ing a handkerchief or noose round their necks, and then plundered and buried them. All this was done according to certain ancient and rigidly prescribed forms and after the performance of special religious rites, in which the consecration of the pick-axe and the sacrifice of sugar formed a prominent part. From their using the noose as an instrument of murder they were also frequently called *Phânsigârs,* or “noose-operators.” Though they them­selves trace their origin to seven Mohammedan tribes, Hindus appear to have been associated with them at an early period ; at any rate, their religious creed and prac­tices as staunch worshippers of Devi (Kâlî, Durgâ), the Hindu goddess of destruction, had certainly no flavour of Islam in them. Assassination for gain was with them a religious duty, and was considered a holy and honourable profession. They had, in fact, no idea of doing wrong, and their moral feelings did not come into play. The will of the goddess by whose command and in whose honour they followed their calling was revealed to them through a very complicated system of omens. In obedience to these they often travelled hundreds of miles in company with, or in the wake of, their intended victims before a safe opportunity presented itself for executing their design ; and, when the deed was done, rites were performed in honour of that tutelary deity, and a goodly portion of the spoil was set apart for her. The fraternity possessed also a jargon of their own (Ramâsî), as well as certain signs by which its members recognized each other in the remotest parts of India. Even those who from age or infirmities could no longer take an active part in the operations con­tinued to aid the cause as watchers, spies, or dressers of food. It was owing to their thorough organization, the secrecy and security with which they went to work, but chiefly to the religious garb in which they shrouded their murders, that they could, unmolested by Hindu or Moham­medan rulers, recognized as a regular profession and pay­ing taxes as such, continue for centuries to practise their craft. Both the fractions into which they were divided by the Nerbudda river laid claim to antiquity : while the northern, however, did not trace their origin farther back than the period of the early Mohammedan kings of Delhi, the southern fraction not only claimed an earlier and purer descent, but adhered also with greater strictness to the rules of their profession.

The earliest authenticated mention of the Thugs is found in the following passage of Zíáu-d dín Barní’s *History of Firoz Sháh* (written about 1356): “In the reign of that sultan,” that is, about 1290, “some Thugs were taken in Delhi, and a man belonging to that frater­nity was the means of about a thousand being captured. But not one of these did the sultan have killed. He gave orders for them to be put into boats and to be conveyed into the lower country, to the neighbourhood of Lakhnautí, where they were to be set free. The Thugs would thus have to dwell about Lakhnautí, and would not trouble the neighbourhood of Delhi any more ” (Sir H. M. Elliot’s *History of India,* vol. iii. p. 141). The first European travellers who speak of them without mentioning their name are Thevenot (1665) and Fryer (1673). Though instances of Thuggee had been known to the English rulers in India for many years, and sporadic efforts had been made by them towards the extinction of the gangs, it was not till Lord W. Bentinck (1828-35) took vigorous steps in this matter that the system was gradually un­masked, and finally all but stamped out. His chief agent, Captain (afterwards Sir William) Sleeman, with several competent assistants, and the co-operation of a number of native states, succeeded in completely grappling with the evil, so that up to October 1835 no fewer than 1562 Thugs had been committed, of which number 382 were hanged and 986 transported or imprisoned for life. It is true that, according to the *Thuggee and Dacoity Report for 1879,* the number of registered Punjabi and Hindus­tani Thugs then still amounted to 344. But all of these had already been registered as such before 1852. It may, therefore, fairly be assumed that none are alive now, and that the whole fraternity may be considered as extinct.

Full particulars concerning the system of Thuggee are given by Dr Sherwood, “On the Murderers called Phánsigárs,” and J. Shake­spear, “ Observations regarding Bradheks and Thegs” (both treat­ises in vol. xiii., 1820, of the Asiatic Researches)·, [W. N. Sleeman,] Ramaseeana, or a Vocabulary of the Language used by the Thugs, with an Introduction and Appendix, Calcutta, 1836 ; the Edinburgh Review for Jan. 1837 ; [E. Thornton,] Illustrations of the History and Practices of the Thugs, London, 1837 ; Meadows Taylor, Confessions of a Thug, London, 1839 ; Major Sleeman, Report on the Depredations committed by the Thug Gangs, Calcutta, 1840 ; J. Hutton, Popular Account of the Thugs and Dacoits, London, 1857 ; Yule and Burnell, Glossary of Anglo-Indian Colloquial Words and Phrases, London, 1886, p. 696 sq. (R. R.)

THUGUT, Franz Maria von (1734-1818), foreign minister of Austria, was born of humble parentage at Linz in 1734, placed in the Government school of Oriental studies in 1752, and sent to Constantinople as an interpreter in 1757. At Constantinople he rose from post to post in the embassy, until in 1771 he became internuncius or ambassador. In 1776, after the war between Russia and Turkey, he obtained from the latter power the cession of the province of Bukowina to Austria. After thus crown­ing his long service in the East and gaining the confidence of Maria Theresa, he was sent by her without the know­ledge of her son, the emperor Joseph, to Berlin, to avert by a peaceful settlement with Frederick the Great the threatened Bavarian war. In 1790 he was employed in the negotiations of Sistova, and his next mission was to Paris, where he entered into close relations with Mirabeau as the friend of Marie Antoinette. On the invasion of France by the allied armies in 1792, Thugut was sent to the scene of operations. It is well known that Kaunitz, the veteran minister of Austria, condemned the terms of the alliance with Prussia, as securing to Prussia the annexation of a great part of Poland, while only holding out to Austria an uncertain prospect of acquiring its equivalent in Bavaria. Thugut, a politician of the same school, viewed the new alliance with even greater hatred. After the failure of the campaign of 1792 he formed the deliberate opinion that persons around the duke of Bruns­wick had been bribed by the French, and that the retreat had been ordered in consequence. A few months later the anticipations of Kaunitz were realized. Prussia seized western Poland, while Austria remained as far as ever from gaining Bavaria. The emperor Francis now dismissed the ministers responsible for the Prussian alliance, and called Thugut to power. From this critical moment the alliance was doomed, and the allied commanders thwarted rather than assisted one another’s operations on the eastern frontier of France. On the other hand, Thugut drew nearer to Russia, and negotiated at St Petersburg for the seizure of Venice by Austria. With England he desired to stand on a good footing ; but, while Pitt’s object was the overthrow of the revolutionary Government, Thugut’s was simply the acquisition of territory for Austria. This dis­crepancy of aim led to results exasperating to the English ministry, such as the fall of Toulon, to which Thugut neglected to send the troops which he had promised. The evacuation of Belgium in 1794, usually attributed to Thugut’s treachery, was, however, due to the incapacity or intrigues of others. In 1795, after the withdrawal of Prussia from the coalition, Thugut obtained financial help from England, gained from Russia a large share of Poland in the last partition, and prepared to carry on the war against France with the utmost energy. The campaign