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A NOTE ON THE ADMINISTRATION

OF

CRIMINAL TRIBES PUNJAB

1917 TO 1919.

BY

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16880

(Not to be sent up to Simla.)

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1917-1919

PUNJAB CIVIL SECRETARIAT
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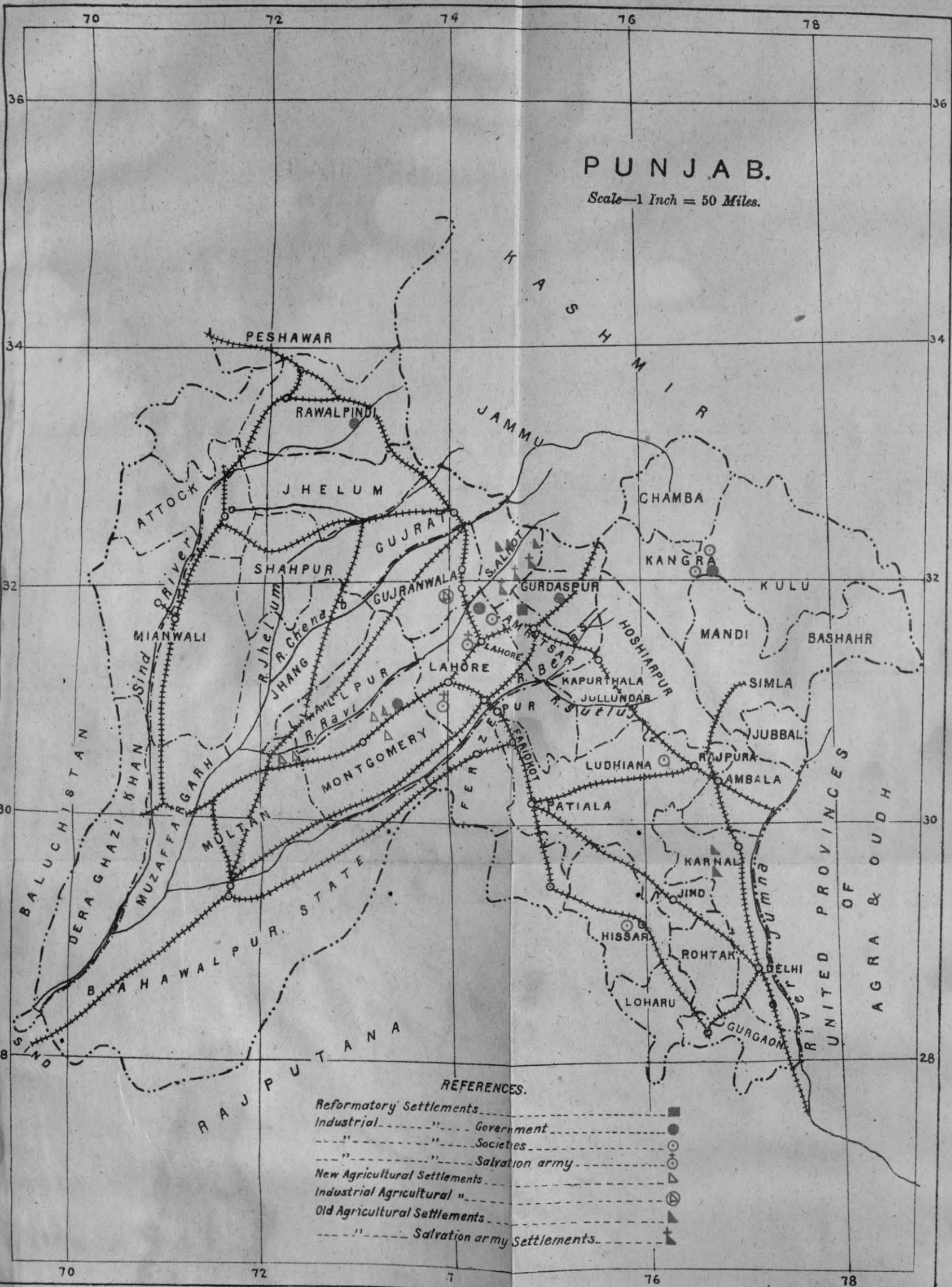
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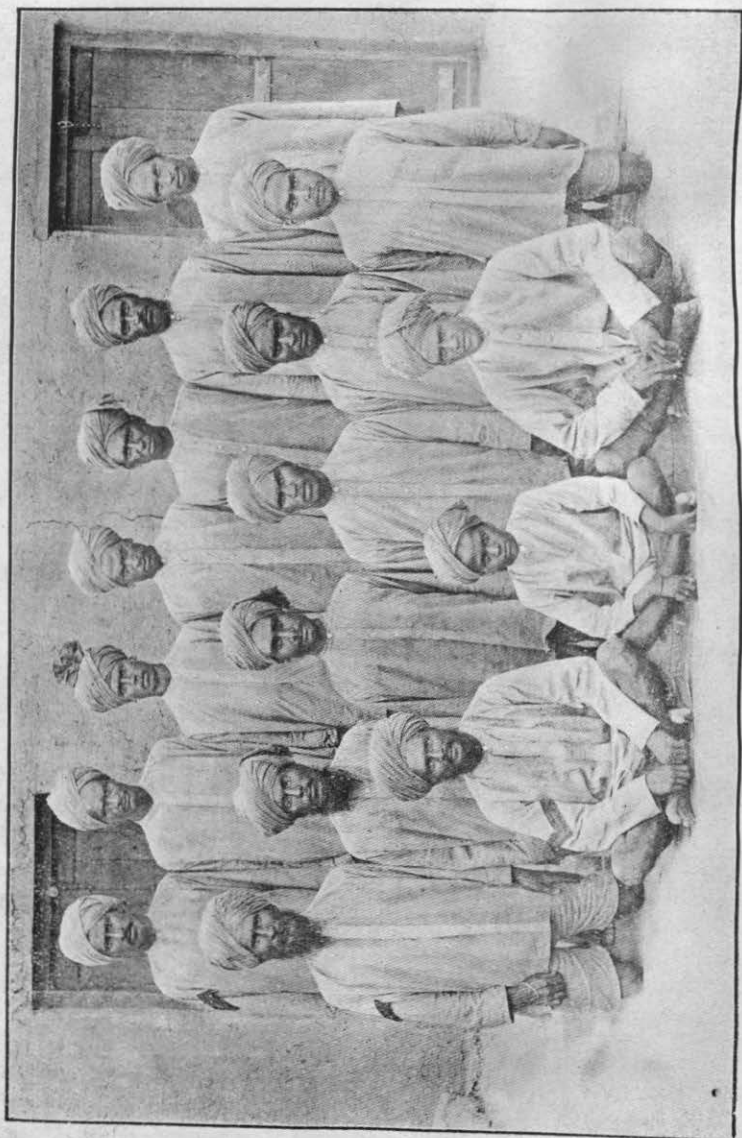


PUNJAB.

Scale—1 Inch = 50 Miles.

REFERENCES.

- Reformatory Settlements ■
- Industrial " ●
- " " ○
- " " ◐
- " " ◑
- New Agricultural Settlements △
- Industrial Agricultural " ◔
- Old Agricultural Settlements ▲
- " " ⚡
- Government Societies ●
- Salvation army ◐
- Salvation army Settlements ⚡



Bawarias of Mughalpura Settlement in working dress.

Note on Work being done in the Punjab for the Reformation of Criminal Tribes.

Preliminary.—The Punjab has from time immemorial been a favourite hunting ground for the criminal tribes, and some of the tribes who were settled in the Punjab extended their operations to the most distant parts of India. Their activities attracted attention as long ago as 1856 and measures were concerted, from time to time, in local areas to settle wandering gangs of particular tribes and to impose restrictions on their movements. But, for want of a general policy and systematic action the results achieved were limited and temporary. In 1913-14 Sir Michael O'Dwyer, late Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, had the conditions of these tribes thoroughly investigated, declared a policy, under the Criminal Tribes Act III of 1911, which was calculated to wean the members, in course of time, from their criminal instincts, and drew up a definite scheme for the reclamation of such tribes.

The Scheme.—The main features of the policy are—

- (a) an effective, but sympathetic, control of the tribes combined with the provision of sufficient opportunity for earning an honest livelihood ;
- (b) gradual relaxation and ultimate total exemption of well behaved individuals ;
- (c) education of children.

The control contemplated by the scheme was to be exercised by the removal of the worst characters to the Reformatory Settlement, of the hopeful ones to Industrial Settlements and of the well-behaved to Agricultural Settlements. These three classes of Settlements were to form stages in the reformation of the criminal tribes. All members of criminal tribes not sent to Settlements were to remain under the surveillance of the local police

All tribes and gangs found to be addicted to the systematic commission of non-bailable offences were notified under Section 3, Act III of 1911, and simultaneously registered in January 1917. The secret preliminary operations and effective arrangements resulted in the registration and subsequent restriction of 33,000 male adults including 11,000 members of the wandering tribes out of a total population of 150,000 souls.

Classification.—With a view to treat individuals in proportion to their degree of criminality and to determine the class of Settlement which they were fit for, the registered members were classified on the basis of their antecedents and reputation.

The Settlements.—Besides the Amritsar Reformatory which was established in April 1917 there are 26 Settlements, including 12 Industrial, 1 semi-Agricultural, 3 old Agricultural and 7 new Agricultural, Settlements, together with 3 old Settlements, one of which needs no supervision and two of which will soon be provided with a supervising staff. Three temporary Industrial Settlements, which were started during the same period, had to be closed owing to termination of work.

The total population of the Settlements is 8,583, including 3,553 registered male adults.

Assistance of Philanthropic Societies.—Of the Philanthropic Societies who have been associated for the reclamation of the criminal tribes the Salvation Army was the first to come in the field, Anjuman-i-Ahmadyya-Ishaat-i-Islam, Arya Samaj, Sanatan Dharm, Dev Samaj, Qadian Society, Chief Khalsa Diwan, Hindu Sabha, Anjuman Islamia have since joined and are assisting in the work. Each of them has been placed in charge of one or more Settlements.

The accompanying sketch map roughly indicates the locality of the various Settlements.

The most important Settlements are naturally under Government management, but the other Settlements are also fast developing and it is hoped that in the course of a year or two, not only the Settlements now in hand will have grown considerably, but that several other Settlements will have been opened.

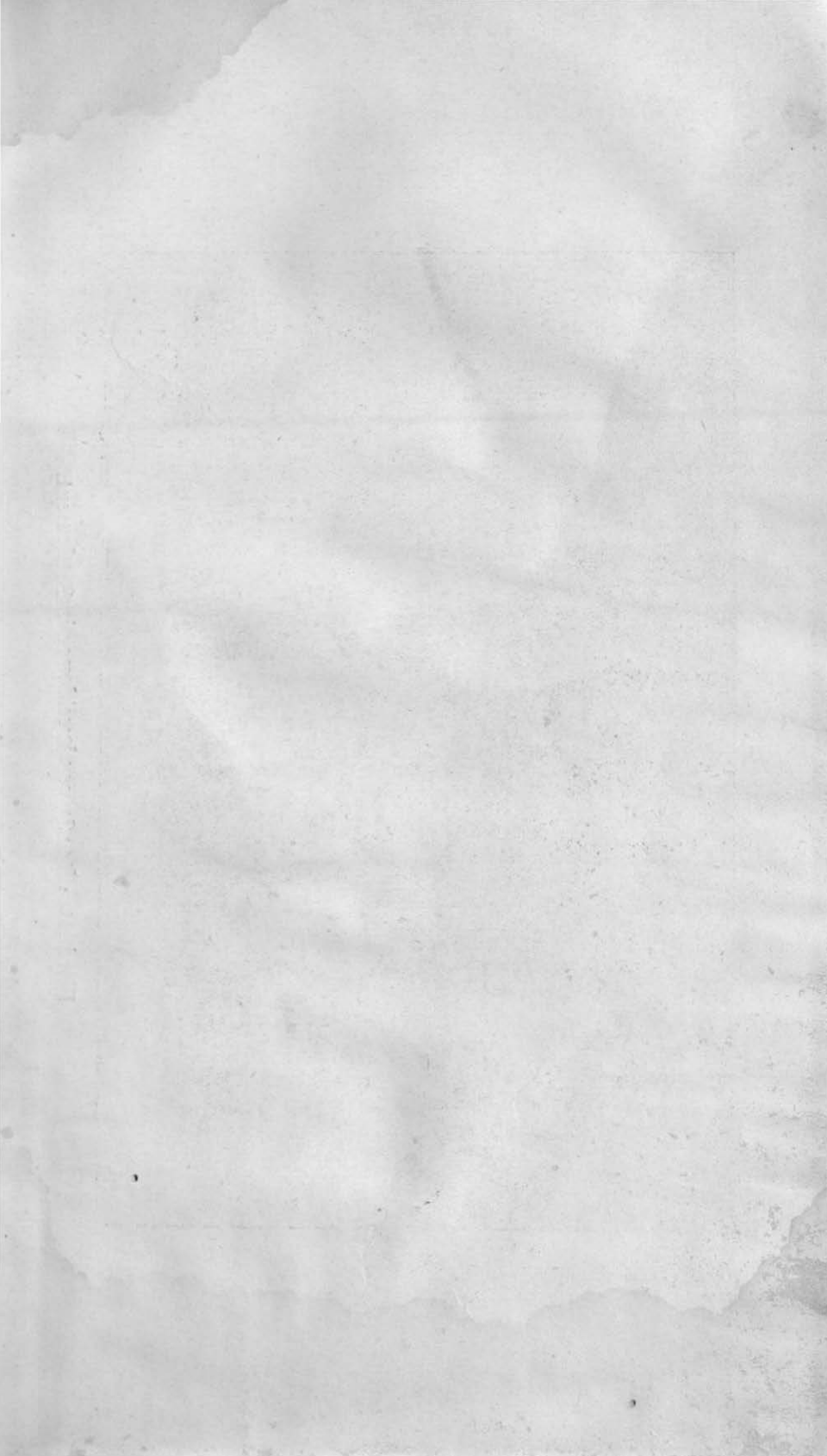
The Agricultural Settlements are, as a rule, placed in charge of Societies as the inmates are not likely to give trouble. The Societies are also given Industrial Settlements where no complications are likely to arise.

Initial Difficulties.—The inauguration of the scheme was a bold step involving a large outlay and although the reclamation of hereditary criminals and the protection of the peaceful population from their depredations were objects both philanthropic and laudable from the point of view of criminal administration, the expectation of results was at

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Newly received Bhedkuts.

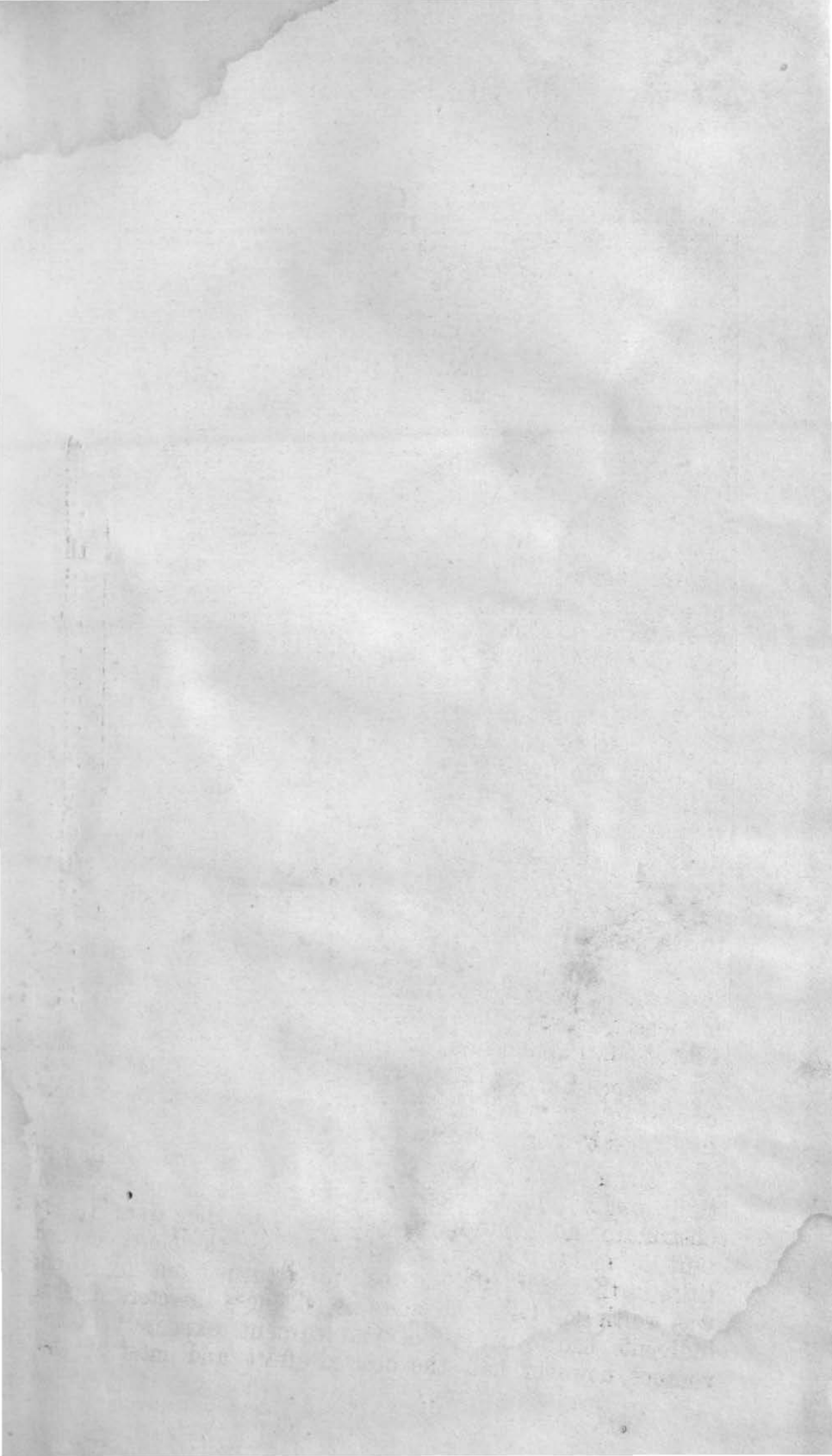


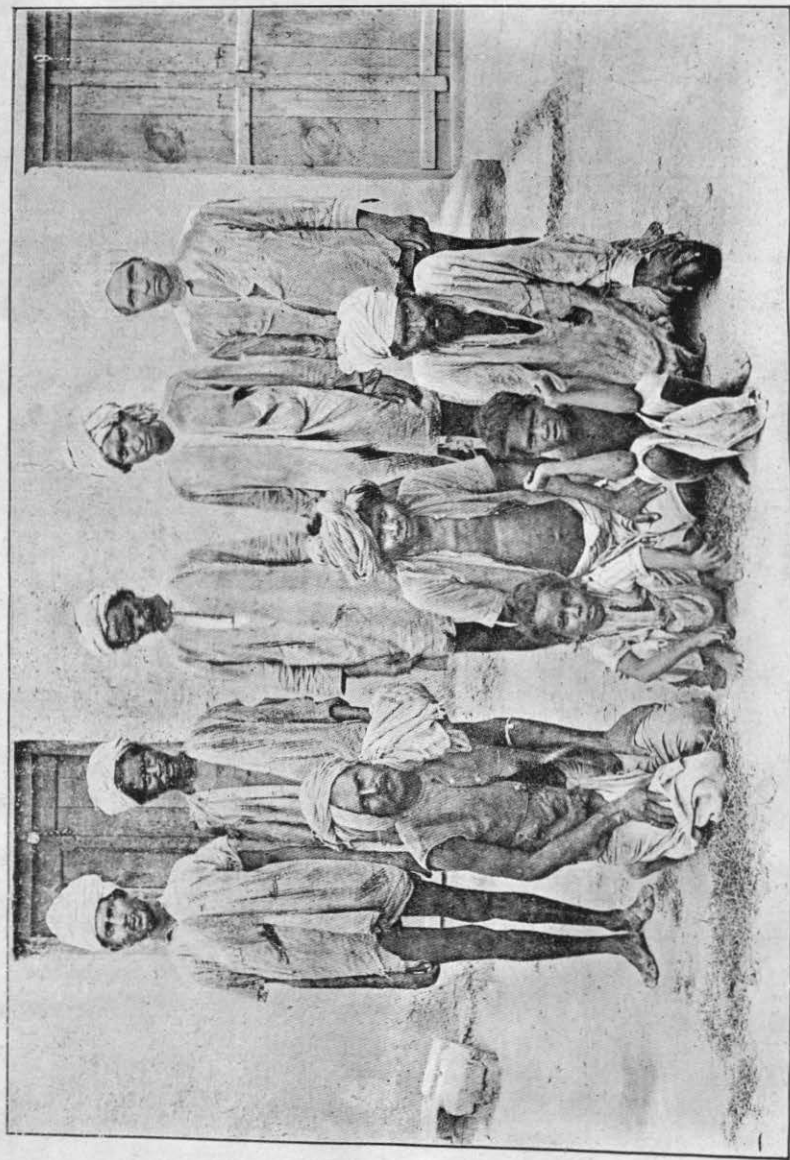
in the Industrial Settlements is due in no small measure to the discipline infused into the criminal tribesmen at the Reformatory Settlement.

Growing Demand for Criminal Tribe Labour.—The reluctance of employers of labour to have anything to do with criminal tribes labour disappeared gradually, when they found that the discipline under which they were kept rendered them innocuous. The demand for labour began to increase by leaps and bounds. The first Labour Supplying Settlement was established at Dhariwal, but it was followed by one at Shahdara and another at Bhiwani, while temporary Settlements were started at Montgomery and Rawalpindi to help Military Works. The North-Western Railway was reluctant to try an experiment with one hundred families, although Government in the Civil Department offered to pay the cost of building a Settlement. They, however, agreed to make a temporary agreement at the instance of the Signal Engineer, Mr. Scott, who deserves all credit for introducing criminal tribes labour into the Railway Workshops. The Railway authorities were so pleased with the labour that they asked for more workers and provided 200 temporary quarters for the establishment of a second Settlement. Over three hundred families are now located at Mohalpur and temporary quarters are being built for 100 more. These four hundred families will provide some eight hundred workers, but the Railway have under contemplation the question of building a town for the residence of some three thousand families with a total population of about 12,000 souls capable of providing five to six thousand workers. Criminal tribes labour has now become so popular that it is being employed at workshops, mills, carpet factories, military works, building works, tea gardens, dairies, public gardens, clothing factories and as tenants, farm labourers, chaprasis and supervisors.

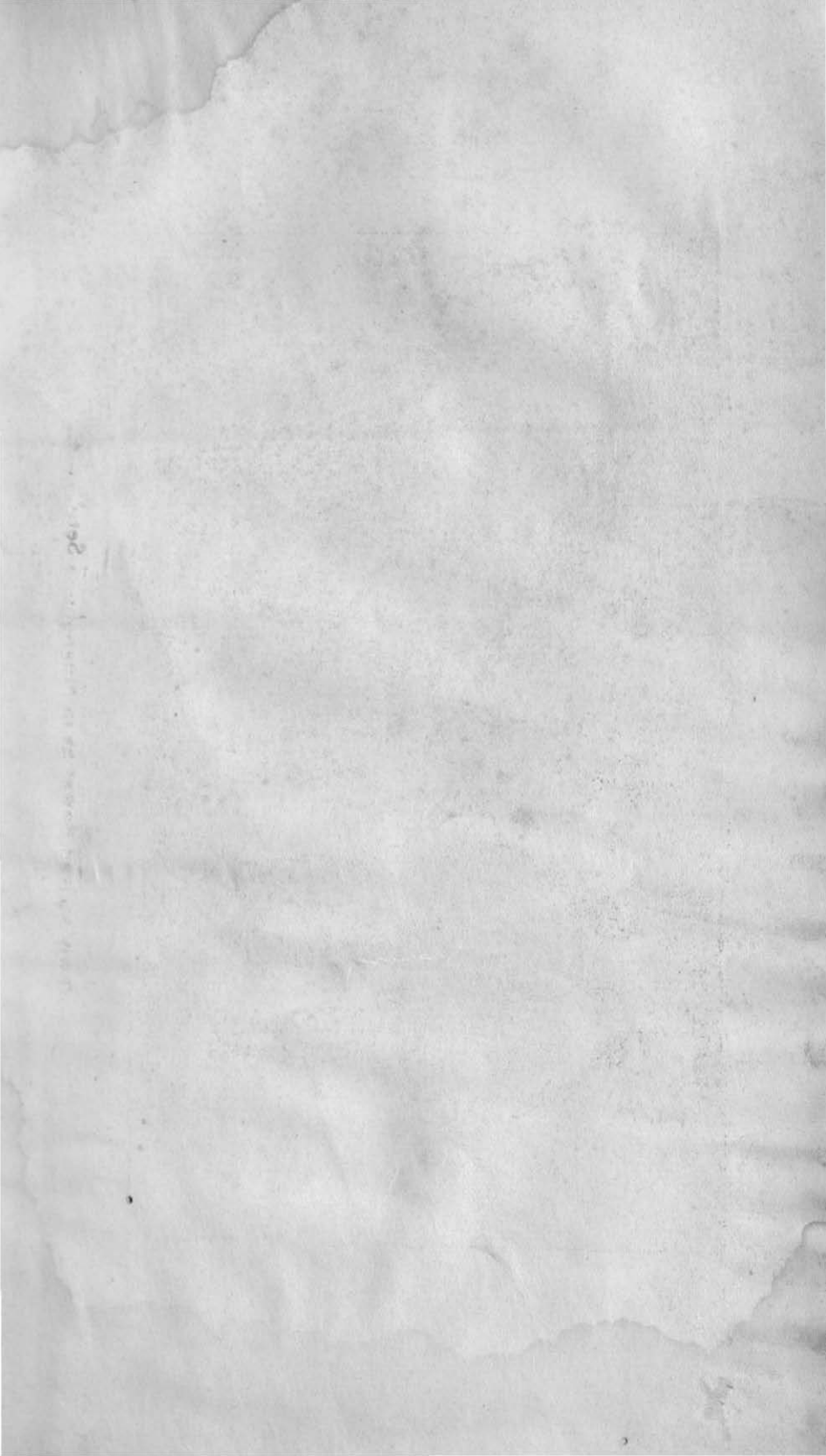
Wages Earned.—The greatest practical difficulty was experienced in inducing these savage people to earn their livelihood by honest work.

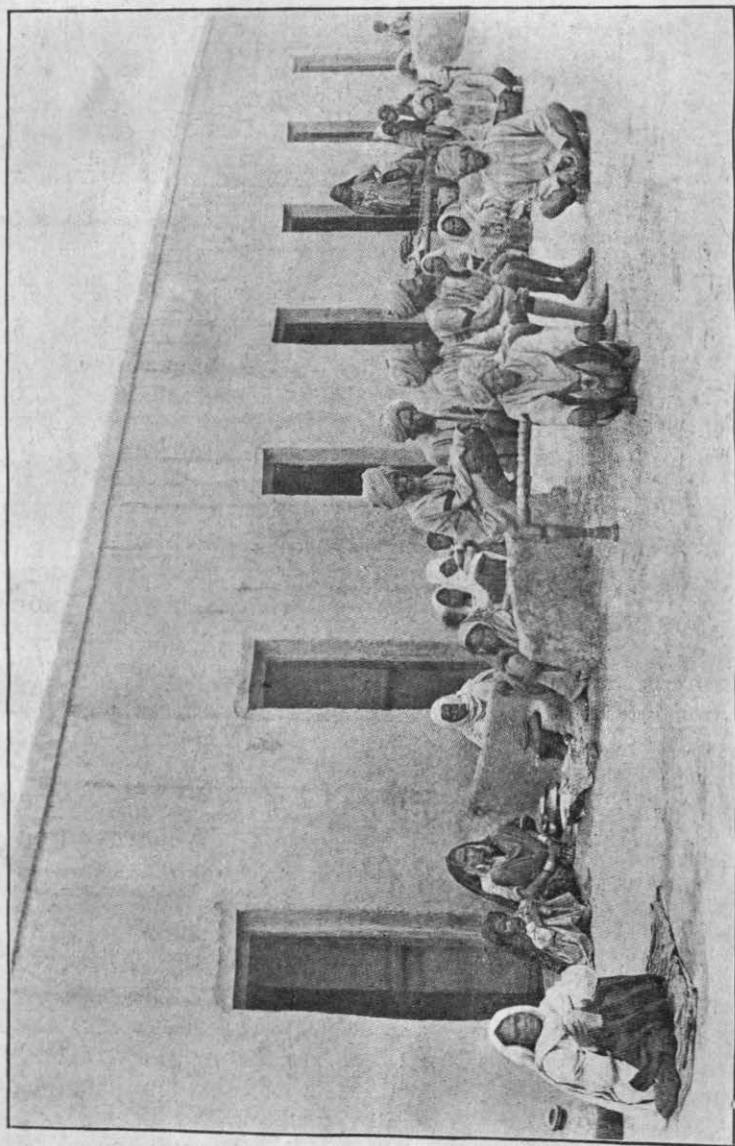
The monotony and irksomeness of work was galling to their undisciplined minds and they were as obstinate in obstructing all attempts at persuasion as they were reluctant to make themselves useful. They, therefore, earned little in the beginning and the work turned out by them was worth still less. In times of sickness therefore several indigents had to be fed at Government expense. Perseverance, however, had the desired effect and most of the





Newly arrived Bawarias in Mughalpura Settlement.





Bawarias in the Settlement.

inmates of Industrial Settlements are now earning enough to live upon and some of them are also able to lay by something for the rainy day. In certain Settlements where the wages are not as high the inmates receive other concessions in the form of free clothing, vegetables, meals for children, etc. A hard day's work is no longer looked upon as a misfortune to which their ill-luck has subjected them and unlike the earlier days when an Inspecting Officer was assailed, on all sides, by the cries of *Margae, Margae*, one reads contentment on the faces of the inmates who are ready to acknowledge their gratefulness to Government for having bettered their condition.

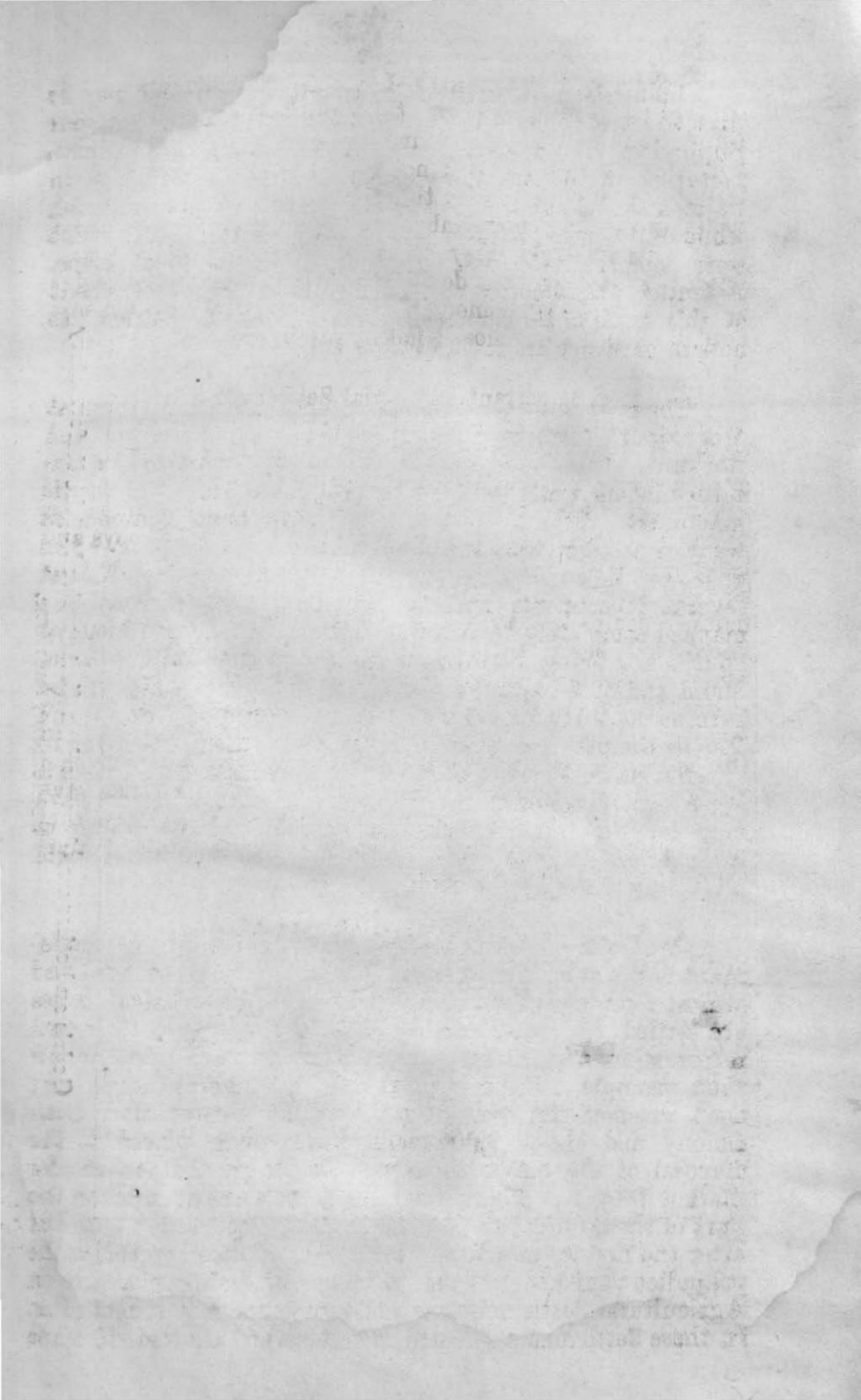
The Piece-Work System.—From the very commencement of Settlements the piece-work system, whereby a worker earns according to the turn-out has been introduced as far as possible. It is by this system that some of the individuals are able to earn Re. 1 to Re. 1-8-0 a day, while the fixed daily wage ranges from Re. 0-6-0 to Re. 0-12-0. Indeed, a piece worker at the Rawalpindi Settlement is reported to have earned Rs. 7-8-0 in one day and Rs. 9 on the next with the help of his little family.

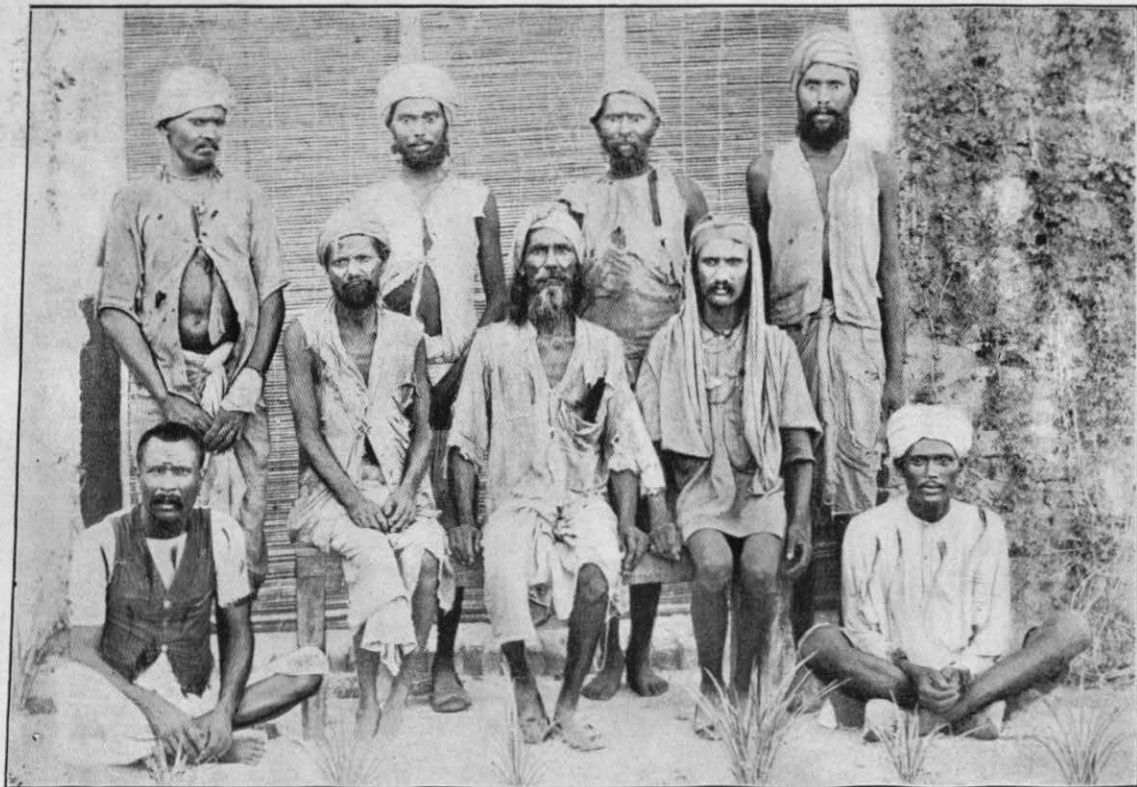
The Different Classes of Settlements.—The Reformatory settlement at Amritsar which is intended for the reception of the worst types of criminal tribesmen whether from jails, after expiry of their sentences, from other Settlements or from the districts and which serves the purpose of a distributing centre as the inmates prove their fitness for the various types of Settlements, has been equipped with a comparatively larger staff, though not yet quite enough to maintain proper watch and ward over the registered members located therein. Most reckless types of men and gangs have been received in this Settlement from time to time and it is a matter of satisfaction that besides drilling the hopeful criminal tribesmen into discipline and befitting them for milder treatment in other Settlements, the institution has been successful in completely curing them of their lust of crime, some of the worst offenders among the criminal tribes known as incorrigibles and the most notorious leaders of burglars and dacoits are now among the most useful and reliable workers in the Settlements. Photograph No. VII indicate the appearance of some of the worst criminals after a period of training at the Reformatory Settlement and Nos. VIII, III and XI (a) show the present condition of Sansis, Bhedkuts, etc., residing at other Settlements.

Industrial Settlements.—Industrial Settlements may be divided into two classes, *viz.*, the Manufacturing and Labour Supplying. It was soon found by experience that Manufacturing Settlement did not pay owing to difficulty in training the labour and to the high prices of raw material, while on the other hand labour supplying settlements, which were comparatively easy to manage had a great scope. Attention was therefore devoted mainly to the development of this type of Settlements. The Industrial Settlements now in existence are mostly labour supplying.

The most important Industrial Settlements are those at Moghalpura (Lahore Railway Workshop), Dhariwal and Bhiwani. The older men and women are employed on unskilled labour while the younger people are trained to handle machinery. Several young men have been trained as weavers at Dhariwal and Bhiwani and numerous boys and girls are now working the machines in so much so that several departments both at Dhariwal and Bhiwani are manned completely by criminal tribesmen. Over a hundred youths are being trained as smiths at the Railway Loco. Shops and it is expected that in 4 or 5 years they will be earning Rs. 40 to Rs. 50 a month. Photographs Nos. IV and I show the past and present condition of men belonging to the Bauria Settlement at Moghalpura while No. V gives a view of the interior of this Settlement. These Baurias have been initiated into Sikhism and now differ in no way from their brethren who were enlisted in a separate Double Company of the 2/35th Sikhs.

Agricultural Settlements.—The highest type of Settlement is the new Agricultural where the best behaved and almost completely reformed members of the criminal tribes are settled on land both by way of reward for their own reformation and as an inducement to others to follow their example. Chaks aggregating 10,000 acres in area have been reserved for the purpose in the Lower Bari Doab Colony and about 2,000 acres have been placed at the disposal of the Salvation Army at Rakh Adhian in the Sialkot District. There was some reluctance at first on the part of the criminal tribesmen to take up agriculture, but after the first Agricultural Settlement had been organized the prejudice vanished and the privilege of being placed in an Agricultural Settlement has come to be eagerly sought after. In these Settlements selected members are allotted 10 acres





Gedris and other wanderers when first received at the Reformatory Settlement, Amritsar.

Of canal irrigated land each on probation for 15 years during which the grant is liable to confiscation for proved misconduct.

After 15 years' continuous good behaviour they are eligible to occupancy rights. The village buildings are being erected at Government expense and Government meets the cost of the supervising staff.

There are also four old Agricultural Settlements in Sialkot and two in Karnal where criminal tribesmen were settled in the past. The land was insufficient, the means of irrigation were indifferent and for want of any well considered policy for their reclamation the reformation has not been very marked except in one place where other circumstances were favourable. These Settlements have also been taken in hand and their surplus population has been removed to other suitable Settlements, leaving in the old Settlements only as many families as can easily subsist on the land available.

There is another type of Settlement where criminal tribesmen are settled as tenants-at-will under some private landlord who provides residential accommodation and takes the customary share of the produce from the tenants. Owing to the increasing demand for tenants this type of Settlements is likely to be developed considerably.

Discipline in Settlements.—The Settlements ordinarily consist of quarters built within a walled enclosure with one entrance which can be closed at night.

The peculiar feature of all the Settlements is that the men restricted are allowed to keep their families, to appropriate their entire earnings and to go out on leave if necessary.

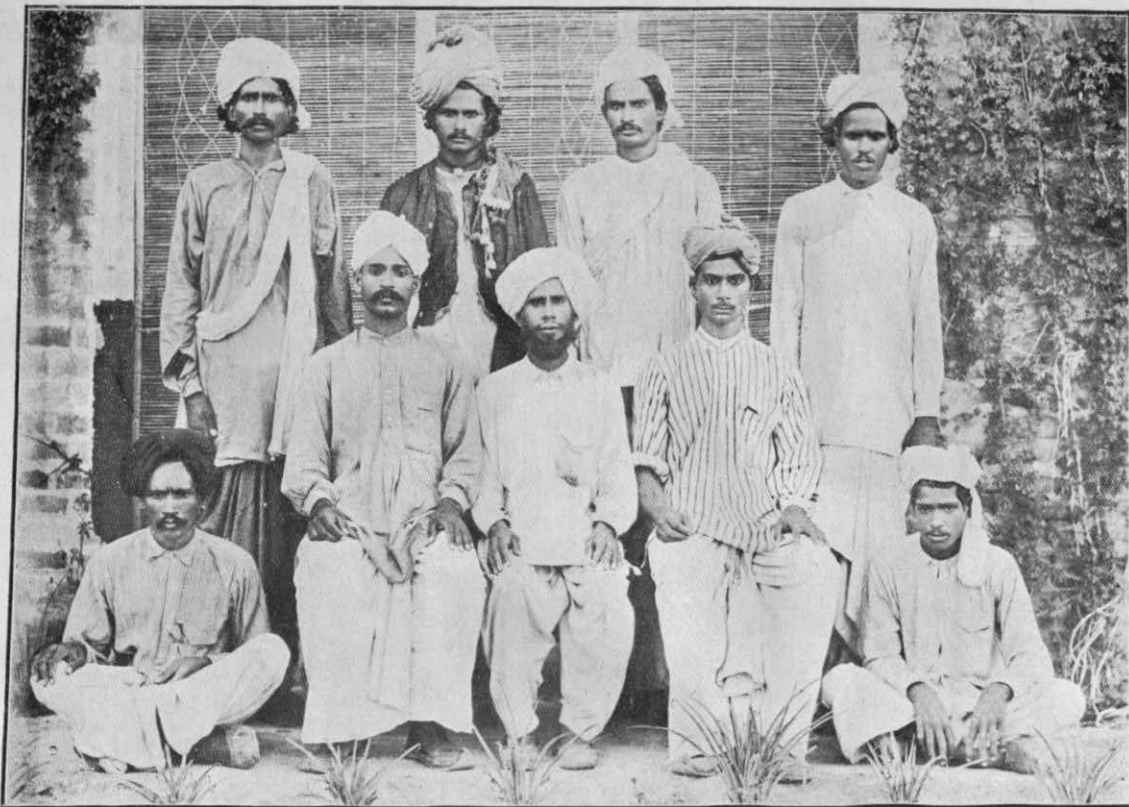
The restrictions and discipline are of course severest in the Reformatory Settlement which deals with the worst type of men. There is a regular warder staff to prevent escapes and a factory is provided inside the Settlement for the benefit of those who cannot, owing to their misbehaviour, be trusted to go and work outside or who are received from jails and are not sufficiently well known or have not brought in their families. As the men become amenable to discipline and inspire confidence they are given more liberty until they become privileged members of the Settlement or are transferred to other Settlements. The gates are locked at night.

In the Industrial Settlements the restrictions are somewhat less severe and only a few chaukidars are maintained for watch and ward. More reliance is placed on the headmen of the gangs who are held responsible for the good behaviour of members of their gangs. The inmates are not allowed to go out at night; although in some of them doors are locked at night in others this precaution is not found necessary. Roll-calls are held in the Reformatory and Industrial Settlements morning and evening and surprise roll-calls are held occasionally at night.

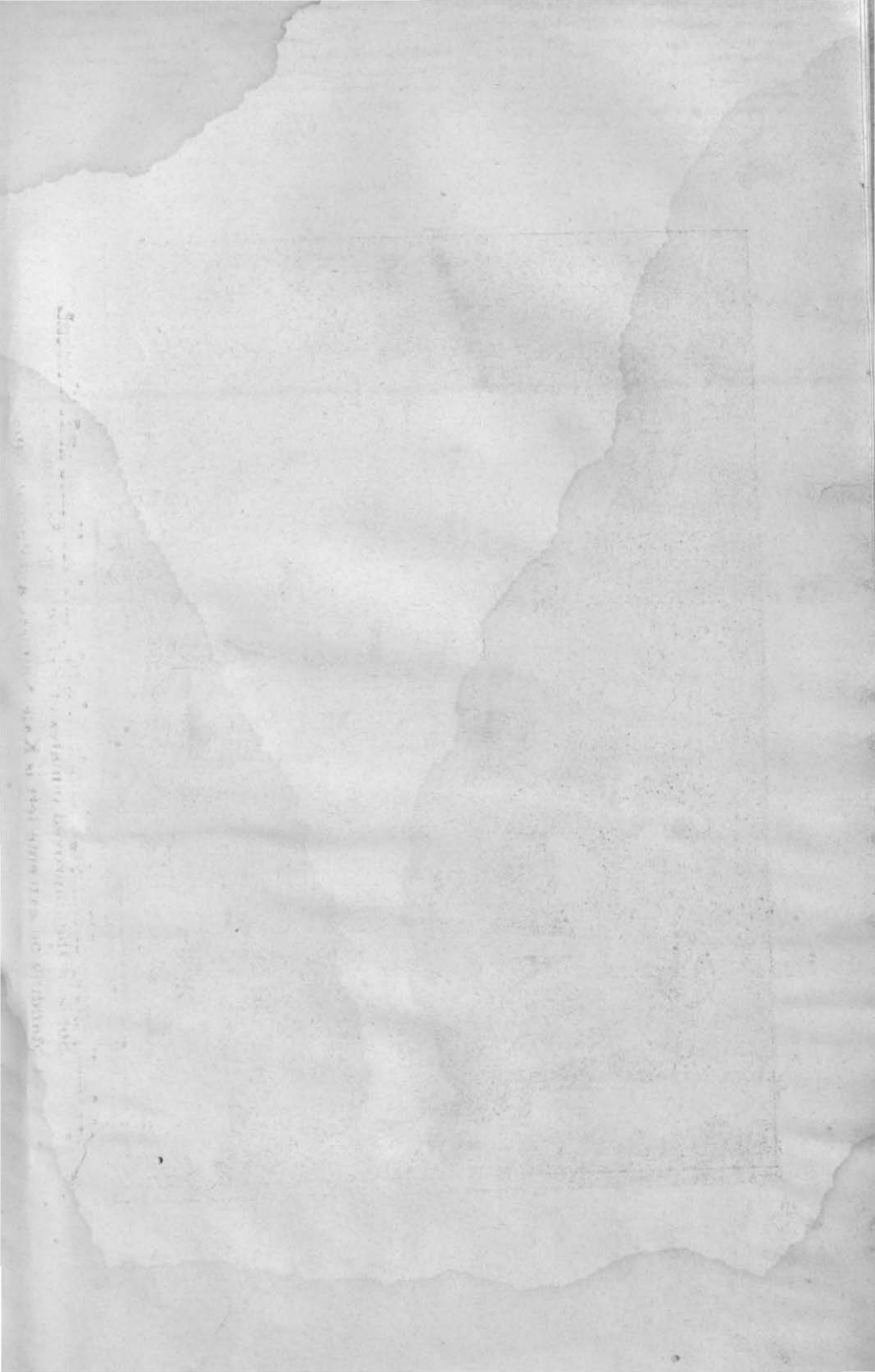
Savings.—The inmates of the Industrial Settlements have after maintaining themselves and their families been able to lay by Rs. 3,895 for a rainy day by depositing the amount in the Savings Bank and have invested Rs. 2,200 in the purchase of the Postal Cash Certificates. The inmates of the Agricultural Settlements have also cleared off their new and old debts and are now anxious to start Co-operative Banks.

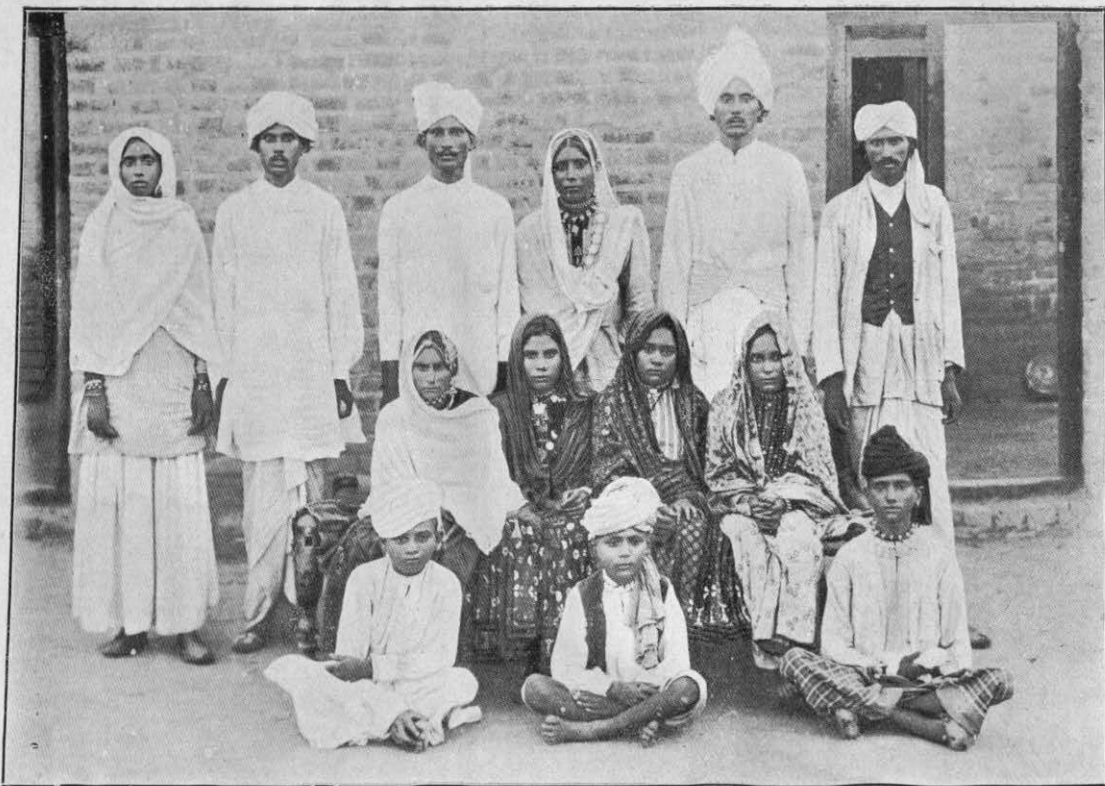
Co-operative Credit.—Co-operative Credit Societies have already been established at Dhariwal and Bhiwani which supply better stuff to inmates at comparatively cheap rates and the system is now being extended to the Agricultural Settlements.

Control over Criminal Tribesmen not placed in Settlements.—Owing to financial and other limitations it is impossible to place all unreformed members of criminal tribes in these Settlements. In each district having a large population of criminal tribesmen a Sub-Inspector of Police with a small complement of constables has been told off, through the good offices of the Inspector-General of Police, specially to supervise the criminal tribes in his district and to see that the rules framed under the Criminal Tribes Act are duly enforced. They submit their diaries to the Deputy Commissioner for Criminal Tribes. Any suggestions supported by the District authorities forms the basis of transfers or other action by Government. This control coupled with the possibility of removal to a Settlement in case of misbehaviour has a considerable reformatory effect, and although experience shows that a large percentage of members living at their homes still indulges in crime, yet there can be no doubt as to the fact that indirect influence has led to many idlers taking to honest work, and if the supervision continues effective, it may result in the reclamation of many a criminal without his removal to a Settlement.



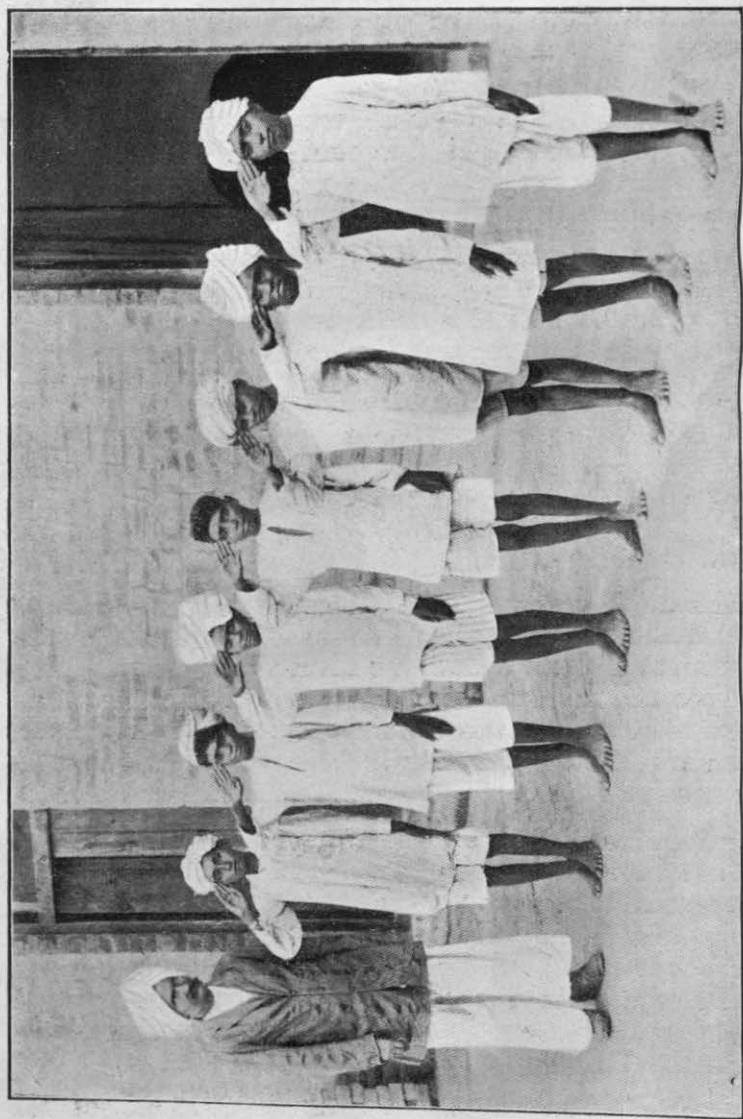
**Some of the improved inmates of Reformatory Settlement.
Standing on extreme left is Kala Kambal, a notorious thief.**





A family group of Dhariwal inmates after 2 years' residence at Settlement.

1870



Types of schoolboys, Dhariwal.

Philanthropy of Government.—To enable the working of this scheme Government provided an initial outlay of 3½ lakhs of rupees for the construction and equipment of Settlements and for the expense of removing the inmates to Settlements for the first time. The cost of supervision and other contingent expenditure as well as the cost of the Central Office, Government sanctioned a maximum expenditure of Rs 1,90,000 per annum. The exercise of rigid economy so far as it was consistent with good management has resulted in saving and has consequently enabled the establishment of a larger number of Settlements than was contemplated in the scheme.

The 12,000 acres of land set apart for criminal tribes are according to current prices worth about 50 to 70 lakhs of rupees

Care is taken that the Societies assisting Government in the work are not put out of pocket. Government pays all initial expenditure and provides the Societies with an annual subsidy calculated to cover all reasonable expenses of supervision. In Labour Supplying Settlements all expenses save the cost of the supervising establishment are met by the employers.

Habitual Offenders' Act.—Besides the members of criminal tribes the Settlements established under Section 16 of the Criminal Tribes Act have been receiving from time to time for specified periods, hardened criminals whose movements are restricted under the Habitual Offenders' Act. These men are treated similarly to the worst members of criminal tribes.

War Services.—During the progress of the great war the criminal tribesmen contributed their mite. Two Settlements were established exclusively for Military Works and the Dhariwal Mills worked exclusively for supplying woollen cloth and hosiery to the Army. The inmates of Settlements invested Rs. 3,895 in Postal Cash Certificates and no less than 2,017 recruits were provided by the criminal tribes throughout the Punjab including 1,307 combatants.

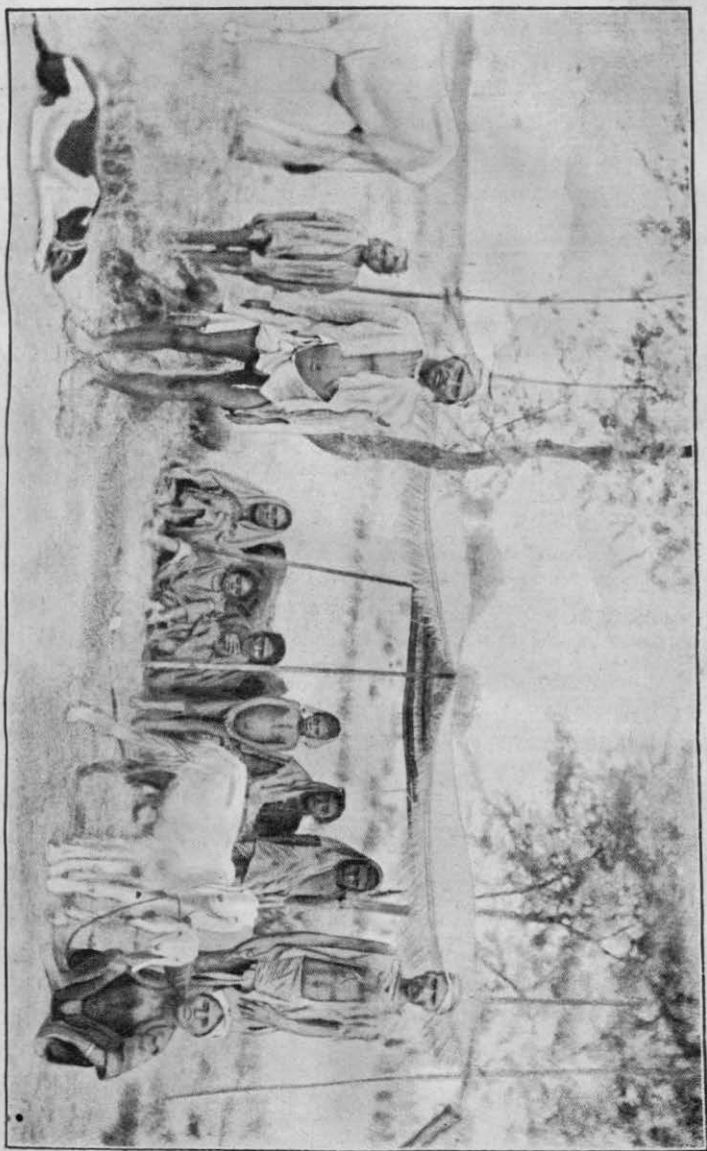
Education.—The surest sign of the success of the scheme is the rapidity with which the children have profited by education. Every Settlement has a boys' school and most of the Settlements have already been provided with girls' schools. The children are given a little primary education in one or other of the vernaculars. The boys play

football and hockey. The Photograph No. IX shows an air of self-respect about the boys of the Dhariwal School. This school is the best Settlement school going and a dormitory for 200 boys will soon be started at this Settlement. A *Crèche* has also been established at this Settlement at the suggestion of the Manager, Mr. Armstrong, for looking after little children while their mothers are away working at the Mills.

Results.—The results of this great experiment have passed all expectations even in the short time which has elapsed since the inception of the scheme. The nuisance of the Wandering Criminal Tribes has ceased to exist and it is obvious that there has been an appreciable decrease in crime reported and unreported. The inmates of Settlements for whom it has become a practical impossibility to indulge in crime make no secret of the fact that they used to live mainly by crime. The condition of the inmates of the Settlements has been completely revolutionized. Instead of the cringing debased and demoralized criminals who ate carrion, drank or drugged themselves heavily and professed to live by begging, they are now decently clad, eat wholesome food and wear an air of self-respect. Escapes still occur occasionally from Settlements but on the whole the inmates have given up the idea of remaining away from Settlements. The children instead of sneaking away at the least pretext and starting to beg from passers-by have now other things to attend to and prefer to win a prize in a fair competition at games. The inmates have settled down to a peaceful life, enjoy sports on holidays and celebrate their marriages and festivals in a manner befitting a civilized population.

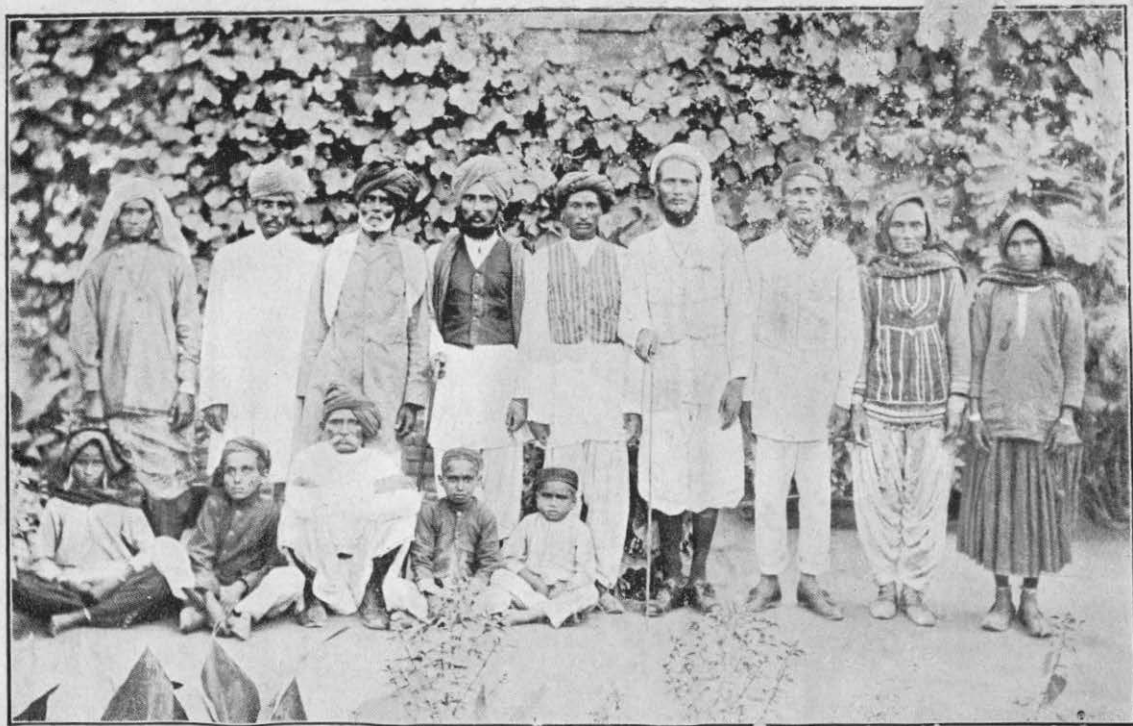
These are the results of much anxious and uphill work but the vigilance will have to be continued for a considerable time in order that the effects may become permanent and the progress go on unretarded.

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Some of the Bhedkuts rounded up in 1917.

1871



Bhedkuts at Bhiwani Settlement after 3 years' residence at Settlement.

