the old designations were adopted, for the others substitutes were introduced. The pargana-headman remained the *chaudhri*, the village-accountant remained the *patwari*: the village-headman, on the other hand, was re-named *muqaddam*, and the pargana-accountant became *qanungo*.[1]

This diversity of practice is, I think, significant of the conditions in which the fusion of the Hindu and Moslem systems took place. So far as we can see, there was no attempt at systematic re-naming: if an Arabic or Persian equivalent lay ready to hand, it was employed, while a convenient Hindi designation might survive: a Persian name first adopted might give way to Hindi in course of time, and one Persian name might be displaced by another. The facts point to a fusion worked out by practical men, and not by theoretical jurists, men whose immediate object was to get in the revenue, and who, we may suspect, were ready to follow the line of least resistance, rather than seek for guidance from the Qazis and other professed expounders of Islamic law.

This view is borne out by what we know of the attitude of the early Moslem Kings of Delhi. I have not found precise information on this point for the first half century, but regarding Balban, who was first deputy, and then actual, King for a total period of nearly forty years, we know[2] that in matters of administration he did what he thought was best, whether it was technically lawful or not. Alauddin Khalji explicitly claimed the same freedom, and exercised

[1] *Chaudhri* and *patwari* appear in Barni, 288. The specialisation of the word *mnqaddam* was apparently gradual: in some passages in Barni it seems to point definitely to village-headmen, but in others it retains its general sense of "prominent men": it had become definitely specialised in the sixteenth century. The first reference I have found to the *qanungo* is in T. Sher Shahi (*Elliot*, iv. 414), but he appears there as an old-established institution.

[2] For Balban's attitude, see Barni, 47; for Alauddin, *id.* 290ff: for Muhammad Tughlaq, *id.* 461, 492. For Firuz, see Afif, 99, 129, and *passim*.

it regularly in practice; Muhammad Tughlaq combined extraordinary subservience to the Khalifa with systematic and gross breaches of Islamic law ; and it is only in Firuz that we meet a ruler who regularly sought guidance from jurists, and framed his policy in accordance with their rulings. As will be explained in the next chapter, we have no record of the actual circumstances attending the assumption of fiscal authority by the Moslem conquerors, but the facts which have been stated lend probability to the view that, at any rate, it was not dominated by meticulous ecclesiastics.

The reader will perhaps ask if the concurrence of the Hindu and Moslem systems is a fortuitous coincidence, or can be explained on historical grounds. I cannot give a definite answer, but the latter alternative seems to me to be more probable. Tithe-land is definitely an Arabian institution, but the rules regarding tribute-land appear to have been worked out to meet the situation arising from the Moslem conquests towards the East; and it would not be matter for surprise if the indigenous institutions of those regions resembled those of India. The question must, however, be left to students of the pre-Islamic history of Persia and Iraq, a subject of which I have no knowledge.

Chapter II

The 13th and 14th Centuries.

1. THE MOSLEM KINGDOM OF DELHI

THE Moslem Kingdom of Delhi dates from the year 1206, when Qutbuddin, the Governor appointed by the King of Ghazni, assumed the title of Sultan and ascended the throne. At this time, however, India had already obtained some experience of Moslem rule. Apart from the episode of Arab rule in Sind, Afghan Kings had maintained governors in Hindustan[1] for more than a century ; and, since the collection of revenue was an essential part of administration, we must assume that contact between the Hindu and Islamic agrarian systems was established during this period. Of the details of this contract I have found no record, and the nature of the arrangements for collecting revenue can only be guessed. The position of the Moslem governors was at times precarious, and the force at their disposal can scarcely have been sufficient for the effective subjugation of the country nominally in their charge ; the conditions suggest rather centres of authority at Multan, Lahore, and (later) Delhi, and a sphere of influence round each fortress, varying in extent with the personality of the Governor and the other circumstances of the time. Reading back from the facts of the next century, we may infer that the Hindu Chiefs were the dominant factor in the situation, and that the success of a Governor depended on the relations he could establish with his neighbours, relations which would depend

[1] "Hindustan" in the chronicles is a word of fluctuating meaning, but at this period the general sense is the country to the South and East of the centre of Moslem power, wherever it might at the moment be located. When, for instance, the King of Ghazni in 1098 confirmed a Governor of Hindustan (T. Nasiri, 22), his charge was merely a corner of North-West India ; but about 1250 the King of Delhi marched to Kanauj on his way to Hindustan (*id.* 210) In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the word usually points to the country beyond the Ganges, or, less commonly, to Rajputana and Central India.

partly on his personal qualities, and partly on the force he could command; but in the absence of any record of facts it is useless to carry conjecture further.

The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries form a well-marked period in the history of India. During it, the Kings of Delhi ruled with something like continuity from the Indus to Bihar, and from the Himalayas to the Narbada, with temporary extensions of authority further to the South and East; but by the end of the fourteenth century this large kingdom was disintegrating, and it was soon to be replaced by a number of independent States. The principal first-hand authorities for the period are three. Minhaj-ul Siraj, who was Chief Qazi of Delhi in the middle of the thirteenth century, recorded the history compendiously from the days of Adam down to his own times; nearly a hundred years later Ziya Barni, a retired official, took up the story where Minhaj-ul Siraj had left off, and carried it down to the early years of Firuz; while Shams Afif, also an official, writing soon after the year 1400, essayed to complete Ziya Barni's unfinished work. So far as regards the agrarian system of the period, practically everything which is found in later chronicles can be traced to one or other of these writers; and, while I have referred to the condensed accounts given by Badauni Firishta, and others, I do not think it necessary to cite them as authorities. Of the three contemporary chroniclers, the first was apparently little interested in agrarian topics, but the second and the third had personal connections with the Revenue Ministry, and furnish much relevant information. It is given in the official jargon of the period, which was soon to become obsolete, and is consequently at times difficult to interpret; but it is undoubtedly authoritative, and, so far as I can see, is not vitiated by prejudice or flattery, two characteristics which are in evidence occasionally in the accounts of political or dynastic affairs.

Some description of the administrative organisation of this large kingdom is necessary for our present purpose. From the outset we find it broken up into regions which I shall describe as Provinces, in charge of Governors[1]; by

[1] The position of the Governor at this period is discussed in Appendix B.

"Province" I mean a primary division of the kingdom, and by "Governor" an officer who received orders directly from the King or the Ministers at Court. These provinces varied in number with the size of the kingdom, and possibly also with its development; but most of them appear in the chronicles with sufficient regularity to be regarded as permanent, though two or more might on occasion be held by a single Governor. Apart from the ordinary provinces, two particular regions require separate notice.

1. The Delhi Country[1] (*havali-i Dehli*). This region was bounded on the East by the Jumna, and on the North by the Siwaliks, or rather by the line of forest at their foot. On the South it marched with Mewat, a fluctuating boundary, because at times the turbulent Mewatis threatened Delhi itself, and at others they were penned up in the Rajputana hills, but they were never really subdued. On the West, it was bounded by the provinces of Sirhind, Samana, and Hansi (known later as Hissar). Its administrative position was exceptional in that it had no Governor, but was directly under the Revenue Ministry.

2. The River Country. This region is described in the chronicles as "between the two rivers," and translators have usually written of it as "the Doab." That rendering is, however, misleading, because in modern usage the Doab extends to Allahabad, while the region referred to by the chroniclers was much smaller; it lay between the Ganges and the Jumna, and on the North it extended to the submontane forest, but on the South it did not reach much further than Aligarh. During the thirteenth century, this region was divided into three provinces, Meerut, Baran (now Bulandshahr), and Kol (now Aligarh); but Alauddin brought it directly under the Revenue Ministry on the same footing as the Delhi country. In a later section we shall see how it was desolated under Muhammad Tughlaq.

These two regions formed the heart of the kingdom. The provinces which can be identified outside their limits are

[1] The word *havali* occurs occasionally in the general sense of "neighbourhood," but in many passages it denotes what was obviously a specific administrative area. It should not be identified with the subdivision known in the Mogul period as Haveli-i Delhi, which was much more extensive.

as follows. Below the River Country came Kanauj, and below that Karra, the two together completing the area now known as the Doab ; but Kanauj had apparently some jurisdiction across the Ganges, while Karra extended across both rivers. Beyond the Ganges, we find Amroha and Sambhal[1] on the North, and next to these Badaun, In the earlier period, the next province recorded to the East of Badaun was Awadh (Ajudhiya, or Fyzabad), but later we hear of Sandila between the two ; and beyond Awadh to the South-East was Zafarabad, which became known as Jaunpur when that city was built by Firuz. To the North of the Gogra was Bahraich ; then came a portion of Awadh including Gorakhpur, and then Tirhut, or North Bihar. Beyond Tirhut was Lakhnauti, or Western Bengal, which was sometimes a province, but usually a kingdom, subordinate or independent according to circumstances.

Crossing the Ganges and returning westwards, we have the province then known as Bihar, which was separate from Tirhut. The country lying to the West of this Bihar was not really within the kingdom, and the next province we meet is Mahoba, and next to it Bayana, which was united with Gwalior during the periods when that fortress belonged to the kingdom. Bayana marched with Mewat, the unadministered region South of Delhi to which reference has already been made. West of Delhi, the provinces were Sirhind, Samana and Hansi (Hissar), and beyond them Lahore, Dipalpur, and Multan. The last three were frontier provinces ; almost throughout the period the Mongols were established on or near the Indus, and the danger resulting from their presence was a determining factor in the politics of the kingdom.

To the Southward, Gujarat was a recognised province, and there were some provinces in Malwa, but the chronicles say curiously little about this region, and I am not certain of the number. Of Rajputana also, we hear very little ; there is

[1] Apparently this part of Rohilkhand was at times administered as part of the River Country: I take this to be the meaning of Afif's occasional phrase "between-and-beyond-the-two rivers." In one passage (p. 323), Barni seems to include Amroha in the River Country, mentioning it, along with Meerut, Baran, and Kol, as being under direct administration.

occasionally a reference to Chitore as a province, but there is little trace of effective jurisdiction in this region. This enumeration brings us down to the line of the Narbada. Alauddin carried the Moslem flag across this river, and for a time there was a large and important province at Deogir or Daulatabad, and others extending as far as the South-East Coast, but this extension was not retained for long. There were thus in all from 20 to 30 provinces, the numbers varying from time to time as the kingdom grew or shrunk; and the phrase "the twenty provinces," used by Ziya Barni (p. 50) in recording the resources of the kingdom under Balban, may be taken as a more or less precise description.

We have then the kingdom divided into provinces, while the villages were grouped in parganas, and the question naturally arises whether there was any intermediate administrative unit corresponding to the district of later times. I have failed to find materials for a decisive answer to this question. In a few passages we read of "divisions" (*shiqq*), in terms which suggest that these were in fact districts; but the passages are not decisive, and leave room for doubt whether these divisions, if they existed, were normal or exceptional, or whether the word is not a mere synonym. My impression is that during the fourteenth century the word *shiqq* was coming into use as a synonym for the terms which I have rendered "province"; but a full discussion of the question would carry us too far, and, since it is not really important for the present purpose, I shall leave the matter open.

We have no actual description of a province at this period, but it would, I think, be a mistake to picture an area with strictly defined boundaries, and with uniform administrative pressure over all its parts. At the provincial capital was the Governor with the troops maintained by him, and there may have been smaller centres of authority, though this is doubtful; in some villages, his officials might be dealing directly with the peasants, in others there would be resident grantees or assignees, in others—as I think the majority—there would be Chiefs to whom the Governor looked for the revenue. If Chiefs rebelled, that is to say, did not pay the

revenue, the case was one for military force; and if rebellion in this sense was widespread or serious, the King might lead, or send, a punitive expedition to put matters right. It is reasonable to infer that rebellion was conditioned largely by distance or accessibility, that it was comparatively rare near the provincial capital, and comparatively common near the boundaries; and that there might be areas where the Chiefs were practically independent, because the Governor was not in a position to reduce them to submission. In any case, the relations between a Chief and his peasants would not be affected by the establishment of Moslem rule, except in so far as more money might have to be raised in order to pay the revenue; inside the villages the established agrarian system would continue to function.

2. THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

There is no record of any large change in the agrarian system of the Delhi kingdom earlier than that which was effected by Alauddin Khalji about the year 1300, and the question arises whether any inference can be drawn from the silence of the chroniclers regarding the thirteenth century. So far as the first half of the century is concerned, I do not consider silence as necessarily significant. Minhaj-ul Siraj, the chronicler of this period, was an ecclesiastical jurist, who for long periods was at the head of the qazis of the kingdom; his chronicle shows no trace of interest in economic or social matters; and I think it is quite possible that he might have ignored changes of importance in the agrarian system. He might indeed have noticed discussions as to the legality of the system, if they had occurred in his time, for in that case he would necessarily have taken part in them; but he was courtier as well as qazi,[2] and it is easy

[1] For examples, see Barni, 57 ff. Balban did not dare to go on distant wars of conquest owing to the threat from the Mongols on the frontier, but he spent much of his time in these punitive expeditions, to Mewat, or Kanauj, or Badaun, as necessity arose.

[2] His praise of King Balban is extravagant, but he does not mention the fact, recorded by Barni (p. 47), that this King paid no attention to Islamic law in matters of government. The topic was certainly important to a man in his position, but it was obviously an inconvenient one at a time when Balban ruled the kingdom.

to suppose that he would have passed over in silence decisions which were unfavourable to his views.

The case is different with Ziya Barni, who came of administrative stock,[1] and, as his personal narrative shows, was interested in agrarian matters. I think it is probable that he would have heard of, and duly recorded, any large change made by Balban, the only ruler in the second half of the century who is likely to have done anything of the kind; and his silence suggests that there was nothing to be told. However that may be, the only materials available for this century consist of incidental remarks, and one or two anecdotes. We see the peasantry supporting the kingdom by the revenue they furnished, and we read of rebellious, or defaulting, Chiefs being punished; but we are told nothing of the methods by which the revenue was assessed and collected, nor have I found any details bearing on the life of the peasants or their relations with their Chief. It is clear that Grants were freely given by the Kings, and that Assignments were common; as regards the former we have no particulars of interest, but something must be said of the assignment-system, the scope of which was in some respects wider than in some later periods.

For practical purposes we must distinguish between small and large Assignments, both of which classes were described as *iqta*, and implied liability to military service. By small Assignments I mean those which were given to individual troopers, who were bound to present themselves, with horses and arms, whenever they were called up for service or inspection. Their position can be illustrated by the story told of the "Shamsi iqtadars" (Barni, 60, 61). Early in King Balban's reign, reports were made to him regarding Assignments which had been allotted to about 2000 troopers in the time of Shamsuddin. Most of these men had become old or unfit for service, and the rest had come to terms with

[1] Barni tells us (p. 248) that his father was "Naib and Khwaja" in the province of Baran : the duties of the Khwaja at this period are not described, but the word Naib indicates that he was Deputy-Governor, or the second man in the province ; and he retained a position there long enough for his son to acquire the soubriquet by which he is usually known. Barni does not tell us what positions he himself occupied, so probably he never rose very high ; but in one passage (p. 504), he speaks of having been employed at headquarters for more than 17 years under Muhammad Tughlaq.

the clerks of the Army Ministry, and so escaped the liability to serve; sons had been tacitly allowed to succeed their fathers; the holders lived in their villages as if they were proprietors; and a claim was now put forward that the holdings were Grants and not Assignments. The King passed orders on these reports, resuming the Assignments of those who were unfit for service, and giving them small pensions in cash, while the Assignments were continued to men who were able and willing to perform their duties; but subsequently these orders were cancelled on a picturesque appeal *ad misericordiam*, and we are left to infer that, in these particular cases, the Assignments were allowed to develop into Grants free from liability.

The story is interesting for the light it throws on the agrarian position in the vicinity of Delhi. An individual trooper could apparently settle down quietly in a village, and enjoy the revenue it yielded; and, since these individuals obviously regarded their holdings as well worth keeping, we must infer that the peasants accepted the arrangement without much difficulty. The life of the village doubtless went on as before : the only novelty was the new revenue-collector who came to live in it, with the authority of the King behind him, but obviously with no great force at his own disposal. We may guess that in some cases there may have been friction due to the attitude of a particular assignee; but the duration of the Assignments indicates that, in the thirteenth century, as in later times, the peasants were content to acquiesce in arrangements made over their heads, and pay the revenue to anyone who claimed it with authority.

No similar account exists of the larger Assignments, that is to say, those held by men of position. Their existence is indicated, but that is all, and we do not know whether the position involved merely liability to personal service as officers, as was the case in the fourteenth century, or whether it included also the maintenance of a body of troops, as was the rule in other Moslem countries at that time, and in India during the Mogul period. Taking a general view of the position, it is clear that Assignments were fairly common in the neighbourhood of Delhi; but in this region there was

also Reserved (*khalisa*) land,[1] that is to say, land administered directly by the Revenue Ministry for the benefit of the treasury. The King thus drew revenue from two principal sources, the receipts from the Reserved lands, and the surplus-income[2] remitted from the provinces.

Something can be added to this vague outline by arguing back from the reforms of Alauddin to the system which he changed. It is clear that, at the end of the thirteenth century, the Hindu Chiefs were sufficiently numerous and important to dominate the political outlook, and consequently they must have been of great importance from the agrarian standpoint also. As remuneration for their services to the kingdom, they were allowed a portion of land free from assessment, and the income from this source, described as their "right" or "perquisite" (*haqq*), was intended to suffice for their maintenance; but they were suspected—and the suspicion is at least probable—of taking more from the peasants than they paid to the State, so that "the burden of the strong fell upon the weak," to use a phrase which occurs more than once in the discussions. Clearly then the arrangements for assessment and collection from the peasants were in the hands of the Chief, where one was recognised.

Now the course of events in the thirteenth century was not, on the whole, favourable to an increase of the Chiefs, authority: despite occasional periods of weakness, there was a considerable extension and development of the King's power, and it is probable that the Chiefs, regarded as a whole, were at least as strong in the middle of the century as at its close, and that they were stronger at the beginning than in

[1] From the nature of the case we hear very little of this topic, but a Superintendent of Reserved Lands is mentioned in T. Nasiri (p. 249) before the middle of the century. The word *khalisa* means "pure" or "free," hence, "unencumbered," and its use in this special sense would be natural in the Revenue Ministry, but "Reserved" gives the actual position more clearly, because, at any moment, certain lands were kept apart for the Treasury, while the remainder were assigned. The common rendering "Crown lands" is, I think, misleading, because in modern use the phrase carries with it the idea of permanence, while thoughout the Moslem period there was no permanence whatever, reserved land being assigned, and assigned land being reserved, at the will of Ruler or Minister: the distinction between the two classes was permanent, but a particular area might pass from one to the other at any moment.

[2] Surplus income is denoted by the word *fawazil* (Barni, 164, 200, &c.).

the middle. It may well be, then, that the chroniclers' silence in regard to agrarian changes is explained by the fact that there was nothing to record; that throughout the century the old agrarian system continued to function under the established Chiefs; and that their methods were followed in the areas where Moslems were in direct contact with peasants. The relations between Governor and Chief would probably be, in the main, matters for negotiation, while the relations between Chief and peasants would be outside the scope of the Revenue Ministry, which would be gradually accumulating experience in the management of the areas which were neither held by Chiefs nor assigned to individuals. It cannot be said that this view is established by an adequate mass of recorded facts, but it seems to me to be the most probable interpretation of the few facts which have been preserved.

As regards the areas managed by Moslem officials, the only fact which emerges is that the position of the headmen was recognised. The passages given in Appendix C show that in the matter of perquisites headmen were on the same footing as Chiefs; and it is safe to infer that, in the one case as in the other, the perquisites were intended as remuneration for service to the King, or, in other words, that the villages which were not under Chiefs were managed through their headmen. There is nothing on record to show the extent of the headman's authority: all that can be said is that his position was recognised by the Moslem administration.

Before leaving this century, it may be well to ask what was the attitude of the sovereign towards the peasants under his rule. The question can be answered only in the case of Balban, whose power extended over nearly half the period. In his advice to his son, whom he placed on the throne of Bengal, he insisted (Barni, 100), on the danger of making excessive demands on the peasants, even when they were justified by precedent, and on the need for firm but just administration. With regard to assessment, he advised a middle course: over-assessment would result in the impoverishment of the country, but under-assessment would render the peasants lazy and insubordinate; it was essential

that they should have enough to live on in comfort, but they should not have much more. It may fairly be said then that Balban had grasped the main principles of rural economy in an Indian peasant-State, at a period when the environment afforded little scope for individual advance ; he aimed at a peaceful and contented peasantry, raising ample produce and paying a reasonable revenue; and he saw that it was the King's duty to direct the administration with this object in view.

3. ALAUDDIN KHALJI (1296-1316)

In the year 1296, Alauddin obtained the throne of Delhi by the murder of his uncle, the reigning King, and consolidated his position by lavish distribution of the wealth he had obtained by his raid into the Deccan.[1] Just at first, he appears to have thought that a kingdom so obtained would stand of itself; but from a succession of revolts in the opening months of his reign he learned the need for vigorous administration, and thenceforward he stands out as a strong and absolutely ruthless ruler, intent only on the security of his throne and the extension of his dominions. The changes made by him in the agrarian system did not arise from any economic, still less any philanthropic, motive, but were inspired solely by political and military consideration. Personally he was unpopular, at the outset he had no trustworthy body of nobles or officers on whom to rely, nor could he count on the support of orthodox Moslems; his subjects were ready to rebel, while the Mongols, massed on the Indus, constituted a perpetual danger on the frontier. The need for security, internal as well as external, was thus the dominant note of his policy, and extension of the kingdom was deliberately postponed until he judged that he was safe at home.

[1] The narrative in the text is based entirely on Barni (241 ff.), who wrote from personal knowledge, and who condemns some portions of Alauddin's conduct severely, while he praises certain of his measures. He may fairly be regarded as impartial, at least in intention ; and, from the form in which he gives the King's regulations, I judge that he must have had access to the official records, or else had preserved copies of some important documents. His chronology is difficult, for dates are often wanting, and his narrative does not always follow the order of time ; but close reading usually makes it possible to ascertain the sequence of events, though not the actual dates.

Internal security was the first consideration, and, in or near the year 1300, the King took steps to bring his officers under closer control. His regulations issued with this object were numerous and varied, but the only measure which concerns us is the resumption of nearly all the existing Grants, which at his accession he had confirmed[1] to the holders, the idea being apparently that men of position should have no income independent of the King's continued favour. This measure is important as showing that Grants were in fact held merely at the King's pleasure, and were liable to resumption at any time; but the area affected by it cannot have been large relatively to the extent of the kingdom, and the outstanding fact is the action which was taken about the same time to keep the Hindu Chiefs and rural leaders in subjection.[2]

The view taken by Alauddin and his counsellors was that Chiefs and leaders would be rebellious so long as they had the resources necessary for rebellion; and a consideration of the actual position suggests that this view was probably sound. The Chiefs had behind them a long tradition of independence, maintained entirely by the sword; they cannot, in the mass, have had any particular reason for loyalty to the foreign rulers who had annexed the country by force, and who derived a large revenue from it; while the arrogance of individual Moslems[3] must have furnished on occasion a

[1] Barni, 248, for confirmation ; and 283, for resumption. The resumption extended to religious endowments as well as personal grants, and was effected summarily, "with one stroke of the pen, as Dowson rendered the passage.

[2] A translation of the passage dealing with this action is given in Appendix C. Barni speaks of "the Hindus," but here, and in various other passages where the phrase occurs, the context makes it plain that he is thinking of the upper classes, not of the peasants. Taking his book as a whole, I would infer that he thought of the kingdom as consisting not of two elements but of three—Moslems, Hindus, and the "herds," or peasants. In this passage, the details which follow show that the question really at issue was how to break the power of the rural leaders, the Chiefs and the headmen of parganas and villages ; in point of fact, the regulation was favourable to the smaller peasants, in so far as it insisted on the leaders bearing their fair share of the burden—the weak were not to pay for the strong.

[3] See Barni, 290, for an extreme instance of this arrogance. The Qazi of Bayana laid it down as Islamic law that Hindus must show the utmost reverence to the collector of revenue, so that "if the collector spits into a Hindu's mouth, the Hindu must open his mouth to receive it without objection."

strong incentive to rebellion. It is easy then to believe that the Chiefs, or some of them, were in fact ready to throw off the Moslem yoke whenever an opportunity should occur, and that they employed their surplus income largely in strengthening themselves in the traditional ways, by maintaining troops and accumulating weapons; but, however this may be, the view accepted by Alauddin led directly to a change in agrarian policy designed to deprive the Chiefs of a large part of their resources. The measures taken were:

1. The standard of the revenue-Demand[1] was fixed at one-half of the produce without any allowances or deductions.

2. The Chiefs' perquisites were abolished, so that all the land occupied by them was to be brought under assessment at the full rate.

3. The method of assessment was to be Measurement, the charges being calculated on the basis of standard yields.

4. A grazing-tax was imposed apart from the assessment on cultivation.

These measures were in themselves well suited to achieve the object in view. A Demand of half the produce cannot have left the ordinary peasant with any substantial surplus, and would thus strike at the private revenue which the Chiefs were suspected of levying; while the assessment of the Chiefs' holdings at full rates would reduce them practically to the economic position of peasants, and the grazing-tax would operate to diminish their income from uncultivated land. The economic result would be to draw the bulk, if not the whole, of the Producer's Surplus of the country into the treasury; to stereotype the standard of living of the ordinary peasants; and to reduce the standard of living of the Chiefs, who would not be in a position to maintain troops, or accumulate supplies of horses and other military requirements. The only question that arises is whether such a policy was, or could be, carried out effectively.

On this question we have the definite statement of the chronicler that the regulations were strictly enforced, and

[1] The word "Demand" is used to denote the claim actually made by the State, as distinguished from the other senses borne by revenue." The later ambiguous term is analysed in Appendix A.

that their object was realised. As the result of some years' continuous effort, the Chiefs, and the headmen of parganas and villages, were impoverished and subdued; there was no sign of gold or silver in the houses of the "Hindus"; the Chiefs were unable to obtain horses or weapons; and their wives were even driven by poverty to take service in Moslem houses. We may suspect some rhetorical exaggeration in the language of the chronicle; but the success of the King's policy seems to be established by the fact that, six years after its adoption, his kingdom was at peace, and he was able to detach strong armies for his long-meditated project of the conquest of the Deccan. Nor is there any record of serious internal revolt during the remainder of his reign; and we may fairly accept the inference that, for the time being, the Chiefs were set aside, and the Administration was brought into direct relations with the peasants throughout a large part of the kingdom.

The extent of country over which these regulations operated is not entirely clear. The chronicler gives (p. 288) a long list of provinces, but, as commonly happens with such lists, some of the names are corrupt; and, in the absence of any definitive text, there is no certainty that others may not have dropped out in the course of copying. Taking the list as it stands, we learn that the regulations were applied by degrees to Delhi, the River Country, and the rest of the Doab. To the East, Rohilkhand was included, but not Awadh or Bihar; to the South, portions of Malwa and Rajputana were included, but not Gujarat; while on the West, all the Punjab provinces are indicated with the exception of Multan. So summarised, the list inspires some confidence, because it covers the centre of the kingdom and omits the outlying provinces; but, as I have just said, the possibility remains that some of the omissions may be the work of copyists. Even, however, if the list has not been accidentally curtailed, it represents a very large administrative achievement on the part of the Deputy-Minister, Sharaf Qai, to whose efficiency the chronicler pays a glowing tribute.

The establishment of direct relations with the peasants over this large area must necessarily have involved a rapid

increase in the number of officials; and in the 14th, as in the 16th, century such an increase was apt to result in an orgy of corruption and extortion. That something of the sort occurred on this occasion must be inferred from the chronicler's description (pp. 288—9) of the measures taken by the Deputy-Minister for the audit of the local officials' accounts, measures so drastic as to render the Service unpopular for the time being; "clerkship was a great disgrace," and executive position was accounted "worse than fever." The only point, however, which concerns us is that the records of the village-accountants were used in the audit. This is one of the very rare glimpses we obtain of the interior of a village at this period, with the accountant recording meticulously every payment, whether lawful or not, made to each official. We shall see in a later chapter that Aurangzeb's Revenue Minister advised his controlling staff to adopt the same expedient in order to detect unauthorised levies by their subordinates; and we may fairly infer that the functions of the village-accountant constitute one of the permanent features of the agrarian system.

The main changes effected by Alauddin originated in the effort to realise internal security; but one important detail was the result of the pressure of the Mongols on the frontier. Shortly after the adoption of the regulations which have just been described, the King made an expedition into Rajputana. It was not very successful, and when he returned with his army tired and disorganised, a strong force of Mongols appeared suddenly outside Delhi. For a short time the kingdom was in imminent danger; and, when the Mongols eventually withdrew, the King turned his attention to the prevention of such attacks in future. The frontier defences were duly re-organised; but, in addition to the troops stationed there, he decided that it was necessary to maintain a large and efficient standing army, not scattered over the country in Assignments, but concentrated in the neighbourhood of the capital, and paid in cash from the royal treasury. Here, however, financial considerations obtruded themselves. It was a time of inflation; prices, and consequently wages, were high; and it

was found that the accumulated treasure of the kingdom would very soon be exhausted if the necessary forces were maintained. To meet this difficulty, Alauddin determined on his famous policy of reduction and control of prices, so that the resources of the kingdom might be able to bear the expenditure deemed to be necessary for its security.

A little must be said on the general aspects of this policy, because on the one hand its possibility has been questioned, while on the other hand its extent has been exaggerated. It seems to me that the chronicler's account must be accepted in substance, to the extent that, in and near Delhi, prices were in fact reduced, and were stabilised at the lower level for a period of about twelve or thirteen years, a period which was not marked by anything like serious dearth, though some reasons were unsatisfactory.[1] Ziya Barni had no motive for inventing such a story, and, what is more significant, he obviously did not possess the power of economic analysis which would have been needed for its invention. The long and detailed price-regulations (pp. 304 ff.) can be summarised very shortly. Their essence was, (1) control of supplies, and (2) control of transport, with (3) rationing of consumption when necessary, the whole system resting on (4) a highly-organised intelligence, and (5) drastic punishment of evasions. This summary, it will be seen, applies almost precisely to the system of control which was elaborated in England during the years of war, and which was proved by experience to be effective. It is quite inconceivable that a writer like Ziya Barni could have invented these essential features out of his head; but it is quite conceivable that, in the economic conditions of the time, a King like Alauddin, aided, as he certainly was, by competent Ministers, should by degrees have arrived at the essentials of the policy he was determined to enforce. He

[1] Barni implies (p. 308) that there were seasons which would otherwise have meant famine in Delhi, but his language shows that he was straining for effect, and consequently it requires to be discounted. Other references to "famine" indicate that the word meant for him a scarcity of provisions in the city, rather than a deficiency of production throughout the country; and we should not be justified inferring from his language that there was a famine in the ordinary sense during the period, though there were seasons when, without Alauddin's regulations, a rise in prices would have been needed to draw adequate supplies to the capital.

was it must be remembered, strong just where modern systems are weak, for he could rely on an elaborate organisation of spies, and there was no sentimental objection in the way of effective punishment.[1]

The question of practicability is, however, mainly a matter of extent. No attempt was made to keep down prices throughout the kingdom; effort was limited to Delhi, where the standing army was concentrated; and the regulations extended only to a region sufficiently large to ensure the isolation of the Delhi market. Isolation was favoured by the cirumstances of the time. In the North lay the submontane forests, to the South the disturbed and unproductive country of Mewat. The city depended for its ordinary supplies on the River-Country to the East, and on the productive parts of the Punjab to the West; the cost of transport was necessarily high in the case of bulky produce; the industry was specialised in the hands of the professional merchants[2]; and, given effective control of these, the isolation of the market could be completely effected.

(The point which specially concerns us in these regulations is the supply of agricultural produce.) The whole revenue due from the River Country and half the revenue due from Delhi, was ordered to be paid in kind and the grain so collected was brought to the city, and stored for issue as required; while peasants and country traders were compelled to sell their surplus at fixed prices to the controlled merchants, with heavy penalties for holding up stocks.) I think it is quite clear that this rule involved a change in practice, or, in other words, that, in this part of the country, collections had been ordinarily made in cash, and not in produce, during the thirteenth century. Taking all the

[1] There are definite indications that the system was perfected by degrees. At the outset (p. 304), the King wished to avoid severe punishments, but the shopkeepers would not abandon their practice of giving short weight (p. 318), until at last a rule was made that on detection, the deficiency should be cut from the seller's person; and (p. 319) the fear of this punishment proved sufficient to put a stop to fraud.

[2] Barni calls the professional merchants *karavaniyan*; they may safely be identified with the *banjaras* of later times. The merchants were compelled to deposit their wives and children as security for their conduct, and these pledges were settled near Delhi under the control of an overseer (p. 306).

regulations together, they lend no support to the view which has been occasionally put forward, that Northern India was, at this period and even later, a country of Arcadian simplicity; the cash-nexus was well-established throughout the country, there were grain-dealers in the villages as well as in the cities, and we may safely infer that prices were a matter of interest to the peasant at least as far back as the thirteenth century.

The result of the changes in the agrarian system introduced by Alauddin, and maintained throughout the rest of his reign, may be summarised as follows :

1. Delhi and the River Country, together with part of North Rohilkhand, were Reserved (*khalisa*), and were managed by the Revenue Ministry, through its officials, in direct relations with the peasants. The Demand was fixed at one-half of the produce, assessed by Measurement, and collected, wholly or partly, in grain. There were doubtless some Assignments of Grants in this region, but apparently they were not important. The peasants were restricted in the sale of their surplus produce, the prices of which were fixed by authority.

2. Round this nucleus lay an inner ring of provinces administered by Governors in direct relations with the peasants, claiming half the produce, assessing by Measurement, and—apparently—collecting, in cash. There is no record of restrictions in regard to marketing in these regions.[1]

3. In the outlying provinces the Governors had not been placed in direct relations with the peasants, and we may assume they continued to deal largely with the Chiefs: we are not told what was the Demand, how it was assessed, or in what form it was collected; and we can only guess that no change was made in the arrangements previously in force.

A glimpse of the position occupied by the Chiefs in this reign is furnished by the story of the birth of King Firuz, as related by the chronicler Shams Afif (pp. 37 ff.). The

1 Grain was ordered to be stored in Malwa, as well as in Delhi, but Barni does not say that any restrictions were enforced on the Malwa peasants.

Governor of Dipalpur selected as a bride for his brother the daughter of a Hindu Chief living within his jurisdiction. The Chief rejected the proposal in terms which were regarded as insulting, and the Governor thereupon led his troops to the spot, and proceeded to collect the year's revenue by force directly from the headmen, who would ordinarily have paid it to the Chief. The suffering caused by these measures induced the lady to sacrifice herself for her tribe, the marriage duly took place, and King Firuz was its offspring. The point of the story lies in the chronicler's remark that the people were helpless, for "in those days Alauddin was on the throne," and no protest was possible; and it may fairly be inferred that a strong Governor, serving under a strong King, could treat the Chiefs very much as he chose.

Alauddin was, as a rule, opposed to the alienation of revenue by way of Grant or Assignment. As we have seen, he resumed all existing Grants early in his reign, and he appears to have made few, if any, in later years. His Court, indeed, was brilliant, but rewards to scholars and artists were on a moderate scale, and apparently they were usually given in cash.[1] As to Assignments, he probably disliked the whole system, for the later chronicler, Shams Afif, records (p. 95) that he condemned assignments of villages on the ground that they constituted a political danger, the assignees forming local ties, which might easily develop into an opposition party. He certainly did not give small Assignments to individual troopers, his large army at the capital being paid entirely in cash; and there is, so far as I can find, no record of his giving large Assignments to officers. It is quite possible that some Assignments were given or continued, because the silence of the chronicles is not conclusive on such questions, but it is clear that the practice had, for the time being, fallen out of favour. Of Farming, I have found no trace during this reign. Here, too, it is possible that our information is incomplete; but, speaking generally,

[1] Barni, 341, 365-6. He contrasts Alauddin's conduct with that of Mahmud of Ghazni. The latter, he says, would have given a country or a province to a poet like Amir Khusru, while the former merely offered him a salary of 1000 tankas.

the reign was characterised by vigorous, direct administration, and not by such expedients as Farming or Assignment.

4. GHIYASUDDIN TUGHLAQ (1320-1325)

Alauddin's system did not survive its creator.[1] His son and successor, Qutbuddin, a charming and popular lad, devoted himself entirely to pleasure. He formulated no agrarian policy of his own, but his father's minute regulations were allowed to lapse in their entirety. The revenue-Demand was reduced, but in what manner is not recorded; the work of the Revenue Ministry fell into disorder; speculative Farmers appeared; Grants and Assignments were made lavishly; and the capital, following the king's example, indulged in a period of debauchery, during which the administration went to pieces. Qutbuddin was eventually murdered by a favourite, who ascended the throne and exterminated the royal family; but the favourite and his adherents were in turn exterminated by Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq, a Frontier veteran who, in the absence of any other candidate, became king with general consent.

Ghiyasuddin reorganised the revenue administration of the kingdom. The proportion of produce which he claimed is uncertain, and the point is discussed later on; he discarded Measurement in favour of Sharing; and he restored the Chiefs to something like the position they had lost. His reasons for changing the method of assessment are indicated in the phrase, "he relieved the peasants from the innovations and apportionments of crop-failure," a phrase which is cryptic as it stands, but which can be interpreted from the later history of assessment by Measurement. Under this method, the peasant's liability depended on the area sown, and consequently he was, in theory, bound to pay the full Demand even though the crop might be an entire failure. In practice, however, such a rule could not

1 Barni (pp. 381 ff.) is again the only contemporary authority for the reigns of Qutbuddin and Ghiyasuddin. It is clear that he was a great admirer of the latter's reforms but his account is extremely crabbed and unsystematic; from the style, I judge it to be a compilation, from notes or from memory, of phrases which he had heard directly from the King. A translation will be found in Appendix C.

be enforced, because, when the charge was relatively heavy, as was the case throughout the Moslem period, the peasant would be unable to pay. Almost wherever we read of the system then, we find reference to allowances in case of crop-failure. Under Akbar, the rule was, as we shall see, that the area of failure was deducted, and the charge made only on the area which matured; and I take the word "apportionments" to indicate that something of the same sort was done under Alauddin, the area sown being apportioned between "success" and "failure"; while the other word, "innovation," can be explained by the fact that he had introduced Measurement in places where it was not already customary. It is matter of common knowledge that such allowances for crop-failure require an administration both honest and efficient. They have to be made hurriedly, often at the very end of the season; there is little time for adequate verification of the facts; and the local staff are under strong temptations to negotiate with the peasants, and to overstate, or understate, the extent of loss according to the amount of the gratification they receive. In the conditions which prevailed in the fourteenth century, it seems to me to be quite certain that Measurement must have involved a large amount of extortion and corruption of this kind, and it is possible that the alternative method of Sharing was open to less objection in practice; but, however that may be, Measurement as the standard method of assessment now disappeared, to be restored two centuries later by Sher Shah.

In regard to the Chiefs and headmen, Ghiyasuddin rejected Alauddin's view that they should be reduced to the economic position of peasants. They had, he considered, large responsibilities, and were entitled to remuneration accordingly; their perquisites were to be left to them without assessment, and their income from grazing was not to be taxed; but the Governors were to take measures to prevent them from levying any additional revenue from the peasants. In this way it was hoped to enable the Chiefs to live in comfort, but not in such affluence as might lead to rebellion. So far as this policy was carried out in practice, it may be inferred that the Chiefs regained in

essentials the position they had held in the thirteenth century, but—where the Governor was sufficiently strong—with less freedom in regard to their treatment of their peasants.

A third element in the policy of Ghiyasuddin was his insistence on the dignity of provincial Governors, and on a correspondingly high standard of conduct on their part. It is clear that, at his accession, speculative farming of the revenue was common; and the Ministry was crowded with touts and pests of various kinds, whose functions have to be guessed from the designations applied to them,—"spies," "farmers," "enhancement-mongers," and "wreckers." The King put a stop to the activities of these pests, and chose his Governors from the nobility; he ordered that they were to receive all due consideration from the audit-staff of the Ministry; but he made it clear that their position and dignity would depend on their own conduct. They might honourably take the ordinary perquisites of the post, described as "a half-tenth or half-eleventh, and the one-tenth or one-fifteenth of the revenue"; while their sub-ordinates were allowed to appropriate "a half or one per cent." in addition to their salaries; but exactions were to be limited to these figures, which we may assume were already traditional,[1] and any substantial misappropriations were to be sternly punished.

These orders call for a few words of explanation regarding the relations which subsisted between the provincial executive and the audit staff of the Revenue Minisitry. The audit was periodical, not continuous. An official was left at work for some time, and then called to the Ministry for the two-fold process denoted audit (*muhasaba*) and recovery (*mutalaba*); the auditors, as might be expected, strove to bring out a balance due, and payment of this balance was enforced by torture. The first mention I have found of recovery by torture is in the proceedings of Sharaf Qai, which have been referred to under the reign of Alauddin (Barni, 283). There is no suggestion in that passage that officers of the rank of Governor were tortured, but the orders

[1] Ibn Batuta, who was in India during the next reign, mentions (iii. 112) that Governors received a half-tenth on the revenue as a regular thing.

of Ghiyasuddin indicate that they had not been exempt, since he found it advisable to prohibit anything of the kind. The prohibition was renewed (574) by Firuz, so it may be assumed that torture had been practised under Muhammad Tughlaq. The next chronicler, Shams Afif, also records (341) the friendly nature of the audit of Governors' accounts under Firuz; but elsewhere (488ff.) he tells how a high officer was flogged periodically for some months in order to recover what he had embezzled when Deputy-Governor of Gujarat. We may infer then that, while torture was an ordinary incident in the case of officials, it might be applied under some kings, or in exceptional cases, even to an officer of the rank of Governor. The subject recurs in the sixteenth century, when, as we shall see in a later chapter, some of Akbar's officers practised recovery "after the ancient fashion"; and the flogging of defaulting Governors is recorded in the seventeenth century in the kingdom of Golconda.[1] It is necessary therefore, in trying to realise the position of revenue-payers, to bear in mind that a Governor or other official might have a very strong motive for oppressive conduct in cases where the choice lay between torturing defaulters and being tortured himself.

Apparently the Governors appointed by Ghiyasuddin, while they were to be men of rank, were to hold their posts on farming-terms, that is to say, the surplus-revenue, to be remitted to the treasury, was to be a stated sum, and not a matter to be settled by annually balancing accounts of actual receipts and sanctioned expenditure. This seems to me to be the most reasonable interpretation of the orders that the Ministry should not make "an increase of more than one-tenth or one-eleventh on the provinces and country by surmise and guess-work or on the reports of spies and the representation of enhancement-mongers."

The Demand on the peasants was, as we have seen, to be assessed by Sharing, and would therefore depend on the seasons: the Ministry would not be in a position to vary the amount of revenue, except by varying the share which

[1] See Methwold's *Relations of the Kingdom of Golckonda*, in *Purchas His Pilgrimage*, 4th edition, p. 996. A Governor of Masulipatam "for defect of full payment, was beaten with canes upon the back, feet, and belly, until he died."

was claimed; and minute variations in the share are recorded on no other occasion, and are in themselves highly improbable. On the other hand, if the Governor was liable to pay a stated sum by way of surplus revenue, it would be the natural procedure of the Ministry to endeavour to increase this sum as quickly, and as largely, as possible. The result of such an increase would be that, in some form or other, the Governor would increase the burden on the peasants, and this would tend to hinder the development of the country, which was the King's great object. To limit the enhancement on a province to about ten per cent. at a time would from this point of view be a reasonable rule of practice: development would be gradual, and the Governor's payment should increase *pari passu*, but should not be allowed to get ahead of the paying-capacity of the province.

The sentence I have just examined has been read[1] in a different way, as stating that the Demand was limited to one-tenth or one-eleventh of the produce. This interpretation would be a welcome addition to our knowledge of the period, but I do not see my way to accept it; the references to spies and enhancement-mongers cannot, so far as I see, be interpreted on these lines; the context indicates that the reference is to the relations between the Ministry and the Governors, not between the Governors and the peasants; and the point of the passage is enhancement of the sum payable, not the fixing of its proportion to the produce. The proportion claimed by Ghiyasuddin is not stated elsewhere in the authorities, and we can only infer that he did not alter the figure which he found established, but this figure again is not on record. Ziya Barni tells us merely (p. 383) that Qutbuddin "removed from among the people the heavy revenues and severe demands" imposed under Alauddin. The passage is rhetorical rather than precise; it cannot possibly mean what it seems to say, that he abolished the land-revenue altogether; and we can only guess that he reduced its incidence to some figure below Alauddin's claim of half the produce, or in some other way alleviated the burdens on the people.

1 Ishwari Prasad, *Medieval India* p. 231. The same view is taken in the *Cambridge History* (iii. 128).

In any case, the reign of Ghiyasuddin was too short to establish a new tradition, and its main interest lies rather in the formulation of policy than in the results achieved. The soldier-king was interested, first of all, in the welfare of the troops, and, next to them, in the prosperity of the peasants. His ideal was that his peasants should maintain the existing cultivation, and should effect a steady, if gradual, extension as their resources increased; and he realised that progress in this direction depended very largely on the quality of the administration. Sudden and heavy enhancements were, in his judgment, disastrous: "when kingdoms are obviously ruined, it is due to the oppressiveness of the revenue and the excessive royal demand; and ruin proceeds from destructive governors and officials". Ghiyasuddin thus stands in the line of succession from Balban; his son was in a few years' time to furnish a striking example of the danger of departing from his policy.

5. MUHAMMAD TUGHLAQ (1325-1351)

Ghiyasuddin was succeeded by his son, Muhammad Tughlaq. The character and capacity of this King have been frequently discussed, and, since Ziya Barni is the principal contemporary authority for the reign,[1] the discussion has necessarily involved the question of his impartiality: on the one hand, Professor Dowson curtailed his translation of what he called "a long strain of eulogy," on the other hand, Mr. Ishwari Prasad writes of him as "bitterly prejudiced" against the King. The truth is, I take it, that the chronicler found himself confronted with a task which was beyond his capacity. He could understand, and depict, kings like Alauddin or Ghiyasuddin, strong, simple men with obvious motives; but Muhammad was a more complex character, his conduct was a mass of

[1] Barni's account of this reign begins on p. 454 ; his estimates of the King are on pp. 496-7, 504. Dowson's remark quoted in the text is on p. 235 of Elliot, iii ; Mr. Ishwari Prasad's criticsms are in Ch. X of his *Mediæval India*, especially the notes on p. 238, 260. Ibn Batuta, the other contemporary authority, gives much interesting information regarding some aspects of the reign, but he throws little light on the agrarian

inconsistencies, and the final position of the chronicler is not one of uncritical eulogy, nor yet of prejudiced detraction but of astonishment and perplexity. He tells us that he had never heard or read of such a character, he could not place it in any known category, and, more than once, he takes refuge in the view that the King was one of the wonders of creation, in fact, a freak of nature. In such a position, it is safe to assume that the chronicler's language is exaggerated in both directions: he was striving to emphasise the contrasts presented by the reign—the King's brilliant gifts and his practical incompetence, or his subservience to the Khalifa and his disregard of Islamic law, and both sides of the case are inevitably overstated. It is advisable then to discount the chronicler's superlatives, but there is, so far as I can see, no reason to distrust his statements of fact regarding the King's agrarian measures, the only topic with which I am at present concerned.

For this reign we have no formal statement of agrarian policy, and no direct indication of the King's ideal; but we have a series of episodes which fall into two groups, the treatment of the provinces generally, and the special measures taken in the River Country. One of the King's earliest measures was an attempt to assimilate the administration of the outlying provinces to that of Delhi and the River Country, which were, it will be recalled, directly under the Revenue Ministry. The chronicler gives a caustic description of this attempt at centralisation, which is closely in accordance with his picture of the King as a brilliant but unpractical man; he tells us of detailed accounts being submitted from the most distant provinces, and of the uttermost penny in them being wrangled over by the audit staff at the capital; and he mentions that the experiment lasted only for a few years. The sequel is not formally recorded, but two episodes show that the speculative Farmer supervened in the provinces. One episode (p. 488) is that of a man who had taken a three-year farm of Bidar, in the Deccan, for a payment of a kror of tankas. The chronicler describes him as "by occupation a corn-merchant, timorous, incompetent"; he was a stranger to the locality; and, when he found that he could not realise

more than a third or a fourth of his contract, he went into rebellion, and shut himself up in the fort. He was, however, easily captured, and was sent as a prisoner to Delhi.

The other case[1] is that of the farmer of the province of Karra. The chronicler's scorn for him is expressed in language too idiomatic for exact translation, but "a contemptible, drug-soaked, little idiot" gives, I think, the general sense. He took the farm without capital, adherents, or resources of any kind, failed to collect even a tenth part of the sum he had promised to pay, and then, gathering a rabble round him, went into rebellion, and assumed the title of king. The rebellion was easily crushed by the nearest Governor, the rebel farmer was flayed, and his skin duly sent to Delhi. Even if we assume that the chronicler's description of these two speculators is overdrawn, the fact remains that they were speculators pure and simple, with no local ties, and no claim to be governors except that their offers of revenue had been accepted. Nor would we be justified in inferring that these two farms were exceptional.[2] The only reason for the chronicler's record of them is that they resulted in rebellions, the heading under which the episodes are recounted, but their terms are stated in such a matter-of-fact way that it is reasonable to conclude that they were typical of the ordinary provincial arrangements, after the attempt at centralised administration had broken down. We hear of the speculators who failed and rebelled,

[1] Barni, 487. The description of the farmer is *marduk bhangri bhangi khurafati*. The first word means "mannikin," hence "contemptible fellow," and the last "nonsensical" or "idiotic." *Bhangri* denotes addiction to the use of hemp-drugs. My friend, Mr. R. Paget Dewhurst, describes *bhangi* as a meaningless appositive, or jingle, with possibly a punning allusion to its sense of "sweeper." I do not myself take the passage to assert that a man of the sweeper-caste had been allowed to farm the province, but this interpretation cannot be absolutely ruled out: further on (p. 505), Barni complains bitterly of Muhammad Tughlaq's patronage of men of low caste, barbers, liquor-sellers, gardeners, weavers, and so on, who were made equal to nobles, and received high Court appointments and provinces. Acceptance of a sweeper's tender is not therefore absolutely inconceivable, but probably the word conveys nothing more than abusive assonance.

[2] Ibn Batuta was told (iv.49) that the entire Deccan country had been farmed to a Hindu for 17 krors, and that he was flayed for default. This may possibly be a distorted account of the first episode given in the text, but it reads more like a different occurrence.

but not of those who succeeded in meeting their engagements, or who submitted to the penalty of failure; and the nature of their relations with Chief and peasants is left to be imagined.

The fate of the River Country during this reign must be told in some detail. Here, as elsewhere, the precise dates are sometimes uncertain, but the sequence of events can be traced: the story extends over nearly a quarter of a century, and the main features are—ruinous enhancement of revenue, loss of market, restriction of cultivation, rebellion, drastic punishment, attempts at restoration defeated by the failure of the rains, and, finally, a spectacular policy of reconstruction, ending in an almost complete fiasco.

At the outset of his reign, Muhammad decided (p. 473) to enhance the revenue of the River Country, which was, in the main, reserved for the treasury. The enhancement was ruinous[1] in amount, the peasants were impoverished, and those of them who had any resources became disaffected. Not long afterwards, the King carried out his plan of transferring the capital to Deogir in the Deccan, and in the year 1329 Delhi was evacuated by practically the entire population. The economic effect of this measure on the peasants in the River Country can be readily understood from a study of Alauddin's regulations. Delhi was the one large market for the surplus produce of the country, and when that market was summarily abolished, there would be no object in raising produce which could not be sold; in

[1] Barni, 473. The enhancement is described as *yaki ba dah wa yaki ba bist*. Mr. Ishwari Prasad rightly objects (*Medieval India*, 239*n*.) that Dowson's rendering (Elliot, iii. 238) "ten or five per cent. more" does not explain the results which followed; while he observes, also rightly, that the alternative rendering, "ten or twenty times" is impossible if taken literally. The fact is that the phrase is rhetorical and not arithmetical; it is one of Ziya Barni's favourite locutions, and he runs up and down the scale, ten-fold 100-fold, 1000-fold, according to the humour of the moment, and not with any precise numerical significance. The idea of percentage is ruled out by such passages as that on p. 30, where an increase of "one to 100" brought tears to the spectators' eyes, or that on p. 568, where it is said that the effect of irrigation will be to increase the cattle "one to 1000." Other passages are 84, 91, 109, 138, 294, 368, 394, 532; the list is not exhaustive, but it suffices to place the meaning of the phrase beyond doubt, as "huge," "marvellous," "enormous," or any rhetorical expression suited to the context.

other words, cultivation must have been curtailed, and the revenue correspondingly reduced.[1]

Some years later, perhaps about 1332, the King returned for a time to Delhi (p. 479), leaving the capital still in the Deccan, and found that, as the result of the excessive exactions, the River Country was in disorder; stores of grain had been burnt, and the cattle had been removed from the villages. Such conduct, in the circumstances of the time, constituted rebellion, seeing that the primary duty of the peasants was to till the soil and pay the revenue; the country of the rebels was therefore ravaged under the King's orders, many of the leading men were killed or blinded, and when Muhammad returned to the Deccan, we may safely infer that he left the River Country more unproductive than before.[2]

Then, somewhere about the year 1337, came the restoration of Delhi as the capital (p. 481); and when the troops and the city-population, returned, they found that supplies for them were not available, for, in the chronicler's rhetoric, "not one-thousandth part" of the cultivation remained. The King endeavoured to reorganise production, and gave advances for the purpose, but at this juncture the rains failed, and nothing could be done. Eventually (p. 485), the King, together with his troops and most of the city population, moved to a camp on the Ganges, not far from Kanauj, where supplies could be obtained from the provinces of Karra and Awadh. After staying there for some years, Muhammad returned to Delhi,[3] and spent three years in administrative business, including (p. 498) an attempt to restore the River Country to prosperity.

With this object a special Ministry was constituted, the region was divided into circles, and officials were posted to

[1] Barni does not say how the enhanced assessment was made in the River Country at the time, though he mentions that cesses were imposed in the process. A later chronicle, T. Mubarakshahi, says it was by Measurement, and this is not improbable (Or. 5318, *f.* 34*r*).

[2] Ibn Batuta arrived at Delhi in 1334 (iii. 91, 144). The King was then at Kanauj, where he went after the River Country had been ravaged, so that probably this took place in 1333.

[3] On the data given by Ibn Batuta (iii. 338, 356), the date of the King's return would be about 1341. He was at Delhi when the Khalifa's envoy arrived in 1343 (Barni, 492). Ibn Batuta left Delhi in 1342, and his narrative then ceases to be of use for chronological purposes.

them with instructions to extend cultivation, and improve the standard of cropping. These aims are expressed in magniloquent language: "not a span of land was to be left untilled," and "wheat was to replace barley, sugarcane to replace wheat, vines and dates to replace sugarcane"; but in essence the underlying idea was obviously sound, and, as so often in this reign, it was the execution which broke down. The officials, nearly 100 in number, who were chosen for the purpose, were an incompetent and esurient lot. They undertook to complete the task in three years, and started out with ample funds for the grant of advances; but much of the money was embezzled, much of the waste land proved to be unfit for cultivation, of 70 odd lakhs issued by the treasury in the course of two years, "not one-hundredth or one-thousandth part" produced any effect, and the officials were—naturally—in fear of drastic punishment. Before, however, the fiasco became manifest, the King was called away to the Deccan, whither he went in the year 1345. The chronicler opined that, if he had returned to Delhi, not a single one of these officials would have escaped with his life; but he was not destined to return, and, under his mild successor, the advances were written off[1] as irrecoverable.

The story speaks for itself, and only two points in it require notice. In the first place, the desolation of this tract has sometimes been attributed solely to a long series of bad seasons, but the summary I have given shows that it was essentially administrative in its origin. There was undoubtedly severe famine in parts of India at this period, and the first attempt at restoration was defeated by a failure of the rains; but the second met with no such obstacle, and in view of the later failure it is not easy to suppose that the earlier attempt would in any case have been successful. It will be recalled that in this chronicler's language, the word "famine" usually refers primarily to the population of the city. There was clearly famine in Delhi when

[1] Afif, 93-4. This chronicler puts the total of advances at 2 krors. Barni's figure of 70 odd lakhs is apparently for the first two years only, and the balance may have been issued later; but it is perhaps more probable that the sum had been exaggerated by tradition in the half century which intervened before Afif wrote.

it was repopulated, because the country on which it depended for supplies was unproductive; but the failure to produce arose, not merely from the want of rain, but from the dispersal of the peasants, and that dispersal must be attributed solely to a series of administrative blunders.

The other point in the story is that we now meet for the first time with the idea that improvement in cropping[1] should be one of the objects of administrative action. In the declarations of agricultural policy which have already been examined, stress is laid solely on maintenance and extension of cultivation: Muhammad Tughlaq may not have been the first to insist on the alternative line of action, but the earliest record of its official adoption comes in his reign. Its expression is, as I have said, magniloquent, and the picture of Meerut or Bulandshahr as a country of vines and date-palms is calculated to evoke a smile, or even a snear; but the idea itself was sound, and from this time forward it is a recognised element in agrarian policy.

The position in regard to Assignments in this reign is not recorded by the Indian chronicler, but some idea of it can be obtained from a book which was written in Damascus,[2] and which mentions Muhammad Tughlaq as the reigning sovereign in India. The military organisation in Delhi differed, we are told, from that of Egypt or Syria, in that a commandant was not required to maintain troops out of his own resources; the troops were paid from the treasury, while the commandant's income was personal. Their personal income was given to them in the form of Assignments of revenue; which ordinarily yielded much more than the estimated value; and some of the higher officials at headquarters also had "towns and villages" for their salary, or for part of it. This account fits in with what has been said above regarding some previous reigns. The Assignment of this period differed from that of the Mogul

[1] In the Cambridge History (iii. 161) this passage is taken as ordering a change in rotation of crops; but I read it as meaning exactly what it says, that inferior crops were to be replaced by superior.

[2] The *Masalig-ul Absar* of Shahabuddin. I have not seen the text of this work, and quote from the extracts given in Elliot, iii. 573 ff. I conjecture that "towns" in the phrase "towns and villages," may represent "*qasbat*," in which case "parganas" would be the probable meaning.

Empire in that it represented only personal salary, and not the cost of maintaining troops; the pay of the provincial troops was separately provided, and had to be accounted for, as the orders of Ghiyasuddin show; and Alauddin's decision to pay his troops in cash still represented the working rule at this period. The statement that the Assignments "bring in much more than their estimated value" is of particular interest, because, so far as I can find, it is the first reference in the literature to the Valuation of the kingdom, a topic which comes into prominence in the next reign. The extent to which Assignments were given cannot be deduced from this account, but facts recorded incidentally by Ibn Batuta[1] show that officials were, at least normally, paid in this way; and, since the salaries were very high, the area on which they were charged must have been extensive. Farming and Assignment may thus be regarded as the most prominent agrarian institutions of the reign.

6. FIRUZ SHAH (1351-1388)

Muhammad Tughlaq was succeeded by his cousin, Firuz, a man of mature age, who had been for some time employed in the administration of the kingdom. There is some little difficulty in estimating the value of the contemporary authorities for this reign. Apart from a brief memoir written by the King himself, we are dependent on the records left by Ziya Barni and Shams Afif. The former deals only with the first six years of the reign: it is clear that this period was a far happier one, at least for the bureaucracy at headquarters, than the later years of Muhammad Tughlaq; and I think that the closing chapters of the chronicle show definite signs of failing powers. Ziya Barni died at an advanced age before his self-chosen task could be finished, and what he wrote regarding this reign consists largely of loose and rhetorical eulogy, the language of which must be discounted at a rather high rate. The other chronicler, Shams Afif, grew up under Firuz, by whom

[1] See especially iii. 400-402, where details are given of the salaries allotted to Ibn Batuta and his companions; in each case an appropriate Assignment was made.

he was employed in the Revenue Ministry; but he wrote late in life, when his patron was dead, when Delhi had been sacked by Timur, and when the kingdom was rapidly falling to pieces. The contrast between the present and the past, on which he so often insists, is sufficient by itself to explain the warmth of his recurring eulogies of his deceased patron, and his language also must be rather heavily discounted; but fortunately he was fond of relating anecdotes, and a study of the gossipy reminiscences contained in his later chapters makes it possible to form a more just idea of the quality of the king's administration than can be obtained from the formal portions of the chronicle. Firuz was a devout Moslem, and some of his recorded actions towards Hindus may evoke criticism at the present day; but, taken as a whole, he may be described as benevolent, but essentially weak.[1] His reign was undoubtedly a golden age for the bureaucracy at headquarters, the source from which our information regarding it is derived; but control over the provincial Governors was lax, some very unsuitable appointments to these posts are recorded, and there is room for doubt as to the extent to which the king's benevolent intentions were realised in the more distant provinces. The heart of the kingdom, however, appears to have been peaceful and prosperous for the greater part of the reign.

On his accession Firuz found the revenue administration in disorder, and one of the first tasks[2] of his Minister was to reorganise it. That there must have been disorder is clear from what has been already said: the River Country was still depopulated, while the provinces had fallen into the hands of speculators, who, it may safely be inferred, had been more concerned to make an immediate profit than to adhere to any regulations which were in force. The proportion of produce now claimed as revenue is not stated

[1] It may perhaps be objected that a really weak king could not have held the kingdom together for nearly forty years, but Firuz had from the outset the services of a Vazir of exceptional strength and loyalty in Khanjahan Maqbul, who was succeeded by his son, another strong and (for the most part) loyal Minister; and these two men were clearly the backbone of the administration throughout the reign. The collapse began when the second Khanjahan became disloyal.

[2] Barni, 571; Afif, 94. These passages are translated and discussed in Appendix C.

in the chronicles, and I can find no contemporary authority for the view which has been put forward by some modern writers that it was only one-tenth[1]; the actual figure is a matter of conjecture. The method of assessment adopted was Sharing, and we are told that "apportionments and excess-demands, and crop-failures, and conjectural-assessments" were entirely abolished. The words rendered "apportionments" and "crop-failures" are the same as those which have been noticed in connection with the reforms of Ghiyasuddin, and their use here may indicate that Measurement had been practised in some places during Muhammad Tughlaq's reign; but it is also possible that the chronicler was writing at random, and merely expressing his own preference for the method of Sharing. The other two expressions are not explained, but they point to exactions over and above the regular revenue. So far then as concerns the Demand to be made on the peasants, the position was that they were to pay a share of their produce, and nothing more; there is nothing to show whether the payment was to be made in cash or in grain. The question: Who was to receive the payment? brings us to two important topics, the provincial Governors, and the Assignees.

Ziya Barni makes it clear (p. 575) that, at the outset of the reign, the provincial Governors, like the other high officers, were chosen for their personal character, and not for speculative offers of revenue; and the administration was again purged (p. 574) of touts and pests, as it had been purged by Ghiyasuddin. At the same time, the severity of the Audit and Recovery procedure was relaxed; while, by an altogether exceptional order, the value of the Governors' annual presents to the King was set off[2] against

[1] Possibly some other writers may have been misled, as I was for a time, by the phrase in Dowson's rendering of the King's Memoir (Elliot, iii. 377), "First the *kharaj* or tenth from cultivated lands." As the phrase stands, "tenth" seems to be here an explanation of *kharaj*, but the text shows clearly that it must be read as an alternative, the reference being to the fundamental rules of Islamic law explained in Chapter I. The king is enumerating the lawful sources of revenue: "first, the *kharaj*, the *ushur*, and the *zakat*: next the *jiziya*," etc.

[2] Afif, 268. In this reign the Governors came every year to pay their respects to the King; the presents (*khidmati*) offered on the occasion consisted largely of slaves, a commodity which Firuz valued highly, and which he is said to have accumulated (p. 270) to the number of 180,000.

the revenue due from their provinces. The position of the Governor was therefore such as to make for fair treatment of the revenue-payers, and the evidence of rural prosperity during the reign suggests that on the whole the peasants had a reasonable chance.[1] Cases are on record where the King's discrimination was at fault, as when a Deputy-Governor, who had already been dismissed for misconduct in Samana, was appointed to Gujarat, and after some time had to be dismissed again, to the great relief of the people[2]; but there are not many such cases in the chronicles, and they may, I think, be regarded as exceptional.

At this period, however, the Assignee must have been more important to the peasants than the Governor, for Firuz relied largely on the Assignment system. The salaries of his officers were fixed in cash on what appears to be an exceedingly liberal scale, and the corresponding amount of revenue was assigned to them, while the practice of assigning villages to individual troopers was revived. Shams Afif doubtless exaggerates, when he says (p. 95) that all the villages and parganas were assigned to the army, for the King must have had some revenue for himself; but it may fairly be inferred that Assignment was now the usual arrangement throughout the kingdom.

The precise nature of the Assignments given to troopers is obscure. Some passages in the chronicles suggest that, according to the usual practice, the troopers assumed charge of the villages assigned to them; while another, and very difficult, passage can be read in the sense that a trooper was not placed in direct contact with his village, but merely received a document entitling him to draw his pay from it, and that he discounted this document with one of the

[1] Barni, 574, says that as the result of the King's orders, the provinces became cultivated and tillage extended widely. Afif, 295, says that not a single village in the River Country remained uncultivated, and that in the provinces there were "four cultivated villages to the *kroh*" (1½ miles). The language of both writers is rhetorical, but we may safely infer from it that there was much improvement compared with the preceding reign. More satisfactory evidence is contained in a later passage (Afif, 321), which records the preservation for sport of a large area in Rohilkhand; the extension of cultivation had reduced the supply of game, and, if this area had not been preserved, it would, we are told, have come under cultivation like the rest of the kingdom.

[2] Afif, 454, 455. A Deputy-Governor was appointed in cases when the Governor held also a post at Court.

bankers at the capital who specialised in this business, and who made a handsome income out of it. The difference might be material to the revenue-payers, but it does not affect the matter with which we are immediately concerned, that in this reign the bulk of the revenue was assigned.[1]

The wide extension of the practice of Assignment brings us to a technical but important question of procedure, which, in the absence of any recognised name, I shall describe as Valuation. The salaries of officers, and the pay of troopers, were fixed in cash; the revenue-Demand, assessed by Sharing, necessarily varied from season to season with the area sown and with the yield at harvest; and the duty of the Revenue Ministry in allotting Assignments was thus to see that each claimant received a fluctuating source of income equivalent on the whole to the amount of his fixed claim. For this purpose, the actual Demand of any particular year would not serve as a standard; if a man was entitled to, say, 5000 tankas yearly, it would not suffice to assign to him an area which had yielded 5000 tankas in the previous year, because this figure might be altogether exceptional. Wherever then the Assignment system prevailed, there must have been some sort of calculation and record of the standard, or average, Income which villages and parganas could be expected to yield, one year with another, to the assignee; the future Income, in fact, had to be valued in order that claims upon the State might be met; and it is this process, together with the record of it, which I denote by the term Valuation. We must think of a list of the parganas and villages of the kingdom, maintained in the Revenue Ministry, and showing the value of each from this point of view; as each order for an Assignment was received, the task of the Ministry would be to find in this list an available area with a Valuation equivalent to that

[1] Afif uniformly speaks of the troopers' villages in the same language as he uses of ordinary Assignments, and his account (pp. 220, 1) of the way in which the army was refitted in Gujarat implies that the troopers were dependent on supplies from their villages, and not from financiers. The passage (p. 296) regarding the documents (*tarīq*) was read by Dowson (Elliot, iii. 246) as describing three methods of paying the troops (*a*) Assignment, (*b*) cash, (*c*) *itlāq*: while Irvine (*Imperial Gazetteer*, ii. 365) identified (*c*) with (*a*), but his language indicates some lack of confidence. The passage is so obscure that I can form no opinion on the point.

of the Assignment, and, having found it, to allot it to the claimant.

It will be obvious that successful administration must have depended on a Valuation substantially in accordance with the facts. Where the income was over-valued, claimants would be disappointed, and the result would be a dissatisfied Service, a thing which no Moslem king in India could afford to tolerate; if it were under-valued, claimants would be contented, but the resources of the kingdom would be dissipated. We have seen in the last section that, under Muhammad Tughlaq, the Assignments were said to yield much more than their estimated value, or, in other words, in his time under-valuation was general. At the outset of his reign, Firuz ordered a new Valuation to be prepared; the work took six years (Afif, 94), and the total came to 5¾ krors of tankas. This is the first actual record of a general Valuation which I have found in the chronicles; we shall meet with others in the Mogul period, when they bulk largely in the administrative literature.

Firuz retained this Valuation throughout his reign; and, since cultivation extended largely in the period, we must infer that his officers benefited progressively as the actual Income mounted above the accepted figure. This fact alone would go far to explain the glowing descriptions of the general happiness given by Shams Afif, a bureaucrat thinking primarily in terms of his own environment; while the fiscal effect would not necessarily have been serious, because the revenue from the Reserved sources would also have increased as the result of extended cultivation. Some allowance must also be made for the fact that the prices of produce were now on a much lower level than had ruled in the second quarter of the century, after Alauddin's regulations had been allowed to lapse. Shams Afif insists (p. 293-4) on the facts that the prevailing cheapness was not due to any action taken by Firuz, and that, while prices varied with the seasons, the general level remained low; in other words the main effects of inflation had now disappeared, and the increase in cash revenue would be less than proportionate to the increase in produce due to extended cultivation. On the whole, however, it may be

inferred that assignees of all classes enjoyed at least their fair share of the prosperity of the kingdom; and we may perhaps go further, and say that they were under less temptation than usual to exploit the peasants who had come under their control. The nobles at any rate became rich (p. 297), and accumulated large stores, while we now begin to hear of great fortunes being left at death, a topic which becomes familiar in the Mogul period.

Firuz was liberal in the matter of Grants. At his accession, he restored[1] to the claimants large numbers of Grants which had been resumed by his predecessors, and in the early years of his reign he made fresh Grants "every day" to the host of candidates present in the capital. The chronicler speaks of the restoration of Grants which dated from 170 years back; this carries us beyond the establishment of the Delhi kingdom, and the passage is so fervid that not much stress can be placed on its wording, but it is allowable to infer that Firuz recognised his predecessors' Grants as establishing a claim which ought to be satisfied. This inference is confirmed by a passage in the King's Memoir, where he records that he directed claimants to Grants which had been resumed to produce their evidence, and promised that they should receive the land, or anything else, to which they were entitled. In this reign, therefore, we come within measurable distance of the idea of a proprietary right in Grants; but the idea was not destined to develop, and in the Mogul period the practice of arbitrary resumption was well established.

Under Firuz we hear very little of the Hindu Chiefs, the other important class of Intermediaries. The general averments of continued tranquillity, taken with the absence of records of punitive expeditions, suggest that their relations with the Administration were normally friendly, but I have found no details throwing light on their position, except in regard to two Chiefs belonging to the province of Awadh. When the King was marching through this province on an expedition to Bengal, the Chiefs (Rai) of Gorakhpur and Kharosa, who had formerly paid their revenue in Awadh, but for some years had been in "rebellion," and had withheld

[1] Barni, 558 ; Futuhat, as in Elliot, iii. 386, and Or. 2039, *f.* 304*r*.

their payments, came to make their submission (Barni, 587), and offered valuable presents. At the same time they paid into the Camp treasury "several lakhs" of tankas on account of the arrears of former years, and agreed to the sums to be paid in future, for which they gave formal engagements. They accompanied the King for some marches through their country; and, in recognition of their submission, orders were issued that not a single village of theirs was to be plundered, and that any animals which had been seized were to be restored. I think we may reasonably take this incident as typical of the period. The Chiefs had "rebelled" when the disorganisation of Muhammad Tughlaq's administration gave them an opportunity; but when the royal army reached their country and resistance was impossible, they submitted with a good grace, and renewed their engagements. We may assume that, if they had not done so, their villages would have been ravaged in the ordinary course. It will be noticed that formal engagements were taken for the revenue fixed to be paid in future years. This makes it plain that at this period the revenue due from such Chiefs was not assessed on the produce of each season, as was done in the case of peasants, but was more like a tribute, the amount of which was settled by negotiation for some time ahead.

Lastly, we have to consider the attitude adopted by Firuz towards the peasantry. According to the eulogies of the chroniclers, it was substantially the same as that of Ghiyasuddin. The administration was to aim at extension of cultivation and improvement in cropping; and, with these objects in view, it was to treat the people equitably. After discounting the language used, we are justified in concluding that this policy was on the whole carried out, to the extent that cultivation extended, and rural prosperity increased; but Firuz also made a specific contribution to the tradition of agricultural development by undertaking the construction of irrigation-works. Some of these, it is true, were intended in part to bring water to the new cities which he built; but that they served the country also is apparent from the statement (Afif, 130) that during the rains officers were specially

deputed to report how far the floods caused by each canal had extended, and that the King was exceedingly pleased when he heard of widespread inundation. The canals were thus of a somewhat elementary type, and should not be thought of in terms of those which now exist in the Punjab, but their value to the country cannot be questioned; the same chronicler records (p. 128) that in the country round Hissar, where formerly only kharif crops were grown, both kharif and rabi crops could be matured with the aid of the canal. The extent of their value can be inferred from the fact that they brought in an annual income of two lakhs of tankas; this is not a large sum when compared with the Valuation of the kingdom (5¾ krors); but obviously it was important for the limited areas where water was made available.

The assessment of this irrigation-revenue furnishes some points of interest. To begin with, the King referred to an assembly of jurists the question whether he could lawfully claim any income in return for his outlay, and was informed that it was lawful to take "Water-right" (*haqq-i shirb*), a term of Islamic law, denoting a right, separate from that of the holder of land, arising from the provision of water. The jurists defined this right as "one-tenth," presumably of the produce, and the King proceeded to assessment accordingly. The chronicler's account of the procedure (Afif, 130) is highly technical, and I am not absolutely certain of its meaning, but a distinction was apparently drawn between existing villages, and the new "colonies" (in the modern Indian sense of the word) which were founded in country previously uncultivated. From the former, water-right was collected, and its amount, together with the entire revenue derived from the "colonies," was excluded from the public accounts, and paid into a special treasury, the receipts of which were earmarked for the King's charitable expenditure.

[1] The *Hedaya*, translated by C. Hamilton, iv. 147. Thomas, in his *Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi*, p. 271*n*, took the assessment as ten per cent. on the total outlay, but it seems to me doubtful whether an idea so closely allied to usury would have found favour with Moslem jurists of the period. I have found no authority showing how water-right was to be calculated in ordinary cases.

One difficulty arises in interpreting this account. Revenue due from the peasants was assessed by Sharing, and consequently the ordinary Demand would increase automatically with every increase in produce resulting from the supply of water; at first sight then, there was no reason for a separate assessment. The water-right was claimed on the specific ground that the King was entitled to some return for his outlay; but the Sharing-method of assessment would of itself have yielded an adequate return. The point is not explained by the chronicler, but the explanation is to be found in the circumstances of the time. We have seen that the Valuation was not altered during the reign, and consequently the benefit of irrigation would accrue to the assignees; the State could hope to benefit only from the Reserved areas administered by the provincial Governors. If the Governors held on farming terms, that is to say, if they were liable only to remit fixed sums to the treasury, then the benefit of the canals would enure to them, and the King would in fact derive no income until the contracts were revised. The terms on which Governors held their provinces during this reign are not on record, but all incidental references to their position are consistent with their holding on farming terms, and I think this explanation is, at least, probable.

The reference of the water-question to jurists is not an isolated occurrence. In his general administration Firuz endeavoured to follow the rules of Islamic law, and in regard to finance in particular he insisted[1] that no taxation should be received in the treasury which was not strictly lawful. In accordance with this principle, he abolished all miscellaneous cesses. Most of the examples given are of the nature of town-dues, but the inclusion of the grazing-tax seems to indicate that his orders were intended to relieve the villages as well as the cities from these imposts. This action had no permanant effect, for cesses of the same nature were abolished by Akbar, and again by Aurangzeb, but were still in existence at the opening of the British period; we may, however, infer that the orders were effective for the time, or, at the least, that Firuz tried to limit the burdens on the peasants to the regular revenue-Demand.

[1] Futuhat, as in Elliot, iii. 377; Or. 2039, *f.* 300*r*.

7. SUMMARY

The death of Firuz marked the end of an epoch. In the course of a few years the kingdom broke up, and during the first half of the fifteenth century there was no longer a single predominant Moslem power in India. The Deccan and Khandesh, Gujarat and Malwa, Bengal and Jaunpur, had become independent kingdoms; Lahore and Delhi were sometimes at variance; and for the time being there was no opportunity for the revenue administrator to make his mark on the institutions of the country as a whole. Before leaving the fourteenth century, it may be well to attempt a summary of the features of the agrarian system as it had developed under the Khalji and Tughlaq dynasties.

The King's share of the peasant's produce was fixed by Alauddin at one-half; the figure during other reigns is not recorded, but was probably less, rather than more. As regards the method of its assessment, there were two currents of opinion, one of which favoured reliance on the area sown, while the other looked at the produce reaped. Individual kings chose one method or the other, and doubtless their orders were carried out in the country which they administered directly; but the larger area was controlled by Governors, sometimes holding in farm, or by Chiefs retaining their internal jurisdiction, and it would be rash to infer absolute uniformity of practice throughout the kingdom. The more probable view is that the different methods of assessment persisted side by side, gaining or losing ground in accordance with circumstances, but neither yielding entirely to the other; and the existence of Assignments must be regarded as a factor working strongly in favour of local diversity, because it involved the appearance of a large number of persons more intent on collecting their dues than on the maintenance of any particular method of assessment. The form in which the Demand was ordinarily made on the peasants is not recorded in so many words but the fact that Alauddin, for special reasons, ordered collections in some areas to be made in grain shows that cash payments were, at any rate, common, though in this matter,

as in others, individual Chiefs and assignees may have followed their own inclinations.

It can be said with confidence that the records of the century disclose no trace of either the institution, or the conception, of private ownership of land in the sense which the term "ownership" bears to-day. All forms of tenure were liable to summary resumption at the King's pleasure, and, with a succession of despots of strong characters and varying views, the phrase "the King's pleasure" must be taken in its literal sense ; even religious endowments, the nearest approach to what would now be called ownership, could be annulled by a stroke of the pen. The attitude of Firuz to Grants in general was, indeed, such that a right of ownership in them seemed to be developing, but this development was not destined to proceed through later periods. So far as the peasants were concerned, the idea prevalent in Hindu times, that cultivation was a duty to the State, and not a right of the individual, still persisted, and manifested itself on occasion in administrative practice. The position of the Chiefs was a matter of politics rather than of law. Ordinarily they could hope to retain their jurisdiction so long as they paid the stipulated revenue ; when they defaulted or rebelled, the matter in dispute was settled by force or by diplomacy according to circumstances.

Regarding the internal organisation of the villages, the chronicles are silent, and, if we take them by themselves, it is almost impossible to point to a single definite phrase indicating the existence of anything which could be described as an organised village ; chance references to the headman's perquisites, and to the records of the village-accountant, are practically all that has survived. The inference that such institutions did not exist would, however, be unjustifiable. We shall meet them at later periods, bearing indisputable marks of their great antiquity ; it is incredible that they should have originated in the intervening centuries ; and there are no grounds for questioning their continuity from a date antecedent, at any rate, to the Moslem conquest. It is better to interpret the silence of the chronicles, not as showing that organised villages did not

exist, but as indicating that at this period they did not present any serious administrative problem. The Moslem administration was concerned mainly with the problems presented by the Chiefs, who, within the area of their authority, stood between the peasants and the Government. The extent of country allowed to remain in their hands cannot be calculated, but it was certainly important. The policy adopted after the lapse of Alauddin's regulations may be regarded as on the whole favourable to the Chiefs, and would make for stability so long as revenue was paid, and friendly relations were maintained with the local authorities; but obviously the individual Chief had no security as against a King sufficiently strong to oust him.

Whether the peasants enjoyed in practice the security of tenure which is nowadays regarded as a primary condition of successful agriculture, is a question on which the records of the period throw no direct light. The episode of the River Country shows that they could be driven to abscond, but it stands by itself, and there is no hint of anything which could justly be described as ejectment. It is clear, however, that there was fertile land to spare, waiting for men with the resources needed to bring it under the plough; and, in such circumstances, the question of ejectment is of little practical interest, because the essence of good management is to keep the peasants at work, and help them to extend their holdings. Nor could the connected question of limitation of rent arise in such circumstances, since, on the assumption[1] that rent-paying tenants existed, they would be certain of a welcome elsewhere, and consequently would be in a position to resist unreasonable demands. The facts on record are too scanty for a precise description of the position of the peasantry as a whole, but what facts there are, are consistent with the existence of a fairly stable condition in normal times, the peasants of a village cultivating more or less land according to their needs and resources, and treating their tenants, if there were any, well enough to keep them at work. Given reasonably good

[1] The question of tenants living in the village but not included in the Brotherhood is discussed in Chapter VI. I have found no evidence to show whether such tenants existed in the fourteenth century.

weather, and a reasonable administration, a village would continue to function; failure of crops, or oppressive administration, might send the inhabitants elsewhere; later on, the village might be repopulated, either by its former inhabitants, or by new settlers, as the case might be; and another cycle in its history would then begin.

The view that productive land was waiting for men with adequate resources is fully established by the agricultural policy of those sovereigns whose pronouncements are on record; their primary object was extension of cultivation, with an immediate increment of revenue accruing from each field brought under the plough. Two methods of securing this object are indicated in addition to administrative pressure. One of these was the provision of State irrigation works, so that, in the picturesque terms borrowed from Islamic law, the "dead lands" might be brought to life; this expedient was, so far as the chronicles show, practised only by Firuz, and it does not again become prominent until the reign of Shahjahan. The other expedient was the grant of advances, which are mentioned particularly as the foundation of Muhammad Tughlaq's attempts to restore the River Country, but in terms which imply that the practice was already familiar. It is safe to infer that capital was the principal requirement for the accepted policy of development; but the records show that, in this period, as in later times, State advances were apt to be embezzled by the officials employed in their distribution, and consequently the value of the expedient was in practice limited. For the second line of development, improvement in cropping, no practical measures are indicated in the chronicles; possibly some effect was produced by a combination of advances and administrative pressure, but we are not told of any actual progress in this direction. We have merely the praiseworthy aspirations of Kings or officials; the result is matter for conjecture.

Chapter III
The Sayyid and Afghan Dynasties

1. FROM FIRUZ TO BABUR (1388-1526)

DURING the first half of the fifteenth century Delhi was ruled for a time by the line of Firuz, and then by a short-lived dynasty of Sayyids. The only contemporary authority I have found for this period is the Tarikh-i Mubarakshahi,[1] which was written about the middle of the century. Judging by its contents, the author was not interested in agrarian topics, and he tells us very little about them ; but it may well be that there was very little to be told. The kingdom was now small, and, within its reduced limits, the royal authority was weak ; the Hindu Chiefs tended to become independent, while the Moslem Governors were apt to be insubordinate. Much of the narrative relates to the King's annual expeditions undertaken with the object of collecting the revenue, and punishing rebels or defaulters ; and it is a striking fact that in these expeditions Governors and Chiefs were treated very much on the same footing. The King marches towards Gwalior ; the Chiefs pay the customary revenue, or do not pay it, as the case may be. He marches towards Badaun, and the Governor either comes to meet him and settle his accounts, or else shuts himself up in the fort, and is treated as a rebel. The position for the time being resembled that which we shall meet in the eighteenth century, when all titles and jurisdictions became confounded in the *taluq* or "dependency," that is to say, the area over which an individual, whether Governor or Assignee, whether Farmer or Chief, exercised *de facto* authority.

[1] Much of this chronicle is translated in Elliot, iv. 6 ff. I have used Elliot's MS., which now forms part of Or. 1673, checking it by Or. 5318, which is attributed to the seventeenth-eighteenth century. The blanks in Elliot's MS., noticed by Dowson, occur also in this earlier copy, and the two must be regarded as constituting a single authority. So far as I have seen, the only difference between them are the clerical mistakes made by Elliot's copyist : as Dowson remarks, his MS. "is in a fair handwriting, but it is full of errors."

In these circumstances, it is, at the least, improbable that any general agrarian measures were instituted, still less, enforced. The conditions would make for diversity of practice in assessment and collection, and the probabilities are that each individual dealt with the peasants very much as he chose. We may guess that Group-assessment gained ground at the expense of Sharing or Measurement, because it was more suitable to the conditions which prevailed, but we have no precise knowledge on the subject. A few casual references[1] show that Assignments were given, and that is practically the only definite fact which I have found.

In the year 1451 the Sayyid dynasty gave place to the Afghan family of Lodi, and Delhi began to recover a part of its former position. The southern kingdoms, indeed, remained independent, but the Afghan power extended eastwards; and, after the final reduction of Jaunpur in 1493, it can fairly be described as holding the North of India. I have found no contemporary authority for the Lodi dynasty, and the later records[2] are in many respects unsatisfactory; but they indicate that during this period the Assignment was the most important agrarian institution, and that it had now taken the form which is familiar in the Mogul period, that is to say, the assignee was bound, not merely to loyalty and personal service, but to maintenance, out of the assigned Income, of a body of troops available for the King's needs. Assignments would thus be fewer in number, but individually more extensive, than in the reign of Firuz. Bahlul, the founder of the dynasty, appears to have based his throne definitely on this institution; it was the offer of Assignments[3] which attracted to India the Afghan leaders who constituted his effective strength; holders of large Assignments were expected to

[1] *E.g.*, we are told (Elliot, v. 71, 75) that the Lodi family held various Assignments under the Sayyid dynasty.

[2] The *Tarikh-i Daudi* dates from the reign of Jahangir, the *Tarikh-i Salatin* from late in the reign of Akbar, and the *Makhzan-i Afghani* was completed in 1612. For the two former, I have to depend on the translations in Elliot, iv, v; for the last, I have used also Dorn's translation, "History of the Afghans," and the RAS MS. 60 (Morley), which was used by Dorn.

[3] Elliot, iv. 308-10. The existence of Reserved land is indicated in *idem*. iv. 410, v. 75.

maintain smaller men on the same terms ; and, while some land was. Reserved to provide revenue for the King, it is probable that the great bulk of the kingdom was administered through assignees rather than salaried officials.

The attitude of the Afghan officers towards their Assignments can be inferred from the fact that at one time they set up a claim[1] to treat them as heritable ; but the King insisted on a clear distinction between private property, which would be distributed according to the law of inheritance, and public offices and Assignments, in which no vested or contingent rights accrued. Subject, however, to this distinction, the facts on record justify the statement that the Afghan assignees had something like a free hand in the management of the land, and the peasants, placed under them. It is easy therefore to understand the silence of the chroniclers regarding general orders during this period ; the only order of the kind which I have noticed is that which was issued by Ibrahim Lodi requiring that collections should be made only in grain.[2]

The reasons for this order, and its duration, are matters of some little interest. The chronicler attributes it to low prices resulting from uniformly good harvests, but there are grounds for thinking that scarcity of the precious metals was the decisive factor. The prevailing cheapness extended, we are told, to all classes of merchandise, not merely agricultural produce, while "gold and silver were procurable only with the greatest difficulty"; and this is only another way of saying that the precious metals had appreciated. A probable interpretation of these statements is that the course of trade at this period did not bring the precious metals into Northern India in sufficient quantities to satisfy the demand, which is one of the permanent economic features of this region. Adequate supplies could be obtained only through the seaports of Bengal and Gujarat. When one or other of these tracts was under the rule of Delhi, trade could move freely, and, apart from trade, the revenue could come up country in cash ; when they were independent, and cut off from Delhi by lawlessness along the roads, there would be no remittance of revenue, and trade

[1] Elliot, iv. 327. [2] Elliot, iv. 476.

would necessarily be hampered. At this time Delhi had been cut off from the coast for a century or more, and the cumulative effect of reduced supplies of treasure must have been important. How long the order remained in force is uncertain ; we know, as will be seen in the next chapter, that cash collections were the rule in the beginning of Akbar's reign, but I have found no indication of the date when they were reintroduced.

In assessment, as distinguished from collection, the assignees appear to have had at this time a perfectly free hand, at least in practice ; on no other theory is it possible to understand the proceedings of Farid Khan, the young Afghan who, some years later, was to drive the Moguls out of India, and ascend the throne with the title of Sher Shah. In the reign of one of the Lodi Kings, that is, some time before the year 1526, Farid Khan was appointed to manage two parganas held by his father in Assignment, and he set to work to increase the prosperity of the holding by means of just administration.[1] He found the land held partly by peasants and partly by Chiefs ; the former he regarded as the true source of prosperity, the latter as dangerous nuisances.

His first step was to give the peasants their choice as to the system on which the Demand should be assessed.[2] It is significant that they were not unanimous on this question ; some wished to pay by Measurement, others by Sharing, and Farid let them do as they chose. Having decided this, his next step was to protect the peasants from extortion on the part of the *chaudhri*, or pargana-headman, and the *muqaddam*, a term which had now become definitely specialised to denote the headman of a village. We have seen in the last chapter that Alauddin had aimed at

[1] Farid's proceedings are described in the Tarikh-i Sher Shahi (Elliot, iv. 312). The text of this chronicle is fluid, as explained by Dowson ; the MSS. I have seen are an inferior lot, but they support Elliot's version of this passage. The precise date is uncertain : Farid lost the management in the reign of Ibrahim (1517-1526), but it is not clear how long he held it, and his initial proceedings may belong to the time of Sikandar.

[2] We now meet new names for the different methods of assessment. Measurement is denoted by *jarib*, Sharing by *qismat-i ghalla*. The account in the text differs in some points from that given in Professor Qanungo's *Sher Shah* (Calcutta, 1921); the differences are explained in J.R.A.S. 1926, p. 447 ff.

preventing this kind of extortion, owing to which the weak bore the burden of the strong : in the same way Farid told the headmen that he knew the oppressions and exactions of which they had been guilty towards the peasants, and in order to check such malpractices, he fixed the payments to be made in connection with assessment, either the fees for measuring the area, or the fees for determining and collecting the amount of produce. Further, if in this matter we may trust the chronicler, who was much addicted to putting long speeches into his characters' mouths, Farid declared the policy he intended to pursue. The headmen were to be confined strictly to the prescribed fees ; the revenue was to be paid punctually, season by season ; the assessment, though it was made on the area sown, was to take due account of the yield ; but, a fair Demand having been fixed, collection was to be rigorous. Having settled these matters, he dismissed the peasants, who carried away with them written documents defining the terms of their tenure.

Some villages however were in "rebellion," that is to say, they were not prepared to submit to the assignee's authority ; in order to deal with these, Farid raised local levies, plundered the rebel villages, and confined the inhabitants, until the headmen submitted and gave security for their good conduct in the future. In the case of certain rebellious Chiefs, his action was even more drastic, for he rejected their offers of submission as insincere, and exterminated the rebels, killing the men, enslaving their families, and bringing settlers from elsewhere to the ruined villages. As the result of these measures, we are told that rebellion ceased, the parganas quickly became prosperous, and Farid's reputation as an expert manager spread far and wide ; but after some time his position was affected by family quarrels, and, when he was displaced in favour of his half-brothers, he set out to seek his fortune at Ibrahim Lodi's Court at Agra.

It will be seen from this description that the situation which confronted Farid Khan was in all essentials similar to that which had prevailed in the fourteenth century. So far as the peasants were concerned, there was the fundamental liability to pay a share of the produce to the King or his representative, and failure or refusal to pay

constituted an act of rebellion. The method of assessment had to be decided by authority, and on this matter finality had not yet been attained. In the fourteenth century there had been two schools of opinion, one preferring to assess on the produce gathered, the other on the area sown. In the sixteenth century the terminology had changed, but the conflict between the two methods remained ; and even in one small region the peasants took different views, while Farid himself was clearly open to conviction, and allowed the two methods to continue side by side. He recognised, however, that assessment on the area sown could not be carried out entirely without reference to the yield. Ghiyas-uddin Tughlaq had, as we have seen, regarded this defect as fatal to the method ; Farid, concerned with a smaller area, and in a position to give personal supervision to the process, was prepared to make the necessary allowances. The only apparent novelty in his arrangements is the execution of written documents. I have not read of these in the fourteenth century, but it is quite possible that they were executed then, and in earlier times; all that can be said here is that the documents now familiar, the *patta* given by authority, and the *qabuliyat*, or acknowledgment of the peasant's liability, are at least as old as the sixteenth century, and may be much older.

The position of the Chiefs remained unchanged. In the sixteenth century, as in the fourteenth, they were Intermediaries between the peasants and the central authority ; and, where they existed, the assignee had to look to them, and not to the peasants, for his Income. The action taken by Farid Khan shows that an assignee could in practice exercise the full powers of the executive administration ; he had not to apply to a Governor or other official to coerce his recalcitrant debtors, but coerced them himself, with forces raised at his own cost; and, in cases where he judged it desirable, he finally abolished their claims by what, in the circumstances of the time, was probably the only effective method, killing the claimants and reducing their families to slavery. The assignee in fact could exercise the powers delegated to him by the King practically as if he were King himself.

At this stage then, Farid Khan does not come before us as an agrarian reformer. He worked the system which he found in existence, and made the best of it by close personal supervision ; accepting in substance, as we may, the chronicler's assurance of his success, we may fairly infer that it was due to the man rather than the methods. For about twenty years after his dismissal, the man was engaged in tasks of a different nature, and when we next meet him, it is in the person of Sher Shah, King of Hindustan, reorganising the administration in the light of his past experience. Before, however, we turn to his constructive work, a few words must be said on certain points affecting the Lodi period.

I have found nothing to show what share of the produce was claimed as revenue at this time. It is *prima facie* improbable that the Afghan kings and their assignees should have been content with less than could be realised, but their claims probably varied with varying power of enforcement ; diversity may therefore be conjectured, but in the absence of any authority the question must remain open. For a time, the revenue continued to be collected in cash, but, as we have seen above, early in the sixteenth century grain-collection was made the rule. A few details are available regarding the conditions of tenure of Assignments. For one thing, it is clear that the allocation of these had raised difficulties in regard to any small Grants or endowments which might be included in them ; Sikandar Lodi issued general orders under which the assignee was bound to respect existing tenures of the kind.[1] The same passage mentions that the assignees' accounts were settled at the Revenue Ministry without formalities or difficulties ; while we are told also (iv. 453) that under Sikandar the assignee was allowed to keep any excess over the nominal Valuation which he could secure from his Assignment. In this latter respect, the procedure was much more favourable to the assignee than that which prevailed in the Mogul Empire, when excess realisations were claimed by the State, as we shall see in a later chapter. Apart from Assignments,

[1] Elliot, iv. 447, 8. The terms used for the small tenures are *milk* and *wasifa*. At other periods *wasifa* commonly meant a stipend paid in cash.

Grants were made commonly during this period (iv. 450) for the maintenance of scholars, saints, or persons with some sort of claim against the King. These Grants were, as a rule, comparatively small; their total value is a matter of conjecture, but taking Grants and Assignments together, there can be no doubt that the greater part of the revenue of the Afghan kingdom was alienated, and that the real masters of the peasant were the assignees.

One passage (iv. 414) of some importance remains to be noticed. In describing Sher Shah's introduction of Measurement as the general rule, the chronicler says that "before his time it was not the custom to measure the land, but there was a qanungo in every pargana, from whom was ascertained the present, past and probable future state of the pargana." In point of time, this is the earliest mention I have found of the qanungo as the local authority who furnished the information required for the assessment of his pargana; but he is presented as an established institution, and there is no reason to doubt that the post dates from before the Moslem conquest. His appearance in this connection suggests that before the reign of Sher Shah the revenue Demand was ordinarily fixed for a village or pargana as a whole, and not on the individual peasant; the passage thus points to either Group-assessment, or Farming, or both. The one essential for these methods was the local information provided by the qanungo, showing what each village had paid in the past, and what new factors had to be taken into account in its assessment; so far as we know, he was not in a position to furnish such information separately for each individual peasant (which would have been the duty of the village-accountant), and his appearance on the scene is always a suggestion, though not a proof, that either Group-assessment or Farming was for the time in operation, alongside of the methods of individual assessment, which never entirely disappeared, or at least recurred after any temporary disappearance. Probably then the period under review was chracterised by one, or both, of these methods, but definite evidence is wanting.

It is possible that a clue to the position is contained in a sentence in the Ain (i. 296), which states incidentally that

under Sher Shah Hindustan passed from Sharing and (a doubtful word) to Measurement. The doubtful word was printed by Blochmann as *muqti'i*. I can find no such word in the dictionaries, nor have I met it elsewhere in the literature; but derivatives from the same root are applied in some cases to Assignment, in others to Farming, and it would be possible to render the passage either "from Sharing and Assignment," or "from Sharing and Farming." The exact meaning must remain obscure until other uses of the word in a similar context come to light.

2. SHER SHAH AND HIS SUCCESSORS (1541-1555)

Passing for the moment over the first, unstable, period of Mogul rule, we come to Sher Shah, one of the outstanding administrators of Moslem India, and the only sovereign who is known to have gained practical experience in managing a small body of peasants before rising to the throne of a peasant kingdom. The main source of information regarding his administrative activities is the chronicle of Abbas Sarwani to which reference has already been made, but it is confirmed and supplemented by a chapter in the Ain-i Akbari. In itself, the chronicle[1] is fairly good historical material, but the manuscripts differ widely, and, so far as I can learn, nothing has yet been done to establish a definitive text.

The administrative unit adopted by Sher Shah was the existing pargana, each of which was placed in charge of two officers, shiqqdar and amin,[2] with a treasurer and clerks,

[1] The material portions of the chronicle (translated by E. C. Bayley) are in Elliot, iv; for the state of the MSS., see p. 302. I know of no printed text. The MSS. I have examined are Or. 164 and Or. 1782 in the British Museum, and Ethe, 219, in the India Office, as well as an Urdu version (Ethe, 220). All these appear to belong to one family, and omit some important sentences found in the translation; all are obviously careless copies, and I should not like to assert their authority against the unspecified MSS. on which the translator relied.

[2] Elliot, iv. 413. The term shiqqdar clearly does not denote the administrator of a shiqq, in the sense of an aggregate of parganas, found occasionally at an earlier period; at this time it is applied consistently to the revenue officer of a single pargana, whether a State official or the servant of an assignee. Sher Shah's designation for his district officers was "shiqqdar of shiqqdars," rendered "chief shiqqdar" in the translation. "Amin" appears in all the MSS. I have examined, and is clearly appropriate; the variant "amir," which is given in the translation, is improbable, and I conjecture that in the MS. of the translation (which I have failed to trace) the *n* may have been misread as *r*.

while for purposes of control the parganas were grouped in districts, now named sarkar. The general attitude of the administration is shown in the instructions given to the district officers that "if the people, from any lawlessness or rebellious spirit, created a disturbance regarding the collection of the revenue, they were so to eradicate and destroy them with punishment and chastisement that their wickedness and rebellion should not spread to others,"—an obvious restatement of the principle on which Sher Shah had acted when he was managing his father's Assignment. In regard to assessment, however, the King's views had changed. As manager, he had allowed the peasants to choose the method they preferred ; as King, he imposed the method of Measurement on practically the whole of his dominions, and various passages show that its successful operation was the test by which his officers were judged. Thus in the Punjab hills, the Governor held such firm possession "that no man dared to breathe in opposition to him, and he collected the revenue by measurement of land from the hill people" ; while the Governor of Sambhal (in Rohilkhand) "so humbled and overcame by the sword the contumacious zamindars (Chiefs) of those parts that they did not rebel even when he ordered them to cut down their jungles.... and they reformed and repented them of their thieving and highway robberies, and they paid in at the city their revenue according to the measurements."[1]

Measurement then was enforced even in notoriously rebellious tracts, and the only recorded exception to its application is in the distant country round Multan, which had suffered greatly from disorder, and the acquisition of which gave peculiar pleasure to the King. Here the Governor was ordered to repeople the country, to observe the local customs, and to take only a fourth share of the produce as revenue.[2] The conditions obviously justified exceptional treatment in this tract, and there may also have been exceptions elsewhere, though none are recorded ; but there can be no doubt that Measurement was the general rule in practice, and not merely in theory.

[1] Elliot, iv. 415, 416.
[2] Elliot, iv. 399 ; Makhzan-i Afghani, I.O. (Ethe) 60, f. 121.

As regards the share of the produce which was to be taken as the basis of the assessment rates, the chronicle presents a difficulty. The translation says that one share was to be given to the cultivator and half a share to the headman, presumably as representing the State, and this would mean a claim to one-third of the produce ; but this clause does not appear in any of the manuscripts I have seen, and, if it stood by itself, it might be an incorrect gloss. The point is, however, settled definitely by a chapter in the Ain,[1] which reproduces a schedule of Sher Shah's assessment rates, showing the method by which they were calculated. For a few special crops, mainly vegetables, cash rates were fixed, and these are not recorded ; but for all the principal staples the "good," "middling," and "bad" yields per bigha were added up, one-third of the total was reckoned as the "average produce" (*mahsul*), and one-third of this was taken as the revenue-Demand. A single example will suffice ; wheat was assumed, or calculated, to yield 18 maunds (good), 12 (middling), and 8-35 (bad) ; the "average produce" obtained by totalling these figures and dividing by three comes to 12-38⅓, but was taken as 12-38¼, and the revenue-Demand on each bigha of wheat was one-third of this, or 4 maunds, 12¾ sers. I have found nothing to show whether the Demand on the peasant was made in grain, or whether he was called on to pay cash at rates fixed by the administration ; as has been explained in the last section, we know that collection in grain was reintroduced under the Lodi dynasty, while collection in cash was the rule in the early years of Akbar's reign, but we do not know when the change was made.

In examining this schedule of rates, we must recognise that the units in which it is expressed are uncertain. It is given in the Ain as a document of merely historical interest, and, to my mind, it is highly improbable that the compiler should have taken the trouble to recalculate it in terms of Akbar's bigha and maund, which were introduced after it had been finally discarded. We know from the Ain (i. 296)

[1] Ain, i. 297 ff.: Jarrett's rendering (ii. 62) is not quite literal. Professor Qanungo, in his monograph on *Sher Shah* (Calcutta, 1921), argued (p. 373) that Sher Shah claimed only a fourth share. I have examined his arguments in detail in J.R.A.S., 1926, pp. 448 ff.

that under Sher Shah the unit of measurement in use was that of Sikandar Lodi, and we know also the relation of this unit to that of Akbar; there is, I think, a definite presumption that the schedule relates to the Sikandari bigha, but I have found no authority to show the precise unit of weight which was in use at this time. We cannot then use the schedules to calculate the productivity of the soil under Sher Shah; but we can see that, whatever the units, the suitability of the rates must be judged, firstly, by the standards of yield, and, secondly, by the area over which they were applied.

On the first point, the terms "good," "middling," and "bad" are obviously not based on any scientific distinction, but indicate working by rule of thumb; men of practical knowledge and experience might reach in this way a figure which would approximate very closely to a true average, men without the requisite qualifications might go very widely astray; and the only thing to be said is that Sher Shah, who personally administered his kingdom in great detail, was certainly not a fool, and had practical knowledge of the agriculture of at least one corner of his dominions. On the second point, it is uncertain[1] whether this schedule applied originally to the whole kingdom or whether it is one of several local schedules, subsequently selected for general application under Akbar. In general application it broke down, as we shall see in the next chapter; but might have lasted for Sher Shah's reign of only five years, and there is nothing in his character inconsistent with the idea that he may have imposed a general schedule on the entire kingdom.

Apart from his action in regard to assessment, Sher Shah appears to have initiated no large changes of system. Assignments continued to be granted, as we know from various incidental references,[2] and there is no suggestion of any alteration in the conditions attaching to them; while the reign was, perhaps, too short for the emergence of such difficulties in regard to their Valuation as were to

[1] The enclytic *-i* which is attached to the word schedule is ambiguous. It would be idiomatic to render it as *the* schedule, implying that there was only one; but it can be read also as *a* schedule, suggesting that it was one of several.

[2] *E.g.* Elliot, iv. 415, where one officer is mentioned as holding the sarkar of Sirhind, and another held Kant and other parganas in Rohilkhand.

trouble Akbar. The ten years which followed Sher Shah's death were a period of confusion, during which we naturally hear little of the revenue administration. Islam Shah, we are told, replaced Assignments by cash salaries and abolished all the old regulations regarding them[1]; but we find him shortly afterwards offering a choice of Assignments to his brother, and converting cash stipends into Grants of land, so that no permanent change in policy can be inferred, and his action was probably intended merely to bring under closer control influential men whom he had reason to distrust. With this exception there is nothing to record, and we may fairly assume that the Revenue Ministry, now known as Diwani, not Diwan, continued, in the absence of orders to the contrary, to carry out Sher Shah's system in so much of the kingdom as remained intact.

In my opinion, it would be a mistake to suppose that conquests of themselves made much difference to this permanent institution. The chief motive of a conqueror, as distinct from a raider, was to secure the revenue of the conquered territory; and, in order to do so, he would have to rely at the outset on the existing machinery for assessment and collection. The immediate effect of a conquest would be, on the one hand, to replace some assignees by others, leaving the assignment-system intact; and, on the other hand, to give the Ministry a new master, whose orders would be carried out when they were received. If he gave no new orders, the Ministry would presumably follow the most recent orders, interpreting them in the light of departmental tradition, but not making formal changes without due authority. A strong King, like Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq in the fourteenth, or Sher Shah in the sixteenth century, might inaugurate his reign by the introduction of new methods: conquerors of a different stamp might be content to accept the methods which they found. Where then there is no record of a change, it is reasonable to assume administrative continuity; but in the period we are now approaching, assumption is unnecessary, for we shall see in the next chapter that Akbar began by adopting Sher Shah's methods, and changed them only when they had definitely broken down.

[1] Elliot, iv. 479-81 v. 487.

Chapter IV

The Reign of Akbar (1556-1605)

1. INTRODUCTORY

THE suggestion which was made in the last chapter, of a measure of administrative continuity throughout periods of violent political change, applies to the first episode of Mogul rule (1526-1540). There is nothing in the literature to indicate that either Babur or Humayun made any alterations in the agrarian system of northern India, and the few references I have traced to the subject suggest that they accepted what they found. We read of Babur distributing Assignments among his followers very shortly after the battle of Panipat,[1] and his own summary account of the kingdom[2] must have been based on Indian records, for it notes that Mewat had not been administered by his predecessor, while the statement that 8 or 9 krors, out of the total of 52, related to "parganas of Rais and Rajas, who, as obedient from of old, receive allowance and maintenance" is definite evidence of continuity. Humayun[3] confirmed the Assignments which had been given by his father, and we hear of his granting new Assignments in Bengal and elsewhere; Khondamir's account of the reconstruction of the central administration, though it mentions revenue business as being placed in charge of one of the four Ministers, suggests no change in the actual work of the Ministry; and I have found no single passage to indicate any material alteration in the arrangements. The few months in 1555-6 which constituted the second portion of Humayun's reign obviously afforded no opportunity for the introduction of a

[1] Gulbadan, 11b.

[2] Baburnama, 520. The figures given by Babur are described in the Persian version as *jama* (*idem*, App. P., liv.), and possibly he was quoting the Valuation which was in force at the time of his conquest; *jama* is the regular term for Valuation.

[3] Gulbadan, 20b, 158. Elliot, v. 123, 141.

change in system, and we may fairly treat the accession of Akbar as the opening of a new period.

Akbar succeeded to the throne in 1556, when he was only 14 years old; the period of his personal rule began in 1562, and lasted until his death in 1605. For the present purpose this long reign falls into two divisions; up to the 24th regnal year (1579-80) the revenue administration may be described as a series of experiments, while thenceforward the authorities indicate that stability of system had been attained, though adjustment of details was still required. Materials for the study of the earlier period are fuller than for any previous reign, and throw light on both the past and the future; but the texts are by no means easy to interpret, and the account which I give in this chapter will be found to differ in some important matters from those which have been furnished by previous writers.

The main authorities for the period are the Akbarnama and its concluding section, the Ain-i Akbari, which must be regarded as a distinct, though not unrelated, work. These authorities are official, and in addition to them we have various unofficial chronicles, the most notable of which bear the names of Nizamuddin Ahmad and Badauni. The unofficial records are indispensable to a correct appreciation of the environment, but they throw little direct light on the details of the agrarian system; a few passages from them will require our attention, but the main lines of the story must be drawn from the official documents.

The Akbarnama is a formal chronicle of the reign, prepared under the Emperor's orders by Shaikh Abul Fazl, one of the foremost writers of the age, and a man absolutely devoted to his Imperial master; it is characterised by a strongly individual style, and generally, by a due sense of proportion in regard to subject-matter; and as a piece of literature it must be given a high rank. To the historian, its chief defect is an economy, or, according to some students, an occasional perversion, of the truth, in matters where the naked facts might have been unpleasant to recall; it requires therefore to be read critically in the light of other accounts, but for our purposes this defect is not a very serious matter.

The Ain-i Akbari, which in point of form is the

concluding section of the Akbarnama, presents very different features. Its purport, as described in the preface,[1] is to record such of Akbar's activities "as illustrate the worldly side of his nature and his greatness as a king," his work as a spiritual leader being intentionally passed over; and the author adds, with entire justice, that he is offering students "a present, which may seem difficult to understand, but which is easy; or rather, which may seem easy, but is in reality difficult."

The work is heterogeneous. The latter portion consists mainly of a description of Hindu culture, and does not concern us; the earlier portion, which I shall speak of shortly as the Ain presents an account of the action taken by Akbar in each of the different departments in which the administration was organised, and thus carries out the declared object, No one who has read the Ain and the Akbarnama side by side can regard them as the work of the same author; the Ain is a jumble of all styles[2] and no style at all, the lack of proportion is glaring, the diction is often crabbed and technical. Some small portions are clearly from the pen of Abul Fazl, as Blochmann pointed out in his preface to the text, but it is equally clear that those which most concern us are the work of very different writers. Taking the book as a whole, it must be regarded as a collection of official papers contributed by the various administrative departments, edited by Abul Fazl, and containing occasional matter from his pen; but in essence consisting of what the departments furnished and the editor did not reject. The chapters which deal with the agrarian system can be understood only as the work of one or more officials in the Revenue Ministry, too familiar with its routine to explain details, and, I think, inclined to be reticent over departmental failures; it is open to us to explain obscurity as the result either of faulty drafting, or of hasty editing, but we can never assume that the writers were ignorant of their subject.

While the two works are distinct, they are not unrelated. In some passages the Akbarnama gives a summary of the Ain, to which it refers for details; in others, the Akbarnama

[1] Ain, i. 7; Blochmann, i. x.
[2] On the style see Blochmann's preface, i. 4.

furnishes some details which are wanting in the parallel passages in the Ain; and reference will be made further on to a case in which the former seems deliberately to supply the text of official documents which had been omitted from the latter. We must then read the two together as complementary; neither tells us all we want to know, but nearly all is contained in one or other; and in the case of some gaps, at least, we may suspect that the editing was at fault. In the description which follows, I begin with the history of the heart of the Empire, from the Punjab to Allahabad, tracing first the assessments, then the Assignments, and then the course of certain scandals which supervened: I then examine the working of the Regulation-system in its final form; and conclude with a survey of the arrangements in force throughout the Empire in the latter portion of the reign.

2. THE METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

This section relates mainly to the country which, from the 24th regnal years onwards, was included in the five provinces of Lahore, Delhi, Agra, Awadh,[1] and Allahabad. A sixth province, Multan, comes into the story in the 15th year, and a seventh, Malwa, also appears in the records, but the figures relating to it are so eccentric as to suggest that in practice it must have had an assessment system of its own. Put very briefly, the story which has to be told is one of three sets of assessment-rates, which may be called respectively "Sher Shah's," "the qanungo," and "the ten-year"; all three come under the general type which I have described as Measurement, that is to say, a charge, varying with the crop, on the area sown; and the transition from one set of rates to another represents a gradual approximation to a workable system.

As has been indicated in the last chapter, Akbar, or rather, the Regent, Bairam Khan, began by adopting for general use a schedule of assessment-rates which had been framed by Sher Shah[2] on the basis of claiming for the State

[1] I retain the spelling Awadh as a tacit reminder that Akbar's province differed materially in extent from the country now known as Oudh.

[2] Ain, i. 297, 347. The passages bearing on this section are discussed in Appendix E.

one-third of the average produce, stated in grain, with rates fixed in cash for a few crops only. Under Akbar, the actual Demand was made in all cases in cash, the grain-rates being commuted on the basis of current prices. This schedule could not be made to work. The term official verdict[1] on it was, in literal version, that "abundant distress used to occur"; its use in the Reserved districts was suspended in the 13th year; and, after a short period of Group-assessment in those tracts, the second or qanungo rates were introduced. The actual working of both sets of rates can be traced in a chapter of the Ain entitled "The Nineteen-Year," which requires a little preliminary explanation.

The short text of the chapter[2] tells us merely that the figures appended to it, showing the cash-rates demanded in each year on a bigha, were collected after the most diligent investigation; then follow tables arranged by provinces, showing the demand per bigha in dams (normally 40 to the rupee) on each crop in each year, from the 6th, which was presumably the earliest for which figures were available, to the 24th, when the practice of commutation was abandoned. The figures are wanting in some manuscripts. and, where they have been copied, discrepancies are numerous, as is usually the case in such statistical tables. Blochmann, in his note to the text, describes the figures as a whole as untrustworthy, and this verdict may be taken as accurate, in the sense that no argument can safely be based on any particular item, because of the risk that that particular item may be corrupt; but even a careless copyist gives most of the figures before him correctly, and in this particular case we have the great advantage of a separate table of rates for each province. When the figures for all five provinces show a definite tendency in one direction, it is safe to accept them as evidence of what actually happened; and the instances in which this occurs are so numerous that, after analysing them in detail, I am convinced that the following account can be accepted as substantially accurate.

[1] *Farawan ranj rafti*, Ain, i. 347.

[2] Ain, i. 303 ff. Jarrett (ii. 69) suggests in a footnote some connection with the lunar cycle of nineteen years, but this appears to be unnecessary. I take it that the table gives all the figures that could be traced in the records, which happened to be for 19 years.

From the 6th to the 9th year, a single set of commutation-rates was adopted for all five provinces, with only a few local variations. In the 6th and 7th years, for instance, wheat was everywhere charged 90 dams; and, since we must allow for local variations in season and in productivity as large as at the present day, and for very much narrower markets owing to the higher cost of moving bulky produce, it is impossible to believe that uniform prices can actually have prevailed, alike in town and in country, all the way from Lahore to Allahabad. The only reasonable inference is that the uniform grain-Demand fixed by the schedule in force was commuted by a single price-list, probably based on the rates prevailing in the Imperial Camp.

This inference is supported by the fact that in these years the pulses were very heavily over-assessed relatively to cereals. As has been explained in the last chapter, uncertainty regarding the units employed prevents us from drawing conclusions regarding actual productivity from the data contained in Sher Shah's schedule; but relative, as distinct from actual, productivity can be stated with some approach to precision. Taking the relative productivity from this schedule, and the relative normal prices[1] from another section of the Ain, we find that, if the assessable value of wheat, stated in money, is put as 100, the corresponding figures for jowar (*sorghum*) ought to be 66, and for gram, 53. In the 6th year, the assessment on jowar works out to 55, so that, relatively to wheat it was slightly undercharged; but the figure for gram was 89 instead of 53, and another pulse (*moth*) was overcharged on the same scale. The obvious explanation of this anomaly is that pulses

[1] The prices considered to be reasonable in Akbar's reign are given in Ain, i. 66 ff. In J.R.A.S., 1918, p. 375 ff., I showed that the relation between these prices was very much the same as existed in the years 1910—12, and a similar relation holds in all the other figures I have tested. Prices of wheat and gram, for instance, have varied enormously in the course of six centuries, but the value of a pound of wheat in terms of a pound of gram has been one of the most stable relations in history. It may be well to add that this relation is obscured in some modern works, where the wrong figure has been taken for gram. Two kinds of gram are referred to occasionally in the chronicles, "Kabuli," which was an exotic, and cost more than wheat, and "black," the common kind, which cost less. Edward Thomas, in *The Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi*, p. 429, showed the price of gram (*nukhud*) under Akbar as 16½ dams; this represents the price of the exotic, country gram being priced at 8 dams.

all over the country were assessed on the basis of the high prices necessarily prevailing in a large camp crowded with animals; but, without carrying the analysis further, it may fairly be said that these uniform rates, and this over-assessment of pulses, were sufficient by themselves to render the assessments unworkable.

In the 10th year there was the beginning of a progressive change, in that the staple crops were valued at local prices, a practice which naturally reduced the overcharge on the pulses. The evidence of this change is found in the appearance of maximum and minimum rates in place of a single figure. In Awadh, for instance, a region lying at some distance from the capital, wheat, having been charged 90 dams in the 9th year, was charged 52 to 60 dams in the 10th, and gram, which had been 80 dams, was charged 40 to 56. It is of course impossible that a local assessing officer should have been allowed an option to assess at 40, or at 56; the only reasonable explanation is that these are local rates applicable to different parts of the province, and since the grain-Demand was still uniform, the differences in charge can be attributed only to differences in price. Assuming that the local prices were correctly fixed, this measure would operate to mitigate the worst evils which had come to light, but there still remained the fundamental defect of a uniform grain-charge over a wide region of varying productivity, a defect which must have been felt increasingly as the area of the administration extended.

The cash-rates from the 10th to the 14th year show no general tendency beyond a gradual increase in this local differentiation, but from a passage in the Akbarnama (ii. 333), we learn that they ceased to be used in assessing the Reserved land. In the 13th year it was found that Muzaffar Khan, the Minister who was in charge of both general and revenue administration, was overworked, and he was relieved of the charge of the Reserved land, which was entrusted to Shihabuddin Ahmad Khan. This officer discontinued the detailed annual assessment, and in its place established a *nasaq*, a term which, as is explained in Appendix D, I interpret as Group-assessment (or possibly Farming), of a village, or a pargana, as a whole. The

duration of this arrangement is not recorded, but I think that it may be taken as temporary, and that it ended when, in the 15th year, the qanungo-rates came into force.

The method of calculating these rates is not on record, and the rates themselves have not been preserved; but the information which is available[1] appears to me to justify the conclusion that each qanungo was required to prepare for his pargana a schedule of crop-yields in the same form as that which had previously been in use, showing the Demand on each crop, stated in grain, as one-third of the average produce; that is to say, the basic rule of assessment was unchanged, but it was applied separately to each pargana, instead of to the Empire as a whole. The Demand continued to be made in cash on the basis of local prices, and the figures for these still required the Emperor's sanction from season to season; the important difference was that the grain-Demand, to which these figures were applied, was now based on local, instead of general, productivity. It is perhaps going too far to speak of "each pargana": there was indeed a qanungo in each pargana, but some of these charges were very small, and it is probable that schedules for adjoining parganas would sometimes be identical or nearly so. I suspect that the grouping of parganas into assessment-circles, which characterised the next set of rates, may really have originated at this time, but I have found no evidence on the point.

At the time when this change was made, the Revenue Ministry was in charge of Muzaffar Khan and Raja Todar Mal. The former was still responsible for the general administration as well, and we may infer that the real author of the qanungo-rates was the Raja, a figure equally prominent in history and in legend. As we shall see, Todar Mal was not responsible for the introduction of the next change in assessment, so that when his rates are spoken of by later writers, the reference ought to be to those which are now under discussion.[2]

The introduction of the qanungo-rates can be traced in the figures of "The Nineteen-year," which we have already

[1] The information on this point is brought together in Appendix E.

[2] My reasons for discarding the much later account of Todar Mal's rates given in the chronicle of Khwafi Khan will be found in Appendix F.

followed. The rates for the 15th year show definite discontinuity in the case of each province. New crops are introduced for the first time, and action was obviously taken to ensure that all schedules should now be formally complete. There is marked widening in the gaps between maximum and minimum rates, as well as increased divergence between provinces, results which would naturally follow from the adoption of local schedules, giving two variables in each case—grain-Demand and price—instead of a fixed Demand commuted at varying prices; and, speaking generally, it is certain from the figures that a general change in assessment was made in this year, though in some cases its full effect was not obtained till a year or two later.

From the 15th to the 24th year, on the other hand, the recorded rates show no general discontinuity, and are consistent with the inference which can be drawn from the silence of the authorities, that the method of assessment remained unaltered during this period.[1] We may infer also that the rates were on the whole equitable, so far as the grain-Demand was concerned, for we are told very clearly that their supersession was due to the breakdown of the seasonal commutation, and there is no suggestion that the grain-rates themselves were at fault. The Ain (i. 347) attributes the difficulties which ensued to the expansion of the Empire: the determination of the prices to be used in calculating the Demand was frequently delayed, and this led to constant complaints both from peasants and from assignees, until the Emperor devised a remedy. The explanation is convincing when we allow for the fact that the seasonal commutation-prices required Imperial sanction. It is not possible to propose such prices until the prospect of the harvest is reasonably assured; and, as things go in Northern India, very few weeks elapse between that period and the time when collection must begin. We can easily imagine how delays might occur: the proposed rates for Multan, for instance, might reach Agra by courier, only to find that the Emperor was marching to Patna or Ahmedabad, or perhaps that he had delayed his return from Kashmir. In

[1] In particular there is no sign of change in the nineteenth year, when some writers have suggested a revision of assessment-rates.

such cases the local authorities would have to start collection, a process which must never be delayed, on the basis of their proposed rates; and then would come orders from Court altering the rates, which would necessarily involve a hurried adjustment of the Demand in the middle of the season, to the annoyance ef everybody concerned.

The Akbarnama (iii. 282) gives substantially the same account in more elegant language, but it adds a point which the departmental record ignores, that some of the price-reporters "were rumoured to have strayed from the path of rectitude," a suggestion which we need not hesitate to accept as probable. It adds also that the officials at head-quarters, in other words, the staff of the Revenue Ministry, were distressed and helpless, until a solution was found by Akbar himself. We may then accept the concurrent accounts that the invention of the final, or "Ten-year" schedules of rates was the Emperor's own idea, and not that of his officials.

The distinctive feature of the new schedules, which are on record in the Ain, is that the Demand-rates on all crops were fixed in cash, not in grain, so that the need for seasonal commutation was obviated. The account of their calculation is obscure,[1] but my reading of the authorities is that the rates adopted were the average of those which had been fixed for the previous ten years, the period during which the qanungo-rates had been in force. In the schedules, the parganas are grouped into what may be described as assessment-circles, with a schedule (*dastur*) [2] for each circle; and it may fairly be said that the grouping was, on the whole, satisfactory, for most of the circles of which I have personal knowledge are fairly homogeneous from the standpoint of productivity.

The view that the new rates were averaged from ten years' experience cannot be checked arithmetically. For the qanungo-rates, we possess only the maximum and

[1] The authorities are discussed in Appendix E.

[2] It was shown in J.R.A.S., 1918, pp. 12, 13, that the word *dastur* does not in the Ain carry the meaning of a local area attributed to it by some modern writers, but was the precise official designation of a schedule of cash-rates, as distinct from *ray'*, which denoted a schedule of grain-rates (J.R.A.S., 1926, pp. 454 ff.).

minimum charge made in each province, and can say nothing more than that the average lies somewhere within these limits: where, for instance, wheat was charged from 40 to 75 dams, it is not permissible to take 57½ dams as the average rate, because the extremes may, for all we know, refer only to a few small parganas, and the charge on the bulk of the province may have lain close to either of them. Without the aid of averages, exact comparison between the two sets of rates is impossible; taking probable figures determined by inspection, the general result is that, while the ten-year rates show no such extreme figures as those of some earlier seasons, extremes being naturally eliminated in the process of averaging, their range is, on the whole, somewhere between 10 and 20 per cent. higher. We must remember that Akbar's bigha was not introduced until the 31st regnal year, and that it was about 20 per cent. greater than the unit previously employed[1]; it is to my mind highly improbable that the voluminous tables of the "19-year" rates, which were certainly struck in terms of the earlier unit, were ever re-calculated in terms of a unit which was adopted after they had become obsolete; and, if the ten-years rate were in fact averages of the charges for 10 years, but necessarily adjusted later on to the enlarged bigha, they would in fact show some such increase as is disclosed by inspection. Too much weight must not be attached to this argument, because the process of inspection is very far from being infallible; my point is merely that the ten-year rates, as we have them, stand somewhere about the level which would be reached by an average of ten years' actual charges adjusted for the increase in the size of the bigha.

No later changes in the methods of assessment are recorded during Akbar's reign. It is open to us to conjecture that the rates, as given in the Ain, may have been modified in details between the 24th year, when they came into force, and the 40th year, when that record was completed; but the general system was clearly maintained. The operation of Akbar's invention was two-fold. Administratively, it

[1] Ain, i. 294, 296.

got rid, once for all, of the vexatious business of commutation, and made it possible for the local authorities to assess the Demand in each season in time for prompt collection. Economically, its effect was to transfer from the State to the peasantry the benefit and the burden of fluctuations in prices resulting from seasonal variations or other causes. Having regard to the high pitch of the assessment, the question naturally arises whether such a transfer was wise, or even possible; the answer is found in certain occurrences recorded after the transfer was made. In the 43rd year we are told (Akbarnama, iii. 747), that, in consequence of Akbar's prolonged residence at Lahore, and the resulting rise in local prices, the revenue-Demand in this region had been increased by 20 per cent.; on his departure prices fell, and the increase was discontinued by his orders. In this case, the State resumed at least a portion of the benefit which the system secured to the peasants; it is the only case I have found, but the silence of the chronicles in such matters is by no means conclusive.

On the other hand, there is a striking series of cases where the State was forced to resume a portion of the burden it had shifted. Between the 30th and the 35th regnal years, Northern India was threatened with disaster[1] from a series of exceptionally favourable seasons. In the circumstances of the time there was no adequate market for the surplus produce, prices inevitably fell heavily, and producers who could not realise their stocks had difficulties in paying the revenue. Substantial reductions were made in the Demand in three provinces, Allahabad, Awadh, and Delhi, in the 30th year and again in the 31st; the same three provinces, along with Agra, received further remissions in the 33rd year, and portions of them again in the 35th. There is no record of any remission of revenue for the opposite cause of unfavourable seasons, though we know[2] that five years later famine was raging in this tract; the explanation is, I think, to be found in the fact that the system in force provided for automatic remissions in case of crop-failure,

[1] Akbarnama, iii. 463, 494, 533, 577.

[2] Elliot, vi. 193. For remissions on account of crop-failure, see Ain, i. 288.

and consequently there would be no record of any special orders on the subject. In general terms then, we may say that in practice the State continued to take some share in the benefits and the burdens which in theory had been entirely shifted to the peasant.

Such is my reading of the history of assessment in the older provinces during this reign. A uniform set of grain-rates per bigha, valued first at uniform, and then at local, prices, gave way to local grain-rates valued at local prices; and, when commutation broke down, schedules of cash-rates were fixed on the basis of past experience, which lasted, so far as we know, for the remainder of the reign. The theoretical basis of the revenue-Demand, one-third of the average produce, remained intact; the changes made were matters of administration, determining only the methods by which the Demand was calculated. It should, however, be added that our knowledge of the last decade of Akbar's reign is imperfect. The historical account in the Ain stops abruptly at the 24th year; the Akbarnama, which carries the story further, becomes less detailed after the 43rd, when its author was sent on service to the Deccan, and breaks off in the 46th year, when he was murdered; while the "completion" of the work, prepared by a later writer, is very concise and pays no attention to agrarian topics. It is possible then that definite changes may have been made during this period, or else, what I think is more probable, that a gradual evolution may have been in progress, but on these points speculation is useless.

One important question remains : Did these assessment rates apply to the whole area of the provinces, Assigned as well as Reserved, or only to the portion administered directly by the Revenue Ministry? We have seen in the last chapter that under the Lodi dynasty assignees had in practice entire freedom in regard to assessment; I have found nothing to show whether this freedom lasted into Akbar's reign, or had been curtailed under Sher Shah. It is clear, however, that the second, or qanungo-rates, directly affected assignees, because their complaints about delay in commutation are specifically recorded (Ain, i. 348); and a passage in the Akbarnama (iii, 381) makes it quite

plain that the ten-year rates were equally binding on assignees and on official collectors. For the greater portion then of the reign, if not for the whole, the sanctioned assessment-rates were binding on the whole country to which they applied, with the exception—probable, though not recorded—of those tracts for which Chiefs paid a definite tribute instead of a varying annual revenue.

This does not necessarily mean that every assignee complied, in all its details, with the schedule in force. An ordinary man, intent only on realising the Income to which he was entitled, and, if possible, a little more, would naturally follow the line of least resistance, and fall in with any local customs he might find in operation. The true implication is, I think, that the sanctioned assessment-rates set the standard of Demand throughout the whole country. An assignee would not in ordinary circumstances be content with a lower Income than they would yield; he might try to collect something more, but activity in this direction would be controlled by the fear of anything like a scandal. Assignees might, as we shall see, be called on to refund any sums which they were known to have collected in excess of their sanctioned Income, and any considerable excess would set informers and enemies to work; while the Emperor was accessible to complaints, and Akbar would probably have taken serious notice of any open disregard of his orders in regard to assessment. The conditions of the period then suggest that peasants under an assignee would ordinarily pay as much as, but not much more than, peasants in the Reserved areas.

3. THE ASSIGNMENTS

We have just seen that in one important feature the Assignment-system in force under Akbar differed from that which had prevailed earlier in the century, and this fact may serve as a warning against any assumption that its nature remained unchanged throughout the period of Moslem rule. During the Mogul period most of the incidents of the system are readily ascertainable, and their study is essential, because, almost throughout the period,

the great bulk of the Empire, sometimes seven-eighths of the whole, was in the hands of assignees.

As the designation implies, the essence of the system was to set aside particular items of recurring revenue to meet particular items of recurring expenditure, usually, but not invariably, the salaries and expenses of the Imperial Service. In the Mogul period, it is correct to speak of a Service, and not of Services, because at this time there was practically no differentiation in regard to functions. Once appointed, an officer's time was entirely at the Emperor's disposal ; he might be employed either on military duties or in civil administration ; and, if he had no specific employment, he was required to remain in attendance at Court, unless he obtained permission to go elsewhere. In addition to this general obligation of service, he was under the liability to maintain at his own cost a definite force of cavalry available at all times for the Emperor's needs ; and an officer who did this was entitled to receive an Income, defined exactly in money, corresponding to his rank. Some officers received also recurring sums by way of reward,[1] that is to say, an addition to their Income with no corresponding liability for expenditure. An officer's Income, including any reward he might receive, was thus always defined in money, but the actual payment might be made either in cash from the treasury, or by assignment of the revenue of a specified area, or partly in one way and partly in the other.

Up to the end of the seventeenth century, with the exception of one short period, payment by assignment was the rule of the Mogul Empire, and payment from the treasury was exceptional. A few Assignments, which carried special administrative jurisdiction, were allocated by the Emperor's personal order ; thus a district surrounding a fort like Ranthambhor or Kalinjar usually went with the command of the fortress, and some historic areas, such as Kanauj or Jaunpur, were treated in the same way ; but, in the ordinary procedure, allocation was the work of the Revenue Ministry. The Emperor made an appointment or

[1] *Inam*. The rewards we read of were usually enjoyed by high officers, a term which includes the Princes and other members of the Imperial family; ladies, in particular, normally received at least a portion of their Income in the form of reward.

promotion, or granted a reward, and the order went to the Ministry to be carried out.[1] This business was certainly heavy. The chronicles show the frequency of appointments and promotions, and each order would have to be followed by the allocation of an appropriate Assignment ; while each transfer might involve a series of adjustments, because an officer who was moved from, say, Lahore to Patna, would often prefer, or might on occasion be required, to exchange his Assignment in the Punjab for one in Bihar.

I have not found precise details of the internal organisation of the Ministry in Akbar's time, but some incidental references show that then, as in the next century, it consisted of two main branches, one of which managed the Reserved districts, while the other, known as the Salary Office, handled all questions regarding Assignments. The work in the latter branch can be readily visualised. An order comes to provide for a particular officer an Assignment yielding, say, a kror of dams, the unit in terms of which salaries and rewards were defined ; the records must be searched to find vacant districts or parganas estimated to yield just this Income, and no more ; existing arrangements may have to be disturbed in order to provide it ; and everyone concerned, not merely the new assignee, but existing assignees who either want a change or want to be let alone, will be busy making interest, and, as we shall see, sometimes offering bribes, in order to secure their objects.[2] In dealing with such cases, the essential record was an estimate of the Income which an assignee could reasonably expect to obtain from a district or pargana, and the story to be told in this section relates mainly to the vicissitudes of this record, for which, as has been explained in Chapter II, I have selected the term Valuation.

[1] The procedure is detailed in Ain, i. 193; but this chapter relates wholly to procedure in the military department, where the orders were drawn up, and does not go into the manner in which the Revenue Ministry handled them, a matter which has to be deduced from scattered passages.

[2] Bayazid, an old collector, tells us (f. 154) how, when Akbar granted him a pargana by way of pension, he went to the Ministry to settle details, and quarelled over them with Raja Todar Mal, who was then in charge of the work. Hawkins (*Early Travels*, p. 114) describes the constant changes in assignments in his time, so that everything depended on how a man was "befriended of the Vizir," *i.e.* the head of the Revenue Ministry; probably things were worse in his time than under Akbar, but in essentials it was the same system.

We are not told how, when, or on what basis, the first Valuation was made. We know only that it is described as *raqami*, a term of doubtful significance, that it was in use in the early years of Akbar's reign, and that it had to be discarded in discreditable circumstances.[1] My reading of the official records is that at first, under the regency of Bairam Khan, Assignments were made too lavishly, and the small Empire could not provide the necessary Income; the Revenue Ministry met the difficulty by writing up the Valuation arbitrarily, so that the assignee of, say, a kror of dams would get a district stated on paper to yield that sum, but in fact yielding less. In such circumstances, the corruption which we are told supervened was obviously inevitable. The figures in the Valuation had become irrelevant; each assignee was concerned to get the largest possible real Income; and, while his claim might be formally satisfied, the amount of his real Income would depend solely on the favour of the Ministry, which might offer him a choice of two districts, both valued on paper at the same figure, but one yielding only a half, while the other yielded three-quarters, of the nominal sum.

This Valuation was consequently discredited, and in the 11th regnal year Akbar ordered a new one to be prepared. The method of its preparation is not described; it was based on a calculation of the actual yield, but was apparently adjusted in some way, for the figures finally adopted were close to, but not identical with, the actual yield as calculated. The matter is not of great importance because this second Valuation did not last for long. It is clear from the account in the Akbarnama (iii. 117), that the change of record was not accompanied by reform in the working of the Ministry; the clerks used to increase the figures without measure, and used to "open the hand of corruption" in increasing and decreasing them; each man did as he liked for his own objects; and the result was a serious threat to the morale of the Imperial Service, which became permeated with discontent.

Akbar evidently took a very serious view of the situation, for in the 18th regnal year he decided (iii. 69) on drastic

[1] The passages bearing on this topic are examined in Appendix E.

action, to put the bulk of his Service on cash salaries, and take the northern provinces under direct administration. The decision was welcomed, or possibly inspired, by Raja Todar Mal, but it was opposed by his superior officer, Muzaffar Khan, and action was delayed until the next year, when the latter officer had fallen out of favour. In the 19th year, a large staff of collectors was appointed (iii. 117), and posted to circles formed for the purpose; the working of this large administrative enterprise will be examined in the next section, and for the present it must suffice to say that, so far as our information goes, it was carried on for five years, and then abandoned. Direct management extended to what may be called the old provinces,[1] Multan and Lahore, Delhi and Agra, Awadh and Allahabad, and also to Ajmer and Malawa; but there is no reason to suppose that it was applied to the territories of, at least, the more important Chiefs, and it is probable that the two last-named provinces, where such Chiefs abounded, were not very greatly affected.

I have found in the chronicles only three references to the existence of Assignments during the period in question in the regions taken under direct administration. Two of these,[2] Chunar and Ranthambhor, were administrative charges with an Assignment attached, and cannot be regarded as indicating a general departure from the principle of direct administration; the third is a reference to certain Rajputs who had been settled, apparently for political reasons, on Assignments in the Punjab, which they retained until the 23rd year, and it also may fairly be regarded as a special case, so that we may infer that, from the 19th to the 24th year, Assignments were not made in this tract in the ordinary course, and consequently there was no need for a Valuation.

In the latter year a new Valuation was drawn up, based on the facts of recent experience. According to my reading of the obscure passages[3] in the authorities, an average was

[1] It is convenient, but not strictly correct, to speak of provinces at this period. The organisation of the Empire in provinces dates only from the 24th regnal year (Akbarnama, iii. 282).

[2] Akbarnama, iii. 158, for Chunar, iii. 210, for Ranthambhor, iii. 248, for the Punjab.

[3] The passages are discussed in Appendix E.

struck of the Demand for ten years, the period during which the qanungo-rates had been in force, and the figures were then raised to take account of the improvements in cropping which had been established during the period; but, whatever the detailed procedure may have been, the fact that a new Valuation was prepared suggests strongly that by this time it had been decided to revert to the practice of Assignment, and this suggestion seems to me to be established definitely by the references to Assignments in these provinces during the next decade. This evidence may be summarised as follows, the references given being to the third Volume of the text of the Akbarnama.

At the end of the twenty-fourth year, orders were issued (287) to certain named persons, *and the other assignees*, of the provinces of Allahabad and Awadh.

In the twenty-fifth year, orders were issued to *the assignees* of Malwa (314), and Ajmer (318); while there is a reference (345) to *the other assignees* in Lahore.

In the twenty-sixth year we read (348, 350) of *two assignments* in Lahore, of *various assignees* (370) at Bahraich, in Awadh, and (372) of some *other assignees* in Lahore.

In the twenty-seventh year we hear (397) of *an assignment* in Delhi; and in the twenty-eighth, of orders (398) to *various assignees* in Awadh and Allahabad; of *the assignee* (415) of Kalpi, in Agra; and (422) *the assignee* of Raisin, in Malwa.

In the thirtieth year, general orders issued (464-5) that *all assignees in the North* should prepare for the expedition to the Deccan.

In the thirty-first year, we read (489) of *an assignment* in Malwa, and (512) of one in Ajmer.

In the thirty-second year, we read (525) of *assignments* in Lahore, and in the thirty-fourth year (536) of Multan—apparently the whole province—being given *in assignments*.

Further, in the records of remissions of revenue, which have already been discussed, the sums remitted in the Reserved areas of Allahabad, Awadh, Agra, Delhi and Lahore are set out, with the observation (533) that those made *by the assignees* can be estimated from these data.

While then there is no formal record of a change of policy, the evidence shows definitely that after the 24th year Assignments again became common in all the provinces where the system had been abandoned; and it may be added that the orders issued by Jahangir on his accession (Tuzuk. 4) leave no room for doubt that by that time much of the

Empire was in the hands of assignees. Some previous writers on the subject (including myself) have interpreted the decision taken by Akbar in the 18th year as showing that he disliked the Assignment-system, and determined to do without it; but, the facts summarised above render this interpretation improbable. It is possible that, for the time being, he was disgusted with the system, and tried to find an alternative, but, if so, five years' experience of the alternative sufficed to convince him; it is, I think, more probable that his action amounted only to a suspension of the system until adequate data could be collected for a really serviceable Valuation, and that he restored it as soon as the necessary experience had been gained. Whatever view[1] may be taken on this question, the fact remains that, from the 25th year onward, the Assignment again became a normal feature of the agrarian system of the Empire as a whole, and it retained this position until the end of the seventeenth century.

It has been said above that an assignee was permitted to realise only his sanctioned Income, and was required to account to the treasury for any sums which he might collect in excess. I have not, however, found any important references to this topic during Akbar's reign, and discussion of it may be postponed until a later period, when the evidence is more extensive. It is possible that the practice of recovery developed gradually as an alternative to frequent revisions of the Valuation, but on this point I have found no information; all that can be said is that there is no subsequent record of any general re-Valuation such as took place in the 24th year.

Before leaving the subject, a few words may be said regarding the distinction between service Assignments (including rewards), and the various Grants and endowments which in the records of the period are grouped under the term *suyurghal*. In practice, the distinction was one

[1] The passage in the Akbarnama (iii. 117) which described the emergency goes on to say that, first, the Emperor took the country under direct administration. The word "first" (*nukhustin*) may have been intended to denote that the measure was merely a preliminary to further action, but I can find no "second" in the context.

mainly of procedure. The Emperor authorised Grants, in cash or in land, at his pleasure, just as he made appointments or promotions; but in the former case his orders were carried out, not by the Revenue Ministry, but by the high officer of State designated Sadr. The administration of this department has a chequered history[1] into which it is unnecessary to enter; periods of liberality, or even prodigality, were punctuated by spasms of economy, but on the whole the amount of revenue which was alienated in this way was substantial. The tenure of such Grants can be described only as "during pleasure"; many of them were intended to last for a life, or for more lives than one, but a change of policy, or even of *personnel*, might in practice be followed by annulment or drastic reduction, as the passages quoted by Blochmann show.

A further distinction in the procedure was that, while Assignments were made in terms of Income, Grants of land were made commonly in terms of area. A claimant was granted so many bighas of land in a specified locality, and the local officials were then directed to demarcate the land, and put him in possession. The procedure in force at this period can be studied in a series of documents[2] which have been preserved in a Parsi family in Gujarat. In some of these documents the Grant is strictly personal, while others are drawn in favour of the grantee "with his children," a phrase which is open to more than one interpretation, but which certainly indicates a grant for two lives at least. One interesting detail which emerges from these documents is the fact that, between the 40th and 48th regnal years, Akbar had issued a general order reducing by one-half all the Grants of land for maintenance existing in the province of Gujarat, action which furnishes definite proof of the conclusion expressed above that the tenure was strictly "during pleasure"; while the instances of confirmations or renewals,

[1] The procedure is described in Ain, i. 198, and the history summarised in Blochmann's note (i. 270 ff.) on his translation of the chapter. Allowances in cash were at this period designated *wazifa*, while Grants of land were *milk* or *madad-i ma'ash*.

[2] For these documents see S. H. Hodivala, *Studies in Parsi History*, 167 ff.; J. J. Modi, *The Parsees at the Court of Akbar*, J.R.A.S. (Bombay), 1902, pp. 69 ff.; and *A Farman of Emperor Jahangir*, *idem*, 1920, pp. 419 ff.

and the language addressed in the orders to local officials, suggest that, in practice, grantees were subject to interference by subordinate authorities also.

While, however, a Grant might be summarily withdrawn or modified, there is reason to think that its conferment created in the mind of the recipient some sort of expectation that he and his family would continue to benefit by the liberality of the State. Apart from the published documents which have been quoted above, I have heard of quite a number of others, in libraries or in private hands, the survival of which suggests that they were considered to be worth keeping. Such documents cannot be regarded as title-deeds to a particular area, or to a stated income; but they constitute evidence that at some period in the past the family possessing them had benefited by the King's favour, and in the Moslem period that fact probably counted for something when a new request was put forward.

4. THE COLLECTORS

The account given in the last section of the appointment of collectors throughout the northern provinces follows the official version, which, in my opinion, is correct as far as it goes, but is in some respects incomplete. In this section I propose to examine the account contained in the chronicle written by Abdul Qadir Badauni, which at first sight conflicts seriously with Abul Fazl's story. In considering Badauni's version, it mut be remembered that he wrote as a disappointed man, for he had not received the preferment he expected, while his religious feelings were outraged by Akbar's attitude towards Islam; he was therefore definitely on the opposition side. I should myself be inclined to describe his chronicle as reminiscences, or even journalism, rather than history. He selected his topics less for their intrinsic importance than for their interest to himself; he did not, so far as I can judge, indulge in romance; but he presented the facts he selected, as coloured by his personal feelings or prejudices, in bitter epigrammatic language which presumably gave him satisfaction, but which

must not be taken too literally. His account of the collectors is a brief review of a somewhat lengthy story; he did not trouble to set out the dates, but concentrated, as I read it, on the points which seemed to him of interest. The following[1] is the portion which concerns us.

In this year [nineteenth regnal], a new idea reached the heart for extending the cultivation of the country and improving the condition of the peasants. The parganas of the empire, dry or irrigated, in towns or hills, in deserts or jungles, by rivers, reservoirs, or wells, were all to be measured.. so that in the course of three years all the waste land should be cultivated and the treasury be benefited....

Eventually these regulations were not properly observed. A great portion of the country was laid waste through the rapacity of the collectors, the wives and children of the peasants were sold and scattered abroad, and everything was thrown into confusion.

But the collectors were brought to account [*muhasaba*] by Raja Todar Mal, and many good men died from the severe beatings which were administered, and from the tortures of the rack and pincers. So many died from protracted confinement in the prisons of the revenue anthorities that there was no need of executioner or swordsman, and no one cared to find them graves or graveclothes.

These paragraphs furnish a good illustration of Badauni's methods of work. The opening sentences are based on Nizamuddin Ahmad's Tabaqat-i Akbari, which he used as the foundation of his chronicle, but the wording is heightened almost to the point of distortion; and he then breaks the chronological sequence of his narrative to record the rest of the story, which is not alluded to in the earlier chronicle. The points which require our attention are three, the motive for the appointment of collectors, their subsequent misconduct, and Todar Mal's drastic measures of audit.

As regards motive, Badauni represents that the object of direct administration was to extend cultivation, benefit the peasants, and increase the revenue; the official version is, as we have seen, that the object was to remove the causes of the dissatisfaction which was ruining the morale of the

[1] Badauni, ii. 189. I follow generally Lowe's translation, as amended in the errata-list. For the opening clause, Lowe gives "a new idea came into his head," but there is no person in the text to whom "his" can refer, and I take the phrase to be impersonal, and contemptuous.

Imperial Service. The passage in the Tabaqat-i Akbari on which Badauni's account is based runs as follows:

"Since much of the land of Hindustan was uncultivated and fallow, and was capable of being cultivated in the first year, to the advantage and profit alike of peasants and the Revenue Minister, the Emperor (compliments) after careful consideration ordered that the area of the parganas of the Empire should be examined, and that the extent of land which, after cultivation, would yield one kror of tankas should be separated off, and entrusted to an official (compliments). That official was to be designated Krori, and sent to the pargana with a clerk and a treasurer, so that by his efforts and exertions the uncultivated land should be brought under cultivation, and the correct Demand realised."[1]

We have thus two unofficial chronicles in conflict with the official version. Now the motive alleged by Nizamuddin Ahmad and Badauni is in itself creditable, and, what is more to the point, would have been regarded as highly creditable in official circles in Akbar's reign; why then should it be ignored in an official, and ordinarily eulogistic, record, which, in place of it, reveals discreditable facts, for inability to secure the maintenance of an honest Valuation is certainly not creditable to the administration concerned? It seems to me that in such a case we are bound to accept the official, and less creditable, version, in the sense that the direct cause of the change was, in fact, Akbar's determination to put the remuneration of the Imperial Service on a more satisfactory basis; but to take this view is not to charge the unofficial writers with deliberately inventing a more creditable motive. What I suggest is that, while Akbar had his own motive, the Revenue Ministry, possibly with his concurrence, introduced another.

It is easy to realise what the change must have meant from the departmental standpoint. The Ministry had hitherto been in a position to give effect to the traditional policy of agricultural development only in the relatively

[1] My rendering of this passage is based on Or. 2274. f. 203, checked by Add. 6543, f 238, and RAS 46 (Morley), f. 262. Add. 6543 is defective in the opening sentence, the copyist having passed from the first to the second appearance of the word "cultivated." RAS 46 has many verbal blunders, but agrees generally. The version given in Elliot, v. 383, is substantially different; the MSS. on which it is based are not specified, and consequently I have been unable to examine the differences in detail.

small areas which were directly under its charge ; the new order gave scope for its activities over the whole of Northern India from Multan to Allahabad ; and it is quite safe to assume that the traditional policy was impressed on the small army of collectors recruited at this time, and probably in terms sufficiently rhetorical to provoke Badauni's sneers.

Again, we can scarcely suppose that the Ministry would be anxious to give publicity to the discreditable facts placed on record in the Akbarnama ; the obvious course for it was to emphasise the secondary, and creditable, motive, and to ignore the other. The reasons for reticence no longer existed when the Akbarnama was being written, because the events in question had passed into history ; but at the moment the most prudent course would be to say nothing in public about them, but to give currency to the version which the unofficial chroniclers have preserved.

It is not necessary to assume that in taking this course the Ministry acted independently, for Akbar himself may have thought it wiser to make public a version which did not accurately represent his real motives. In any case, it is easy to see how the unofficial account could have gained currency; while it is to my mind quite impossible to suppose that Abul Fazl invented the discreditable version which appears in the Akbarnama.

As regards the subsequent events, the silence of the official record regarding past scandals, of no particular importance from the writer's standpoint, is too natural to require explanation ; but, as a matter of fact, two documents preserved in the Akbarnama seem to me to afford ample, though indirect, confirmation of Badauni's story, in that they disclose, firstly, gross oppression by the collectors, and, secondly, a ferocity in audit which was followed by the practical supersession of Raja Todar Mal. These documents are difficult, as well as important ; and, in order to understand them, it is necessary to enter into some details regarding the Raja's position in the administration.

To begin with, we must recall the concurrent tradition that Todar Mal joined to honesty and great capacity the

qualities of obstinacy, ill-temper, and vindictiveness[1]; and we must also remember that, apart from his eminence as revenue administrator, he was a consistently successful Commander in the field. As such, he was frequently called away from the Ministry for military duty, and between the 19th and 26th years he had very little to do with its activities. In the 18th year he was sent to Bihar, and then to Bengal. A temporary arrangement was made at this time, under which his staff in the Ministry was not to be changed, and his policy was to be carried out ; so we may infer that he was in fact responsible for the original collectors, though he was not actually in charge at the time of their appointment. He returned to the Ministry in the 20th year, but was almost immediately sent back to Bengal, and the charge of the Ministry then fell to Khwaja Shah Mansur. From Bengal the Raja went to Gujarat, and then, in the 22nd year, we find him and Shah Mansur working together in the Ministry; but there was clearly friction, and Muzaffar Khan, the former Chief Minister, was recalled to Court, apparently to moderate between them, for they were ordered to work "in consultation with" him. Next year Todar Mal went on special duty to the Punjab, and, when Muzaffar Khan left Court, Shah Mansur remained sole Revenue Minister, in which capacity he was serving in the 24th year ; Akbar had intended that the reforms of that year should be introduced by the two Ministers jointly, but, again, he found it necessary to send Todar Mal to Bengal, where he remained until the 26th year.

During this interval a bitter quarrel broke out between the Raja and Shah Mansur, and the latter was imprisoned pending enquiry into his conduct. He was reinstated shortly afterwards ; but, in the last days of the 25th year, he was executed on a charge of treasonable correspondence with the enemy. Next year Todar Mal returned to the Ministry, and in the 27th year reached the zenith of his career, being practically Chief Minister of the Empire. While holding this position, he wrote the first of the two documents which we have to examine, a set of proposals

[1] Akbarnama, iii. 861, Maasirulumra, ii. 123 ff. The summary which follows of Todar Mal's employment is based on Akbarnama, iii. 80, 158, 193, 207, 214, 215 243, 250, 265, 282, 316, 327, 372, 331, 403, and 457.

for removing defects in the local revenue administration, which were duly sanctioned by the Emperor. During the next year his responsibility was reduced to purely revenue matters, and, not long after, he was for a time practically superseded, being directed to work "in consultation with" Fathulla Shirazi, a foreigner whom Akbar had invited to his Court from Bijapur, and who was given the temporary appointment of "Imperial Commissioner" (*Amin-ul mulk*), with orders to wind up old cases which had been pending in the Ministry from the time of Muzaffar Khan, that is to say, since about the 23rd year. The Imperial Commissioner produced the second document, and his proposals were sanctioned in the 30th year.

We may say then that from the 21st to the 25th year the real Revenue Minister was Shah Mansur. Now Badauni's account suggests that direct administration made a good start, and then failed, for he says that *eventually* the regulations were not properly observed; we may therefore attribute the breakdown to Shah Mansur's term of office. When Todar Mal resumed effective charge of the Ministry, he tried to put things right; and, if we read his proposals, which are given *verbatim* in the Akbarnama (iii. 331), as practical measures intended to remove definite defects, it is easy to see what the defects were. Local officials had varied the sanctioned assessment-rates, and had demanded too much from the peasants; the collector's clerks, in collusion with the village headmen, had oppressed the peasants; oppression in connection with the annual measurements had resulted in progressive contraction of cultivation; advances to peasants had been given without adequate security; there had been frauds in connection with the records of calamities; there had been many irregularities in making and crediting collections; there had been no effective control over the local officials. Between this indictment, which rests on the authority of Raja Todar Mal, and Badauni's rhetorical description of maladministration, there is no essential difference; it is only a short step from a progressive decline in cultivation, to "a great deal of the country being laid waste"; oppressive over-demand and fraud in regard to collection

would lead naturally to the sale of wives and children, which was a recognised process for realising arrears; and, speaking generally, Badauni's account is confirmed in essentials by the official record.

Turning to his description of Todar Mal's severity, it is to my mind impossible to read the appointment of the Imperial Commissioner in any other sense than as showing that Akbar thought the Raja had gone too far. Todar Mal's proceedings, as described by Badauni, were obviously a revival of the old, ferocious, process of audit called *muhasaba*, which we have seen in operation in the fourteenth century. The process was not yet obsolete, for the same writer tells us (ii. 280) that in Bengal Muzaffar Khan "practised *muhasaba* according to the ancient custom"; and it is perhaps significant that some of the cases which the Commissioner was appointed to settle dated from the time when that officer was working in the Revenue Ministry. These proceedings had clearly been dragging on for years, collectors being brought to account with repeated floggings and tortures in the old style, till Akbar decided to bring the matter to a close.

This view is entirely borne out by the nature of the Commissioner's proposals. The document is exceedingly obscure, dealing, as it does, with minute details of the relations between the Ministry and the local staff; but its general purport is correctly represented in the statement that it was designed to make the position of a collector tolerable. We may infer from its terms that, in the practice of the period, each individual collector was held personally responsible for the revenue assessed on his charge; but that the "check on receipts," to use the modern administrative phrase, was occasional rather than continuous. That is to say, a collector was left for some time with an open account, which was audited, at the Ministry and not locally, on the occasion of his removal or transfer, or else when he was called to headquarters for the purpose; he had then to satisfy the auditors that he had collected and paid to the treasury all that was due, or, failing that, to make good the sum for which he could not account satisfactorily.

Reading the Commissioner's report in the light of this

practice, and arguing from his recommendations back to the position he was trying to improve, we reach the state of things depicted in the following summary.[1]

1. The auditors had been careless and had neglected orders; they had guessed, instead of relying on actual figures; and had shown excessive balances. Consequently, the cunning had prospered, while the honest had suffered; and collectors who could have settled a small balance were frightened by the size of the inflated demand.

2. The rule that the accounts should be based on a list of the receipts given to peasants had been ignored, and unsupported statements of collections had been corruptly accepted.

3. The demands made on the collectors had been based on standard figures, or hastily compiled data, and not on the facts.

4. Excess collections had not been properly treated (the details of this clause are obscure).

5. The auditors had not allowed for the inevitable fluctuations of agriculture, in consequence of which some villages are improving while others are deteriorating; they had held collectors responsible for all deterioration, but had not credited them with improvement. The proper course was to look at the result as a whole.

6. A quarter of the collector's pay had been kept in deposit against possible arrears, and this had been withheld indiscriminately, when it should have been withheld only in cases of culpable negligence.

7. The collectors had not been allowed the staff they required, or their pay for time spent on duty after the issue of an order of removal, or for the time of their attendance at audit.

8. The collectors had been harried by futile correspondence.

I have omitted from this summary a few clauses which refer to various matters affecting the local administration, but those which I have summarised appear to me to furnish definite proof that the methods of audit which the Commissioner found in operation had been such as to make an honest collector's position intolerable; and it must be remembered that some of the cases he investigated had been dragging on for years. The essence of the report is that collectors had been held liable for far more than was really due from them; and, with an obstinate and vindictive Minister like Todar Mal, dealing with the staff employed by his bitter enemy, there is no difficulty in believing that

[1] This summary is based on the text given in Akbarnama, iii. 874 ff., and differs in some paragraphs from Mr. Beveridge's version.

Badauni's account, while it may be exaggerated in detail, is founded on substantial facts. The author of the Akbarnama closes his description of the matter with the observation that the old accounts were thus settled, and that, through the efforts of the just and sagacious Imperial Commissioner, the Ministry became a "house of delight": we can safely infer that that description did not apply to it before the Commissioner's reform.[1]

On the whole then it seems to me that Badauni's account can safely be accepted as supplementing the official record in this matter, but a few words must be added on the literary problem presented by the two documents we have been considering. Why are they in the Akbarnama at all? Their proper place was in the Ain, following the chapter on the "Ten-Year-period," which breaks off so abruptly. As the text of the Ain stands, Akbar took no action worthy of record in revenue matters between the 24th and the 40th year; yet the author of the Akbarnama considered the action embodied in these documents to be so important that he departed from his usual practice and inserted them *in extenso*. I can find no other instance of lengthy and technical departmental records being given in the Akbarnama in full, and from the literary standpoint, which was the standpoint of the author, they are a gross disfigurement on his work; why did he so disfigure it, when he could so easily have secured their insertion in the Ain? I know of no evidence bearing on the question: there must have been some strong motive at work, but its nature is a matter for conjecture. My own guess is this. The draft of the Ain contained a full account of the transactions we have been considering in this section, including the two documents: Abul Fazl in editing the draft cut this portion out as undesirable, but subsequently, when the canon of the Ain had been closed, he decided, or else Akbar ordered, that these important documents ought to be preserved; and he inserted them in the third volume of the Akbarnama,

[1] Bayazid (f. 154) gives us an interesting glimpse of Fathulla's work in the Ministry at this time. As has been mentioned in a previous note, Todar Mal lost his temper with Bayazid in an argument over the latter's pargana. After the quarrel had gone on for some days, Fathulla intervened, and referred the matter to Akbar, who decided in Bayazid's favour.

which was still in process of compilation, and was in fact incomplete at the time of his death. This is a mere guess, arising out of the facts, but not established by them; my only justification for offering it is that the problem must present itself to any student of the subject.

With the completion of the Imperial Commissioner's work, we reach a period of apparent stability in the revenue administration, a period which, if we may rely on the silence of the authorities, continued to the close of Akbar's reign. The changes made in the 24th year, the introduction of assessment-rates fixed in the money, and the reversion to the practice of granting Assignments, constituted the foundations; but the need still existed for reforming procedure, both in the districts and in the Ministry, so far as concerned those portions of the northern provinces which were retained under direct administration. The district procedure was reformed by Todar Mal, that of the Ministry by Fathulla Shirazi, and, in order to complete this section, it is necessary only to refer to some changes subsequently made in the organisation of the Ministry. In the 34th year Todar Mal died; two years later, the work of the Reserved areas was distributed on a territorial basis among four officers working at headquarters under the Minister; and in the 40th year a more important change[1] was carried out, a separate Diwan being posted to each province, to work directly under the Revenue Minister's orders. I take this to mark the beginning of the administrative dyarchy, Diwani and Faujdari, which is so familiar a feature of the next two centuries. Henceforward the revenue administration in each province was conducted under the orders of the Revenue Minister, and independently of the officers charged with the general administration. Up to this year the provincial Diwan had been an officer of the Viceroy's staff; for the future he was to be an officer on the staff of an Imperial department.

[1] Akbarnama, iii. 605, 670. I had not come across this latter passage when I suggested (J.R.A.S., 1922, p. 22) that the change might date from the reign of Jahangir.

5. THE WORKING OF REGULATION SYSTEM

The working of Akbar's revenue system in what appears to be its final form, and which may be called the Regulation system, must be studied in those chapters[1] of the Ain which prescribe the duties of the collector and his clerk. These chapters belong to a group which can be read only as containing the working orders for various officers in force at the time when the Ain was compiled. They are not essays in history, or descriptions of a system, but, alike in form and in content, they are definitely orders, assuming a knowledge of the system, and prescribing the manner in which it is to be worked. As such, we may safely take them as the orders actually in force; some points in them indicate that Todar Mal's proposals of the 27th year had been incorporated, with later modifications, in detail; other provisions suggest a gradual development by way of piecemeal amendment, such as is familiar in codes of administrative practice at the present day; and there is no room for doubt as to their nature and purpose.

The chapters in this group show some curious contrasts. In the case of the Viceroy of a province, stress is laid rather on general conduct than on specific duties, and a high ideal is presented in rhetorical language, fortified with apposite quotations, from the poets; but, as we go down the scale, the rhetoric disappears, and details of specific duties become prominent, till we reach the local treasurer, the chapter relating to whom can be compared only to a portion of the Civil Account Code used in the British period. Confining our attention to the chapters dealing with the collector and his clerk, it is obvious, in the first place, that their complete application extended only to the areas Reserved for direct administration; as we have seen in an earlier section, the Assignment system had by this time been restored in the north, and, while the sanctioned schedules of assessment-rates were binding on assignees, there is nothing to suggest that any attempt was made to enforce on them uniformity of procedure in detail. So far as I

[1] Ain, i. 285—288. These chapters must be read together, the details in the latter supplementing the more general provisions of the former.

know, there is no record showing the extent of the Reserved areas at this period, or the number of collectors employed, and all that can be said is that the rules applied directly only to a portion, and probably a small portion, of the Empire, though we may conjecture that indirectly they may have set a standard of procedure for the area in the hands of assignees.

In the next place, it is important to realise that each of these chapters has a definite structure, dealing successively with different branches of the work, so that each separate provision must not be read as applying indiscriminately in all cases. The latter course would land us in various contradictions, a thing being allowed in one place, and prohibited in another ; but, if due attention is paid to the context, these apparent contradictions disappear, and we find a carefully drafted code of practice, tedious in point of detail, and omitting much that we should like to know, but, taken as a whole, intelligible, and obviously workable by officers familiar with the system and with the technical language used in the department.

The environment in which the code was intended to operate is not formally described, but we can discern in its provisions the elements of a village such as is familiar in later periods, a number of peasants each in separate possession of his holding, with one or more headmen occupying a privileged position, and with an accountant, the *patwari*, keeping records of cultivation, assessment, and collections, records which were available to the administration, but belonged to the village, and not, as now, to the State. The collector's attitude towards the peasants is defined in precise terms. He was to be the peasants' friend, and as such was to be accessible to them without intermediaries. He was to treat each peasant as an individual ; and, in order to be able to do this, he was required to familiarise himself with agriculture in its local aspects. He was required also to recognise the importance of the headmen in developing the village as a productive unit, and, in cases where their efforts were successful, he was to allow them a share in the results, the proportion of 2½ per cent., calculated on the cultivated area, being suggested as

appropriate ; but he was prohibited from coming to terms with them for a revenue-Demand assessed on the village as a whole, a course which was condemned as leading to inefficiency and oppression. The headman in fact was useful, but he was not to be given too much authority.

What I have spoken of as the traditional policy of development is given a prominent place. It was the collector's duty to secure extension of cultivation, and improvement in cropping ; the general idea was that he should offer liberal terms to peasants to induce them to increase production, and should hold them firmly to their engagements when once engagements had been made. In order to secure improved cropping, he was authorised to reduce the sanctioned assessment-rates on high-grade crops ; while, for extension of cultivation, he was empowered to depart from the regulation system of assessment by Measurement, and agree to practically whatever the peasants wanted, to either Sharing or Group-assessment, and to payment in either cash or kind. It is somewhat remarkable that there is no specific reference to sinking wells, a topic which is prominent in some later documents of a similar type ; provision is made for advances of capital to needy peasants, and presumably this would cover loans for wells, but the omission is nevertheless noteworthy.

The provision that Group-assessment, which was prohibited for the village as a whole, might be sanctioned in the special case of land newly brought under cultivation, carries us back to one of the proposals made by Raja Todar Mal in the 27th regnal year. Interpreted strictly, the accepted method of assessment involved the measurement in each season of every field under crop, and, in cases where the fields were well defined and under continuous cultivation, this must have meant much repetition of labour, and much harassment of busy peasants. The Raja wrote[1] with reference to the progressive decline of cultivation in the Reserved districts: "if the cultivated land is once measured, the capacity of the peasants being increased yearly, a partial Group-assessment should be sanctioned." I take this to mean that the actual size of the defined fields in regular

[1] Akbarnama, iii. 381.

cultivation should be carried on in the records from year to year, instead of measuring them every season; while the newly-broken land should be assessed summarily in block, and not measured in detail. This proposal was sanctioned, but presumably experience showed that greater elasticity was required to meet the divergent views of different bodies of peasants, and the later rules give an option where Todar Mal's proposal gave none. It will be remembered that Sher Shah, in his early years, had found that, even in two parganas, the peasants were not unanimous as to the method of assessment to be preferred; and in the much wider area over which Akbar's rules applied the recognition of diversity was obviously reasonable.

Some additional light is thrown on the policy of development by the chapters in the Ain[1] dealing with the assessment of land which had fallen out of cultivation, and then been broken up afresh. Three scales of assessment were recognised, to be applied according to circumstances. In the first of these, the assessment began at two-fifths of the ordinary rates, and rose to the full amount in the fifth year. In the second, and more favourable, scale, a very low charge in grain was made for the first year, rising by degrees until the full Demand was taken in the fifth; while under the third scale, applicable to land which had been uncultivated for five years or more, the initial charge was nominal, rising to one-sixth, one-fourth, and finally one-third of the produce. A collector was thus in a position to contribute materially to the recovery of villages which had been impoverished by calamities.

From development, the rules pass to details of the procedure in the seasonal assessment by Measurement. It is not clear whether or not the practice of taking the areas of defined fields from previous records was now in force; the rules speak of measuring, but the term might cover a shortened procedure in which an existing record of area was accepted or merely checked. The most important feature of this part of the rules is the treatment of crop-

[1] Ain, i. 301. Jarrett's rendering, two-fifths to four-fifths *of the produce*, is not supported by the text, and is impossible, because the "reduced" charges so calculated would be more than the ordinary Demand of one third.

failure. Areas of failure were to be noted during Measurement, and deducted from the total area of the plot before the Demand on it was calculated; while injuries to crops detected after the assessment had been made were to be reported, with details of the area affected, to the authority to whom the assessment statement had been transmitted. These provisions obviously constitute an essential part of the system, for, considering the high pitch of the assessment, crop-failure must have been a very serious matter. For the rest, the procedure was simple. The crop on each field was first noted: the entries for each peasant were then brought together; and the total Demand on him for the season was calculated by applying the sanctioned assessment-rates. These totals gave, when added up, the Demand on the village, and an assessment statement for it was then sent, we are told, "to Court"—presumably at this period to the Revenue Ministry, though, after the change in organisation already noticed, the sanctioning authority would probably be the provincial Diwan.

The rules then pass from assessment to collection. Peasants were to be encouraged to bring their revenue in cash to the treasury as each instalment fell due, but collecting agents were also sent to the villages, and the headmen and village-accountants also took part in the process. There are no orders regulating the disposal of grain collected as revenue, and it may be inferred that the practice was too rare to require general rules. The remaining provisions deal with treasury procedure and miscellaneous matters, including numerous periodical returns: all that need be noticed here is that the collector acted as the local agent of the Sadr in connection with the demarcation of Grants, and that the formal prohibition of a long list of miscellaneous exactions—from the *jiziya*, or personal tax, imposed by Islamic law but not claimed by Akbar, down to the customary present (*salami*) from a head man coming to pay his respects—suggests the possibility of a substantial illicit income being within the reach of the collector.

When we scrutinise the detailed provisions imposing so many specific duties on the collector and his clerk, the

question naturally arises whether their performance was possible in practice. We do not know the size of a collector's charge at this period; but, assuming that the standard of a kror of dams fixed in the 19th year had not been altered materially, and taking the Demand on a bigha as ranging round 40 dams, the figure indicated by the assessment-rates, a circle would contain somewhere about 250,000 bighas of cropped land, and the duties imposed by the rules could not possibly have been carried out by the officials in person. We must regard them rather as the heads of staffs employed by themselves and on their reponsibility; we know[1] in fact that collectors had agents (*gumashta*), and we may assume that in the same way the clerk had a staff of writers, one of whom would accompany each measuring-party in the field. That there might be several parties at work simultaneously in each circle is plain from Todar Mal's proposal (Akbarnama, iii. 382), that the number employed should be adjusted to the area to be measured, and that the collector should station himself at a central place whence he could visit them all.

It is, I think, possible to obtain a general view of this system as it must have presented itself to an ordinary peasant. He knew beforehand the extent of his liability to the State, and could plan his season's cropping with a knowledge of the amount of cash he would have to find; but he was necessarily ignorant of the prices at which he would be able to sell his produce. So far as the revenue-Demand was concerned, he was not exposed to the tyranny of a village oligarchy, but, on the other hand, he would have to reckon with the exactions of the measurement-party and the subordinates employed in collection. He might be harassed further by an energetic collector intent on the extension of cultivation and the improvement of cropping, without due regard to the possibilities of the locality; or he might find himself placed in relations with a prudent and sagacious officer who would assist him to make the most of his resources. Thus the effects of the system must have depended wholly on the manner of its administration: according to circumstances, it might be either

[1] See, *e.g.*, Akbarnama, iii. 457, where the *gumashtas*, misconduct is noticed.

helpful or intolerably vexatious; and evidence is wanting to show which alternative is nearer the truth. We may safely guess that neither was universally true, that there were good collectors as well as bad, and that the balance was determined, in the last resort, by the personal qualifications of the Emperor. We can believe then, if we choose, that the system worked reasonably well in the Reserved districts under Akbar's rule, and yet went to pieces under Jahangir; but we know only that it had disappeared before the accession of Aurangzeb.

Peasants in Reserved districts were, however, but a small proportion of the whole; and the ordinary man had to look to the assignee to whom circumstances entirely beyond his control might entrust his destinies. The literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries does not of itself enable us to form a definite judgment regarding the conduct of the assignees. All that can be said is that frequent changes in Assignments undoubtedly made for inefficient and oppressive management, because they rendered anything like a constructive policy a waste of effort. A collector might work up his district, and be rewarded for doing so; an assignee might lose his holding before his efforts began to bear fruit, and in all ordinary cases would have been very unwise to sink capital on such precarious security.

There is not sufficient evidence to justify a precise statement as to the length of Assignment-tenure in this reign. I have found no record of any formal rule on the subject, and, while the chronicles disclose instances of large areas changing hands at short intervals, the instances are too few to form the basis of a confident generalisation. Probably there were more cases than we hear of where an assignee retained his holding long enough for a constructive policy to be carried out; but the facts on record show, at any rate, that the duration of the tenure was absolutely uncertain, and, if an assignee had no assurance of retaining his holding, then we cannot suppose that an ordinary man would take a long view, or do much beyond collecting the largest possible income. In general, then, there was probably better hope of development in a Reserved district in charge of a competent collector. It must, however, be recalled that the

distinction between Reservation and Assignment, though precise at any given moment, was not permanent. The chronicles contain numerous instances of an area being transferred from one category to the other, and there are some indications that the Ministry aimed, as it naturally would, at keeping in its own hands the most productive, and most easily managed, land. Thus one of Akbar's old collectors tells how he represented that the district he was managing was not fit to be reserved, and accordingly it was assigned; and the same authority speaks of a pargana as having gone to ruin, because a proposal had been made to assign it, and the collector had consequently neglected it.[1] Such sidelights on the actual position are unfortunately too rare to serve as a basis for any general conclusions. A few tracts can be identified as regularly Reserved, but data are wanting to show the areas in which peasants could hope for some measure of stability of management, and all that can be said is that instability was probably more usual.

6. THE FINAL POSITION

The materials used in this section are contained mainly in a portion[2] of the Ain headed "Account of the Twelve Provinces," which is purely descriptive, and may almost be called the Gazetteer of Akbar's Empire. Each province is taken in its turn; notices, varying somewhat widely in value, are given of the topography, agriculture, revenue-system, industries, and standard of life; then follow descriptions of particular towns and localities; then certain statistics relating to the province; and finally its history. The scheme of the various notices furnishes definite evidence of uniformity of design; but the execution is much less uniform, and it looks as if each province had been dealt with by some official with special knowledge of it, working on a prescribed plan, but not held strictly to the plan in all its details. The account is not found in all manuscripts; and it appears to have been maintained, or completed, after

[1] Bayazid, f. 149, 154. Hawkins (*Early Travels*, 114) speaks of assigned land being taken by the King, "if it be rich ground and likely to yield much."

[2] Ain, i. 386 ff. The information given in the Account can be checked in some cases from the schedules of assessment-rates beginning on p. 348.

the rest of the Ain had been definitely closed, because, while the title refers to the twelve provinces constituted in the 24th year, reference is made in the preface to three others, Berar, Khandesh, and Ahmadnagar, which were later acquisitions, and the first two are described in some detail. The precise date to which the materials relate is thus uncertain, but we can use the account to form a general view of the position in the Empire about the 40th regnal year. It may be added that the Account was clearly edited[1] by Abul Fazl personally, and that he was working on it as late as the 43rd year.

The revenue-systems in force are stated for most of the provinces in precise official terminology; and. where a formal statement is wanting, the actual position can usually be determined from other information contained in the Account. The facts may be summarised as follows.

The six older provinces, which formed the heart of the Empire, MULTAN and LAHORE, DELHI and AGRA, AWADH and ALLAHABAD, were mainly, but not entirely, under the Regulation system, which has been described in the last section. The revenue-Demand was regulated by the schedules of cash-rates, to be applied to the area sown in each season; and these schedules, which are set out at length in the Ain, were, as we have seen, applicable to Assignments as well as to the Reserved areas. Certain tracts, however, were administered on different lines. The two largest of these were the mountainous district of Kumaun in Delhi, and a rather vaguely defined region to the South of Allahabad, described as the district of Bhathghora; these appear to have been left entirely in the hands of Chiefs, some of whom were practically independent rulers. In the case of a few other sub-divisions, there are suggestions in the statistics[2] that the same position prevailed but they form in the aggregate only a small proportion of the total area.

The provinces lying beyond this nucleus show less uniformity, and each must be mentioned separately. On

[1] The opening paragraphs of the description of Malwa (Ain, i. 455), bear the mark of Abul Fazl's pen, and include a personal reminiscence of Ujjain in the 43rd year, when the editor visited the city on his way to the Deccan.

[2] These suggestions are explained in Appendix G.

the West, TATTA, or Lower Sind, was assessed by Sharing, the State's claim being one-third of the produce; I have found nothing to show whether the Demand was made in produce, or was commuted in cash.

The Mogul province of AJMER represents generally the modern Rajputana, excluding the eastern portion, which belonged to Agra. In Akbar's time the province was heterogeneous, some parts being administered on the Regulation system, while the remainder was left in the hands of the Chiefs. The standard of the revenue-Demand was low, being described as one-seventh or one-eighth of the produce, "and money little," a cryptic phrase which may possibly indicate that payment in kind prevailed. Judging by the form of the statistics, three districts, Ajmer, Ranthambhor, and Nagor, were administered mainly on the Regulation system. Of the other districts enumerated, Bikanir was obviously left entirely to the Chief; Sirohi was divided between four Chiefs; while Jodhpur and Chitor were held mainly by Chiefs, though some parganas in them were directly administered. Schedules of assessment-rates are given for all districts except Bikanir and Sirohi, for which they "had not been prepared"; but in the cases of Jodhpur and Chitor they must be taken as applicable only to the subdivisions administered directly by the Mogul authorities.

MALWA was another heterogeneous province. The Regulation system had been introduced, at least formally, but it certainly did not extend to the districts of Marosor (Mandasor) on the West or Garha on the East, the figures for which can be interpreted only on the view that they were held by various Chiefs; while there is room for doubt as to the position in other portions of the province. The actual facts cannot be ascertained in detail,[1] but so much is

[1] Ain, i. 331. The grouping of assessment circles in Malwa is unintelligible. Reading the text as it stands, on the lines followed in other provinces, Ujjain and Raisin would be in one circle, but the schedule shows them as separate, and some words have apparently slipped out of the description. The most probable reading is that (1) no schedules were framed for Garha and Marosor; (2) one schedule applied to Chanderi and Raisin; (3) a second schedule to Mando; (4) a third, named Ujjain, to the remaining seven districts. Readers who are dependent on Jarrett's translation will find the figures for Garha under the erroneous heading Kanauj (ii. 199).

clear that, of the three assessment circles which are recorded, only one (Raisin-Chanderi) had a workable schedule of rates. The second circle, that of Mando, had no rates for any spring crops except melons, while of the autumn crops rates are entered only for sugarcane, cotton, henna, and waternuts, a ludicrously inadequate presentation of the cropping of this region. The third schedule, which apparently applied to seven districts, is equally defective for the autumn crops, while in the spring it gives merely poppy, oilseeds, melons, and some vegetables. Schedules of assessment rates which ignore the staple produce of Malwa, millets, wheat, and pulses, cannot possibly present a correct view of the actual position; and it is scarcely conceivable that the compilers of the Ain should have been able to give some, but not all, of the sanctioned rates actually in force. The only explanation of the data which presents itself to me is that the Regulation system had been applied in its integrity to two districts, Raisin and Chanderi, but elsewhere all that had been done was to fix cash-rates for a few market-crops, leaving the food-grains to be assessed on some other system, the nature of which is not on record.

BIHAR[1] was not one of the provinces which were brought under direct administration in the 19th year, and hence there cannot have been adequate data for preparing schedules of cash-rates five years later, nor are any such schedules on record. The Account shows, however, that the Regulation system had been applied to most of the province, and we may conjecture that this step was taken at some date between the 25th and the 40th year. The system had not been extended to the district of Monghyr, and in some other districts there are subdivisions which seem to have been left under Chiefs; in all, 138 subdivisions out of the total of 199 were "Regulation."

In BENGAL Akbar maintained the method of assessment which was in operation at the time when the province was annexed. It is described as *nasaq*, a term which, as is explained in Appendix D, is of uncertain import; it

[1] In some works of the period the name Bihar is limited to the country South of the Ganges, but in the Ain it bears substantially its present meaning, including Saran, Champaran, and Tirhut on the North of the river.

points clearly to assessment on the village or larger unit, but leaves room for doubt whether the assessment was made with the headmen or with farmers. In this position there is of course no record of sanctioned assessment rates, and the eighteenth-century tradition that Todar Mal made a detailed assessment on the individual peasants is unsupported by any contemporary evidence.

ORISSA appears in the Account as part of Bengal, and its assessment methods are not described separately. Judging by the form of the statistics, the position was similar to that of Bengal; but two districts, Kalang Dandpat and Raj Mahandra, were obviously held as units by Chiefs, and there are indications of Chiefs' holdings in some of the other districts on a smaller scale.

To the East of Orissa lay a region which is sometimes referred to as the province of Gondwana, but no such province had been constituted at this time. The territory was in possession of independent Chiefs, or of Chiefs who had made some kind of submission; and the holdings of the latter class are entered under adjoining provinces. Passing over this territory, we come to BERAR. At the time of conquest, this province had for a long time been under *nasaq*, and this arrangement was maintained by Akbar; as in the case of Bengal, it remains uncertain whether the village-assessments were made with the headmen or with farmers. The greater portion of the province was, however, obviously left in the possession of Chiefs, and some subdivisions, though their names appear in the statistics, were admittedly still independent.

KHANDESH, the Dandes of the Ain, was a small province, organised as a single district, lying just South of the Narbada. The assessment system in force is not specified, but the form of the statistics suggests that it may have been similar to that of Berar.

GUJARAT, the last province on the list, presents certain difficulties. It was not brought under direct administration in the 19th year, so assessment rates for it could not have been prepared on the usual lines, nor are any assessment schedules on record. In the text of the Account we find the phrase "mostly *nasaq*, and Measurement is little

practised"; but the statistics for all districts (except Sorath) show the areas assessed or valued for most parganas, and, since we can scarcely set aside these figures as imaginary, we must suppose that, at some period or other, the cultivated area had in fact been measured. It may be conjectured that the Regulation system had been introduced at some period after the 19th year, and then discarded for Farming or Group-assessment, made with the aid of the data so obtained, but there is no evidence on which to found a definite conclusion.[1] The statistics indicate the presence of Chiefs in the whole district of Sorath, and in a few places elsewhere.

The foregoing summary takes no account of the systems in force in the mountainous tracts of Kashmir and Afganistan. The arrangements in these regions were complex and peculiar, being adapted to the local condition, and the description in the Ain contains much that is of interest to local historians, but throws no light on the working of the revenue administration of the Empire as a whole. The facts which have been brought together appear to justify the general statement that, at least up to the 40th regnal year, Akbar adhered to the Regulation system, and extended it as far as circumstances permitted, but made no attempt to enforce it without regard to local conditions; and the most interesting question remaining is, How far local conditions were recognised inside the Regulation tracts? or, in other words, What portions of those tracts were in fact left under the jurisdiction of the Chiefs?

The data on record do not enable us to answer this question, for the indications on which we have to rely are of varying value. We can say with confidence that Rajputana was largely Chiefs' country, and we can discern something like a ring of Chiefs round Gondwana—in the South of Allahabad and Bihar, in the West of Orissa, in the North of Berar, and in the East of Malawa—but as regards the heart of the Empire much uncertainty exists. It is probable that

[1] It is possible that Todar Mal may have introduced Measurement during his visit in the 23rd year "to correct the Valuation, and transact the business of Gujarat" (T. Akbari; Add. 6543, f. 247*r*.), but I have found no record of what he did on this occasion.

the general attitude of the Administration was hostile, and that Abul Fazl represented it correctly when he wrote in the Akbarnama (ii. 60) that "the general custom of Indian *zamindars* is to leave the path of single-mindedness, and to have an eye to every side, and to join anyone who is victorious or is making increasing stir"; and we may perhaps assume that in ordinary cases the presumption was against the Chief; but, at the same time, we must recognise that Akbar was not the sort of man to carry a general principle too far in the practical work of administration.

The country now known as Oudh is of particular interest in this connection, because local traditions declare that many of the Rajput Chiefs maintained their authority practically intact throughout the Mogul period Nothing of the kind is suggested in the description of the province contained in the "Account," while the statistics do not indicate that a single subdivision was in any respect exceptional; and, taking the official record as it stands, we might infer that the Regulation system was in force throughout every district of the province. It may be conceded that local traditions are likely to exaggerate the authority enjoyed by the Chiefs, but it is not easy to disregard them altogether. I suspect that the truth lies somewhere between the two versions; and that, while the administration functioned effectively on the normal lines, in practice it worked largely through the Chiefs, who were permitted to retain a portion of what their peasants paid; but I have failed to find anything that can be called evidence in support of this view, and the question must remain unanswered until new facts come to light.

Chapter V

The Seventeenth Century

1. JAHANGIR AND SHAHJAHAN (1605-1658)

THE information which we possess regarding the agrarian system in the first half of the seventeenth century is scanty and incomplete. I have found no relevant official documents for this period; the contemporary chronicles indicate no important changes; and, if we could rely on their silence, we should be justified in inferring that the methods of assessment elaborated under Akbar, and described in the last chapter, remained in operation in their integrity. This inference is, however, negatived decisively by general orders issued by Aurangzeb in the year 1665, which show that by that time Akbar's methods had become almost entirely obsolete; and we must conclude that between 1594, when the Ain was completed, and the accession of Aurangzeb, either unrecorded changes had been formally made, or else—what is, I think, somewhat more probable—that Akbar's institutions had gradually decayed. The position disclosed by Aurangzeb's orders, which will be examined in detail in the next section, is that, while Sharing was authorised in certain, unspecified, backward tracts, the general rule of the Empire was Group-assessment, with the alternatives of Measurement and Sharing held in reserve, to be used only in cases where the headmen would not agree to a reasonable revenue-Demand for the year. I can trace no orders authorising such a change, and my reasons for thinking that probably it came about of itself are, firstly, that, if formal orders were issued, we should expect to find some mention of them in the chronicles, and, secondly, that gradual decay is what might be expected in the circumstances of the period.

It will be apparent from what has been said in the last

chapter that seasonal Measurement was costly and cumbrous. We must regard it as an effective expedient under a strong administration, but probably unworkable, and almost certainly oppressive when the Ministry was weak, or was unsupported by the energy of the Emperor; while the cheaper and simpler alternative of Group-assessment lay ready to hand, prohibited indeed by Akbar in the Reserved areas, but quite familiar to the Revenue Ministry, and actually in operation in important sections of the Empire. Remove Akbar's personal influence, and the gradual extension of Group-assessment would be the line of least resistance, as the administrative difficulties of Measurement recurred. For a time, at least such a change would not necessarily be evil; in fact, I am inclined to think that, in the circumstances which prevailed, the best arrangement for Northern India would have been an alternation. Measurement being practised for a period long enough to furnish adequate data of productive capacity, and being then replaced by Group-assessment based on those data, and continued until such time as economic changes should render them obsolete. It is even conceivable that some such idea may have operated to produce the change in question, but in practice there is no sign of alternation. However, and whenever, the change was introduced, we have to accept it as a fact; but before examining Aurangzeb's orders in detail, it will be well to bring together the few items of definite information which we possess regarding the first half of the century.

The distinction between Assigned and Reserved tracts stands out clearly in the chronicles relating to this period; a relatively small portion of the Empire was administered, so far as the land-revenue was concerned, by the provincial Diwans under the direct orders of the Ministry, while the bulk was assigned on the lines described in the last chapter. In the year 1647, the annual income from the Reserved area was taken as 3 krors of rupees, while the aggregate for the Empire was 22 krors, so that great majority of the peasants were under assignees; and, while the proportion

[1] Badshahnama, II. 713. This chronicle was drawn up under the Emperor's orders, and the figures in it may reasonably be taken as official.

may have varied from time to time, this statement applies in general terms to the whole of the period under consideration. It may be worth while to summarise at this point a sketch of the financial history of the century which is given in the biographical dictionary known as the Maasir-ul Umra: it is not a first-hand authority for this period, and the exact figures may be open to question; but the matter contained in the sketch is not likely to have been invented, and probably it represents the truth in substance, if not in every detail. According to this authority, under Akbar the rapidly increasing Imperial expenditure was more than covered by the growth of the Empire, and reserves in cash were accumulated. Jahangir neglected the administration, fraud became rife, and at last the annual income from the Reserved tracts fell to 50 lakhs of rupees, while the annual expenditure was 150 lakhs, and the accumulated treasure was drawn on for large sums. Shahjahan, on his accession, put the finances on a sound basis: he reserved tracts calculated to yield 150 lakhs as income, fixed the normal expenditure at 100 lakhs, and had thus a large recurring balance for emergencies. Expenditure rose far above this limit, but careful administration raised the reserved income to 300 lakhs (the figure given above) by 1647, and to nearly 400 lakhs by the end of the reign. Aurangzeb at first endeavoured to maintain the balance between income and expenditure, but his long wars in the Deccan were ruinous, and at his death only 10 or 12 krors of rupees were left in the treasury, a sum which was rapidly dissipated by his successors.

So far as Jahangir is concerned, this account is closely in accordance with what we know from the chronicles, and from the observations of foreign residents in India. For the latter part of his reign he left the administration entirely in the hands of his wife and her brother, a position which would naturally result in extravagance and inefficiency; and his detachment from financial questions is apparent in the silence of his Memoirs as to what was going

[1] Maasirulumra, II. 813 ff. The bibliographical note in Elliot (viii. 187) shows that the authorship of the dictionary is composite, but no part of it is earlier than the eighteenth century, and it was compiled in the Deccan, not in Northern India.

on in the Revenue Ministry. A few passages, however, from this work require notice. One is the seventh clause of the regulations which he issued (Tuzuk, 4) on his accession to the throne, to the effect that officials and assignees should not take peasants' land into their own cultivation by force. We may infer from this that cases of the kind had occurred, and had given rise to scandal; in most parts of the Empire there was productive land to spare, but there would often be choice plots coveted for their productivity or situation, as Ahab coveted Naboth's vineyard, and it is in accordance with what we know of Jahangir's character that he should have condemned such conduct, though we cannot be confident that his orders were vigorously enforced. In another passage[1] the Emperor, whose taste for choice fruit is notorious, states that fruit-trees were, and had always been, free of any demand for revenue, and that a garden planted on cultivated land was forthwith exempted from assessment; but the language indicates, what is known from other sources, that a cess on fruit-trees was among the items of miscellaneous revenue which survived repeated prohibitions.

The only definite innovation which Jahangir records[2] is the institution of the Grant-under-seal (*altamgha*), which is of interest as constituting the nearest approach to land-ownership, in the modern sense, which appears during the Mogul period. The scope of such Grants was limited to the case where a deserving officer applied for a grant of his "home" that is to say, of the village or pargana in which he was born: in this case the grant was to be made under a particular form of seal, and was not to be altered or resumed, so that, by contrast with the other tenures of the period, it may be regarded as permanent, though naturally an absolute Emperor could not be prevented from annulling it. This Grant-under-seal, it may be noted, was not an

[1] Tuzuk, 252. The cess on fruit-trees is called *sar-darakhti*; Akbar had remitted this impost (Ain, i. 301).

[2] Tuzuk, 10; Badshahnama, II. 409. At the opening of the British period claims to altamgha grants were not uncommon, but the designation had come to be used loosely during the disorders of the eighteenth century; thus the grant of the Diwani of Bengal to the East India Company was described as altamgha [Aitchison's *Treaties* (1892), i. 56], but it cannot possibly be brought within the original definition.

Indian institution, but was avowedly copied from Central Asian practice. I have not found records to show the extent to which such grants were made during the seventeenth century, but they seem to have been very rare. In the twenty years covered by the Badshahnama, the only case I have noted is that of a successful doctor, who, among other rewards, received a village by this title; and later records contain no suggestion that it became of practical importance during the rest of the century.

Such is the meagre record of Jahangir's personal activities in connection with the agrarian system. A few sidelights on its working during his reign can be obtained from other sources. We know[1] that, in some cases at least, Viceroys and other high officers were appointed on farming-terms; but there is nothing to suggest that such farmers were entitled to receive any part of the revenue from the Reserved areas, which were administered by the Diwan on behalf of the Emperor. These farms of high office must thus be distinguished from the arrangements in force in portions of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. At that period the Governor-on-farming-terms enjoyed the entire revenue, of which the land contributed probably by far the largest share; under Jahangir, the land-revenue was controlled by a separate department, and the provincial Viceroy would enjoy only so much of it as was yielded by his personal Assignment. It is possible that the Diwans may have farmed out some of the Reserved lands, but I know of no evidence on the point; there is no doubt, however, that assignees[2] sometimes farmed their Income, and consequently we must recognise that Farming was familiar in practice to the peasants at this period.

[1] Roe. 210: Terpstra, App. VI. According to the Viceroy of Bihar's statements, as recorded by Roe, he paid 11 lakhs yearly for the post. He received 3·6 lakhs as "pension" (presumably *inam*), and made 7 lakhs out of the pay of his rank (*mansab*): the net result would be that his actual income depended on what he could make out of the province by miscellaneous exactions, his authorised receipts being more than covered by the amount of the farm. There is, however, obvious room for mistakes in figures recorded in this way, and it would be dangerous to base any argument on the details.

[2] Pelsaert (p. 54) recorded that an assignee who was in attendance on the king either sent his employees to manage his Assignment, or else handed it over to a collector on farming terms.

We get somewhat nearer to the peasant in an account,[1] written shortly before 1630, of agrarian practice in Gujarat. Anyone, we are told, "who wants to cultivate any land, goes to the headmen of the village, who are called *muqaddam*, and asks for as much land as he wants, at the place which suits him. This is rarely refused, but almost always granted, because here not one-tenth part of the land is cultivated, and so anyone can easily obtain his choice, and the area he needs; and he may sow as much as he can till, on condition of paying the dues to the lord." This account brings out the fundamental difference from the present time, when the productive land is fully occupied, holdings are ordinarily permanent, and a successful peasant often has difficulty in finding room for extension; so long as there was land to spare, the peasant could pick and choose, and, while it is reasonable to suppose that the ordinary man retained certain fields as a fixed holding, it was possible for him to extend or contract his operations according to his resources and other conditions; while there was room for administrative efforts such as were prescribed in Akbar's rules for collectors, directed towards bringing waste land into cultivation, and preventing cultivated land from falling vacant. The account also fits in with the provision made in the same rules for rewarding the headmen for their exertions in developing a village.

According to this authority, an assignee in Gujarat usually received three-quarters of the produce from the peasants, so that poverty was general, and few of the peasants were possessed of any means. The figure given is probably an exaggeration, because a somewhat later writer,[2] who almost certainly had this report before him, wrote that one-half, or sometimes three-quarters, was paid; and, assuming that this includes cesses or miscellaneous exactions, it points to the practice of assessing at half the produce which we find well-established under Aurangzeb.

[1] Gujarat Report, f. 21. The expression "not one-tenth part" should not be taken in a strict arithmetical sense; the writer of the report frequently used figures rhetorically, and I do not think he meant to say more than that there was plenty of land for everybody. He uses the word "lord" (*heer*) in several other passages to denote the assignee.

[2] J. van Twist, *Beschrijvinge van Indien*, c. xli. This book was first published in 1638.

The only other fact which requires mention regarding this reign is the agrarian instability[1] which resulted from the frequency of changes in Assignments. William Hawkins, the first Englishman to enter into negotiations with Jahangir, attributed the prevalent lawlessness to the oppression which the "clowns," that is to say, the peasants, experienced at the hands of the assignees; and he blamed the system for this evil, writing that

"a man cannot continue half a year in his living, but it is taken from him and given unto another; or else the King taketh it for himself (if it be rich ground and likely to yield much), making exchange for a worse place; or as he is befriended by the Vazir. By this means he racketh the poor to get from them what he can, who still thinketh every hour to be put out of his place. But there are many who continue a long time in one place, and if they remain but six years their wealth which they gain is infinite if it be a thing of any sort."

Hawkins did not write as a mere spectator, for Jahangir had given him a small appointment, and he had prolonged business with the Revenue Ministry regarding the allocation of his Assignment. He mentions that the Minister of the time was displaced as the result of many complaints made by noblemen who "could not receive their livings in places that were good, but in barren and rebellious places, and that he made a benefit of the good places himself"; but there is no sign of any change in the system. We may suspect that Hawkins exaggerated the frequency of transfers, but that they were frequent appears from other evidence. Terry, writing a few years after Hawkins, noted that high officers usually received a remove yearly; and this would ordinarily involve alteration in their Assignments. The Dutch writer of the report on Gujarat, which has been quoted above, said that assignees were "transferred yearly, or half-yearly, or every two or three years," and consequently none of them could "make any certain calculation in advance regarding the places which are given them, for to-day they are masters of a great place, to-morrow they are removed

[1] For Hawkins, see *Early Travels*, 83, 91, 93, 114; for Terry, *idem*, 326. The passage in the Gujarat Report is f. 9 of the chapter dealing with Broach. For Pelsaert's observations, see 64 ff.

from it." Pelsaert, too, writing in Agra in 1626, laid stress on the instability of the position of the great men in the Empire; and, when we read the statements of these observers along with Jahangir's own memoirs and the other chronicles of the period, we cannot avoid the conclusion that anything like a far-sighted policy of agricultural development must have been impossible in the bulk of the Empire, because no assignee could count on retaining his position long enough to reap the benefit of his exertions. We must remember further that the period was one of growing luxury and extravagance, so that the needs of the assignees would tend to increase, and it was the peasant who had to pay; all the circumstances of the time point to the probability of impoverishment, rather than development of the resources of the country.

The contemporary chronicles tell us even less of the activities of Shahjahan than of Jahangir. A later writer[1] indeed, refers to orders issued by him for the increase and welfare of the peasants, to his constant attention to the revenue administration, and to his practice of rewarding those collectors who developed their circles; but I cannot trace any record of the orders themselves. The fact that successful collectors were rewarded is made clear[2] in the Badshahnama, and the Emperor's attention to finance can be inferred from the account already quoted of the increase in revenue during his reign; what general orders he issued, if there were any, remains uncertain.

The reign was marked also by the construction of some canals for irrigation, but the chronicles are silent as to the revenue side of these enterprises, and it is matter for conjecture whether or not water-rates were charged; possibly the resulting increase in land-revenue was regarded as sufficient remuneration, since, with annual or seasonal assessments, the return would be almost immediate. I have found no record of any other changes, and, so far as the chonicles go, we might look on the reign as a period of

[1] See Elliot, vii, 171. The word rendered "collectors" is *chakladar*; I have not found an earlier use of it, but by the middle of the century *chakla* had come to denote the circle of a collector (*e.g.* Badshahnama, I, 1. 409), and *chakladar* may safely be taken here as denoting the collector.

[2] *E.g.* Badshahnama, II, 247, 319.

agrarian tranquillity; but it is impossible to disregard the observations of Bernier, made in the opening years of Aurangzeb's reign, that by this time the pressure on the peasants had become excessive, that agriculture was suffering, and that the land was going out of cultivation. The significance of these facts will become apparent when we have examined the conditions disclosed by Aurangzeb's orders.

2. AURANGZEB'S ORDERS (1665-1669)

The agrarian situation in the early years of Aurangzeb's reign can be learned with some approach to precision from two farmans, or general orders, issued from the Revenue Ministry under the authority of the Emperor.[1] The first of these orders, which took effect from the 8th regnal year, 1665-6, was directed to secure "the increase of cultivation and the welfare of the peasants." The preamble contains a description of the methods of assessment then in force in the Reserved areas, and points out certain defects; a general order follows, indicating the procedure to be adopted in future; and then come 15 detailed clauses, constituting a manual of practice, which was addressed primarily to the provincial Diwan and his subordinates, but was intended also for the guidance of the staff employed by assignees. The second order was issued in 1668-9 with the specific object of ensuring that, throughout the whole Empire, the revenue should be assessed and collected in accordance with the principles of Islamic Law; it deals mainly with the action to be taken, and the attitude to be adopted, towards individual peasants, constituting in effect a forerunner of the revenue and tenancy legislation of the British period.

The extant copies of both orders are addressed to

[1] The text of the farmans with translations was published by Professor Jadunath Sarkar in J. A. S. B., June, 1906, p. 223 ff. Translations will be found also in the same author's *Studies in Mughal India*, p. 168 ff., where the known MSS. are enumerated. In the references below, I write "R" for the farman to Rashik Das, and "H" for that to Muhammad Hashim. I discussed these documents in J. R. A. S., January, 1922, but I had not at that time detected the relation which the latter bears to the *Fatawa-i Alamgiri*.

individuals,[1] but their application is obviously intended to be general, and we may reasonably infer that a copy was sent to each provincial Diwan, addressed to him by name; the earlier document is based on enquiries made throughout the Reserved and Assigned areas of the Empire, while the latter applies specifically to the revenue officers of "the Empire of Hindustan from end to end."

The two orders are distinguished by a marked difference in the terminology employed. The language of the earlier is substantially that which was used in official documents in the time of Akbar, and presents no serious difficulties in interpretation, though a few phrases are obscure. The later order is expressed in the terms of Islamic Law, and is obviously related to the extant collection[2] of Fatwas, or rulings given by ecclesiastical jurists on questions referred to them by the Emperor. The farman is based either on these fatwas or on some earlier pronouncements of similar purport; and it must be taken as part of Aurangzeb's attempt to conduct his administration in accordance with the religious system of which he was so devoted an adherent.

The first order is characterised by precise and logical arrangement, practically identical with that of Akbar's rules for collectors, and it shows us in operation the administrative dyarchy, the introduction of which was noticed in the last Chapter. Revenue from the Reserved areas was expended by the Emperor, not the Viceroy; and it was assessed and collected by the Revenue Ministry, acting through the provincial Diwans. Accordingly, we read nothing about Viceroys or Governors; all references are to

[1] The first order is addressed to Rashik Das Krori, but its terms show that it was intended for a provincial Diwan, because it instructs him how to control the Amin, the Amil or Krori, and the treasurer, who constituted the Diwan's staff. The word "Krori," must therefore be read as a soubriquet rather than a designation; such soubriquets were commonly employed when there were two or more officers bearing one name, and presumably Rashik Das had been a Krori before promotion to the post of Diwan. I have not traced a reference to him in the chronicles, but they do not give anything like a complete list of provincial Diwans at this period. The recipient of the second order, Muhammad Hashim, was, according to Professor Sarkar, provincial Diwan of Gujarat.

[2] *Fatawa-i Alamgiri*, title "Ushr and Kharaj." The text is Arabic, and I know of no published translation; that which I have used was made for me by Mr. U. M. Daudpota.

the staff employed under the Diwan, which consisted of three sections, the Amins, whose primary business was assessment, the Kroris, who were concerned mainly with collection, and the Treasurers, who handled the money when it was received. These subordinates were posted to circles (*chakla*), which were not identical with the districts of Akbar's time, but were presumably arranged with reference to the amount of work.

The motive underlying the first order is the need for increased control over this localised staff: the central authority complained that it was kept in ignorance of agricultural conditions, and was not in a position to check the reports which it received. The preamble of the order allows us to see what had been happening; a sanguine assessment would be made at the beginning of each year, but the collections were apt to be disappointing, and the deficiency would be explained, on paper, as due to allowance for calamities, which were suspected to be fraudulent inventions. In order to put the administration in a stronger position, instructions were now issued for the submission of more detailed annual returns for each village; but the opportunity was taken of codifying the practice of the department, and it is this portion of the document which gives it historical value.

Following the order in which the subject-matter is arranged, we may begin with the development policy of the Ministry. This follows closely on the lines with which we have become familiar. Extension of cultivation comes first, then increase in the area under high-class crops, then the repair and construction of wells for irrigation. Peasants who co-operated actively in carrying out this policy were to be treated with consideration, and their reasonable requests for assistance were to be met; but the idea of cultivation as a duty owed to the State was still paramount, and flogging was specifically authorised in cases where this duty was neglected (R. 2; H. 1-3). The operation of such rules as these would neccessarily depend to a great extent on the individuality of the local officials; since extension of cultivation and increase of revenue were the declared aims of the Ministry, its staff must have been

judged largely by the results attained; and there were obvious inducements to practise towards the peasants the severity which characterised the general administration of the time. Excessive severity would indeed defeat itself, because it would drive the peasants off the land, as we shall see later on; but we may reasonably infer that the peasants in Reserved areas were ordinarily kept under strict discipline.

The basis of the revenue-Demand was now higher than under Akbar: his standard of one-third of the produce had become the minimum, while more could be claimed, up to a maximum of one-half (H. 6, 16). Within these limits the local officials were apparently allowed some discretion; but, seeing that their primary duty was to increase the revenue, we may infer that the actual Demand worked out nearer the maximum than the minimum. In practice, however, the arithmetical side of assessment was less prominent than in Akbar's time, because the methods had been changed.

The methods in force are described clearly in the preamble of the first farman. In some villages where the peasants were poor, Sharing was practised, at rates adapted to the local conditions, "one-half, one-third, two-fifths, or more, or less"; but Group-assessment was the regular rule. At the beginning of the year the assessor (Amin) fixed the total sum to be paid by a village, or apparently on occasion by an entire pargana, on a consideration of the available data, including recent assessments, and the area to be cultivated in that year; the village could refuse the assessment offered by the Amin, in which case the revenue was taken from it by either Measurement or Sharing, apparently at the discretion of the local officials; but, in the circumstances of the period, we may reasonably infer that refusal was the exception.

The Demand on the individual peasants was thus ordinarily left to be fixed by the headmen; and, as usual, we find that, in the official view, "the burden of the strong" tended to fall on the weak. The provincial Diwan was therefore instructed (R. 6) to examine the distribution (*tafriq*) of the Demand in every village which he had occasion to visit, and to rectify any unfairness on the part of

headmen and accountants.[1] The Diwan was required also (R. 11) to examine the records of receipts and payments kept by the village accountant, and, by comparison with the official accounts, to determine the amount misappropriated by each individual, whether an official, or a headman or accountant; the latter classes were to be allowed only their established customary dues, and anything received by them in excess of these was to be recovered.

Here, by a rare chance, we find in official records some glimpses of the inner life of a village, and they agree precisely with what we learn from the records of the early British period. Wherever Group-assessment was practised, the headmen and accountants, or a dominant clique,[2] occupied a dual position. In one aspect they were the champions of the village, negotiating the assessment with the officials, and bearing the brunt of any official severity which might be practised; in the other, they were potential, if not actual, oppressors of the smaller or less influential peasants, overcharging them for revenue, and levying additional sums for village-expenses, an item characterised in general by elasticity. Official records naturally bring the latter aspect into prominence, and it is impossible to discover to which side the balance inclined; but we may safely infer that, then as now, the villages varied greatly among themselves.

Turning from assessment to collection, the instructions

1 The second subsection of this clause (R.6) contains an obscure reference to *gunjayish*. Professor Sarkar renders this "unlawfully appropriated funds." I have not heard the expression in current use in this sense, and have found no parallel passages, but, from the etymology and the context, I suspect it to refer rather to the "margin," by which headmen would naturally protect themselves. They had undertaken to pay a fixed sum, and if they demanded only that sum from the peasants, some of these might default, and the loss would fall on the headmen. It would be natural therefore to begin by charging the peasants something more than the sum due from them, so that the solvent men would help to pay for the insolvent; and such a practice, once started, would be very likely to develop into a serious abuse. I think this subsection means that the Diwan was to look into this question, and ensure that a large "margin" should not stay in the pockets of the headmen. A quotation given in Chapter VI shows that in the country near Delhi the headmen occasionally charged more than they had to pay, and enjoyed the difference.

2 I take "dominant clique" to be the meaning of *mutaghallibán* in R. 6, 9. The existence of such cliques in a village was a prominent feature of the position in the early days of British rule, and they were clearly of old standing in the eighteenth century.

to the Treasurer (R. 8) make it clear that cash-payments by peasants were usual; and the absence of any provisions for the disposal of revenue received in kind suggests that this practice was not general, though it appears to have existed in localities where currency was normally scarce.[1] Payment in cash is indicated also by the language of the preamble, which refers to low prices as a calamity on the same footing as drought or frost. In the practice of Group-assessment, the Demand was fixed for the year, not, as in the alternative methods, for each season; and it was realised by three instalments (R. 4), fixed apparently with regard to the circumstances of each pargana.

In ordinary seasons then the position of the village was clear. The Demand was assessed at the beginning of the year in a lump sum, which was distributed over the peasants by the headmen; the peasants paid the headmen as the crops matured, and the latter satisfied the demands of the collector. The arrangements might however be upset by the occurrence of a calamity, "drought, frost, low prices, or other"; for Group-assessment, aiming at a Demand approximating to half the produce, was open to the same objection as Measurement, that even a moderate loss of produce might render the realisation of the assessment impossible. In such an event the revenue staff was required (R. 9) to be active and vigilant, to revise the assessment in accordance with the actual produce, and to take special care that the apportionment among the peasants was not left in the hands of the headmen, accountants, or dominant cliques.[2] The second farman adds the detail (H. 9) that

[1] Professor Sarkar has shown (*Studies in Mughal India*, p. 217) that in parts of Orissa revenue was paid in kind during Aurangzeb's reign, but this was one of the tracts where currency was normally scarce, and cannot be taken as typical of Northern India.

[2] There is some difficulty in interpreting the phrase "*sarbasta* calamity" in R. 9. The context shows only that it refers to a calamity in which the distribution (*tafriq*) depended on the headmen and accountants, and that this practice was not to be permitted. The only illustrative passages I have found are Khwafi, i. 733, and Maasirulumra, iii. 498, which are one authority, not two. In them *tashkhis-i sarbasta* is used to describe the method of assessing revenue by a charge on each peasant. Here the word clearly means "per head," or nearly its etymological meaning; and the same sense seems to fit the passage under consideration. A "sarbasta calamity" would be one in which the village authorities sent up a list showing the loss of each peasant separately; and the possibilities of fraud in a proceeding of that kind are sufficiently obvious to explain the prohibition.

half the actual produce was to be left to the peasants, and it draws a distinction (H. 10) between calamities occurring before, and after, the crops were cut; allowance was to be made for the former, but not for the latter, a rule which survived in the administrative tradition of the nineteenth century.

The administration was required to see that exactions from peasants were limited to the lawful demands, and three classes of prohibited exactions are specified (R. 10). The first consists of those cesses which had been forbidden by the Emperor, who followed in this matter the general line taken by Firuz and by Akbar. The second is "charges in excess of the revenue," which may be interpreted as customary levies made by officials. The third is described by the word *baliya*, which in ordinary use may mean either "misfortune" or "oppression"; here it probably denotes some particular form of oppression which was common at the time, but I have found no illustrative passages to assist in its interpretation. So much is clear, that various forms of exaction prevailed, and that they were definitely prohibited; how far the prohibition was effective remains a matter for conjecture.

The orders which have been summarised above applied primarily only to the Reserved areas, a small fraction of the Empire, but their provisions were intended, at the least, to set a standard of procedure in Assignments, for the officials employed by assignees were to be urged to act in accordance with them. Here again it is a matter for conjecture how far these orders took effect. Aurangzeb's local administration was not characterised by efficiency, so that assignees probably enjoyed more freedom than in Akbar's days; but a curious provision suggests that the provincial Diwan was in fact in a position to influence the local staff employed by assignees. He was required (R. 12) to report on the loyalty and efficiency of the assessors and collectors employed in Assignments, and a promise was given that punishment should follow on an unfavourable report. It is not easy to understand how the Revenue Ministry could ensure the punishment of subordinates employed by an assignee, but the promise is there, and we must infer that, in some way or other, it could be made effective.

3. THE APPLICATION OF ISLAMIC IDEAS

In the preceding section the general situation in the early part of Aurangzeb's reign has been described with the aid of both the extant farmans issued under his authority. It remains to examine those provisions of the later order which relate specifically to Islamic law, and in doing this, it is necessary to realise the position of the ecclesiastical jurists on whose pronouncements (*fatwa*) the order is obviously based. There is no reason to suppose that the jurists were in touch with the actual working of the Revenue Ministry; their authorities consisted, not of rules and orders issued by Sher Shah or Akbar, but of law-books and commentaries written, for the most part, in other parts of Asia, in Arabia, Syria, or Iraq. The authorities are duly quoted in the extant fatwas, and we find among them such names as Abu Hanifa, Muhit, or Abu Yusuf, men whose experience had been gained long before, and in countries altogether different from India. The officials who drafted the farman obviously followed the fatwas closely; and the result was necessarily to import into the Indian system terms, ideas, and institutions, which are not easily brought into accordance with the facts of Indian life.

As an example of exotic terminology, we may take the description of the peasant as *malik*, a word which originally denoted a king, but in process of time has come to mean an owner. The anonymous commentator whose observations are included in Professsor Sarkar's translation of the farman was obviously puzzled by the unfamiliar term, for he suggested that the word must refer to the owner of the crop, implying that there could not be an owner of the soil; but the fact is that *malik* was the term used, no doubt appropriately, in other Islamic countries, and it was carried over to India, where it was not applicable to the local conditions. Similarly as regards ideas, the force of parts of the farman is distorted by the conception of land devoted permanently to a particular crop. We are given detailed rules for land under dates and almonds, which were almost irrelevant in India, but we find nothing about the particular difficulties connected with characteristic Indian

crops such as sugarcane. In the same way, the farman stresses the distinction between tithe-land and tribute-land, which, as we have seen in Chapter I, lies at the root of the Islamic system; but I have failed so far to find a single case of tithe-land existing in India, and if any existed, it was certainly unimportant in extent. We must not then read the order as recognising peasants' proprietary rights, or as indicating the existence of an important date-growing industry, or as necessarily implying the prevalence of tithe-land; and in a few other cases the question arises whether the provisions of the farman were really required, or whether they are mere surplusage, introduced by the conditions in which it was drafted.

The only one of these questions which requires discussion relates to the distinction drawn throughout the order between two forms of tenure, denoted by the words *muqasama and muwazzaf*. These words are not defined in the order itself, but the distinction between them is brought out clearly in the fatwa, which shows that, under the former, land paid revenue only when cultivated, while, under the latter, it paid whether it was cultivated or not. The same distinction appears in the order (H. 2) and its provisions show that muwazzaf was a form of what I have described as Contract-holding, where a fixed sum is paid for the occupation of land, independent of cropping or produce; while the term muqasama is sufficiently wide to cover both Sharing and Measurement, applying in all cases where the amount of the revenue-Demand depends on the produce of the season. Now up to the date of this order, I have found no definite evidence to show that Contract-holding existed as a tenure in Moslem India,[1] and the question arises whether the references to it are mere surplusage, or were in fact required by Indian conditions.

On this question two considerations suggest themselves. The first is that Contract-holdings were quite common in

[1] Payment of wazifa, *i.e.* muwazzaf-tenure, is mentioned in the Ain (i. 294), but in a disquisition on the general Islamic revenue-system, and with no suggestion that wazifa was paid in India. In the Indian chronicles the word wazifa occurs frequently, but in none of the passages noticed does it refer to peasants' tenure; the usual meaning is an allowance granted, ordinarily in cash, by the Emperor to a learned man or some other claimant on his liberality.

some regions at the opening of the British period ; either, then, they existed in the time of Aurangzeb, or they had come into existence during the eighteenth century. The latter alternative is improbable, because it was a period of disorder, during which men lived from hand to mouth, and were unwilling to commit themselves in advance. The refusal of peasants to bind themselves to pay revenue for even so short a term as five years is one of the most remarkable facts in the early British records; at that time popular opinion favoured annual assessment, with entire freedom for the future; and it is hard to see how a system of Contract-holding could have come into existence in such an environment. The probability then is that the system was of old standing.

This view is strengthened by the facts, which have been given in Chapter I, regarding tenures in Udaipur. In that region, which never came under Moslem administration, the existence of Contract-holdings is established by extant documents, some of which go back for four centuries, and the inference seems to be almost certain that they are a Hindu institution, not a modern introduction. The fact that there is no trace of them in the earlier literature of Moslem India does not constitute a proof of their non-existence; it may equally be read as showing that Moslem administrators found no occasion to interfere with them. While then direct evidence is wanting, it is permissible to conjecture that Contract-holdings may in fact have persisted from the time when Moslem rule was first established in Delhi, not as a general institution, but in particular localities, or particular circumstances, in which they were found to be convenient; and therefore that Aurangzeb's orders regarding them were required to enable the Diwan to dispose of difficulties which arose from time to time. The alternative view, that the provisions in question are mere surplusage, introduced from an exotic system of law for formal purposes, is not, however, disproved by positive evidence; in the present state of our knowledge, the matter is one of probability.

The orders indicate that the administration recognised the existence of certain rights to retain, and dispose of,

a holding. A Contract-holder was ordinarily succeeded by his heir (H. II), and he could lease, mortgage, or sell, his rights in his holding (H. 12, 13). Inheritance is recognised by implication in the case of an ordinary peasant also, because provision is made (H. 17) for the disposal of a holding when there is no heir; and power to sell or pledge is also recognised by implication in the same case (H 16). These provisions do not indicate any fundamental change in system, because, as we have seen in Chapter I, rights of inheritance and transfer are recognised by the Hindu Sacred Law.

It is noteworthy that there is no explicit provision for the dispossession of an inefficient or defaulting peasant, similar to that which is found in the Arthasastra; and this omission is common to the two farmans, for the earlier one lays great stress on complete and punctual collections (R. 4, 5), but is silent as to the action to be taken against defaulters. It is impossible to suppose that an administration concerned with getting the largest possible revenue should have been left powerless in the event of contumacious default; and the true reading must, I think, be that the necessary powers were inherent in the administration, but that at this period they were not of practical importance because of the scarcity of peasants, a topic to which I shall return.

In the same way, Aurangzeb's orders, like those issued by Akbar, do not provide for the sale of a peasant's family for default; but we know from various authorities[1] that this process was in the fact available to the local officials. Thus Badauni records, as we have seen in the last chapter, that in the reign of Akbar, "the wives and children of the peasants were sold and scattered abroad." Pelsaert, writing in the next reign, tells of the wives and children of defaulters being "made prize" and sold. Bernier states that defaulters were "bereft of their children, who are carried away as slaves." Manrique, in describing Bengal under Mogul rule, wrote that "when the wretched people have no means of paying this (the revenue demanded in

1 Badauni, ii. 189 ; Pelsaert, 47 ; Bernier, 205 ; Manrique, i. 53, in the Hakluyt Society's translation (*Travels of Fray Sebastian Manrique*, 1927).

advance], they seize their wives and children, making them into slaves and selling them by auction." We must not then read the orders as a complete code of procedure, providing for all possible emergencies; the reasonable view is that thay deal only with those matters on which a ruling was thought to be required, and that the treatment of defaulters was not one of these.

An interesting provision in the farman is that which relates to the residual right of a Contract-holder who was unable to cultivate, or had absconded (H. 3.) His right to the holding remained in existence, and he was entitled to resume it when in a position to do so; but, during the period of absence or inability, the officials were empowered to let the land on farm, and if the income so obtained exceeded the contract-revenue, the surplus was to be paid to the holder. This is the earliest suggestion I have found of anything analogous to the *malikana*, or allowance to a landholder excluded from settlement, which was an important subject in parts of the nineteenth century.

If Contract-holdings already existed at this period, it may be said that the orders we have been examining introduced little of importance into the Indian agrarian system. The provisions which clearly derive from the fatwas are matters of detail; rules regarding apportionment of the liability for revenue in case of transfers (H 12, 13), revenue to be levied on vines and almond trees (H. 14), liability of Moslems to pay revenue instead of tithe (H. 14), exemption from assessment of land devoted to the endowment of tomb (H 15)----such rules as these could be enforced without making any appreciable alteration in the Indian system as it had developed under previous Moslem sovereigns, and they were doubtless useful to an administration which may have had to decide such questions in the course of its ordinary work. The system however in its broad outlines remained unchanged, unless we accept the view, which seems to me improbable, that Contract-holding was now recognised for the first time.

4. THE SCARCITY OF PEASANTS

One feature of Aurangzeb's orders remains to be noticed, the stress which is laid on the need for keeping, and for obtaining, peasants. In previous chapters we have seen that, from the thirteenth century onwards, extension of cultivation had been the most important item in the official policy of agrarian development; but the earlier declarations point to an increase in the size of holdings rather than in the number of peasants. Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq, for instance, wished to see the peasants extending their holdings year by year; and Akbar's rules for collectors contemplate the same process, while the topic of absconding peasants finds no place in them. By Aurangzeb's time, however, absconding had become a serious matter for the administration. It was to be examined in the course of each annual assessment, and great efforts were to be made to secure the return of absconders, as well as to attract peasants from all quarters (R. 2); while the detailed rules for dealing with the holdings of absconders (H. 3) suggest that cases for disposal must have been numerous. Judging from these orders alone, we should infer that at this period the limiting factor in cultivation was man-power rather than material resources, and it becomes necessary to look for the reasons why peasants had become scarce.

There are no grounds for thinking that the population of Northern India was declining seriously at this period. Taking a general view of such facts as are on record, it may be said that throughout the country population tended to increase rapidly, subject to recurring checks from war, famine, and disease. During the first half of the seventeenth century, Northern India was, comparatively speaking, peaceful. There were indeed occasional rebellions and civil wars, but the destruction of life in the course of these incidents was not unusually great. The drain on man-power caused by the conquest of the Deccan was possibly substantial in the earlier part of the period, but after about the year 1630 there was not much serious fighting; while the Maratha trouble had not come to a head at the time when Aurangzeb's revenue orders were issued. On the whole,

then, the political and military history of the period does not suggest any serious check on the natural growth of population.

The records of famine are undoubtedly incomplete,[1] but, so far as they go, they disclose no very serious calamity in Northern India during the first half of the century. There had, indeed, been heavy mortality in the year 1596, but the effects of this would have disappeared by 1660. There are indications of scarcity in the Punjab in 1614-15, and again in 1645, and in Oudh in 1650, but I have found no record of serious loss of life; while the calamity of 1630, which fell so heavily on Gujarat and the Deccan, did not extend to the North. Rajputana suffered severely in 1648, and Sind in 1658-9, but in both cases the loss was local. The famine of 1660 was severe and widespread in the South, but the only indication of its influence in the North is a statement in a chronicle of the next century that "crowds of people from all parts made their way to the capital." If "the capital" in this passage denotes Delhi, as is probable but not certain, then we may infer either that the North was affected, or that people came from the affected region to the North in search of food. Between 1660 and 1670 we read of famine again in the South and in Gujarat, but not in the North. It is, I think, quite certain that the population in the former regions must have declined heavily after 1630; but, from the recorded evidence, there is no reason for thinking that there was any serious general decline in the country from the Punjab to Bengal.

The evidence regarding epidemic disease is even more scanty than that which refers to famine, and the only point which emerges is that bubonic plague[2] was present in Northern India during the first half of the century. The Emperor Jahangir tells us that a dreadful epidemic had spread from the Punjab as far as Delhi, and caused great

[1] I discussed this subject at some length in Ch. VII of *From Akbar to Aurangeb*, where detailed references will be found to the summary given in the text. The Punjab scarcity of 1645, which is not mentioned there, is recorded in Badshahnama, II, 489.

[2] For plague, see Tuzuk, 162, 225; Badshahnama, I, i. 439, II, 353; Khwafi, i. 755, and ii. 382. The identity of the disease is usually indicated by references to either the presence of buboes, or the effect on rats and mice.

mortality, but had wholly subsided in the year 1616 ; the symptoms are not described, but the language used points to plague.[1] Either the statement that the disease had subsided was premature, or fresh infection supervened, for plague was prevalent in the city of Agra in 1618, in 1632, and in 1644, and in Delhi in 1656 ; while it was virulent in the Deccan and Gujarat for several years before 1689. It is possible then that the rural population of the North had been affected by a prolonged epidemic of plague at the time when Aurangzeb's orders issued, but I know of no direct evidence in favour of this view, and on the other hand there is definite and credible evidence that the scarcity of peasants was due to flight, not death.

This evidence is contained in the survey of the Mogul Empire[2] which Francois Bernier wrote for Colbert, the eminent French statesman, about the year 1670. Bernier was well qualified for the task he undertook. He came of peasant stock, and was thus in a position to appreciate the agrarian situation which he found in India ; while, at the same time, he was a highly educated man, having taken a Doctor's degree at the University of Montpellier, and he had travelled widely, in Asia as well as Europe, before he reached India about the time of Aurangzeb's accession. He spent eight years at the Emperor's Court in practice as a physician, he was on familiar terms with some of the high officers, and his opportunities for acquiring knowledge were thus much greater than those of an ordinary traveller. That they were well used is apparent from his observations on various topics, such, for instance, as the supply of gold and silver, which can be confirmed from the Dutch and English commercial records of the period ; and there are no grounds for rejecting his evidence on the question which concerns us—the scarcity of peasants, and their readiness to abscond. "

This scarcity of peasants had clearly impressed itself

[1] This epidemic is mentioned in some Factory Records published in Sir William Foster's *Supplementary Calendar of Documents in the India Office*; see Nos. 377, 379, 384, 393. The information is, however, not at first hand; one report declared it was "not the plague," but this is by no means conclusive.

[2] Bernier. The Letter to Colbert begins on p. 200; the extract given is on p. 205; the subject of absconding recurs on pp. 226, 232.

very strongly on his mind, and it is noteworthy that he does not attribute any part of it to exceptional mortality. Had plague been raging throughout the country, he, as a practising physician, could scarcely have ignored the fact; but he is quite definite in attributing the evil, not to any such cause, but to the severity of the administration, which drove the peasants to abscond. Much of the Empire, he observed, was

"badly cultivated, and thinly peopled; and even a considerable portion of the good land remains untilled from want of labourers[1]; many of whom perish in consequence of the bad treatment they experience from the Governor. These poor people, when incapable of discharging the demands of their rapacious lords, are not only often deprived of the means of subsistence, but are bereft of their children, who are carried away as slaves. Thus it happens that many of the peasantry, driven to despair by so execrable a tyranny, abandon the country, and seek a more tolerable mode of existence, either in the towns, or camps; as bearers of burdens, carriers of water, or servants to horsemen. Sometimes they fly to the territories of a Raja, because there they find less oppression, and are allowed a greater degree of comfort."

According to Bernier, then, the peasants were being driven by administrative pressure into other occupations, or, into regions where the Mogul administration did not operate; and his account, which is in itself credible, fits in precisely with the situation depicted in Aurangzeb's orders, a peasantry heavily assessed and kept under strict discipline, but decreasing in numbers to an extent which was seriously embarrassing the administration. The increase in administrative pressure which had occurred during the first half of the century must be attributed either to Jahangir, or to Shahjahan, or to both Emperors. According to the traditional account summarised in an earlier section, we must look to the reign of Shahjahan for most, if not all, of the increase, since the revenue from the Reserved areas rose in that period from 150 to nearly 400 lakhs; but more definite evidence is wanted for a final verdict.[2] All that can be

[1] The quotation is from the published translation; "peasants" would be a more precise rendering than "labourers" of the word *laboureurs*.

[2] In *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, Ch. VIII, sec. 5, I argued that the increased pressure during Shahjahan's reign was reflected in certain revenue statistics which have survived. I have since found that the argument is

said with certainty is that, by the early years of Aurangzeb's reign, administrative pressure had increased to a point where it was tending to defeat its object, even in the Reserved areas; and we must infer that the injurious effects were greater in Assignments, because of the short and precarious tenure on which they were usually held. Taking Aurangzeb's orders as they stand, it would have been possible for a provincial Diwan, endowed with the necessary capacity, tact, and integrity, to work up the revenue of his charge by degrees; it would have been obvious folly on the part of an ordinary Assignee to attempt anything of the kind, seeing that he must expect to lose the Assignment before the results of his efforts would be manifest. Whether any provincial Diwan at this period was in fact a successful revenue-administrator is doubtful, for Bernier tells us[1] that the Reserved areas were farmed, and in his description of the prevalent oppression he draws no distinction between officials, farmers, and assignees; all that can be said is that there was some room for successful administration in the one case, but scarcely any in the other.

Here the story which I have been endeavouring to tell comes to its conclusion, so far as the assessment of the peasants in Northern India is concerned. I have traced no reference to any important change during the century and a half intervening between Aurangzeb's accession and the establishment of British rule in the North; while the practice which was found in operation by the early British administrators is precisely that which is described in

formally defective, because the statistics for the opening of the reign are described as *hasil*, while the later figures are *jama*. Following previous translators, I had treated these terms as synonymous, but, as is explained in Appendix A, a distinction must be drawn between them, and the figures are not directly comparable. To re-establish the argument, it would be necessary either to find figures for the *jama* at Shahjahan's accession, or to determine the precise relation between *hasil* and *jama* at that period, and my search for these data has so far proved unsuccessful.

[1] Bernier, 224, 225. He writes of assignees under the name "timariots," which he had presumably learned during his travels in Turkey; it denotes the holder of a tenure involving military service, and apparently indistinguishable from the assignments of the Mogul Empire. It is not, I think, necessary to read the passage as stating that Farming was invariable in the Reserved areas, though we must conclude that it was a common practice.

Aurangzeb's orders of 1665. Thus Holt Mackenzie, writing in 1819, quotes[1] a description of the procedure in the Delhi territory at a time when the native institutions had not been disturbed, which shows that the person in authority—whoever he might be—"made settlements with the village zamindars for such a fixed annual revenue as the latter agreed to pay, or he took the Government share of the crops in kind, or he levied the established pecuniary assessment according to the quantity of the land cultivated and the species of crop grown." Here we have Group-assessment in the foreground, with Sharing and Measurement behind, exactly as in the time of Aurangzeb; and the standard of the revenue also was unchanged being "half of the produce of land fully cultivated," while in practice as much was taken "as the cultivator could afford to give." Similarly Lord Moira, in his Minute of 1815, described the early British practice in the following terms: "The Collector considers the former assessment of the village, compares it with all the information he has received, and, having endeavoured to form an estimate of its capability, offers it to the proprietor at the rate of assessment he conceives it capable of yielding. The proprietor denies the extent of capability, when the Collector threatens measurement, the dread of an exposition of the real state from which will generally induce an acceptance of the offer." Here again, we have Group-assessment, made on general considerations, as the regular practice, with the threat of Measurement in reserve, almost exactly as the arrangements are described in Aurangzeb's farman.

We may take it then that the method of Group-assessment, which, at some unascertained time, superseded the methods favoured by Sher Shah and Akbar, persisted as the ordinary practice in Northern India until the end of the Moslem period. The interest which the intervening years possess for us lies in the developments affecting Intermediaries, which resulted in the fusion of Assignees and Grantees, Chiefs, Headmen, and Farmers, into a body of

[1] Rev. Sel., i. 89, 90 (Holt Mackenzie); 323 (Lord Moira). The words "village zamindar" in the first quotation denote the peasants acting through their headmen.

landholders, which was to be recognised by British law as homogeneous; the earlier stages in these developments form the subject of the next section.

5. INTERMEDIARIES UNDER AURANGZEB AND HIS SUCCESSORS

We have seen in a previous section that, in the middle of the seventeenth century, the great bulk of the revenue was assigned, as much as 19 krors out of the total of 22; and consequently the assignees were at that period much the most important class of Intermediaries between the Emperor and the peasants. During the next half century, a gradual change occurred, and shortly after the end of Aurangzeb's reign. Assignments, taken as a whole, had become unremunerative, and were naturally unpopular; they continued to be made, bu energetic men preferred a title resting on force to one which was based on paper, and in the course of the eighteenth century the Taluq, or "Dependency," came to take the place of the Assignment as the most prominent agrarian institution.

The unpopularity of Assignments is a familiar topic in the chronicle written by Khwafi Khan shortly after Aurangzeb's death. The most noteworthy passage is a digression,[1] where, after describing the liberality of Shahjahan in equipping his officers for active service, the chronicler proceeds to stress the contrast between past and present. Nowadays, he says in effect, perhaps one or two in a hundred of the wretched assignees may get a morsel of bread from their Assignments, but the rest are starving mendicants; while those who are nominally on the cash-roll may possibly receive their pay for a year or two at most. The passage is rhetorical, and the writer was obviously a pessimist, so that his language must be somewhat heavily discounted; but there is no reason to suppose that it does not represent in substance the opinion current in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. Perhaps its most significant feature

[1] Khwafi. i. 622. The approximate date of this chronicle is fixed by such passages as ii. 578, where the year of writing is given as 1155 H, or 1722–3.

is the recognition that it might be better to be on the cash-list than to have an Assignment. No such preference is suggested by the records of the earlier period, during which all high and favoured officers received Assignments as a matter of course, while the only changes in conditions recorded in the chronicles during the interval were on the whole in favour of the assignees.

One of these changes related to a practice by which the assignees were required to pay for the keep of the animals in the Imperial stables.[1] This practice became a serious burden during the reign of Aurangzeb, when the income from Assignments was declining, so that the demand made by the stables on an individual might even exceed the total he was able to collect; but under Shah Alam these charges were so adjusted that no grievance remained. The other, and more important, change in practice was the disappearance of the audit. During the seventeenth century, it was the duty of the provincial Diwan to see that assignees did not retain more than the sums to which they were entitled, and to recover any excess for the treasury. On the other hand, an assignee could claim to be reimbursed for deficiency in his actual Income arising from certain causes, though it was difficult to establish such claims in the face of the determined opposition of the accountants. An Assignment thus involved a periodical contest of wits, in which the assignee needed to employ competent agents, and probably to spend money freely on bribery, if he was to retain what he had succeeded in collecting; but during Aurangzeb's reign the practice gradually decayed, and the audit-procedure had become obsolete when Khwafi Khan wrote.[2]

The reasons for the unpopularity of Assignments must then be sought, not in changes in administrative practice, but in the conditions of the time, the decline in agricultural production, and the weakening of the central authority.

[1] Khwafi, ii. 602.

[2] For this complicated subject see Tuzuk, 22, 89, 190, 399; Salih, 319; Siqi, 234; Khwafi, i. 753, ii. 87, 397. That a recovery might be substantial in amount appears from the record in Siqi, 170, that Shayista Khan was surcharged 132 lakhs of rupees for what he had collected in excess of his authorised Income while Viceroy of Bengal.

The flight of peasants from the land to more attractive occupations, which was considered in the last section, undoubtedly continued, and was probably intensified, during the reign of Aurangzeb; and when peasants decreased, the assignees' Income was necessarily reduced. We may indeed reasonably infer that the process, once started, was apt to be cumulative, because an assignee, with a short and uncertain tenure, would ordinarily try to make good some part of his loss by increased pressure on the peasants who remained at work, and increased pressure would in turn strengthen the motives which tempted peasants to abscond. A progressive decline in the Income yielded by Assignments would of itself explain their unpopularity, but in addition there was the risk that the assignee might not be able to obtain possession even of what remained.

So far as the Deccan is concerned, this risk arose primarily from the activities of the Marathas. The story of Aurangzeb's attempt to maintain his position in the South can be read elsewhere, and it must suffice to recall the fact that the Marathas steadily extended both their settled dominions and their claim to share in the yield of a much larger area. A passage in Khwafi Khan (ii. 784 ff.) shows that within ten years of Aurangzeb's death this claim, which in form amounted to one-fourth (*chauth*) of the revenue, had in practice risen to nearly one-half; while in villages which had been restored after depopulation, the gross produce was divided equally between the Marathas, the assignees, and the peasants. Thus an assignee could not hope to realise anything like the share of half the produce, which had formerly represented his Income; and it must always have been doubtful if he would be allowed to realise anything at all in the areas where the Marathas maintained their separate staff of revenue-collectors. It is easy then to understand that a cash-order, even on an almost empty treasury, would have been preferred to an Assignment in the region dominated by the Marathas.

As regards Northern India, our information is very incomplete, for the chronicles tell us little of what was happening in the North after the year 1682, when Aurangzeb transferred his Court to the Deccan. All that can be said is that

the Administration was gradually losing its hold on the country, officials were getting out of hand, and strong men were beginning to assume an attitude of independence. Khwafi Khan tells a story (ii. 861), which is perhaps typical of what was going on. For some years before 1719, an Afghan named Husain Khan had gone into rebellion, and taken possession of some parganas in the neighbourhood of Lahore; the officials employed by the State, and by the assignees, were driven out of their charges, the Viceroy's troops were more than once defeated, and Husain Khan was for a time practically independent, but ultimately he was killed in a skirmish with the Viceroy. Further South we get glimpses of the revolt of the Jats near Agra, which resulted eventually in the establishment of the State of Bharatpur.[1] The local traditions of Oudh show that, by the end of the seventeenth century, Chiefs and officials alike were engaging in the struggle for territory;[2] and these incidents cannot be regarded as exceptional. An assignee could no longer rely on the authority of the Emperor; he had to expect that other claimants to the revenue would appear, and he must either repel them by force, or submit to the loss of his expected Income.

The eighteenth century was thus a period when *de facto* possession came to count for much more than title, and it was characterised by an apparent assimilation among the different classes of Intermediaries, of the kind which, as we have seen, occurred in the disorganisation of the Delhi kingdom after the death of Firuz. This assimilation is reflected in the history of the word Taluq,[3] which may be rendered as Dependency. The word and its derivatives appear occasionally in the earlier chronicles as denoting the relationship between a person and his position, whether official or territorial, but there is no sign of any specialised

1 Khwafi. ii. In 1683, Khan Jahan was sent from the Deccan to punish the Jats (316). He failed, and there was more trouble in 1690 (394). The chronicler does not pursue the subject, but the story of the rise of the State can be read in the *Imperial Gazetteer*, viii. 74.

2 See *e.g.*, W. C. Benett, *The Chief Clans of the Roy Bareilly District* (revised edition, 1895), p. 36 ff.

3 More precisely *ta'alluq*. The derivative word taluqdar, "holder of a taluq," though familiar, is best avoided in a general discussion, because its meaning now varies in different provinces.

or technical meaning up to the middle of the seventeenth century, when the Badshahnama was written. In the Maasir-i Alamgiri, which was completed in 1710, there are signs of specialisation, while Khwafi Khan, writing some years later, used the word definitely in the special sense which was current in the North at the opening of the British period, that is to say as denoting a tract of country held in possession, whatever the nature of the title.[1] An official or a Chief, an assignee, or even a foreign power, could have a Dependency in this special sense, for possession was coming to be the only thing that mattered. In the next chapter we shall have to record the results which ensued when British officers came to administer Northern India, and tended, not unnaturally, to regard Dependencies of all sorts as held in the same tenure; here it must suffice to note that the term, in its special sense, came into prominence in the period of disorganisation, when the value of rights or claims depended mainly on the power to enforce them.

Among the various holders of Dependencies, we have seen already that assignees had lost the leading position they occupied in the middle of the seventeenth century. Meanwhile other classes of Intermediaries had increased in importance. The decay of the central administration necessarily strengthened the Chiefs; and this term must now be extended to Moslems, since men of this religion had in fact established themselves in positions not to be distinguished from those of Rajas or Rais. Strong Viceroys might become *de facto* Kings, as happened in Oudh, in Rohilkhand, and in Farrukhabad; and officers of lower rank might in the same way establish themselves as practically independent within a smaller area. Farmers also had similar opportunities, which were increased by a prolongation in the terms for which farms were given, and by the practice of accepting

[1] Khwafi Khan in his first volume applies the word indifferently to the area held by an assignee (i. 266, 324); by a Chief—Jodhpur (i. 288), and Jhajhar Bundela (i. 516); and by a foreign power—"the taluq of the Portuguese" (i. 469). Its use becomes more common in the second volume, when he was writing of his own time: *e.g.* "zamindars in their own taluq" (ii. 89); the taluqs of assignees (114); "the taluq of the Faujdar of Mulher" (277).

premiums in advance ;[1] and, speaking generally, we must regard the period which followed the death of Aurangzeb as one in which men of these various classes were competing with one another in a struggle for territorial position, and the revenue which it brought. Rights to receive the revenue could still be granted by the Emperor, but the power of the Empire could not enforce his orders, and the right might often be given to whoever had secured possession by force. The results of these conditions were manifest when the northern provinces came under British rule, as will be described in the next chapter.

Before taking leave finally of the Assignment system, a few words may be said regarding the practice of Valuation during the seventeenth century. The only reference I have found in the chronicles to a formal revision is Jahangir's order (Tuzuk, 9) appointing a Diwan to revise the Valuation of Bengal. There is no record of the result, but, as will be explained in Chapter VII, there are indications that revisions were subsequently carried out in this province. The maintenance of a general Valuation during the first half of the century is established by various passages, some of which are quoted in Appendix A, contrasting the Income of a particular region with its Valuation. Some statistical records[2] of the next century indicate obscurely that a change in practice took place during the reign of Aurangzeb, for figures for his Empire are given in three columns instead of two. The first, which is headed *jama-i dami*, may safely be taken as the formal Valuation, and the third (*hasil-i sanwat*) as current, or recent, Income; but the second (*hasil-i kamil*), which is not explained in any document within my knowledge, is more difficult to interpret. The heading means "complete" or "perfect" Income, and points to some sort of standard figure, but its nature, and the method of its calculation, are matters for conjecture.

My own guess is that "perfect Income" is an office abbreviation of "Income of the perfect year"; that is to

1 In Farrukhsiyar's reign "lakhs were realised by sale of farms of the Reserved parganas" (Khwafi, ii. 773). A little later, the practice of farming was condemned as ruinous to the Empire (ii. 948), but it was not discontinued for long.

2 "Official manuals" (*Dastur-ul amal*), Or. 1779 and 1842; Add. 6588.

say, that sometime in this century, when Income was found to have diverged from Valuation, the Ministry, instead of laboriously calculating a new Valuation on the lines followed under Akbar, chose the figures of some particular year as a standard to serve the same purpose ; but, for some reason or other, the obsolete figures were preserved alongside of the new standard, so that the three columns showed respectively the old and new Valuations and the current Income. The idea of a typical, or standard, year (*sal-i kamil*) existed at least as early as the reign of Akbar,[1] and the adoption of such a standard for Valuation would not be an altogether unreasonable expedient, but I can find no positive evidence on the subject, and all that can be said with confidence is that some sort of Valuation was used in the Ministry until the practice of Assignment decayed in the eighteenth century.

[1] Akbarnama, iii. 451; Badshahnama, I, ii, 287.

Chapter VI

The Last Phase in Northern India

I. INTRODUCTORY

THE last phase of the Moslem agrarian system in Northern India must be studied mainly in the initial proceedings of the administrations which succeeded the Moslem power; and the most suitable area for this purpose comprises the country which at the opening of the nineteenth century was described as the Ceded and Conquered Provinces, together with the "Benares Province or Zemindarry," or, in the nomenclature of to-day, the United Provinces exclusive of Oudh, Kumaun, and parts of Bundelkhand.[1] The extant records relating to this area may be regarded as sufficient for the present purpose; but at the same time they are incomplete, and also treacherous, so that it will be well to explain the exact position in some little detail.

The earliest English administrators in this region were necessarily ignorant of the local conditions; while their proceedings were governed by orders founded on experience gained in Bengal and Bihar, experience which was in some respects seriously misleading. They knew that the primary business of the administration was to arrange for collecting the State's share of the produce of the land, and the first task assigned to them by the orders issued in Calcutta was to find the landowners, and compound with them for its collection on the lines which had been adopted

[1] The revenue history of the Benares province begins in the year 1787, when Jonathan Duncan became Resident; he was authorised to carry out a settlement of the revenue, and his operations were given legal force by Bengal Regulation II of 1795. The "Ceded Provinces," acquired in 1801, surrounded Oudh on three sides, and comprised the present Gorakhpur division on the East, Rohilkhand on the West, and the lower Doab on the South and South-West; Farrukhabad was added a year later. The "Conquered Provinces" included the rest of the Doab and small areas to the West of the Jumna, while parts of Bundelkhand were acquired about the same time.

in Bengal. The question, Who is the landowner? was, however, one to which no precise answer could be given. For one thing, the rights which in the aggregate constitute ownership, in the English sense of the word, were not as a rule vested in one person, but were distributed irregularly among the various parties connected with the land; and for a other, the collapse of the Mogul administration had produced an environment in which might counted for more than right. As the administrators came into closer contact with the facts, they learned by degrees that the important thing was, not to search for non-existent landowners, but to ascertain and respect the rights, interests, and privileges of the different parties found in enjoyment of the produce of the soil; but, before this stage had been reached, many dubious claims had been recognised, and many existing claims had disappeared, so that the first formal Record of Rights did not represent accurately the position at the end of the Moslem period.

The attitude of the people, especially the important classes of Intermediaries, contributed materially to this result. As we have seen in the last chapter, the collapse of Mogul authority had resulted in a misleading appearance of uniformity among these classes. Assignments had declined in importance, while farms of the revenue had been given for longer terms, and tended in practice to become hereditary. The position of a hereditary Farmer looks from the outside very like that of a Chief; and Chiefs and Farmers alike had been busily engaged in extending their spheres of influence, bringing into their Dependencies, by fair means as well as foul, the peasants of villages who wanted only to be left alone, and were ready to pay the King's Share to anyone who would undertake the King's duty of protecting them against interference from outside. When English administrators looked for landowners, it was usually these Intermediaries who presented themselves; some of them, at least, realised from the outset that the English were offering a new, and possibly a stable, form of tenure; and men who had been following the road leading to kingship naturally strove for ownership when they found that kingship was beyond their reach.

The peasants, on the other hand, were slow to come forward, deterred partly by ignorance, partly by the requirement that they should engage for a term of years to pay a cash-revenue based on the existing standards, which left no margin for unfavourable seasons. At first, many dubious claims were recognised, but the new "owners" frequently failed to pay the revenue for which they had engaged, and were summarily displaced; and for a short time the whole position was unstable. The details of this period, and of the gradual approach to stability lie beyond the scope of this essay; my only reason for referring to these topics is that they explain why it is impossible to present anything like a quantitative account of the position at the end of the Moslem period, to say with precision what districts or parganas were held in what tenure, or what portions of agricultural land were liable to what burdens.

Leaving quantity aside, it is possible to describe the position at the beginning of the period of British rule; but the records available for this purpose are, as I have said, treacherous, and make it very easy for the student to go seriously wrong. As usual, the main difficulty is the terminology. The earliest administrators brought with them the technical vocabulary of Bengal, so far as they had succeeded in acquiring it, and applied the terms to things which looked like the originals; but appearances were sometimes misleading, things were found for which Bengal supplied no names, words had acquired different meanings in different places, and, as time went on, in the mouths of different officers; and the confusion became so great that Holt Mackenzie, the Secretary to the Government of India, writing in the year 1819, suggested[1] that in issuing Regulations it would be advisable "to adopt the use of artificial words, barbarous as they may seem, and altogether to avoid the use of terms already in use until the uniformity of their

[1] Rev. Sel. i. 131. As examples of the pitfalls in these records it may be noted that the familiar term *khudkasht* is often applied in the sense now accepted to land cultivated by a landholder, but more frequently it means land held by a resident peasant who is not a landholder. *Asami* is applied to two different classes of peasants, as Mackenzie points out. What he does not mention is that he himself uses *zamindar* in at least three senses, to denote (*a*) what I call Chiefs, (*b*) a particular class of peasants, (*c*) persons of whatever class allowed to engage for the revenue of a village.

acceptance throughout the country is fully ascertained." This heroic counsel was not followed, and in any case it could not have affected the records already in existence; but the fact that it was tendered is a sufficient danger-signal. A student who dips in the records of the period in search of a particular fact will probably be misled; it is necessary to master each record as a whole, interpreting the technical terms with one eye on the future and the other on the past, to take into account both the individuality of the writer, and the locality from which his experience was drawn, to discard pre-conceived ideas as to the meaning, and occasionally to suspend judgment for the time being. In the account which follows, as in the earlier chapters, I have endeavoured to minimise the risk of misconception by selecting, as far as possible, terms which carry no misleading connotations, and by explaining the sense in which I use them.

2. VILLAGE ORGANISATION

At the opening of the nineteenth century[1] an ordinary village in the Ceded and Conquered Provinces might be expected to contain, in addition to the peasants engaged in cultivation, three classes of inhabitants, landless labourers, village servants, and recipients of charity. The class of landless labourers was, as it still is, widely spread, and of great economic importance, but, being landless, these men lie outside the scope of the present discussion, and it must suffice to say that, so far as it is possible to judge, they were rarely free, and scarcely ever slaves; they may perhaps be regarded as in a state of rather mild serfdom, the incidents of which varied within wide limits. The village servants were remunerated by methods which bear the stamp of antiquity. They usually had a claim on the peasants' crops, assessed sometimes on the area sown, sometimes on the produce gathered, sometimes on the plough, the oldest unit recognised in the industry. Their claims were sometimes met in cash, but more usually in produce; and, apart from the seasonal or annual dues, many of them were

[1] Except where other references are given, the facts summarised in this section and those which follow will be found in three volumes, the Duncan Records, and Revenue Selections, i and ii.

allowed to cultivate small portions of the village lands, retaining the entire produce for themselves. Analogous to these service tenures were the lands granted by way of charity; the holders of these also enjoyed the entire produce, paying nothing on account of the King's share.

Service and charitable tenures were common at this period, but in an ordinary village they occupied only a trifling proportion of the land under cultivation. The bulk of it was held by the peasants, who fall into three classes, the organised bodies which I shall call Brotherhoods,[1] peasants living in the village but outside the Brotherhood, and peasants living in another village and coming in to work. The position of the non-resident peasant was purely contractual. The managers of a village with land to spare were glad to find outsiders to cultivate it; peasants in a neighbouring village might be induced to cultivate it on certain terms; and the bargain was struck according to the views of the parties.

The position held by peasants living in the village, but outside the Brotherhood, was less clearly defined. Some reports of the period presented them as entitled to continue in occupation at established rates of rent; others as entitled to occupy, but liable to pay whatever rates might be demanded; the majority as liable to be ejected at the end of each successive year. These discordant reports may well represent real local differences, but the truth is that whatever views were expressed on the subject were at this period largely theoretical; land lay waiting for peasants, and, so long as that condition persisted, the question of peasants' rights could not arise in practice on any considerable scale. A manager might, or might not, be able to turn out a peasant, but he would be a fool to do so when nobody was available to take his place; that is the gist of numerous

[1] In the Records, the peasants forming the Brotherhood are usually called village-*zamindars*, *pattidars*, sharers, or parceners. They are sometimes referred to in the aggregate as the "village community," but this term frequently covers other elements of the population, and, apart from this ambiguity, it has gathered so many vague connotations that I prefer to avoid it. "Brotherhood" is occasionally used in the Records in the sense which I intend, and not in any other. Non-resident peasants were called, as they still are called, *pahikasht*, but with varied spelling (*e.g. pykoost*). Resident peasants were called either, as now, *chapparband*, or else *khudkasht*.

reports, and the absence of competition for land is borne out abundantly from other sources.[1] In the actual practice of the period, these peasants usually came to terms with the managers either once a year or once a season, and written agreements were frequently exchanged; except in the case of existing Contract-holdings, the peasants were usually reluctant to bind themselves for a longer period, and their attitude was undoubtedly prudent at a time when the natural risks of agriculture were supplemented by the dangers arising out of the disturbed condition of the country. In effect, then, the position of these peasants was contractual, though the terms of the contract were probably influenced by traditions dating from earlier times, traditions which, under other circumstances, might have crystallised out as definite right and liabilities.

The available records justify the statement that at this period a Brotherhood existed in most villages, but certainly not in all. The institution consisted of a number of peasants held together by the tie of a common ancestry, each individual having separate possession of the land which he cultivated, but the whole body acting together, through its representatives, in managing the affairs of the village, and paying the revenue to whoever might be entitled to receive it. The members were ordinarily grouped in divisions and subdivisions on a scheme representing, or at any rate believed to represent, the operation of the Hindu law of inheritance; and land which was not possessed by an individual member might be held jointly by the members of a subdivision, or of a division, or by the whole Brotherhood.

It was frequently observed at the time that the areas assigned to the various subdivisions or individuals did not correspond exactly with the areas they would have received under the law of inheritance, so that a subdivision recorded as holding, say, one-fourth of the village would not necessarily hold one-fourth of the area; and two explanations of these discrepancies were recorded, both of which were probably true in one village or another. The first explanation was that the distribution took quality as well as quantity

[1] As an example, I may refer to Twining's description of his journey from Delhi to Futehgarh in 1794-5, Part II of *Travels in India a Hundred Years Ago* (London, 1893).

into account, so that an excess of area would represent compensation for inferiority. The second may be given in the words of the Commissioner of Agra.[1] "The strong and crafty too frequently in past and present times have got the better of the weak and simple; the absence of those entitled to share, or the incapacity (from non-age or other cause) of some of the resident proprietors, has enabled others, on pretence of deposit or management, to obtain and keep possession of shares very disproportionate to their hereditary rights." Here we meet with a feature still familiar in village life, a few members of the Brotherhood acting as a dominant clique, to the detriment of their weaker brethren. Idealists have sometimes depicted the Indian villages of the past as harmonious little republics, where every member was assured of his rights; but there has been a good deal of human nature in them, as there still is, and we must allow for wide divergence of character, rendering such generalisations misleading. It is safer to hold that in the past, as in the present, there were villages of all sorts.

The business of the Brotherhood was conducted by managers or Headmen,[2] commonly one to represent each main division. The position was filled in various ways, but ordinarily it tended to be hereditary, subject to displacement by the sharers for incompetence. The Headmen dealt with those peasants who were outside the Brotherhood, deffayed common expenses, and paid the revenue, realising the money required from the members in ways that differed widely ; and in a proper Brotherhood there was an annual settlement of accounts, in which the members participated. At this period, however, the position of Headman was not always one to be desired. The pitch of the revenue was, as we shall see, very high, somewhere about half the produce; Intermediaries looked primarily to the Headmen for payment ; and default might be visited on their persons. An ordinary man with a substantial holding was often unwilling to take the risks attached to the position for the sake

[1] Rev. Sel., ii. 342.

[2] The usual name for the Headman was *muqaddam*, but *muqaddams* were found also in villages which had no Brotherhood. The term became unpopular early in the British period, because the people thought their rulers misunderstood it, and it was replaced by the hybrid "number-*dar*" now naturalised in language as *lambardar*.

of the customary remuneration or perquisites which it offered; and in the last days of the Moslem period the Headmen were often either men of straw, or else men of exceptional force of character. A person with a very small stake in the village was put forward as nominal Headman, prepared to abscond if his position became really dangerous; or, in the alternative, the post was accepted by a man strong enough to turn it to his personal advantage.

The usurping Headman was thus a characteristic figure at this period, but I think it would be rash to assume that he emerged in it for the first time. The fullest description of him is contained in the following extract from a document[1] which Jonathan Duncan transmitted to the Government in the year 1794.

"There are cases where there is one Zemindar, in whose name the Pottahs have all along stood, who is very powerful, and of whom all his brethren stand in fear; he collects from his brothers and from the Ryots the Malgoozary or revenue, taking on himself to settle for the whole of what he pays to the Sircar ("Treasury," or "Government",) as he is in his own person the master of profit and loss, and if all the brethren should desire to enter into possession with him according to their respective shares, he will not admit thereof, but, at the same time, without preventing them from carrying on their cultivation, only keeping them excluded from any proportion of the general profit, having, besides, this additional voucher in his favour, that for 5 or 6, or 8 or 10 generations, the ancestors of these brethren of his have in like manner paid in their revenue to his particular line of ancestors, but neither does he collect from these brethren of his at the same rates as he does from the common Ryots; so much the contrary; that if the common Ryots pay for instance after the proportion of Rs. 3 per Begah (bigha,) he will only take from these his brethren at the rate of Rs. 2 per Begah, and the ryots and all submit to this from ancient custom."

That this aspect of the position of the Headman was not peculiar to the Benares country may be seen from the Report[2] which Mr. T. Fortescue, the Civil Commissioner of Delhi, wrote in the year 1820 on the revenue system of the

[1] Rev. Sel., i. 169. It will be seen that the writer of this description meant by "zemindar," one of the Brotherhood, and by "ryots" peasants outside the Brotherhood. "Pottahs" (*patta*) were the documents given to the individuals who engaged to pay the revenue.

[2] Delhi Records, 69 ff. The quotations in the text begin with para. 190.

country West of the Jumna. He recorded that, prior to British rule, "the predicament of the moquddums was frequently very trying and involved much personal suffering. If the moquddums acquiesced in the payment of a sum which the proprietors disapproved, they were sure to load them with abuse and reproach. Unless they had displayed the most devoted zeal for the village by undergoing imprisonment, stripes, starvation, etc., and had been reduced to the last extremity before yielding, the sharers were not satisfied." Here we have the Headman as genuine representative of the Brotherhood, and held strictly to his duties. On the other hand the position enabled the Headmen "often to outwit their brethren and the ruling power for their own aggrandisement. Thus, as I have before said, they would impose a higher *jumma* (revenue) than they had agreed for with the public officers and enjoy the difference, or they would agree with each sharer to receive from him a certain proportion only, by *buttie* (*batai*, Sharing) of his crops, and take upon themselves all the trouble and responsibility of paying and satisfying the Government, by which means they secured a large profit." Thus, in effect, "they became a little aristocracy; but in general they were the safeguards of the community, and had its welfare at heart."

While then many of the Headmen were faithful agents, in some cases there might be a disintegrating force at work within the Brotherhood, which, out of the original organisation, might produce a village Chief and a body of peasants holding their land from him at favourable rates. Disintegration could occur also as the result of external causes, for drought, or intolerable oppression, might drive the residents of a village to abscond *en masse*. There was a general understanding to the effect that the survivors, or their descendants, could claim to re-occupy the village at any time; but, in the case of famine at least, there might be no survivors to exercise the claim, and the village would then remain derelict until new peasants were introduced by someone anxious to draw a revenue from it. On the other hand, there are indications that repopulation of a derelict village might bring a new Brotherhood into existence in place of that which had disintegrated, so that it would

probably be a mistake to regard all the Brotherhoods as dating from the same period. The institution is undoubtedly very old, but, in the course of its long existence, many particular Brotherhoods may have disappeared, and many other may have emerged.

From what has been said already, it will be apparent that at this period there was considerable diversity of conditions in the villages of Northern India. The main types may be described as follows. First, there was the derelict village (*wiran*), that is to say, an area recognised as a village, but uninhabited and uncultivated, presumably because the peasants had been driven, or induced, to abandon it. Next, there was the village without a resident population, cultivated by inhabitants of other villages. These two classes were, so far as can be judged, of minor importance, and the bulk of the villages may be divided into those with a Brotherhood and those without.

The Brotherhood villages may be classed as "pure" or "mixed," the distinction turning on the presence of resident peasants outside the Brotherhood. The pure type was characteristic of that part of Bundelkhand which had come under British rule: in it, all the resident peasants were members of the Brotherhood, and, while individual members might cultivate land in another village as well as in their own, the resident peasant outside the Brotherhood was practically unknown. In the eyes of the early British administrators, this fact served to differentiate Bundelkhand from the country North of the Jumna, in which the mixed type prevailed, if it was not universal. As a matter of fact, in studying the Records, I have come across scarcely a single village in the Doab or Rohilkhand in which cultivation was carried on only by the Brotherhood and the village servants, though I have found cases where the area held by other peasants was proportionately very small; ordinarily the peasants outside the Brotherhood were an important, if sometimes a subordinate, factor in agricultural production.

The villages without a Brotherhood fall into two groups. In the first come the somewhat numerous cases of what

were then recent re-settlements, where the person entitled to collect revenue had induced peasants to settle in a deserted village. The inducements which were offered frequently included the promise that they would be allowed to remain there, and accordingly these peasants are shown in the earliest records as having a right of occupancy. I suspect that, in cases where the settlers belonged to a single caste, they may have been on the way to form a new Brotherhood when the process was arrested by the ideas introduced by British administrators; but I have not found a clear case of a Brotherhood actually originating in this way, and at any rate the administrators failed to discover a Brotherhood in these cases. The other group consists of villages which paid revenue to hereditary Chiefs, or to individuals who, in the disorganisation of the time, were establishing new chief-ships for themselves. There were Brotherhood in some Chiefs' villages, but in other there were merely unorganised peasants, who paid their dues to a manager[1] appointed by the Chief, either one of themselves or a stranger.

The foregoing analysis[2] will show that the agrarian system at this period was by no means uniform. As I have said in the previous section, it is impossible to state quantitatively the area occupied under each of these classes, but there is no doubt that in the region now under examination the bulk of the villages were cultivated by mixed bodies of peasants, each of them being managed by a

[1] Such managers appear in the Records under the name *muqaddam*, which also denoted the Headmen chosen by members of a Brotherhood. The similarity between the two kinds of managers is obvious if one looks on a village from outside, because their functions appear practically identical: inside the village, there is an obvious distinction between the Headman representing the Brotherhood and the manager imposed on the village from above.

[2] In the text I have endeavoured to concentrate on the main lines of rural organisation, and have passed over various exceptions and anomalies. Two of these, however, may be mentioned, because of their historical interest. (*a*) In some cases a village contained two Brotherhoods of different castes. This arrangement seems to have been unstable: either one Brotherhood eventually ousted the other, or the village was divided into two on the basis of existing occupation. Such partitions furnish an explanation of what are now known as *khetbat* villages, where a single map shows the lands of two *mauzas* with the fields intermingled. (*b*) In some cases a Brotherhood was spread over a much larger area than a village, having presumably been allowed to occupy a compact area, or else having gradually absorbed other villages adjoining the original foundation.

Brotherhood but containing also other cultivators outside the circle. In the next section I pass to a consideration of the methods by which the King's share of the produce was paid.

3. THE PEASANT'S PAYMENTS

At this period there is practically no trace of direct relation between salaried officials and individual peasants. The person entitled to collect the King's share of the produce, whether he held the position of Farmer, Assignee, or Chief, ordinarily came to terms with the Headmen of the village for payment of a fixed sum in cash, determined with reference to the productive capacity of the village, but not assessed in detail on individual fields or holdings. Now, as under Aurangzeb, it was the Headmen's business to realise from the individual peasants the amount which had to be paid. The King's share also was unchanged in amount, normally half the produce, and ranging downwards in particular cases to one-third; the recipient aimed at getting a sum of money representing approximately this share, or if possible a little more, while the Headmen aimed at securing a lower assessment by concealing in various ways a portion of the actual production of the village. The amount of the payment was still commonly fixed for the year, but there was in some places a tendency to repeat the assessment until the amount became "customary" in the eyes of both parties.[1]

The pitch of the revenue-Demand necessarily set the standard of the amounts to be paid by individual peasants, since it was obviously better for the Brotherhood that land should lie uncultivated than that its cultivation should involve the Headman in liability for more than he could realise from it. As regards the peasants outside the Brotherhood, the usual practice was to charge them with the revenue, *plus* some small addition representing the Brotherhood's profit; in the Records this additional charge is sometimes, but not always, included in the rates entered as payable, and consequently these sometimes exceed the standard of

[1] Delhi Records, p. 14.

one-half the produce, while in particular localities there were various allowances and deductions, which further complicate the figures; but for land in regular cultivation, and not liable to injury from special causes, it may be said that the rates recognised in the annual agreements between Headmen and peasants ranged upwards, rather than downwards, from 20 ser in the maund (40 ser) of produce, and that 22½ ser was a common figure, representing 20 ser for the Intermediary and 2½ for the Brotherhood. This general standard of payments applied to the ordinary cultivated land. For specially precarious fields, the charges ranged from one-third to one-fourth, and down to one-eighth, while there were recognised local scales of payment for land which had been uncultivated for some time.

As regards the methods of assessing the charge, a distinction must be drawn between the Doab, where the agreements usually rested on the area sown, and the country beyond the Ganges, where they usually rested on the produce gathered. In Rohilkhand and Gorakhpur, those crops which are handled on the threshing-floor were ordinarily subjected to Estimation, and the estimated amount according to the agreed share was valued at the prices ruling in the nearest market, so that what changed hands was cash, not grain. Actual division of the produce was rare, but it was the regular way of settling disputes over the estimate in the few cases where these occurred. For such crops as are not handled on the threshing-floor, the agreements provided for cash payments at rates per bigha, which appear to have been recognised in particular localities, but differed even within a village according to the productive quality of the soil.[1] Thus in ordinary cases the Headman received money from the peasants, though in exceptional cases he might have to market a share of grain in order to provide cash for paying the revenue.

In the Doab, the agreements usually fixed payments in

[1] In Rohilkhand these rates were known as *zabti*, a term which still survives. It may safely be referred to *zabti*, the official name for Akbar's developed revenue-system, the characteristic feature of which was cash-rates varying with the crop. The crops paying *zabti* rates were usually (1) sugarcane and indigo, where the produce must be worked up as it is cut; (2) poppy, and vegetables or garden crops, where the produce is gathered from day to day.

money in the form of either crop-rates, soil-rates, or lump-rents. Crop-rates were on exactly the same lines as Akbar's system, a fixed sum per bigha, varying with the nature of the crop; but the schedules were much less elaborate, crops of approximately equal value being grouped together, so that the schedule for a particular village might show only rice, other grains, sugarcane, cotton, and garden-crops. Soil-rates were altogether independent of the crop, and were presumably based on the peasants' intimate knowledge of the capacity of the land they cultivated. Lump rents were fixed sums for a fixed area, payable whether the whole area was cultivated or not, that is to say, the holdings on which they were paid were what I have called Contract-holdings. In all three cases there were customary allowances on account of crop-failure, an obvious necessity when the charges were pitched so high.

Throughout the provinces then cash-payments were the rule, and the Headman could bring before the members of his Brotherhood a sort of annual or seasonal cash account, showing what had to be paid out for revenue and other expenses, what would be received from peasants outside the Brotherhood or other sources, and what balance remained to be realised from the members. This balance was then assessed on the individual members according to the method customary in the village, sometimes on the season's yield, sometimes on each plough, but usually on the area sown; and the Headman had to collect this assessment in order to complete the necessary payments, and balance his account.

It is clear from the records of the period that the authorities who claimed revenue attempted to secure the largest possible sum, which would represent the economic rent of the village; but their attempt was not always successful, and in cases where the Headmen could retain a portion of the economic rent, it would be distributed among the Brotherhood on the system just described, in the form of a reduction in the Demand charged on their cultivation. When this occurred, it was a matter of great practical importance to conceal it, for, if it became known that the Brotherhood was making a profit, the Demand on the

village would at once be raised; and concealment was effected, or at least facilitated, by the employment of a special unit of area for the land cultivated by the Brotherhood. To take a case[1] reported from part of what is now the Ghazipur district, the net sum payable by the members of the Brotherhood being Rs. 150, and the area cultivated by them being 300 ordinary bighas, they had to pay only 8 annas per bigha; but, if this fact had become known, there would have been prompt enhancement, so they kept a special measuring-rope for their own cultivation, giving a bigha four times the usual size, and thus only 75 bighas, instead of 300, were recorded in the village papers, and the payment on this area worked out at Rs. 2 per bigha, a figure sufficiently high to avoid suspicion.

Where then the organisation of the Brotherhood functioned effectively, the profit of the village was shared equitably among the members, and competent Headmen might be able to show a profit of reasonable amount; but where a usurping Headman was found, he took much of the profit for himself in the way indicated in the quotation given in the last section, charging the members at rates somewhat less than were paid by the other peasants, and remaining "in his own person the master of profit and loss." On the other hand, there are cases on record where members of the Brotherhood paid the same rates as other peasants, because the assessment left nothing in the way of profit, and there may have been cases, though I have not come across any, where the Brotherhood actually paid rather more. The economic effect of the system was thus to take out of the

[1] Mehendy Ally Khan's report to Jonathan Duncan, Rev, Sel., i. 170. The statement that the use of the special unit of area was intended to conceal the facts was controverted on conjectural grounds by Baden. Powell (*The Land-Systems of British India*, ii. 138). His argument was that the officials "would not in the least care for areas. They probably had no measurement, but a traditional assessment of the village. . . . They cared nothing for how much land each sharer held, as long as the whole demand was paid." Aurangzeb's farmans, however, show that the data of area were regularly taken into account in making the annual assessments, so that this conjectural argument falls to the ground. They show also that the officials were ordered to make use of the village-accounts, so that it is reasonable to infer that Mehendy Ally knew what he was writing about when he wrote that the special unit was used "to the end that, should their putwarree's accounts be ever called for by Government or the Amil, the profits in their villages may not be known to amount to so much."

village either the whole or the great bulk of the Producer's Surplus, the balance, when there was a balance, being divided among the Brotherhood or retained by the Headman, as the case might be. In villages where no Brotherhood existed, the question of distributing profits would not arise, anything not taken by the manager remaining in the hands of the individual peasant who had earned it.

4. THE INTERMEDIARIES

As has already been explained, the Intermediaries found in the Ceded and Conquered Provinces at the time of acquisition presented a superficial appearance of uniformity, which had been produced by the conditions prevailing in the country during the 18th century. The cases in which a claim to a *taluq*, or Dependency, was based on an Assignment of its revenue were comparatively rare : the men whose claims came before the British officials were as a rule either Farmers or Chiefs.

At this period, when the central authority had almost ceased to count, a Farmer held his position from whoever might be *de facto* ruler of the region, and such rulers naturally preferred men who possessed some sort of local influence, because there was then some ground for hoping that they would be able to fulfil their engagements. To obtain local influence, by fair means or by foul, was thus the first step on the road of ambition; and the Records indicate that in the years before acquisition there had been a scramble for such influence over a large part, if not all, of the Ceded and Conquered Provinces. The country was full of robber bands, against whom the Empire afforded no protection; and a village which wanted only safety might reasonably offer to pay the King's share of the produce to anyone who would undertake the King's paramount duty, thus going back in effect to the fundamental idea of the old Indian polity.[1] Such an arrangement was, in the circumstances, legitimate; but when a man went further, and said, "Pay me the King's share, or I desolate the village," or followed

[1] This process, which it was the fashion to describe picturesquely as infeudation, was of course not universal, and I have not met with it West of the Jumna. In the Delhi territory, Fortescue tells us that the peasants organised their own defences. (Delhi Records, III.)

some similar line of action, one can only sympathise with villages which were thus forced into the growing Dependency. The nucleus of a Dependency having been acquired, the farm of its revenue could be secured, and the Farmer could then set himself to consolidate and extend his position. The tradition of short-term farms and frequent changes had by now given way. Farms were commonly retained for life, and might in favourable conditions be renewed to the heir, so that in English eyes they appeared to be hereditary tenures; and at any rate it is reasonable to say that such Farmers were on the way to becoming Chiefs or possibly even Kings, on the assumption of a continuance of the period of anarchy.

On the other hand, the Chiefs, who, though they may have had centuries of history behind them, had all along been in the position of Farmers from the strict fiscal standpoint, were as eager as the new men to extend their Dependencies; and we find cases where titular Rajas had taken large farms in addition to their traditional areas. Thus the first English administrators had to deal with Chiefs who were also Farmers, as well as with Farmers on the way to become Chiefs, and there is nothing surprising in the fact that for a time the two classes were treated as one. In point of fact, the early records of the period tell us very little about the distinctive features of the Chief's position, and the only approach to a precise description that I have found relates to the Doab country just north of Agra, which formed part of the district then known as Saidabad-[1]. In this district, the country along the Jumna comprised mainly Brotherhood-villages, but, further East, Brotherhoods were exceedingly rare, and the tenures of the Thakurs, or Chiefs, were described as of "infinitely higher antiquity" than those of any of the peasants in their villages. The relation between the Chief and the peasants was "nearly that which in European countries subsists between the landlord and his tenantry"; the peasants did not usually form a Brotherhood, but were a heterogeneous body of various castes and tribes; and the Chief contracted for the revenue with one or more of their number, or else with a

1 Rev. Sel., ii. 328 ff.

manager from outside the village. The writer of the report assumed that in these cases the original Brotherhoods had been ousted at some distant date by the Chief, but this is speculation, unsupported by evidence, and the hypothetical date may, for all we know, lie far beyond the Moslem conquest. The most significant feature of the Chief's tenure is that at his death his rights were not as a rule distributed according to the Hindu law of inheritance. A new Chief succeeded, chosen according to whatever custom prevailed in the family, and he usually provided for the necessities of his collateral relatives, but the cadets of the family had to "look to their own exertions for subsistence."

This succession of an individual to the undivided rights appears also in the traditional histories of some of the Chiefs in Oudh,[1] and it is a fact with which we must reckon. It points to a recognised distinction between "property," which under the devoloped Sacred Law is ordinarily divided at death, and "Chief's Right," which is not divided, and must be regarded rather as a survival of sovereignty. The fact that a Chief had acknowledged the supremacy of a Moslem dynasty at Delhi or elsewhere made no difference to his position within his own domain, so long as he was allowed to retain possession of it; when his rights were terminated, it was by superior force. This interpretation of the facts is, even now, in accordance with the popular attitude in Chiefs' country; the Chief's domain is still the Raj or kingdom, and within it his will may be very nearly law; and while the tradition has gradually weakened, and is bound to weaken further, I think its existence must be accepted by the historian as definite evidence of a claim to sovereignty, a claim which probably rests on the facts of a more or less distant epoch, though records of the facts may not have survived.

This conclusion must not however, be extended to the

[1] See, for instance, *History of the Sombansi Raj*, by Bishambar Nath Tholal (Cawnpore, 1900). This interesting little book traces the traditional history of the Chiefs of Partabgarh back to the thirteenth century, when Lukhan Sen carved out a domain for himself, and recounts the succession of Chiefs for twenty generations. See also, Benett's *Chief Clans of the Roy Bareilly District* (revised edition, Lucknow, 1895); and Elliott's *Chronicles of Oonao* (Allahabad, 1862).

whole of the area which was found included in the Dependencies held by Chiefs, because, as we have seen, some of them had been active in extending their Dependencies in the years immediately preceding the establishment of British administration; what portion of an estate recognised by the law of to-day represents ancient sovereignty, and what portion is a modern accretion, is a question of fact to be determined separately in each case. We know of landholders in Oudh whose estates date only from the nineteenth century ; of others whose estates were founded in the Moslem period; and of others again whose traditions carry us even further back As with the Brotherhood, so with the Chief ; the institution is one of great antiquity, but we must not infer that all Chiefs date from the same period, or that their possessions have remained unchanged in extent.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In order to complete this account of the agrarian system as it existed in Northern India at the end of the eighteenth century, it is perhaps desirable to see how the various details fit in with the facts which have been discussed in previous chapters. The village as a unit stands, it will be seen, exactly where it stood in the time of Aurangzeb, the revenue due from it being assessed, usually for the year, at a lump sum of money, fixed with reference to its productive capacity, and intended to represent ordinarily half the gross produce, but not distributed by the assessors over the individual peasants. Inside the village we find the individual peasants contributing to this revenue on one or other of the familiar systems, either on an estimate (or sometimes a determination) of the produce gathered, or by rates on the area sown, or by a lump sum payable for the holding. The only apparent novelty is in the method of rating ; in many cases we find crop-rates, exactly like those charged by Sher Shah or Akbar, but with simplified schedules ; but in others we find rates varying with the soil and independent of the crops grown.

I have not come across any definite evidence to show that any of the Moslem administrators who attempted to deal with individual peasants in this region, used these soil-rates,

but there is one case in which they may have been utilised in Moslem times, though the fact is not recorded. We have seen in Chapter IV that Akbar's administrators prepared a set of assessment-schedules differentiated to meet the local conditions prevailing in the different portions of the Empire ; and I conjecture that, in defining the area to which a particular schedule was to apply, they may have been guided, among other data, by the soil-rates recognised in the villages, and used in determining intra-village payments. On this view, the division of Akbar's Empire into circles with separate schedules of rates would stand in historical relation with the assessment-circles of the nineteenth century, which were based largely on the soil-rates actually prevailing : but the schedules themselves were not based on differences of soil, but on differences of yield.

Outside the village, as inside it, there is no apparent breach of continuity. Assignments still existed, though they had become much less important ; the village paid the revenue ordinarily to a Chief or to a Farmer, and the fact that farms tended to increase in duration finds a ready explanation in the changes resulting from the decay of the Mogul administration. The stability of the insitutions whose history can be traced justifies us in asking whether we can carry back through the Moslem period those other institutions on which Moslem chronicles throw so little light—the Brotherhood, the peasants outside the Brotherhood, and the minor tenures, which have been described above.

As to the minor tenures, it may be said with confidence that no inference can be drawn from their non-appearance in the chronicles, because they would have been mentioned only by accident. The village servants are obviously an old institution, the methods of their remuneration bear the stamp of antiquity, and, in the absence of anything like evidence to the contrary, it is reasonable to infer that their tenure of small areas of land has persisted from very early times. Somewhat similar considerations are applicable

[1] The early English records of the Upper Doab contain occasional references to the *balahar*, or village menial. It will be remembered that the regulations of Alauddin Khalji mentioned the *balahar* as representing the lowest stratum in the rural population.

to the small charitable tenures, which I guess to be an institution of old standing; but the area falling under these heads is proportionately so small that they call for mention rather than detailed discussion. The real problem is the silence of the chronicles regarding the organisation of the peasants within the village.

As to this problem, it is well to recall that the evidence available is very unequally distributed over the Moslem period. We have a comparatively large amount of detail regarding the efforts of a few outstanding administrators to deal directly with the individual peasants; but these are episodes only, when measured by years, and our sources are very imperfect for the much longer intervals when, in the absence of an Alauddin or a Sher Shah, we must assume that the revenue administration worked on lines too unsensational to attract a chronicler's attention. It is unlikely that we should hear much of a village organisation during the episodes of activity when the administration was trying to get behind that organisation to the individuals who composed it, while in the remainder of the period there was nothing for a chronicler to tell.

The scanty indications of the existence of a regular organisation group themselves round the *muqaddam*, that is, the Headman, and the Accountant. We have seen that, at the end of the Moslem period, villages dealt with the authorities only through *muqaddams*, and the early English records show that the prominence of these men tended to obscure the position occupied by the other peasants, so that, just at first, some *muqaddams* looked like the landowners for whom the English administrators were seeking. It is safe to identify these prominent men with the *muqaddams* mentioned in Aurangzeb's farman to Rashik Das, where they appear as potential oppressors of the peasants. We may again identify the *muqaddams* of Aurangzeb's time with those who appear in Akbar's detailed instructions as taking part in the seasonal assessments; and also with the *kalantaran-i deh*, whom the Emperor regarded as potential oppressors of the peasantry.[1] Viewed from above, then,

[1] *Ain*, i. 286. Jarrett's translation of the passage (ii. 45) is not exact. The compiler of this portion of the *Ain* used various words to denote the prominent men in a village—*muqaddam*, *kalantaran-i deh*, *rais-i deh*, etc.;

the *muqaddams* of Mogul times were very like the *muqaddams* described in the passages already quoted, men with sufficient power to render them a danger to the other peasants in the village.

When we go back to the fourteenth century, the ground is less firm, for there are a few instances in Ziya Barni's chronicle where the word *muqaddam* seems to refer to the Chief of a considerable area, but in most cases the natural interpretation is identical with that of later times. It must be remembered that Arabic names for Indian institutions can in no case be older than the twelfth century, and it is not necessary to assume that the official terminology was fixed all at once. We have seen that the word *zamindar* had not been definitely chosen to denote a Chief in Ziya Barni's time, though it was coming into use in that sense, and I suspect that the term *muqaddam*, as denoting a village Headman, was, so to speak, crystallising out at the same period; it might still carry the unspecialised meaning of a leader or a prominent man, but, when used in relation to a village, it had become practically specialised. It is probable then, though it is not formally proved, that the institution of village-Headmen continued through the Moslem period, and dates from Hindu times.

In the same way, the few chance references to the viliage-accountant seem to furnish definite evidence of continuity. Under Alauddin as under Aurangzeb, we have seen this functionary recording the village-accounts in such a form that they might be of great value to the administrator; while Akbar's rules for collectors show him incidentally at his daily work, keeping records which could serve as a check on the officials employed in assessment and collection.

We cannot argue with entire certainty from the Headman to the Brotherhood, because, as we have seen, the word *muqaddam* covered managers in villages of all sorts; and a student reasoning *in vacuo* might contend that the *muqaddams* of whom we read during the Moslem period were in all cases managers of villages without a Brotherhood, or,

examination of the various passages discloses no trace of a distinction between these terms, and I take them to be one instance of what is a common feature in this portion of the work, the attempt to secure the utmost possible variety of diction by a free use of synonyms.

in other words, that Brotherhoods did not then exist. We may, however, wait until this hypothetical student appears; for the present I perfer to take the Brotherhood as a very old Hindu institution, one which bears the marks of its antiquity on its face, and we may infer with a high degree of probability that many, though not necessarily all, the *muqaddams* mentioned in Moslem chronicles were representatives of a Brotherhood of the kind which has survived Moslem rule, and which is known, in some parts of India, to have existed before the first Moslem conquests. Whether some of them represented villages without a Brotherhood, is a question on which I have found no evidence. It is possible that at one time the Brotherhood was a universal institution, and that all the cases where it is not found are to be explained as instances of disintegration; it is also possible that in some circumstances new villages were established in conditions under which a Brotherhood failed to grow up; but, in the absence of evidence, speculation on these alternatives would be unprofitable.

The remaining question, the existence during the Moslem period of resident peasants outside the Brotherhood, is also one on which I have found no direct evidence. The most important fact in this connection is, I think, the wide distribution throughout Northern India of the castes which have specialised in intensive cultivation—the Arain, the Mali, the Kachhi, the Koiri. It is conceivable that this distribution may have occurred in comparatively recent times, but it looks older; possibly the traditions of these castes, which, so far as I konw, have never been studied from this point of view, might throw some light on the question, but for the present I must leave it open. On the whole, it seems to me to be reasonable to accept the current view that the existence of a Brotherhood was an ordinary feature in villages throughout the Moslem period ; but, at the same time, it would be unsafe, in the existing state of knowledge, to assume either that the institution was universal, in the sense that there was a Brotherhood in every village, or that it was exclusive, in the sense that there were no resident peasants outside its circle.

Chapter VII

The Outlying Regions

1. THE DECCAN

I HAD hoped to conclude this essay by an account of the agrarian developments in the different States into which the first Moslem kingdom of Delhi broke up, but the materials within my reach have proved to be too scanty for such an undertaking. In the case of Malwa, I have found nothing beyond a passage[1] showing that Assignment were common in the early part of the sixteenth century; while the available chronicles of Gujarat allow us to see only that, during the period of independence, the great bulk of the country was shared between assignees and tributary Chiefs. In neither case have I been able to discover any contemporary account of the position of the peasants under the local dynasties, while it will be recalled that the description of these two provinces given in the Ain are obscure, so that it would be dangerous to base any argument on them regarding the conditions which prevailed at the time of the Mogul conquest These two kingdoms must therefore be passed over, and this chapter confined to two regions—the Deccan and Bengal.

The term Deccan denotes a geographical region rather than a precise unit of administration, and has to be interpreted by the facts of any particular period; but, in the language of the Moslem chroniclers, it usually meant whatever area, beyond the line of the Narbada, was under Moslem rule, its southern, and fluctuating, boundary being the Hindu territory subject to Vijayanagar. We have seen in Chapter II that Alauddin Khalji carried the Moslem

[1] Bayley, 353, for Malwa; 5—16, and *passim*, for Gujarat.

arms across the Narbada, and, during a portion of the fourteenth century, there were Deccan provinces subject to Delhi. Alauddin did not introduce his distinctive revenue-system in this tract, and practically all we know about it is that the practice of Farming existed. Judging by the particular instances recorded, the farms were given for large areas, entire provinces or groups of provinces; and, in the reign of Muhammad Tughlaq, they were held, sometimes at least, by mere speculators.

The disintegration of the Delhi kingdom resulted in the formation of two Moslem States in the Deccan, Khandesh in the North, and beyond it the Bahmani kingdom. About the end of the fifteenth century the latter broke up into five units, Berar, Ahmadnagar, Golconda, Bidar, and Bijapur, so that in the sixteenth century there were six powers in all, which were reduced to three by Akbar's annexation of Berar and Khandesh; and the absorption of Bidar by its neighbours. For the history of these two centuries we are dependent almost entirely on the chronicle written by Muhammad Qasim Firishta,[1] whose work suggests that he was not interested in agrarian questions. We learn from it incidentally that Assignments were common, and that Reserved areas existed, in the Bahmani kingdom (320,356); but there is nothing to show what share of the produce was ordinarily claimed by the king, or how it was assessed and collected, nor are there any details of interest relating to the organisation of the village or the other topics at present under our consideration. We have seen, however, that assessment by *nasaq* had been the, rule for a long time in Berar when it was annexed by Akbar and that probably the same system prevailed at the same period in Khandesh: for the kingdoms further to the South I have found no similar informatiom. The exact meaning of the term *nasaq* in this connection is uncertain, as has already been explained. It points definitely to assessment on a village (or a larger area), not on individual peasants;

[1] The references to Firishta are to the Cawnproe lithographed text of 1873; I have checked the relevant passages by the Bombay edition giving Briggs' text, and found no material difference. Briggs' translation is quite useless for administrative details owing to the looseness of the terminology employed by him.

whether the assessment was made with the headmen, or with farmers not belonging to the village, is a question on which I have found too little evidence for a confident decision, and it is possible that both these alternatives may be covered by the term.

The first definite landmark in the agrarian history of this portion of the country is the system of assessment introduced by Malik Ambar in Ahmadnagar, at the time when he was struggling to maintain the independence of part of that kingdom against Jahangir. The evidence of traditions which survived into the British period shows that the changes then made were important, but I have failed to determine their precise nature. I have found no contemporary account, while the descriptions[1] given by Grant Duff and Robertson, which appear to be the foundations of all that has been written on the subject, are somewhat obscure, and differ in points which must be regarded as essential. Grant Duff's concise account was based principally on certain Maratha MSS., which are not now identifiable, but which can scarcely be contemporary sources; according to it, Malik Ambar abolished Farming, and substituted a collection of "a moderate proportion of the actual produce in kind, which, after the experience of several seasons, was commuted for a payment in money settled annually according to the cultivation." A footnote adds that his authorities showed the State's claim as two-fifths of the produce, while tradition put the money-commutation equal to about one-third. According to this account, the sequence of assessment methods was, first Farming, then Sharing in kind, then Measurement at cash-rates, or something very like it.

Robertson's description was based on traditions collected by him in the district of Poona; but he was obsessed by James Grant's erroneous account[2] of Todar Mal's system, which he supposed had been imitated by Malik Ambar, and his efforts to make tradition square with what he believed Todar Mal to have done involved him in a good deal of

[1] For Grant Duff, see his *History of the Mahrattas*, i. 95 (edition of 1826). Robertson's Report is given in *Selection of Papers from the Records of the E. I. House*, Vol. IV (1826), pp. 397 ff.

[2] Grant's account is discussed in the next section.

guess-work. According to him, Malik Ambar abolished the practice of Sharing, and established "a fixed rent in kind," which, later on, was replaced by "a fixed rent in money"; and various passages in the Report show that he used these terms in their natural sense, so that he could speak of "a permanent village settlement," with a revenue independent of seasonal fluctuations. Elsewhere, however, he refers to grain-rates charged on the bigha, and he allows that the fixed money-rent existed in only 110 villages out of 290 in the region covered by his enquiries. He did not find any precise statement of the share claimed, but guessed it to be less than one-third.

Malik Ambar's final method was then either a cash Demand, fixed annually on the basis of cultivation, or a Demand fixed once for all, either in cash or in grain, and independent of changes in cultivation. In the present state of our knowledge, no decision can be made between these alternatives, though, in the circumstances of the time, the former is the more probable. The duration of his method, whatever it was, is also uncertain. He died about the year 1626, and his methods may have died with him; but in any case they could scarcely have survived the calamities of the next ten years. The Deccan was desolated by the great famine of 1630, and the fighting which preceded the final annexation of Ahmadnagar completed the disorganisation of agriculture: it is quite certain that "fixed rents" in Robertson's phrase could not have continued to be paid, and it is very doubtful if the machinery required for the system indicated by Grant Duff could have continued to function.

All we know is that the economic and financial position of the Deccan as a whole remained unsatisfactory for some years after the Mogul annexation of Ahmadnagar. The administrative organisation of this region was altered more than once, but eventually[1] four Mogul provinces were constituted, all of which were sometimes placed under a single Viceroy. After some time, Prince Aurangzeb was appointed to this post; and, beginning about the year 1652, an entire reorganisation of the revenue-system was undertaken,

[1] Badshahnama, I, ii. 205, II, 710 ff.

which, so far as it is possible to judge, appears to have been conceived and executed on statesmanlike lines.

The work was entrusted to an officer named Murshid Quli Khan,[1] who was appointed Diwan, first in the two southern provinces, and then for the whole region. He was a foreigner, a native of Khorasan, who came to India in the service of Ali Mardan Khan, and enjoyed a share of the lavish patronage which fell to the followers of that officer after he transferred his allegiance from Persia to India. Murshid Quli's first recorded appointment was that of Faujdar in the Punjab hills; then he became Master of the Stables, and then Bakhshi of Lahore, from which post he was sent to the Deccan as Diwan. He had thus, so far as the chronicles show, no previous experience of revenue work in India.

The immediate need of the country was to collect peasants with adequate resources, and in this matter the practice of the North was followed, in that reliance was placed mainly on the village headmen. The headmen, we are told, were encouraged and rewarded, advances in cash were given to them, and competent men were chosen for those villages where the headmen had disappeared. At the same time the possibilities of restoration were ascertained by an extensive survey, in which the culturable lands were distinguished from the unproductive areas. This, too, was in accordance with northern practice, if we may accept Badauni's account that Akbar's collectors began by examining the whole country, and selecting the areas capable of cultivation. The novelty of Murshid Quli Khan's work lay in the methods of assessment.

The account which we are following states that up to this time neither Measurement nor Sharing had been

[1] For Murshid Quli Khan's work, see Maasirulumra, III, 493 ff., and Khwafi, i. 714, 731 ff. The text of Khwafi is fluid, and the passages on pp. 714, 731 are contradictory in details, and so condensed as to be barely intelligible by themselves; but the full account given from a single MS., p. 732*n*, is clear and precise. It agrees closely with that in the Maasirul-umra, so closely that probably either one was copied from the other with verbal changes, or the two were taken from a common source; in either case they must be regarded as constituting a single authority. This Murshid Quli must of course be distinguished from the officer of the same name, who was so prominent a figure in Bengal half a century later, and who is better known by his title of Jafar Khan.

practised in the Deccan. The old-established unit of assessment was the plough; "each headman or peasant who, with one plough and team, cultivated what area he could, and sowed what crop he chose, paid a small sum for each plough"; the amount demanded for a plough differed according to the pargana, and no enquiry was made as to the yield. It may be questioned whether this statement is precisely applicable to the entire region, because uniformity over so large an area is somewhat improbable, while it is at variance with the traditional accounts of Malik Ambar's reforms in Ahmadnagar ; but we may reasonably infer that plough-rents, the existence of which can be traced into the British period, were at this time the prevailing system in a large part of the Deccan.[1] Murshid Quli Khan did not abolish plough-rents altogether, but he introduced Sharing and Measurement as alternatives, so that he had three methods in all, applied doubtless in accordance with local conditions—the backward tracts assessed on the plough, the more developed villages by one of the new alternatives, but with a definite preference for Measurement.

The system of Sharing now introduced was that which I have described in Chapter I as "differential," that is to say, the share claimed was not uniform for all crops, but differed with circumstances. For crops depending on rain, the State took one-half the produce ; for crops irrigated from wells, the claim was one-third for grain, while high-grade crops, such as sugarcane or poppy, were charged at varying rates from one-fourth downwards to one-ninth according to variations in the cost of production ; and lastly, for crops irrigated from canals the rates varied somewhat from those for wells, but are not stated in figures.

In Measurement, on the other hand, all crops were charged at cash-rates, on the basis of one-fourth of the produce valued at local prices. In the conditions prevailing in this region, where rains-crops cover most of the area, a marked inducement was thus offered to accept Measurement

[1] I have not traced independent evidence to show that plough-rents prevailed in Khandesh or Berar, but, if they did, the fact would not be inconsistent with the statement that assessment by *nasaq* was the rule in these provinces under Akbar; the headmen, or farmers, might agree to pay a lump sum for the village, and distribute it over the peasants on the basis of ploughs, instead of cultivated area, or gathered produce.

instead of Sharing ; the bulk of the land would then pay one-fourth, instead of one-half, and it would be only in villages with large areas of high-grade crops that the peasants would ordinarily prefer to be assessed by Sharing. The account does not say that peasants were in fact given a choice, but, remembering that at the moment the main object was to attract peasants to desolate country, it is reasonable to infer that an option was given to them, similar to that which Akbar had authorised in order to secure extension of cultivation in the North.

The differential scale of Sharing now appears in Indian records for the first time, apart from the early episode in Sind, which has been mentioned in Chapter I. As we have seen, it forms one of the main distinctions between the Islamic and Hindu agrarian systems, and the fact that its introducer was a foreigner is suggestive ; it looks to me as if Murshid Quli Khan had been familiar with differential Sharing when he was working in Persia under Ali Mardan, and had drawn on his Persian experience when he was sent to reorganise the Deccan, but there is no positive evidence on this point. How far this method was adopted in practice is a question on which I have found no information, but the account I have been following lays stress rather on the spread of the alternative method of Measurement, which is said to have become popular owing to Murshid Quli's sagacity, and which, as we have seen, was in all ordinary cases more favourable to the peasantry. No explanation is given of the selection of one-fourth as the share of the produce to be claimed under this method, and it is permissible to take it as a proof of Murshid Quli's practical statesmanship, that he should have discarded the dangerously high proportion which was at this time established in the North. That he attended to details as well as principles may be gathered from the recorded tradition that, in cases where the measurements were open to suspicion, he would hold one end of the measuring-rope himself ; and, after allowing for rhetorical exaggeration, it is reasonable to infer from the statement of the authorities that his policy resulted in a progressive increase in cultivation, and consequently in revenue, in the region where it operated.

In the course of the next half century, most of this region fell into the hands of the Marathas, whose agrarian policy is outside the scope of the present essay; but the South-eastern portion came under the rule of Asaf Jah, the founder of the modern State of Hyderabad, and, as will be explained in the next section, this fact is of historical importance for the beginnings of the British administration in Bengal.

It remains to mention the position in the States of Golconda and Bijapur, which, though paying tribute, were still outside the Mogul Empire at the time of Murshid Quli's reorganisation. I have found no contemporary account of the position in Golconda during the sixteenth century, but early in the seventeenth the country was wholly under the farming-system in its worst form, the amount payable being settled annually by auction,[1] and the system was clearly of old standing at the time when the descriptions we possess were written. We have seen in an earlier chapter that farming was practised in this region in the fourteenth century, and we find it in full swing in the seventeenth; if there were any changes in the interval, they are not recorded in any of the authorities which have come to my notice; and the inference that farming continued throughout seems to me to be probable, but is not established by direct evidence.

Under the annual auction-farm, the pressure on the peasants was necessarily at its maximum; as Methwold wrote, the King's subjects were "all his tenants, and at a rack tent"; and the only limit on exaction was the risk of driving the peasants to rebel or abscond. The share of the produce which they were expected to pay is not on record, but it can scarcely have been a factor of much practical importance when the farmer was concerned only to realise the greatest possible sum, and had no reason to think of the future. I have not found contemporary records of the

[1] Methwold, *Relations of the Kingdom of Golckonda*, in *Purchas His Pilgrimage*, 4th edition. *Description of the Domains of King Kotebipa..* in the Dutch collection of voyages known as *Begin ende Voortgangh van de..O. I. Compagnie* (ii. 77 ff.). The evidence regarding Golconda and Bijapur is discussed at greater length in *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, Ch. VIII, sec. 3.

later history of this region, the bulk of which came under the rule of Asaf Jah, and is now comprised in the Hyderabad State; but Farming is said[1] to have been the rule throughout the eighteenth century, and to have continued until its abolition by Sir Salar Jang in, or shortly after, the year 1853.

For the remaining kingdom, Bijapur, I have found scarcely any information. A few chance entries in Dutch records show that Farming existed in the seventeenth century, but they do not suffice even for such a general description as has been given for Golconda, and by the end of that century the bulk of the country had passed to the Marathas. In the absence of contemporary records, it is useless to speculate as to the details of its agrarian system during the period of Moslem rule.

The agrarian position in the final southward extension of Moslem rule can be traced in the Regulations issued by Tipu Sultan in the year 1785 for a portion of his kingdom of Mysore. I have failed to find the Persian text of these regulations, but the extant translation[2] preserves many of the technical terms, and justifies the following description. Peasants in this region held their land (rule 3) on one of two tenures, either Contract, or Sharing; in the latter case, the State claimed half the produce, and apparently this tenure was preferred, because collectors were ordered to see that the proportion of land under it was maintained. Stress was laid on the peasants' duty to cultivate (2), and on the improvement of cropping (4); and advances or other concessions (2, 15-18, 21, 26-28) were authorised to secure these objects, while headmen were to be flogged (9) for default. Stress was laid also (34-36) on the construction and maintenance of irrigation-works and other improvements; and, speaking generally, the regulations embody the traditional policy, under which the peasants were to be kept under strict discipline, and encouraged, or compelled, to make the best use of their land. It was the collector's duty to attract peasants when the numbers were

[1] *Imperial Gazetteer*, xiii. 280.

[2] *British India Analysed*, pp. 1 ff. The book is anonymous, but is catalogued in the British Museum under the name Greville.

insufficient (10), and he was liable to a fine (49) for each plough lost by the absconding of peasants.

The collector was formally directed to deal with individual peasants, but the practice of farming a village was recognised (8, 9, 16, 39), and it may be inferred from the detailed provisions that farms were, at any rate, common. The collector was paid by a commission on the amount he realised; out of the total, he had to defray the salaries of his sanctioned staff (58), and the balance was his personal remuneration, so that he had a direct pecuniary interest in his work.

In the case of these regulations, as of some others which have been examined in previous chapters, the only comment that is required is that their results must have depended mainly on the quality of the administration. An honest and zealous collector, under competent supervision, could have worked the system with satisfactory results; without these qualities, the life of the peasants could have been made almost intolerable. The numerous prohibitions show that abuses were expected, but their frequency is a matter of conjecture; and here, as elsewhere, the conditions of peasant-life must have depended very largely on the presence or absence of competition for land. So long as opportunities for migration existed, they set a limit to oppression or extortion; where the peasant was tied to his village by the want of any accessible refuge, a limit can scarcely be said to have existed.

2. BENGAL

The agrarian history of Bengal is of peculiar interest, because it was in Calcutta that the early British administrators acquired the terminology which they carried with them to the North, and which combined with other circumstances to involve them in the mass of misconceptions described in Holt Mackenzie's Memorandum; but for Bengal as a whole I have found in the northern literature scarcely anything beyond the statement in the Ain (i. 389) that Akbar maintained the methods of assessment which were in force at the time of annexation; and such information as I have been able to gather from the earlier sources relates only to a few villages along the Hugli, which were possibly

not typical of the province. The story of these villages must be told at some little length, because it appears to furnish a clue to some of the early difficulties of British administration in other parts of India. As I understand the position, Englishmen were first brought into contact with agrarian matters in a region were the local terminology differed from that which was employed in the North; and the subsequent difficulties resulted to some extent from the application of this local terminology to regions where it was not previously in use.

The story begins in the sixteenth century with the decay of the port of Satgaon, and the consequent migrations of its population. Most of the migrants moved to Hugli, which, as a centre of foreign trade, came practically into the possession of the Portuguese. At this time the country near Hugli was largely unoccupied, and we are told that, before the Mogul annexation, Portuguese individuals had obtained farms (*ijara*) of portions of it at a low revenue.[1] In view of the conditions which prevailed, it is reasonable to infer that these farms were in the nature of clearing-leases, that is to say, a fixed annual payment was accepted for vacant land, which the farmers had to bring under cultivation in order to obtain a profit. These particular farms were apparently brought summarily to an end when Shah-jahan expelled the Portuguese from Hugli; his orders specified that the intruders were to be exterminated, while in the course of the operations detachments were sent into the neighbouring villages "to send the Christians of the *ijaradars* to hell," meaning, I suppose, the Christian tenants whom the Portuguese farmers had settled on the land.

While, however, most of the migrants from Satgaon had moved to Hugli, a few Hindu families had gone further down the river, and founded two settlements, which were named Govindpur and Sutanuti. They, or their successors, also obtained possession of an existing village named Deh-i Kalkata, and the three places can be spoken of as "the three Towns," in the phrase used in the early British records.[2]

[1] Badshahnama, I, i. 434, 437.

[2] The relevant records are abstracted in *Early Annals*, and *Old Fort William*. A copy of the sale-deed of the three towns is in the British Museum, Add. 24, 039, No. 39.

When the first Fort William was being constructed in Sutanuti, the English merchants naturally desired to obtain possession of some land in its immediate vicinity, and in the year 1698, with the sanction of the provincial Viceroy, they bought the rights (whatever they were) of the holders of these three Towns. In the sale-deed, the holders were styled zamindar, and the English understood the transaction as a purchase of the zamindari, or, as they rendered the word, "the right of renting" the Towns.

In this transaction the word zamindar can be read in one of two ways. Taken in its general sense, it may mean "holder of land," denoting the fact of possession, but implying nothing as to the title on which possession is based; and this was probably the meaning current in the locality at this period. In the alternative, it might denote holding land by some particular title (whatever it was) derived from the Moslem ruler. Neither of these alternatives can be made to agree with the precise use of the word zamindar in the literature of Northern India, where, from the fourteenth to the eighteenth century, it denoted possession by a particular title antecedent to Moslem rule, that is to say its application was limited to the class which I have designated as Chiefs. The founders of Govindpur and Sutanuti obviously cannot be brought within this class; and in point of fact the officials at Delhi did not describe the rights purchased by the Company as zamindari. In the year 1717 the Surman Embassy obtained a farman[1] from the Emperor Farrukhsiyar, which, among other provisions, confirmed the existing English tenure of the three Towns, and sanctioned the acquisition of others on the same tenure. The extant translations of the farman speak of "the renting of the three Towns," the phrase which the English authorities took as the equivalent of zamindari; but the farman itself, which had been examined in draft in the Revenue Ministry, speaks not of zamindari, but of taluqdari, the term which, as we have seen, had by this time come into use in Northern India to denote possession, whatever the title might be.

[1] The text of the farman is given alongside of the translation in I. O. Records, Home Misc., Vol. LXIX, p. 130. The sanction for the additional towns did not become operative, and consequently there are no illustrative documents regarding them.

At this time then, Calcutta meant by zamindari what Delhi meant by taluqdari; and, in the precise official language of the North, the East India Company became by purchase the taluqdar of the three Towns. The merchants, however, continued to employ the local term, and proceeded to extend its use; the Member of Council who was placed in charge of the three Towns was designated Zamindar, and, in accordance with the practice of the period, the term "black zamindar" was applied to his Indian assistant. Here, I think, we find the germ of the idea which appears from time to time in the English records, that the word zamindar denoted a collector of rent, remunerated by salary or commission, as the case might be; and that meaning is a very long way from the established northern use of a hereditary Chief with claims antecedent to Moslem rule.

Thus the nature of the Company's tenure cannot be inferred from the designations applied to it, which are general, and not specific. The Records show its Collector as granting leases (*patta*), subject to a maximum rate, which had apparently been fixed by superior authority, collecting rents, and managing the villages in general; and as paying an annual sum of about Rs. 1290 to the local revenue-collectors, who demanded it in the usual three instalments,[1] sometimes for the King, and at others for the assignee in possession. So much is clear, that the Company was not liable to a changing annual assessment, but paid a stated sum, which the merchants regarded as invariable. I suspect that what they acquired was really an old farm (*ijara*) in the nature of a clearing-lease; and this may be the implication of the Company's promise[2] that "particular care shall be taken to

[1] The farman puts the annual payment at Rs. 1195-6; but the Company stated the "rent" as Rs. 1281-6-9 (*Early Annals*, II, i. 17), and the recorded payments for the years after 1717 total about Rs. 1290, the exact amounts varying by small sums according to the denomination of the rupees in which payment was made. I conjecture that the extra amount may have denoted some cesses added to the original sum, and this may be the meaning of the phrase "something more" in the Company's petition (II, ii. 60), "the rent .. according to the King's books, amounts to 1194.14, and something more; which is yearly paid into the Treasury."

[2] *Early Annals*, II, ii. 60. There is a discrepancy in the translations of the documents of 1717. The farman, or general sanction, from the Emperor was accompanied by a batch of particular orders dealing with each point separately, the 28th of which related to the grant of land.

make them (the Towns) flourish," a phrase which points to the development of vacant land. It would be rash to use the word "permanent" of any transaction entered into by a government of the period; but it is clear that the fixed payment had already become established when the Company acquired its rights, and the question of possible future enhancement does not appear to have been raised in the course of the negotiations. Whatever the tenure really was, the fact remains that the origin of the early English use of the word zamindar is to be found in connection with this transaction; whether the Company's tenure was technically *ijara* or something else, the English in Calcutta were led to call it zamindari, and they became habituated to the word in the sense of collecting rents from tenants and paying revenue to government—the sense which later on they carried into Northern India.

Whether this sense of the term prevailed generally in Bengal, or was confined to the neighbourhood of the Hugli, is a question to which I cannot give a definite answer based on contemporary sources. I have not had opportunities of studying any records of the local history during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and I cannot offer a confident account of what happened in the province at large during the interval between the preparation of the Ain and the appointment of the East India Company as Diwan in the year 1765. If, however, we may accept Sir John Shore's later account[1] as correctly representing the facts of that period, the word zamindar carried throughout Bengal the wider meaning which, we have seen, was current in Calcutta. Shore recognised that the zamindars of Akbar's time were what I have called Chiefs, that is to say, men with claims antecedent to the establishment of the Mogul government, and enjoying hereditary positions subject to recognition by the Emperor. The great majority of the

The translation of the former speaks of "renting," but in the latter the term used is "farming"; and, since the translations were made at the same time, and presumably by the same staff, the difference may well indicate a difference of language in the originals. I have failed to trace a Persian version of this order, and the question cannot therefore be settled definitely, but it is possible that "farming" in the translation may represent *ijara* in the missing original.

[1] Shore's Minute of 2nd April, 1788, reprinted in *Firminger*, ii, 737.

Bengal zamindaris had, however, come into existence after Akbar's reign. At first the position was definitely official, that of a revenue collector with certain stated remuneration; but the collector developed into a Farmer, paying a fixed sum, and making what he could; and then the Farmer became assimilated by degrees to the Chief, acquiring hereditary claims, and obtaining the same designation, which thus came to cover Chiefs, Farmers, and collectors alike. According to this account, the Bengal zamindar of the eighteenth century was precisely the counterpart of the taluqdar of Northern India at the same period, a person in possession, whatever his title might be.

This view appears to me to be, at the least, probable; but it is not so easy to accept the account of the revenue assessments during the same period which became current in Calcutta through the labours of James Grant; and which is the starting point of most of what has recently been published on the subject.[1] Grant's studies were carried on, as he tells us, in Hyderabad, the capital of the State founded by Asaf Jah. Here he obtained access to records relating to Murshid Quli Khan's reorganisation of the revenue system of the Deccan, a portion of which was included in Asaf Jah's territory. In his "Political Survey of the Northern Circars," which was written in 1784, he described Murshid Quli's methods with substantial accuracy; but he added the erroneous statement that they were a servile copy of those which had been introduced in Northern India in the time of Akbar by Raja Todar Mal. Shortly afterwards, he applied the conclusions reached in the "Political Survey" to the affairs of Bengal in his better-known "Historical and Comparative Analysis of the Finances of Bengal," the whole argument of which is based on the view that Todar Mal made a detailed assessment on the peasants throughout Bengal on the lines which Murshid Quli followed in the Deccan.

[1] Grant's two works were reprinted as Appendices to the Fifth Report of the Select Committee on the Affairs of the E. I. Co., 1812, the "Survey" as Appendix 13, the "Analysis" as Appendix 4. Portions of them have been discussed by Archdeacon Firminger in his recent edition of the Fifth Report, and by Mr. Ascoli in the *Early Revenue History of Bengal*, 1917. I have examined some of Grant's work in J. R. A. S., Jan. 1926, p. 43; but when that paper was written, I had not fully realised the ambiguity underlying the term "aggregate."

According to Grant, the history of the assessment of Bengal was as follows :

(1) About the year 1582, the revenue-Demand on the peasants was fixed in detail by Todar Mal at figures representing one-fourth of the average produce. The set the standard of Demand; and collections were made according to it by zamindars, who were annual contracting farmers, with stated allowances by way of commission, and small estates, their entire legitimate receipts never exceeding ten per cent. of the Demand.

(2) This Demand was revised by Shah Shuja in 1658, but its basis was not altered; some accrued increases (of unexplained nature) were incorporated in the figures, and also the Demand on territory annexed by conquest, or transferred to Bengal from other provinces.

(3) A similar revision of the Demand was made by Murshid Quli, or Jafar Khan in 1722.

(4) Thencef orward, successive levies were made on the zamindars in the form of cesses, the basic Demand remaining unchanged.

If this account is true, then the position which we know existed in the "three Towns" about the year 1700 was almost typical of the general position in Bengal from 1582 to 1722, that is to say, the State's Demand for revenue was almost unchanged, the recorded increases representing mainly territorial adjustments. Excluding these, the unexplained enhancements were 15½ per cent. in the 76 years between 1582 and 1658, and a further 13½ per cent. in the next 64 years. If then Grant's figures represent the Demand, the enhancement made was almost negligible; and I gather from his obscure explanation that he understood it to be local, not general, particular areas having been reassessed for special reasons, so that the bulk of the province would have been paying a fixed Demand, increased only by any exactions made surreptitiously in excess of the authoritative figures.

Whether Grant's presentation is correct is a question which I cannot answer with certainty. A definite verdict would have to be based on independent study of his authorities, the volumes of old Persian accounts and other documents

to which he refers in general terms; I have not seen these, and I cannot trace any later reference to show whether or not any of them still exist. It is certain, however, that Grant's starting-point was wrong. His statement that Todar Mal made a detailed assessment of the province is historically impossible, as Shore pointed out, and it is directly at variance with the official record in the Ain, that Akbar maintained the method of assessment (*nasaq*) which he found in force; whether the word *nasaq* denotes Group-assessment, or Farming, or both, it excludes the possibility of such a detailed assessment as Grant asserted. His statement that the basis of the assessment was one-fourth of the produce must also be incorrect, for in Todar Mal's time the State's claim was uniformly one-third; the figure of one-fourth was obviously derived from Grant's early studies of the Deccan assessment, which he was led to believe was a servile copy of Todar Mal's work. Grant's account, therefore, cannot be accepted in its entirety, and the initial misapprehension affects the whole of his argument.

In my opinion, the most probable reading of Grant's earlier figures is that the documents which he used referred to Valuation, not Demand. I have given in Appendix G my reasons for holding that the statistics in the Ain, for Bengal as for the other provinces, probably represent the Valuation in force at the time when the record was compiled. The Bengal figures, which Grant took as showing Todar Mal's assessment of Demand, would on this view be in fact the first and summary Valuation of a newly acquired province, made by Todar Mal, or under his orders, on the basis of whatever data were available at the time of annexation, probably the records maintained by the former Government. This view clears up the obvious difficulty that Todar Mal could not possibly have assessed in detail the Demand on those portions of eastern Bengal, which had not fallen into Akbar's hand; it is easy to understand that, finding Chittagong, for instance, shown in the old records as still part of the kingdom of Bengal, he should have included it in the Valuation, pending the time when its possession should be obtained; while it is quite certain that, in this region, at least, he could not have carried out the

elaborate detailed assessment attributed to him by Grant.

On this view we should regard the revisions made by Shah Shuja and Jafar Khan as corrections of this original Valuation, incorporating the territory which had been acquired in the interval, and those increments of the figures for particular areas which had been made from time to time. This reading is in accordance with the fact that all three records were known to Grant under the name of "aggregates" (*jama*), the word which is appropriate to Valuations, and which would necessarily appear in the titles of such records. The idea of Valuation had, however, become obsolete before Grant took up his duties in Bengal, and it would be natural for a man in his position to understand "aggregate" in the alternative sense of Demand, which has survived in India into the present century.

It does not, however, follow from this view that Grant's elaborate discussion was entirely irrelevant, because it is quite possible that, in the case of Bengal, the Valuation may in fact have come to set the standard of the Demand made by the State, not indeed on the peasants, as he supposed, but on the Intermediaries whom it recognised. In Bengal, the position of the provincial Diwan at the beginning of the seventeenth century must have been particularly difficult. His duty was to raise the maximum revenue from the Reserved area, which, on Grant's figures,[1] considerably exceeded the area given in Assignment ; but he had, so far as we can see, absolutely nothing in the way of standards by which to check the work of the local assessors, beyond the Valuation made when Bengal was brought into the Empire. To have allowed the assessors a free hand would have been utterly at variance with Mogul administrative practice, and it would be the obvious course to check their assessments by the Valuation, the only record available in the Diwan's office, and to call for explanations in cases where the annual assessment fell below that standard. For the next half century, the assessments, taken as a

[1] Analysis, p. 255 ff. I am doubtful as to the significance of Grant's figures for Assignments, which do not explain themselves, and can be interpreted in more ways than one; but in any case the Reserved areas were important.

whole, could hardly have been expected to rise above this standard, because, with foreign trade interrupted, and a consequent scarcity of silver, prices remained abnormally low,[1] and the province generally was depressed. When, therefore, the Valuation was revised in 1658, there would be no accumulated data to justify a general rise, though particular regions may have yielded the small increase shown in Grant's figures.

Economic conditions began to change rapidly about this time with the large influx of silver imported by the Dutch and English Companies ; and Grant conjectured, with some probability, that at first the change was reflected, not in an enhancement of the formal Demand, but in the imposition of private cesses. If this is true, then the decay of the Mogul administration under Aurangzeb would explain how, in formal documents, the Demand on the Intermediaries, based, as it had come to be, on the original Valuation, would be shown as fixed, the actual enhancement being intercepted by subordinates; and in this way we should reach the position as presented by Grant in the first half of the eighteenth century, a Demand on the Intermediaries nominally almost unchanged for more than a century, but increased by cesses, first taken privately, then brought formally on to the record, and growing by degrees, until, about the year 1755, the total recorded Demand on the Intermediaries was about double the original standard.

This explanation of Grant's account is, it will be observed, conjectural. My reasons for offering it are, firstly, that the account, as it stands, is irreconcilable with the known administrative methods of the Mogul Empire; and, secondly, that it holds the field in all recent discussions of eighteenth century conditions in Bengal. It is not absolutely inconceivable that Akbar's administrators should have adopted, from the outset, methods entirely at variance with their usual practice, and established in Bengal a revenue-Demand not ordinarily alterable from year to year ; but it seems to

[1] I discussed these facts in *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, 178 ff. I there suggested that the annual drain of silver up-country might have been of the order of 50 lakhs of rupees. Grant asserted (Analysis, 323) that the drain was at least a kror yearly, but, again, I am doubtful as to his authority for this statement.

me much more probable that this peculiar feature of Bengal developed gradually under the pressure of exceptional circumstances, until figures which were originally prepared for use in granting Assignments became eventually a standard of the recurring Demand on the Intermediaries, not liable to alteration, but liable to be supplemented by cesses in the way that Grant describes. There is no doubt that the fixed ideas which Grant brought with him from Hyderabad to Bengal coloured the whole of his work in the latter province, and, as I have said above, I have had no opportunity of checking his interpretation of the statistics by the documents which we used; what I have attempted is to offer an hypothesis of his account, which may perhaps be of assistance to students of any local records of the period that may still survive.

On this hypothesis, we may say provisionally that, when Bengal was annexed by Akbar, there were some Chiefs, and some old-established Farmers, how many we cannot say, both classes paying fixed sums by way of Demand; and that, apart from the areas so held, the officials or assignees dealt with the villages either through Farmers or through the headmen. The Valuation of the province, made primarily for administrative use, came, in the absence of any other data, to set the standard of the Demand made by the State, and the officials came, as Shore stated, to occupy the position of Farmers, paying the amount of the Valuation, and making what they could. As time went on, the distinction between Chiefs, Farmers, and officials disappeared, because there was in fact no difference in the incidents of the various positions, and all alike came to be known as zamindars. The English records already quoted suggest that this transition may heve been complete by the end of the seventeenth century, but their application is limited to so small an area that further evidence is required for a conclusion on this point. While, however, the Demand on the Intermediaries was not formally varied, they were not allowed to retain the entire profits resulting from the restoration and development of commerce which occurred in the second half of the seventeenth century; the existing Demand was supplemented by cesses, which were increased

from time to time, and which in fact operated to maintain the claim of the State to a share in the produce of the country, though the developments which had occurred necessarily tended to obscure the fundamental nature of that claim. It was through this obscurity that the earliest British administrators had to grope their way to a workable agrarian system.

Chapter VIII

Conclusion

In the foregoing chapters I have set out the evidence I have been able to collect regarding the agrarian system which operated in India during six centuries of Moslem rule. Readers who have followed thus far will probably share the impression with which I leave the subject, a sense of the inequality with which the evidence is distributed both in time and in space. We know much, if not everything, regarding certain periods during which the State entered into direct relations with some, or all, of the peasants owning its authority ; but, measured by time, these periods are merely episodes, and we know very much less of the rest of the story. A few great names—Alauddin, Sher Shah, or Akbar, Todar Mal, or Murshid Quli—stand out like mountain-tops rising clear-cut above a sea of mist ; but for a just appreciation of their significance we need to obtain a view of the much wider country which the mist conceals. I cannot claim to have presented that view as a whole, but in places the mist allows occasional glimpses of portions of it, and in the paragraphs which follow, I base on these glimpses a hypothetical reconstruction, which I offer, not as fact established by evidence, but as tentative inference, to be confirmed or modified in the light of further knowledge.

It seems to me to be a probable view that, just before the establishment of Moslem rule, the Hindu Kings or Chiefs in Northern India dealt ordinarily, though not exclusively, with the village, or on occasion with an aggregate of villages, as a unit, fixing the revenue-Demand to be paid for the season, or the year, either with the headmen or with a farmer as circumstances might permit. The aim would be to realise an amount corresponding to whatever share of the produce the King or Chief might claim, but there would be an element of bargaining in the transaction, and the

arrangement would necessarily offer a prospect of remuneration for headmen or farmers, sufficient at least to make it worth their while to enter into it. Inside the village, this Demand would be realised by the headmen from the individual peasants by a charge on the plough, or by Sharing, or by Measurement, according to whatever custom might have grown up in the locality; and it would be open to the King or Chief at any time to dispense with the headmen or farmers, and enter into direct relations with the peasants on the basis of the customary method, whatever it might be.

In such an environment, the establishment of Moslem rule would take one of two forms. If the Hindu King or Chief submitted, and agreed to pay tribute, things would go on as before, except that the Chief, no longer a King, would probably try to recover the amount of the tribute from his villages by increasing the Demand on them, a process which would be possible in some conditions, if not in all. If the King or Chief did not submit, and lost his position by conquest, the conquerors would step into his place, and would probably continue the existing relations with the villages as the line of least resistance, until circumstances arose which called for a change.

The first recorded change is that which was made by Alauddin Khalji; and the motives by which he was influenced, as they are indicated by the chronicler, are consistent with the view that the position which I have sketched hypothetically prevailed in fact during the thirteenth century. The Chiefs and headmen, we are told, were retaining a share of the income of the kingdom which rendered them politically dangerous, while the burden of the Demand was unequally distributed as between the strong and the weak. Consequently Alauddin set Chiefs and headmen aside, and entered into direct relations with the peasants of a large portion of the kingdom, selecting for general adoption one of the various methods of detailed assessment which prevailed at the time.

In the circumstances of the period, his action must be regarded as the *tour de force* of an exceptionally strong administrator, and his system died with him. A very few

years later we find the Revenue Ministry pestered by farmers and their touts, an arrangement natural to a period of administrative collapse, on the assumption I have made that the practice of Farming was already familiar, but almost impossible to explain if Farming was previously unknown. A little later, we find the main burden of detailed administration passed on to assignees, who continued to carry it, with very brief intervals, up to the eighteenth century.

For the dark period which separates Sher Shah from Firuz, we have slight but significant indications that the village was the unit ordinarily dealt with by the King and his assignees. The strong administration of Sher Shah was marked by the resumption of direct relations with the peasants in a portion of the kingdom, and his example was followed for a time by Akbar, but by the middle of the seventeenth century, the village had again become the unit, a position which continued until the end of Moslem rule. The inference is, I think, permissible that, in the circumstances of the time, a system based on direct relations with individual peasants was not practicable as a permanent general arrangement. An exceptionally strong administration might carry it out successfully over wide areas for a short time, and doubtless individual Chiefs and assignees might do the same on a smaller scale; but the administrative burden was too heavy to be borne for long. The village was there, and the line of least resistance was to bargain for its revenue, either with its headmen or with a farmer, as circumstances might permit.

While, however, an element of bargaining would ordinarily enter into assessment, the basic idea of taking some definite share of the produce certainly persisted. We know that Alauddin claimed half the produce, and it is possible that this was a somewhat larger share than had been claimed in the thirteenth century, because his object was to deprive the Chiefs and headmen of a portion of the income which they had previously enjoyed. We know, too, that some sort of reduction was made by his successor, but its amount is nowhere stated, and the next established fact is Sher Shah's claim to one-third. It seems to me to

be probable that this figure was of old standing, and not an innovation; and, in the absence of records, the guess is perhaps admissible that the reduction made after Alauddin's death was from one-half to one-third, and that this figure continued to be the standard, until, some time in the first half of the seventeenth century, the maximum claim was raised to one-half. It is possible, then, though it is certainly not proved, that the share of one-third, which was recognised by commentators on the Hindu Sacred Law as the highest permissible claim, was in fact the general claim in Northern India in the twelfth century, that it was accepted by the Moslem conquerors, and that, apart from the episode of Alauddin it persisted into the Mogul period as a traditional standard, too familiar to everybody to find a place in the chronicles.

It is also possible that the general rule in the twelfth century may have been more flexible, the claim varying from one-third to one-half according to circumstances, that particular Moslem rulers selected one figure or the other as they judged best, and that the claim indicated in Aurangzeb's farmans was in accordance with the ancient tradition of the country. We have seen that in Udaipur, up to the present century, the claim was either one-third or one-half, and this may be a survival of the same tradition, uninfluenced by Moslem practice. On the available evidence, either of these hypotheses seems to be admissible, not, of course, as a conclusion, but as a basis on which to consider any new facts which may come to light.

As regards the form in which the peasants' payments were made, we know of two occasions on which, for particular reasons, collections were ordered to be made in grain ; and we know, or have reason to think, that in some backward tracts the same practice prevailed as a regular thing. In the North, however, the periods of general grain-collection were clearly episodes of short duration, and we must regard payment in cash as the ordinary rule from the thirteenth century onwards. I have not come across a single instance of payments in grain being made by headmen or farmers; and since in these cases the assessment was ordinarily made in money, we may safely infer that payments

usually took the same form. Whether or not cash-payment existed before the Moslem conquest is a question which must be left to students of the Hindu records, but it is certainly one of the characteristic features of the Moslem administration.

When we look at the period as a whole, two figures stand out as normally masters of the peasants' fate. They are not the King and the Minister, nor the assessor and collector, but the farmer and the assignee. The two institutions were not mutually exclusive, for, as we have seen, assignees sometimes farmed their Income ; but, taken together, they formed the backbone of the whole agrarian system. Neither institution is inherently bad ; both must be judged according to their conditions, and, most of all, their duration. As a matter of history, in Moslem India the tenure of assignees, as of farmers, was ordinarily far too short, and always far too uncertain, to justify expenditure of capital or effort on a constructive policy of development. The only prudent course was that which was in fact usually adopted, to take whatever the peasants could be made to pay, and leave the future to look after itself. In his analysis of the conditions prevailing in the middle of the seventeenth century, Bernier put the following argument into the mouths of the dominant classes with whom he was familiar, officials, assignees, and farmers alike :

"Why should the neglected state of this land create uneasiness in our minds ? and why should we expend our money and time to render it fruitful ? We may be deprived of it in a single moment, and our exertions would benefit neither ourselves nor our children. Let us draw from the soil all the money we can, though the peasant should starve or abscond, and we should leave it, when commanded to quit, a dreary wilderness."

In the circumstances which prevailed, the logic of that argument is not open to question ; and it may stand as the epitaph of the agrarian system to which it was applied.

In have sometimes been asked by students whether the agrarian system prevailing at one epoch or another is to be classed as "zamindari" or "ryotwari." The question involves something of an anachronism, for the clear-cut

distinction denoted by the two words only emerged as a result of the discussion of early British administrators ; but, so far as it can be answered at all, the answer must be that the Moslem system ordinarily comprised both elements. The power of the Chiefs varied inversely with the strength of the central administration, but they persisted throughout the period, and their position was in essentials that of the modern zamindar, liable to pay, or account for, an annual sum fixed in advance, and making what they could out of the peasants under their control. The distinction between the two periods is found mainly in the modern tenancy legislation, which determines the relation between land-holder and peasants in detail : so far as we know, similar limitations were not ordinarily imposed on the Chiefs by the Moslem governments.

On the other hand, the Reserved areas might certainly be described as ryotwari during the periods when salaried officials dealt directly with individual peasants. When the officials dealt with the headmen, an element of uncertainty is introduced by the dual position occupied by these representatives, for every headman was potentially a zamindar, though many acted merely as agents of the peasants. When again the officials dealt with farmers, the modern classification cannot be applied, for, so long as the farms were for short periods, the tenure was too uncertain to be classed as zamindari, and it is only towards the close of the period that it acquired a degree of stability justifying the application of that term.

The position of an assignee was no less ambiguous, for while he sometimes exercised powers approximating to those of a modern zamindar, his tenure was ordinarily far too short and precarious for him to be called by that name. Again we have to allow for the multiplication of authorities. An assignee might receive his income from farmers dealing with headmen, who in their turn dealt with the peasants, and in such a case the rights now known as zamindari were distributed between various individuals. It is not then by the road of formal classification that the student should approach the subject. His need now is the need which Holt Mackenzie pressed on the early British administrators,

to escape the domination of theories and terminologies, and to get down to the facts.

Finally, a few words may be said regarding the economic significance of the facts which have been brought together. The idea of agricultural development, progressing slowly but continuously, was already present in the fourteenth century, and probably was never entirely lost ; but the political and social environment was usually unfavourable to its fruition. The high pitch of the revenue Demand, approximating to the full economic rent, could be justified from Islamic texts by anyone who might care to take the trouble, but its actual motive was to be found in the needs of successive administrations and their officers ; and its influence was necessarily increased by the miscellaneous exactions, prohibited from time to time, but recurring regularly after each prohibition. The direct result was to take from the peasant whatever he could be made to pay, and thus to stereotype low standard of living ; but in addition there was the further effect of requiring the peasant who was making money to conceal his good fortune from everyone outside the village, and perhaps even from his neighbours. Thus the normal position was a contest between the administration and the peasants, the former endeavouring to discover and appropriate what the latter endeavoured to retain and conceal—an environment in which agricultural development could not be expected to make much headway.

If the land had been fully occupied, such a position could not have continued for long, because competition among peasants would have resulted in an increase of their payments to a point where either life ceased to be worth living, or the administration was forced to change its attitude, as in fact was to happen in the nineteenth century over the greater part of India. Throughout the Moslem period, however, there was usually land to spare, and the risk of losing peasants set some limit to administrative exactions. It is, I think, probable that the risk frequently became a reality in one part of the country or other, and that local depopulation occurred from time to time, though not on a scale to attract the chroniclers' attention; but two instances

stand out in history, the desolation of the River Country under Muhammad Tughlaq, and the general economic collapse after the middle of the seventeenth century. In both cases the administration strained the existing system to the breaking-point, and the system in fact broke down ; but during the longer periods when the system worked, its worst incidents were the repression of individual energy, and the concentration on a barren struggle to divide, rather than a concerted effort to increase, the annual produce of the country. This was the *damnosa haereditas*, the legacy of loss, which Moslem administrations left to their successors, and which is still so far from final liquidation.

Appendix A

INDO-PERSIAN TERMS FOR LAND-REVENUE

VARIOUS expressions which occur in the literature of the Moslem period have been treated by translators as synonyms, and rendered as "land-revenue," or more shortly, "revenue," a word which, as used in India, is itself ambiguous. For the purpose of interpretation it is necessary to distinguish between some of these expressions, and to formulate a precise phraseology. The conclusions stated in this appendix are derived from a collection of all the relevant passages which I have found in the Indo-Persian literature recorded in the List of Authorities (Appendix I), from the thirteenth century Tabaqat-i Nasiri, down to the chronicle of Khwafi Khan, which is nearly five centuries later.

For the present purpose it is advisable to discard the ambiguous word "revenue," and I use the following terms in the precise sense stated opposite to each.

PRODUCE.—The gross yield of crops, whether stated by weight or by value.

DEMAND.—The amount or value of Produce claimed as the share of the State, whatever the system of assessment, and whoever the actual claimant.

INCOME.—The amount realised or expected from the Demand granted or assigned to an individual.

VALUATION.—An estimate of the probable future Income from any area, required in order to facilitate the allocation of Grants or Assignments to claimants entitled to a stated Income.

The expressions which require consideration are as follows:-

1. KHARAJ. As explained in Chapter I, sec. 3 this is a precise term of Islamic law, denoting the tribute claimed from conquered land left in the possession of non-Moslems, and enuring for the benefit of Moslems in general. With the development of separate Moslem States, this latter incident came to be eliminated in practice, and kharaj was expended by the King who collected it from his dominions. The word gradually becomes less common in the literature, being replaced by other expressions noted below, but, almost wherever it is

used, it is precise in the sense of Demand; the only exceptions which have been noticed are a few rhetorical passages where the plural is used to signify exactions in a wide sense—"demands," not "Demand,"—and these are easily recognised.

2. MAL. The general sense is "wealth," or "property," but in administrative use two special senses are found.

(*a*) In the military department, the word meant "booty taken in war."

(*b*) In fiscal administration, it ordinarily meant Demand; but occasionally it was used more widely to denote the whole system under which Demand was assessed and collected, as in the phrase *mulki wa mali*, which corresponds to the now familiar "general" and "revenue" administration.

The two special senses are sometimes difficult to distinguish. Thus in a passage in the Akbarnama (iii. 316), Mr. Beveridge rendered "revenue," where I think "booty" would make better sense, because the officers whose morale was being destroyed by untimely claims for mal were not usually Demand-payers; the point is, I think, that they were being pressed to account for booty which they were alleged to have misappropriated. Ordinarily, however, there is no difficulty in discovering which sense is intended.

Mal is sometimes found in combination. Malwajibi is a recognised term for Demand, and is not ambiguous. Malguzar is usually adjectival, meaning "Demand-paying"; the modern use as a substantive, "Demand-payer," has not been noted in the literature earlier than Khwafi Khan, where it appears (*e.g.* i, 704). Malguzari denotes the act, or process; of Demand-paying. I have not found it used in its modern sense of Demand in the Persian literature; but the sense occurs in one of the earliest British records (Rev., I. 169).

3. Next may be noted a group of expressions which are picturesque but also precise, denoting Demand, regarded as the King's remuneration. They are compounded of a word meaning wages, such as paranj or dastmuzd, and another meaning sovereignty (as jahanbani), or guardianship (as pasbani). They have been noticed only in sixteenth-century documents, *e.g.* Ain, i. 298.

4. BAZKHWAST and BAZYAFT are occasionally used for the Demand on cultivation, but they belong properly to the Accounts side of the administration, and usually mean

"recovery"; that is, they may refer to any claim by the State against an individual, whether it be for Demand, or for a debt, or for property misappropriated, or for the balance of an account. So for as I can find, the two words are synonymous.

5. MUTALABA. In the earlier literature this word denotes "the process of demanding." The modern use as "Demand" seems to occur first in the Badshahnama (II, 365) ; it is well established in Khwafi Khan.

6. MAHSUL.—This word does not occur in any general sense, and its technical use is ambiguous. Ordinarily it means Demand, but in some cases it certainly denotes Produce, and, in a few, average-Produce. Khwafi Khan sometimes distinguished the first two senses by writng mahasul-i jinsi for Produce, and mahsul-i mal for Demand (*e.g.* i. 731, 734); but as a rule he, like the earlier writers, used the word by itself, and the context is the only guide to its interpretation.

The earliest writers usually meant Demand, and this sense prevails throughout the unofficial literature. A clear instance of "Produce" is Ain, i. 286, which refers to the mahsul having been romoved from the field; another is in Aurangzeb's farman to Muhammad Hashim, where (4, 14) the Demand is fixed at half the mahsul; and there are a few cases elsewhere in which the word can be read as Produce, but they are not entirely free from ambiguity.

The special meaning of "average-Produce," occurs in Ain, i. 297 ff, and there is no doubt about it, because we have a formal definition, followed by numerical examples, showing how the average was calculated. The same sense is appropriate in one or two other passages in the Ain, but I think it must be regarded purely as office-jargon, and it would be dangerous to read it into the unofficial literature.

7. HASIL, which is etymologically related to mahsul, has, like it, the two meanings of Demand and Produce ; and the two words are sometimes used for the sake of variety of diction, as when Jahangir wrote (Tuzuk, 252), that there is no mahsul on fruit-trees, and that the hasil is remitted when cultivated land is planted as a garden. Here the word obviously means Demand; equally clearly it means Produce in the phrase hukm-i hasil, which Ziya Barni uses to denote assessment by Sharing.

The commonest use of the word is, however, to denote Income: in this use it is contrasted with Valuation, as in the

passages given below. It will be remembered that an officer's remuneration was usually fixed in cash. Sometimes the salary was paid by the treasury, but ordinarily it was adjusted by assignment of the Demand, on a stated area. The Income actually received from an Assignment necessarily varied with the season and other causes; and did not necessarily agree with the Valuation, or estimate of Income, on the basis of which the Assignment had been allocated.

8. JAMA.—This word carries the general sense of "aggregation" or "total," and occurs in the literature both in this meaning and also in at least three specialised senses.

(*a*) In the Accounts department, it meant the receipt-side of a cash account, as contrasted with kharch, the expenditure-side.

(*b*), (*c*). In revenue administration, it may mean either Demand or Valuation according to the context; and the failure of translators to recognise this ambiguity probably accounts for most of the difficulty experienced by students in understanding the technical literature of the subject.

(*b*) *Demand.* Khwafi Khan occasionally (*e.g.* i. 403, 714) wrote the full phrase, jama-i mal, or "aggregate of Demand," and wherever this phrase occurs, the sense of Demand is clear. This writer, however, also used jama alone, and some earlier writers followed the same practice; in such cases, the context is the only guide to the meaning. In some official documents, all of them referring to local administration, the sense of Demand is clear. The most noteworthy case is Aurangzeb's farman to Rashik Das, where jama is used consistently to denote the Demand on a peasant; and the same meaning is appropriate in Akbar's rules for collectors and their clerks (Ain, i. 286-88), though in some of these passages the word need not mean more than "total." In the unofficial literature, the sense of Demand is exceedingly rare, and I have found no clear instance earlier than the eighteenth century; it is appropriate in one passage in Saqi (345), and it occurs in Khwafi Khan (*e.g.* i. 583, ii. 782) alongside of the alternative sense.

(*c*) *Valuation.* When used in connection with the headquarters administration, jama refers uniformly to the Valuation for Assignment; and, according to the context, may denote either the figure at which a particular area was valued, or the record of Valuation of the Empire as a whole. Apparently the

word in this sense is an abbreviation. Afif wrote (94) jama-i mamlakat, or "valuation of the kingdom"; in the Akbarnama (ii. 270), we have jama-i parganat, "valuation of the parganas"; in the Ain (i. 347), jama-i wilayat. "valuation of the country"; and in the Iqbalnama(ii. 287), jama-i qasbat wa qariyat, "valuation of the parganas and villages." In the course of the seventeenth century, these phrases, which I take to be equivalent, gave way to jama-i dami, "which is common in Khwafi Khan, and must refer to the fact that salaries continued to be stated in terms of dams, though for other administrative purpose the rupee was the ordinary unit of value.

The first Valuation we meet in the literature is that which was sanctioned by Firuz. The passage relating to it is discussed in Appendix C; the passages relating to Akbar's general Valuations are examined in Appendix E; and here it will suffice to refer to two incidents of his reign which go far to establish the technical sense of the word.

(1) After the conquest of Gujarat, Todar Mal made a hurried journey in order to effect the "ascertainment of the aggregate" (tahqiq-i jama) of the newly acquired territory (Akbarnama, iii. 65—67). This operation is described in Mr. Beveridge's translation as a "settlement of the revenue," a technical phrase which nowadays denotes assessment of the Demand; but the circumstances and the context show that this was not the object of Todar Mal's visit. The country had just been distributed among assignees, whose business it was to establish the Mogul administration; and there was neither time nor scope for an assessment of the Demand throughout the provinces. The clear meaning of the passage is that Todar Mal made a summary Valuation of the Assignments which had recently been granted, and, on return to the capital, handed over the Valuation statement to the headquarter records-office, so that it could be used by the clerks in adjusting the accounts of the assignees.

This interpretation is placed beyond doubt by the parallel passages[1] in the Tabaqat-i Akbari. The first of these tells us

[1] Add. 6543 ff., 229, 230. The rendering in Elliot, v. 370, "the revenues of Gujarat had not been paid up satisfactorily," misses the point of the first passage. It was not a question of "paying up" the jama, but of a document reaching the headquarter record-office; under no conceivable circumstances could the record-office; handle "revenues" The phrase "royal exchequer," again does not accurately represent *daftarkhana*.

that "since the jama-i mamalik of Gujarat had not reached the headquarter record-office after ascertainment, Raja Todar Mal was sent to Gujarat to determine the jama-i wilayat accurately, and make over the amended schedule to the record-office." The second records that the Raja, "who had gone to Gujarat to correct the jama-i wilayat, returned to Court, and (after compliments) presented the amended record relating to the jama of Gujarat." We may infer that the provincial administration had been instructed to ascertain the true Valuation, but had failed to do so; consequently, the Raja was deputed to effect the business. It will be noticed that this writer speaks first of the "aggregate of the provinces," then of the "aggregate of the country," and then of the "aggregate of Gujarat," the three phrases being obviously synonymous.

(2) Again the, Akbarnama (iii. 726 ff.) attributes the peasants' rebellion in Kashmir shortly after its annexation to the oppression exercised by the new assignees, who (besides other mistakes) had foolishly demanded the full jama Here jama cannot mean Demand, because to demand the Demand would be neither folly nor oppression. The point is that the original Valuation on which the Assignments were granted was excessive: and the attempts of the assignees to realise their full expected Income, without consideration of the actual position, drove the peasants into rebellion. That this is the true reading is clear from the action taken by the Emperor. First, in order to deal with the actual emergency, he limited the assignees' Income to one-half of the Produce,in accordance with the local standard of Demand, and orderd them to refund to the peasants whatever they had collected in excess of this amount: next, in order to provide for the future (Jahalnama, ii. 453), he ordered the preparation of a new Valuation, which should be in accordance with the facts, and would thus prevent the recurrence of similar trouble.

The sense "Valuation" persists in the literature of the seventeenth century. Thus the Badshahnama records (II. 360), that when the Chief of Palamau was, after some trouble, brought into the Empire, a jama of one kror of dams was fixed on his country, which was then assigned to him at this figure. Here jama cannot possibly mean the Demand on the peasants: the transaction was, I take it, purely formal, in the sense that there was no question of

any money being received or paid. All that was done was to fix an arbitrary Valuation, and allow the Chief to retain his actual position, but in point of form as an assignee instead of an independent ruler.

The contrast between the Valuation, or estimated Income, and the Hasil, or Income actually realised, is brought out in a passage in the same chronicle (II. 397), which records the grant as reward (inam) of the port of Surat, the Valuation of which was one kror of dams, or 2½ lakhs of rupees, but the Income (hasil) had risen to 5 lakhs owing to the increase in foreign trade. Similarly we read (II. 108) that the Income of Baglana had fallen to one-half of the Valuation after the famine of 1630; and numerous passages in this chronicle and in those which follow it give the Valuation of districts or provinces as an indication of their wealth or importance.

As is explained in Chapter V, Assignments had become unpopular early in the eighteenth century, and, in the troubles of the time, the idea of a Valuation seems to have become unfamiliar. The changes introduced early in the British period, under which the Demand was assessed for a term of years, resulted in a coalescence of the two ideas denoted by jama, because a Demand intended to be paid for a term of years is substantially the same thing as an estimate of the Income derivable during those years. Thus in modern times, the "revenue" is both Demand and Valuation, because the two figures have coalesced; but the idea of Valuation still persists in the "nominal revenue," which is assessed for administrative purposes on revenue-free villages. This nominal revenue is not meant to be paid, and consequently is not Demand; it is in fact a Valuation calculated on the income of the landholders, on the basis of which various cesses are assessed.

Appendix B

PROVINCIAL GOVERNORS IN THE THIRTEENTH AND FOURTEENTH CENTURIES.[1]

THE words "Province" and "Governor" are used in Chapter II to represent two groups of terms, which I take to be either precisely synonymous, or else distinguished only by minor differences, of no practical importance for our present purpose. The first group is *wilayat*, *wali*. The word wilayat is used in the chronicles in various senses, which can almost always be recognised with certainty from the context: it may mean (1) a definite portion of the kingdom; that is a province; (2) an indefinite portion of the kingdom; that is, a tract or region; (3) the kingdom as a whole; (4) a foreign country; (5) the home-country of a foreigner (in which last sense a derived form has recently become naturalised in English as "Blighty"). Wali occasionally means the ruler of a foreign country, but the ordinary sense is Governor of a province of the kingdom, that is to say, a localised officer serving directly under the orders of the King or his Ministers.

So far as I know, it has never been suggested that the Wali held anything but a bureaucratic position at this period, and the word Governor represents it precisely, as is the case throughout the history of Western Asia. The position is different in regard to the second group of terms, *iqta*, *muqti* (more precisely, *iqta'*, *muqti'*). Various translators in the nineteenth century rendered these terms by phrases appropriated from the feudal system of Europe; their practice has been followed by some recent writers, in whose pages we meet "fiefs," "feudal chiefs," and such entities; and the ordinary reader is forced to conclude that the organisation of the kingdom of Delhi was heterogeneous, with some provinces ruled by bureaucratic Governors (Wali), but most of the country held in portions (iqta) by person (Muqti), whose position resembled that of the barons of contemporary Europe. It is necessary, therefore to examine the question whether these expressions represent the facts, or, in

[1] The substance of this Appendix was printed in the *Journal of Indian History*, April 1928.

other words, whether the kingdom contained any element to which the nomenclature of the feudal system can properly be applied. The question is one of fact. The nature of the European feudal system is tolerably well known to students: the position of the Muqtis in the Delhi kingdom can be ascertained from the chronicles; and comparison will show whether the use of these archaic terms brings light or confusion into the agrarian history of Northern India.

The ordinary meaning of Iqta in Indo-Persian literature is an Assignment of revenue conditional on future service. The word appears in this sense frequently in the Mogul period as a synonym (along with tuyul) of the more familiar jagir; and that it might carry the same sense in the thirteenth century is established, among several passages, by the story told by Barni (60, 61) of the 2000 troopers who held Assignments, but evaded the services on which the Assignments were conditional. The villages held by these men are described as their iqtas, and the men themselves as iqtadars. At this period, however, the word iqta was used commonly in a more restricted sense, as in the phrase "the twenty iqtas," used by Barni (50) to denote the bulk of the kingdom. It is obvious that "the twenty iqtas" points to something of a different order from the 2000 iqtas in the passage just quoted; and all through the chronicles, we find particular iqtas referred to as administrative charges, and not mere Assignments. The distinction between the two senses is marked most clearly by the use of the derivative nouns of possession; at this period, iqtadar always means an assignee in the ordinary sense, but Muqti always means the holder of one of these charges. The question then is, was the Muqti's position feudal or bureaucratic?

To begin with, we may consider the origin of the nobility from whom the Muqtis were chosen. The earliest chronicler gives us the biographies[1] of all the chief nobles of his time, and we find from them that in the middle of the thirteenth century practically every man who is recorded as having held the position of Muqti began his career as a royal slave. Shamsuddin Iltutmish, the second effective king of Delhi, who had himself been the property of the first king, bought foreign slaves in great numbers, employed them in his household, and promoted them, according to his judgment of their capacities, to the highest positions in his kingdom.

[1] T. Nasiri, book xxii. p. 229 ff. I follow the Cambridge History in using the form Iltutmish for the name usually written Altamsh.

The following are a few sample biographies condensed from this chronicle.

Taghan Khan (p. 242) was purchased by Shamsuddin, and employed in succession as page, keeper of the pen-case,[1] food-taster, master of the stable, Muqti of Badaun and Muqti of Lakhnauti, where the insignia of royalty were eventually conferred on him.

Saifuddin Aibak (p. 259) was purchased by the king, and employed successively as keeper of the wardrobe, sword-bearer, Muqti of Samana, Muqti of Baran, and finally Vakil-i dar, apparently, at this period, the highest ceremonial post at Court.[2]

Tughril Khan (p. 261) also a slave, was successively deputy-taster, court-usher, master, of the elephants, master of the stable, Muqti of Sirhind, and later of Lahore, Kanauj and Awadh in succession; finally he received Lakhnauti, where he assumed the title of king.

Ulugh Khan (p. 281), afterwards King Balban, is said to have belonged to a noble family in Turkistan,[3] but was enslaved in circumstances which are not recorded. He was taken for sale to Baghdad, and thence to Gujarat, from where a dealer brought him to Delhi, and sold him to the King. He was employed first as personal attendant, then as master of sport, then master of the stable, then Muqti of Hansi, then Lord Chamberlain, and subsequently became, first, deputy-King of Delhi, and then King in his own right.

It seems to me to be quite impossible to think of such a nobility in terms of a feudal system with a king merely first among his territorial vassals: what we see is a royal household full of slaves, who could rise, by merit or favour, from servile duties to the charge of a province, or even of a kingdom—essentially a bureaucracy of the normal Asiatic type. The same conclusion follows from an examination of the Muqti's actual position: it is nowhere, so far as I know, described in set terms, but the incidents recorded in the chronicles justify the following summary.

1. A Muqti had no territorial position of his own, and no claim to any particular region: he was appointed by the King,

[1] *Dawat-dar*. The dictionary-meaning of "Secretary of State" does not seem to be appropriate here, for we are told that on one occasion Taghan Khan was sharply punished for losing the king's jewelled pen-case, and I take the phrase to denote the official responsible for the care of the king's writing materials. In later times the Chief Dawatdar was a high officer.

[2] The exact status of the *vakil-i dar* at this period is a rather complex question, but its discussion is not necessary for the present purpose.

[3] The chronicler is so fulsome in his praise of Balban, under whom he was writing, that, this statement may be merely a piece of flattery, but there is nothing intrinsically improbable in it, having regard to the circumstances of the time. Writing in the next century, Ibn Batuta recorded (iii. 171) a much less complimentary tradition; it is unnecessary for me to enquire which account is true, because both are in agreement on the essential point, that Balban was brought to India as a slave.

who could remove him, or transfer him to another charge, at any time. The passages proving this statement are too numerous to quote: one cannot usually read ten pages or so without finding instances of this exercise of the royal authority. The biographies already summarised suffice to show that in the thirteenth century a Muqti had no necessary connection with any particular locality; he might be posted anywhere from Lahore to Lakhnauti at the King's discretion. Similarly, to take one example from the next century, Barni (427 ff.) tells show Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq, on his accession allotted the iqtas among his relatives and adherents, men who had no previous territorial connection with the places where they were posted, but who were apparently chosen for their administrative capacity. Such arrangements are the antithesis of anything which can properly be described as a feudal system.

2. The Muqti was essentially administrator of the charge to which he was posted. This fact will be obvious to any careful reader of the chronicles, and many examples could be given, but the two following are perhaps sufficient. Barni (p. 96) tells at some length how Balban placed his son Bughra Khan on the throne of Bengal, and records the advice which he gave on the occasion. Knowing his son to be slack and lazy, he insisted specially on the need for active vigilance if a king was to keep his throne, and in this connection he drew a distinction between the position of King (*iqlimdari*) and that of Governor (*wilayatdari*); a King's mistakes were, he argued, apt to be irretrievable, and fatal to his family, while a Muqti who was negligent or inefficient in his governorship (*wilayatdari*), though he was liable to fine or dismissal, need not fear for his life or his family, and could still hope to return to favour. The essential function of a Muqti was thus governorship, and he was liable to fine or dismissal if he failed in his duties.

As an instance from the next century, we may take the story told by Afif (414), how a noble named Ainulmulk, who was employed in the Revenue Ministry, quarrelled with the Minister, and was in consequence dismissed. The King then offered him the post of Muqti of Multan, saying, "Go to that province (iqta), and occupy yourself in the duties (*karha wa kardarha*) of that place." Ainulmulk replied: "When I undertake the administration (*'amal*) in the *iqta*, and perform the duties of that place, it will be impossible for me to submit the accounts to the Revenue Ministry; I

will submit them to the Throne." On this, the King excluded the affairs of Multan from the Revenue Ministry, and Ainulmulk duly took up the appointment. The language of the passage shows the position of a Muqti as purely administrative.

3. It was the Muqti's duty to maintain a body of troops available at any time for the King's service. The status of these troops can best be seen from the orders which Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq issued[1] to the nobles "to whom he gave iqtas and wilayats." "Do not," he said, "covet the smallest fraction of the pay of the troops. Whether you give or do not give them a little of your own rests with you to decide; but if you expect a small portion of what is deducted in the name of the troops, then the title of noble ought not to be applied to you; and the noble who consumes any portion of the pay of servants had better consume dust." This passage makes it clear that the strength and pay of the Muqti's troops were fixed by the King, who provided the cost; the Muqti could, if he chose, increase their pay out of his own pocket, but that was the limit of his discretionary power in regard to them.

4. The Muqti had to collect the revenue due from his charge, and, after defraying sanctioned expenditure, such as the pay of the troops, to remit the surplus to the King's treasury at the capital. To take one instance (Barni, 220 ff.), when Aluddin Khalji (before his accession) was Muqti of Karra and Awadh, and was planning his incursion into the Deccan, he applied for a postponement of the demand for the surplus-revenue of his provinces, so that he could employ the money in raising additionnl troops; and promised that, when he returned, he would pay the postponed surplus-revenue, along with the booty, into the King's treasury.

5. The Muqti's financial transactions in regard to both receipts and expenditure were audited by the officials of the Revenue Ministry, and any balance found to be due from him was recovered by processes which, under some kings, were remarkably severe. The orders of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq, quoted above, indicate that under his predecessors holders of iqtas and wilayats had been greatly harassed in the course of these processes, and he directed that they were not to be treated like minor officials in this matter. Severity seems to have been re-established in the reign of his son Muhammad, for Barni insists (pp. 556, 574) on the contrast

[1] Barni, 431. For a full translation of the passage, see Appendix C.

furnished by the wise and lenient administration of Firuz, under whom "no Wali or Muqti" came to ruin from this cause. The processes of audit and recovery thus varied in point of severity, but they were throughout a normal feature of the administration.

This statement of the Muqti's position indicates on the face of it a purely bureaucratic organisation. We have officers posted to their charges by the King, and transferred, removed, or punished, at his pleasure, administering their charges under his orders, and subjected to the strict financial control of the Revenue Ministry. None of these features has any counterpart in the feudal system of Europe; and, as a student of European history to whom I showed the foregoing summary observed, the analogy is not with the feudal organisation, but with the bureaucracies which rulers like Henry II of England attempted to set up as an alternative to feudalism, The use of feudal terminology was presumably inspired by the fact that some of the nobles of the Delhi kingdom occasionally behaved like feudal barons, that is to say, they rebelled, or took sides in disputed successions to the throne; but, in Asia at least, bureaucrats can rebel as well as barons, and the analogy is much too slight and superficial to justify the importation of feudal terms and all the misleading ideas which they connote. The kingdom was not a mixture of bureaucracy with feudalism: its administration was bureaucratic throughout.

The question remains whether there were differences in status or functions between the Wali and the Muqti. The chronicles mention a Wali so rarely that it is impossible to prepare from them a statement similar to what has been offered for the Muqti. The constantly recurring double phrases, walis and muqtis, or iqtas and wilayats, show that the two institutions were, at any rate, of the same general nature, but they cannot be pressed so far as to exclude the possibility of differences in detail. A recent writer has stated that the difference was one of distance from the capital,[1] the nearer provinces being iqtas and the remote ones

[1] Qanungo's *Sher Shah*, p. 349, 350. Barni, however, applies the term wilayat to provinces near Delhi such as Baran (p. 58), Amroha (p. 58), or Samana (p. 483); while Multan (p. 534) and Marhat, or the Maratha country (p. 390) are described as iqta. Some of the distant provinces had apparently a different status in parts of the fourteenth century, being under a Minister (Vazir) instead of a Governor (Barni, 379, 397, 454, &c.), but they cannot be distinguished either as wilayats or as iqtas.

wilayats; but this view is not borne out by detailed analysis of the language of the chronicles. Looking at the words themselves, it is clear that Wali is the correct Islamic term for a bureaucratic Governor; it was used in this sense by Abu Yusuf (*e.g.* pp. 161, 163) in Baghdad, in the eighth century, and it is still familiar in the same sense in Turkey at the present day. I have not traced the terms Iqta or Muqti in the early Islamic literature to which I have access through translations, but taking the sense of Assignment in which the former persisted in India, we may fairly infer that the application of iqta to a province meant originally that the province was assigned, that is to say, that the Governor was under obligation to maintain a body of troops for the King's service. It is possible then that, at some period, the distinction between Wali and Muqti may have lain in the fact that the former had not to maintain troops, while the latter had; but, if this was the original difference, it had become obsolete, at any rate, by the time of Ghiyas-uddin Tughlaq, whose orders regarding the troops applied equally to both classes, to "the nobles to whom he gave iqtas and wilayats."

The chronicles indicate no other possible distinction between Wali and Muqti, and the fact that we occasionally read[1] of the Muqti of a Wilayat suggests that the terms were, at least practically, synonymous. The possibility is not excluded that there were minor differences in position, for instance, in regard to the accounts procedure of the Revenue Ministry, but these would not be significant from the point of view of agrarian administration. In my opinion, then, we are justified in rejecting absolutely the view that the kingdom of Delhi contained any element to which the terminology of the feudal system can properly be applied. Apart from the regions directly under the Revenue Ministry, the entire kingdom was divided into provinces administered by bureaucratic Governors; possibly there may have been differences in the relations between these Governors and the Ministry, but, so far as concerns the agrarian administration of a province, it is safe to treat Wali and Muqti as practically, if not absolutely, synonymous.

It may be added that the latter term did not survive for long. In the Tarikh-i Mubarakshahi, written about the middle of the fifteenth century, the title is preserved in summaries of earlier chronicles, but in dealing with his own

[1] For instance, T. Nasiri; Muqti of the Wilayat of Awadh (246, 247); Muqti of the Wilayat of Sarsuti (p. 256). As has been said above, Barni (96) describes the duties of a Muqti by the term Wilayatdari.

times the writer consistently uses the term Amir. This term had already been used by Ibn Batuta a century earlier; he speaks of Indian Governors sometimes as Wali, sometimes as Amir, but never, so far as I can find, as Muqti; and possibly Amir was already coming into popular use in his time. Nizamuddin Ahmad, writing under Akbar, usually substituted Hakim, as is apparent from a comparison of his language with that of Barni, who he summarised; Firishta occasionally reproduced the word Muqti, but more commonly used Hakim. Sipahsalar, or some other modern equivalent; and Muqti was clearly an archaism in the time of Akbar.

Appendix C

SOME FOURTEENTH-CENTURY PASSAGES

SOME of the most important passages bearing on the agrarian system of the fourteenth century are difficult to follow, and extant translations, where any exist, are not always exact. The renderings of these passages offered below are meant to be strictly literal, any departure from the original being indicated by brackets; the technical expressions are discussed in the notes which follow the translations. The clauses are set out, punctuated and numbered for convenience of reference; the texts are continuous, and as a rule are not punctuated.

I. ALAUDDIN'S REVENUE DECREE.

(Text, Barni, 287. Translations, Elliot, iii. 182, and J. A. S. B. vol. xxxix. p. 382, the last with Blochmann's notes).

1. Sultan Alauddin demanded from learned men rules and regulations, so that the Hindu (1) should be ground down,

2. and property and possessions, which are the cause of disaffection and rebellion, should not remain in his house;

3. and in the payment of the Demand one rule should be made for all alike from Chief to sweeper (2);

4. and the Demand on the strong should not fall on the weak;

5. and so much should not remain to the Hindu (1) that they should ride on horseback, and carry weapons, and wear fine clothes, and enjoy themselves;

6. and to make two regulations (3) in pursuance of the aforesaid object, which is the chief of all objects of government.

7. The first (regulation),—that those who cultivate, whether small or great, shall cultivate according to the rule of measurement and the biswa-yield (4),

8. and shall pay half without any deduction;

9. and in this paying there should be no distinction between Chiefs and sweepers (2);

10. and not a jot should be left to the Chiefs by way of Chiefs' perquisites (5).

(The text goes on to the second regulation, imposing a tax on grazing.)

NOTES.

(1) "Hindu." As explained in Chapter II, Barni uses this word in a narrow sense, to denote the classes above the ordinary peasants, so that in fact it is almost a synonym for Chiefs and headmen in this context.

(2) "From Chief to sweeper." *Az khuta wa balahar.* Balahar is not a Persian word, and it is quite safe to follow Blochmann in identifying it with the common Hindi name for a low-caste menial, employed in the village as a general drudge. In the Upper Doab, which was Barni's country, the balahar is almost always a sweeper by caste,[1] and, since the word is obviously used to denote the lowest rank of the rural population, the rendering "sweeper" probably gives what was in the writer's mind; there is no actual English equivalent.

The word transliterated provisionally as khuta has not been found elsewhere in the literature, and has to be interpreted from the parallel passages, which are fairly numerous in Barni. It appears indifferently as khut and khuta, and these cannot be distinguished. The antithesis to balahar indicates that the khut must be looked for among the rural aristocracy, and all the passages confirm this. Khut is commonly coupled with the headman or muqaddam (*e.g.* 288, 291, 324, 430, 479, 554), while in two passages (288) he is linked with the chaudhri, or pargana headman, as well as with the muqaddam; and his perquisites were on the same footing (430) as those of the muqaddam.

Barni does not use the word zamindar for a Chief (subject to the King) until nearly the end of his book (539, 589), and it never appears in his discussions of agrarian policy; we find khut wherever we should expect to find zamindar, and the only reasonable interpretation is that the latter word was coming into use during his lifetime, and gradually superseding khut, so that the two are in fact synonymous. If we read zamindar in every passage where khut occurs, we get perfectly good sense; if they are not synonyms, then we must hold that the important class of khuts, as known to Barni, had become absolutely extinct when the next chronicler wrote, and that the equally important class of zamindars had mysteriously come into existence, a hypothesis as unreasonable as unnecessary.

The identity of the word khut is doubtful. Blochmann took it as the rare Arabic word, rendered by Steingass as "a limber twig; a corpulent man, yet handsome and active," but did not indicate how such a word could come to denote a Chief. The MSS. I have seen do not show the vowels, and it is possible that the pronunciation was different, and that we are dealing with a word formed independently in India; but, whatever be the origin of the word, its meaning in Barni is clearly that of Chief. Blochmann arrived by analysis at the correct result, that the phrase indicates the extremes of rural society, but the rendering "landowners and tenants" which he endorsed involves both a logical non-sequitur and an historical anachronism.

The suggestion has been made that the word under discussion is really Indian in origin, being identical with the Marathi word *khot,* which is familiar in the Konkan; but the fact that Barni wrote the word with two Arabic letters (kh and t) makes its derivation from any sanskritic language highly improbable. The word *khot* has not been traced further back than

[1] For the balahar's position, see Rev. Sel., ii. 97.

the sixteenth century kingdom of Bijapur, and a possible explanation of it is that the Arabic khut passed into the Deccan at the time of Alauddin's conquest, and became naturalised there as *khot*. That there were *khots* in Gujarat also, before the Mogul conquest, appears from a document published by Professor Hodivala (*Studies in Parsi History*, p. 204), but their position is not explained; it is possible that the Arabic word, which quickly became obsolete in the North, survived in Gujarat, as in the Konkan, in the Indianised form, but more documentary evidence is necessary on this point.

(3) This clause is ungrammatical as it stands. It would be easy to read *awardand* for *awardan*, putting a full stop at the end of clause 5. The translation would then be: "And two regulations were made in pursuance of the aforesaid object," which makes grammar and sense. Barni's grammar, however, is not immaculate, and the text may show what he actually wrote.

(4) "The rule of Measurement and the biswa-yield," *hukm-i masahat wa wafa-i biswa*.

Barni mentions two "hukms" or rules for assessment, Masahat and Hasil, *i.e.* "measurement" and "produce"; he does not describe the methods, but the passage which follows will make it clear that Masahat involved allowances for crop-failure, which were not required in Hasil. Unless we take these two terms to denote methods which have become entirely forgotten, we must identify them with the two which I have called Measurement and Sharing, which, as we have seen, were equally familiar to Hindus and Moslems at this period, which reappear, though with different names, in the sixteenth century, and which persisted into the nineteenth. The word Masahat gives place to *jarib* or *paimaish* in the official records of the Mogul period, but it seems to have survived in local use, for as late as 1832 the "native measuring staff" was known as the "masahut establishment" (*Rev. Sel.* ii. 378). Hasil can be read quite naturally as denoting the process of Sharing the produce, and, so far as I can see, it can carry no other suggestion.

The phrase "wafa-i biswa" does not occur except in Barni, and can be read here merely as a repetition or duplication of what precedes it, "reliance on the unit of area," "biswa" denoting the smaller unit, 1/20th of the bigha. Passages in the next two chronicles, however, indicate that the word wafa had acquired the technical meaning of yield of crops," and this is probably the meaning here; "biswa-yield" would then indicate the standard outturn per unit of area, which was a necessary datum for the method of Measurement. The decisive passage is in T. Mubarak-shahi (Or. 5318, f. 34*r*.), where, in a description of the oppression in the River Country under Muhammad Tughlaq, we read Kisht-ha mi-paimudand wa wafa-ha farmani mi-bastand; "they used to measure the fields and fix the yields by ordinance." Here it does not seem possible to take wafaha in any other sense. The same sense is required in Afif, 180, where the word occurs twice: and taking these examples into account, it is permissible to infer that Barni also was familiar with this technical use of the word. I have not found this use in the Mogul period, and presumably it became obsolete.

(5) "Chiefs' perquisites"; *huquq-i khutan*. It can be inferred from the passage which follows that these perquisites consisted of exemption from revenue of a proportion of land, allowed to the Chiefs in return for

the services they rendered; Ghiyasuddin considered that they should be satisfied with this allowance, so its amount must have been substantial, but there is no record of the extent of land allowed. The same passage shows that the Chiefs were suspected of levying revenue for themselves from the peasants: this is probably the implication of clause 4, that the peasants were in fact paying revenue which ought to fall on the Chiefs or headmen.

II. Ghiyasuddin's Agrarian Policy.

(Text, Barni, 429, checked by Or. 2039. Translation J.A.S B., vol. xl. p. 229. The translation in Elliot, iii. 230, is very incomplete.)

I applied to Mr. R. Paget Dewhurst for help with this exceedingly crabbed passage, and he generously furnished me with the following translation. The notes marked (D) are also his ; the others are mine.

1. He fixed the revenue of the territories of the kingdom equitably according to the "rule of the produce" (1),

2. and relieved the peasants of the territories and the kingdom from innovations and apportionments based on crop-faliure (2) ;

3. and with regard to the provinces and country of the kingdom he did not listen to the tales of spies and the speeches of enhancement-mongers(3) and the bids (literally acceptances) of revenue-farmers.

4. He also ordered that spies and enhancement-mongers and revenue-farmers and land-wreckers should not be allowed to hang (literally, wander) round the office of the Ministry,

5. and he instructed the office of the Ministry not to make an increase of more than one-tenth or one-eleventh on the provinces and country on surmise and guess-work or on the reports of spies and the representations of enhancement-mongers,

6. and that efforts should be made that cultivation should increase every year and the revenue be enhanced very gradually,

7. and not in such a way that the country should be ruined all at once by heavy pressure and the path of increase closed.

8. Sultan Tughlaq Shah frequently remarked that the revenue should be taken from the country in such away that the peasants of the country should extend cultivation,

9. and the established cultivation become settled, and every year a small increase should take place.

10. He used to say that you ought not to take all at once so much that neither the established cultivation should be maintained nor any extension be made in the future.

11. When kingdoms are obviously ruined (literally, are ruined and show themselves ruined) it is due to the oppressiveness of the revenue and the excessive royal demand,

12. and ruin proceeds from destuctive Muqtis and officials.

13. Also with regard to the exaction of revenue from the peasants Sultan Tughlaq Shah used to give instructions to all the Muqtis and governors of the territories of the kingdom,

14. that the Hindu should be kept in such a condition that he should not become blinded and rebellious and refractory from excessive affluence,

15. and that he should not be compelled by poverty and destitution to abandon cultivation and tillage.

16. The observing of the standards and principles mentioned in collecting the revenue can be carried out by typically eminent statesmen and experts,

17. and the essence of the art of statesmanship in regard to Hindus (4) is the fulfilment of the aforesaid instruction.

18. Further in regard to the collection of revenue it is related of Sultan Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq Shah, who was a very experienced, far-sighted, and prudent sovereign,

19. that he urged on the Muqtis and governors investigation and consistency in the collection of revenue,

20. so that Chiefs and headmen should not impose a separate assessment on the peasants apart from the king's revenue;

21. and if their own cultivation and pasturage be not brought under assessment, perhaps their perquisites as Chiefs and headmen, on the supposition that they pay nothing on this, may suffice them and they may make no additional demand.

22. It cannot be denied that abundant responsibilities rest on the neck of Chiefs and headmen, so that if they too contribute a share in the same way as the peasants, the advantage of being Chief or headman would disappear.

23. And as for those among the amirs and maliks (5) whom Sultan Ghiyasuddin advanced, and to whom he gave iqtas and provinces,

24. he used not to hold it permissible that they should be brought before the Ministry just like (ordinary) officials (6)

and that the revenue shoutd be demanded from them as from officials with rudeness and severity,

25. but he used to give instructions to them saying,

26. "If you wish to be exempt from the burden of being summoned before the office of the Ministry and that you should not be exposed to pressure and discourtesy,

27. and that your credit as an amir or malik should not be changed to humiliation and discredit.

28. make slender demands on your iqtas,

29. and reserve out of that slender demand something for your own agents,

30. and do not covet the smallest fraction of the pay of the troops.

31. Whether you give or do not give a little of your own to the troops rests with you to decide.

32. But if you expect a small portion of what is deducted in the name of the troops,

33. then the name of amir and malik ought not be employed by the tongue in respect of you,

34. and the amir who devours a portion of the pay of servants had better consume dust.

35. But if maliks and amirs from their own country and provinces a half-tenth or half-eleventh and the one-tenth or one-fifteenth of the revenue,

36. and take the perquisites of iqta-holding and governors,

37. no occasion has arisen to forbid this to them, and to demand it back and to exact it by pressure on the amirs would be altogether deplorable.

38. Similarly it the agents and deputies(7) of the country and provinces should appropriate a half or one per cent. in addition to their salary,

39. they ought not to be disgraced for this amount, and it ought not to be recovered from them by beating and torture and imprisonment and fetters.

40. But if they appropriate considerable sums (8) and write off deductions from the revenue demand, and carry off large sums by way of mutual sharing from the provinces and country,

41. such treacherous persons and thieves should be given disgrace and humiliation with beating and torture and imprisonment and fetters, and what they have abstracted should be taken from them together with their family stock."

TEXT-NOTES.

Cl. 3. "Bids." Paz raftaniha in text is clearly a blunder for paz-iruftaniha [D].

4. "Land-wreckers," reading mukharriban for muhazziban. Or. 2039 can be so read.

7. "not in such a way," reading na for ta, as Or. 2039.

26. "If you wish," reading khwahed for khwahad, as Or. 2039.

„ "not to be exposed," reading nayuftad for biyuftad, as Or. 2039.

38. "should appropriate," reading isabat for isayat, as Or. 2039.

NOTES.

(1) "Rule of the produce," *hukm-i hasil*. See note 3 to the preceding passage.

(2) "Crop-failure," *bud wa nabud-ha*. The technical force of this phrase, literally "existence and non-existences," is fixed by Akbar's assessment rules (Ain, i. 288), in which the clerk is directed to deduct the nabud and record the bud, that is, to exclude from the measured area the area on which the crop had failed. Presumably the word apportionments, *qismat*, refers to the process of classifying the area of failure. The word "nabood" survived into the nineteenth century in the wider sense of a deduction from the gross assessment (*Rev. Sel.* i. 305).

(3) "Enhancement-mongers," *muwaffiran*. This word, which is not in the dictionaries, may safely be referred to the technical sense of taufir as any secret profit derived from land. In a later passage (574), Barni uses the equivalent taufir-numayan, *i.e.* discloser of secret profit. It is clearly a bit of office jargon, and Mr. Dewhurst adopted the expression "enhancement-monger," which I coined as a rough equivalent.

(4) "Hindu" in this passage has obviously the same restricted meaning as in that which precedes it.

(5) "Amirs and maliks." At this time there were three recognised titles of nobility, Khan, Amir, and Malik; here the words are best read loosely as denoting "nobles."

(6) "Officials." *amilan, 'ummal*. The word 'amil had not yet been specialised to denote a definite post, but meant any executive official.

(7) "Agents and deputies," *karkunan wa mutasarrifan*. Karkun is etymologically an agent. I am not clear whether by this time it had become specialised as "clerk," the meaning it usually bears in the sixteenth century; some passages can be read in this way, but others are doubtful, and perhaps specialisation was in progress, but was not complete. I have found no passage to indicate whether or not mutasarrif denoted a particular post; the word occurs in connection with the local bureaucracy, and may mean either subordinates in general, or a particular class of subordinates.

(8) "Considerable sums," *mu'tadd-ha*. I take this to mean "a considerable sum," literally "a thing counted," and hence "a thing worth counting." (D.)

The words iqta and Muqti, which are preserved in the translation, have been discussed in Appendix B. Their preservation is intended to bring out the force of the recurring duplications.

III. Firuz Shah's Second Regulation.

(Text, Barni, 574; no published translation has come to my notice. The chapter containing this Regulation, along with several others, is highly eulogistic and rhetorical, and too great weight must not be given to all the assertions which it contains, but there is no reason to distrust the account of the genaral policy adopted by Firuz).

1. *Second Regulation* It was ordered that the revenue-Demand and the poll-tax(1) shall be collected according to the "rule of the produce";

2. and "apportionments," and "increase of demands," and "crop-failures," and "large demand based on surmise," were entirely removed from among the peasants (2);

3. and revenue-farmers and land-wreckers and enhancement-mongers(3) were not allowed to infest the provinces and the kingdom.

4. And a reduction was made in the *mahsul-i mu'malati*(4), so that the peasants may pay willingly without difficulty or severity;

(5) and no roughness or violence was used towards the cultivators, who are the keepers of the treasury (5) of Moslems.

Notes.

(1) The reference to the poll-tax, *jiziya*, is puzzling. According to Afif (383), this tax in Delhi was a fixed sum per head payable in cash. It is possible that, in the case of peasants, it may have been assessed along with the revenue, and varied with it; but it is equally possible that the phrase is loose, "revenue and poll-tax" being used to describe the liabilities of non-Moslem subjects in general terms.

(2) This clause must be read as enumerating the familiar exactions on the peasants. Apportionments, *qismat*, and crop-failures, *nabudha*, occur in the preceding passage. *Mu'taddha* is there taken as exactions of considerable amount, and the addition here of *tasawwuri* must mean that these exactions were arbitrary, "based on surmise."

(3) This clause also is an echo of part of the previous passage, referring to the various pests that appeared naturally in connection with the revenue-assessment.

(4) *Mahsul-i mu'amalati.* I have not found any parallel passage to indicate the meaning of this phrase. From the context, it appears to denote some impost on the peasants, different from the *kharaj* or revenue, but its nature is a matter for conjecture.

(5) Treasury, *bait-ul-mal.* This is a precise phrase of Islamic law, denoting the receptacle for *kharaj* and other sources of income which were in theory for the benefit of Moslems in general, though by this time in India they were in fact part of the revenue of the State.

IV. Firuz Shah's Assessment.

(Text, Afif, 94. I have found no translation; only one sentence is given in Elliot, iii. 288.)

1. The king . . . settled the Demand (1) of the kingdom afresh. And for the settlement of that Demand Khwaja Hisamuddin Junid was appointed.

2. The excellent Khwaja, having spent six years in the kingdom.

3. (and) having settled the Demand according to the "rule of inspection," (2)

4. determined the "aggregate" (3) of the kingdom at 675 lakhs of tankas in accordance with the principle of sovereignty.

5. During forty years during the reign of Firuz Shah the "aggregate" of Delhi was the same.

Notes

(1) "Demand," *mahsul*. Afif occasionally uses this word in the sense of revenue Demand, that is, as a synonym for *kharaj*, never, so far as I can find, in the other sense of "produce of the soil," which occurs in some later writers.

(2) "Rule of inspection," *hukm-i mushahada*, occurs, so far as I know, nowhere else in the literature. Barni tells us in the preceding passage that Firuz, at his accession, adopted the "rule of the produce." Afif's account refers to the same period, for this appointment was made very soon after the King's first arrival at Delhi; either then one of the writers made a mistake, or the two expressions mean the same thing. A mistake is improbable, for old bureaucrats like the writers do not misuse technical terms: on the other hand, Afif's vocabulary differs from that of Barni in several cases, such as "khut" or "pargana," so that verbal divergence need not suggest error. The general idea conveyed by *mushahada* is "witnessing," "observing"; and in order to reconcile the two statements, all that is necessary is to take this word as denoting Sharing-by-estimation, the reference being to the persons who observe or inspect the condition of the growing crop in order to estimate the yield. We may say then that, while Barni tells us that Sharing was prescribed, Afif tells us that it was Sharing by Estimation, not actual Division. On this interpretation the disappearance of the term *mushahada* can be readily understood, because the official literature of the Mogul period employs the Hindi name *kankut* to denote the process in question.

The revenue-Demand under this system varied from season to season with the area sown and the produce reaped, so that the phrase "to settle," *bastan*, must not be read in the sense of fixing beforehand the number of tankas to be paid; I take the meaning to be that the arrangements for assessment were reorganised after the confusion which had developed during the previous reign.

(3) "Aggregate," *jama*, has in the later literature two well-defined senses, as has been explained in Appendix A. Used for jama-i mal, it

denotes the aggregate revenue-Demand; used for jama-i wilayat (or parganat), it means the Valuation on the basis of which assignments were allocated. In this passage it cannot bear the former sense, because the determination of the aggregate is stated as a separate process from the settlement of the revenue-Demand, while a Demand varying with the season is obviously incompatible with a Demand remaining unchanged for forty years. In the text we have jama-i mamlakat, which may fairly be read as a variant of the later phrase jama-i wilayat, and Valuation makes perfectly good sense. We have seen in Ch. II that a Valuation existed in the previous reign, and it is in fact a necessary feature of any system of Assignments; we have seen also that the existing Valuation had diverged widely from the facts. I read this passage as telling us that the Khwaja brought the assessment-system into order, and, on the basis of six years' experience, framed a new Valuation, which remained in use throughout the reign.

Appendix D

ASSESSMENT BY *NASAQ*

In the text I have followed generally the description of Akbar's methods of assessment which was offered in a paper written some years ago in collaboration with Mr. Yusuf Ali (J. R. A S., 1918, pp. 8 ff.). I have seen no published criticism of the conclusions there put forward, but some scholars have informed me that objection has been taken in India to the identification of the term *nasaq* with a particular method of assessment, and it is perhaps desirable to go into this point in some little detail. The objection, as it has been represented to me, is to the effect that, since *nasaq* bears a well-defined sense in the general literature of the period, this sense must be accepted throughout, and it is not permissible to deduce another, and inconsistent, sense from isolated passages. My answer is that the general sense of the word makes nonsense of passages written by expert officials; and that, since we are not entitled to assume that they wrote nonsense, we must infer that, in these passages, the word is used in a specialised, technical sense, which prevailed at the time alongside of the general meaning, but subsequently became obsolete. The coexistence of two senses, general and technical, is of course no isolated phenomenon. In English at the present day, we may write of the manners and customs of a foreign nation, and equally we may write of the customs levied at a foreign seaport: in the first case we are using the word "custom" in its general sense, in the second we give it the specialised, technical meaning of taxes on imports levied by the State, taxes into which no element of custom now enters. Similarly, the Persian word *dastur*, which in our period had various general meanings, one of them being "custom," meant also, in its technical use, a schedule of assessment-rates fixed by authority, and in no sense customary. There is no difficulty then in the co-existence of a general and a specialised meaning for a particular word.

In its general sense *nasaq* means "administration," and at this period it was used as one of a group of terms denoting the administrative charge of a country, province, or district.

We read frequently of a Viceroy being posted to the *nazm wa nasaq*, or to the *zabt wa rabt*, or to the *hirasat wa hukumat*, of his province, and meet also the connected expression *tansiq wa tanzim* in cases where an officer was posted to organise the administration in newly-acquired territory. The general sense is thus clear, and it may be observed that the objection under consideration applies equally to the interpretation of *zabt* adopted in the text, though I have not heard that this interpretation has been questioned.

That this general meaning may make nonsense in some contexts can be shown by examples. The Ain tells us (i. 296) that, under Sher Shah and Salim Shah, Hindustan passed from *ghalla bakhshi* to *zabt*. No one, so far as I know, has disputed the identification of the former term with the method of assessment which I describe as Sharing, the division of the crop between State and Peasant; and in this passage *zabt* must be an alternative method. To say that Hindustan passed from Sharing to Administration (in the general sense) makes nonsense: *zabt* must mean a method of assessment different from Sharing, and the other passages where the words is used in the Ain bear out the interpretation that it denotes the method of Measurement, but usually with the implication of rates fixed in cash and not in grain. This sense is rare in the general literature of the period, but it occurs in a passage in the Akbarnama (ii. 333), which tells us that in the 13th year Shihabuddin Ahmad Khan, on appointment to the charge of the Reserved lands, having set aside the annual *zabt*, established a *nasaq*." Here again the general meanings of the two words make nonsense, or at least I can get no idea out of the statement that "the annual administration was replaced by an administration." In order to make sense, the two words must be taken as denoting different species of the same genus; and since *zabt* is one method of assessment, *nasaq* must be some alternative method. The same interpretation is necessary in order to make sense of the description of the Gujarat practice (Ain, i. 485), "mostly *nasaq*, and *paimaish* is little practised," where the contrast between two alternative methods is unmistakable; and it brings sense and order into the classification employed in the "Account of the Twelve Provinces," where Multan, for instance, is described as "wholly *zabti*," Allahabad as partly *zabti*, Berar as "for a long time *nasaqi*," while in Bengal (i. 389) "the demanding of revenue proceeds on *nasaq*." This last phrase, indeed, is sufficient by itself to establish the proposition that *nasaq* denotes a particular method of assessment.

In the official literature of period then, *nasaq* must be read as denoting a particular method of assessment other than Sharing or Measurement, with both of which it is specifically contrasted. Apart from Farming, the only other method disclosed by the literature is that which I describe as Group-assessment, viz, assessment of a lump sum on the village (or occasionally the pargana) by agreement with the headmen as representing the peasants, the distribution of the assessment over the individual peasants being left in the headmen's hands. *Nasaq* is nowhere defined in the literature of Akbar's reign, but the few facts on record regarding it allow us to identify it with Group-assessment, for which no other specific name has been found. Thus the reasons for Shihabuddin Ahmad's change of method already referred to are indicated in the statements that the work of assessing the Reserved lands was heavy, while honest officials were scarce, and that the annual *zabt* involved very great expense and led to corrupt embezzlement: consequently, the object of the change of method was to simplify and cheapen procedure, and diminish opportunities for official corruption; and these would be secured by Group-assessment. Again, *nasaq* might clearly be made with the headmen, for Akbar's rules for collectors laid down (Ain, i. 286) that in Reserved areas *nasaq* should not be made with the headmen, because of the risk of inefficiency and oppression. Thus *nasaq* might be made with the headmen, was simpler and cheaper than Measurement, and offered fewer opportunities for official corruption, but involved the risk of oppression if the headmen were strong, and of loss if they were weak. This description applies precisely to the method of Group-assessment as we meet it in Aurangzeb's farman (which is discussed in Ch V.), and in the earliest English records (Ch. VI): while there is nothing said about *nasaq* which is in any way inconsistent with the identification. We have then either two methods of assessment, not distinguishable by any recorded fact, and certainly very much alike, or else we have one method, named but not described in the official records of Akbar's reign, described but not named in Aurangzeb's farman. It seems to me that the latter alternative may reasonably be accepted, at least until some evidence comes to light showing that a real difference existed.

There remains, however, a possibility that the term may have been used in a wider sense so as to cover Farming as well as Group-assessment. As has been pointed out elsewhere, the two methods look very much alike when viewed from above, though the difference may be obvious

and important to the peasant inside the village. In each case the collector has to deal with an individual who has engaged to pay a lump sum on account of a village, or some larger area; it may make little difference to him whether that individual is a member of the village or an outsider; and it is, I think, conceivable that, in the official view, a single term might have been used to cover both arrangements. I have found no passage which lends any direct support to the view that *nasaq*, in the restricted, specialised, sense, may refer to Farming: this restricted use appears, so far as I know, only in the literature of Akbar's reign, and there is nothing to suggest that he countenanced Farming, the method of all others most opposed to his recorded ideals; the details which we possess point rather to Group-assessment; and, on the evidence available, I think it is permissible to adopt the interpretation I have given above. The possibility that the term includes Farming cannot, however, be definitely ruled out; and the matter must be left open pending the discovery of further evidence.

Appendix E

AIN-I DAHSALA.

THE primary source for the development of Akbar's revenue administration is a short chapter in the Ain (i. 347), bearing this title. Its interpretation is exceedingly difficult, for the account is greatly condensed, the language is technical, and there are some grounds for suspecting that the concluding passage may have been mutilated. Blochmann's text of this chapter is not satisfactory. In one important passage it cannot be interpreted; it differs materially from his best MS; that which he denoted H, and which is now numbered Or. 2169 in the British Museum; and there are no footnotes to indicate the various readings which in fact exist. I have found in the literature no satisfactory interpretation of the chapter as a whole, while various misleading inferences have been based on phrases divorced from their context.

The following MSS. have been used in the interpretation which I now offer; those in the Bodleian Library were examined for me by Sir Richard Burn, the rest by myself.

British Museum, or, 2169: Add. 5609, 5645, 6546, 6552, 7652.
Royal Asiatic Society, 116 (Morley).
India Office, 264-68, and 270 (Ethe),
Cambridge University Library, NN. 3, 57, 15.
Bodleian Library, 214-16.

These MSS. have not yet been critically studied as a whole, and their relative value is consequently uncertain. Judging by dates, where these are known, Or. 2169 is decidedly the best, but, as Blochmann recorded in his preface, it is "by no means excellent," and there are a few obvious errors in the chapter under examination; nevertheless, it is probably much nearer to the original in point of time than any other in the list. Of the others, RAS. 116 belongs to the middle of the seventeenth century, and this is probably true also of Add. 6552; the remainder are apparently later.

The text of the chapter falls into five paragraphs, which I mark with capital letters, and discuss in order. The translation

offered is meant to be quite literal, except that conventional compliments are omitted or condensed ; ambiguous expression are given in the original, and discussed in the interpretation.

(A)

TRANSLATION. From[1] (or, At) the beginning of the reign, every year experts used to ascertain the price-currents, and lay them before the throne[2];

and, taking the schedule of crop-yields and the prices thereof, used to fix the schedule of cash-rates;

and abundant distress used to occur.

NOTES.—(1) The MSS. vary, as, usual, between the prepositions *az* and *dar*.

(2) The words *wala dargah* show that the prices to be used in commutation required the Emperor's sanction, a detail of some importance, because it helps to explain why commutation ultimately broke down.

INTERPRETATION. This paragraph repeats the information given in an earlier chapter (i. 297), that at first Akbar adopted a schedule of crop-rates (*ray'*) which had been sanctioned by Sher Shah, commuting the grain-Demand based on it into cash-rates (*dastur*) on the basis of current prices ; it adds only that the result was very unsatisfactory.

(B)

TRANSLATION. When Khwaja AbdulMajid Asaf Khan was Vazir, the *jama-i wilayat* was *raqami*,

and "they " used to show[1] whatever they pleased with the pen of enhanced salary.[2]

Seeing that the kingdom was not extensive, and that promotion of officers used to be frequent,

there used to be increase and decrease from bribe-taking and self-interest.

NOTES. (1) There is no subject for the verb, which must be read as the common locution, impersonal for passive ; I mark this locution by inverted commas.

(2) *Afzudatan* is not in the dictionaries. I take *tan* in the regular office-sense of "salary," the phrase indicating that a rising salary-list was the motive for whatever was done at this time.

INTERPRETATION. Abdul Majid had ceased to be Vazir in the eighth year of the reign, when he had "turned from the

pen to the sword" (Akbarnama, ii. 182). I have not traced the date of his appointment to the post, but a passage quoted below shows that the reference is to the fifth year or earlier.

As has been explained in Appendix A, the word *jama*, standing by itself, is ambiguous, and may mean either Demand or Valuation. Taking the former sense, the passage could mean only that at this time the Demand on the peasants was fixed arbitrarily to meet the rising salary-bill, and that corruption supervened. The word *raqami*, which by itself does not mean more than "written," would on this interpretation have a derived sense, pointing to an assessment made merely with the pen, that is to say, not based on the facts of productivity, but framed to meet requirements.

The following objections apply to this interpretation :— (1) The phrase *jama-i wilayat* is of the type which in other passages points to Valuation, not Demand. (2) At this time, salaries were ordinarily paid by Assignment, so that the change would not meet the emergency which is indicated: arbitrarily increased assessments might bring more money into the treasury from Reserved lands, but the treasury did not pay salaries as a general rule. (3) These arbitrary assessments would supersede the methods described in paragraph A, and would render detailed assessment-rates unnecessary: we should therefore have to regard the assessment-rates from the sixth year onwards, tabulated in Ain Nuzdahsala, as irrelevant to the actual assessments. We should have two processes going on side by side—seasonal calculation of a mass of assessment-rates not intended to be used, and arbitrary fixing of the Demand without reference to the rates. (4) The idea of assessments fixed in the lump is something of an anachronism: all the discussions of this period point to rates applied to varying crop-areas, not to sums independent of the area of production. (5) We know from the Akbarnama (ii. 333) that assessment by rates charged on the measured area, the practice described in paragraph A, was in fact still in force in the Reserved areas in the twelfth year, because its discontinuance is recorded in the thirteenth year. We should have to infer then that this period of arbitrary assessments intervened between two periods of Measurement, though the resumption of Measurement is nowhere stated.

All these difficulties disappear if we take the phrase *jama-i wilayat* to denote the Valuation. On this reading, the word *raqami* might either carry the meaning "arbitrary," as

suggested above, or, what is, I think, more probable, it would be the office-name of the record in question, used to distinguish it from some other Valuation which it had superseded. In the latter case, it might have meant merely "written," or, as Mr. Beveridge has suggested in a note on the passage in the Akbarnama discussed below, it might indicate that the record was in the *raqam* notation ; but, whatever its origin, it would be in fact a label.

On this reading, the first sentence tells us that, while assessment was proceeding on the lines given in paragraph A, the Valuation in use was "arbitrary," or "the Raqami," according to the guess adopted ; and we are told further that the figures in it were altered to meet the needs of the moment, and that corruption ensued. The salary-list became excessive owing to frequent promotions, and the kingdom was too small to bear the charge ; the Revenue Ministry consequently wrote up the Valuation without reference to facts, so that officers would get Assignments which, on paper, were adequate to meet their claims, but which could not, in fact, yield the Income charged on them. With this procedure, corruption was obviously inevitable.

Taking the paragraph by itself, then, "Valuation" is a much more probable interpretation than "Demand," and this view is confirmed by two parallel passages.

(*a*) The Akbarnama (ii. 270) tells us that in the 11th year Akbar "turned his attention to the *jama-i parganat*, and under his orders Muzaffar Khan set aside the *jama-i raqami-i qalami*, which, in the time of Bairam Khan, had been nominally increased for the sake of appearances owing to the number of men and the smallness of the country ; and that (*sc.* the increase) had always remained entered in the public records, and was tools of corruption."

The force of *qalami* in this passage is uncertain. My friend Mr. R. Paget Dewhurst has suggested to me that it is merely a repetition of *raqami*, and that the two words together mean "recorded"; my own idea is that it may point to the phrase *ahl-i qalam*, "folk of the pen," commonly used for the clerks in the public offices, so that it is a sort of apology for writing jargon—"the *raqami jama*, to use the office name." Bairam Khan's "time" ended in the fifth regnal year ; we can thus date the transaction as lying in his regency, and in Abdul Majid's vazarat, not later than the fifth year.

It seems to me to be quite impossible to read this passage as referring to a new assessment-system introduced after the failure of the one described in paragraph A. It tells us distinctly that certain figures had been nominally increased for the sake of appearances, a statement which cannot possibly refer to Demand-to-be-collected ; it tells us, as the Ain tells us, that the point was a heavy salary bill in a small kingdom ; and it tells us also that the nominal increases made in or before the 5th year still remained in the records in the 11th year, and were used for corrupt purposes. Clearly we are not concerned here with any annual assessment of Demand ; but if we follow the opening phrase, as I read it, and take the subject of the orders as the Valuation, the meaning is obvious. In the early years, the salary bill exceeded the available resources, and the Valuation in use was written up for the sake of appearances, so that officers would get Assignments yielding the sanctioned Income on paper, but not in fact ; and these false entries remained in the Valuation until Akbar ordered a new one to be prepared.

(*b*) Another account of the same transaction is given in the Iqbalnama (p. 213) ; it is clearly a paraphrase of the Akbarnama, but different wording enables us to see how the later writer understood the earlier. "In the beginning of the reign, when Bairam Khan was Chief Minister, the revenue officials, having fixed the *jama* of the Empire (*mamalik-i mahrusa*), by summary computation and estimate, (and), because of the large numbers of the army and the narrowness of the Empire, having made a pillar of snow, offiered it to men as salary."

The phrase "pillar of snow" almost explains itself, but it may be illustrated from an anecdote told by Khwafi Khan (i. 735). The accountants had on one occasion prepared a long and fantastic list of recovery-demands against a certain collector : on seeing it, the Minister said, "Bring this pillar of snow into the sunshine, and recover whatever remains of it after the hot weather." We have then a "*jama* of the Empire," so inflated that it could be described in this contemptuous phrase, offered as salary. A Demand meant to be collected could not possibly be described in these terms ; and, taking the three passages together, we must conclude that *jama-i wilayat*, or *parganat*, or *mamalik-i mahrusa* denotes the Valuation, on the basis of which Assignments were allocated.

It follows that paragraphs A and B are to be read as referr-

ing to the same period: they give us, not two successive assessment-systems, but the first phase of Akbar's revenue administration. There were two main branches, assessment of the Demand, and allocation of Assignments: we are told how the first broke down, and how the second was affected by falsified figures. There was thus urgent need for reform in both branches, and the next paragraph indicates what was done in the second phase.

(C)

TRANSLATION. And when this supreme office (*sc* the *vazarat*) fell to Muzaffar Khan and Raja Todar Mal,

in the 15th Ilahi year "they" took the *taqsimat-i mulk* from the qanungos,

(and) having completed the *mahsul* by estimate and computation, a new *jama* came into force.

Ten qanungos were appointed, who, having received the schedules from the local qanungos, continued to deposit them in the record-office.

Although it (*sc.* the new *jama*) fell somewhat below the former, yet there was a very great distance from it (*sc.* the former) to the *hasil.*

INTERPRETATION. These clauses give in succession (*a*) the action taken, (*b*) the method of work, and (*c*) the result. The action was in three stages, *taqsimat-i mulk*, *mahsul*, and *jama*. The first phrase has no parallel, while the second and third are ambiguous; and the parallel passages must be examined in order to ascertain the meaning.

We have seen already that the Akbarnama tells us that in the 11th year Muzaffar Khan set aside the original Valuation, described as *raqami*: the passage continues, qanungos and experts of the whole Empire, having, according to their own ideas, recorded the actual-yield (*hal hasil*) of the country, fixed another *jama*. Although in point of fact it (the new *jama*) was not an actual yield, yet in comparison with the former *jama* it is not far (*sc.* from the truth) to call it an actual yield." .

Allowing than in this passage the Akbarnama is dealing with Valuation, and not with assessment, the passage explains itself. The experts determined the actual-yield and made a new Valuation on its basis, not taking it as it stood, but keeping near it.

As has been explained in Appendix A, the commonest meaning of *hasil* is the Income derived by an assignee, as contrasted with with the Valuation of his assignment; but the word is also used simply as a synonym for *mahsul* (in the sense of Damand), and may be taken here in this meaning, as being an elegant variation of the language of the Ain. This passage thus fixes the sense of *jama* and *mahsul* in in paragraph C, but throws no light *taqsimat.*

The parallel passage in the Iqbalnama, already quoted in part, goes on to tell that Akbar ordered Muzaffar Khan "to summon the qanungos and chaudhris of the parganas to Court, and having determined an actual- yield (*hal hasil*) in accordance with the facts, to determined the *jama* of the country intelligently, equitably, and accurately." This passage agrees closely with the Akbarnama, on which it is obviously based.

We have then to see what meaning can be assigned to *taqsimat-i mulk*, a term for which I have found no parallel in the literature. The root QSM points to the idea of dividing the produce, as in the phrases *qismat-i ghalla*, or *kharaj-i muqasama*. To my mind, the only reasonable view is that *taqsimat-i mulk* was the office name for the schedules which, as a subsequent clause tells us, were taken from the local qanungos and deposited in the record office: each schedule would be headed "Apportionment (*taqsim*) of Pargana so-and-so," and the whole file would be called "The apportionments of the Empire." This view explains the awkward plural of the abstract noun, and makes perfectiy good sense. It also explains why the phrase is unique; there is no other known occasion on which this procedure was followed, and no other reference to these particular schedules, which became obsolete a few years later.

I think then that the Ain, having in the preceding paragraph stated the case for reform in both branches of the revenue administration, here deals with the reforms in both in a single sentence, a process which is justified by the fact that the two, though distinct, were closely connected. The stages were:—

(1) Qanungos prepared new schedules showing the apportionment of produce on the lines of Sher Shah's schedule, but separately for each pargana, instead of a single schedule for the whole Empire. These would, by themselves, provide the necessary reform in assessment, but not all the materials for a new Valuation.

(2) From these schedules, the Demand (*mahsul*), or actual-yield (*hal hasil,*) of the Empire was calculated or estimated.

This could easily be done by applying the rates shown in the new schedules to actual or estimated, crop-areas. Actual areas would be on record for the Reserved lands, but in the case of Assignments it might be necessary to estimate, if the records of area were not considered satisfactory, or were not available.

(3) On the basis of these calculations a new Valuation was made: not, as we are told, identical with the calculated Demand, but near it, and thus a great improvement on the old Valuation, which had lost all touch with facts.

The reform then was twofold, providing new schedules of assessment-rates, and also a new Valuation, the two things which were wanted. The Ain mentions both: the Akbarnama is dealing only with Valuation, and says nothing about assessment-rates, which the author had not in view.

The schedules are not described, or incorporated, in the Ain, but it is possible to infer their nature. We know from another chapter in the Ain (i 297) that the basic rule-one-third of the average produce—which gave the original Demand-rates, was still in force in the fortieth regnal year, and we are justified in inferring that the *taqsims* conformed to it. We know further that the *taqsims*, like the original schedule, showed the Demand in terms of produce, because seasonal commutation was still required, as the next paragraph of the text will show. The fact that the work was done by the qanungos, the repositories of local agrarian knowledge, makes it certain that the schedules were local. A separate schedule was prepared for each pargana, and deposited, as such, in the record-office: this can mean only that assessment was now based on local productivity, not on the average productivity of the empire. Analysis of the rates actually charged, as given in Ain Nuzdahsala, shows clearly that there was in fact a general change in assessment in the 15th year; new crops then come into the schedules, the provinces diverge more widely, and, inside each province, the gap between maximum and minimum rates widens—as would necessarily follow when local schedules replaced a general one, because there would then be, inside the province, two variables instead of one, rates and prices, instead of prices only.

These considerations, taken together, appear to me to settle the nature of the *taqsimat-i mulk*. That they were not incorporated in the Ain can be accounted for by their bulk. The original schedule, which is given as a historical document, fills nearly three pages of Blochmann's text.

from Multan to Allahabad, the country to which this chapter applies, there were more than a thousand parganas, so that some 3000 pages would have been needed to give *taqsims* prepared on the same lines for each pargana.

There remains an apparent discrepancy in date. The Ain speaks of the 15th year, while the Akbarnama and Iqbalnama have the parallel passages under the 11th year. Mr. Beveridge, in a note to his translation of the Akbarnama, suggested that there had been confusion somewhere between the two words, which are nearly identical in Persian script; the only real difference is between *p* and *y*, and this is a matter of three dots instead of two. The suggestion, however, raises difficulties. So far as the Akbarnama is concerned, there is no question of a copyist's error: it is a strictly chronological work, and we should have to suppose that Abul Fazl, whose chronology is ordinarily precise, put this event four years too early, a mistake which is conceivable but distinctly improbable. It would be easy to alter 15th to 11th in the text of the Ain, but in my opinion it would not be justifiable. Of the 12 MSS. which I have myself examined, 10 have the initial *p* clearly marked, and the remaining two are nearer *p* than *y*: copyists must have been quite familiar with this pitfall, and the obvious efforts to make the *p* clear cannot be disregarded.[1]

Again, the table of rates, which indicates a general change in assessment in the 15th year, indicates equally an absence of change between the 10th and the 12th Again, the Akbarnama tells us (ii. 333) that in the 13th year, the assessment of the Reserved lands by Measurement was given up, and Group-assessment substituted: it is highly improbable that revised rates sanctioned in the 11th year should be discarded in the 13th, but it is quite likely that rates which had absolutely broken down should be discarded, and a temporary arrangement made, while waiting for the new rates to be sanctioned.

My reading is that Akbar took up the question in the 11th year, as the Akbarnama, followed by the Iqbalnama, states, and ordered a new Valuation to be prepared; that it took three years to make the necessary enquiries and calculations; and that, as the Ain states, the new Valuation came into

[1] Sir Richard Burn informs me that, of the Bodleian MSS., 15th is quite clear in 214, but 215 has 11th.

force in the 15th year, when the new assessment-rates also began to operate. The interval does not appear to be excessive when we remember that over a thousand qanungos were concerned, with only ten supervisors—one man to hundred or more—and that schedules for adjoining parganas must have required comparison and agreement, so that the sickness or slackness of one man might have delayed the work of many parganas. That the process was gradual is shown by the use of the past-continuous tense, and the probabilities are that it went on for a considerable time.

My interpretation of paragraph C, taken with the other relevant passages, is thus that the defects recorded in paragraphs A and B were noticed, and reform was ordered, in the 11th year; that the reforms took time, and the method of assessing the Reserved lands was changed temporarily in the 13th year without waiting for their completion; but that in the 15th year, new assessment-schedules and a new Valuation came into force. Our authorities were, however, interested in the latter rather than the former: they do not say expressly that new schedules were introduced, but the Ain mentions them in the cryptic phrase *taqsimat-i mulk*, and figures given in the preceding chapter show that they were in fact introduced.

At this point there is a notable omission in the Ain, which tells nothing of the fate of this second Valuation. The gap can be filled from the Akbarnama, which records (iii. 117) that before the 19th year the officials at headquarters used to increase the Valuation arbitrarily, and used to open the hand of corruption in decreasing and increasing, so that the Emperor's officers were dissatisfied and ungrateful. To remedy the evil, Akbar placed most of his officers on cash-salaries, and brought most of the Empire under direct administration (so that for the time being no Valuation would be required). The reason for the Ain's silence on this important change can only be guessed: we may assume bad drafting, or we may infer departmental *amour propre*, since it was clearly discreditable to the Ministry that a Valuation should have to be set aside within a few years of its introduction, because it had been falsified; but all we know is that the account is incomplete, and that here, as in some later years, facts are recorded in the Akbarnama which ought to have appeared in the Ain.

The next clause, D, passes to the breakdown of commutation.

(D)

TRANSLATION. And when, through the wisdom of the Sovereign, the Empire was greatly extended.

every year there used to be abundant distress in price-ascertainment,

and various difficulties used to arise from delay.

Sometimes the peasant would have to complain of (?) excess-demand,

and sometimes the assignee would have to lament arrears.

His Majesty proposed a remedy, and established the *jama-i dahsala* (which gave general satisfaction).

INTERPRETATION. The emergency is clear. With the extension of the Empire, delays in fixing commutation-prices became serious, and caused much inconvenience. Obviously, collections must start promptly if they are to be made at all; and, when the prices required Imperial sanction, as we have seen was the case, local officers would sometimes have to start collections in advance of orders. Then, when the orders came, there would be difficulties if the sanctioned rates proved to be different from those which had been assumed. I am not sure of the exact force of *afzunkhwahi*. If it means "excess-demands" as I have rendered it, the point would be that peasants had paid too much: if it means "supplementary-demands," they would have paid too little; but in either case the inconvenience to peasants, as well as assignees, is obvious.

The emergency then is clear, but the remedy is obscure. So far in this chapter of the Ain *jama* has meant Valuation, but a new Valuation would be no remedy for the evil stated. If the word has here its other technical sense of Demand, we must suppose that Akbar fixed cash-demands in lump sums, as they are fixed at the present day; but we know from other passages, notably Akbarnama, iii. 381, and Ain-i Amalguzar, that such demands were not fixed. What was done was to introduce the Dasturs, or schedules of cash-Demand rates, applicable in place of grain-rates, so that the need for commutation disappeared. I know of no passage where *jama* can possibly mean schedules of rates, or anything of the kind: in both the technical senses, the root-idea of "aggregate" is clearly present.

The parallel passage in the Akbarnama (iii. 282), is again important. One of the occurrences of the 24th year

was, we read, "the fixing of the *jama-i dahsala*." We then read that local prices used to be reported regularly for use in commutation, and that, as the Empire extended, delays in the reports caused dissatisfaction, while some of the reporters were suspected of "straying from the path of rectitude." Thus the emergency was the same: and it is added that the officials were helpless, but that Akbar himself solved the problem.

In both records then, and I have found no other account, the *jama-i dahsala* is named as furnishing an alternative to commutation; and, since we know what the actual alternative was, we must infer that this known alternative could be described officially by this title. How the title can have come into use, is a question which must be reserved until the remaining paragraph has been discussed.

(E)

TRANSLATION. From the 15th to the 24th year "they" added up the *mahsul-i dahsala*, and took 1/10th of that as *harsala*;

but "they" took the 20th to 24th years as ascertained, and the five previous from the statements of upright men.

And also taking into account the (figures known as) *mal-i jins-i kamil*, "they" took the year which was greatest, as the table shows.

INTERPRETATION. Mahsul obviously cannot mean "produce" in this context, and must be taken as Demand. The first two clauses are plain. An average was struck of the Demand for ten years. Actual figures for the last five were available, because, as we have seen, most of the provinces had been brought under direct administration by orders issued in the 19th year; for the earlier years there would not be complete figures for Demand, because most of the country was then assigned, and consequently it would be necessary to collect whatever data were available, presumably from qanungos and from managers employed by assignees. Clearly, then, the Ain speaks of averaging the Demand, and not the demand-rates, because the rates were on record (they are in Ain Nuzdahsala), for the whole period, and collection of secondary data for them would not have been required.

Interpretation of the third clause depends on the reading adopted. Here, Blochmann's text is not supported by any of the MSS. I have consulted, and is contradicted by Or. 2169,

which was his best authority. The MSS. I have seen fall into two groups. One group runs the two parts of the clause into one, reading "*wa har sal jins-i kamil afzun bud*" (RAS. 116, and I. O. 266, 267, 268, 270). *Jins-i kamil* bears the precise meaning of high-grade crops, such as sugarcane or poppy, which were encouraged by the Revenue Ministry on fiscal grounds, as yielding a larger Demand per bigha: this reading then asserts as a fact that cropping steadily improved. The assertion would not be absolutely irrelevant, because it would record the success of the new arrangements, but it is awkwardly placed, and does not fit in with the concluding words, because there is in fact no table showing such an increase. My reason for rejecting this reading is that, if it were the original, I do not see how the other readings could have arisen from it by gloss or error. On the other hand, a copyist, confronted with some of the alternative readings, might in despair pick out enough to make an intelligible sentence, omitting the apparently surplus words; or possibly the original MS. may have been altered in editing at this point, and the alterations were obscure.

In the remaining MSS. the texts agree generally except for the second and third words, and for a few casual variations, which can be neglected. The second and third words stand as follows:—

har sal	printed text.
har mal	I. O. 264, Add, 6546, 7652.
partal	I. O. 265.
har sal bar mal	Add. 5645.
tar mal	Add. 5609.
har hal	Cambridge.
niz mal	Or. 2169, Add. 6552.

Such diversity is very unusual, and I can account for it only on the view that the original contained some highly technical phrase, which was unintelligible to copyists outside the Ministry, that it was distorted almost from the outset, and that various attempts were then made to obtain sense. Or. 2169 is much the earliest of the dated MSS., and Add. 6552 is also early, "probably 17th century"; their reading gives a technical sense, much better than anything which can be read into any of the remainder; while it is easy to see how distortion can have come, if the cryptic phrase *mal-i jins-i kamil* were either badly written or misunderstood. I therefore adopt this reading.

As to distortion *mal* is easily misread as *sal* if the loop of the *mim* is left open, as sometimes happens ; and, given *sal*, to turn *niz* into *har* would be easy and natural *Har hal, tar mal,* and *partal* would be "shots," made by puzzled copyists ; *har sal bar mal*, the work of a man with conflicting MSS. before him. At any rate, the authority for *mal* is much better than that for *sal.*

As to meaning, *mal-i jins-i kamil* denotes Demand-on-high-grade-crops. Now, from the 14th to the 17th century, we find the development of high-grade crops forming one of the two main lines of the policy of the Revenue Ministry, the other being extension of cultivation : it is, at the least, probable that the Ministry tabulated figures year by year to show the progress made in this direction ; and I read the text as saying that, having struck an average of the Demand, the officials also took into account these figures for the Demand on high-grade crops, and, for them, took the maximum instead of the average.

Now the averaging of the Demand, as to which the text is clear, would not be the way to obtain the new Demand-rates, which we know were introduced at this time, but would be an obviously proper basis for a useful Valuation. This consideration proves, to my mind, that paragraph E tells of the preparation of a new Valuation, not new Demand-rates. It is clear that an average Demand for the past ten years was struck: would this average be a good Valuation by itself? or would it require adjustment? We must remember that the work was in charge of Shah Mansur, whose reputation as a meticulous accountant is notorious. One can almost hear him insisting that such an average would be unfair to the State, because it would undervalue villages where high-grade crops were extending. "We must accept the average," he would argue, "for crops dependent on the rains; but in a case where the State has sunk wells, or made advances, and thereby fostered a large extension of sugarcane or poppy, why should we surrender any part of the benefit to the assignee? Suppose sugarcane has risen steadily from 2 to 10 in the course of the decade, why value the village as if the figure were only 6? The wells are there, the assignee can maintain the area at 10 by proper management, and, if he fails to do so, he deserves to lose. To make the Valuation fair to the State, we must raise the calculated average-Demand by substituting the maximum for the average on these high-grade crops." That is what the Ain tells us was done, on the reading I adopt.

According to the reading, then, the Ain tells us that what was done was either to strike an average of Demand, or else to strike an average and then adjust it. Either course is irrelevant to the emergency caused by the breakdown of commutation ; both are equally relevant to the preparation of a new Valuation, and thus paragraphs D and E are apparently illogical. The emergency was that commutation had broken down : the remedy was a new *jama*, which, from the details given, was obviously a Valuation. The last words of the paragraph give a further illogicality. They refer to "the table," but the tables which follow in the text, as we have it, are those of the Demand-rates, which we know were introduced at this time to meet the commutation emergency.

One other point must be mentioned. As has been shown in Chapter IV, numerous detailed references in the Akbarnama prove that the practice of Assignment was in fact reintroduced in the old provinces in, or just after, the 24th year. This must have been intentional, though no order is on record, and consequently a new Valuation must have been prepared at this time, because Assignments could not be made without one ; the paragraph under examination can be understood only as describing the preparation of this third Valuation ; so that, from the facts on record, it is certain that two distinct, but connected, operations were were carried out at this time—preparation of the cash-Demand schedules, and of the third Valuation. The account in the Ain points to both of these, but so obscurely that we must infer either that it was badly drafted, or that it was mutilated in editing.

We must now turn to the parallel passage in the Akbarnama, (iii. 282). It tells as we have seen, that Akbar devised the *jama-i dahsala* as a remedy for the breakdown of commutation, and proceeds :—"the essence of the device is that, having determined the *hal-i dahsala* of each pargana from the variations of cultivation and the range of prices, he established 1/10th thereof as *mal-i harsala*, as is explained in detail in the last volume of this work." The Ain is the last volume of the Akbarnama, and hence this sentence should be read as a condensed paraphrase of what we are examining. In that case, *hal-i dahsala* represents *mahsul-i dahsala*, and *mal-i harsala* represents *harsala*. The latter may be accepted as the same thing in more elegant language ; *mal* is the widest of the revenue terms, and, while it often means Demand in the strict sense, there is no difficulty in reading it as the average calculated

from the actual figures of Demand. I have found no parallel for *hal-i dahsala*, but *hal* is a very wide word, and we can render "a ten-year state" without straining it. The figures for Demand would include the effect of variations of cultivation and prices, because they had been assessed on the actual cultivation in each season, at rates which varied with prices; and the passage can thus be read as an elegant, but inadequate, summary of what the Ain records, while it cannot be read as complementary, supplying something which the Ain omits.

There is nothing then in the Akbarnama to clear up the apparent illogicalities in the Ain. The last of them would disappear if we assume that, following the words, "the table shows," the draft contained a statement of the third Valuation, and then an explanation of the Demand schedules ; that the former was struck out as unnecessary, because the Account of the XII Provinces was to contain the Valuation brought upto date ; and that the latter disappeared accidentally in the process of revision, so that the Demand schedules were made to follow directly on the account of the Valuation. This is possible, for there are other signs of hasty editing, but there is no evidence on the point.

As to the main illogicality, two explanations can be suggested. In the first place it is possible that this portion of the chapter may have been substantially altered, a first and full draft having been greatly curtailed by the editor. As has been related in Chapter IV, various passages in the Akbarnama show that, about this time, there was friction in the Ministry between Shah Mansur, who was there all the time, and Todar Mal, who returned from time to time in the intervals of military duty. It is quite conceivable that the draft may have contained a good deal about these old squabbles, which was struck out by the editor as unnecessary or inconvenient. Shah Mansur was in fact an inconvenient topic,[1] for there were doubts whether his execution for treason was justified ; Abul Fazl deals with him cautiously in the Akbarnama; and it is noteworthy that his name does not appear in paragraphs D and E, though he was solely responsible for carrying out the operations they record, and the responsible officers are duly named in the earlier paragraphs. Faulty condensation of a lengthy draft might produce the illogicality of the text as it stands, but more than this cannot be said.

[1] See. V. Smith. *Akbar the Great Mogul* 194 ff.

The alternative is to treat the expression *jama-i dahsala* as a bit of jargon which had gained temporary currency in the Ministry, and has survived only in these passages, denoting neither aggregate-Demand nor Valuation, but the whole of the special operations carried out in the Ministry in the 24th year, operations which produced both the new schedules of Demand and new Valuation, each of them based on "the Decade," and consequently very closely related, though the calculations must have been distinct. Taking the phrase as an office-label of this sort, the illogicality disappears, because the special operations denoted by it did in fact offer a remedy for the emergency. The inadequacy of the account remains, because only one operation is described where there must have been two ; but we have seen already that the Ain is on occasion incomplete. In regard to the change in the 19th year, the hiatus can be filled, as we have seen, from the Akbarnama; in the present case, the Akbarnama merely summarises the Ain, and does not complete it, but we are not entitled to hold Abul Fazl down to meticulous detail, that it is not matter for surprise that he should have contented himself with summarising materials on a matter of purely technical interest. Office-labels may depart far from etymology, and the use of a name properly applicable to a part in order to denote the whole is not inconceivable, when the part was the most important in the eyes of the men who used the label.

This alternative then seems to me to be quite tenable but it is not established by evidence. The established facts are: (1) new schedules of Demand-rates were introduced at this time, and are on record in the Ain ; (2) a new Valuation was required at this time, because the practice of Assignment was being revived (3) the operation described in paragraph E would give a satisfactory Valuation, but would not give the Demand-schedules which are on record, and which we know to have been used for assessment from this time onwards. The paragraph must be read as describing the preparation of the new Valuation, because it cannot be read in any other way consistent with the established facts: the only point which remains uncertain is the reason why it took its actual form.

Appendix F

LEGENDS OF TODAR MAL

I HAVE mentioned in Chapter IV that, in describing Todar Mal's work, I have followed the contemporary records, and discarded the account contained in the eighteenth-century chronicle of Khwafi Khan: my reasons for discarding it are given in this Appendix.

The account in question is introduced by the statement that Todar Mal's work was proverbial throughout Hindustan, and consequently some notice of him was required. It then records in succession his activities in connection with the coinage, his methods of assessment, and his system of advances to peasants; and then breaks into a long lament on the degeneracy of the writer's days, when nobody paid any heed to the peasants, the land had reverted to jungle, and an upright official was popularly regarded as an incompetent fool.

As regards coinage, this account asserts definitely that Todar Mal introduced the silver rupee of 11 (*sic*) mashas, superseding the "black" tanka, which up to his time was the only currency; silver tankas had indeed been struck, but they were used only for rewards to foreign envoys and to artists, were not generally current, and were sold as bullion. Now the Ain records (i. 26) that the silver rupee, of 11½ mashas, was introduced in the time of Sher Shah. It is quite incredible that the official record of Akbar's administration should deprive him of the credit of this reform if he was entitled to it; while the extant specimens of the silver coinage of Sher Shah and Islam Shah are so numerous as to place the fact of their currency beyond dispute. In this case, then, the writer of the account has clearly credited his hero, Todar Mal, with the achievement of an earlier reformer; and consequently the account as a whole is not above suspicion.

As regards Todar Mal's methods of assessment, the description given is as follows:

For grain-crops of both seasons depending on the rains, Todar Mal settled that half the yield should be taken as revenue.

For irrigated crops (grain, pulse, sugarcane, opium, turmeric, etc.), after one-fourth had been deducted for expenses, one-third was taken for grain, while for high-class crops like sugarcane, etc., the rates varied, 1/4, 1/5, 1/6, or 1/7, according to the crop.

If desired, a fixed cash-charge was levied on the bigha for each crop, which was called Raja Todar Mal's *dastur-ul 'amal* and *dhara.*

This account points to two alternative methods of assessment, differential Sharing, and Measurement at cash rates. The contemporary records which I have followed in the text give no hint of differential Sharing; and they show clearly that Todar Mal's Measurement-rates were not fixed in cash, but were stated in grain, and commuted on annual prices. The discrepancy is therefore serious.

In estimating the value of this account, it must be remembered that the text of the chronicle is very uncertain. Colonel W. N. Lees is quoted in Elliot's *History* (vii. 210) as writing that "no two copies that I have met with—and I have compared five apparently very good MSS.—are exactly alike, while some present such dissimilarities as almost to warrant the supposition that they are distinct works." So far as I know, no attempt to settle the text has yet been made: the first volume issued in *Bibliotheca Indica* promised a critical preface, but the promise has not yet been fulfilled, and no description is extant of the MSS. which were used by the editor. In the present case, however, it is apparent that this account did not form part of the original chronicle, but is a later insertion. It is given in two places in the printed text, the notes to which show that in two MSS. it is inserted (p. 155) under the sixth year of Akbar's reign, while in a third (p. 195), it appears under the 34th year. It is scarcely possible to suppose that an integral portion of the original chronicle should have become displaced in this way; the facts point clearly to a later insertion, which was made in two copies at the first mention of Todar Mal, and in another at the record of his death. I am not prepared to express a definite opinion on the question whether the insertion was made by Khwafi Khan, or by someone else. The style of the chronicle is not uniform: this account resembles some portions of it, but not others; and it may well be that the portions which it resembles are other insertions by the same hand.

The account, whoever wrote it, is thus separated from the facts by 150 years or more. It is also separated from them by distance, for the chronicle belongs to the literature of the Deccan, not of Hindustan. The word *dhara*, which is given as a synonym for *dastur-ul 'amal* points to the locality of origin: in Hindi it means primarily a stream, and the dictionaries of Forbes and Platts indicate no technical use,

but in Molesworth's Marathi Dictionary it is rendered as "the usual rate (of rents, prices, etc.)." No Moslem writing in Hindustan would have needed to give such a word as an equivalent for a common expression like *dastur-ul 'amal*, but the Marathi synonym comes in naturally in the Deccan. We have then a late account drawn up in the Deccan.

Now the methods of assessment described in it are substantially those which, as is related in Chapter VII, Murshid Quli Khan had introduced into the Deccan about the year 1655, and which clearly left a strong impression on the locality. There is no reason for supposing that Murshid Quli was practically familiar with the word of Todar Mal, but there is no difficulty in the idea that, when he started work in the Deccan as a stranger, he should have invoked the traditional authority of Todar Mal for his innovations. Where he established Measurement, he was in fact working on Todar Mal's lines, and the Deccan, which had no first-hand knowledge of Todar Mal, might very easily attribute to him the whole of Murshid Quli's work, when in fact he was entitled to credit for only portions of it. To the extent that Murshid Quli introduced Measurement, he was a follower, though not a servile copyist, of Todar Mal: if his method of differential Sharing was, as it seems to me, a novelty in India, then the traditional fame of Todar Mal was sufficiently great, and also sufficiently vague, to carry it also. At any rate, it is clear from the accounts of Murshid Quli's work that it was regarded in the Deccan as based on that of Todar Mal; Khwafi Khan (i. 732), and the Maasirulumra (iii. 497) are in agreement on this point, though not on others; and it was doubtless this southern tradition which was absorbed later in the century by James Grant, when he described Murshid Quli's work as servilely copied from that of Todar Mal.

It may be noted that this southern account of the work of Todar Mal is not in agreement with the *Maasirulumra*, which was also compiled in the Deccan during the eighteenth century. The description there given (i. 127) is clearly condensed from the Ain and the Akbarnama, and gives no support to the view that the Raja's methods included differential Sharing. I have found no other relevant passage in the literature, so that the account in Khwafi Khan appears to stand alone; and, taking its date and locality into account, it cannot be accepted as contradicting the contemporary evidence on which I have relied in Chapter IV.

I think then that the statement that Murshid Quli was a servile copyist of Todar Mal may fairly be described as legendary. Another legend, found in some early English

writers, is that Todar Mal was himself a copyist, and that the Ain-i Akbari derives directly from Timur's *Institutes*. The original of this work is not known to be in existence, but a Persian version, said to have been made in the reign of Shahjahan, was published in 1783, along with an English translation by Major Davy, under the editorship of Joseph White. Doubts have been thrown on the authenticity of this work. If it is a later forgery, the idea that Todar Mal copied from it is ruled out; but, assuming it to be genuine, a comparison of it with the Ain negatives decisively the view of direct derivation. Naturally some of Timur's institutions, particularly in the military departments, survived into Akbar's time, and consequently some resemblances in detail exist between the two works; but (1) the assessment-system, and (2) the practice in regard to Assignments, show material differences.

(1) Timur's assessment-system, as described on pp. 360 ff. of White's edition is of the distinctive Islamic type, based on differences in the water-supply, while the Ain nowhere recognises such differences.

(2) Timur's practice regarding Assignments (pp. 236 ff.) was that allocation was made by lot, that an Assignment was held for three years, that it was then inspected, and that, if the assignee was found to have oppressed the peasants, he received no salary for the next three years. In Mogul India, allocation was not by lot, but by favour of the Diwan, the term of holding was indeterminate, and there is no record of any process of inspection, or of a prescribed penalty for oppression.

There is nothing in the Ain to suggest that Akbar's Revenue Ministry accepted the *Institutes* as authoritative, or indeed had even heard of them. The work is not mentioned in the historical essay on taxation (i. 289), where we should execpt to meet it, while the fact (if it be a fact) that a translation had to be made in the reign of Shahjahan suggests that nothing of the kind existed previously. There are no grounds, therefore, for the view that Todar Mal used the *Institutes* as his guide; and all that can be said is, that, if he knew of their existence, he departed widely from their provisions in his practice.

Appendix G

THE AGRARIAN STATISTICS IN THE AIN

In this Appendix I discuss certain features of the statistical matter contained in the "Account of the Twelve Provinces," which has been described in Chapter IV, sec. 6. At the end of the account of each province there is a paragraph giving the provincial figures ; following this, each district (*sarkar*) is treated in order, a sentence giving the district figures being followed by a table giving those for each sub-division (*pargana* or *mahal*), together with occasional notes showing the existence of forts, minerals, or, in a few cases, natural curiosities. The general arrangement may be exemplified by the paragraph dealing with the province of Agra (Ain, i. 442).

"Sixteen districts and 203 subdivisions belong to it. Measured land, 2,78,62,189 bighas, and 18 biswas. Aggregate (*jama*), 54,62,50,304 dams. Out of this, 1,21,05,703½ dams, Grants. Local force, 50,681 cavalry, and 577,570 infantry ; 221 elephants."

The paragraphs dealing with the other provinces are generally in the same form, the most important variation being the omission of any reference to measured land in the case of certain provinces.

We may regard these statistics either as compiled specially for record in the Ain, or, more probably, as a reproduction of records already existing in the Revenue Ministry ; but on either hypothesis we must treat them as a whole, and recognise that, to the compilers, there was probably some connection between the different items, which justified them in setting out, for instance, the strength of the local forces alongside of the Aggregate and the Grants.

Looking first at the figures for Measured land, we find areas given for the whole, or the greater part, of ten provinces—Multan, Lahore, Delhi, Agra, Awadh, Allahabad, Malwa, Ajmer, Bihar and Gujarat. The first eight of these are the provinces which Akbar brought under direct administration in the 19th year ; we know therefore that in them (or rather in the greater part of them) the cultivated land had in fact been measured for assessment during a series of years. On the other hand there is no record of area for any part of Bengal (including Orissa), Khandesh, Berar, Sind, Kashmir, and Kabul, provinces where there is no

reason for thinking that assessment by Measurement had ever been introduced. It is reasonable to infer from these facts that the records of area are confined to the regions which had at one time or other been so assessed; and this inference is supported by an examination of the cases in which areas are not recorded for a portion of a province. The following districts in the ten measured provinces have no record of areas: Kumaun in Delhi, Bhathghora in Allahabad, Garha and Marosor in Malwa, Jodhpur, Sirohi, and Bikanir in Ajmer, Monghyr in Bihar, and Sorath in Gujarat. In all these districts we either know or have good reason to believe that either the Mogul administration did not function effectively, or that it functioned through the local Chiefs.

So far then as the provinces and districts are concerned, we may infer a connection between the record of areas, and the practice, at some period, of assessment by Measurement; in the cases of Bihar and Gujarat, we have to assume that Measurement had been introduced for a time, not in the 19th year, but probably at same later period.

Area-figures are wanting for a number of subdivisions in districts which as a whole had been measured. It is possible to suppose that in these cases, or in some of them, the figures had been lost; but it seems to me more probable that, in some of them at least, the subdivisions had in fact escaped Measurement, and that local jurisdiction in them remained in the hands of Chiefs.

Turning now to the figures given in dams as Aggregate, the question arises whether these represent the Demand made on the peasants in some particular year or series of years, or the Valuation used in the Ministry for administrative purposes. The former view has been taken by, I think, all previous writers on the subject, including myself; and it was reasonable, or at least tenable, on one or other of two hypotheses, firstly, the hypothesis of an assessment fixed in money, secondly, the hypothesis of a continuance of direct administration. If, however, both of these have to be rejected, we are almost driven to the conclusion that the figures must represent Valuation, not Demand.

The first hypothesis was accepted by various writers in the nineteenth century, who considered that the operations of the 24th year consisted in fixing a cash-Demand to be paid year by year by each village, in the same way as the Demand has usually been fixed during the British period.

The idea comes naturally to British administrators, but I think it is an anachronism, and it is certainly contradicted by the records of Akbar's time. Thus the first of Todar Mal's amending regulations sanctioned in the 27th year insisted (Akbarnama, iii. 351) that the assessment should be made strictly according to the *dastur-ul a'mal*, or schedule of cash-rates to be charged on the area under each crop, and subsequent clauses dealt with the measurement of crop-areas in each season. Similarly the rules for collectors and their clerks (Ain, i. 286—288) show the assessment-procedure in detail. The crops on the ground were measured, areas of crop-failures were deducted, the Demand on each peasant was calculated on the area so adjusted, and these figures were then totalled for the village, giving an assessment statement on the basis of which the revenue for the season was to be collected. If these documents mean anything at all, they mean that in the 27th year, and in the 40th, the prescribed method of assessment was Measurement; the Demand on a village was not lump sum fixed beforehand, but was calculated by applying fixed Demand-rates to the area cropped in each season.

As to the second hypothesis, so long as direct administration continued, with the Demand assessed by Measurement, it would have been possible to provide figures showing the aggregate of Demand. The rules for collectors and their clerks show that assessment-statements for each village were forwarded to headquarters season by season, and, so long as this procedure was followed, there would have been no difficulty in compiling the figures for aggregate Demand on subdivisions, districts, and provinces; in fact it would be safe to assume that such compilation was regularly carried out for administrative purposes, so that the figures would be available for the officials who drafted the Account of the Twelve Provinces.

If, however, we accept the conclusion reached in Chapter VI and it seems to me to be fully established by the evidence, that direct administration lasted for only five years, after which the Assignment-system was re-introduced, then it is scarcely possible that the figures under discussion can represent an existing record of the Demand at the period when the Ain was compiled. There is no suggestion in the rules, or elsewhere, that seasonal assessment-statements were required from assignees, and the figures for current Demand available at headquarters would be limited to the comparatively small portions of the Empire which were then Reserved. On the other hand, the prevalence of

Assignments from the 24th year onwards makes it certain that a Valuation of the Empire must have been in regular use in the Revenue Ministry. We must then choose between two alternatives: either the compilers of the Account incorporated the Valuation current at the time; or they collected a vast amount of information, not already on record, regardning the current Demand made on the peasants by a multitude of assignees, which they incorporated with the Ministry's figures for Demand in the reserved areas. The former course would be obvious, natural, and easy; the latter would be exceedingly difficult, and I doubt whether it would have even suggested itself to the compilers in the circumstances of the time. I have found no direct evidence on the question, and it is necessary to enquire which alternative is supported by the statistics.

We may allow that it would have been possible, though difficult, to collect figures for Demand from the assignees; and that, in the provinces where Measurement was in force, the areas assessed could have been obtained from the same sources with a few exceptions, represented by the blanks for some subdivisions in the statistics. We may allow further that it might have been possible to obtain figures for Chiefs' holdings, representing either tribute paid by the Chiefs, or their Demand on their peasants—we cannot say which. There remains what seems to me the insuperable difficulty of accounting for the figures for areas lying outside the Empire. These are found principally under the province of Bengal: how can we explain the detailed figures for, *e.g.* the district of Chittagong (Ain, i. 406), which was never administered by Akbar, either directly or through assignees? I can detect no relevance in the collocation of Demand with the strength of the local forces, or various other details given in the statistics, but these are matters of minor importance: the figures for areas outside the Empire are, to my mind, the great obstacle to accepting the hypothesis that we are detailing with statements of Demand, compiled specially for the "Account."

The alternative view, that we have here the current Valuation of the Empire, presents no difficulty. For the older provinces, this would be the Valuation made in the 24th year, but kept up to date ; while for the newer provinces we would have figures representing the Valuation made at the time of annexation. Taking as an example of the older provinces the paragraph relating to Agra, which has been quoted above, we have first the total Valuation. From the latter we have of course to

exclude the Grants, because, where a Grant was in existence, its Income would not be available for the assignee of that region. The record of Valuation might be expected to contain the particulars which would have to be entered in the documents issued to the assignee, and he would certainly have to know the Grants already existing within the limits of his Assignment. He would equally require to know the strength of the local forces. The Ain contains no rules for the embodiment or control of these forces, and tells us only (i. 175) that they were furnished by the Chiefs. To call them up would be the work of the local administration, of the collector or the assignee, as the case might be ; and the latter would require to know the extent of his liabilities in this respect. We must assume that the original record specified each village in each subdivision, and that the figures we possess are the totals which the original record contained, first for the subdivision, then for the district, then for the province: such a record, in the form we possess, would be necessary, and also sufficient for furnishing the assignee with a precise statement of his claims and his liabilities, whether he received a single village or an entire district.

Turning to the later acquisitions, we have seen in Appendix A that, in the cases where the procedure is on record, the first step after conquest was to distribute the territory among assignees, whose business it was to organise the administration ; and that a Valuation was made summarily in other to enable the Revenue Ministry to regulate the assignees' accounts. In the case of Gujarat, the time spent by Todar Mal in the country was too short for anything in the nature of detailed local investigations, and the most probable view is that he obtained access to the records of the previous Government, and made the Valuation on their basis. It is possible that the figures given for Gujarat are this initial Valuation, as amended by Todar Mal in the 23rd year, and in that case the area-figures might date from before annexation ; but I think it is more probable that the area-figures indicate that assessment by Measurement had been introduced for a time after annexation, though the fact is not mentioned in the chronicles.

The figures we possess for Bengal can be interpreted on the view that they represent a summary Valuation made on the same lines, that is to say, that they were based on the records of the previous Government, which included Chittagong and the other tracts recently lost to Arakan. The

same view accounts for certain peculiarities in their presentation, such as the inclusion of miscellaneous revenue as a "subdivision," the entire absence of any reference to Grants, and the omission of any detail of the local forces by subdivisions. I find it impossible to suggest an alternative hypothesis which would account for all these features, but they fall naturally into line on the view that the record, as we have it, was based on records kept by the previous Government, and consequently reproduced peculiarities in which the local practice had differed from that of the older Mogul provinces. Taking it as a preliminary Valuation of this kind, we may infer that it was found to be unsatisfactory, for one of Jahangir's earliest recorded actions (Tuzuk, 9) was to appoint a Diwan to revise the Valuation; there is, however, no record of the result, and from the later history discussed in Chapter VII it appears as if the figures in the Ain remained substantially unaltered till the middle of the seventeenth century.

As regards Khandesh, which in the Ain is called Dandes, we find (i. 474) the "aggregate" given in Berar tankas (of 24 dams), and we are told that Akbar increased the original figures by 50 per cent. at the time when the fortress of Asir was taken, this event marking the definitive conquest of the country. We thus have the old and the new aggregate, and the action taken here was clearly what I have suggested was taken in Bengal, in that existing figures were adopted as a basis. It is hard to believe that Akbar should have signalised his conquest by summarily raising the Demand on the peasants by so large a proportion, a course which would necessarily increase the difficulties of establishing his rule; but, if "aggregate" here means Valuation, what happened was that Akbar, having reason to believe that the old Valuation understated the facts, ordered such an increase that the new Valuation should correspond more closely with the Income which his assignees could hope to realise. Here, as in Bengal, there is no record of Grants, while the local forces are not enumerated, though their existence is mentioned.

In Berar, the "original aggregate" of 3½ krors of the local tankas had been raised (i. 478) by the "Deccanis," that is to say, the previous rulers, and a further increase was made after the Mogul conquest. Here we have another instance of figures being taken over from the previous regime, and enhanced by the new government, and again there is the improbability of an enhancement of Demand at conquest; while, on the other hand, an adjustment of the existing Valuation would be a natural proceeding.

The figures for Tatta, or Lower Sind, which was also a later acquisition, contain no indications of value for the present purpose ; but, taking Bengal, Khandesh, and Berar together, it may fairly be said that there is no difficulty in the view that the figures which we possess represent Valuations made at, or shortly after, annexation, and based on the records of the previous governments. In the case of Bengal, we do not know whether the earlier figures were accepted as they stood, or were adjusted ; in the other two provinces, we know that the earlier figures were increased by the first Mogul rulers. On the other hand, the Bengal figures cannot be read as a statement of the actual Demand ; and there is no particular reason for taking the figures for Khandesh or Berar in this sense.

The considerations which have now been stated do not amount to formal proof, but they seem to me to establish a definite probability that the statistics in the "Account" reproduce the Valuation which was in use in the Revenue Ministry at the time when it was compiled. On this view, their value for the historian is substantially greater than I had previously supposed. Taking them as representing the Demand for a single, unspecified, year, it was necessary to ask whether the year was typical of the period, or was exceptional, and that question could not be answered with entire confidence. Taking them as representing the Valuation, we have the data on which the Ministry relied for a very important branch of the administration. It is true that similar data had been falsified on two occasions earlier in the reign ; but it is also true that on each occasion Akbar had intervened to put things right. It is reasonable to suppose that he took measures to secure that the third Valuation for the older provinces, made in the 24th year, should be honestly maintained, and the absence of any later record of a general re-Valuation suggests that this was done effectively. For the older provinces, then, we have, on this view, data which were good enough for the administration, indicating the Income which could be expected to accrue : the figures for the later acquisitions would necessarily be of less value, because based on less experience.

I suggest then that the figures we possess for the older provinces are most probably the Valuation based on the ten-year average of assessed area and Demand calculated in the 24th year, but modified in detail on experience gained in the next 15 years, so as to be more or less up to date at the time when the record was incorporated in the Ain. I

have found only a single passage indicating that modification took place, but it suggests that the practice was normal; it is Bayazid's account of the dispute over his pension,[1] which has been referred to in the notes to Chapter IV. When Bayazid was getting past work, Akbar granted him by way of pension a pargana which was entered at a Valuation of 14½ lakhs of dams; when he went to the Revenue Ministry to settle the matter, Todar Mal objected that another claimant had agreed to a figure of 16 lakhs for the pargana in question, and urged him to do the same, the result being, I take it, that he would have had to pay the difference to the Treasury. Bayazid refused, Todar Mal lost his temper, and, when neither would give way, Fathulla Shirazi, who was then Imperial Commissioner intervened, and took the case to Akbar, who ruled that Bayazid was to have the pargana at the old Valuation. This anecdote suggests, what is in itself probable, that the Revenue Ministry, concerned primarily with finance, made a practice of raisng the existing Valuation in any case where there was reason to regard it as below the truth. In the ordinary course, we could not expect to find any record of such a practice, part of the routine of the Ministry, and for this isolated notice we have to thank the garrulity of the old collector, who inserted his personal experiences into what was intended to be a chronicle of the period.

The view that the Valuation was modified in detail would help to explain a feature of the statistics which has been the subject of frequent comment—discrepancies between recorded totals and the sum of the items. In some cases such apparent discrepancies probably result from copyists' errors, in others from accidents in printing,[2] but it is obvious that they might also arise from piecemeal modifications. It would be a nuisance to correct the successive totals for subdivision, district, province, and Empire, on each occasion when the figures for a village were modified, and it would be a greater nuisance to distribute the modification over subdivisions and villages in cases where an officer accepted an entire district at an enhanced Valuation; it is quite possible therefore that some of the discrepancies were in fact present in the original record from which the statistics were reproduced.

[1] Bayazid, f. 154.

[2] The Arabic digits used in Blochmann's text are particularly liable to break in printing, and traces of such an accident are not always visible. I have found that owing to this cause two copies of the printed text may differ materially, one having a line of, say, seven digits, while another has six, or eight.

One of the most interesting questions arising out of these statistics is the interpretation of the figures relating to country in the possession of Chiefs. As an example, we may take the "district" of Bikanir, in the province of Ajmer (Ain, i. 512), It contained II subdivisions, with an aggregate of 4,750,000 dams, and furnished a local force of 12,000 horse and 50,000 foot. The subdivisions are named, but no figures for them are given, the district being clearly treated as a unit; and there are naturally no figures for area. I think these entries can safely be taken as indicating that this "district" was in fact the territory of Raja Rai Singh. who served as one of Akbar's high officers, and that the local force represents the contingent which he had undertaken to furnish when required. The aggregate may be read in one of two ways, either as tribute, or as an nominal figure. We know that at some periods Chiefs paid an annual tribute, not assessed by the year, but fixed by agreement in advance; and, from the financial standpoint, such a tribute would be properly regarded as a Valuation, because it would indicate the probable future Income, though, from the nature of the case, this particular Income would not ordinarily be assigned to anyone except the Chief. I have, however, found nothing to show whether Akbar in fact claimed tribute from Bikanir or the other Chiefs in Ajmer, and it is possible that the figure is purely nominal.

An example of how such nominal figures might come into the Valuation is given by the account in the Badshahnama (II. 360) of the submission of the Chief of Palamau. The Viceroy of Bihar had been ordered to reduce this Chief to submission, and marched into his territory. Eventually the Chief agreed to pay a lakh of rupees as *peshkash*, or present, and he was then appointed formally to the Emperor's Service, his country was valued at a kror of dams, and was forthwith assigned to him. In this case the Valuation must be regarded as purely nominal. The Chief retained his country, but in point of form he now held it in Assignment from the Emperor instead of as an independent ruler, and there was no question of tribute being paid, apart from the ceremonial *peshkash*. Such an arrangement was so obviously convenient that there is no difficulty in supposing it to represent a common practice; and, in the absence of positive evidence, the question remains open whether the recorded Valuation of a Chief's country represents tribute actually paid, or is merely a nominal figure, arrived at in the course of negotiations for a formal submission. My own guess is that practice varied, and that some Chiefs paid

tribute while others did not, but, so far as Akbar's reign is concerned, I cannot advance facts in its support.

Another example of the entries relating to Chief's country may be taken from the district of Kumaun in the province of Delhi (Ain, i, 521). Here, out of 21 subdivisions, the Valuation of five was "undetermined" or, in other words, no arrangement had been come to with the Chiefs; for the remaining 16, the Valuation is given without further details and as in the case of Bikanir, the question remains open whether any payment of tribute was actually made or claimed. Further examples of the same kind will be fond in other provinces but I hnve discovered no case in which it is possible to say with certainty whether Akbar claimed tribute or not; and the only point on which we can be reasonably sure is that the figures do not represent what the country was worth to the Chiefs, or, in other words, they furnish no indication of the Demand made by the Chiefs on the peasants in those regions.

So for then as the more important Chiefs are concerned, it is possible, subject to the ambiguity as to payment of tribute, to interpret the statistics in the light of our knowledge of the period: the question remains whether it is possible to trace the smaller Chiefs, who certainly existed at this period. The statistics treat each subdivision as a unit, and consequently it is hopeless to look for traces of Chiefs holding less than a complete subdivision; but there are certain indications, of varying value, which suggest that some entire subdivisions were held by Chiefs, and it may be of service to students of local history to explain what these indications are.

(*a*) In a measured district, the absence of area-figures for a subdivision suggests that it may have been left in the hands of a Chief, so that assessment by Measurement had not been extended to it.

(*b*) When the Valuation is given in a round figure, there is a suggestion that it may have been fixed in a lump, and not built up from the figures of constituent villages.

(*c*) The absence of any record of Grants points vaguely in the same direction; or it would be more accurate to say that a record of Grants suggests that there was no Chief, since it is scarcely conceivable that Grants would have been made in a Chief's territory.

(*d*) Other indications may occasionally be found in the composition of the local forces ; while a note of the existence

of a fort may be significant, because one can scarcely think of a Chief without a fort.

As an example of the way in which such indications may serve, we may take the subdivision of Ajaigarh in the district of Kalinjar (Ain. i. 430). It is the only subdivision of the district for which area-figures are missing; the Valuation is a round figure (two lakhs of dams), the only one in the district; there are no Grants ; and there is "a stone fort on a hill." These facts make it permissible to conjecture that at this period a Chief was left in possession of this wild bit of country, either paying a small sum as tribute, or merely recorded as "worth" that sum; the student of local history may find here something to explain or corroborate local records or traditions, in themselves of uncertain validity.

Appendix H

GLOSSARY

NOTE.—The words explained in this Glossary are given in the simplified spelling used in the text, the precise transliteration being added in brackets where necessary. The numbers, with c. affixed, denote the period, in centuries.

ABADI. Carries the general sense of populated and cultivated country, population and cultivation necessarily going together. Used to describe a condition, it is best rendered as "prosperity": when applied to a process, it denotes "development." The modern sense, "the village site," does not occur in the literature. The related word, abadani, denotes "development."

ALTAMGHA (Altamgha). Grant-under-seal; a special tenure introduced by Jahangir (*vide* Ch. V, sec. I).

AMIL ('Amil). In 13--15c. an executive official in general. From Akbar's time onward. has also the specialised meaning of collector of Reserved revenue, as variant of the official designation 'amalguzar in this sense, synonymous with krori. In 18c. used also to denote a Governor, *i. e.* an officer in charge of the general administration.

AMIN. An official designation. Under Sher Shah, probably one of the two chief officials in a pargana (but see under Amir). Under Akbar, an official on the staff of a Viceroy, whose precise duties are not explained. In 17c., a revenue-assessor under the provincial Diwan. May also, apparently, be used in a wider sense to denote an officer's "deputy" or "assistant."

AMIN-UL MULK. The designation of Fathulla Shirazi, when appointed by Akbar to control Todar Mal : may be rendered "Imperial Commissioner." The designation does not recur.

AMIR. In 13-14c., a rank of nobility, inferior to Khan and superior to Malik. In 15c., also a provincial Governor. In Bayley's version of the T. Shershahi (Elliot, iv.) used for a pargana official, but all the MSS. I have seen have Amin, and I take this to be correct reading.

BALAHAR. A Hindi word denoting a village menial; discussed in Appendix C.

BANJARA. Itinerant grain-merchant: synonym, karavani.

BATAI. (Batai). Sharing produce by Division.

BIGHA. The ordinary unit of area; its size varied within very wide limits, both by place and by period.

BISWA. One-twentieth of a bigha.

CHAKLA. (Chakla). In 17c., the area of Reserved land placed in charge of an officer denoted chakladar. In 18c. an administrative area in Bengal.

CHAUDHRI (Chaudhri). The headman of a pargana.

CHAUTH (Chauth). The claim, nominally one-fourth of the revenue, made by the Marathas on country which they overran, but did not administer.

DAFTAR. A record. Daftarkhana, record office.

DAM. Under Akbar, a copper coin, worth about 1/40 rupee, but varying in exchange with the silver price of copper. In 17-18c., a nominal unit (40 to the rupee) in which the Valuation was recorded, and in terms of which salaries were fixed, and Assignments made.

DASTUR. Has various general senses, "custom," "permission," "a Minister." Under Akbar and later, a schedule of assessment-rates stated in money; an abbreviation of dastur-ul 'amal.

DEH. A village in the Indian sense, which is nearly that of "civil parish," that is, a small area recognised as an administrative unit, not necessarily inhabited: synonyms, Mauza, Qariyat.

DHARA. A Marathi word, applied in 18c. to Murshid Quli's schedule of assessment-rates.

DHARMA. The Hindu Sacred Law, prescribing the duties of all classes, including kings, and not liable, in theory, to alteration.

DIWAN, DIWANI. Discussed in Introduction. In 13-14c., Diwan meant a Ministry. In 16c., (1) the Revenue Minister, (2) a nobleman's steward. In 17c., (1) a high official in the Revenue Ministry, (2) the provincial Revenue Officer. Diwani in 16c. meant the Revenue Ministry; in 17c. and later the revenue and financial administration as a whole; in 19c., the Civil Courts.

DOAB (Du-ab). A region lying between two rivers, especially that between the Ganges and the Jumna (*vide* Ch. II, sec. 1).

FARMAN. A formal order issued by Emperor or King.

FATWA. An opinion given by a jurist on a question of Islamic Law.

FAUJDAR. Ih 14c., a military officer, corresponding roughly to General of Division, as being directly under the General in chief command. In 16-18c., an officer in charge of the general administration of a portion of a province: ordinarily he was not concerned with the revenue administration, but in 18c. an officer was occasionally Diwan as well as Faujdar.

Faujdari. The post, or the charge, of a Faujdar: from 17c., also the general, as distinct from the revenue, administration; and hence, in later times, criminal, as distinct from civil, jurisdiction.

FAWAZIL. (Fawazil). In 13-14c., the surplus-revenue which a provincial Governor had to remit to the Treasury, after defraying sanctioned expenditure.

GRAM. Anglicised from Portuguese *grao*: a pulse (*Cicer arietinum*).

GUMASHTA (Gumashta), An assistant or subordinate. In the Ain, applied to subordinates employed by the collector in Reserved land.

GUNJAYISH (Gunjayish). "Capacity," "room." The technical sense is obscure: discussed in Ch. V, sec. 2.

HAKIM (Hakim) Not a precise designation, but used to denote any high executive officer, whether Viceroy of a province or Governor of a smaller area.

HAQQ (Haqq). In addition to the general senses—right, justice, truth, etc.—denoted in 13-14c., the perquisites allowed to Chiefs, usually in the form of land free from assessment.

Haqq-i shirb, a term of Islamic law, denoting the right accruing to a person who provided water for irrigation.

HASIL. (Hasil).. Discussed in App. A. Sometimes used as synonym for Mahsul, denoting either Produce or Demand, according to the context. From 16c. usually means Income, as contrasted with Valuation.

HAVALI (Havali). Environs; but in 13-14c., havali-i Dehli denoted a definite administrative area west of the Jumna.

HINDU (Hindu). Usually carries the ordinary sense, but in Barni (14c.) restricted to the Hindu rural aristocracy, or classes superior to ordinary peasants.

HINDUSTAN (Hindustan). In 13-14c., the country 'ying East or South of the centre of Moslem power; in 14c., usually the country beyond the Ganges; from 16c., India North of the Narbada.

IJARA. 16-18c.. a Farm of revenue. The Farmer is usually Ijaradar; also Mustajir.

INAM (In'am). A reward. Applied specially to gifts made by the King, whether in the form of a sum of money, or a stipend paid in cash, or a Grant of revenue. In 17c., commonly a Grant of revenue made to a high officer as a supplement to his Assignment.

IQTA (Iqta'). An Assignment of revenue; synonyms. Jagir. Tuyul. In 13-14c., also a Province, *vide* App. B.

IQTADAR (Iqtadar). Holder of an Assignment. (Not used in the sense of Governor of a Province, who was designated Muqti.)

JAGIR. An Assignment of revenue. Synonyms, Iqta, Tuyul.

JAMA (In Arabic, Jam', in Urdu, usually Jama'). Aggregate. Discussed in App. A. (1) In accounts, the credit-side. (2) In Revenue, either Demand or Valuation, according to the context. The phrase *jama-i dahsala* is discussed in App. E.

JARIB. A land measure; also, the measuring instrument. In 16c., used to denote assessment by Measurement, as synonym of Paimaish.

JIZIYA. The personal tax imposed by Islamic law on non-Moslem subjects.

JOWAR. A millet. (*Andropogon sorghum.*)

KARAVANIYAN. Used by Barni to denote the itinerant grain-merchants, usually called Banjaras.

KARKUN. Literally, agent or deputy. From 16c., usually means clerk, writer. The same meaning is appropriate in some 13-14c. passages, but they are too few to show with certainty whether the word had become specialised by that period.

KHALISA (Khalisa). Land Reserved for the State. as opposed to land Assigned or Granted to individuals.

KHARAJ (Kharaj). Discussed in App. A. The tribute imposed by Islamic Law on non-Moslems permitted to remain in occupation of conquered land: in India, revenue-Demand. Kharaji denotes country liable to Kharaj, as distinguished from country paying tithe (Ushr).

KHARIF (Kharif). The rains season, and the crops grown in it.

KHIDMATI (Khidmati). A present given by an inferior to a superior.

KHUT (Khut). Discussed in App. C. Used only by Barni, to denote Chiefs.

KHWAJA (Khwaja). Usually an honorific title. In 13c., designation of an officer on the staff of a province, whose functions are not clearly indicated.

KROH. A measure of distance, about 1½ miles.

KROR. Ten millions (100 lakhs).

KRORI. In 16c., the popular designation of the collector of Reserved revenue, known officially as 'Amalguzar. In 17c., used officially in this sense, and also to denote the collector employed by an Assignee.

LAKH. One hundred thousand.

MADAD-I MA'ASH. A Grant of land for subsistence.

MAHAL (Mahal). Under Akbar, a revenue-subdivision, corresponding usually, but not invariably, with pargana; and occasionally applied also to a head of miscellaneous revenue. The modern form, mahal, does not appear before 18c.

MAHSUL (Mahsul). Discussed in App. A. May mean, according to the context, either Produce or Demand; and, in 16c. official documents, also the average-Produce calculated for assessment-purposes.

MAL. Discussed in App. A. General sense, property or possessions. In agrarian matters usually means Demand, but sometimes has the wider sense of revenue-administration. In the Army, denoted booty taken in war.

MALIK. In 13-14c., a rank of nobility, inferior to Amir. Later, an honorific title used more vaguely.

MALIK. Carries the general idea of sovereignty or dominion. In Islamic law, applied to an occupant of land, and used in one of Aurangzeb's farmans to denote a peasant.

Malikana, in the British period, denotes an allowance made to a landholder, or claimant, excluded from possession.

MASAHAT (Masahat). Measurement, Survey. In 14c., denoted the process of assessment by Measurement, which in later times was called Jarib, or Paimaish.

MASHA. An Indian weight, equal to 15 grains.

MAUND. Anglicised form of Mann, a unit of weight containing 40 ser. The size of the unit varied with both time and locality.

MAUZA (Mauza') In 13c., used generally in a wide sense as a place or locality; later, denotes a village (in the Indian sense); synonym of Deh.

MILK. A Grant for subsistence, resumable at pleasure.

MOTH (Moth). A pulse (*Phaseolus Aconitifolius*).

MUHASABA (Muhasaba). Audit of an official's accounts.

MUHASSIL (Muhassil). Etymologically, a collector. In 14c., an official with unspecified functions, appointed by the King in the territory of a Chief.

Muhassilana, in 16c., denoted fees paid in connection with revenue-collection.

MUQADDAM. In 13-14c., sometimes a leading or prominent man; sometimes, specifically a village-headman. From 16c., the latter use predominates.

MUQASAMA. In Islamic Law, assessment on production, as opposed to occupation (which latter is Muwazzaf *vide* Wazifa).

MUQTI (Muqt'i), Discussed in App. B, In 13-14c., a provincial Governor; obsolete by 16c.

MUQTI'I (Muqti'i). This word has been found only in one passage (Ain, i. 296), and its meaning is uncertain; it may point to either Farming or Assignment.

MUSHAHADA (Mushahada). Discussed in App. C., where I interpret the word as Sharing-by-estimation, the Hindi kankut. Does not occur after 14c.

MUTALABA (Mutalaba). Discussed in App, A. The early use is to denote the process of demanding, or recovery: from 17c., it may mean the amount of the revenue-Demand.

MUTASARRIF (Mutasarrif). Minor officials; I am doubtful whether it denotes some particular official, or a class of officials.

NAIB, Deputy. In 13-14c., denotes an officer sent to a province to perform the duties of the Governor, when the Governor held also a Court appointment; or was employed on other duty.

NASAQ. Discussed in App. D. The general sense is "order" or "administration." Under Akbar, applied to a particular form of revenue-administration, which I identify with Group-assessment, though it may cover also Farming.

PAIMAISH (Paimaish), Measurement. In 16c., denoted the process of assessment by Measurement, as a synonym for Jarib.

PARGANA. The Indian name for an aggregate of villages. Came into official Moslem use in 14c., partially superseding Qasba.

PATTA (Patta). Lease. The document given to a revenue-payer, indicating the sum which he had to pay.

PATWARI (Patwari). The village-accountant, a Hindi term adopted from the outset in Moslem administration.

QABULIYAT. Written undertaking given for the payment of revenue; the counterpart of a Patta.

QANUNGO. The pargana accountant and registrar. The position certainly existed in the Hindu period, but the Hindi designation appears nowhere in the chronicles. The word Qanun in 13-14c. had not acquired the modern sense of "law," but denoted "custom" or "practice"; and Qanungo must be interpreted, not as "expounder of law," but as "interpreter of custom," *i.e.* it denotes the men to whom Moslem administrators looked for information regarding the customs of their Hindu subjects.

QARIYAT. A village, synonym of Deh.

QASBA (Qasba). The current meaning "town" has not been found in the chronicles. The earliest writers used qasba to denote a pargana; from Afif onwards, pargana was adopted as a Persian word, but qasba survived as an occasional synonym.

QAZI (Qazi) An official in the Islamic system, with duties mainly judicial, but also executive: there is no precise English equivalent, but in the Mogul period the Qazi might, be described as the judicial assistant of the Governor.

QISMAT-I GHALLA (....Ghalla). Division of grain. In 16c. a name for assessment by Sharing.

RABI (Rabi). In India, the winter; the crops grown in winter and harvested in spring.

RAI, RAJA, RANA, RAO. Hindi terms denoting a King or Chief, whether independent, or paying tribute or revenue to the Moslem King.

RAQAMI. A description applied to Akbar's first Valuation. Its precise significance is obscure, as explained in App. E.

RAY. In 16c., denotes a schedule of crop-rates prepared for assessment purposes, and showing the Demand in terms of produce: opposed to Dastur, a schedule of cash assessment rates. The word has survived locally in Benares in the sense of "rent-rate."

RYOT (Anglicised from of *Ra'iyat*). A herd, the peasantry as a body. The use to denote an individual peasant has not been found in the chronicles; the use to denote a particular form of tenure (ryotwari) belongs wholly to the British period.

SADR (Sadr). In the Mogul period, the designation of a high officer whose duties included the supervision of Grants. (*Vide* Blochmann's note on the Sadrs of Akbar's reign, in his translation of the Ain, i. 270 ff.)

SALAMI. A present offered to an official on approaching him.

SARKAR. In the chronicles usually means a treasury, whether belonging to the king or to a noble. Under Sher Shah, denoted an administrative district, *i.e.* an aggregate of parganas: under Akbar, a revenue-district. The modern meaning "Government" does not appear clearly in the chronicles.

SER. A unit of weight, one-fortieth of a maund, and, like the maund, varying with time and with locality.

SHIQQ (Shiqq). Division. Apparently at first a military term; an expeditionary force (lashkar) was divided into main groups (fauj), and these again into smaller groups (shiqq). In 14c, an administrative area, either a province, or a division of a province (*vide* Ch. II, sec. I). In 15c., a province. Not used in later times in this sense.

SHIQQDAR (Shiqqdar). At first, a military rank (*vide* shiqq); later a revenue subordinate. Under Sher Shah, one of the officers on the staff of a pargana, also a revenue-collector employed by an Assignee. The term survived into 18c. to denote a subordinate revenue-official, usually an Assignee's servant.

SUBA (Suba). In the Mogul period, a province of the Empire.

SUYURGHAL (Suyurghal). In the Mogul period, allowances granted by the Emperor, whether paid in cash, or by Grants of land.

TAFRIQ. The distribution of the Demand, determined by Group-assessment, over the individuals composing the group.

TALUQ (Ta'alluq). Dependency. Came into use at end of 17c. (*vide* Ch. V, sec. 5), to denote possession of land, whatever the title. Has been specialised in the British period to denote particular titles, which differ in different provinces. Taluqdar denotes the holder of a taluq.

TANKA. The chief monetary unit, 13-16c. (See Thomas, *Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi*, where the unit is discussed at length).

TUYUL. An Assignment of revenue, synonymous with Jagir, Iqta.

USHR ('Ushr). The tithe levied under Islamic law. *Ushri* denotes country liable to tithe, as opposed to *kharaji*.

VAKIL. In 13-14c., the Vakil-i dar was apparently the highest ceremonial officer at the Delhi Court. In the Mogul period, the Vakil was Prime Minister, and superior to the Vazir; but the post was not always filled, and, when it was vacant, the Vazir was practically Prime Minister.

UAZIR. In 13-14c., the Prime Minister, who in practice held charge of the revenue and financial administration. In the Mogul period, when there was a Vakil (*q.v.*), the Vazir was Revenue and Finance Minister, and was sometimes described as Diwan; when there was no Vakil, the Vazir was in charge of general, as well as revenue. administration.

Vazarat denotes the post of Vazir.

WAFA. Lit. "faith," "reliance," was used in 14-15c. in the technical sense of the yield of crops (*vide* App. C.).

WALI. Usually a provincial Governor (*vide* App. B): sometimes the ruler of a foreign country.

WAZIFA (Wazifa). In Islamic Law, denotes a periodical payment for the occupation of land, and the derived word *muwazzaf* denotes assessment on occupation, or what I call Contract-holding (*vide* Ch. V. sec. 3). In the chronicles, Wazifa usually means a charitable or compassionate allowance granted by the King, and paid in cash, as distinguished from a Grant of land or revenue (milk, or madad-i ma'ash) occasionally it is applied to a Grant of revenue.

WILAYAT. Commonly in 13-14c., a province under a Wali (*vide* App. B); but may mean also, (1) the kingdom, (2) a tract or region, (3) a foreign country, (4) the home-country of a foreigner. The meaning "province" had practically disappeared in the Mogul period.

WIRAN. Deserted. Applied to a village which had been abandoned and was uncultivated.

ZABT (Zabt). Discussed in App. D. In Akbar's time, the system of assessment by Measurement as then practised. The adjective zabti was used to denote an area where the

system was in force. In later times zabti denotod a revenue-rate, or rent-rate, levied on the area sown, and varying with the crop.

ZAMINDAR. Lit. "Land-holder." The word does not necessarily imply any particular claim or title, and in 18c. was used in Bengal to denote any sort of holder (*vide* Ch. VII, sec. 2). In the literature of North India, from 14c. onwards, it meant what I have called a Chief, that is, a landholder with title or claim antecedent to Moslem rule, commonly a Raja, Rao, or some other Hindu King, or ex-King, who had become tributary to the Moslem State. It is occasionally applied also to rulers who had not become tributary.

Appendix I

LIST OF AUTHORITIES

NOTE.—This list is not intended to be a complete bibliography of the subject, but is confined to those authorities which I have found it convenient to cite by abbreviated titles. Other works which are quoted rarely will be found fully described in the text or notes.

ABU YUSUF. Abou Yousuf Yakoub. *Kitab el-Kharadj*, tr. E. Fagnan. Paris, 1921.

ADD. The recognised description of one series of the MSS. in the British Museum, The number which follows the word is that of the particular MS. in Rieu's catalogue, or in the list of later additions.

AFIF. Shams-i Siraj Afif. *Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi*, *Bibl. Ind.* Partial translation in Elliot, iii. 269.

AIN. Shaikh Abul Fazl 'Allami. *Ain-i Akbari*. *Bibl. Ind.* The MSS. consulted by me are detailed in Appendix E. Translation by Blochmann and Jarrett, *Bibl. Ind.*

AIYANGAR. S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, *Ancient India*. London and Madras, 1911.

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BADAUNI. Abdul Qadir al Badaoni. *Muntakhab-ut Tawarikh*. *Bibl. Ind.* Translation by Rankin and Lowe in *Bible. Ind.*

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FIRMINGER. *The Fifth Report from the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the affairs of the East India Company, 28th July,* 1812. Edited by the Venerable W. K. Firminger. Calcutta, 1917.

FUTUHAT. Sultan Firuz Shah *Futuhat-i Firuz Shahi.* MS. Or. 2039. Translation in Elliot. iii. 374.

GUJARAT REPORT. Dutch MS. report on the markets of Gujarat before 1630 A.D. No. 28 of the W. Geleynssen de Jongh Collection in the Record Office at the Hague. The text has now been issued by the Linschoten Society as as *De Remonstrantie van W. Geleyssen De Jongh,* The Hague, 1929.

GULBADAN. Gulbadan Begam. *History of Humayun.* Text with translation by A. S. Beveridge. London, 1902.

IBN BATUTA. C. Defremery and B. R. Sanguinetti. *Voyages d'Ibn Batoutah.* Text and translation. Paris, 1874-79.

IMPERIAL GAZETTEER. *The Imperial Gazetteer of India.* Oxford, 1909.

I. O. The India Office. I. O. (Ethe) stands for Ethe's catalogue of the Persian MSS. I.O. Records stands for the MS. records preserved in the Office.

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MAASIRULUMRA. Shah Nawaz Khan. *Ma'asir-ul Umra. Bibl. Ind.*

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OR. The recognised description of one series of the MSS. in the British Museum. The number which follows the word is that of the particular MS. in Rieu's catalogue, or in the list of later additions.

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