

Ordinary high lands, producing *aman* rice only, or *aus* rice, with a second crop of pulses, oilseeds, etc., or if sown in jute, 12 annas to Re. 1-4 per bigha; the same land, if cultivated with pepper or indigo, from Re. 1 to Re. 1-4 per bigha; the same land if under sugarcane, Re. 1-4 to Rs. 2 per bigha; very deep marshy land in which the latest winter rice is sown on the chance of its not being entirely submerged, from 6 annas to 12 annas per bigha; exceptionally high lands, near homesteads, frequently formed by elevations made for houses, and sides of tanks, and artificial mounds on which tobacco, betel-leaf, cotton, mulberry, garden produces, etc., are grown, from Rs. 2-4 to Rs. 2-12 per bigha; the same land when used for plantain gardens from Re. 1 to Rs. 2 per bigha; *jama* rates for orchards of mango, jack, or bamboos, Rs. 2-8 to Rs. 5 per bigha.

(2) Chuadanga Subdivision, in which lie the following parganas:—

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| 1. Ashrafabad. | 10. Matiari. |
| 2. Bagwan. | 11. Nandalalpur. |
| 3. Burapara. | 12. Nagarbanka. |
| 4. Husainujial. | 13. Obania. |
| 5. Hunkhani. | 14. Rajpur. |
| 6. Kasimnagar. | 15. Shahujial. |
| 7. Kasimpur. | 16. Taraf Munsifpur. |
| 8. Mahmudshahi. | 17. Ukhra, Chakla Krishnagar. |
| 9. Makimpur. | |

18. Umarpur.

High lands growing *aman* rice only, or *aus* rice with a second crop of pulses, oilseeds, etc., or for jute only, from 12 annas to Re. 1-4 per bigha; the same land, if cultivated with pepper or indigo, from Re. 1 to Re. 1-4 per bigha; the same kind of land, growing sugarcane, from Re. 1-8 to Rs. 2-4 per bigha; very deep marshy lands, in which late winter rice is sown, none in cultivation; exceptionally high lands near homesteads, on which tobacco, betel-leaf, cotton, turmeric and garden produce is grown, from Re. 1-8 to Rs. 2-12 per bigha; plantain gardens

Rs. 2 per bigha; *jama* rates for jack, mango and tamarind orchards, Rs. 5 per bigha.

(3) Ranaghat Subdivision, in which lie the following parganas:—

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| 1. Arsa. | 12. Pajnaur. |
| 2. Faizullapur. | 13. Pajnaur Srinagar. |
| 3. Halikanda Pajnaur. | 14. Patmahal. |
| 4. Havilishahar. | 15. Ranihati. |
| 5. Havilishahar and Arsa. | 16. Raipur. |
| 6. Jaipur. | 17. Selampur. |
| 7. Jaipur Atali. | 18. Srinagar. |
| 8. Kaugachi. | 19. Taraf Santipur. |
| 9. Khosalpur. | 20. Ukhra. |
| 10. Krishnagar. | 21. Ukhra, Chakla Krishnagar. |
| 11. Mamjuani. | 22. Ukhra and Pajnaur. |

High lands, growing *aman* rice only, or *aus* rice, with a second crop of pulses, oilseeds, etc., or jute only, from 8 annas to Re. 1-1 per bigha; same description of land, if cultivated with pepper or indigo, 10 annas to Re. 1-1 per bigha; same land under sugarcane from Re. 1 to Re. 1-11 per bigha; exceptionally high land near homesteads, on which tobacco, betel-leaf, cotton, turmeric, garden produce and plantains are grown, from Re. 1-4 to Rs. 2-8 per bigha; the same land on which betel-leaf alone is grown from Rs. 2-2 to Rs. 3-6 per bigha. Potatoes were grown in this subdivision only. *Jama* rates for mango, jack and tamarind plantations, from Re. 1-11 to Rs. 2-4 per bigha.

(4) Kushtia Subdivision, in which lie the following parganas:—

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| 1. Anupampur. | 8. Bara Fatehjangpur. |
| 2. Aurangabad. | 9. Brahmapur. |
| 3. Begamabad. | 10. Birahimpur. |
| 4. Bhandardaha. | 11. Brajamula. |
| 5. Baradi. | 12. Bajuras Mahabatpur. |
| 6. Baria. | 13. Bhabananda Diar. |
| 7. Bamankarna. | 14. Bhaturia. |

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| 15. Fazilpur. | 30. Makimpur. |
| 16. Gajnabhipur. | 31. Mahmudshahi. |
| 17. Hapania. | 32. Nagarpota. |
| 18. Husainujial. | 33. Nagarbanka. |
| 19. Hunkhani. | 34. Nazir Inayetpur. |
| 20. Islampur. | 35. Rajpur. |
| 21. Jahangirabad. | 36. Rukunpur. |
| 22. Jiarakha. | 37. Sankardih. |
| 23. Jhaudia. | 38. Shahujial. |
| 24. Kantanagar. | 39. Shah Jahannagar. |
| 25. Kasimnagar. | 40. Sherpur Beria. |
| 26. Kururia. | 41. Sadaki. |
| 27. Kasimpur. | 42. Tappa Chapila, pargana
Bhaturia. |
| 28. Laduani. | 43. Taraujial. |
| 29. Laskarpur. | |
44. Taragunia.

High land, growing *aman* rice only or *aus* rice with a second crop of pulses or oilseeds, etc., or jute only, from 12 annas to Re. 1 per bigha; the same land growing indigo, the same rates; pepper or chillies were hardly ever grown in this subdivision; sugarcane land, Re. 1-13 per bigha; very low marshy land on which late winter rice is grown, of which there was a good deal in the Kushtia Subdivision, from 3 to 4 annas per bigha; exceptionally high land near homesteads on which tobacco, betel-leaf, cotton, turmeric, garden produce and plantains are grown, from Re. 1-7 to Rs. 2-3 per bigha; *jama* rate for mango, jack and date orchards, Rs. 3-8 per bigha.

(5) Meherpur Subdivision, in which lie the following parganas:—

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| 1. Ashrafabad. | 9. Gurar Hat. |
| 2. Bagwan. | 10. Husainujial. |
| 3. Belgaon. | 11. Hunkhani. |
| 4. Betai. | 12. Hauspur. |
| 5. Bhandardaha. | 13. Kasimnagar. |
| 6. Dogachi. | 14. Kajipur. |
| 7. Fatehjangpur. | 15. Manikdihi. |
| 8. Goas. | 16. Nandalalpur. |

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| 17. Nagarpota. | 23. Shahbazpur. |
| 18. Patkabaria. | 24. Taraf Bati. |
| 19. Palashi. | 25. Taraf Munsifpur. |
| 20. Pipulbaria. | 26. Taragunia. |
| 21. Rajpur. | 27. Ukhra, Chakla Krish-
nagar. |
| 22. Shahujial. | |

High lands, growing *aman* rice only, or *aus* rice with a second crop of pulses, oilseeds, etc., or jute only, from 6 annas to Re. 1-4 per bigha; for land growing pepper or indigo, the rates were about the same; sugarcane from Re. 1 to 2 per bigha; exceptionally high land near homesteads, growing miscellaneous crops as noted above, from Re. 1 to Rs. 2-8 per bigha; *jama* rates for mango, jack, tamarind and bamboos, from Rs. 5 to Rs. 6-4 per bigha.

During the eighty years separating the periods when these two sets of rates prevailed, rent generally rose at least 30 per cent., and in some instances as much as 100 per cent.

CURRENT RENTS

The *utbandi* system appears to be gradually giving way to the leasehold system, but it still covers about 65 per cent. of the cultivated land. This tenure is not peculiar to the Nadia district, but is specially common in it. Under it the tenant pays rent only for the land which he cultivates each year, and he cannot acquire occupancy rights unless he tills the same land for twelve years consecutively, which, in fact, he rarely does. Meanwhile the landlord can raise the rent at his pleasure, and if the tenant refuses to pay, he can be ejected. This tenure deprives the tenant of any incentive to improve the land, and at the same time encourages rack-renting. The land generally being sandy and of poor quality, it has frequently to be left fallow to recover some degree of fertility; during these periods, of course, the landlord receives no rent where the *utbandi* tenure is in force. This being so, the rate of rent for land under the latter tenure is naturally higher than for leasehold

land, for which the ryot has to pay his rent every year, whether or not he has been able to put it under crops. In 1872, as has been stated above, the rate of rent for *utbandi* lands was about twice as high as that for leasehold lands. Since then the disparity has increased, and it is reported that as much as Rs. 4 to Rs. 8 per bigha is now paid for *utbandi* lands, as compared with 5 annas to 14 annas for similar lands held on long or permanent leases. The ordinary rate during recent years paid by occupancy ryots for rice land varies from 7 annas to Re. 1-8 per bigha, and it is thus clear that the increase in the rate observed up to 1872 has been more than maintained.

WAGES

About the year 1850 the wages of ordinary labourers were from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to $2\frac{1}{2}$ annas per diem; of agricultural labourers from 2 to 3 annas; and of ordinary masons, about $2\frac{1}{2}$ annas. In 1870 coolies were earning from 3 to 4 annas; agricultural labourers about the same; masons 4 to 5 annas; and blacksmiths and carpenters about 4 annas. In 1890 agricultural labourers were earning about 6 annas per diem, and masons, carpenters and blacksmiths from 10 annas to Re. 1-4. At present (1909) day labourers receive from 4 annas to 8 annas per diem, and, in times of great demand, as much as 10 annas; masons, carpenters and blacksmiths receive from 12 annas to Re. 1. There has thus been an almost continuous rise in the wages of labours, both skilled and unskilled, during the last sixty years. According to the census of 1901 the percentage of the population engaged upon general labour is as high as 17.

Agricultural labourers are frequently paid in kind when employed on reaping, and arrangements are occasionally made under which the labourers employed in cutting a field of paddy receive, in lieu of wages, a proportion of the crop varying with the state of the labour market. Women seldom engage in agricultural labour, but children are regularly employed on looking after cattle.

PRICES

The following statement shows the number of seers per rupee at which the three principal food-crops grown in the district sold during each quinquennium from 1861 onwards:—

	Common rice	Gram	Wheat
1861-65	22	23	19
1866-70	19	17	16
1871-75	17	23	16
1876-80	14	19	15
1881-85	17	23	16
1886-90	16	22	15
1891-95	13	18	16
1896-00	12	17	13
1901-05	12	18	15

During this period the average annual price of rice was cheaper than 20 seers for the rupee in three years only, namely in 1869, when it was 24 seers for the rupee, and in 1881 and 1882, when it was 21 seers. the average annual price was dearer than 12 seers for the rupee in ten years; namely, 1874 (11.46 seers), 1879 (11 seers), 1892 (10.65 seers), 1893 (11.64 seers), 1897 (8.87 seers), 1900 to 1903 inclusive (11.30 to 11.90 seers), and 1906 (8.93 seers). The high prices of 1874 and 1897 were, of course, due to the famines which visited the district in those years; those in 1879 were probably due to the famine of 1877-78 over a large part of India; those of 1892 and 1893 were probably due to the famine of 1891-92 in Bihar and other parts. There appears to be no special reason to account for the high prices in the other years mentioned, except the fact that the crop was not a good one in Nadia and the neighbouring districts, and the general tendency to rise in prices.

MATERIAL CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE

The following extract is taken from Hunter's Statistical Account of Nadia, as showing the material condition of the people in the early seventies of the nineteenth century:—

"The condition of the people, as regards dress and other comforts, has of late years steadily improved. A well-to-do shopkeeper dresses during the warm weather in a waist-cloth (*dhuti*) and a loose sheet (*chadar*), both of thin cotton, costing together about 4s., and a pair of shoes costing about 2s. During the winter a stout cotton *chadar*, a woollen wrapper, or a coarse shawl takes the place of the thin muslin *chadar*. Generally speaking, he lives in a brick-built house, having four or five rooms, containing as furniture two or three plank bedsteads (*takhtposh*), with one or two wooden chests for keeping clothes, and some brass plates, drinking vessels, etc. The female members of his household wear a single cotton cloth, five yards long, with a broad stripe near the margin (*sari*), throughout the whole year, with gold and silver ornaments to the value of £20 to £30. The widows, of whom one or two are generally to be found in a household, have, of course, no ornaments.

"The ordinary food of his household consists of rice, split peas (*dal*), fish, vegetables and milk. The Collector estimates the following to be the monthly expenses in a middling-size household of a well-to-do trader:—Rice, two and a half hundred weights (three and a half maunds), value 18s.; split peas, 40 lbs. (half a maund), value 4s.; fish 5s.; vegetables, 4s.; oil, 5s.; clarified butter (*ghi*), 2s.; fuel, 4s.; fodder for cows, of which two or three are usually kept, 4s.; salt, 1s. 3d.; spices, including *pan*, 4s.; clothes, 8s.; sweetmeats, 4s.; a servant to look after the cows, 4s.; contingencies and other expenses, 8s.; total, £3 15s. 3d. This is the scale for a fairly prosperous shopkeeper or village merchant.

"An average husbandman dresses in a coarser *dhuti* and carries a bathing towel (*gamcha*) over his shoulders in lieu of a *chadar*. Occasionally he wears a coarse muslin sheet or shawl and wraps it round his waist. In the winter he adds to his dress a thick Madras cloth *chadar*. He lives in a *bari* or inclosed homestead, containing a hut which serves as a bed room, a cattle shed, and an

outside shed for the master of the house to sit and receive his friends. The walls of the huts are built of mud or split bamboos, or bamboo mats plastered over with mud; the roofs are made of a bamboo framework covered with thatch-grass. The furniture of the house consists of one or two plank bedsteads (*takhtposh*) and a wooden chest. The ordinary food of a husbandman's household consists of coarse rice, split peas (*dal*), vegetables and milk. Generally speaking, he obtains the rice, peas and vegetables from the land he cultivates, but has to buy fish, oil, salt, spices and clothes. As for fuel, the dung of his cattle, and the stalks of certain plants, such as *arhar*, which he cultivates, supply his wants in this respect. The Collector estimates the monthly expenses of such a household (not including the value of the rice, pulses or vegetables, which the head of the family grows himself) to be as under—Fish, 2s.; extra vegetables, 1s.; oil, 3s.; salt, 1s.; spices, including *pan*, 3s.; fodder for cattle, over and above grazing, 3s.; clothes, 4s.; rent, 6s.; contingencies and other expenses, 4s.; total £1 7s. Such a scale would show a total outlay of about £2, if we add the home grown rice and split peas. This, however, is the scale of living of a prosperous farmer. The majority of cultivators do not spend anything like that amount on the maintenance of their households. A husbandman with five acres, which is a fair-sized holding, and as much as a man with a single pair of oxen can till, spends under £1 a month including everything."

Though there has been some improvement in the material condition of the people of this district, especially in their power of resistance to famine conditions, there can be no doubt that they are not as well off as the inhabitants of the neighbouring districts. This fact is probably due in the main to three causes—first, the unhealthy climate which must react unfavourably upon both the physical and moral qualities of the people; secondly, the comparatively unfertile nature of the soil, and thirdly, the precarious tenure upon which so large a proportion of the land is held. There seems but little immediate chance of a marked improvement in any of

these respects, and it is probable that for many years to come the material condition of the people of the Nadia district must compare unfavourably with that of the inhabitants of the other districts in the Presidency Division. The class who have suffered most during the recent years are the upper middle class, or *bhadralok*, especially those with small fixed incomes, who find it very difficult to keep up appearances and maintain their traditional style of living in these days of high prices. Landless labourers, of whom there are many in the district, also suffer, notwithstanding the marked rise in the wages which they receive. On the whole there has perhaps been some improvement in the standard of living, and simple luxuries are more commonly used than they were, but the vast majority lead but a hand-to-mouth existence.