PART II

THE DECLINE AND FALL

OF THE

PORTUGUESE IN BENGAL
CHAPTER II

BENGAL

"The Paradise of India"*

When in quest of new horizons and a wider scope of activities the first Portuguese bent their way to the shores of Bengal the reigning dynasty was that of the Lodi independent kings who had thrown off the yoke of Bakhtiyār Khilji's successors in 1338. Syūd Husain Shāh, known as the most powerful of the independent kings of Bengal, was on the throne and held his court in historic Gaur, which was, it is computed, a magnificent city five or six centuries before Christ. Gaur was to Bengal what Delhi was to Hindusthan. It was still magnificent and opulent, seat as it was of a thousand kings, though Hussain Shāh in a freak of fancy had allowed his soldiers to plunder it on his ascending the throne. The dynasty of the independent Kings lasted only up to 1538 when Sher Shāh, the Tiger, made himself master of Bengal. In the beginning the Portuguese had, therefore, to contend with the Muhammadan chiefs and only a few years after, with the successors of Sher Shāh. Neither the Lodi rulers nor the Afghāns were so liberal-minded as the Mughals proved to be when after the fall of Daūd Khān in 1576 they wrested the kingdom of Bengal from the Afghān chiefs.

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* A Memoir by Monsieur Jean Law, Chief of the French Factory at Cossimbazar says: "In all the official papers, firman, parwanas of the Moghal Empire, when there is question of Bengal, it is never named without adding these words "Paradise of India", an epithet given to it par excellence". Cf. Hill's Bengal in 1756-57. Vol. III p. 160. Aurangzeb is said to have styled Bengal, "the Paradise of nations."
The Portuguese found a vast majority of Hindus in Bengal ruled by a minority of Muhammadans for more than 300 years, that is, since the defeat of the last Hindu King Lukshmanya and the taking of Nadiā in 1203. Until the battle of Plassey in 1757, that is, for more than five centuries and a half, Bengal was practically in the hands of the Muhammadan chiefs, strangers to Bengal by race and custom if not by birth. Hindu principalities flourished for a time but seldom exerted any considerable influence on the government of Bengal as a whole. Peaceful by disposition, docile and easy going, the people of Bengal were submissive to this foreign rule and apparently content with seeing their liberties not trampled upon and the virtue of their wives protected from force in their cloistered seclusion. But given the opportunity, the Bengalees were ready to rise against the Muhammadans and join with the new European comers as they did when Sebastião Gonsalves conquered Sandwip and ordered the Hindus to deliver up to him every Moor in the land.

The Portuguese historians dwell much on the wickedness of the “Bengalas”. De Barros remarks: “the people natural to the land of Bengal, are mostly Hindu, weak in’ fighting but the most malicious and treacherous in the whole East; so that to injure a man anywhere (sic) it is enough to say he is a Bengalal”.* The Portuguese historian seems to have erred in the application of the word “Bengalas”, whom the Portuguese in India referred to as treacherous in the reports sent to Portugal. By “Bengalas” the Portuguese in India did not only mean the Hindus but the Muhammadan rulers of Bengal who were indeed most malicious and treacherous especially towards the Portu-


Whiteaway says in his History of Rise of Portuguese Power in India, that a Portuguese description of the Bengalis calls them “False and thieves, people who get up quarrels as an excuse for robbery” See p. 233, n. 1.
guesc whose earliest expeditions they had either treacherously put an end to or tried their best to do so in every covert manner. Hence de Barros who had never come to India probably confounded "Bengalas" with the "native people of Bengal" and ascribed to the latter the character which the rulers of Bengal possessed.

The geography of Bengal was not exactly what it is to-day. It was an irony of fate that in India towns and cities should have risen and fallen, depending as they did on the fickleness of a river that shifted its course here and there; or on the whims of a ruler who fixed his heart on a newer spot; or still more on the grim destinies which in every age create kingdoms and as quickly destroy them.

When the Portuguese came to Bengal, Chittagong was its chief port, and the main gateway to the royal capital Gaur. Its geographical position lent it importance.

Situated as it is at the mouth of the Meghna, this port was most convenient for navigation. The Meghna was the principal route to Gaur, the other being up the Hooghly. With the fall of Gaur, Chittagong began to decline, and trade was diverted to Sātgāon, which in its turn was supplanted by Hooghly. Chittagong was always a bone of contention between the Rajas of Bengal, Arakan and Tippera, who strove for supremacy over the seaport until the Mughal conquest of Bengal. All the Portuguese commanders that came to Bengal first entered Chittagong. In fact to go to Bengal meant to go to Chittagong. It is the "city of Bengal" referred to in the early Portuguese writings. They named it Porto Grande (great port) in contradistinction to their Porto Pequeno (small port) in Sātgāon. Hooghly eventually came to be known as Porto Pequeno.

From ancient times the chief port and emporium of trade on the Western side of Bengal, was Sātgāon, situated on the
river Saraswati, which branches off from the Hooghly below Tribeni and joins it higher up. The main current of the Hooghly till the middle of the sixteenth century streamed through the Saraswati; hence, the importance of Satgaoon which was more accessible to larger ships. The town of Hooghly was then a mere collection of huts. Satgaoon was the Saptagrama that figures so prominently in the ancient Puranas. It was so called because it consisted of seven villages on the banks of the river Saraswati, each of which was occupied by one of the seven sons of the Rishi King Pryavanta. This district undoubtedly played an important part in the Mauryan civilization. It is Satgaoon (Gange) that is probably described by Ptolemy as the capital of the Gangaridae, Saraswati being the Ganges Regia.* The unknown author of the "Periplus of the Erythraean Sea" who wrote in the first century A. D. speaks of Satgaoon thus:

"There is on it (Ganges) a mart called after it Gange through which passes a considerable traffic consisting of betel, the Gangetic spikenard, pearl and the finest of muslins, those called the Gangetic".† There were times when the muslins of Dacca shipped from Satgaoon clad the Roman ladies and when spices and other goods of Bengal that used to find their way to Rome through Egypt were very much appreciated there and fetched fabulous prices. Till the middle of the 16th century large vessels sailed up to Satgaoon with merchandise. In the reign of Akbar it brought an income of 12,00,000 dains or 30,000 rupees.‡ This historic port was, however, destined to decline on the advent of the Portuguese, chiefly because the river Hooghly diverted its current through the main channel, and caused the silting up of the Saraswati which became unsuitable for naviga-

* Wilford’s Asiatic Researches, Vol. V., p. 278.
† McCrindle’s Commerce and Navigation of the Erythraean Sea p. 146.
‡ Gladwin’s Aya Askari pt. II, p. 472.
tion. Fifty years ago the Saraswati was a dead river, with its bed traversed by a few chains of pools. To-day, however, it is a running stream even in summer as water is let into it from the Kala Nadā in connection with the Eden Canal Scheme. The Portuguese called it Porto Pequeno (small port) as it was of lesser importance than the port of Chittagong.

De Læt who in his India Vera (1630) described Sātgāon as a beautiful town drew largely upon his imagination. In 1660 Van den Broucke called it a village and by 1870 the proud name of Sātgāon, the Gangē of Ptolemy, was applied to a collection of eleven huts. A ruined mosque can be seen at Sātgāon even to this day attesting to its former glory.

The river Hooghly was not navigable for larger vessels higher up than the Adhi-Ganga (Tolly's Nollah) but lighter craft could transport to Sātgāon and other places on either bank of the river the goods which the Portuguese disembarked at Garden Reach. The topography of the Hooghly river was not very different from what it is to-day. Kalikatta (Calcutta) was an insignificant village on the left bank. The towns of Hooghly, Chandernagore, Chinsura, Serampore and Barrackpore did not even exist in name. They flourished only as European settlements. An idea of the villages on the banks of the Hooghly can be well formed by the following description of the voyage of Kabi Kankan who wrote the famous Chandi in 1577 (1499 of the Saka Era). Going down the Hooghly from Burdwan to the Sea, the poet passed or touched at the following places:

"Floating down the river Ajai the boats came to Indrani. Further down they passed Bhrigu Sinha's Ghat on the right and Materi Ghat on the left. Then they passed Chandi Gach; Balanpur Ghat; Puravastali, Navadip; Parpur; Mirzapur; Ambua on the right side, Santipur on the left, Guptepara on the right; Oola Kismar Fula, Joshepur Kodal Ghat, Halishahar on the left side, and Tribeni on the right; Saptā-
gramma (Sātgān), Garefa (Gouripur), Andalpara, Jagathal, Nowpara, Teliapur, Nunai Ghat, Mahesh on the right side and Kurda, Konnagar, Kotrung, Kuchinan, Chitpur, Sulkhia, Kalikatta (Calcutta) Bithoor (Betor or modern Howrah). Leaving on the right, the way to Hijuji (Hißill) they turned to the left, passed Balughata, Kali Ghat, Mirnagar, Nachangacha, Vaisnav Ghata, Barasat, Chatra Bhuj, Ambri Bhuj, Hithagar and then came to Mogara."* How many of these places are not familiar to us to-day, and with a slight change in the orthography, do appear in our most modern guide-books?

The geographical position of Bengal has considerably influenced its history. Away from the heart of India, Bengal was a refuge for fugitive princes who like Humâyûn, Sher Shâh and Shâh Jahân made it the scene of their bloody exploits. Southern Bengal, woven as it is by a network of rivers as no other part of India, was calculated to offer the sea-faring people like the Portuguese the greatest scope for their instincts of navigation and love for adventure. Unfortunately this very geographical character of Bengal, fostered a greed for piracy and plunder, the terrors of which still form the darkest themes of popular tradition. In a labyrinth of rivers, the adventurers could dive and dart, appear and disappear, ravage the country and escape with impunity. Hence Bengal has been the victim of exploits and depredations of foreign and native adventurers alike,† who inclined by temperament or driven by circumstances looked to privateering as the best and most convenient method of making a bid for wealth. Before the Sundarbans became a nest of pirates, this unfortunate part of Bengal, a prey to the wickedness of men and no less to the whims of the rivers was not in such a flourishing condition as some writers have made

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† The Portuguese were not the only nor the worst offenders. Cf. Chap. XIV.
it out to be. The ruins of the villages and towns marked by de Barros and Van den Broucké in their maps and overspread to-day by thick jungles, indicate according to Blochmann* mere attempts at civilization. Westland† has moreover shown that the desolation of the Sundarbans is due to the changes of the river system of the Delta, and Beveridge‡ in his enquiry, "Were the Sundarbans inhabited in ancient times?" comes to the conclusion that it is very doubtful indeed that the Sundarbans were ever largely peopled, and still more so that their inhabitants lived in cities or were, otherwise civilized.

Regarding the trade and wealth of Bengal, the Portuguëse had the most sanguine expectations which did not, indeed, prove to be far from true. Vasco da Gama had already in 1498 taken to Portugal the following information: "Benguala has a Moorish King and a mixed population of Christians and Moors. Its army may be about twenty-four thousand strong, ten thousand being cavalry, and the rest infantry, with four hundred war elephants. The country could export quantities of wheat and very valuable cotton goods. Cloths which sell on the spot for twenty-two shillings and six pence fetch ninety shillings in Calicut. It abounds in silver."§ From time to time Albuquerqué had written to King Manoel about the vast possibilities of trade and commerce in Bengal. When the Portuguese actually established commercial relations in Bengal, they realized to their satisfaction what a mine of wealth they had found. Very appropriately, indeed, did the Mughals style Bengal, "the Paradise of India".

* H. Blochmann, Contributions to the Geography and History of Bengal, p. 23, reprinted from J. A. S. B. 1823, pt. 1.
‡ History of The District of Bakarganj, p. 169.
§ Appendix to the Roteiro of Vasco de Gama.
CHAPTER III

EARLY EXPEDITIONS TO BENGAL

For almost twenty years after Vasco da Gama discovered the sea-route to India, the Portuguese had no definite commerce with Bengal. The goods of Bengal, indeed, found their way in native crafts to Goa, Malacca and other Portuguese ports. As evident from the letters sent from Malacca to Portugal, the Portuguese had visited Bengal in these crafts even before D. João de Silveira, who came with the first expedition to Bengal, but these were passing tradesmen who sold or exchanged their goods at the first port in Bengal they touched at, and then availed themselves of any vessels to repair to their own havens.

Albuquerque who with a lynx-eye had surveyed the whole map of the East had not left Bengal out of his reckoning; but his attention was absorbed with affairs on the other side of India. Besides, he had only a limited number of ships and with those that he had, he preferred to consolidate the conquests he had already made, rather than embark on new ventures in trying to secure the trade of Bengal and China. He, however, informed King Manoel* about the possibilities of trade in Bengal, and probably acting upon his injunctions the King sent in 1517 Fernão Peres d’Andrade with four ships particularly to open a trade with Bengal and China. This captain sailed towards Sumatra, took Pacem, filled his ships with chillies and other commodities and learning that the goods would fetch a higher price in China, sailed towards the Chinese coast thinking

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* On Dec. 1513 Albuquerque wrote to King Manoel “Bengal requires all our merchandise and is in need of it.” Cf. Doc. de Arch. Nacional da Torre do Tombo p. 300.
of returning to Bengal at a later date. But a candle flame by an accident set fire to his largest ship and he was forced to return to Malacca where he hoped to replace the lost vessel. On his way back he sent a messenger to Bengal in a Moorish ship as an advance agent to announce his arrival. This man was João Coelho who had arrived at Chittagong before Silveira. Fernão Peres, however, explored the coast of China, secured its trade, returned laden with riches, but never realized his hopes of coming to Bengal.

D. João de Silveira* was sent to Bengal from the Maldives with an expedition by Lopo Soares de Albergaria, the Governor of the Portuguese possessions in the East, who had succeeded Albuquerque. The Governor sent three other expeditions at the same time to Malacca under D. Aleixo de Menezes; to Diu under Manoel de Lacerda; and to the coast of Arabia under Antonio de Saldanha. The Governor himself went with an expedition to Ceylon and on account of some commercial disputes compelled the King to become a vassal of the King of Portugal, and to pay a yearly tribute of 12,000 Quintals† of cinnamon, twelve rings of rubies and sapphires, and six elephants. To ensure the Portuguese interests, he built a fort thus laying the foundation for the conquest of Ceylon, which proved to be one of the richest Portuguese possessions in the East. All the expeditions that had sailed at this time were successful but the one that came to Bengal. Silveira landed in a port situated, according to de Barros, at the mouth of the river Arakan that flowed from the country called Arakan itself‡ and where the King of the place resided. As Chittagong

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* For an account of Silveira's expedition see de Barros Dec. III. pt. I. Chap. III. p. 135 et seq. There were at least four Portuguese captains by the same name João de Silveira. The one that came to Bengal was the nephew of the Governor Lopo Vaz de Sampayo according to Correa.

† Each quintal was equivalent to 128 lbs.

‡ At present, Arakan is the most westerly division of Lower Burma.
was at this time the chief port in the whole of Bengal Silveira
moored there and found that João Coelho whom Fernão Peres
d'Andrade had sent in order to announce his arrival had
already arrived at Chittagong in a Moorish vessel; by a curious
coincidence belonging to Gromalle himself. Silveira sent with
a messenger his compliments to the King of Bengal* asking
in the name of the King of Portugal for facilities of trade and for
permission to erect a factory where the Portuguese merchants
could rest during their voyages and exchange goods with other
parts of India; but the messengers were never received.
During Silveira's voyage to the Maldives an event had occurred
which influenced the fate of this expedition to a great extent.
He had captured two ships that were going from Bengal to
Cambay and sent them to Cochin. These ships belonged to a
Moor named Gromalle who was related to the Governor of
Chittagong. Silveira took over in his own ship the pilot
of the captured ships and his nephew who were from Bengal.
The latter pretended to be a great friend of the Portuguese
and even informed Silveira about some of the plans of the
country; but no sooner did he land in Bengal than he
related to the Governor at Chittagong all that had happened.
The Governor covertly made preparations for a fight taking
Silveira for a corsair, though Silveira had no intentions what-

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consisting of a narrow tract which extends from Chittagong Division to
within 90 miles of Cape Negrais. The old kingdom of Arakan was prac-
tically the same in boundaries as the present Division. The capital of
Arakan was Myo-haung and this is the City of Arakan referred to by
Portuguese writers.

* It is doubtful who this king was. Husain Shâh was at this time
King of Bengal but according to the Râjmâl the King of Tippera
conquered Chittagong from him in 1512. O'Malley, Chittagong Gazetteer
p. 32, says, "in 1517, when, as mentioned later it was visited by John
de Silveira it was a port held by the Kings of Arakan." For a statement
like this there is no evidence in the Portuguese historians. On the
contrary de Barros says, Dec. 111. p. 1. p. 142, that at this time the King
of Arakan was a vassal of the King of Bengal. Any way, it is related that
Naṣr-ud-din Nasrat Shâh, the son of Husain Shâh reconquered Chit-
taggong from the King of Arakan.
soever but those of commercial interests. The suspicious and unfriendly manner in which the early European merchants were received by the Indian rulers, impelled them in a large measure to constitute themselves into a military power. The Portuguese originally came only for purposes of trade and evangelization. From the difficulties that were put in their way and from the consequent commercial disputes, arose the necessity of defence by arms, and from this grew up the idea of conquests.

Suspecting nothing of the attack that was about to be made against him, Silveira was waiting still to open negotiations. The Governor was, however, well disposed towards Coelho, as the Moors who had come from Pacém along with him and who had received good treatment from Fernão Peres, gave favourable reports about Coelho to the Governor, who naturally thought that while Coelho was the real messenger of the King of Portugal, Silveira was actually a corsair. Silveira, knowing nothing about what was passing, would not allow João Coelho to arrange the trade matters preferring to do so himself as he was the real ambassador sent by the Portuguese Governor. Meanwhile food ran out and Silveira found himself in the necessity of capturing a boat full of rice. This pretext served the Governor’s intentions. He suddenly opened fire from land and Silveira had to defend himself with great difficulty. He did not give in, however, though his men were about to die of starvation and spent the whole of winter in the Bay of Bengal as he could not return during the rains.

The only revenge Silveira could take, was to paralyze the whole sea-trade of the Governor’s ports. He must have, indeed, stopped all shipping in the Bay, because the Governor who was expecting the arrival of some ships which he knew very well Silveira would capture, made overtures of peace. During these negotiations Silveira learnt how well disposed the Governor was towards Coelho. Coelho being allowed to land, arranged the
terms of peace with the Governor and sent food stuffs to Silveira. But the Governor never really meant to stand by the treaty. As soon as the Governor’s ships landed unmolested by the Portuguese, he made war again on Silveira. Coelho was meanwhile on land. The Moors who had come in the new ships, also knew well João Coelho and Fernão Peres d’Andrade and confirmed the earlier reports as to how favourable these two captains had been to the Moorish people. Coelho used all his influence in favour of Silveira but the Governor* was obstinate in his hostility towards Silveira. Coelho, thereupon, sailed to China, and Silveira bent his way towards the coast of Arakan, where he had first touched. The King of Arakan was at this time subject to the King of Bengal, and his city, called Arakan itself was, according to de Barros, 35 leagues from Chittagong. On opening negotiations, the King sent a messenger with a precious present of a ruby ring assuring Silveira that though he was not well received in Chittagong he would be pleased to be friends with the Portuguese. Silveira however came to know in time that the offer was part of a treacherous plot that was laid in order to capture him just after landing. Unsuccessful and disappointed, he sailed to Ceylon and was given the command of the Fort of Ceylon which Lopo Soares had built sometime before.

Although Silveira had achieved nothing, it became an established custom from the time of Silveira’s visit to Bengal to send annually to Bengal a Portuguese ship with merchandise. According to this yearly custom of sending ships, the Governor Lopo Vaz de Sampayo chose Ruy Vaz Pereira† to command the ship going to Bengal in 1526. Having entered Chittagong with his merchandise, Ruy Vaz Pereira saw in the

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* Though the Governors of Chittagong were subject to the authority of the Kings of Bengal or of Arakan, they seem to have acted largely on their own.

port a galleot belonging to one Khājeh Shīhāb-ud-dīn (Coge Sabadim), a rich Persian merchant, built after the Portuguese fashion in order to plunder merchant ships and ascribe the crime to the Portuguese. Ruy Vaz Pereira immediately captured this galleot and took it along with him with all its merchandise. It was this event, as it will be seen, that eventually contributed to the liberty of Martim Affonso de Mello, after two years of captivity.

In 1528 an expedition commanded by Martim Affonso de Mello* landed by a curious chance on the coast of Bengal. This Captain had built a fort in Sunda where he had gone with eight ships and four hundred men. He then sailed to Colombo and put to flight Pate Marcar, the captain of the King of Calicut, who was coming to attack King Cotta of Ceylon, the Portuguese ally. Proceeding on his voyage he was overtaken by a storm, and his ships being driven adrift he was left stranded on a sandy bank near the island of Negamale opposite the city of Sodoéc. † Some fishermen promised to guide him to Chittagong but they played him false and took him to Chakariā ‡ which was under the Governorship of Khudā Baksh Khān (Codovascam), a vassal of King Mahmūd Shāh III, the last independent ruler of Bengal. This King kept a gay and rich court at Gaur, his women alone, according to Faria y Souza, amounting to ten thousand. As Khudā Baksh Khān had a feud with a neighbouring chief, he employed the Portuguese to fight for him promising to give them liberty and leave to go to their destinations. They won for him the victory but far

† Neither Negamale nor Sodoéc has been marked by de Barros in his Map of Bengal, Da Asia, Dec. IV. The city of Sodoéc referred to is obviously the town of Sandoway in Burma (Arakan).
‡ Chakariā is a police division of the Chittagong District containing at present a thana and a subregistry. De Barros speaks of it as “the city called Chacuriā"
from keeping his promises he imprisoned them in his city of Soré* situated on a river which emptied in the sea eight miles away. This was the second instance of treachery the Portuguese met with in Bengal.

Two of the ships of Affonso de Mello that had gone adrift during the storm reached Chakarī under Duarte Mendes Vasconcellos and João Coelho, probably the same Coelho who had joined Silveira in Chittagong. These captains tried to ransom Affonso de Mello with all the goods they had brought in their ships but Khudā Baksh Khān demanded more. As a last bid for safety, Martim Affonso de Mello made an attempt to escape with the co-operation of Coelho and Vasconcellos but it proved unsuccessful. And then followed a tragedy. The Brahmins† had made a vow that if they ever caught hold of the Portuguese they would sacrifice to their gods the most handsome of them. The man sacrificed was the nephew of Affonso de Mello himself, named Gonçalo Vas de Mello, a young man on whose cheeks, as de Barros says, the downy plush of youth had not yet begun to appear—"Jeune homme d'une figure charmante et d'une très haute espérance", as Van der Hoult describes him.

Nuno da Cunha, the son of the famous Tristão da Cunha whose name is borne by three islands in the Atlantic, was at this time the Governor in Goa. Although he concentrated most of his energies on obtaining fortresses in Bassein and in rocky Diu as defence against the powerful Muhammadans of Gujrat, his cherished ambition was to secure

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* Soré is marked by de Barros in his Map of Bengal and also by Van Blaeu in his Map in *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, Vol. IV. It is placed south-east of Chittagong further in the interior.

† The fact that the Brahmins vowed to make sacrifices of foreigners in the face of a Muhammadan Government would show that they had some power in the land. Couto, however, explains that they obtained their victim by bribing the Moors. *Dec. IV, Liv. IV, Cap. X.*, p. 323.
the trade of Bengal and gain a footing on its shores. With this object in view he fitted out many expeditions to Bengal. It happened that Khājeh Shihāb-ud-din referred the matter of the capture of his galleon to Nuno da Cunha and agreed to ransom Affonso de Mello for 3000 crusados* if he got back his vessel. His vessel, with all its goods, was restored to him and he indeed ransomed Affonso de Mello in 1529 and sent him with his cousin Khājeh Shakk-Ulla (Coge Sukurulá) to Goa. Khājeh Shihāb-ud-din became now a great friend of the Portuguese and with their help he determined to free himself from some trouble he had got into with Nasrat Shāh, the Sultan of Bengal, and to escape to Ormuz in a Portuguese vessel. He promised to use his influence with the king to give them great facilities for trade and even to give them permission to build a fort in Chittagong, if they would only send an expedition to help him in his projects.

Nuno da Cunha naturally chose Martim Affonso de Mello, the same man whom the Persian had ransomed, to command the expedition. This captain landed in Bengal in 1533 with five ships and two hundred men.† One ship called São Raphael was government property, the other four being the property of private captains. All the cargo belonged to joint stock companies. The object of this expedition was not only to help Khājeh Shiab-ud-din but through his influence to attempt to open commerce with Bengal and choose a suitable site for a factory. When Affonso de Mello reached Chittagong, he sent to Gaur his ambassador, Duarte de Azevedo with twelve men

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* A crusado was a Portuguese coin, so called from the cross marked on it. It was worth 420 reis that is about 9 sh. according to the value attached by Yule to the reis in the sixteenth century. Cf. Hobson-Jobson s. v. pardao. According to Gershom da Cunha a crusado or 420 reis would be worth about 2 sh. only. Frei Ambrosio de Santo Agostinho says in 1750 "we spent 1,200 rupees which amount to 1200 Crusados". Cf. O Chronista de Tissuary Vol. II. p. 62.

† Correa gives the date as 1533, de Barros as 1534, Faria y Souza as 1538. I have generally followed the dates of Correa.
among whom was Nuno Fernandes Freire and according to the prevailing custom, he sent presents to the King such as horses, brocades and sundry other things worth in all about £1,200. King Mahmūd Shāh was at that time in a sullen and irritable frame of mind, gnawed as he was by the remorse of having ascended the throne by the murder of his nephew Firuz Shāh III. Moreover, he is said to have been prejudiced against the Portuguese because he recognized among the presents some boxes of rose water which a Portuguese corsair named Damião Bernaldes had seized from a Moorish ship. Highly incensed, the King immediately decided to put to the sword not only the ambassador and his men but, by any form of treachery, all the Portuguese that came in this expedition. A Moor named Alfu Khān* and a Moorish saint, reputed to be a hundred years old, interceded in their favour dissuading him from murder. The King, however, determined to imprison them, and sent a Guazil † to the port of Chittagong where Affonso de Mello was staying, in order to seize him and his men. A dispute had meanwhile arisen between Affonso de Mello and the Moorish custom officers; and the Guazil took this opportunity to interfere and ultimately invited the Portuguese commander and his men to a dinner. Affonso de Mello and forty other Portuguese suspecting no treachery accepted the invitation while the rest preferred a hog-hunt. The dinner was held in a large courtyard surrounded on all sides by verandahs above. During the dinner the Guazil rose on pretence of illness and immediately a number of Moors came with guns and bows and arrows and began to hurl them against the unfortunate guests. The Portuguese did not, however, give in but tried to defend themselves with their


swords. Unable to hold out, they eventually surrendered. Some of those that were on shore were also killed and property valued at £100,000 was confiscated. De Barros dwells at length on this event and his pages read like the description of the Black Hole.* Ten Portuguese were killed including Christovam de Mello, the nephew of the Governor Lopo Vaz de Sampayo. Affonso de Mello himself was wounded. Thirty Portuguese who survived the massacre were tied up and put in a dark room. Their wounds were not attended to for some days and then they were forced to march six leagues during one whole night till they reached a place called Mavá. They were eventually taken to Gaur and were treated not like men but like beasts. Duarte d'Azavedo and his twelve men who had gone to Gaur as envoys were also confined in what de Barros calls a hell (inferno).

Nuno da Cunha, the Governor, swore revenge when the news of this disaster reached Goa. He prepared in great haste a fleet of nine sail manned by 350 Portuguese. He sent it under the captainship of Antonio da Silva Menezes† instructing him to demand an explanation from the King of Bengal why his ambassador who had gone to establish relations of peace and friendliness was so badly treated. If the King did not return Affonso de Mello and his men, Menezes was ordered to wage war with "fire and blood." As soon as Menezes arrived in Chittagong he sent Jorge Alcocorzo to King Mahmud Shâh with the message of the Portuguese Governor and with the threat that if any harm were done to him or if he were not allowed to return within a month, war would be declared against him. Mahmud Shâh, as obdurate as ever, would not think of setting free Affonso de Mello and his men but sent a letter to Antonio da

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* Couto, Dec. IV, Pt. I, Liv. IV, Cap. X, and Francisco D'Andrade Part. II, Chap. 80, 81, describe this episode a little differently.
† De Barros, Da Asia, Dec. IV, Pt. II, Liv. IX, Cap. V.
Silva Menezes requesting from the Governor of Goa a number of carpenters, jewellers and other workmen. Before these negotiations were over, a month had elapsed. Menezes thereupon, set fire to a great part of Chittagong and captured and killed a great number of people. Although Jorge Alcocosnado had to stay beyond the limit of his time, he had departed from Gaur only three days before the burning of Chittagong had begun. The King immediately ordered his arrest but Jorge Alcocosnado escaped just in time and joined Antonio da Silva Menezes. One would expect that the days of Martim Affonso de Mello and his men were numbered; but new developments were taking place, and Bengal was soon to become a theatre of war owing to the quarrels between Sher Shāh and Humāyūn in which Affonso de Mello was destined to play an important part.

Sher Shāh,† who was perhaps the greatest and the most treacherous of the Afghāns; who had introduced himself in the service of Bābar and then sworn to oust the Mughals from India; who unable to oppose the Lodi King of Bihar had joined him, marched with him to fight against Humāyūn and then deserted him and given the victory over to Mughals, came now to Bengal and determined to make himself master of it whilst Humāyūn was busy in Gujrat. He began a campaign against Mahmūd Shāh who, now no longer proud and unrelenting, was compelled by circumstances to implore the help of the very man whom he had treated so cruelly. He sought advice from Martim Affonso de Mello as to the plan of defence and decided

* Another account differs a little from de Barros and relates that Mahmūd Shāh demanded 15,000 as ransom, which being too exorbitant, Menezes decided upon bombing Chittagong.

† At the time of Sher Shāh’s invasion of Bengal he was known as Sher Khān and hence the Portuguese historians call him Xercansur. De Barros, however, calls him Xerchan, quite correctly.
to send an ambassador to Nuno da Cunha, the Portuguese Governor in Goa, asking for help.

At this critical juncture there happened to arrive at Sātgāon, Diogo Rebello, the Portuguese captain and factor of the Coromandel pearl fisheries.* According to Gaspar Correa he came in his own vessel and two foists well armed with guns. Nuno da Cunha had asked him to go to Bengal to see if by any means he could save Martim Affonso de Mello and his men. At this time two big ships laden with merchandise came to Sātgāon from Cambay. Rebello, without molesting these ships, forced them to leave this port and forbade them to carry on any trade. This illustrates the policy which the Portuguese had adopted, in order to destroy the Arab commerce, claiming for themselves alone, the right of trading in the Indian seas. Rebello sent Diogo de Spiñdola, his own nephew, and Duarte Dias, to the King in Gaur with a message that if he did not liberate the Portuguese prisoners he would seize his ports and repeat in Sātgāon what Menezes had done in Chittagong. This was the first time when a Portuguese captain is recorded to have sailed up to Gaur by the Hooghly, the others having gone to Gaur up the Meghna from Chittagong. As already stated, Mahmūd Shāh was no longer the same as Menezes had found him. He wrote to the Governor in Sātgāon to receive Rebello well, and to inform him that he was sending his ambassador to the Portuguese Governor in Goa as a proof of his friendship. He asked for Portuguese help and in return he promised to grant them land to erect their factories and permission to build fortresses in Chittagong and Sātgāon. The object of Martim Affonso de Mello was gained; he had been in prison for two years before he was liberated, and had undergone captivity again in pursuance of the very object which was now about to be realized. The

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King returned twenty-two prisoners to Diogo Rebello and excused himself for not sending back Martim Affonso de Mello because he needed his advice most of all. Affonso de Mello himself wrote a letter on behalf of Mahmūd Shāh assuring the Governor that the Portuguese would get permission to erect their factories and fortresses. *Sic tempora mutantur et nos in illis.*

Meanwhile Sher Shāh was advancing and decided to enter Gaur by the passes of Teliāgarhi and Sikligalī leading to the fortress of Gorij (Garhi).* To defend these passes which were considered to be the gateways to Bengal, troops were sent in two ships, one under the command of João de Villalobos and the other of João Correa. The Portuguese offered a stubborn resistance and prevented Sher Shāh from taking the city of Ferranduz, which was twenty leagues from the city of Gaur. The Portuguese historians say the Portuguese did wonders and captured a particular elephant which King Mahmūd Shāh especially wanted; but Sher Shāh went by another less protected way and entered Gaur with 40,000 cavalry, 1,500 elephants and 200,000 men and with a fleet of 300 boats.† Mahmūd Shāh, unable to offer any resistance paid an enormous sum of money amounting to thirteen lakhs of gold or 525,000 pardoas ‡ and made peace with him although Martim Affonso

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* These passes, near Colgong, are now traversed by the East Indian Railway. For the position of Ferranduz and fortress of Gorij see Map of de Barros.


‡ Castanheira, *Historia*, Liv. VIII, Cap. CXXVIII. The historian is not definite as to in what coins the "thirteen lakhs of gold" were paid. He however gives the equivalent of the sum in *pardoas*. As the Portuguese historians generally speak of money in *pardoas* it is important to ascertain the value of a *pardoa*, the value of which has undergone many variations. Originally it was a gold coin of Western India, which was adopted in the Goa currency. Later on a Portuguese silver coin was called a *pardoa*. Hence there were two kinds of *pardoas* a gold one (Pataco d'ouro) worth 360 reis and a silver one (Pardoa de Tanga) worth 300 reis. Castanheira obviously attaches to a *pardoa* the value which A. Nunes (1554) attached to it, viz. 5 silver *tangas* or 300 *reis* which amount
de Mello advised him to the contrary. The soundness of Affonso de Mello’s advice was apparent when Sher Shah soon after attacked Mahmud Shah again, utilizing the latter’s money against him.

Though Mahmud Shah had not emerged victorious in the campaign, he did not fail the recognize the services of the Portuguese. He gave to Affonso de Mello a present of 45,000 reis and allotted to each of the Portuguese a daily sum of money equivalent to ten crusados for food expenses. However, finding himself secure from the menace of Sher Shah, he changed his mind as to allowing the Portuguese to build fortresses in Chittagong and Satgao but he permitted Affonso de Mello to build factories and offered to give them custom-houses. He, indeed, appointed Nuno Fernandez Freire the chief of the custom-house of Chittagong, granted him land with many houses empowering him to realize rent from the Moors and Hindus who lived there, and gave him many other privileges over the people. The custom house of Satgao which was less in importance than that of Chittagong, was given to Joao Correa. The people were indeed surprised to see that the King had given the Portuguese so much power and such a firm footing in Bengal. This was the first establishment of the Portuguese in Bengal, almost simultaneously in Chittagong and Satgao.*

Under conditions so favourable and pregnant with possibilities, Affonso Vaz de Brito† came in a ship to Bengal from

to about 4 sh. 6 d. as the value of a reis in the 16th century was about one-fourth of a penny while to day it is about one-seventeenth. The value of a jardao deteriorated until its worth became 10½ d. Cf. Yule and Burnell, Hobson-Jobson & W. Proud.

* Castanheda, Historia, Liv. VIII, Cap. CXXVIII, 303. For a fuller account of these settlements, Vide infra.

Cochin with instructions from Nuno da Cunha to bring back Martim Affonso de Mello and carry his letter in reply to Mahmūd Shāh's request about the help that the latter had asked for. He, however, hesitated a good deal to land in Chittagong as there was temporarily a great commotion against the Portuguese arising from a report to the King about the Portuguese Governor having murdered the King of Cambay and ransacked his property. But Antonio Menezes de Crasto having, at this juncture, arrived in Chittagong, with merchandise and a letter from the Portuguese Governor explaining the Cambay affair, there was no more trouble. Affonso Vaz de Brito landed in Chittagong where he met Nuno Fernandes Freire at the Portuguese custom-house. Having, then, gone to the Court of Gaur he requested the King to liberate Affonso de Mello and gave him Nuno da Cunha's letter in which it was stated that he could not send him any help because the wars in Cambay had made a demand on all his available men and that he would assuredly send it the following year. Mahmūd Shāh highly grateful as he was to the Portuguese for the valuable assistance they had rendered in defending the passes permitted Martim Affonso de Mello to leave Bengal with his men. He kept only five Portuguese, including Affonso Vaz de Brito, as hostages for the promised help.

After the departure of Affonso de Mello, news arrived in Gaur that Sher Shāh was advancing again with a very powerful force in order to demand another large sum of money which he declared was to be his annual tribute and was now due to him after the lapse of a year. Mahmūd Shāh who had never agreed to such a compact refused to pay the tribute; whereupon, Sher Shāh invaded Gaur, burnt and pillaged the town, and took possession of sixty millions in gold. Mahmūd
Shāh covered with wounds fled to Hazipore and thence to Chunar, where Humāyūn was waiting with a large army to punish the revolt of Sher Shāh. Humāyūn sent one of his captains to Mahmūd Shāh asking him to come to him, but the latter died of his wounds before he could see Humāyūn and was buried by the Mughals with great pomp and ceremony.

Humāyūn advanced against Sher Shāh, attacked Gaur and forced him to retreat to Sasseram, after which he spent three months rioting in Gaur. The rains having set in, Sher Shāh cut off the retreat of Humāyūn, who was forced to ask the Afghān to allow him to return promising to give him Bengal and Bihar. Sher Shāh agreed and swore on the Koran that during the return of Humāyūn’s army he would injure no Mughal. But that very night he treacherously put eight thousand Mughals to death and the Emperor himself narrowly escaped with a few friends and fled to Lahore where his brother Kamrān (Camiran Mirza) whom he had recently poisoned and who had not yet recovered from the effects thereof, received him hospitably.* Sher Shāh proclaimed himself Emperor of Bengal in 1538 and the following year marching against Humāyūn at the head of 500,000 Afghāns, fought the great battle of Kanouj, defeated him and ascended the throne of Delhi. Thus he gained the throne for which he had fought for fifteen years and which he after all retained for only five years.† Henceforward till 1576 the Portuguese had to struggle with the successors of Sher Shāh.

The help which Nuno da Cunha had promised Mahmūd

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† The campaigns of Sher Shāh and Humāyūn in Bengal are described in the Portuguese chronicles so minutely, that it is a pity no History of Bengal has taken them into consideration. Even the Muhammadan accounts give a poor and scanty information of this period, a comparative study of which I reserve for my larger work referred to in the Preface.
Shāh did come indeed, but it was too late. The expedition was commanded by Vasco Peres de Sampayo and consisted of nine vessels. This captain reached Chittagong when Sher Shāh was already master of Bengal. At this time disputes arose between the generals of Mahmūd Shāh, Khudā Baksh Khān (Codovascão) and Amirza Khān (Amarzacão) regarding the possession of Chittagong. Nuno Fernandes Freire whom Mahmūd Shāh had created chief of the customs house and who wielded great influence in Chittagong intervened and declared in favour of Amirza Khān. Sher Shāh, however, sent his captain (Nogazil) to Chittagong and he took possession of the town. Finding Chittagong in such a precarious state Nuno Fernandes Freire advised Sampayo to conquer the town which he could easily have done. But whether it was on moral or political grounds, he refused to do so. Meanwhile Amirza Khān collected a force and sent it against Sher Shāh’s captain who asked for the help of Nuno Fernandes Freire preferring rather to be a prisoner of the Portuguese than of the “Bengalas”. When Fernandes went to the house of Sher Shāh’s Nogazil which was now under a siege, the men of Amirza Khān who knew him well gave him a great ovation. He dissuaded them from seizing the Nogazil but, he himself, with fifty Portuguese whom Sampayo had sent ashore, eventually captured the Nogazil and imprisoned him in one of Sampayo’s vessels whence after six month’s captivity he managed to escape by bribing a subordinate. It happened, however, that a galleot with sixty armed Moors of Raja Suleiman came to Chittagong and engaged some of Sampayo’s men; but Sampayo who had behaved cowardly all throughout, would not send any more men for their help nor send a ship to defend a Portuguese merchantman, which

* The account of this expedition is based on Castanheda, Histoira, Liv. VII, Cap. CXCVIII.
was in danger, inspite of Fernandes repeatedly asking him
to do so. Diogo Rebello and Nuno Fernandes themselves
condutced the defence during which the latter was wounded.

Vasco Peres de Sampayo passed the whole of winter in
Bengal and then went to Pegu where he died. Castanheda who
gives a very full account* of this event concludes that through
the folly and indiscretion of Sampayo the King of Portugal
lost Chittagong which could easily have been taken possession
of, considering that Sher Shāh was busily engaged on the other
side of Bengal. Any way, Martim Affonso de Mello's sufferings
had not been in vain. The Portuguese had obtained from
Mahmūd Shāh a vast establishment and a custom-house in
Chittagong and a smaller one in Sātgāon. The latter establish-
ment did not seem to have prospered and gained any impor-
tance, as Mahmūd Shāh died and the Afghāns came into
power. Most writers on Hooghly have, curiously enough, given
Sampayo the credit of having established the first settlement in
Sātgāon or rather Hooghly, when the fact is that Sampayo
never came to Hooghly.

Many other Portuguese captains came to Bengal besides
those mentioned above, but their doings may be passed over
in silence as not being of sufficient importance.

* Castanheda, *Historia, ut supra.*
CHAPTER IV

PORTUGUESE SETTLEMENTS IN THE HOOGHLY DISTRICT

The history of the Portuguese is not now one of expeditions but of their trade and settlements in Bengal, nay more, of their conquests. The Portuguese, as has been shown, had already come with arms and fought on the fields of Bengal, not so much for themselves as for others, in return for which they obtained a settlement in Sātgāon, in the Hooghly District. In Indo-European history there is not, undoubtedly, a more interesting Indian town than Hooghly because there, within a range of a few miles, seven European nations fought for supremacy: the Portuguese, the Dutch, the English, the Danes, the French, the Flemish, and the Prussians.* Before the Portuguese settlement Hooghly had neither a distinct existence nor history of its own. It was only a small insignificant village consisting of a few huts, while Sātgāon was a great port and a flourishing city whose antiquity extended beyond the times of Ptolemy. The Portuguese, indeed, were founders of the town of Hooghly.

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* The Dutch settled in Chinsura, with headquarters in Fort Gustavus; the English first established themselves in the town of Hooghly; the French in Hooghly, then in Chandernagore; the Danes in Gondalpara, south-east of Chandernagore and then in Serampore; the Flemish in Bankibazar; and the Prussians or Emdeners in a place a mile south of Fort Orleans in Chandernagore. There is a good deal of confusion about the Prussian and Flemish settlements. O'Malley, Hooghly Gazetteer, p. 87–91 understands that Bankibazar was a Flemish and not Prussian settlement and that the Ostend Company which settled there was a Flemish and not Prussian Company. Hill in his Bengal in 1756-57 enters Bankibazar as a Prussian settlement in the Index, though Le says it was held by the Ostend Company. Sir W. Hunter also calls Bankipur (Bankibazar) a Prussian settlement understanding the Ostend Company to have been the Prussian Company. Vide, India of the Queen and other Essays, pp. 201-2. The real name of the Prussian or Emden Company which was founded by Fredericke the Great in 1753 was Bengalische Handels-Gesellschaft.
REFERENCES.
P. 1 = First Portuguese Settlement.
P. 2 = Second " "
P. 3 = Third " "
Dut. = Dutch Settlement.
F. = French "
Fl. = Flemish "
Dan. = Danish "
The account of the foundation of the Portuguese settlement in Hooghly has taxed the imagination of most writers on Hooghly. On this point much has, indeed, been written for which there is absolutely no historical evidence. The Rev. Long states the Portuguese got Bandel in 1538 and built a fort there in 1599. Others say that Vasco Peres de Sampayo came to Hooghly in 1537-38 and built a fort at Hooghly. Shumbhoo Chunder Dey doubts its truth and yet Dr. Crawford quotes him as having asserted the fact about Sampayo’s building the fort. Succeeding writers have perpetuated and even added to these errors, until they find a place in our most modern Gazetteers. If the original Portuguese sources were consulted many mis-statements would have been avoided.

The fact was that the Portuguese established three settlements in the Hooghly District, each distinct in its origin, time and even place. The confusion about them has obviously arisen from the one being mixed up with the other. The first settlement was made in Sātgāon, not in Hooghly proper, nor in Bandel. It was, moreover, made by Affonso de Mello and not by Vasco Peres de Sampayo, who made a poor display of himself in Chittagong. Neither de Barros nor Correa refers to any of the doings of Sampayo in Bengal, and Castanheda who gives a detailed account of his expedition has nothing to say about his ever being in Hooghly. As Faria y Souza rightly says, Sampayo arrived too late to be of any help to Mahmūd Šāh, and in fact he arrived after the latter had died of wounds at Chunar. The second settlement was founded in

‡ A Brief History of the Hooghly Dist. p. 4.
§ Cf. Faria y Souza, Trans. of Savants, 1695, Ch. IX, pp. 418-20. For further account see Castanheda, ad supra.
Hooghly proper by Tavares to whom Akbar granted a farman (1579-80). The third settlement was established in Bandel, close to the previous one, under a farman of Shāh Jāhān granted in 1633, a year after the Siege of Hooghly. As to the supposed existence of a Portuguese fort in Hooghly, all evidence points to a contrary conclusion.*

The descriptions of the Portuguese settlement in Sātgāon are found in Castanheda and Correa. The following is a literal translation of the passage in Castanheda†:

a gist of which has already been given:—

"and the King after seeing himself free from war, or for some other reason, changed the wish which he had of giving fortresses to the King of Portugal in Chittagong (Chatigão) and Sātgāon (Satigão) but not of giving the custom-houses with houses of factories, and thus he told Martim Affonso who reminded him that he promised fortresses; and he seeing that the King would not assent to this, did not like to dispute it and told him to give whatever he liked. And at his request the King made Nuno Fernandes Freire the chief of the custom-house of Chittagong giving him a great circuit of houses in which the Moors and Hindus lived in order that it might bring him rent as also the custom-house of Chittagong (might bring him rent) and gave him many other powers at which all in the land were surprised, as also at the King being such a great friend of the Portuguese whom he wanted to settle (arréigar) in the country. And the custom-house of Sātgāon which was smaller he gave to João Correa and soon he and Nuno Fernandes Freire went to these two cities to perform their offices, for which the Guazils of these two cities were very sad because the power that they had was taken, chiefly of Chittagong which was bigger." Castanheda

* Vida Chapter V.
does not, indeed, distinctly say that the Portuguese erected a factory in Sātgāon but it is evident that they did erect a factory or made some sort of establishment from the fact that Mahmūd Shāh did not change his mind as to giving the Portuguese, custom-houses and factories both in Chittagong and Sātgāon and did actually appoint João Correa, the head of the custom-house in Sātgāon. Gaspar Correa* also confirms Castanheda differing only in that he says Nuno Fernandes Freire was given the custom-house with much rent (sic) in Sātgāon (Satigão) and that Christovam Correa (not João Correa) was given the custom-house of Chittagong (Chatigã) with much rent and power (sic) over the people of the land. As early as 1554 Antonio Nunes† referred to Sātgāon as Porto Pequeno and obviously the Portuguese must have thus named it from the time of their first settlement in 1537-8. When the Portuguese established themselves in the town of Hooghly, and Sātgāon was no longer the great city that it was, they applied the name Porto Pequeno to the port of Hooghly. Yule and Burnell lose sight of this second denomination in their Hobson-Jobson, where only Sātgāon is said to have been called Porto Pequeno.

The Muhammadan historian Abdul Hamīd Lāhorī who died in 1654, also dates the Portuguese settlement earlier than Akbar’s time. He says in the Bādshāhnāmā‡:—“Under the rule of the Bengālis, (das’ahd-i-Bāngāliyān) a party of Frank§ merchants, who are

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† Nunes, Livro dos Pesos etc. Subsidios, p. 37.
‡ Elliot, Hist. of India, Vol. VII pp. 31-32.
§ Frank is the parent word of Feringhi by which name the Indian-born Portuguese are still known. The Arabs and Persians called the French crusaders Frank, Ferang, a corruption of France. When the Portuguese and other Europeans came to India the Arabs applied to them the same name Ferang, and then Feringhi.
inhabitants of Sündip came trading to Sātgānw. One kos above that place they occupied some ground on the bank of the estuary. Under the pretence that a building was necessary for their transactions in buying and selling, they erected several houses in the Bengali style. In course of time, through the ignorance or negligence of the rulers of Bengal, these Europeans increased in number, and erected large substantial buildings, which they fortified with cannons, muskets, and other implements of war. In due course a considerable place grew up which was known by the name of the Port of Hūgli. On one side of it was the river, and on the other three sides was a ditch filled from the river. European ships used to go up to the port and a trade was established there. The markets of Sātgānw declined and lost their prosperity. The villages and the district of Hūgli were on both sides of the river and these the Europeans got possession of at a low rent.” It is evident from this passage that the Portuguese had some sort of settlement in or above Sātgāon before Akbar’s conquest of Bengal in 1576. The question is who these Bengali kings were, during whose reign the Portuguese settled above Sātgāon. The Oriyā Kings possessed the Hooghly district from Tribeni downwards from 1560–1567. From 1568 to 1575 reigned the dynasty of Sulaimān Kararani (1568-73). O’Malley* suggests that the settlement must have taken place between 1568 and 1573 in the reign of Sulaimān Kararāni. This conjecture has nothing to support it.

It is probable that Abdul Hamid Lāhorī confirms the Portuguese historians though rather vaguely and that the Bengali rulers referred to were the Lodi Kings, the last of whom granted the Portuguese a settlement in Sātgāon. The Mughal historians actually referred to the earlier Muhammadan rulers of Bengal as Bengali kings. It cannot be said

* Hooghly Gazetteer, p. 48.
the account of Lāhorī is quite indefinite for while he places
the settlement above Sātgāon, he says it grew up into what is
known as the port of Hooghly, which is really below Sātgāon.
It is true in a way that he confounds the Portuguese settle-
ment of Sātgāon with that of Hooghly. Yet the fact that he
places the first Portuguese settlement above Sātgāon has some
significance in that he probably means that it was a little above
the main Muhammadan city of Sātgāon, whence it extended
to Hooghly. Else, Lāhorī's account would be an absurdity.

In spite of the abundant evidence of Portuguese his-
torians partly corroborated by a Muhammadan account
modern writers have not recognized
the Portuguese settlement of Sātgāon.

Fr. H. Hosten S. J. whose authority is very valuable in
Portuguese history asserts*: "The Portuguese first settled
at Hugli under a farman from Fatehpur Sikri between
1578 and 1580. Until that time they had not been allowed
when coming up the river to do more than build godowns
in bamboo and, thatch which were burnt down regularly
every year when they returned to Goa." Fr. Hosten
evidently bases his statement on the account of the
traveller Caesar Federici who writing about what he saw in
Bengal about 1565 says†: "Every year at Buttor they make
and unmake a village with houses and shops made of straw,
and with all things necessary to their uses; and this village
standeth as long as the ships ride there, and till they depart
for the Indies, and when they are departed, every man goeth
to his plot of houses and there setteth fire on them which
thing made me to marvel. For as I passed upto Satagan, I saw
this village standing with a great number of people, with an in-
finité number of ships and bazars, and at my return coming
down with my Captain of the last ship for whom I tarried, I

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† C. Federici. Purchas V. 411, 439.
was all amazed to see such a place so soon raised and burnt and nothing left but the sign of burnt houses.” Federici, it will be seen, only speaks of the making and unmaking of villages in Betor, (Howrah, near Botanical Gardens) which he saw when going up to Sātgāon. Even though in the rest of his account he does not refer at all to the Portuguese settlement in Sātgāon, it cannot be inferred that the Portuguese never had a settlement in Sāgtāon. By 1565 when Federici visited Sātgāon all traces of the Portuguese settlement might have disappeared and the Afghāns who reigned after Māhmūd Shāh might have taken away from the Portuguese their custom-house and their factory, so that they found it necessary to build many sheds on the banks of the Hooghly to store their goods in. If Castanheda and Correa are to be believed, and there is no reason to doubt them, the Portuguese did something more than “build go-downs in bamboo and thatch” before they founded their great settlement in Hooghly in Akbar's time. Manrique also dates the origin of the city of Ugolim (Hooghly) to the farman of Akbar and speaks of the golas (store-houses) of the Portuguese.* His evidence does not obviously go against that of Castanheda since he speaks of the Portuguese settlement in Hooghly and not the one in Sātgāon about which he does not seem to have been informed at all. It must be considered that between the date of the settlement in Sātgāon and Manrique’s visit to Hooghly almost a century had elapsed.

Whatever might have been the fate of the first establishment of the Portuguese, they definitely settled in the town of Hooghly about 1580 by virtue of a charter conceded to them by Akbar. Manrique, who was in Bengal (1628-29) gives a pretty detailed account of this settlement, prior to which the Portuguese according to him, did not permanently stay in Bengal. They remained during the

* Manrique, Bengal Past and Present Apr.— June 1916, p. 286.
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rainy season in Bengal buying and selling goods and went home to Goa when the rains were over. Later on the Portuguese remained for one or two years without going back and the Moorish collector in the district even invited them to bring their Fathers and erect churches. Akbar seeing the precious goods which the Portuguese used to bring to Bengal from Borneo, Malacca and other ports ordered the Nawab of Dacca under whom the Hooghly District then was, to send from Sātgāon two principal Portuguese to his Court in Agra. The Nawab immediately sent a messenger to Sātgāon for this purpose but on account of the delay that occurred on the way he reached Sātgāon after a journey of twenty-eight days and found that the Portuguese had gone, some to Malacca and others to China. However the Mirza assured the Nawab that the Portuguese would come back the next year as they had left behind in the hands of some merchants (Sodagones) goods worth more than two thousand rupees. But Akbar having expressed his indignation at the Nawab's negligence, the latter took it so much to heart that, as Manrique relates, he died shortly after.

The following year a Portuguese captain named Pedro Tavares* "a man well versed in politics and state-affairs" arrived in Sātgāon and was received with great joy. On learning that the Emperor Akbar wished that two Portuguese should come to him from Bengal, he gladly accepted the invitation and choosing two Portuguese and many servants went to Agra. Akbar, favourably impressed with the conduct and valour of the Portuguese who with Antoni'o Cabral had, sometime before, gone to see him at Surat,

took a great liking to Tavares and had several interviews with him. He gave him many valuable presents and a farman permitting him to build a city in Bengal wherever he liked. He granted the Portuguese full religious liberty with leave to preach their religion and build Churches and even baptize the gentiles with their consent. Besides, the Mughal officers were ordered to help the Portuguese with all materials necessary for the construction of their houses.

The Akbarnāmā* mentions one Partāb Bār Feringui one of the chief merchants of the port of Bengal who came in 1579† to Akbar's Court at Agra with his wife Basūrbā and won great favour and esteem from the Emperor. As H. Beveridge suggests,‡ this Partāb Bār must have been Pedro Tavares. The name, indeed, approximates very closely, in spite of the mutilation which is very common in the Muhamadan historians. In the different MSS. of the Akbarnāmā there are various forms of the spelling of Partāb Bār's wife, such as Basūrbā, Nashurna, Nasunta, while some MSS. do not refer to her at all. It is only a guess of H. Beveridge or of the lady who told him, that the real name of Tavares's wife might have been Assumpta. Considering the severe mutilation which the Portuguese names have undergone in the Muhamadan histories it is wiser not to hazard groundless conjectures in the attempt to identify them. In the Akbarnāmā§ there is a further reference to Partāb Bār where it is said that Mirza Najat Khān, Akbar's Faujdar at Sātgāon, fled to the Portuguese Governor of Hooghly, after being defeated by the King of Orissa. This leads

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* Elliot Hist. of India, Vol. VI. p. 59.
† Though Tavares was at Akbar's Court in 1579, he must have gone there a year or two before. Vide infra.
‡ J. A. S. B. 1888, p. 34 and J. A. S. B. 1904, p. 52.
§ P. 320 of the original.
Blochmann* to identify Partāb Bār with the Portuguese Governor of Hooghly. As Tavares who was at Akbar's Court in 1579 must have been the same as the Portuguese Governor of Hooghly in 1580, the account of the Akbaranāmā beautifully tallies with that of Manrique; and Partāb Bār was evidently no other than Pedro Tavares. Blochmann's and Beveridge's identifications of Partāb Bār should not therefore be taken as referring to two different persons.

Tavares must have exerted a great influence on Akbar. At his request Akbar exempted the Portuguese merchants from all the custom-duties of which they had defrauded the treasury until 1529.† To Tavares and two Jesuit Missionaries of Bengal must be given the credit of having convinced Akbar of the "truth of Law of Christ" or at least impressed him favourably towards the Christians. In consequence of a petition of Tavares, Akbar called for a priest named Fr. Juliano Pereira from Bengal so as to learn from him something more about the Christian Faith. Fr. Juliano Pereira having acquainted the Emperor with the tenets of the Christian religion asked him to send for more learned priests from Goa. From this resulted the famous Mission of Fr. Rodolfo Aquaviva.§

When Tavares returned to Hooghly in 1579 or 1580 he was high in the estimation of the people and choosing a favourable site in Hooghly established the settlement, which grew into the greatest centre of trade in Bengal and supplanted the historic glory of Sātgāon. It is unfortunate that Manrique; does not specify the date of the foundation of Hooghly by Tavares. It can, however, be determined within close approximation from a consideration of contemporary writings. The

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† Fr. F. de Souza, Oriente Cong. Pt. II, Conq. I, Div. ii, § 44.
§ An excellent account of this Mission is given by Vincent Smith, Akbar, p. 170 et seq.
Akbarnāmā* records Tavares's visit to Akbar as occurring in 1579 (23rd year of Akbar's reign) but if Fr. du Jarric† is correct in dating Fr. Juliano Pereira's arrival at Fatehpur Sikri in the year 1578 then Tavares must have gone to the Court of Akbar in 1577, or 1578 at the latest, since it was through his request that Fr. Pereira was called by Akbar. According to Fr. F. de Souza‡, Tavares must have been in Agra even up to 1579 because he obtained a decree from the Emperor exempting the Portuguese of Bengal from all their dues up to 1579. Now, it is certain that Tavares was in Bengal early in 1580 because Fr. A. Monseratte§ relates that when the first Jesuit Mission arrived at Akbar's Court on February 18, 1580, they found there some of Tavares's men while no mention is made of Tavares. The confirmation of the fact is found in the Akbarnāmā‖ which relates that in 1580 Mirzā Najat Khān Akbar's Faujdar at Sātgāon being defeated by the king of Orissa, fled to Partāb Bār (Pedro Tavares) at Hooghly. Hence it may be asserted that the settlement of Hooghly was established either towards the close of 1579 or in the earlier months of 1580.

† Hist. Des. Choses plus Memorables.
‡ Oriente Conquistado Pt. II, Conq. I, Div. ii, § 44.
§ Mongol. Legat. Comment. 20 a. 3. Vide, Fr. Hosten's annotations to Manrique, Bengal Past and Present, April—June, 1916, Ch. V.
CHAPTER V

THE GROWTH OF THE SETTLEMENT OF HOOGHLY

The Portuguese settlement in Hooghly flourished with amazing rapidity. In 1580, about the same year that the settlement was made, the Portuguese influence was so well established that according to the Akbarnāma* Mirza Najat Khān, Akbar’s Faujdar at Sātgāon being defeated by the king of Orissa near Solimabad† fled to the Portuguese Governor at Hooghly for protection. Hooghly rose to be indeed “the richest, the most flourishing and the most populous” of all the Bandels that the Portuguese possessed in Bengal. As Fr. Cabral says, Hooghly became the common emporium of the vessels of India, China, Malacca and Manilla and a resort not only of a large number of the natives of the country but also of the Hindustanis (sic) the Mughals the Persians and the Armenians. Ralph Fitch who visited Hooghly in 1588 found the whole of the town in the hands of the Portuguese of whom he says it was the “chief keep.” He adds the town was one league from Sātgāon, and was called Porto Pequeno in contradistinction to their Porto Grande which they had in Chittagong. Within the next ten years the Portuguese authority extended even to Sātgāon. The Ain-i-Akbari written in 1596-1597 says that in the Sarkār of Sātgāon there were two ports (Hooghly and Sātgāon) at a distance of half a kos from each other both of which were in possession of the Portuguese, Hooghly being the more important. Besides the Portuguese, had bought lands and possess-

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† A town south-east of Burdwan on the left bank of the Damodar.
ed villages on both sides of the river for a considerable distance from their town of Hooghly. Manrique, describing his voyage to Hooghly in 1628 says* "...we entered the mouth of the large and far-famed old Ganges at a distance of Ganges sixty leagues from the City of Vgolim (Hooghly). As we were navigating 'al uzane' which in the Bengala and Industana languages means going against the current we found it a very tough and tedious piece of work inspite of the many villages and towns, some of them the private property of the Portuguese of Vgolim which were covering both banks of the river all the way up to Vgolim." Fr. Cabral asserts the Portuguese did not confine themselves to the banks of the river but extended their settlement sixty leagues inland. The Portuguese population was fast increasing in Hooghly and so was the number of Christians who were converted by the Portuguese. The Augustinians built therefore in 1599, the year when the East India Company was formed, their great Convent at Bandel which still exists though not as originally built and not even on the original site.†

Towards the latter part of the sixteenth century, the greater part of the Bengal trade had passed into the hands of the Portuguese. Hooghly, Sātgāon and Chittagong were not their only ports and settlements, but they had also Hijilt, Banja, Dacca and many other small ports. The extent of the Portuguese trade in Hooghly can be imagined from the fact that they paid over a 100,000 tangas or rupees as custom duties to the Mughals. For an account of the Portuguese trade in Bengal a separate chapter will be devoted.

The Portuguese were equally well thriving on the side of Chittagong and owned innumerable Bandels or Bunders on the

† Fr. Hosten supposes the Convent stands on the same site as the old one. Cf A Week in Bandel Convent, Bengal Past and Present Jan.—Mar. 1914. The question will be discussed below.
banks of the Ganges, of the Brahmaputra and of their various tributaries. In fact at this time more important events were occurring on the coast of Arakan and in the islands at the mouths of the Ganges than in Hooghly. In course of time the Portuguese of Hooghly became really independent of the Mughal Emperor in as much as they discontinued to pay the nominal tribute despite the remonstrations of the Mughal Governor. The Shāh Jahānnāmā* refers to the fact that the Portuguese had lands on both sides of the Hooghly and that they collected revenue from them. Even at the time when the Ain-i-Akbari was written (1596-97), Hooghly had supplanted the historic Sātgāon, and both these ports were in the possession of the Portuguese.†

Two causes contributed to the decline of Sātgāon. The first was that the Portuguese, when they settled in Hooghly, diverted all the trade to their own port to the detriment of Sātgāon. The Mughal officers in Sātgāon actually complained to the Emperor that on account of the Portuguese, the revenue of Sātgāon was decreasing. The second cause was that the river Saraswati on which Sātgāon was situated and through which flowed the main stream of the river Hooghly began silting up and was navigable only by smaller vessels. The Portuguese must have, indeed, chosen Hooghly for their settlement because they had noticed the main stream no longer flowing through the Saraswati. This is one of the few examples in which the waters of the Ganges have played fast and loose with the ambitions of man. The holy Ganges does indeed work changes in its water system but it is not like other rivers such as the Indus, on which throughout its course no great city has ever flourished because it shifts its bed so very frequently. Well may it be called the Holy Ganga.

† Ain-i-Akbari, Jarret, Vol. II. p. 125.
The Rev. Long remarks* that in 1599 the Portuguese erected a fort of a square form, flanked by four bastions, surrounded by a ditch on three sides and on the fourth by the Hooghly. This statement rests on no authority and it is one of the great many creations of his fancy. Each subsequent writer, probably relying upon him, has referred to the existence of the Portuguese fort in Hooghly, the remains of which are supposed to be the foundations of two walls that can be seen jutting out into the river at low tide.† The fact seems to be, however, that the Portuguese had not erected any fort in Hooghly.‡ No reference to it can be found in the Portuguese records. Ralph Fitch who was in Hooghly in 1686 makes no mention of a Portuguese fort and Van Linschoten (1593-97) distinctly says there was none.§ Most conclusive evidence is that of Manrique and Cabral who in their descriptions of the Siege of Hooghly regret that the Portuguese could not well defend themselves as they possessed no fort, having to content themselves with raising embankments and barricades, and converting their houses into citadels. It must be remarked Khāfi Khān|| in his description of the siege asserts that the Portuguese defended themselves from a fort; but throughout his account he enlarges upon the Bādshāhnāmā,¶ which records that the Portuguese erected substantial buildings (not forts) which they fortified with cannon, muskets and other imple-

* Rev. Long, Portuguese in North India, ut supra.
† O'Malley, Hooghly Gazetteer p. 272.
‡ Fr. Hosten S. J. was the first to deny the existence of a Portuguese fort in Hooghly and to adduce evidence in support of it. Vide Bengal Past and Present, Jan.–Mar. 1915, p. 80 et seq.
§ Van Linschoten is however open to doubt as he says the Portuguese had no Government in Hooghly and lived like wild men, which could not be true.
|| Elliot, Hist. of India, Vol. VII. p. 211.
¶ Ibidem, pp. 31, 32.
Portuguese in Bengal, 1919.

[To face page 58.

RUINS OF THE SUPPOSED PORTUGUESE FORT IN HOOGHLY.
ments of war. It is not probable nor is there any evidence that the Portuguese built a fort after the Siege of Hooghly which took place in 1632.

The Rev. Long and Toynbee* refer to the fact that in 1603 Cervalium captured a Mughal fort with a garrison of 400 men all but one of whom were killed. This Cervalium was Domingo Carvalho who, as it will be seen, was the conqueror of the island of Sandwip. Fr. du Jarric† gives some details about this interesting event. Carvalho came to Hooghly from Sripur (Bakarganj district) in order to take reinforcements for the capture of Sandwip. He found there were about 5000 inhabitants in the Portuguese colony and that the Moors wanted to make them pay new tributes. Seeing the increasing prosperity of the Portuguese, the Moors had built a fortress near Hooghly so as to check their progress and had placed there a garrison of 400 Mughal soldiers. Whenever the Christians passed with their ships down the river, the Moors robbed them and even killed several of them inflicting indescribable cruelties. They tried to do the same with Carvalho when he was passing by their fortress with his thirty Jaleas‡ and began to discharge on him their arquebuzes. Carvalho jumped ashore with sixty Portuguese, and some seizing the gate of the fortress and others scaling its walls, they captured it and massacred the whole garrison excepting one Caffre who escaped through a channel. The further history of this fort, does not seem to exist in any records. Excepting this temporary hold on a Mughal fortress, the Portuguese cannot be said to have possessed a fort in Hooghly.

It is much to be deprecated that no adequate account is left

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* Sketch of the Administration of the Hooghly District, p. 4.
‡ Jaleas was a vessel used both for trading and fighting purposes; the word Jolly-boat is derived from it. Cf. Hobson-Jobson s. v. Gallevat.
of the Portuguese system of Government either in the official or individual writings. While so much is written about the Portuguese possessions in Western India, their doings in Bengal and the names of the chief actors have comparatively been consigned to oblivion. As to the names of the Portuguese Governors or Captains in Hooghly the only three names that can be given are Pedro Tavares (1580) Miguel Rodrigues (1623) and Manoel d' Azavedo (1632).*

The two of the earliest accounts of the Portuguese of Hooghly, throwing incidentaly some light on how they governed themselves, contain doubtful statements. Van Linschoten who travelled in India between 1583 and 1589, remarks in a brief description of the Portuguese of Chittagong and of Hooghly† "The Portingalles deale and traffique thether, and some places are inhabited by them, as the havens which they call Porto Grande (Chittagong) and Porto Pequeno (Hooghly) that is the great haven and the little haven but there they have no Fortes nor any government, nor policie, as in India [they have] but live in a manner like wild men, and untamed horses, for that every man doth there what

* In spite of repeated investigations I have not been able to find a list of the Portuguese Governors of Hooghly. Out of the three names given the first is mentioned on the authority of Manrique and others. As to Manoel d' Azavedo being Captain of the Portuguese of Hooghly we have the statement of Fr. Cabral, in his letter from Ceylon (1633) describing the Seige of Hooghly. Though Miguel Rodrigues is mentioned by Stewart, in his History of Bengal, and by others who have repeated his statement, as the Governor of Hooghly when Shāh Jahān fled to Bengal, yet there is considerable doubt about it. Stewart probably based his statement on Fr. Catrou's History of the Mogol Empire. But Manrique calls Miguel Rodrigues Captain of the Portuguese in Dacca. Fr. Catrou's is not a sure evidence because he makes Miguel Rodrigues a Captain of the Portuguese in Hooghly even in 1632, which cannot be true according to Fr. Cabral. Yet I have included Rodrigues's name among the Portuguese Captains of Hooghly for it he was a Captain of the Portuguese in Dacca he might have, at the same time, been Captain of those in Hooghly.

hee will, and every man is Lord [and maister], neyther esteeme they anything of justice, whether there be any or none, and in this manner doe certayne Portingalles dwell among them some here, some there, [scattered abroade] and are for the most part such as dare not stay in India for some wickednesse by them committed; notwithstanding there is great trafficke used in those part es by diverse ships [and marchants] which all the year divers times both go to and from all the Orientall ports." As Van Linschoten was in Bengal not more than five years after the Portuguese had settled in Hooghly it is probable they had no perfect system of government and that there were many abuses but this writer seems to have been in some points either misinformed about Hooghly or else he applies to Hooghly what he saw in Chittagong, just as a later traveller Pyrard de Laval did. If in 1580 there was a Portuguese governor in Hooghly to whom Mir Najat Khan fled for protection it is difficult to conceive how there could be no government at all only about five years after, especially since all evidence points to the fact that the Portuguese were flourishing rather than degenerating into "untamed horses". Ralph Fitch who was in Hooghly in 1588 saw a great town in the possession of the Portuguese and has nothing to say about their living like wild men. Pyrard de Laval who was in Chittagong in 1607 perpetrates the same blunder imagining that the condition of the Portuguese in Hooghly was the same as in Chittagong. It must be mentioned Pyrard de Laval did not visit Hooghly. "A large number of Portuguese", he says "dwell in freedom at the ports on this coast of Bengal; they are also very free in their lives being like exiles. They do only traffic, without any fort, order, or police, and live like natives of the country; they durst not return to India, for certain misdeeds they have committed and they have no clergy among them." To say that the Portuguese had no

clergy in Hooghly in 1607 is quite erroneous. As will be seen, the religious orders, Jesuits and the Augustinians, had erected in Hooghly many churches and undoubtedly there were priests in the great Augustinian convent built in 1599, which after being destroyed and re-built many times, still exists in Bandel.

Manrique who was in Hooghly in its palmiest days, devotes many pages to quite insignificant matters but as to the system of government or its officials he has scarcely to say anything beyond mentioning that "there was a government which did not think it fit to send an embassy to Shâh Jahân on his ascending the throne."* Fr. Cabral, however, gives some information, about how the Portuguese governed themselves in Hooghly.† He says the Portuguese enjoyed absolute independence, the Mughals being content with merely collecting custom duties and market dues. This is a fact which Shâh Jahân-nâmâ confirms. Not even the Emperor's Guazil could enter the Portuguese town except with the consent of the Portuguese and the Mughal ships had to submit themselves to many regulations which the Portuguese enforced in their port. The Portuguese government was under a Captain Convidor and four assistants annually elected by the citizens. This Captain was obeyed by common folk and even by the gentry of the place. It is worthy of remark that Fr. Cabral says that it was the King of Portugal who had these officials in Hooghly showing that the Portuguese of Hooghly were loyal to the crown. The reason why Manrique, Cabral and other Portuguese who were in Hooghly have not left any detailed description of the system of government was probably because

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it was the same as in the other Portuguese possessions, with only some modifications to suit the conditions of the country.

Mannuci who was in Hooghly about 1660, does not also refer in his *Storia do Mogor* to any Portuguese officials though he has a lot to say about opulent Portuguese merchants. It cannot be said that after the Siege of Hooghly in 1632 the Portuguese were mere traders without any officials or responsibilities. In the Diaries of Streynsham Master appears a deed, in the Portuguese language, enacted and signed by a Portuguese public notary named Antonio Gil de Brito in the year 1657.* In Bandel some tenants of the Augustinian Convent still possess deeds and documents in Portuguese, signed by public notaries at a comparatively recent date.†

The Portuguese in Hooghly were under the authority of the Ceylon government and not directly under the Portuguese Viceroy in Goa as communication with the latter place was only possible by sea and involved considerable delay. In a large measure the Portuguese managed their affairs independently, but they never shook off the authority of the Portuguese Viceroy who from time to time communicated to the King of Portugal the state of affairs in the Portuguese possession of Ugolim (Hooghly).

It is commonly supposed that the word Hooghly is derived from *hogla*, (*typha elephantina*) the name for the tall reeds growing in abundance on the banks of the river. * This derivation

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* Diaries Temple’s Edition Vol. II p. 62. “I Antonio Gil (not Gonvalves as Temple has) de Brito, notary public of deeds for his Majesty in this Bandel of Nossa Senhora de Guadalupe of Xahabad, certify that the signature above Gaspar de Breu is that of the said Gaspar de Breu, a Portuguese. I assured myself that the said Gaspar de Breu was his signature, in faith of which I have enacted this at present, signed by me with my public signature which is as follows.

To-day, 3rd Oct. 1657. He paid for this half a tanga.”

† One deed, dated 22nd Sept. 1704 is signed by Thomas de Faria, Escrivão Público das notas desta Villa de Bandel, and another, dated 21st Oct 1824 is signed by João Lobo, Escrivão e Notario.
first proposed by H. Blochmann,* does not seem to be true. The hogla reeds which always grew on the river banks cannot alone account for a remarkable change of the name of the river from Bhāghirathi or Ganges into Hooghly towards the end of the sixteenth century. The river acquired its name from the town of Hooghly which the Portuguese founded about 1580. Before this date Hooghly did not exist in name. The Chandi written in 1577 makes no mention of it though it refers to places close to it and opposite to it such as Harishar and Gouripur (Gorifa). O'Malley says † that Hooghly is mentioned in a Bengali poem dated 1495 but the reference which he gives, has no word about Hooghly and deals about quite different matters. The Portuguese obviously originated the name. The earliest mention of the word is in Ralph Fitch who in 1588 spells it Hugeli. Two years later we find in Fr. Monseratte's map the town marked Goli. The Ain-i-Akbari (1596-97) has Hugli. As to the Portuguese historians, de Barros, Correa and Castanheda do not refer at all to Hooghly as their histories cover an earlier period than 1550, while Hooghly came into existence about 30 years later. Fr. Fernandes (1599) has Gullum or Gullo. Bocarro (1612-17) has D'Ogolin, Golin, Dogolin and Faria y Souza speaking about the Siege of Hooghly has Golin. Other forms are Gollye (Hughes and Parker 1620); Ugolim (Manrique, 1628); Ugoli (De Laet, 1630); Oegli or hoegli (Van den Broucke 1660); Ogouli (Bernier, 1665). Towards the end of the seventeenth century and after, hughly, hooghly began to be adopted.

It is very interesting to know whence arose the designation Hooghly. As already said it is not likely to be derived from the hogla alone, as it was not the river that was called

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* Blochmann, J. A. S. B. 1873, p. 217 n.
† Hooghly Gazetteer p. 48.
Hooghly first but the town, where, as far as the Portuguese were concerned, the hogla reeds were not of any importance. Besides hogla reeds are to be found all over the banks of the river and not confined to the town of Hooghly. As Fr. Hosten suggests* the Portuguese might have named their settlement from the large amount of golas (store-houses) which they erected on the banks of the river. Fr. Hosten is not well inclined to adopt this derivation and raises many doubts. It has also been suggested that Hooghly is derived from Gal or Goli (Beng,) meaning a narrow passage, though there is nothing definite to justify such a conjecture. After all, the explanations suggested, resolve into attempting to suit facts to the theory. Whether Hooghly is derived from hoglas or golas, one thing certain at the present stage of historical research is that the name was originated by the Portuguese. Most probably both the words explain the origin of the name Hooghly, as the golas must have been covered with thatches of hoglas, as it is done even to this day.

* Bengal Past and Present, Jan.-Mar. 1915, A week at the Bandel Convent, pp. 89-91.
CHAPTER VI

PORTUGUESE SETTLEMENTS IN EASTERN BENGAL

From the earliest times Chittagong was the greatest harbour of Bengal, as already stated, and it continued to be so, as long as the far-famed Gaur remained the royal capital of Bengal, and one of the queens of Eastern cities.* All the early Portuguese captains João Silveira, Affonso de Mello and others, sailed up to Chittagong and stoutly braved the vicissitudes that the Bengal rulers subjected them to, until Mahmud Shāh, in consideration of the help rendered him by the Portuguese, granted them in 1537 their settlement of Chittagong with a custom-house, and land and houses with powers to collect rent.† Unlike the one in Sātgāon, the settlement of Chittagong grew into a great centre of trade. Nuno Fernandes Freire who was appointed chief of the custom-house exercised vast powers in Chittagong and was asked to decide the quarrels between the Moorish Governors who did not fully acknowledge the authority of the King of Bengal.

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* Camões thus speaks of Chittagong, Lusiadas, Canto X, St. cxxi.

VI Cathiango, cidade das melhores
De Bengal, provincia que se preza
De abundante; mas olha que está posta
Para o Anistro d'aque virada a costa.

See Cathigam, amid the highest high
In Bengal province, proud of varied store
Abundant, but behold how placed the Post
Where sweeps the shore-line towards the southing Coast.

Burton's Trns.

† Vide Chapter IV; also Castanheda Hist. Liv. VIII. Chap. CXXVIII. p. 303.
Towards the last two decades of the sixteenth century, when the Portuguese settlement in Sātgaon was flourishing so well and the Portuguese were in high favour with Akbar and Jahāngīr, the Chittagong settlement was equally well progressing. The Mughal authority had not, however, yet extended to Chittagong side. The King of Arakan who held it, was favourably disposed towards the Portuguese. The Portuguese, it appears, had a skirmish with him and one Antonio de Souza Godinho about 1590 had captured by force of arms the fort of Chittagong and made the island of Sandwip tributary to it.* But a reconciliation had taken place and the King was, in fact, permitting the Portuguese to build other forts in his kingdom, which the King of Portugal found were not quite necessary and difficult to maintain. The Portuguese and the King of Portugal spoke at this time in glowing terms of their settlement of Chittagong.

Though Antonio de Souza Godinho had made the Sandwip island tributary to the Portuguese Settlement of Chittagong it did not come completely in the possession of the Portuguese until 1602, when Domingo Carvalho and Manoel de Mattos captured it from the Mughals who had deprived Kedar Rai (Cedarai) from its possession. The details of this conquest have not been given by the Portuguese historians but fortunately much information about the feats of the Portuguese in Sandwip is found in Fr. Nicolau Pimenta, and Fr. Du Jarric. This island, where two hundred ships were annually laden with salt and which, indeed, according to Fr. Du Jarric supplied the whole of Bengal with salt, belonged to the famous Kedar Rai, one of the tradi-

* Archivo Portugues Oriental, Fasciculo III p. 257, King’s letter, 12th January 1591. It is surprising that the letters in Fr. Pimenta do not refer to this event which had occurred only eight years before they were written.

Sandwip is a big island at the mouth of the Ganges in the district of Noakhali. According to Faria y Souza it is 70 leagues in length.
tional heroes of Bengal. The Mughals, however, after their conquest of Bengal deprived him of this possession. The Portuguese who for long had an eye on this rich island took advantage of this situation and under Domingo Carvalho, one of the most valiant Portuguese in Bengal or even in India, attacked and captured the fortress of Sandwip in 1602.* But the inhabitants of Sandwip (naturels du pais) having risen against the Portuguese, Carvalho appealed to the Portuguese of Chittagong for help. Manoel de Mattos who was captain of the Portuguese in Dianga came to succour Carvalho with 400 men and put the enemy to rout. This victory placed Sandwip completely in the hands of Carvalho and Mattos who divided it between them. Fr. Du Jarric mentions that Carvalho was born in Montargil (Portugal) and was previously in the service of Kedar Rai.

Though Domingo Carvalho and Manoel de Mattos were jointly governing the island, the former wrote to the Portuguese King that they held authority under the crown of Portugal. In recognition of their brilliant services the King of Portugal created Carvalho and Mattos Fidalgos da Casa Real (i.e. nobles) and bestowed on them the Order of Christ.†

The King of Arakan who had many Portuguese in his kingdom, was highly enraged at their conquest of Sandwip, and apprehended that as they were becoming very powerful especially in Sīrām (Pegu), ‡

* This account is based on Fr. Du Jarric's Histoire des Chose plus Memorables etc. Part IV. Chap. XXXII & XXXIII. The passage referring to Kedar Rai has been mistranslated by Nikhil Nath Roy in his প্রতাপগাঁন্ধা. It runs: "Ceste Isle appartenoit de droiet à un des Roys de Bengala, qu'on appelle Cadaray: mais il y avoit plusieurs annees qu'il n'en jouissoit pas à cause que les Mogores se n estoient emparez par force. Or quand il scut que les Portugais s'é estoient saisir, comme nous dirons bien lost, il la leur donna de fort bonne volonta renoncand en leur fauor a tous les droiets qu'il y pouvoit pretendre." Vide op. cit. p. 848.


where they had built a fortress, they might prove a source of
danger to his Kingdom. He prepared, therefore, a fleet con-
sisting of hundred and fifty jaleas, caturas,* and other larger
vessels well equipped and armed with guns and canon. Kedar
Rai also joined the king of Arakan and sent hundred cosses†
from Sripūr to help him in the attack. The Portuguese of
Dianga and Caranja having got scent of the impending attack
took to their ships and sailed off with all their goods since
they could not face the enemy's enormous forces. Those of
Chittagong also began to escape with their most precious
things doubting the intentions of the King (sic) of Chittagong
who was the uncle of the King of Arakan and who outwardly
pretended to be a great friend of the Portuguese. On the 8th
of November 1602, the Arakan fleet appeared in the port of
Dianga where Manoel de Mattos was in a foist, with many other
Portuguese in their jaleas, which being badly equipped, drew
in the rear. The foist of Mattos bore the brunt of the attack
in which many Arakanese were killed. Only one Portuguese
was killed and seven were wounded of whom Mattos himself
was one. The Arakanese captured four Portuguese vessels
and in honour of their victory they drank and feasted in the
wildest joy.

Two days after, things changed, as Domingo Carvalho
came with relief from Sandwip. He and Mattos got up fifty
vessels among which were two foists, four caturas, three barques,
the rest being jaleas. With this fleet they set out early in the
morning and made a surprise attack on the enemy's ships
with such fury and violence that they were completely routed.
They became masters of all the Arakanese ships to the

* Caturas were light rowing vessels, 60 to 80 ft. long, used in sea-fights.
the word is probably the origin of the English marine term cultor.
Cf. Hobson-Johnson S. V. Catur.
† Cosses were light boats suitable for fighting on the rivers and
not at sea.
number of hundred and forty nine, with all the ammunition, arquebuzes, muskets and other implements of war. Many Arakanese lost their lives in this engagement, notably the uncle of the King of Arakan, named Sinabadi. Some escaped by jumping into the sea and swimming across to land.

When the news of the Portuguese victory reached Chittagong, all were panic-stricken. The people thinking that the Portuguese would march on the city began to run away carrying their valuable things on their shoulders and the Queen herself mounted on an elephant took to flight. The Portuguese, however, did not follow up their victory, though they could have easily taken possession of the fort of Chittagong as there was nobody to defend it.

The King of Arakan, though humbled in his pride at sea revenged himself on the Portuguese who were on land in his kingdom. He sacked their houses which they owned in many Bandels (bunders) on the river and imprisoned men, women and children in his fortress and subjected them to many cruelties. He, however, set to liberty the women on the day following their imprisonment. The Portuguese missionaries, Jesuits and Dominicans, who had come to Bengal in 1598 and 1599 and were carrying on very successful work also suffered immensely. * A treaty was, however, concluded by the Portuguese with the King of Arakan, and peace was restored for a time. According to the chronicles of the Dominicans the King of Arakan actually offered to rebuild at his own expense the church and the residence of the Dominicans which he had destroyed and requested them to stay in his kingdom.†

The Portuguese were now becoming very powerful in Eastern Bengal and Burma. Fillipe de Brito e Nicote had established a kingdom in Pegu and made treaties with the

* Vide Chapter IX.
† Frey Luis de Cacegas, Historia de San Domingos, 1767, Vol. III. Liv. V. Ch. XI.
kings of Tangu, Siam and Proem. After the conquest of Sandwip, the Portuguese conceived the grand project of holding the whole of the Eastern coast of the Bay of Bengal with Chittagong and Pegu as bases. Purchas remarks* the Portuguese feats were of great consequence for "here they (the Portuguese) might both build their Fleets, and be furnished of sustenance, might send at any time to all places in the South (which from Goa cannot be done but with the Monsons) and might cause that no ship of Moores should lade Pepper Cinamon or other commodities at Martavan, Reitav, Juncalao, Tanassarin and Queda, for Surat or Mecca, but with custome to them and passe from them."

The King of Arakan, dreading the Portuguese might oust him from his kingdom, decided to attack Sandwip a second time and sent an enormous fleet of a thousand sail consisting of "the most Frigates, some greater, Catures and Cosses" against Carvalho. Again were the Portuguese victorious. The gallant Carvalho with only sixteen vessels destroyed the whole fleet of the Arakan King. Nearly two thousand Arakanese were killed and a hundred and thirty of their ships were destroyed, while the Portuguese lost only six men. This signal defeat enraged the King of Arakan beyond measure. He punished his captains by forcing them to put on women's clothes as they behaved so effeminately that they could not bring one Portuguese alive or dead.†

Though the Portuguese had won a brilliant victory their ships were badly damaged. Carvalho soon found out that he could not withstand another attack of the King of Arakan whose resources were unlimited. The Portuguese with the native converts of the place, therefore, evacuated Sandwip and transported all their possessions to Sripur, Bākla and

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* Purchas, *His Pilgrimage*, Book V., Chap. vi., p. 582.
Chandecan, whereupon the King of Arakan at last became master of it. Carvalho curiously enough stayed with thirty frigates in Sripur which was the seat of Kedar Rai. The Jesuit Father Blasio Nunes and three others who had begun building a church and a residence in Sandwip abandoned their new ventures and repaired to their residence at Chandecan which was the only one left to them, all the others having been destroyed.

Even in Sripur Carvalho was not destined to be left undisturbed. The Mughals who were extending their power all over Bengal and Arakan sent against Kedar Rai a fleet of hundred cosses under one Mandarai with a view to capture Sripur. The Mughal captain find Carvalho in Sripur directed his fleet against him. Carvalho had only thirty jaleas under him. But he who with sixteen vessels had defeated the King of Arakan's fleet of a thousand vessels could never hesitate to stand against only a hundred vessels of the Mughals. Not long after he engaged the Mughal fleet, he worked its destruction and even slew Mandarai who is described as "a very valiant man and very famous all over Bengal." Carvalho himself was wounded but he soon recovered and determined to embark on new ventures.

The re-capture of Sandwip never ceased to haunt the dreams of Carvalho. As the Portuguese were very powerful in Hooghly, he personally went there in order to bring reinforcements for the execution of his plans. In Hooghly, still more stirring events were in store for him. He found that the Mughals gave the Portuguese a lot of trouble, demanding from them new tributes and imposts, and that in order to check their growing power they had built close to the Portuguese town of Hooghly a fortress garrisoned by four hundred soldiers. From this fortress the Mughals came down upon the Indian-born Christians when they passed by and inflicted on them untold
cruelties. "Wishing therefore" adds Fr. Du Jarric,* "to do the same with Domingo Carvalho when he was passing by their fortress with his thirty Jaleas, those who were inside began to discharge on him many arquebuzes. Carvalho, unable to tolerate such an affront, promptly jumped ashore with eighty Portuguese soldiers, and at first seized the fortress, while others scaled the walls. Entering inside the fortress they made such a slaughter that of the four hundred soldiers, who were there only one a Caffre escaped through a channel."

The victories of Carvalho won for him a legendary reputation in Bengal and Arakan. His name was so much dreaded that one of the Arakanese commanders who had fifty ships under him, having dreamt one night that he was assaulted by Carvalho he "terrified his fellows and made them flie into the river; which when the king heard cost him his head." The grand career of Carvalho was brought to a tragic end by the cruel and treacherous king of Chandecan, who was, according to Beveridge;† no other than Raja Pratāpāditya, the great hero of Bengal. This unscrupulous chieftain desired to make friends with the King of Arakan who after taking possession of Sandwip and conquering the kingdom of Bākla had become considerably powerful, and menaced the kingdom of Chandecan. As he knew that nothing would please the King of Arakan more than the death of Carvalho, he invited the latter to his court in Chandecan and had him treacherously murdered. The King of Arakan, indeed, prized the head of Carvalho more than Sandwip. Not long after, Raja Pratāpāditya, a cruel monster as Beveridge calls him, expiated his crimes in an iron cage in which he died.

The identification of the exact sites of the Portuguese Settlements offers many difficulties. Old Chittagong or

† *The District of Bākarganj Chap. V.*
Chatigam of the Portuguese writers was according to de Barros’s map (1540), Bleav’s map (1650), Broucke’s map (1660) and other old maps, on the northern bank of the Karnaphuli river almost at its mouth. It is not the same, therefore, as the modern town of Chittagong which is situated ten and half miles to the east of the mouth of the Karnaphuli. Strangely enough in 1598 Van Linschoten* assigned to Chittagong a position fifty miles eastward from the mouth of the Karnaphuli. The first Portuguese settlement, founded by Affonso de Mello in 1537, was obviously in the real Chatigam as marked by de Barros in his map. There is no trace left of the Portuguese factory, their custom-house and their “circuit of houses”. But the relics of their later establishments still survive.

O’Malley† refers to the remains of a Portuguese fort close to Pahartali which is two miles from the civil station of Chittagong and adds that according to tradition the Portuguese bucanneers buried their treasures in this fort. According to the Portuguese records‡ the Portuguese possessed a fort in Chittagong before 1590 but it was rather in the port of Chittagong than close to Pahartali. If it is true that the Portuguese bucanneers buried their treasures in the Pahartali fort, it must have come into their possession after 1615, after which date they constituted themselves into a piratical power and settled in Dianga with the sanction of the King of Arakan. Yet Manrique does not refer to any Portuguese fort between 1621 and 1635 in Chittagong or Arakan. Fr. du Jarric§ mentions that in 1602 the Portuguese under Carvalho and Mattos could have easily taken possession of the fort of Chittagong,

* Linschoten, Hakl. Ed. Vol. I p. 94. “From this River Eastward 50 miles lyeth the town of Chatigam which is the chief town of Bengal.”
† Chittagong Gazetteer, p. 176.
§ Histoire des Choses plus Memorables, Part IV., p. 851.
which seems to have been close to the mouth of the Karnaphuli. It is this fort on which the Portuguese must have had a temporary hold about 1590. The King of Chittagong was in fact willing to allow the Portuguese to build more fortresses but the King of Portugal in his letter to the Viceroy dated 12th January 1591 did not consider them necessary. “And thus I am told”, the letter runs* “that Antonio de Souza Godinho has served me well in Bemgualla and has made the Island of Sundiva (Sandwip) tributary to this State, and that he gained the fort of Chatiguão (Chittagong) by force of arms and that the King is making some offers (permitting the Portuguese) to build fortresses in his country. Because new fortresses when they are not quite necessary are useless and quite inconvenient to this State in which it behoves to have more garrisons to increase and preserve, than extra forts to guard and thus divert the forces of the same State, I do not consider it proper that the offers of this King should be accepted and it will be enough to maintain with him good friendship.” Little did the King know that if the Portuguese had erected forts in Chittagong and Arakan they might have defied the King of Arakan on land as they defied his fleets at sea, in the constant struggles that arose in the next few years.

In the literature of the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries and especially in the Portuguese writers, there are frequent references to a “City of Bengal,” which is generally supposed to have been Chittagong. Varthema† as early as 1510 speaks of taking his route to this City of Bengal though according to Garcia de Orta;‡ he never came to Bengal. Duarte de Barbosa, who was one of the earliest Portuguese to write a geographical

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* Arch. Port. Orient, ut supra.
‡ Garcia de Orta, Colloquios p. 30.
account of the African and Indian coasts says,* "........ this sea (Bay of Bengal) is a gulf which enters towards the north and at its inner extremity there is a very great city inhabited by Moors which is called Bengala, with a very a good harbour." Lord Stanley of Alderly understands this city of Bengala to have been Chittagong and in a note says that where Ortels places Bengala, Hommanus places Chatigam, or Chittagong. Considering a chart of 1743 in Dalrymple Chittagong, as Yule remarks,† seems to have been the City of Bengala. Ovington‡ in giving the boundaries of the kingdom of Arakan remarks "Teixeira and generally the Portuguese writers reckon that (Chatigam) as a city of Bengala; and not only so, but place the city of Bengala itself upon the same coast, more south than Chatigam." From this quotation, Fr. Hostip concludes§ that the City of Bengala was Dianga, which is opposite Chittagong on the southern bank of the river Karnaphuli; and adds that Dianga was the first Portuguese Settlement in the Gulf of Bengal and that it was called Porto Grande. That the first Portuguese settlements in Bengal were Sātgāon and Chittagong has been already shown. In the Gulf of Bengal, however Pipli (Orissa) was the earliest settlement, being founded in 1514.‖ To say that Dianga was called Porto Grande is to give it undue importance. The name Dianga does not occur except at the beginning of the seventeenth century¶ while Chatigam the real Porto Grande where the Portuguese settled, and the City of Bengala were referred

† Hobson-Jobson s. v. Bengal.
‡ A Voyage to Suratt, p. 554.
‖ See Chapter VIII.
¶ The earliest mention of Dianga I have found is in Fr. Fernandes's letter dated 22nd December 1599. Vide, Pimenta, or Du Jarric Hist. Part IV, p. 828.
to early in the sixteenth century. De Barros marks Chatigam in his map (1540) but neither Dianga nor the City of Bengal. Ovington, it must be remarked, reckons Chatigam or Chittagong as the City of Bengal and not Dianga though he says the Portuguese writers place the City of Bengal more south than Chittagong. Fr. Fernandes* in his letter written from Dianga on 22nd December 1599 calls Dianga a town (ville) in the Port of Chittagong. It was at about this time that it began to acquire some importance. Besides Dianga could not be the City of Bengal as it really formed a part of the Kingdom of Arakan.

In Blaeu's map, which is not generally accurate, the City of Bengal is placed on the southern bank of the Karnaphuli more or less where Van den Broucke places Dianga. Vignola in a map of 1683 assigns the same position to the City of Bengal. But in an old Portuguese map in Thevenot† the City of Bengal is placed above Xatigam (Chittagong) or probably it is meant to be Chittagong itself. Without at all enquiring into the relative accuracy of these maps it may be safely asserted that all evidence points to the conclusion that Chittagong was the real City of Bengal, spoken of by the early writers. As Chittagong was the Great Port of Bengal it was more likely the Great City of Bengal. The Arabs and later on the Portuguese generally named a foreign important city or a seaport after the country in which it was situated.

Dianga is now known as Bunder or Feringhi Bunder. The word Dianga still survives as Diang Pahar which is the name of a low ridge of red rock running along the last three miles of the southern bank of the Karnaphuli. The Portuguese who had established themselves in Chittagong extended their activities to Dianga towards the end of the sixteenth century.

* Du Jarric, ut supra.
† Thevenot, Voyages Curieux, Vol. 1, Map facing p. 128.
In the above mentioned letter, Fr. Fernandes referred to a great number of Portuguese of Dianga, who made their confessions. The captain of the Portuguese Dianga and of Chittagong was Manoel de Mattos. The King of Arakan owned both these ports at this time and in the letters-patent granted to the Portuguese Fathers he styled himself "the highest and the most powerful King of Arakan, of Tippera, of Chacomas, and of Bengal; Lord of the Kingdoms of Pegu etc." Fr. du Jarric though mentioning that Chittagong was subject to the King of Arakan says that the latter's uncle was King of Chittagong, probably meaning thereby that he was Governor of Chittagong. The King of Arakan was well disposed towards the Portuguese of Dianga and Chittagong until in 1602 he fell out with the Portuguese over their conquest of Sandwip. A Portuguese map in Thevenot marks many houses and a Church in the locality of Dianga though this place is not mentioned. In 1607 there were six hundred Portuguese in Dianga who were put to the sword by the King of Arakan in a general massacre. The Portuguese settled in Dianga again after 1615 when the King of Arakan took the Portuguese adventurers in his service and with their conjoined efforts brought to a culmination an age of plunder and piracy. Till then the Portuguese of Dianga and Chittagong were loyal subjects of the crown of Portugal.

The circumstances that led to the massacre of Dianga belong more to the history of Pegu than of Bengal. Filipe de Brito e Nicote was a Portuguese settled in Pegu, who with his men helped the King of Arakan, Salim Shāh (Xilimiza)† in his battles with the King of Tangu and actually defeated the latter conquering the castle of Mecao. In recognition of his

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* Du Jarric, Histoire Part IV., p. 830.
† Salim Shāh was the Muhammadan name of King Meng Rājāgyi, (1593-1612).
services, Salim Shāh conceded to Brito e Nicote the title of Changa (the good man) and granted to the Portuguese the port of Siriam in Pegu. Encouraged by success, Brito e Nicote returned to Goa to consult with the Viceroy D. Ayres de Saldanha how to carry into effect his plan of conquering the whole of Pegu. He was received with great joy and eventually obtained the Order of Christ and was made Fidalgo da Casa Real (Noble). The Viceroy gave his niece in marriage to Brito e Nicote and conferred upon him the title of Commander of Siriam and General of the Conquests of Pegu. Meanwhile the King of Arakan finding that the Portuguese were fortifying themselves in Siriam, sent his captain Banadola with a large fleet and 6000 men against them, but he was routed by the brave Salvador Ribeiro de Souza, who was in command of the Portuguese. Three more attacks with enormous forces were withstood by Salvador Ribeiro de Souza, who with an epic gallantry would not surrender even after a siege of eight months. Help at last arrived from Goa, with which Salvador Ribeiro de Souza inflicted a crushing defeat on the whole of the fleet and army of Salim Shāh. Soon after, he gained another victory over the King of Massinga, drove him away from his kingdom, and was hailed by the people as the King of Massinga. Such was the high renown won by the Portuguese that they could easily command the services of twenty thousand natives of the place.

Brito e Nicote having returned from Goa, Salvador Ribeiro offered the crown of Massinga to him, who accepted it as the name of the King of Portugal. Salim Shāh astonished at the success of the Portuguese hastened to make friends with them, and the Kings of Tangu and Martaban entered into an alliance with Nicote. While Brito e Nicote was riding on the tide of fortune Salvador Ribeiro, the real hero of

* This brief account of Brito e Nicote is based on Bocarro, Decima XIII; Faria y Souza, Asia; and Documentos Remetidos.
the exploits returned to Portugal and died a poor man. In the letter of 12th September 1608, addressed to the Viceroy at Goa, the King of Portugal accepted the crown of Pegu.*

Brito e Nicote now formed the plan of taking possession of Dianga and as he exercised a great influence over the King of Arakan he sent his son with a fleet asking him to grant him that port. The King suspecting that Brito e Nicote wished to deprive him of the whole of his kingdom invited Brito e Nicote's son and his men to his court and put them all to the sword. A general massacre of the Portuguese in the kingdom was ordered and about six hundred Portuguese who were peacefully residing in Dianga were murdered in cold blood. From this massacre about ten Portuguese escaped with their ships and one of them was Sebastião Gonsalves Tibaé who was destined not only to revenge the grim massacre but also to play an important part in the history of Bengal.

* Arch Port. Orient. Fasc., VI. p. 975.
CHAPTER VII

THE RISE OF SEBASTIAO GONSALES TIBAU

The history of the original Portuguese who settled in Chittagong and who were directly under the authority of the Portuguese Governor in Goa, is closely associated with the history of another section of the Portuguese who shook off the authority of the Governor and beginning life as adventurers eventually became so powerful as to establish an independent kingdom. The hero among these adventurers was Sebastião Gonsalves Tibau, a Portuguese of an obscure extraction born in Santo Antonio de Tojal.* He arrived in India in 1605 and having come to Bengal soon exchanged the profession of a soldier for that of a trader. He purchased a vessel of his own and filling it with salt went to Dianga at such an inopportune time that but for his cunning and bravery he would have perished in the general massacre of the Portuguese which the King of Arakan had ordered in 1607. He with nine or ten other Portuguese who had escaped with their ships, settled in the small islands at the mouth of the Ganges and sought the means of life in piracy. To revenge on the King of Arakan they ravaged his coast and carried off the booty to the King of Bākla’s (Bacala)† ports, who was a friend of the Portuguese. With the massacre of Dianga, an era of piracy had dawned—piracy that led by the Arakanese, was to assume frightful proportions.

* The feats of Gonsalves are generally known through Stevens’s Translation of Faria y Souza, Vol. III, p. 154, et seq. Bocarro, however, has a more detailed account in, Decada XIII, Chapters, 97—101.

† The Kingdom of Bākla included a large portion of the Bākarganj district and a part of Dacca; it was ruled by one of the Bhuyās of Bengal.
It was mentioned that Manoel de Mattos was in sole possession of the island of Sandwip since Domingo Carvalho had died in or about 1605. Wishing to absent himself for some time, Manoel de Mattos entrusted the government of the island to Fateh Khān, a Muhammadan in the Portuguese employ.* But this man learning that Manoel de Mattos had died proved treacherous and took possession of the Portuguese vessels. He murdered all the Portuguese and the native Christians with their wives and children and decided to drive away Gonsalves and other Portuguese, from the islands they had occupied. He prepared a fleet of forty vessels, embarked six hundred soldiers and went in pursuit of the few Portuguese who had escaped from the massacre of Dianga. At a time when these Portuguese adventurers were engaged in dividing their booty in the island of Dakhin Shāhbazpur, Fateh Khān came to attack them. He was so confident of success that he inscribed these words upon his colours: “Fateh Khān, by the grace of God, Lord of Sandwip, shedder of Christian blood and destroyer of the Portuguese nation.”† The small band of the Portuguese who, driven by circumstances, were indeed now no better than corsairs determined to face Fateh Khān. They had only ten vessels and all the men numbered eighty. The fleets met at night and till the following morning there was a desperate struggle, in which one Sebastião Pinto distinguished himself very highly. Victory was on the Portuguese side. Not one vessel of the Moors escaped and those that were not killed were captured. Fateh Khān, who had styled himself the destroyer of the Portuguese nation, was among the dead. The victory did not

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* According to the Doc. Rem. Tom. I. pp. 175-76 Manoel de Mattos died leaving a minor son and appointing Pero Gomes, Governor of the island. Fateh Khān probably seized the island from Pero Gomes.

† Faria y Souza Vol. III. p. 155; Bocarro, Decada XIII, p. 433.
cost the Portuguese anything, save the death of Sebastião Pinto, who was loved by all on account of his noble character.

The Portuguese who though victorious were merely roaming vagabonds felt the necessity of a captain who could train and discipline them, and chose Estevão Palmeyro “a man of years, experience and discretion” to command them. But he refused to be at the head of men who, though brave, had proved themselves to be wicked by their ravages, and appointed Sebastião Gonsalves Tibau as the commander whom all agreed to obey.

Under the new commander, the Portuguese determined to gain Sandwip that was lost to them through the thoughtlessness of Mattos. They gathered the Portuguese from the various neighbouring ports and by March 1609 they managed to collect a force of forty sail and four hundred men. Gonsalves arranged with the King of Bâkla for assistance on the promise of giving him half the revenue of the island. The King, indeed, sent some ships and two hundred horse. Fateh Khān’s brother who conducted the defence of the island met the Portuguese at the landing place but was forced to retire into the fort. The Portuguese then besieged the island for two months, but ran short of provisions and ammunition, which could not be brought up on account of the enemy’s opposition. At a time when all seemed to be lost a Spaniard named Gaspar de Pina at the head of fifty men came to the rescue from Hijili, with only a ship but much courage and ingenuity. He approached by night with shouts, blare of trumpets, noises of drums and a blaze of lights, creating an impression that a powerful succour had come. In this confusion Gaspar de Pina and the whole of the Portuguese force effected a landing and took possession of the island. The Hindu inhabitants of the island, who were already accustomed to the Portuguese rule during the time of Manoel de Mattos welcomed the entry of
Gonsalves. He received them well on condition they brought to him every Moor in the island. They gladly brought to him about a thousand Moors who were all murdered in cold blood. The massacre of Dianga and Fateh Khan’s murder of the Portuguese in Sandwip were thus revenged.

Gonsalves became now the sole master of the island, independent of the Portuguese of Hooghly or of the Goa Government. Besides, he owned lands on the coast of Arakan. He had under him one thousand Portuguese, two thousand soldiers, all well armed, two hundred horse and eighty ships with canon. Many merchants of Bengal and of the coasts of Tenasserim, and Choromandel resorted to Sandwip and paid duty at the custom-house which Gonsalves had erected. He dictated the laws of the place. The neighbouring princes sought his friendship and his alliance. He was at this time at the height of his power and glory; but power dazzled him. He grew insolent and ungrateful. He took back the lands from the very Portuguese who had raised him to power. Instead of paying half the revenue of Sandwip to the King of Bâkla as he had promised he made an attack on him and seized the islands of Dakhin Shâhbâzpur and Patelbanga.

In the year 1609 disputes arose between the Prince (Heir-apparent) of Arakan and his brother Anaporan* over trifling matter such as the possession of an elephant. The Prince actually fought a battle against his brother who being defeated fled to Gonsalves. Gonsalves promised to succour him and kept his daughter† as a hostage. He and Anaporan, combining their armies, marched against the Prince of Arakan but as

* Faria y Souza calls Anaporan brother of the King of Arakan and in Documentos Remetidos he is said to be nephew of the King of Arakan. I have followed Bocarro.

† Sister, according to Faria y Souza.
the latter came with an army of eighty thousand men and seven hundred fighting elephants, they returned to Sandwip. In the sea fight, however, Gonsalves’s brother Antonio captured a hundred sail of the enemy with only five vessels on his side. Anaporan brought over to Sandwip his wife, children and all his treasures. It is an interesting fact that on her becoming Christian, Gonsalves married Anaporan’s daughter whom he had kept as a hostage. Shortly after, Anaporan died and as Gonsalves seized his treasures it was suspected he caused his death. To suppress this suspicion Gonsalves wanted to marry his brother Antonio Carvalho Tibau to Anaporan’s widow but she refused to embrace Christianity and hence his project was not realized.

Many were the marriage relations contracted between the Portuguese and the Royal Family of Arakan. Not only did Sebastião Gonsalves marry the daughter of Anaporan (Meng Phaloung?) who was, as Bocarro says, the second son of the King reigning in 1610 (Xalamixa I or Meng Radzagyi), but also according to Manrique a son of Gonsalves married a daughter of Alamanja whom he calls the younger son of Xalamixa I (and of Xalamixa II in another place). It would seem that the Alamanja of Manrique is the same as Anaporan of Bocarro. But Manrique seems to speak of them as two different persons. According to Faria y Souza, Anaporan was the brother, and according to Documentos Remetidos, the nephew of the King of Arakan who ruled in 1607, that is Xalamixa I or Meng Radzagyi. It is curious that all the Portuguese writings should differ on this point. The daughter of Alamanja who married the son of Sebastião Gonsalves was baptized under the name of Maxima. After the death of Alamanja his two other children, a boy and a girl, were baptized under the names of Martinho and Petronilla respectively. Martinho was brought up by the Augustinians at
Goa, and at the age of eighteen he joined the Portuguese navy in the hope of gaining the crown of Arakan which he claimed on the ground that he was "the legitimate son of Alamanja, and grandson of Xalamixa II (sic)". He served in the Armada of Dom Ruy Freire de Andrade and then in the fleet of Nuno Alvares Botelho. He fought on the Portuguese fleet against the King of Achin in Malacca (1627-28) being wounded in the attack. He went to Portugal when D. João IV was proclaimed King of Portugal (1640) and died when returning to India. His sister Petronilla died at Hooghly.* It may be added, Brito e Nicete's son married the daughter of the King of Martaban, and another of his son was about to marry the daughter of Anaporan.†

The Mughals since the fall of Daud Khan in 1577 were in possession of Bengal and Orissa and according to Bocarro had overthrown the Bhuyas by 1610. They had not, however, yet penetrated into Arakan and were now planning the conquest of the kingdom of Bhulua.‡ As this kingdom was close to Sandwip as well as to Arakan, Gonsalves and the King of Arakan thinking the Mughals would be a danger to their kingdoms forgot their enmity and entered into a mutual agreement to combat them. Stewart however says§ that the reason of this alliance was that they planned between themselves to invade Bengal, the agreement being that the King of Arakan was to proceed with an army by land and the Portuguese in a fleet by sea. The King of Arakan entrusted the whole of his fleet to Gonsalves keeping his nephew as a hostage. During

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† Documentos Remettidos Tom. I, p. 356.
‡ Bhulua is the largest pargana in the Noakhali district of Bengal. The village of Bhulua is a few miles west of Noakhali on the Lakhipur Road.
§ History of Bengal p. 236.
these negotiations Gonsalves gave back the widow of Anaporan who afterwards married the governor of Chittagong. The King of Arakan and the Portuguesc attacked the Mughals and drove them out of the kingdom of Bhulua and took Lakhipur, while Gonsalves barred their advance from the sea.

Gonsalves, however, soon changed his mind and whether he was influenced by a bribe or actuated by a desire for revenge on the former crimes of the King of Arakan, he allowed the Mughals to pass to Bhulua up the river. They then easily attacked the King of Arakan and routed his army. The unfortunate King with his nobles fled towards the forests of Tippera for safety. The King of Tippera who was the vassal of the King of Arakan rebelled at this time and put to the sword the nobles of Arakan. The King of Arakan with great difficulty escaped, mounted on a swift elephant and at last arrived in Chittagong.

Seeing the King of Arakan defeated and driven to his own limits, Gonsalves took possession of the Arakan fleet with which he was entrusted and murdered all the Arakan captains. What is more, with a bold effrontery he set out with his fleet and plundered all the forts on the Arakan coast especially those of Chittagong, Maju and Ramu and destroyed many ships some of which belonged to other nations. Amongst these ships was one the loss of which the King felt most. "It was," says Faria y Souza,* "of a vast Bigness and wonderful Workmanship with several Apartments like a palace all covered with Gold and Ivory and yet the curiosity of the Work surpassed all the rest." All that the King could do in revenge was to order a stake to run through Gonsalves's nephew who was kept as a hostage. He impaled him on a high place near the Port of Arakar, in order that his uncle might see him as he departed from the coast of Arakan. But he, to whom treachery and insolence were ordinary affairs, had no feelings for a nephew.