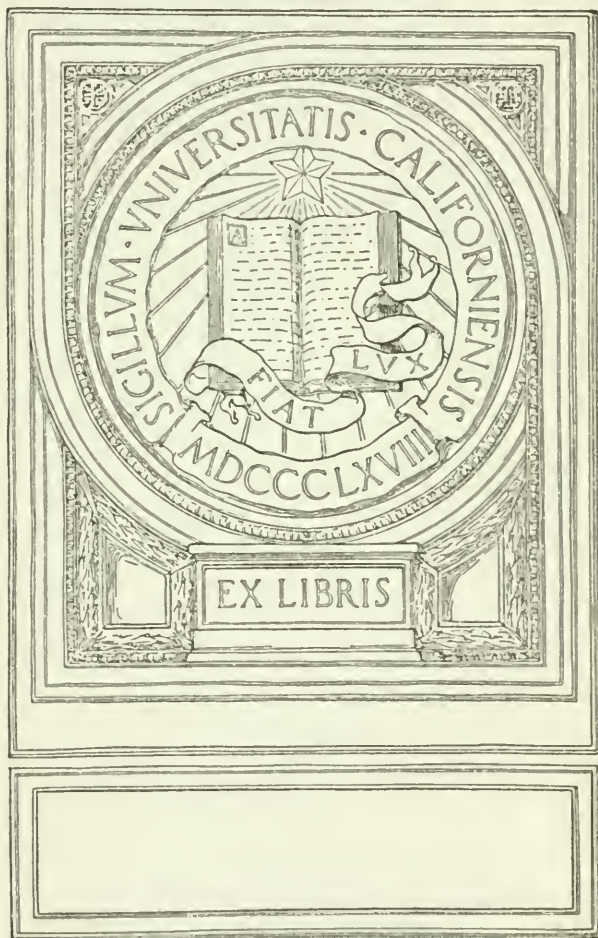


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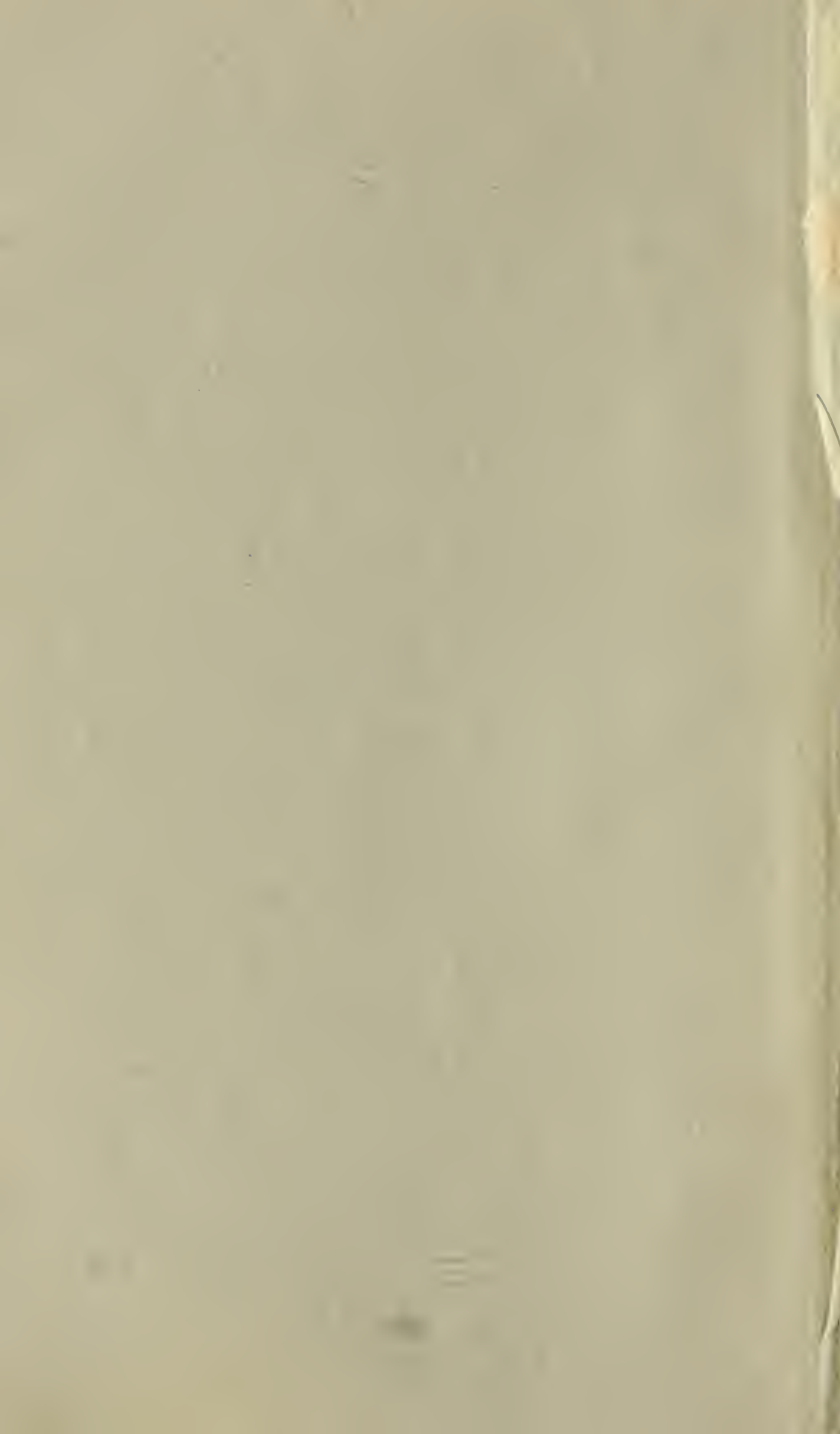


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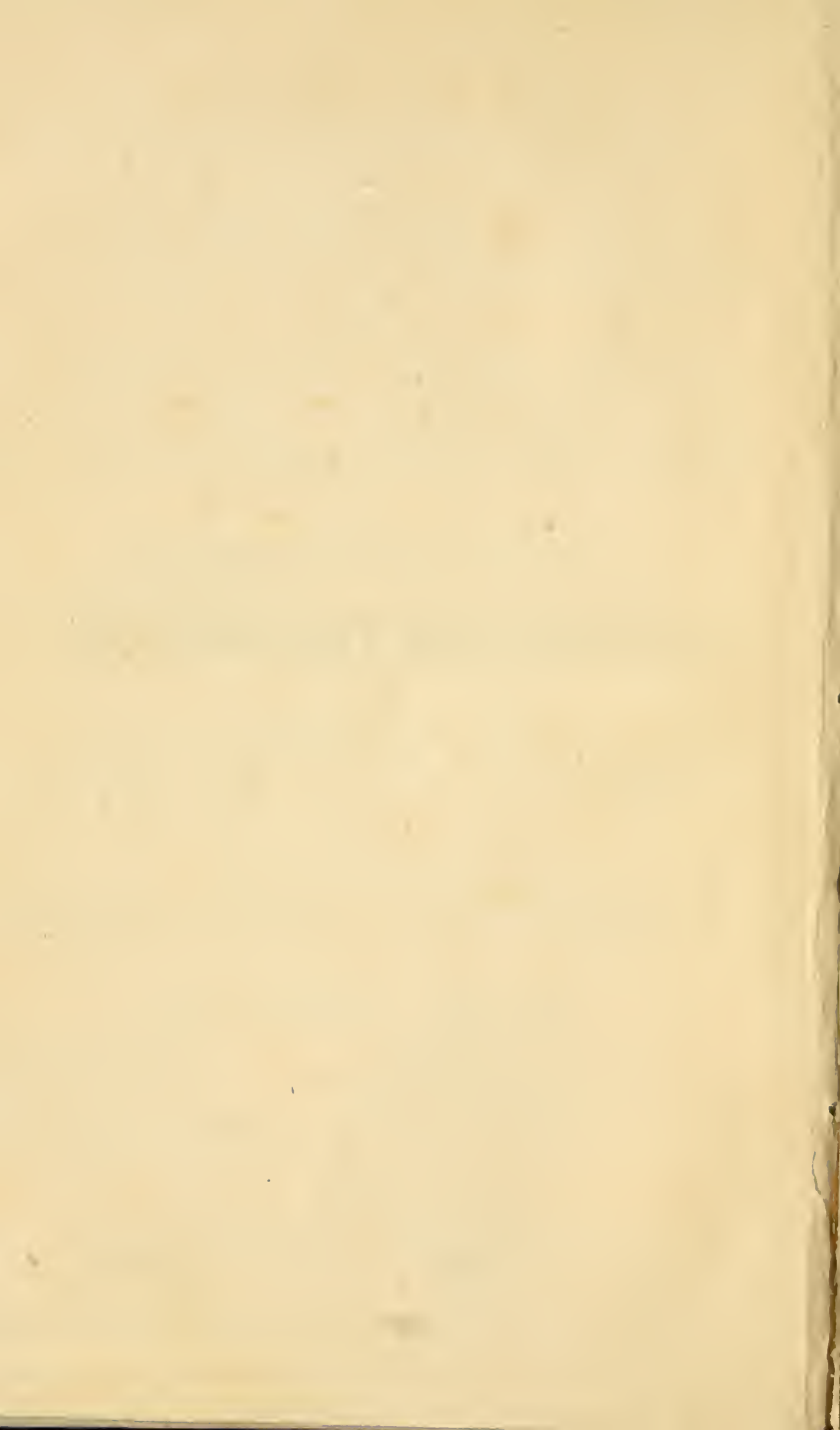
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PREFACE.

IN offering the following historical and social account of Burmese policy and importance, it may be permitted me to make a few remarks on the subject of the war now proceeding in that country.

Unfortunate as any war always is, and must be, yet in contending with an unprincipled and tyrannical government like that of Burmah, there is a grain of satisfaction in knowing that we thereby shake the despotic thrones of the East, and thus add something to the cause of liberty and peace. Such, too, is the only advantage of a contention with the king of Ava. If we cannot humanize by fair means,—of course, under fair means I do not intend to comprehend many of the so-called missionary labours, which cause more harm in a short while than all diplomatic fiddling will do in the course of years,—we must, *vi et armis*, carry civilisation into the country, and openly defy the custom-house of tyranny. The two courses to be adopted with respect to Burmah seem to be these;—the one is to erect the Pegu province into a kingdom; the other, to annex the country ourselves, placing it under Anglo-Indian rule; and I cannot help believing that any fair investigation of the subject will produce the above conviction; but time and the diplomatists must decide on the precise course.

For the cause of religious truth and civil liberty, it is to

be hoped that the missionary system at present pursued may be altered; for the sake of peace, it is to be hoped that the utmost caution will be pursued in framing laws for these countries, which must at last, in some way, become allies or tributaries of the imperial crown of Great Britain.

It will be seen in the following pages, where I have endeavoured to indicate rather than enlarge upon the social condition of the Burmese, that they have many admirable customs; that they are industrious; that their moral propensities are as yet undefiled; and that their country presents a fine field for the development both of commercial and agricultural interests. Now, when even the colonies in the south are overstocked, or rather crowded with persons not capable, as a general rule, of occupying a responsible condition in life, there is a necessity for a new and yet old place. In Burmah we have it. Under the rule of an independent sovereign, Pegu would form a fine place, where our vessels could lie; and the teak of the country would make Bassein and Rangoon of great importance to our shipping interests. If Burmah should be incorporated with our own dominions, why, then at least the same degree of elevation in the intellectual world would be obtained, as in Hindustan, or in Siam, where, as Neale informs us, the king reads "Pickwick" in English, and enjoys it.

In some respects the following character of the English, drawn by the Burmese themselves, is so just, that I shall hardly be wrong in submitting it to the reader:—

"The English are the inhabitants of a small and remote island: what business have they to come in ships from so great a distance to dethrone kings, and take possession of countries they have no right to? They contrive to conquer and govern the black foreigners, the people of castes, who have puny frames and no courage: they have never yet

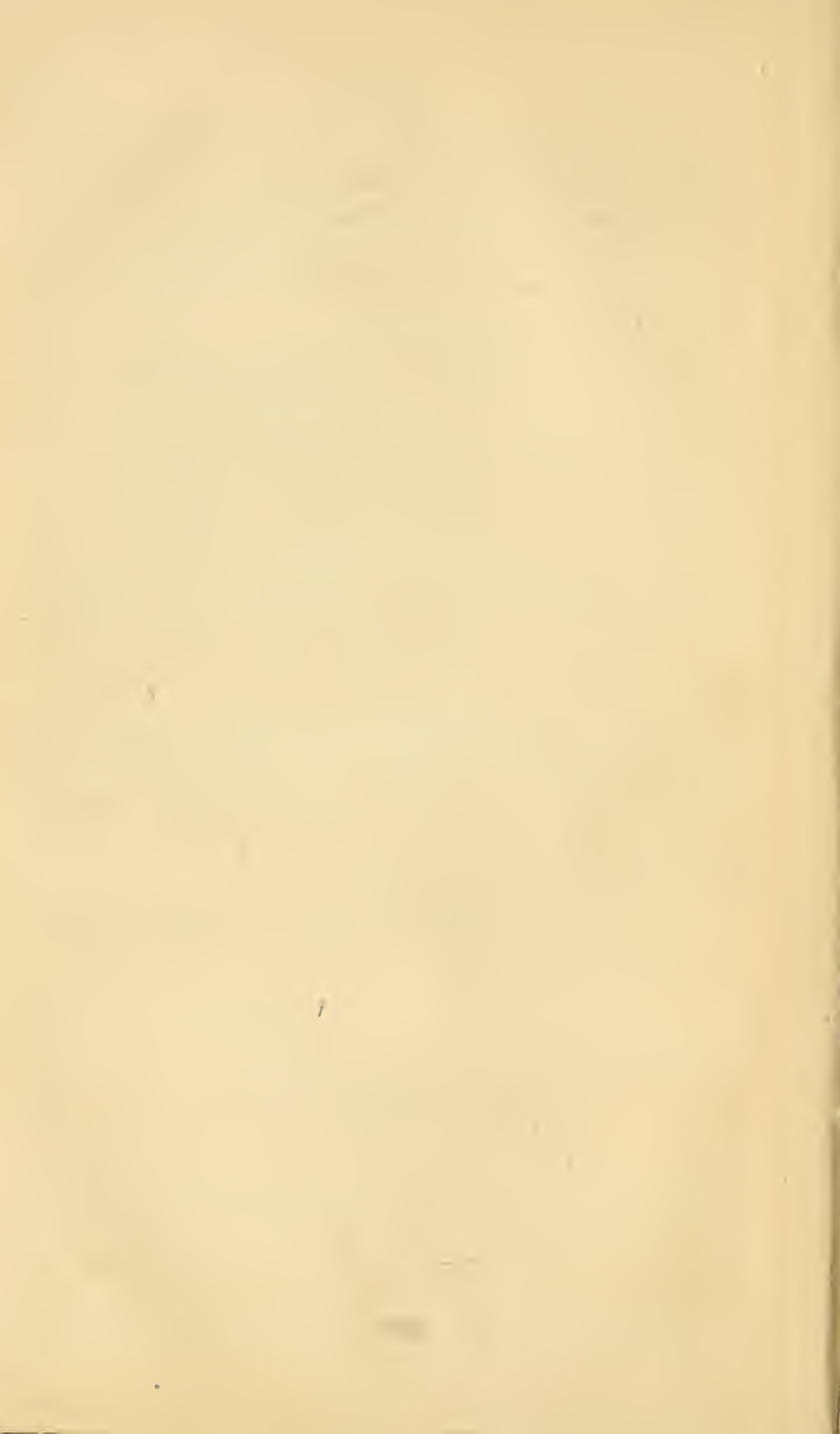
fought with so strong and brave a people as the Burmas, skilled in the use of the sword and spear. If they once fight with us, and we have an opportunity of manifesting our bravery, it will be an example to the black nations, which are now slaves to the English, and will encourage them to throw off the yoke.”(1)

The fact is, that the English never had any business in India, and their only title to it now consists in their long possession and occupation of the territory. The world has forgotten that, or overlooked it from the first. The nation is brave and intelligent, but hasty and inconsiderate, and so blind is it when excited, that, at such time, like Captain Absolute, it could *cut its own throat*, “or any other person’s, with the greatest pleasure in the world.”

I trust this little work may serve as a guide to the many valuable and interesting volumes to which I have been indebted, and that the reader may not count the hours spent in its perusal lost. My literary engagements have somewhat hurried the close, but nothing of importance has been omitted; indeed, by the kindness of several friends, I have been able, here and there, to add new illustrations and comments.

KENNETH R. H. MACKENZIE.

(1) Judson, in Documents, pp. 223, 229.



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BURMAH;

AN HISTORICO-SOCIAL SKETCH.

BOOK I.

BURMAN CIVILISATION.

CHAPTER I.

Geographical sketch—Character of the country—Climate—The river Irawadi—The Petroleum wells—The Saluen, &c.—Forests—Plants—Minerals—Animals—Races of Burmah—Character of the Burmese nation.

BEFORE the war in 1824, 1825, and 1826, the empire of Burmah was the most considerable among those of the Indo-Chinese nations inhabiting the farther peninsula of India. Previous to the events of that campaign it comprehended the whole of the extensive region lying between the latitudes 9° and 27° N. At present, however, its limits are lat. 16° and 27° or 28° N., and long. 93° and 99° E. Its northern boundary is, even at the present day, imperfectly known; and we are in still greater uncertainty concerning the frontier to the east, in Upper Laos, partly subject to the king of Ava or Burmah. Berghaus is probably the most correct in following Sir Francis Hamilton,(1) who has done far more for the geography of these countries than any one else, and extending it to 100° E. long., about the parallel of 22° N. It is bounded

(1) Or Dr. Buchanan. See his paper in the Edinburgh Philosophical Journal, vol. ii. p. 99 sqq.

on the west by the British provinces of Arakhan, Cassay, and Chittagong; to the north, by a portion of Assam and Thibet; to the north-east it has the Chinese province of Yunan; to the east, the independent Laos country and the British territory of Martaban; and to the south it has the kingdom of Siam and the Indian Ocean.

Taken in its most extensive sense, that is, including all the countries subject to Burman influence, its area may contain 194,000 square miles. The population is probably about 4,000,000. The climate of a country comprehending such a vast extent of territory, cannot fail to exhibit much variety, and topographical circumstances cannot fail to produce a still greater difference. But notwithstanding that the southern levels at the mouth of the Irawadi are swampy, yet the climate is not, even there, insalubrious, while farther north it is very similar to that of Hindostan. Col. Symes, to whose excellent, though somewhat over-charged narrative, we shall have ample occasion to refer, insists upon the salubrity of the climate in very strong terms indeed. The aspect of the country is low and champaign up to the full latitude of $17\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ N.; but from thence to the 22° it assumes a hilly aspect, and beyond that it rises into mountains. Burmah is inclosed on the east and west by two branch ranges of the Himalaya; other ranges run down, in general, from north to south, gradually decreasing in height toward the south.

The upper portion of Burmah is mountainous. The scenery is among the most beautiful in the world. Plains and mountains, lovely valleys and gaping chasms, present themselves to the wondering eye of the traveller. Now there is a space of level ground, covered with straggling underwood; plants trail along the earth, the high disorderly grass of the jungle waves, and the wild stunted trees stretch their deformed limbs toward heaven, as if to pray that the hand of civilised man might at length relieve them. The waving grass is gone, and we are again amid the mountains, clothed with majestic trees, arching gloriously over the weary traveller's head, and concealing from his view the wild animals that house there. Such is the greater part of Burmah, thus uninhabited and neglected; such the condition of a region belonging to an unenergetic people; and such it will remain, until the nations can recognise the vast wealth that the gorges and abysses of the mountains contain. Rich and unexhausted

is the land; but the race that shall gather its treasures, and turn its wild wastes into populous cities, is not, and will never be, that of the Burman!

The coasts and rivers are well studded with towns and villages, and the busy hum of the healthy labourers is heard everywhere. Yet there is a blank place in the maps for many portions still. No European voice has listened in the wildernesses of the Naga tribes, or in those of the Murroos. The land whence the human race first came is now left silent.

In the maritime portions of the country the year has two seasons,—the dry and the wet. The latter always begins about the tenth of May, with showers gradually growing more frequent, for several weeks. It afterwards rains almost daily until about the middle of September, when it as gradually goes off, and in the course of a month entirely ceases. During this time from one hundred and fifty to two hundred inches of water fall. This is the only time when the country is unhealthy for foreigners, and even then, there are many places where persons may reside with impunity. In other parts of the country there are three seasons. In the highest and wildest provinces there are severe winters.

Amidst these mountain-passes rises the great and sacred river Irawadi, named from the elephant of Indra, which, like the stream of history, flows down from amidst obscurity and uncertainty. The sources of the Irawadi are yet undiscovered; but Lieutenant Wilcox, who explored a considerable portion of Burmah, was informed, that they were not far distant from that of the Burampooter, or Brahmapootra. It has a course of more than twelve hundred miles to the sea; and passing through the whole of the empire, it falls into the Gulf of Martaban, by a great number of mouths, in the kingdom of Pegu. Its breadth varies from one to three, and even five miles in various parts of its course. How different from its narrowest width of eighty yards, at about forty miles from its supposed source.

The river issues from the mountains, and enters an extensive valley, occupied by the tribes of the Khun-oongs. At this early point of its course, the country is perfectly level, and is partly cultivated, while the remainder is studded with small woods of bamboo. The Irawadi is little more than eighty yards broad at the town of Manchee, and is quite fordable. The plain of

Manchee is 1,855 feet above the level of the sea. After passing through this plain, it runs through countries very little known to Europeans, for about 120 miles. Rugged mountain-chains here form the banks of the river, sometimes diversified by a plain of some extent.

Bamoo is the first place of consequence on the river after Manchee, and is about 350 miles distant from the latter town. The level of the river falls 1,300 feet between the two places. At some distance from Bamoo, near a village called Kauntoun, the river suddenly turns westwards but soon runs south-west again. A little above Hentha it takes a direction due south, so continuing to Amarapura. From Bamoo to Amarapura the country is only navigable for small boats.

“With the change of the river the face of the country is changed. Issuing from the narrow valley, it enters a very wide one, or rather a plain. Along its banks, and especially on the southern side, the level country extends for many miles, in some places even to thirty, and even then is not bounded by high mountains, but by moderate hills, which increase in height as they recede farther from the river. Considerable portions of these plains are covered by the inundations of the river in the wet season. On the north side of the river the hills are at no great distance from the banks, and here the ground is impregnated with muriate of soda, and with nitre, of which great quantities are extracted.”(1)

The Irawadi now rolls its majestic floods towards the ocean, and receives an accession in the confluence of the Kyan Duayn, a river which first receives that name near the Danghii hills; it then continues its course, and arrives at the former boundary of the kingdoms of Ava and Pegu, the promontory of Kyaok-ta-rau.

“The valley of the Irawadi, south of its confluence with the Kyan Duayn, to the town of Melloon (south of 20° N. lat.), is, in its general aspect, hilly and very uneven; but the hills rise to no great height, at least not near the river, and are in many places separated by tracts of flat country, which in some places are extensive and well cultivated. South of Melloon the hills approach nearer the river, and often form its banks. They are in most places covered with forest trees of considerable size; among

(1) Penny Cyclopædia, vol. iv. p. 435 sq.

which teak-trees are frequent. Cultivation is confined to the narrow flat tracts which here and there separate the hills from the river.”(1)

In this neighbourhood are situated the famous Petroleum wells, at a village called Re-nau-khaung, from three to four miles from the river. Colonel Symes did not visit the interesting spot at that time, but he has given us an excellent idea of the locality, by his brief but vigorous sketch :—

“The country,” he tells us,(2)“ now displayed an aspect different from any we had yet seen ; the surface was broken into small separate hills, entirely barren and destitute of vegetation, except some stunted bushes that grew on the declivities, and in the dells, and a few unhealthy trees immediately in the neighbourhood of the villages : the clay was discoloured, and had the appearance of red ochre. We were informed, that the celebrated wells of petroleum, which supply the whole empire, and many parts of India, with that useful product, were five miles to the east of this place. The Scree brought me a piece of stone, which he assured me was petrified wood, and which certainly had much the appearance of it. In walking about, I picked up several lumps of the same, in which the grain of the wood was plainly discernible ; it was hard, siliceous, and seemed composed of different lamina. The Birmans said it was the nature of the soil that caused this transmutation ; and added, that the petrifying quality of the earth at this place was such, that leaves of trees shaken off by the wind were not unfrequently changed into stone before they could be decayed by time. The face of the country was altered and the banks of the river were totally barren ; the ground was superficially covered with quartz gravel, and concreted masses of the same material were thickly scattered. The mouth of the creek was crowded with large boats, waiting to receive a lading of oil ; and immense pyramids of earthen jars were raised within and around the village, disposed in the same manner as shot and shells are piled in an arsenal. This place is inhabited only by potters, who carry on an extensive manufactory, and find full employment. The smell of the oil was extremely offensive ; we saw several thousand jars filled with it ranged along

(1) Penny Cyclopædia, vol. iv. p. 437.

(2) Embassy to Ava, vol. ii. p. 227 sq.

the bank ; some of these were continually breaking, and the contents, mingling with the sand, formed a very filthy consistence."

On the colonel's return, however, he and Dr. Buchanan rode over to the wells ; and their account of their visit is too interesting to be omitted here : (1)—

"The face of the country was cheerless and sterile ; the road, which wound among rocky eminences, was barely wide enough to admit the passage of a single cart ; and in many places the track in which the wheels must run was a foot and a half lower on one side than the other : there were several of these lanes, some more circuitous than others, according to the situation of the small hills among which they led. Vehicles, going and returning, were thus enabled to pursue different routes, except at particular places where the nature of the ground would only admit of one road : when a cart came to the entrance of such a defile, the driver halloed out, to stop any that might interfere with him from the opposite side, no part being sufficiently wide for two carts to pass. The hills, or rather hillocks, were covered with gravel, and yielded no other vegetation than a few stunted bushes. The wheels had worn ruts deep into the rock, which seemed to be rather a mass of concreted gravel than hard stone, and many pieces of petrified wood lay strewed about. It is remarkable, that wherever these petrifications were found the soil was unproductive, and the ground destitute of verdure. The evening being far advanced, we met but few carts ; those which we did observe, were drawn each by a pair of oxen, of a length disproportionate to the breadth, to allow space for the earthen pots that contained the oil. It was a matter of surprise to us how they could convey such brittle ware, with any degree of safety, over so rugged a road : each pot was packed in a separate basket and laid on straw ; notwithstanding which precaution, the ground all the way was strewed with the fragments of the vessels, and wet with oil ; for no care can prevent the fracture of some in every journey. As we approached the pits, which were more distant than we had imagined, the country became less uneven, and the soil produced herbage : it was nearly dark when we reached them, and the labourers had retired from work. There seemed to be a

(1) Embassy to Ava, vol. iii. p. 233 sq.

great many pits within a small compass: walking to the nearest, we found the aperture about four feet square, and the sides, as far as we could see down, were lined with timber; the oil is drawn up in an iron pot, fastened to a rope passed over a wooden cylinder which revolves on an axis supported by two upright posts. When the pot is filled, two men take the rope by the end, and run down a declivity, which is cut in the ground to a distance equivalent to the depth of the well: thus, when they reach the end of the track the pot is raised to its proper elevation; the contents, water and oil together, are then discharged into a cistern, and the water is afterwards drawn off through a hole in the bottom."

It is impossible to read this, without stopping to smile at the backwardness of the people, who, having invented all the machinery for a well, should still remain at that distance from the application of this discovery, as to resort to such a complicated and cumbersome arrangement, as cutting a trackway equal in length to the depth of the well! How easy to have applied the winch and coiled the rope, as other nations as far back in civilisation have done, in the way with which we are acquainted! But it is such little hitches that impede a nation's progress!(1) But to continue the narrative of the envoy.

"Our guide, an active, intelligent man, went to a neighbouring house and procured a well-rope, by means of which we were enabled to measure the depth, and ascertained it to be thirty-seven fathoms; but of the quantity of oil at the bottom we could not judge. The owner of the rope, who followed our guide, affirmed, that when a pit yielded as much as came up to the waist of a man, it was deemed tolerably productive; if it reached to his neck, it was abundant; but that which rose no higher than the knee was accounted indifferent. When a well is exhausted, they restore the spring by cutting deeper into the rock, which is extremely hard in those places where the oil is produced. Government farms out the ground that supplies this useful commodity; and it is again let to adventurers, who dig wells at their own hazard, by which they sometimes gain and often lose, as the labour and expense of digging are considerable. The oil is sold on the spot for a mere trifle; I think two or three hundred pots for a tackal, or half a crown. The

(1) Near Amarpura, however, Symes observed a man in a plantation using a wheel to a well. See his *Ava*, vol. ii. p. 87, small edition.

principal charge is incurred by the transportation and purchase of vessels. We had but half gratified our curiosity, when it grew dark, and our guide urged us not to remain any longer, as the road was said to be infested by tigers, that prowled at night among the rocky uninhabited ways through which we had to pass. We followed his advice, and returned, with greater risk, as I thought, of breaking our necks from the badness of the road than of being devoured by wild beasts. At ten o'clock we reached our boats without any misadventure."

Captain Hiram Cox, the British resident at Rangoon in 1796-7, describes the town of Re-nau-khyaung, or as he spells it, Ramaughong, meaning *the town through which flows a river of earth-oil*, as "of mean appearance; and several of its temples, of which there are great numbers, falling to ruins; the inhabitants, however," he continues, "are well dressed, many of them with golden spiral ear ornaments." (1) Altogether the town or village, and its environs, are as bleak as bleak can be, if we may trust the description. We shall hereafter return to the consideration of the Petroleum trade as a source of revenue to the government.

The most important place about this portion of the course of the Irawadi is Prome, a city which we shall hereafter have to mention as one of those celebrated in the ancient history of the country; we will therefore omit further notice of it here. Exclusive of the Delta of the Irawadi, to which we must now turn our attention, there is very little low land in the Burman territory. Like the Delta of the Nile it is exceedingly fruitful, and it produces abundant crops of rice. It is, too, the commercial highway of the land.

Malcom, who travelled in the country, expresses his astonishment at the number of boats ever passing up and down the river. It would seem that the navigation is very tedious; for, according to the same traveller, the boats are generally from three to four months ascending from the Delta to the city of Ava. (2)

The Irawadi finally embouches into the Bay of Bengal by several mouths, of which the chief are, the Bassein river, the Dallah, the Chinabuckeer, and the Rangoon or Syriam river.

(1) Asiatic Researches, vol. vi. p. 127 sq.

(2) Malcom, Travels in South-Eastern Asia, vol. i. p. 96 sq.

The Saluen or Martaban river rises in the same range of mountain whence the Burampooter, the Irawadi, and the great Kamboja rivers originate. In the early part of its course, it is named Nou-Kiang by the Chinese, through whose territory it at first flows. It disembogues into the Gulf of Poo-looghooon opposite the island of that name.

The Kyan Duayn is a river which, rising near the sources of the Irawadi, traverses the Kubo valley, and falls into that river in lat. $21^{\circ} 35' N.$, long. $95^{\circ} 10' E.$; forming several islands at the junction. The principal of these is Alakyun.

The river Setang makes a grand appearance, as Malcom says, upon the map, still it is of little use, as its depth is only four feet, though at different places it has a depth of from ten to fifteen feet. It must at one time have been deeper and navigable, for the ancient capital of Tongho, in the kingdom of that name, is built upon it. There is a bore of three feet on the Setang. The other rivers of Burmah are of little consequence. There are but few lakes, and the most considerable will be noticed hereafter.

The fruits of Burmah are very varied in their character, and though they surpass their neighbours in the article of timber, yet the fruit-trees are far inferior. A very complete list is given in Malcom's comprehensive work, to which I must refer the reader.(1) The teak forests, whose produce forms no inconsiderable article in Burmese commerce, are situated in the province of Sarawadi, in the hilly mountainous district east and north-east of Rangoon. The forests in this part of Asia, like the woody and uncultivated parts of Hindostan, are extremely pestiferous, and even though the wood-cutters be a hardy and active race of men, on whom climate and suffering would seem to have little effect, yet they never attain to any considerable age, and are very short-lived.

Dr. Wallich, on his visit to Burmah in 1826, collected specimens of upwards of sixteen thousand different sorts of trees and plants. I need only refer the reader to his learned and magnificent work for a description and classification of them.

The mineral riches of the land, which are considerable, are not sufficiently attended to. The head-waters of the various rivers contain gold-dust, and from Bamoo, on the frontier of China, much gold has been obtained. Malcom

(1) Malcom, vol. i. p. 173 sqq.; and Wallich, *Plantæ Rariores*, &c.

suggests that want of enterprise and capital has alone prevented these sources of prosperity from being worked. Yes, it has been that curse! From the earliest ages they have laboured under it, and time seems not to have taught them the important lesson that all the world beside are learning and repeating every day,—the necessity of progress. Much of their gold is drawn from China, and their love for using it in gilding edifices resembles the taste of the Incas, who, richer in the metal, plated their temples with gold.(1) What is not used for this purpose is employed in the setting of the jewels of the great, and as in Peru, remains in the hands of the Inca lords. It is rarely used as currency, and then in ingots.

Notwithstanding that there is much silver elsewhere, the only mines worked are in Laos, and there even the mines are not wrought by the Burmese, but by natives of China and Laos, to the number of about a thousand. The estimated produce does not seem large, amounting annually to only one hundred thousand pounds, on which the contractors pay a tax of five thousand pounds.

The diamonds are all small, and emeralds are wanting. Rubies are found in great quantities, however, at about five days' journey from Ava, near the villages of Mo-gout and Kyat-pyen. Malcom saw one for which the owner asked no less than four pounds of pure gold. The king is reported to have some which weigh from one hundred and twenty to one hundred and fifty grains. Sapphires, too, abound. "Some have been obtained," Malcom assures us, "weighing from three thousand to nearly four thousand grains."(2) Many other precious stones are to be found in this wealthy country. Much amber is found round the Hu-kong valley, on the Assam frontier. Iron, tin, lead, and many of those staples of commerce which form the real wealth and resources of every country, abound, and coal is to be found in the inland provinces.(3) Marble, and of the finest, also exists in the land; better than which there would seem to be none in the world. What might such a country be in the hands of an energetic and intelligent people!

(1) Prescott's *Conquest of Peru*, vol. ii. p. 101-3.

(2) Malcom, vol. i. p. 167.

(3) See *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. iv. p. 704. On the Further Discovery of Coalbeds in Assam, by Capt. F. Jenkins; also vol. viii. p. 385. The existence of coal has, however, been disputed.

I subjoin a translation of a description of the mines of precious stones in Kyat-pyen, from the original of Père Giuseppe d'Amato.(1) It gives a clearer and conciser account of the mines than I can meet with elsewhere, and I therefore offer it to the reader in an abridged form.

“The territory of Kyat-pyen [written Chia-ppièn by d'Amato] is situated to the east, and a little to the south of the town of Mon-thá (lat. 22° 16' N.), distant about seventy miles. It is surrounded by nine mountains. The soil is uneven and full of marshes, forming seventeen small lakes, each having a particular name. It is this soil which is so rich in mineral treasures. It should be noticed, however, that the dry ground alone is mined. The miners dig square wells, supporting the sides with piles and cross-pieces. These wells are sunk to the depth of fifteen or twenty cubits. When it is secure, the miner descends with a basket, which he fills with loose earth, the basket is drawn up, and the jewels are picked out and washed in the brooks in the neighbouring hills. They continue working the wells laterally till two meet, when the place is abandoned. There are very few accidents. The precious stones that are found there consist of rubies, sapphires, topazes, and other crystals. Many fabulous stories are related concerning the origin of the mines at Kyat-pyen.” An anecdote was told Amato, as he says, “by a person of the highest credit,” of two masses (*amas*) of rubies at Kyat-pyen. One weighed eighty *viss*.(2) When the people were taking them to Ava to the king, a party of robbers attacked the convoy, and made off with the smaller one; the other, injured by fire, was brought to Ava.

The animals of the country are very numerous. The domestic quadrupeds of the Burmans are the ox, the buffalo, the horse, and the elephant. The two first are very much used throughout the country. They are both of a very good species, and generally well kept. The ox is to them an expensive animal, as their religion forbids its use as food, and they have, therefore, no profitable manner of disposing of the disabled cattle. This, probably, led to the taming of the buffalo, an animal which has been in use among them from time immemorial. It is less

(1) Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, vol. ii. p. 75 sq.

(2) The *viss* is equal to 3½ pounds. The Burmese word is *peik-tha*.

expensive to rear, and is contented with coarser food. But it is not so valuable in some respects, for though stronger, it is not so hardy, and cannot endure long-continued exertion. The horse is never full-sized in Burmah, as in every Asiatic tropical country east of Bengal, and it somewhat resembles the Canadian pony. The animal is expensive, and rarely used except for the saddle. In some parts of the country it is almost unknown.

The elephant, well named the *Apis* of the Buddhists by M. Dubois de Jancigny,(1) is now much more the object of royal luxury and ostentation than anything else, and I shall, when speaking of the religious ceremonies of the Burmans, again refer to the place it occupies in their estimation. It is only used in Laos as a beast of burden.

Hogs, dogs, cats, besides asses, sheep, and goats, which last are but little known, are little cared for, and they are allowed to pursue their own paths unmolested. The camel, an animal, which as Mr. Crawford says, is "sufficiently well suited to the upper portions of the country," is unknown to the Burmese.(2)

Wild animals of many descriptions abound in Burmah, still it is a remarkable fact, noticed by Crawford, that neither wolves, jackals, foxes, nor hyenas, are to be found in the country. Many species of winged game abound, as also hares.

The Indo-Chinese nations are considered by Prichard (3) to consist of various races, while Pickering (4) seems to be able to detect but two, the Malay, and, in an isolated position, the Telingan. It is therefore difficult with such contradictory evidence to arrive at the probable result. But as, without a slight sketch of this important subject, my work would fall under the just imputation of incompleteness, I shall venture to give some account of the races of Burmah, and I the rather take Prichard as my chief guide, as his research is the completer of the two, notwithstanding that Pickering has shown himself well able through his work to distinguish the Malay race from every other, in the most difficult and delicate cases. I shall not trouble the reader with any account of the

(1) Japon, Indo-Chine, et Ceylan, par M. Dubois de Jancigny, p. 236.

(2) Crawford's *Ava*, vol. ii. p. 222, to whom I am mainly indebted.

(3) *Researches into the Physical History of Mankind*, vol. iv. p. 499.

(4) *Races of Man*, p. 137. See his *Ethnological map*.

adjacent races, but occupy myself solely with the principal nations under the Burman dominion. And first of the people of Pegu: (1) they inhabit the Delta of the Irawadi, and the low coast which terminates in the hilly country of the Burmans or Maramas. They are called by the Burmans, Talain; but their own name for themselves is Mân or Môn. The Pegu race, we shall see in the course of its history, was once very powerful, and its ascendancy remained for many years, and during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the empire of Pegu is often spoken of in the Portuguese chronicles as powerful and magnificent. Their language is entirely different from that of the Burmese and Siamese, as Leyden judged, (2) and Low has since amply proved. (3) In Low's opinion, the Mân is the most original of the Indo-Chinese language. They use the Pali alphabet, and probably had it before the Burmans.

The Karian race inhabits the borders and low plains in Bassein province, but do not present any salient points for consideration.

The Maramas or Burmans inhabit the high lands above Pegu, where they created a powerful empire for themselves in very ancient times. They are some of that valiant Malay stock who subsequently colonized so large a portion of the globe, and passed by way of Polynesia to the American continent. They, like the Incas of Peru, boast a celestial origin; and the similarity of some of their institutions lead to no unfair presumption of their being of the same original family. (4) They are the most extended race in the Burman empires, reaching from the frontiers of Laos and Siam westward to Arakhan.

The country of Arakhan, which next claims our attention, and concludes our consideration of the races of Burmah, stretches along the eastern shore of the Gulf of Bengal, from about 21° to 18° of north latitude. Having in ancient times formed a portion of the empire of Magad'ha, they were for centuries connected with India. The Burmans themselves derive their origin from them; but this is only indirectly true. The solution of the problem remains yet to be told. The opinion of the Burmans re-

(1) Prichard, vol. iv. p. 506.

(2) *Asiat. Res.*, vol. x. p. 240.

(3) Low's Grammar of the T'hay.

(4) See my remarks in Buckley's *Great Cities of the Ancient World*, p. 369.

garding the antiquity of the Rúkheng, or Arakhan dialect, is fully borne out by Dr. Leyden. The chief modifications it has undergone are traceable to the Pali.(1)

The ethnology of the Burman empire is neither so intricate or so unsatisfactory as some others. There does not seem to have been a similar extent of change of race, and probably to that very circumstance do they owe the feebleness of character, which, however willingly we would omit seeing, does not fail to make itself conspicuous in a consideration of their prowess, social institutions, and advancement. The very fact of their quiescent state has debarred from progress, as the most mixed race is ever the most energetic. Witness our own, where so many various bloods have commingled, and formed a nation, which, emphatically speaking, is a progressive one, and now more than ever.

The Burmans have not made the advancement they might have made. There has been sluggish, age-lasting improvement in their empire, and it has been the want of a stimulating and decisive energy alone that has kept them back. Simplicity forms, too, no inconsiderable part of the national character, and this, by leading them to accept various doctrines without examination—a quality usually observable in semi-civilised races—has not given them any reason to think and to look around. Like the American races, they proceeded to a certain point, and then improved but little.

Colonel Symes, who was inclined to magnify the importance of the nation in every way, applied some remarks to them, which, however applicable now, were certainly not then. With those remarks I shall terminate this chapter, leaving their truth or falsehood to be discovered in the course of the work.

“The Birmans,” observes he,(2) “are certainly rising fast in the scale of Oriental nations; and it is to be hoped that a long respite from foreign wars will give them leisure to improve their natural advantages. Knowledge increases with commerce; and as they are not shackled by any prejudices of castes restricted to hereditary occupations, or forbidden from participating with strangers in

(1) In concluding this subject, allow me to refer the reader to some useful observations on Ethnology by Dr. Prichard, in the Admiralty Manual of Scientific Inquiry, edited by Sir John Herschel, p. 423-444.

(2) Embassy to Ava, vol. i. p. 286 sq.; later edition, vol. i. p. 146. /

every social bond, their advancement will, in all probability, be rapid. At present, so far from being in a state of intellectual darkness, although they have not explored the depths of science, nor reached to excellence in the finer arts, they yet have an undeniable claim to the character of a civilised and well-instructed people. Their laws are wise, and pregnant with sound morality; their police is better regulated than in most European countries; their natural disposition is friendly, and hospitable to strangers; and their manners rather expressive of manly candour than courteous dissimulation: the gradations of rank, and the respect due to station, are maintained with a scrupulosity which never relaxes. A knowledge of letters is so widely diffused that there are no mechanics, few of the peasantry, or even the common watermen (usually the most illiterate class), who cannot read and write in the vulgar tongue. Few, however, are versed in the more erudite volumes of science, which, containing many Shanscrit terms, and often written in the Pali text, are (like the Hindoo Shasters) above the comprehension of the multitude; but the feudal system, which cherishes ignorance, and renders man the property of man, still operates as a check to civilisation and improvement. This is a bar which gradually weakens as their acquaintance with the customs and manners of other nations extends; and unless the rage of civil discord be again excited, or some foreign power impose an alien yoke, the Birman bid fair to be a prosperous, wealthy, and enlightened people."

CHAPTER II.

The king absolute—Instances of despotism—Titles—Form of government—Offices—The law courts—Their iniquity—Instances—The Book of the Oath epitomized—The oath—Laws—Police—Revenues—Petroleum—Family tax—Imports and exports—Exactions—Army—Equipments—Cowardice—March—The Invulnerables—Discipline—Military character—The white elephant—Description of an early traveller—Its high estimation—Treatment—Funeral.

ALL writers are unanimous in the cry that there is no potentate upon earth equally despotic with the lord of Burmah. There is no disguise about the fact, and he openly asserts, in his titles, that he is lord, ruler, and sole possessor of the lives, persons, and property of his subjects. He advances and degrades; his word alone can promote a beggar to the highest rank, and his word can also utterly displace the proudest officer of his court. His people is a capacious storehouse, whence he obtains tools to work his will. As soon as any person becomes distinguished by his wealth or influence, then does he pay the penalty with his life. He is apprehended on some supposed crime, and is never heard of more. Every Burman is born the king's slave, and it is an honour to the subject to be so called by his sovereign.

Sangermano mentions that, in approaching the royal person, the petitioner or officer is to prostrate himself before him, clasping his hands together above his head.(1) The fact is curious, and I mention it here, as it presents a striking similarity to the act of homage to which the Inca race themselves were subjected in approaching the sacred person of the Child of the Sun.(2) They clasped their hands over their heads, and bore a burthen upon their backs. Now the usage is such here, for the manner of clasping the hands in the Burman court is typical of bearing a burthen, the actual presence of which is dispensed with.

(1) Sangermano's Description of the Burmese Empire, p. 58.

(2) Prescott, Conquest of Peru, vol. ii. p. 80.

It is, however, an honour both to the institutor of the Burman law and the sovereign, who, though absolute, obeyed it, to mention that no married woman can be seized on by the emissaries of the king. This, of course, leads the Burmese to contract marriages very early, either actually or fictitiously.

The property of persons who die without heirs is swept into the coffers of the state, and by law the property of unmarried foreigners is subject to the same regulation upon their death. Jetsome and flotsome belong to the king. These last provisions have not, however, been much enforced, in consequence of the urgent representations of the foreigners residing at Rangoon, Bassein, and other places. The king alone decides upon peace and war, and his call brings the whole population to the rescue. All serve, all are conscripts. "The only effectual restraint," as Crawford remarks, "on the excesses of mal-administration is the apprehension of insurrection."

However, notwithstanding his being acknowledged as absolute, he, like a present president in Europe, has two nominal councils,—a public one and a cabinet. But he is neither bound to abide by their advice, nor does he. His measures are predetermined, and should they prove unwilling to give an immediate and unconditional assent, he has been known to chase his ministers from his presence, with a drawn sword. Two instances are related of his rigour, which will suffice to show the capriciousness of the unrestrained Oriental.

The first is related by Crawford. (1) "The workman who built the present palace committed some professional mistake in the construction of the spire. The king remonstrated with him, saying that it would not stand. The architect pertinaciously insisted upon its stability and sufficiency, and was committed to prison for contumacy. Shortly afterwards the spire fell in a thunder-storm, and about the same time accounts were received at court of the arrival of the British expedition; upon which the architect was sent for from prison, taken to the place of execution, and forthwith decapitated. This," concludes the envoy, "although upon a small scale, is a fair example both of the despotism and superstition by which this people are borne down."

(1) Ava, vol. ii. p. 137 and note.

The second instance, for the truth of which I would scarcely vouch, was reported to Malcom,(1) whence I quote it. "On a late occasion, for a very slight offence, he had forty of his highest officers laid on their faces in the public street, before the palace wall; kept for hours in a broiling sun, with a beam extended across their bodies." This is scarcely credible, and I think Malcom's informer must have been a Burmese Chartist, an Oriental Cuffey. However that traveller pithily observes, that he is "seldom allowed to know much of passing events, and particularly of the delinquencies of particular officers, who are ever ready to hush up accusations by a bribe to their immediate superior."

Many circumstances lead me to suspect, however, that the king has little real power, and that the officers reap the benefits of the acts of enormity which he commits at their instigation, or which they commit under the shadow of his responsibility. It has often been the case in the world's varied history, and why not here? Facts will show.

As a specimen of the pride of the Burmese government, I shall append the form of address, which an English envoy received with the recommendation that he should pronounce it before the king.(2)

"Placing above our heads the golden majesty of the Mighty Lord, the Possessor of the mines of rubies, amber, gold, silver, and all kinds of metal; of the Lord, under whose command are innumerable soldiers, generals, and captains; of the Lord, who is King of many countries and provinces, and Emperor over many Rulers and Princes, *who wait round the throne with the badges of his authority*; of the Lord, *who is adorned with the greatest power, wisdom, knowledge, prudence, foresight, &c.*; of the Lord, who is rich in the possession of elephants, and horses, and in particular is the Lord of many White Elephants; of the Lord, who is the greatest of kings, *the most just and the most religious*, the master of life and death; *we his slaves* the Governor of Bengal, the officers and administrators of the Company, bowing and lowering our

(1) Malcom, Travels, vol. i. p. 249.

(2) My immediate authority is Sangermano, p. 60. This most lucid and interesting account of the Burmese empire, containing more than its title imports, deserves the most earnest attention of the historian. Compiled from Burmese documents, it bears the highest worth in itself.

heads under the sole of his royal golden foot, do present to him with the greatest veneration, this our humble petition."

I have, by my italics, pointed out the "richest" parts of this grandiose address, which, I think, requires no further comment. It may be as well to add, however, that the presence and attributes of the sovereign are always represented as golden.

The form of the Burman administration may be thus briefly described. There is not here, as in other countries of the East, any official answering to the post of Vizier or Prime Minister. The place of such an officer is supplied by the councils mentioned above. The first or public council is the higher in rank, and it has received the name of Lut-d'hau or Lwat-d'hau. Its officers are four in number, and Sangermano adds four assistants as a staff, (1) which Crawford omits to mention. (2) The ministers bear the official name of Wun-kri (Burthen-bearers great). It is now understood to signify figuratively any one who is responsible; but in the days when the future colonists of Peru left the land, there is not a doubt that it was literally applied to the officers. For in the first place the designation would be applied to them as constantly bearing burthens, being continually in the presence of the king; and then, far from being a term of contempt, it would be a designation of honour and consideration. Thus they were literally, and are figuratively, Bearers of the Great Burthens. (3) The questions of state are discussed by this body, and the decision is by a majority of voices. Its sittings are held within the precincts of the palace in a spacious hall. All the royal edicts and grants pass through this council, and require its sanction; in fact, though they are the king's acts, yet his name never appears in them. The custom is somewhat similar to our own of never mentioning the sovereign directly by name in the houses of parliament. The king is occasionally himself present at their deliberations. The edicts of the council are written upon palm-leaves, and a style of extreme brevity is adopted. Indeed, Sangermano assures us that "the more concise it is, the more forcible and efficacious the sentence is considered." Would that our legislators and lawyers with their

(1) Sangermano, p. 64.

(2) Ava, vol. ii. p. 137.

(3) In accordance with my suggestions at p. 16 of this work,

lengthy documents thought so! They may yet learn a lesson from barbarians.

The proclamations and writings of the council all bear the device of a sabre, to intimate the strength and swiftness of the punishment awaiting the transgressors of its decrees. The assistants or deputies are called Wun-tauk (Burthen-proppers). The literal signification was equally in force in ages gone by. Beside the Wun-tauks there are from eight to ten secretaries, called Saré-d'haukri (Scribes-royal great).

The second council, like the first, has deliberations with the king. But those of the Atwen-wun (Interior burthen-bearers) are private and preliminary to those of the Wun-kri. They are considered to be inferior to the Wun-kri, and yet they have a great deal of by-influence, from their position in the royal palace. The subjects of their deliberations are precisely similar to those of the Lut-d'hau, and they exercise the same judicial functions; and even now it is a question of some doubt as to which of the assemblies is in reality the higher. There are various officers attached to the Atwen-wun, as to the Wun-kri.

The number four is retained in the next rank of officers. They are the four general commanders and surveyors of the northern, southern, eastern, and western parts of the empire respectively. Then follow many subordinate officers attached in various capacities to the administration. None of this numerous staff of officers receive any regular salary, but their payment somewhat resembles the system of *repartimientos* established in the Spanish colonies of America, being assignments of the lands and labour of certain numbers of the people. These are granted to officers of the executive governments, in the same way as the king of Persia assigned various cities and lands to Themistocles in more ancient times.(1) Towns and lands are also granted to the ladies of the king's harem, and to the other numerous members of the royal family. The whole country is looked upon as crown property; and the waste and uncultivated parts are at the disposition of any one who will settle in them. The only duty incumbent on the settler is that he must inclose and cultivate it. If he do not improve the land within a certain period, it reverts to the Crown, and may be settled by

(1) Thucydides, lib. i. c. 135.

another. Strangely enough, this does not prevent the sale, inheritance, or leasing of land, which goes on just as in Europe, although, of course, contrary to law. The conditions of mortgage are simpler than with us; for the lender takes possession of the mortgaged estate, and he becomes the owner of it, if the borrowed amount be not returned before the expiration of three years.(1)

In civil disputes the parties have the right to select their own judges, while criminal causes are tried before the chief governor of the town or village.(2) At first this system of administering justice would appear to be a fair and equitable plan, being apparently merely an agreement to refer the matter to the consideration of umpires. This is, however, not the case. The orders of government forbid this, but nevertheless the prohibition is not observed; the utmost corruption prevails, for any complainant goes to a sufficiently influential person in the neighbourhood, and for a bribe obtains a decision in his favour. Sangermano sarcastically remarks, "It may be easily conceived to what injustice and inconvenience this practice must necessarily lead." The severest calamity that can befall any person is "to be put into justice." There is no small degree of wit in this Burman phrase.

Crawford mentions an instance of the strange proceeding of the Burman courts, which may be interesting.(3)

"In 1817, an old Burmese woman, in the service of a European gentleman, was cited before the Rung-d'hau, or court of justice, of Rangoon. Her master appeared on her behalf, and was informed that her offence consisted in having neglected to report a theft committed upon herself three years before, *by which the government officers were defrauded of the fees and profits which ought to have accrued from the investigation or trial.* On receiving this information, he was about to retire, in order to make arrangements to exonerate her, when he was seized by two messengers of the court, and informed, that by appearing in the business he had rendered himself responsible, and could not be released unless some other individual were left in pledge for him, until the old woman's person were produced. A Burman lad, his servant, who accompanied him, was accordingly left in the room. In an hour he

(1) Malcom, vol. i. p. 262.

(2) Sangermano, p. 66.

(3) Ava, vol. ii. p. 149 sq.

returned with the accused, and found, that in the interval, the lad left in pledge had been put into the stocks, his ankles squeezed in them, and by this means, a little money which he had about his person, and a new handkerchief, extorted from him. The old woman was now put into the stocks in her turn, and detained there until all were paid, when she was discharged *without any investigation whatever into the theft.*"

One would imagine that this circumstance was much more likely to have happened in our High Court of Chancery, under the "sharp practice" of a Dodson and Fogg. It seems to be a mutilated Burman version of one of our "great" institutions made into a matter of physical force by Malcom's Oriental Chartist. I may here mention an affecting incident related by Sangermano, (1) and doubtlessly too true.

A poor widow, who was hard pinched to pay the tax demanded of her, was obliged to sell her only daughter to obtain the sum. The money was received, and heavy at heart she returned home, and put it in a box in her house, intending to lament that night, and carry the money to her inexorable creditor in the morning. But the measure of her sorrows was not yet full. Some thieves broke into the house and stole the money. In the morning she discovered her loss, and this additional circumstance caused the bounds of her grief to flow even beyond that of silence, and sitting before her door she gave herself up to loud lamentations. As she was weeping, an emissary of the city magistrate passed by, and inquired into the cause of her sorrow. He, upon hearing the sad story, related the matter to his master. The poor creature was then summoned to the *court of justice*, and commanded to deliver up the thief. Of course this was impossible. She was detained in the stocks until she could scrape together money enough to satisfy the rapacity of the judge.

Sometimes these affairs are very comical. The same author relates another, the circumstances of which are as follows:—

A woman employed in cooking fish for dinner was called away for an instant. The cat, watching her opportunity, seized a half-roasted fish, and ran out of the house.

The woman immediately ran after the cat, exclaiming, "The cat has stolen my fish!" A few days afterwards she was summoned before the magistrate, who demanded the thief at her hands. It was of no use that she explained that the thief was a cat. The magistrate has nothing to do with that. His time was valuable, and the expenses of the court must be paid.

The report of Captain Alves, cited in Crawford,(1) contains ample accounts of the court charges.

How very similar the Burman law courts are to our own! The following extract from the good father's work will show it: (2)—"In civil causes, lawsuits are terminated much more expeditiously than is generally the case in our part of the world, provided always that the litigants are not rich, for then the affair is extremely long, and *sometimes never concluded at all*. I was myself acquainted with two rich European merchants and ship-masters, who ruined themselves so completely by a lawsuit, that they became destitute of the common necessaries of life, and the lawsuit withal was not decided, nor will ever be." Just like Jarndyce and Jarndyce,—the same costly affair everywhere!

Witnesses, both in the civil and criminal causes, are sometimes examined upon oath, though not always. The oath is written in a small book of palm-leaves, and is held over the head of the witness. Foreigners, however, take their own oaths. The substance of the Book of Imprecations, or, as the Burmese call it, the Book of the Oath, is as follows: (3)—

False witnesses, who assert anything from passion, and not from love of truth,—witnesses who affirm that they have heard and seen what they have not heard or seen, may all such false witnesses be severely punished with death, by that God who, through the duration of 400,100,000 worlds, has performed every species of good work, and exercised every virtue. I say, may God, who, after having acquired all knowledge and justice, obtained divinity, leaning upon the tree of Godama, may this God, with the Nat who guards him day and night, that is, the Assurâ Nat, and the giants, slay these false witnesses.

[Here follows the invocation of many different Nats.]

(1) Ava, vol. ii. pp. 152-156.

(2) Sangermano, p. 67.

(3) My authority is, as usual, the excellent Sangermano, p. 68.

May all those who, in consequence of bribery from either party, do not speak the truth, incur the eight dangers and the ten punishments. May they be infected with all sorts of diseases.

Moreover, may they be destroyed by elephants, bitten and slain by serpents, killed and devoured by the devils and giants, the tigers, and other ferocious animals of the forest. May whoever asserts a falsehood be swallowed by the earth, may he perish by sudden death, may a thunderbolt from heaven slay him,—the thunderbolt which is one of the arms of the Nat Devà.

May false witnesses die of bad diseases, be bitten by crocodiles, be drowned. May they become poor, hated of the king. May they have calumniating enemies, may they be driven away, may they become utterly wretched, may every one ill-treat them, and *raise lawsuits against them*.(1) May they be killed with swords, lances, and every sort of weapon. May they be precipitated into the eight great hells and the 120 smaller ones. May they be tormented. May they be changed into dogs. And, if finally they become men, may they be slaves a thousand and ten thousand times. May all their undertakings, thoughts, and desires, ever remain as worthless as a heap of cotton burnt by the fire.

Such is the fearful anathema held over the head of the witness. The oath that the witness himself pronounced is very curious, and being unique in its way, I shall insert it here.(2) The book of the oath is held over the deponent's head, and he says:—

“I will speak the truth. If I speak not the truth, may it be through the influence of the laws of demerit, viz., passion, anger, folly, pride, false opinion, immodesty, hard heartedness, and scepticism, so that when I and my relations are on land, land animals, as tigers, elephants, buffaloes, poisonous serpents, scorpions, &c., shall seize, crush, and bite us, so that we shall certainly die. Let the calamities occasioned by fire, water, rulers, thieves, and enemies oppress and destroy us, till we perish and come to utter destruction. Let us be subject to all the calamities that are within the body, and all that are without the

(1) This shows how the Burmans fear *justice*. How deeply seated is this disorder, and who can unseat and drive it away?

(2) I am indebted to Malcom, vol. i. p. 256, and others.

body. May we be seized with madness, dumbness, blindness, deafness, leprosy, and hydrophobia. May we be struck with thunderbolts and lightning, and come to sudden death. In the midst of not speaking truth may I be taken with vomiting clotted black blood, and suddenly die before the assembled people. When I am going by water, may the water Nats assault me, the boat be upset, and the property lost; and may alligators, porpoises, sharks, or other sea monsters, seize and crush me to death; and when I change worlds, may I not arrive among men or Nats, but suffer unmixed punishment and regret, in the utmost wretchedness, among the four states of punishment, Hell, Prita, Beasts, and Athurakai.

“If I speak the truth, may I and my relations, through the influence of the ten laws of merit, and on account of the efficacy of truth, be freed from all calamities within and without the body; and may evils which have not yet come, be warded far away. May the ten calamities and five enemies also be kept far away. May the thunderbolts and lightning, the Nat of the waters, and all sea animals, love me, that I may be safe from them. May my prosperity increase like the rising sun and the waxing moon; and may the seven possessions, the seven laws, and the seven merits of the virtuous, be permanent in my person; and when I change worlds, may I not go to the four states of punishment, but attain the happiness of men and Nats, and realize merit, reward, and perfect calm.”

The last term requires explanation. It is the Buddhistie state of extreme delight, called *nib'han*, or *nieban*. A Burman rarely takes the oath, for it is not only terrible but expensive, as the report of Captain Alves will show:(1)—

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Administration of the oath | ten ticals. |
| Messenger for holding the book | one tical. |
| Two other messengers' fees | two ticals. |
| Recorders | two ticals. |
| Pickled tea used in the ceremony | half a tical. |

The pickled tea, as it is called, is a rough, coarse tea, chewed at the conclusion of the ceremony, and without it no oath is binding.

(1) Report on Bassein.

There is another way in which causes are decided on very rare and special occasions,—the trial by ordeal. This is either by water or melted lead. In the first instance, the plaintiff and defendant are made to walk into the water, and whichever can hold out longest under its surface is declared the winner. The other mode consists in putting the finger in boiling water or melted lead, and trying who can keep it in the longest. The stocks are a great torture in this country, for they are made to slide up and down, so that the head and shoulders touch the floor. Of the prisons, sad and disagreeable accounts are given, but they are very insecure.

I may here remark, that it is an accepted truth, that the only use to be derived from the examination of the institutions of other countries, is that they may be compared by us with our own, and that they may serve as a standard whereby to measure the enlightenment to which we have attained. I hope, therefore, that I shall find some one willing to excuse me for having mentioned our “noble institution,” that “bulwark of our liberties,” the most High Court of Chancery, in the same page with the law courts of Burmah, where so much equity and moderation prevail. Because, of course, it is only the “rabble,” the “herd,” the “great unwashed,” that suffer, and these are of no account whatever in either nation, British or Burman, especially in the eyes of Secretaries at War.

Having now ended my account of the Burmese law courts, I shall pass on to a totally different subject,—the Burmese law.

The various codes of laws which are considered of authority are, according to Crawford,(1) the Shwe-men, or Golden Prince, the Wan-da-na, and the Damawilátha, to which may be added the Damasat or Damathat, a Burmese translation of the Institutes of Manu. In these law courts, however, all codes whatever are dead letters, for to none does any judge ever refer. Malcom observes :(2)—“As a great part of their income is derived from lawsuits, they [the rulers] generally encourage litigation.”

The flight of a debtor does not relieve his family of the liability; but no wife can be obliged to pay the debts he has contracted during a former marriage. When a loan

(1) Ava, vol. ii. p. 156.

(2) Travels, vol. i. p. 256.

is entered upon, each of the securities is responsible for the whole amount, and the lender can force the first person to pay that he can catch. The property of insolvents must be equally shared among the creditors without preference. The eldest son inherits the arms, wardrobe, bed, and jewellery of his father; the rest of his property is divided into four equal shares, of which the widow has three, and the family, exclusive of the eldest son, take the remaining fourth.

The different punishments for offences are these, increasing with the enormity of the crime:—Fines, the stocks, imprisonment, labour in chains, flogging, branding, maiming, pagoda slavery, and death. The last, which seldom occurs but for murder and treason, is inflicted by decapitation, drowning, or crucifixion. But killing slaves is not criminal, and is atoned by fines. A libel is punished by the infliction of the punishment corresponding to the crime unjustly charged upon the plaintiff by the libeller: however, if the truth of the charge be proven, it is not a libel. In our country, it is a well-known fact that the truth alone is a libel, a falsehood needing no refutation. Judgments, as in England, go by default of appearance, though that is no rule in Burman practice, whatever it may be in theory.

The husband has power to chastise his wife for misbehaviour, after repeated admonitions and remonstrances in the presence of witnesses. In the event of continued offences, he has the power to divorce her, without appeal. A woman whose husband has gone away with the army is at liberty to marry at the expiration of six years; if his object were business, she must wait seven years; and if he was sent on any religious mission, she must wait ten years. The slave-laws are very strict, yet favourable on the whole; but I should imagine that judge's opinion settled the matter.

Changing a landmark is heavily punished. Betting debts are recoverable from the loser, but not from any person in any way otherwise responsible. A person hurt in wrestling, or any other athletic exercise, cannot recover damages: but if he be mortally hurt, the other must pay the price of his body. An empty vehicle must give place before a full one; and when two loaded men meet, he that has the sun at his back must give way. The following value is set upon men, women, and children:—

| | | £. | s. | d. | |
|------------------------------|----------|----|----|----|---|
| A new-born male infant | 4 ticals | = | 0 | 10 | 0 |
| A female infant..... | 3 „ | = | 0 | 7 | 6 |
| A boy..... | 10 „ | = | 1 | 5 | 0 |
| A girl..... | 7 „ | = | 0 | 17 | 6 |
| A young man | 30 „ | = | 3 | 15 | 0 |
| A young woman | 35 „ | = | 4 | 2 | 6 |

Rich persons pay in proportion to their wealth and importance. Of course the high officers of the administration thus become very valuable men, in one respect at least.

The Burmese code, in its various aspects, seems most strangely inapposite for the land in which it is placed; or, it might be more correct to say, for the officers by whom it is dispensed. The police magistrate's position is in Europe a responsible and disagreeable one; but the case is far otherwise in Burmah, and indeed in all Oriental governments having native ministers. For, though there may be amongst them some few scrupulous men, yet, as a whole, we cannot look upon the magisterial office as otherwise than an engine of extortion, and as a means whereby to turn the weaknesses of the human disposition to the best advantage. It is, however, not very remarkable that a country should exist with good laws and bad administrations, as it is not impossible for a nation to continue under the rule of obsolete ordinances and quibbling sinecurists. Many of the grievances are, however, chargeable on the inactive and unenergetic disposition of the people. I am not, however, prepared, with all this, to go the length of Crawford, who thus speaks: (1)—

“The police is as bad as possible; and it is notorious that in all times of which we can speak with certainty, the country has been overrun with pirates and robbers. Responsibility is shifted from one person to another, and a general ignorance and want of intelligence pervades every department. (2) It is a matter well known, however contrary to theory, that in consequence of this state of things even a royal order will often fail of commanding respect or attention at the distance of five short miles from the seat of government.”

These are but broad, sweeping assertions, like those exactly contradictory remarks of Symes, quoted at the

(1) Ava, vol. ii. p. 157.

(2) This is remarkably applicable to a certain European nation.

close of the last chapter; and such broad assertions must ever be received *cum grano salis*. A middle path between these two must be taken. The condition of the country is probably no worse, and no better, than in the neighbouring empire of China, where the same iniquitous system of bribery prevails amongst the magistracy, and where the actual amount of crime is not great in proportion to the population and extent of the country. The envoy of a government is not likely in the quick progress of his passage through the country, to be able to examine into the condition of the people impartially, and, as they are prepared to make the best or the worst show they can to the foreign ambassador, so, too, will the foreign ambassador take the best or the worst view of their character.

That there is much crime is undeniable; but they are not monsters of iniquity, neither, on the other hand, are they angels of heaven. We must ever, in our judgment of uncivilised or semi-civilised races, be careful and lenient to a degree. They have not always the same advantages, and they are kept back by their rulers, ever ignorant and bigoted. Example, experience, and interest cause a nation to progress, not violence nor fanaticism. Witness the Turkish nation, formerly wild and brutish, now to be considered in every way as a civilised and generous nation. And this was brought about by the force of example and the energy of the ruler. We shall, in the history of Burmah, meet with a somewhat similar case in Alompra.(1)

Let us now turn to the revenues accruing to the government, and first of the earth-oil.

The petroleum wells, once already described, are of immense value to the government as a source of revenue. The annual produce of the wells is, according to Crawford,(2) twenty-two millions of viss, each of $3\frac{65}{100}$ pounds avoirdupois. The wells altogether occupy a space of about

(1) I should not have ventured to say as much as this, had I not found myself corroborated by Dr. Buchanan Hamilton. His remark is as follows:—"I should certainly have been silent, had I thought that Captain Symes or Mr. Wood's inquiries on these subjects had prepared them to give their opinions with advantage. But I imagine that this has not been the case; and I hope the information I here give may be of use to professional men."—MS. in the British Museum, Additional MS. No. 13,872. In the same collection of papers on Ava are a number of communications from Symes to the Marquis of Wellesley, in the course of his second embassy. It is but fair to add, that these letters appear written under more just impressions than his printed journal was.

(2) Ava, vol. ii. p. 206.

six square miles. Cox, who visited them early in 1797, says, that at the place where he stayed to examine the wells, there were about one hundred and eighty of them, and at the distance of four or five miles there were, he was told, three hundred and forty more.(1) I cannot do better than subjoin some few of Crawford's excellent remarks, in connection with his visit. He was put in possession of more correct data on which to found his calculation than his intelligent predecessor Captain Cox, and his observations are consequently of more authority.

"The country here," he says,(2) "is a series of sand-hills and ravines—the latter, torrents after a fall of rain, as we now experienced, and the former either covered with a very thin soil, or altogether bare. The trees, which were rather more numerous than we looked for, did not rise beyond twenty feet in height. The surface gave no indication that we could detect of the existence of the petroleum. On the spot which we reached, there were eight or ten wells, and we examined one of the best. The shaft was of a square form, and its dimensions about four feet to a side. It was formed by sinking a frame of wood, composed of beams of the *Mimosa catechu*, which affords a durable timber. Our conductor, the son of the Myosugi(3) of the village, informed us that the wells were commonly from one hundred and forty to one hundred and sixty cubits deep, and that their greatest depth in any case was two hundred. He informed us that the one we were examining was the private property of his father—that it was considered very productive, and that its exact depth was one hundred and forty cubits. We measured it with a good lead-line, and ascertained its depth to be two hundred and ten feet, thus corresponding exactly with the report of our conductor—a matter which we did not look for, considering the extraordinary carelessness of the Burmans in all matters of this description. A pot of this oil was taken up, and a good thermometer being immediately plunged into it, indicated a temperature of ninety degrees. That of the air, when we left the ship an hour before, was eighty-two degrees. To make the experiment perfectly accurate, we ought to have brought a second thermometer along with us; but this was neglected. We looked into one or two of the wells, and could discern the bottom.

(1) Residence in Ava, p. 134. (2) Embassy to Ava, vol. i. p. 93 sq.

(3) Governor or chief man,

The liquid seemed as if boiling; but whether from the emission of gaseous fluids, or simply from the escape of the oil itself from the ground, we had no means of determining. The formation where the wells are sunk consisted of sand, loose sandstone, and blue clay. When a well is dug to a considerable extent, the labourers informed us that brown earth was occasionally found.....The petroleum itself, when first taken out of the well, is of a thin watery consistence, but thickens by keeping, and in the cold weather it coagulates. Its colour at all times is a dirty green, not much unlike that of stagnant water. It has a pungent aromatic odour, offensive to most people.....The contents of the pot are deposited for a time in a cistern. Two persons are employed in raising the oil, making the whole number of persons engaged on each well only four. The oil is carried to the village or port in carts drawn by a pair of bullocks, each cart conveying from ten to fourteen pots, of ten viss each, or from 265 to 371 pounds avoirdupois of the commodity.....The price, according to the demand, varies from four ticals of flowered silver to six ticals per 1,000 viss; which is from fivepence to sevenpence halfpenny per cwt.....Sesamum oil will cost at the same place not less than three hundred ticals for an equal weight; but it lasts longer, gives a better light, and is more agreeable than the petroleum, which in burning emits an immense quantity of black smoke, which soils every object near it."

The oil is much used, notwithstanding this last inconvenience, by the Burmans in their lamps; and besides this there is another important service which it renders them,—that of preserving their timber from destruction by insects, who detest it. How great must be such a blessing in a land where the detestable white ant commits its dreadful ravages!

It is chiefly consumed in the country itself, where two-thirds of it is used for burning, thirty viss per annum being considered a moderate consumption for a family of about five or six persons. Mr. Crawford, during his short stay, collected some interesting statistical information on the subject of these mines, which I abridge from his work.(1)

The number of boats waiting for cargoes of oil was

(1) Ava, vol. i. p. 93 sq. See also Cox, Residence in Ava, pp. 37-45,

correctly taken, and found to amount to one hundred and eighty-three, of various sizes, some carrying only 1,000 viss, and others 1,400. The average burthen of the vessels employed in this trade is about 4,000 viss. They complete their cargoes in fifteen days; they are, therefore, renewed twenty-four times in the year; the exportation of oil, according to this estimate, will, therefore, be 17,568,000 viss. Deducting a third from this, used for other purposes than burning, and we have, at the annual consumption of thirty viss for a family of five and a half individuals, a population of 2,147,200.

The actual daily produce of the wells is rather uncertain. It was stated to vary from thirty to five hundred, the average giving about 235 viss; the number of wells was sometimes given as low as fifty, and sometimes as high as four hundred.(1) The average made about 200, and, considering the extent of ground covered by the wells, about sixteen square miles, Mr. Crawford does not think this an exaggeration. This estimate would reduce the amount of the population somewhat, causing it to consist only of 2,066,721 persons.

On Mr. Crawford's return in December, he again visited the wells. His investigations did not materially affect his previous calculations, which, on the whole, we can but consider as the most satisfactory that, under circumstances, have yet been attainable. I close this rather extended account of the petroleum wells, by an extract from Crawford's work, which I fancy is the best *finale* that can be imagined, viz., the duty levied on it by the Government:(2)—

“The celebrated petroleum wells afford, as I ascertained at Ava, a revenue to the king or his officers. The wells are private property, and belong hereditarily to about thirty-two individuals. A duty of five parts in a hundred is levied on the petroleum as it comes from the wells, and the amount realized upon it is said to be twenty-five thousand ticals per annum. No less than twenty thousand of this goes to contractors, collectors, or public officers; and the share of the state, or five thousand, was

(1) Cox, on the contrary, was informed that there were five hundred and twenty wells: this, however, is ably shown to be impossible by Crawford, not by snappish contradiction, but by calculation. The captain was, evidently, misinformed.

(2) Ava, vol. ii. p. 178.

assigned during our visits as a pension of one of the queens."

Truly, this does not look like rapacity on the part of the king! Who can tell what portion is legitimately the share of the officers of the Crown?

The revenue of the Burman empire is a duty of ten per cent. upon all merchandise coming from abroad; of the produce of some of the mines in the Burman dominions; export duties; a family tax, and an excise on salt, fisheries, fruit-trees, rice, and, as before seen, on petroleum. Besides this, there is a supply of money continually coming in by the presents which the officers receive for the attainment of various favours. The latter, though of course wavering, forms a by no means inconsiderable portion of the royal income. The taxes are principally taken in kind, with the exception of the tax on families, which is usually demanded in specie.

But even these form a very inconsiderable portion of the income of the Crown. Sangermano tells us very quaintly, "as he considers the property of his subjects as in reality belonging to himself, he therefore exacts from them anything he pleases; so that it may be said with truth, that the unfortunate Burmese labour in acquiring riches, not for themselves or their children, but merely to gratify the avarice of the emperor; as their possessions almost invariably find their way, sooner or later, into the royal treasury." (1) We shall in the course of a few pages see in what manner this took place.

It is, however, somewhat remarkable, as Crawford observes, (2) that "a direct tax on the land, according either to its extent or fertility, is not known to the Burmese." This, though forming a source of much emolument in other Oriental countries, appears to be wholly unknown here. Its place is supplied by the family tax, above mentioned. This family, or more correctly property-tax, is confined to the Burmese, Talains (Pegners), and a few naturalized foreigners. An extract from Alves's Report will show its operation. (3) "The arbitrary assessments for various purposes, which were levied upon the Burmese and Talains, amounted annually, I am informed, to about 50,000 *ticals*" (4)

(1) Sangermano, p. 171.

(2) Ava, vol. ii. p. 162.

(3) Alves, quoted in Ava, vol. ii. pp. 167-9.

(4) A tical is worth about two shillings and sixpence. This would be £6,250.

on ordinary occasions, for the two townships of Bassein and Pantano. Bassein, the chief town of the province, was exempt from regular assessment, being subject to calls for the support of messengers or other public authorities from the capital, and for their travelling expenses. Pantano, and another district of the province, were exempt, as being assignments for the maintenance of their respective Myo-thugyis. (1) I might probably have obtained information regarding the amount of these arbitrary cesses in the other townships; but the subject of inquiry was rather a delicate one, and might have led to the belief that its continuance was contemplated under British sway. Besides, the tax was an ever-fluctuating one; information regarding it not very readily given; and the purpose for which the money was often required, I was told, was too ludicrous to bear repetition to an Englishman. The amount for the other township may be inferred from the above, and was probably about 127,000 *ticals*. On extraordinary occasions there was no limit to exactions of both men and money. It does not appear that assessments could have been properly ordered for other than public purposes, or under instructions from court; although the amount might not always find its way into the treasury of the State, it ought to have been expended in the service of the State. The principle of this tax seems to be that of a property-tax. A town or village having to pay a certain sum, the heads of wards, or principal people of the village, were called together by the Myo-thu-gyi or Thu-gyi, and informed of their quota in men and money to be furnished, and they assessed the householders agreeably to their means, or supposed means,—some having to pay, say fifty *ticals*, others one, or even less. I have been informed that there are tolerably correct accounts of the means of each householder; but on such occasions poverty is often pleaded, and it too frequently happens that confinement and torture are resorted to before the collection is completed. The system is obviously open to the greatest abuses, and although it is not against these abuses that the people generally exclaim, it is evident this is the most vexatious of all parts of the Burmese administration; and its abolition or modification would have been most desirable, had the country been retained. All persons in public

(1) See Wilson's Documents of the Burmese War, Appendix, p. xlv.

employ were exempt from this tax—also artificers, as they had to work without pay, when required for public purposes, or for the business of the local officers.(1) Also the Mussulman and Chinese inhabitants at Bassein: the former, when required, being made to work as tailors; the latter, to manufacture gunpowder and fireworks. Both these classes, however, were compelled to make gunpowder, from the breaking out of the war until the arrival of the British armament at Bassein. There ought to have been no expense of collection, although it appears to have been perfectly understood, that the overplus exacted by the Thu-gyis on such occasions was their chief source of emolument.”

The amount charged upon each family is in English money about twenty shillings and tenpence; and a family consisting of six persons, the taxation per head is about three shillings and fivepence. Besides this, however, there is much to be paid, which varies very considerably, and is applied to extraordinary uses.

In some portions of Burmah a tax is levied upon fruit-trees, and a fixed price is set upon each species of tree. The tax, as usual, was exorbitant, though, as the envoy remarks, “it may be stated generally that the unsettled habits of the people, and the ignorance and unskilfulness of the tax-gatherer, contribute in practice to counter-balance, in some degree, the arbitrary and oppressive character of the government in theory.”(2) In Lower Pegu, a mango, a jack,(3) a cocoa-nut, and a mariam tree (a small kind of mango), paid each one-eighth of a tical (threepence three farthings) per annum. An areca and Palmyra palm paid a quarter of a tical, and a betel-vine one sixteenth. A tithe was levied in other places. Mr. Crawford was unable to ascertain what the total produce of the tax was. Indeed it is difficult to arrive at any determination in any of these cases, for they are all equally wanting in point of data.

The import duties, as already stated, are one-tenth of the value of the articles imported, but the custom-house has the option of levying them in money or in kind. An instance of the vexation attending the latter system was

(1) But, after all, this cannot be considered as other than the substitution of a light or heavy, as the case might be, personal service for a tax in kind or specie. The tax was taken in labour; that is all the difference.

(2) Crawford, vol. ii. p. 175.

(3) See Malcom, vol. i. p. 174.

related to Mr. Crawford. It seems that on board some European vessel there was a small cable or hawser which was imported. The inspector was, I suppose, "entirely bothered;" for he knew not how to manage the matter. At last he settled it by cutting off a tithe, remarking, at the same time, that if it were not long enough for any other purpose, it would do to light the king's cigar! The import duties on the land frontier of China amounted to 40,000 *ticals* (about £5,000).

The whole amount of royal revenue, from various sources, owing probably to the cheating system of the officers, is not more than £25,000 per annum, "an income," as Crawford concludes, "far exceeded by that of many native subjects of the British possessions in India." (1)

But the inhabitants of the land are subjected to many other grievances in the way of extortion, and, taking Sangermano for a guide, I shall enumerate some of these. The funds for building the public edifices and palaces, bridges, convents, and pagodas, are raised by extraordinary levies. Even if that were all, it might be sufferable; but when anything of this nature is required, the government officers extort three or four times as much as would suffice for the purpose. And just as the king acts in Ava, so do the governors of the other towns. The whole system of practical government in Ava is one gigantic mass of corruption and iniquity, and nothing but the total overthrow of the present government, and establishment of British supremacy, can rescue the unhappy people of Burmah. In Rangoon, however, as it is at the greatest distance from the government, these exactions are carried to the greatest excess. It is at that place that those enormities are committed, of which I have already mentioned a few instances. However, the dignitaries meet their reward; "for," says the good Father Sangermano, (2) "sooner or later the news of their conduct reaches the court, they are stripped of their dignity, and sometimes, if their crimes be great, are put to death, and their property is confiscated for the use of the emperor. Generally, however, they save themselves at the expense of their riches, which are entirely consumed in presents to the wives, sons, and chief ministers of the emperor; and then they are frequently sent back to the same governments where

(1) Ava, vol. ii. p. 156.

(2) Page 75.

they had practised their extortions, to heap up new treasures for new confiscations. Hence it may justly be inferred, that the rapacity of the emperor is not less than that of his mandarins; and that he does not care for the spoliation of his subjects, but rather encourages it, that he may thus always have means in his power to replenish his treasury."

In short we may conclude these "Sketches of Government" with the remark of the reviewer: (1) "The government is a despotism upon the model of that of China; the fiction of paternity in the person of the ruler being in both countries upheld. The emperor is the father of the state; each mandarin is the father of the province which he governs; and each magistrate, of whatever gradation, father of the subordinate department in which he presides." We have seen how fatherly is the whole behaviour of the Burman rulers, and we may well agree with the reviewer, in pronouncing the fiction invented for the benefit of the *despot*, and not for the benefit of the *people*.

There is no regular Burmese army. (2) When the king requires one, he fixes the number of soldiers necessary for the enterprise, and nominates the general who is to command them. The Lut-d'hau in the capital, and the Ion or Rondai of the provincial town, then send for a certain number more than absolutely mentioned by the king. These are brought together by a forced conscription, and the conduct of the officers who levy them not a little resembles that of the renowned and valiant Falstaff. Such persons as are unable to serve, or are rich enough to buy themselves off, do so, and the consequence is, that a rabble is assembled, without subordination or discipline, and consequently formidable only to the barbarian tribes on the frontiers, but totally unable to cope with the civilised forces of the Company. The money obtained from the Burmans who buy off is applied to the equipment of the army; "for the emperor," Sangermano observes, "does not furnish anything but the arms, which must be well taken care of; and woe to the soldier who loses them." (3) The whole male population between the ages of seventeen and sixty serve, and those with wives

(1) Edinburgh Review, No. xliv. p. 354, Jan. 1814.

(2) I am chiefly indebted to Sangermano, pp. 76-9; and Crawford, vol. ii. pp. 157-9.

(3) Page 77.

and families are ever preferred, as these last serve as hostages for their good behaviour. This forcible conscription partly induces unwillingness, and partly the natural cowardice of the peasantry. Crawford was informed by several Europeans, who were present at Rangoon when the troops were embarking for Junk Ceylon, and other parts of the Siamese coast, that they were often carried on board tied hands and feet, and this not in a few cases, but repeatedly, and in great numbers. What soldiers for our disciplined army to contend with, and what an insight into their military character this gives us, *if it be not an exaggeration!* And yet these cowards, forced into the service in this valiant way, caused the retreat of the British force at Ramoo in 1824! Perhaps their conduct is somewhat like that of our own sailors. There is, however, little doubt of their being an utterly despicable foe, though they will undergo the severest privations without a word. In time, however, and under judicious generalship, they might become very passable soldiers.

“As soon as the order for marching arrives,” says Sangermano, (1) “the soldiers, leaving their sowing and reaping, and whatever occupation they may be engaged in, assemble instantly in different corps, and prepare themselves; and throwing their weapon over their shoulders like a lever, they hang from one end of it a mat or blanket to cover them at night, a provision of powder, and a little vessel for cooking; and from the other end, a provision of rice, of salt, and of Napè, a species of half-putrid, half-dried fish, pickled with salt. In this guise they travel to their place of destination, without transport-waggons, without tents, in their ordinary dress, merely carrying on their heads a piece of red cloth, the only distinctive badge of a Burmese soldier. (2) About nine o’clock in the morning they begin to march, after having taken a short sleep, and cooked and eaten their rice, and Carè, a sort of stew eaten with the rice, of which that kind which is used by soldiers and travellers is generally made of herbs or leaves of trees, cooked in plain water, with a little Napè. He might then bivouac on the bare ground, without any protection from the night air, the dew, or even the rain; merely constructing a palisade of branches of

(1) Description, p. 77.

(2) Now, however, the soldiers have attempted to get into uniform, and wear belts and conical cases of tin, to resemble the English cap.

trees or thorns. Sometimes it happens that the expedition is deferred till the following year, and then the soldiers being arrived on the enemy's confines are made to work in the rice-grounds, thus to furnish a store of that commodity for their provision."

This is the picturesque description left us by the missionary, and it is of the more value as we know it to come from an eye-witness. But in the Burmese army, as in the ancient Persian, there is a corps of several thousand men, known by the name of the Invulnerables. Major Snodgrass has given us an interesting sketch of this body of military; and it being short, finds a fitting place here. (1)

"They are distinguished by the short cut of their hair, and the peculiar manner in which they are tattooed, having the figures of elephants, tigers, and a great variety of ferocious animals, indelibly and even beautifully marked upon their arms and legs; but to the soldiers they were best known by having bits of gold, silver, and sometimes precious stones in their arms, probably introduced under the skin at an early age.

"These men are considered by their countrymen as invulnerable; and from their foolish and absurd exposure of their persons to the fire of an enemy, they are either impressed with the same opinion, or find it necessary to show a marked contempt for danger, in support of their pretensions. In all the stockades and defences of the enemy, one or two of these heroes were generally found, whose duty it was to exhibit the war-dance of defiance upon the most exposed part of their defences, infusing courage and enthusiasm into the minds of their comrades, and affording much amusement to their enemies. The infatuated wretches, under the excitement of opium, too frequently continued the ludicrous exhibition, till they afforded convincing proof of the value of their claims to the title they assume."

The arms in use among the Burmese are clumsy two-handed sabres, named *dàs*, lances, bows, and matchlocks. A few cannon are managed by a corps of Christians in the service of the country. These Christians, in the time of Anaundoprà, amounted, with their wives and families, to about two thousand, being the descendants of the Portuguese transported from Syriam more than a century

(1) Snodgrass, Narrative of the Burmese War, pp. 64 and 65. We shall hereafter return to these excellent "soldiers and gentlemen."

before. Their gunpowder they manufacture themselves, and Crawford pronounces it to be as bad as any prepared in the Orient. (1) Snodgrass, (2) Crawford, Wilson, and others, are unanimous in pronouncing the chief military talents of the Burmese to lie in field-works; yet, though their position was well selected and quickly occupied, the execution of their stockades, with a few exceptions, seems to be very inferior.

After their conquest of Muniपुर they enrolled a small body of cavalry, which, however, has rarely proved effective, for the horses are of very inferior quality.

The troops are subject to a rigorous discipline. The power of capital punishment is not vested only in the general, but the officer of any corps that happens to be somewhat distant from the main body, has the same liberty of punishing with death, and this without appeal, any soldier that he judges worthy of it. "The sword," observes Sangermano, "is always hanging over the head of the soldier, and the slightest disposition to flight, or reluctance to advance, will infallibly bring it down upon him. But what above all," continues the Father, "tends to hold the Burmese soldiery to their duty, is the dreadful execution that is done on the wives and children of those who desert. The arms and legs of these miserable victims are bound together with no more feeling than if they were brute beasts, and in this state they are shut up in cabins made of bamboo, and filled with combustible material, which are then set on fire by means of a train of gunpowder." (3) The power of the king, however, is as great over his officers, as that of his officers over the common soldiers. "Woe to the commander," exclaims the quaint old missionary, "woe to the commander who suffers himself to be worsted! The least he can expect is the loss of all his honours and dignities; but if there has been the slightest negligence on his part, his possessions and life must also be sacrificed to the anger of the emperor."

The iron rule of the king has caused a vast falling off in his subjects, who have withdrawn to Siam and to the British possessions in Bengal and Arakhan. The maxim of the government has been the saying of its king:—"We must hold down the Burmese by oppression, so that they

(1) Ava, vol. ii. p. 160.

(2) Burmese War, p. 21.

(3) Description, p. 78.

may never dare to meditate rebellion." Another anecdote is related (1) of the same king, Men-ta-ra-gyee; and though it may be apocryphal, yet it shows the spirit of the age. Some one of his court represented to him that the incessant wars were materially reducing the number of his subjects; but the only reply vouchsafed by the inexorable monarch was, "It matters but little; for if all the men are killed, then we can enrol and arm the women."

The military character of the Burmese is well summed up by Snodgrass in the following terms: (2)—"When engaged in offensive warfare, which in their native quarrels has generally been the case, the Burmese is arrogant, bold, and daring; possessed of strength and activity superior to all his neighbours, and capable of enduring great fatigue, his movements are rapid, and his perseverance in overcoming obstacles almost irresistible: possessed, too, of superior science and ability in their peculiar system of fighting, he had seldom met his equal in the field, or even experienced serious resistance in the numerous conquests which of late years had been added to the empire, until the increasing arrogance and aggressions of his government brought him at last in contact with an enemy of a very different description from any he had yet contended with, and presented his military character in a different light, divested of the glare which victory and success had long shed around it." Arrogant and daring, indeed, when the Burman name alone was sufficient to cause the wild tribes of the frontier to lay down their arms, and humbly beg for peace on any terms.

Before closing this chapter, it were well to give some account of that celebrated appendage to Burman state, the white elephant. I shall here take occasion to introduce a description of them by an old traveller, the first Englishman indeed who ever visited Burmah. It is given in Hakluyt's collection of "Nauigations, Traffiques, and Discoueries." (3)

"And among the rest he hath foure white elephants, which are very strange and rare, for there is none other king that hath them but he; if any other king hath one, hee will send vnto him for it. When any of these white elephants is brought vnto the king, all the merchants in the city are commanded to see them, and to giue him a

(1) Sangermano, p. 79.

(2) Burmese War, p. 205.

(3) Ralph Fitch, in Hakluyt, vol. ii. p. 259. London, 1599.

present of halfe a ducat, which doth come to a great summe, for that there are many merchants in the city. After that you have given your present, you may come and see them at your pleasure, although they stand in the king's house. This king, in his title, is called, the king of the white elephants. (1) If any other king haue one, and will not send it him, he will make warre with him for it, for he had rather lose a great part of his kingdome than not to conquere him. They do very great seruice vnto these white elephants; euery one of them standeth in a house gilded with golde, and they doe feede in vessels of siluer and gilt. One of them, when he doth go to the riuer to be washed, as euery day they do, goeth under a canopy of clothe, of golde or of silke, carried ouer him by sixe or eight men, and eight or ten men goe before him, playing on drummes, shawmes, or other instruments: and when he is washed and commeth out of the riuer, there is a gentleman which doth wash his feet in a siluer basin, which is his office giuen him by the king. There is no such account made of any blacke elephant, be he neuer so great. And surely there be woonderfull faire and great, and some be nine cubites in height." (2)

Since the institution of the Burmese monarchy, its kings have ever been most desirous of having one of these white elephants in their possession, as they conceived it added additional strength to their arms, and good fortune to their administration. At the accession of Men-ta-ra-gyee there was no such animal in the royal stables, and he directed all his efforts to the satisfying of a natural desire to have one. His endeavours were crowned with success, for, in 1805, a female was caught at Lain, in the forests of Pegu. Sangermano gives the following account of its treatment and transportation to Amarapura. (3)

"Immediately upon its being captured, it was bound with cords covered with scarlet,(4) and the most considerable of the mandarins were deputed to attend it. A house, such as is occupied by the greatest ministers, was built for its reception; and numerous servants were ap-

(1) See p. 18.

(2) I have preferred to give the spelling of the black-letter folio, as it is not very corrupt, and lends additional quaintness to the writer's remarks.

(3) Page 61.

(4) This intimated that the elephant was the divine ruler of the other animals, and the scarlet borla of the Peruvian Inca was bound upon its temples.—Prescott, Conquest of Peru, vol. ii. p. 44.

pointed to watch over its cleanliness, to carry to it every day the freshest herbs, which had first been washed with water, and to provide it with everything else that could contribute to its comfort. As the place where it was taken was infested with mosquitoes, a beautiful net of silk was made to protect it from them ; (1) and to preserve it from all harm, mandarins and guards watched by it both day and night. No sooner was the news spread abroad that a white elephant had been taken, than immense multitudes of every age, sex, and condition flocked to behold it, not only from the neighbouring parts, but even from the most remote provinces.....At length the king gave orders for its transportation to Amarapura, and immediately two boats of teak wood were fastened together, and upon them was erected a superb pavilion, with a roof similar to that which covers the royal palaces. It was made perfectly impervious to the sun or rain, and draperies of silk embroidered in gold adorned it on every side. This splendid pavilion was towed up the river by three large and beautiful gilded vessels full of rowers.....The king and royal family frequently sent messengers, to bring tidings of its health, and make it rich presents in their name.....To honour its arrival in the city, a most splendid festival was ordered, which continued for three days, and was celebrated with music, dancing, and fireworks. The most costly presents continued daily to be brought to it by all the mandarins of the kingdom, and one is said to have offered a vase of gold weighing 480 ounces. But it is well known that these presents and the eagerness shown in bestowing them, were owing more to the avaricious policy of the king than to the veneration of his subjects

(1) Herodotus has recorded the fact of the fishermen of Egypt hanging their nets around them to keep off the mosquitoes.—Herod. ii. c. 95.

The following remarks, for which I am indebted to my friend the Rev. J. G. Wood, M.A., will, I am sure, interest the reader :—

“The same precautions are taken now. The fisherman plants a pole, usually his fishing-pole, upright in the ground, and disposes his net over it so as to form a kind of tent. Under this he sleeps securely, as no flies dare pass through the meshes of a net, even were they an inch wide. This may be proved by stretching a series of crossed threads across an open window. No flies will venture to pass through the spaces, as they evidently take the net for the toils of some overgrown spider. Should, however, a gauze curtain be drawn across the window, and a small hole made in it, plenty of flies will creep through. By thus stretching a net, it is possible, even in the heat of summer, to enjoy the full benefit of the fresh air, and yet to have the satisfaction of knowing that your winged foes are buzzing outside in useless anxiety. There must be no cross light, or the flies do not appear to see the net.”

towards the elephant, for all these golden utensils and ornaments found their way at last into the royal treasury."

A fit conclusion to so tremendous a piece of superstition and absurdity! Crawford, however, denies that the veneration paid to it was so great as reported; there is at any rate no question that the fortunate discoverer is well rewarded. The one now in the possession of the king of Ava was discovered by four villagers, who, in addition to rank, offices, title, and estates, each received the sum of two thousand five hundred ticals,—about £312 sterling.(1)

"At the death of the elephant," continues Sangermano,(2) "as at that of an emperor, it is publicly forbidden, under heavy penalties, to assert that he is dead; it must only be said that he is departed, or has disappeared. As the one of which we have spoken was a female, its funeral was conducted in the form practised on the demise of a principal queen. The body was accordingly placed upon a funeral pile of sassafras, sandal, and other aromatic woods, then covered over with similar materials; and the pyre was set on fire with the aid of four immense gilt bellows placed at its angles. After three days, the principal mandarins came to gather the ashes and remnants of the bones, which they enshrined in a gilt and well-closed urn, and buried in the royal cemetery. Over the tomb was subsequently raised a superb mausoleum of a pyramidal shape, built of brick, but richly painted and gilt. Had the elephant been a male, it would have been interred with the ceremonial used for the sovereign."

The loss of the elephant was, however, soon supplied; for another was caught in 1806 near a place called Nibban, in Pegu, and the day that Sangermano quitted Rangoon for Europe, the first of October, it was expected at that place. It was the same one that Crawford saw in October, 1826.

(1) Crawford, vol. i. p. 247.

(2) Description, p. 63.

CHAPTER III.

Cosmography—The Burman hells—Definition of a Nat by Hesiod—Buddha—Gandama—His probable history—Buddhism—Priests—Temples—Curious cave near Prome—Monasteries—Ceremonies—Funeral—Concluding remarks.

THE origin of the Burmese nation, like that of every other, is lost in the mists of antiquity. We know not whence we proceed, and the beginning and end of our being on this earth are alike wrapt in obscurity. But in addition to the unavoidable gloom that envelops the beginning of every nation, we have, amongst the Indian races, the additional uncertainty caused by a wild and incoherent cosmography, which, pervading the early portions of their national annals, renders it almost impossible to elicit any sort of narrative that would be satisfactory to the reader in an historical point of view. But, as everything connected with a nation and its belief, is interesting to the curious observer of mankind, it will be as well to listen to the wild and wondrous strain, the sounds of which still thrill and tremble upon the threshold of time. Here, then, is a short view of the Burmese cosmography, as a prelude to the ancient history of that country. We will listen to it from the mouth of Sangermano, one of the best and most modest of the exponents of Burmese antiquities.(1)

According to the Burmese sacred books, there are five species of atoms. The first is an invisible permeating fluid, distinguishable only by the superior order of geni called Nat. The second species is that which may be seen dancing in the gleam of a streak of sunlight. The third species consists of the dust raised by the motion of animals, and vehicles from the earth. The fourth

(1) Description of the Burmese Empire. Compiled from native documents, by the Rev. Father Sangermano. Translated from his MS. by W. Tandy. Published at Rome in 1833, in the invaluable series of the Oriental Translation Committee. I have abridged the lengthy details in the work of the father.

comprises the gross particles which form the soil on which men live. And the fifth consists of those little grains which fall when writing with an iron pen upon a palm-leaf.

These atoms are exactly proportioned to each other in the following way. Thirty-six atoms of the first make one of the second; thirty-six of the second make one of the third, and so on. Upon these proportions depends a strange system of measurement, which, carried on like the world-renowned calculation of the horse's shoes and nails, astonishes us by its simplicity, and amuses us by its uselessness. It is as follows: "Seven atoms of the fifth and last species are equal in size to the head of a louse; seven such heads equal a grain of rice; seven grains of rice make an inch; twelve inches a palm, and two palms a cubit; seven cubits give one *ta*; twenty *ta* one *ussabà*; eighty *ussabà* one *gaut*; and four *gaut* a *juzenà*. Finally, a *juzenà* contains about six Burmese leagues, or 28,000 cubits." (1) The measure of time into homœopathical infinitesimals is equally absurd.

The world, called *Logha*, which signifies alternate destruction and reproduction, is divided into three parts. It is not conceived by the Burmese to be spherical, but is imagined to be a circular plain somewhat elevated in the centre. The three parts into which the earth is divided are called the superior, where the *Nat* live; the middle, the residence of man; and the inferior, the place of subsequent retribution. The middle part is bounded on all sides by an impenetrable barrier of mountains, called *Zacchiavalà*, which rise 82,000 *juzenà* above the surface of the sea, and have an equal depth in the sea itself. (2) "The diameter of this middle part is 1,203,400 *juzenà*, and its circumference is three times the diameter. Its depth is 240,000 *juzenà*. The half of this depth entirely consists of dust, the other half, or the lower part, is a hard compact stone, called *sibapatavi*. This enormous volume of dust and stone is supported by a double volume of water, under which is placed a double volume of air; and beyond this there is nothing but vacuity." (3) Buchanan supplies some parti-

(1) Sangermano, Description, p. 2. See Buchanan, Asiatic Researches, vol. vi. p. 168. The latter tells us that these measures are not used in Burmah. Who can wonder at it?

(2) Strange this is; but at the same time it displays a species of physical and mechanical knowledge which we should hardly have expected in these legends.

(3) Sangermano, p. 3.

culars here, omitted by Sangermano:—"Besides this earth of ours, it is imagined, that there are of the same form 10,100,000 others, which mutually touch in three points, forming between them a number of equilateral spaces, which, on account of the sun's not reaching them, are filled with water intensely cold. The depth of these 10,100,000 triangular spaces is 84,000 *juzenà*, and each of their sides is 3,000 *juzenà* in length."(1)

In the centre of the middle system of the world, above the level of the sea, is a mountain called Miemmo or Mienmò, said to be the highest in the world, rising to the height of 84,000 *juzenà*, and having a similar depth in the sea. Buchanan-Hamilton tells us that the word signifies Mountain of Vision in Burmese.(2) The plateau at the extreme height of Mienmò is 48,000 *juzenà* in diameter, with a circumference of three times that extent. Three enormous rubies support the whole mass, being themselves based on the great stone Silapatavi. The four sides of the mountain are respectively of silver, glass, gold, and ruby. Miemmo is surrounded by seven chains of hills, and seven rivers, called Sida, whose waters are so clear and limpid that the lightest piece of down stripped from a feather would sink to the bottom. These various rivers are of different heights and widths. Buchanan considers the word 'sea' as much more applicable to these waters; Sida, in the Arakhan dialect, having that signification.

At the four cardinal points of Miemmo, in the midst of an immense sea, lie the four great islands which form the habitations of mankind. They are respectively in the forms of a half-moon, a full moon, a square, and a lozenge or trapezium. In the last of these, lying towards the south, opposite the ruby side of Miemmo, are situated the kingdom of Burmah, Siam, China, Ceylon, and the other places with which the Burmans are acquainted, together with many more with which nobody is acquainted.(3) Besides these four great islands, there are two thousand small ones, whence, according to the Burman idea, the Europeans come. The seas are filled with

(1) Buchanan, *Asiat. Res.* vol. vi. p. 175.

(2) *As. Res.* vol. vi. p. 175 n. He adds that it would seem to be identical with the Meru Paravada of the Brahmins.

(3) The eastern island is named Pioppavidaha; the western, Amara-goga; the northern, Unchegru; and the southern, Zabudiba. The tree of Godama (mentioned in a former chapter, p.23) is the *Ficus religiosa*, the Bôdhé-bayn.

horrible monsters and terrible whirlpools; however, this is not the case in the small straits between the little islands and Zabudiba. With the other islands, on account of the horrors of the deep, it is impossible to hold any communication. At present, however, the Burmans are beginning to lose faith in their geography; and Buchanan always heard Britain spoken of in Amrapura as *Pyee-gye*, or the Great Kingdom.(1)

We have next to consider the nature of the living beings which, according to the Burmese, live in this world.(2) They are divided into three classes: Chama, or generating beings; Rupa, or corporeal, but ungenerated and ungenerating beings; and Arupa, or spirits. These three classes are again subdivided into thirty-one species. The Chama contains eleven species, seven happy and four unhappy. One of the happy states is man, and the remaining six are of the Nats, corporeal beings in every respect superior to men. The four unhappy states are infernal states, into which the sinful are sent to expiate their crimes in torment for a season. These are called Apè. The Rupa contains sixteen *bon*, or states, as they are called, and the Arupa four.

The doctrine of metempsychosis, or transmigration of souls, is admitted by the Burmans, but is not precisely of the same character with that of the Hindoos, or the improved system promulgated by Pythagoras. They maintain that the soul and body perish together, and that then a new body and soul are formed from the fragments, and that its nature agrees with the deservings of the individual. Thus every one gradually attains higher excellence, becoming successively a Nat, a Rupa, an Arupa, &c., till at length the individual attains that high state of eternal calm known by the name of Nieban.

This state of existence has been generally translated annihilation, and, as Crawford observes,(3) this misconception has thrown "an unmerited share of obloquy on the worship of Budd'ha." Dr. Buchanan remarks, that the term is very inaccurately translated;(4) and Colebrooke was the first to give a correct definition of it, in an essay on the Philosophy of Indian Sectaries.(5) Sangermano's definition I subjoin:—"This consists in an almost

(1) *As. Res.* vol. vi. p. 178.

(2) Sangermano, p. 6.

(3) *Ava.* vol. ii. Appendix, No. xi. p. 140.(4) *As. Res.* vol. vi. p. 180.(5) *Trans. R. A. S.* vol. i. p. 566.

perpetual ecstasy, in which those who attain it are not only free from the troubles and miseries of life, from death, illness, and old age, but are abstracted from all sensation; they have no longer a thought or desire.”(1)

Human life is continually on the decrease or the increase. At first men attained to an age which can only be conceived by this calculation. “It is said, that if it should rain continually for the space of three years over the whole world, which is 1,203,430 juzenà in diameter, the number of drops of rain fallen in this time would express the number of years that compose an assenchiè,”(2) the term implying the whole period. But the wickedness of man caused his life to be more and more limited, and it reached at length to ten years only. From that time it increased, on their becoming more virtuous, and again they lived an assenchiè. This increase and decrease is to be fulfilled sixty-four times before the destruction of the world. This variation is however limited to the inhabitants of Zabudiba. Space will not permit me to give the description I would of the northern island, where the Burman Utopia is placed. The philosophical inquirer will find it in Sangermano and Buchanan.

The Nats, or genii, have their various seats in the intermediate space between Mienmò and the confines of the world, and live in different degrees of happiness and power. These abodes of the Nats are represented as very delightful, and it is thither that the devout Buddhist hopes to come. The four conditions of punishment are, degradation into beasts; Preitta, a state of sorrow resembling the Tartarus of the Hellenes; the Assurichè, almost identical with Preitta; and Niria, the actual hell of the Burmese.

The transformation into beasts is reserved for those who do not keep a sufficient restraint over themselves, and who speak in a heedless and evil manner. Those who neglect to give alms, too, pass into this condition. An elephant lives sixty years, a horse thirty, an ox and a dog, ten, and upon this they base their calculations.(3)

In the second state of punishment, Preitta, the condemned are obliged to live upon disgusting filth, and inhabit sewers, cisterns, and tombs. Some wander naked through gloomy forests, making them re-echo with their

(1) Description, p. 6.

(2) Page 7.

(3) Sangermano, p. 20.

lamentations, exposed to storms, and fainting with hunger and thirst. Some plough the ground with a plough of fire; others feed on their own flesh and blood, and tear themselves with hooks; and some are tormented by fire. Misers, uncharitable persons, persons who give alms to the wrong Rahaans or priests, are condemned to Preitta.

Assurichè is very like Preitta in its punishments, only every torment is here more acute and frightful. Quarrelsome persons, strikers with weapons, advancers and abettors of bad men, are sent thither.

In the fourth hell, Niria, the sufferings are by fire and cold. It is situated in the midst of the great stone Silapatavi, and is divided into many hells. Here the worst of mankind are punished, and here sit the judges, selected from the dead, upon their peculiar expiation. The time of confinement in all these places is undecided, and very few, if any, are sentenced to eternal punishment. By good behaviour in all these places the sufferers may attain to the position of insects, and gradually rise through all gradations, and finally attain Nieban.(1) The crimes and their punishments are very whimsical, and some very horrid. They are given at length in Sangermano. However, a spirit of mercy runs through all their dogmas, and, as already observed, every one may regain his lost position, though it is this southern island that is the most favoured; for here only can the believer attain Nieban. The infidels only are condemned to eternal torment.

I may conclude this account of the Burman cosmography with a few lines of the oldest writer on Hellenic philosophy, in which a very tolerable description of the nature of the Nat is given.

When in the dark and dread abodes of earth,
The men of earliest golden age were laid,
Their bones remained, but, soaring to the sky,
Their life-enduring souls fled far on high;
Still hov'ring there above the realms of earth,
Still loving much the land that gave them birth,
They kindly watch o'er the affairs of men.
Spirits beneficent, clad in the filmy air,
They take their rapid flight, and with a lib'ral hand,
Like kings, they scatter wealth and justice in their fatherland.(2)

It may easily be conceived, from what I have had occasion to mention, that the Burman chronology is as wild

(1) See Sangermano and Malcom, vol. i. pp. 239-294.

(2) Hesiod, *Op. et Dies*, lib. i. vv. 120-125. The above must rather be called a paraphrase than a strict version.

as any of the other Indian chronologies.(1) According to them, in every period (the age which intervenes between one time, when the life of man amounts to an assenchiè, and the next) there appears a royal being, who lives to an incalculable age, and assumes the title of Sumada. There have been eleven of these. The whole number of kings who have reigned since the last of these Sumadas to the age of Gaudama, is estimated at 334,569! The earliest date in Burmese to which we can give any credence, is the beginning of the epoch in which the period of Gaudama, or Gautama, falls, corresponding with B.C. 661. The date of the birth of Gaudama is said to be B.C. 626. He was the son of Thoke-daw-da-reh, king of Ma-ge-deh, the present province of Behar, in Hindustan. His mother's name was Mâhà-Mai, or the Great Maia, a coincidence which has led to his identification with the Hermes of the Hellenes, and the Thoth of the Egyptians. The new-born child was nursed and baptized by two incarnate deities called Esrur-Téngri and Hurmusta-Téngri, and received the name of Artashidi (Artasidd'hi); his divine origin and perfections were made known by the bowing of the idol, before which he was presented, according to the custom of his father's family.(2) He had lived in four hundred millions of worlds before his present appearance, and, like any other inhabitant of the world, had gradually worked his way up through the state of beasts, and had been in every condition of human life. He exclaimed, immediately upon his birth, "Now I am the noblest of men! This is the last time I shall ever be born!" When ten years of age he was placed under the care of a wise man, named Bahburemihbaeshi, who instructed him in every kind of knowledge: however, he soon seems to have outstripped his teacher, for we learn that shortly afterwards he retaliated and taught the wise man fifty or sixty languages. At twenty he married, but either from the shrewishness of his wife, or some other cause, he expressed a desire to turn anchorite, assumed the name of Gaudama, and gave himself up to the contemplation of the Deity. But for some reason or other he had great difficulty in following up his wishes, and it was not until

(1) I have partly availed myself of the able summary of Crawford, vol. ii. p. 274 sq.; as well as Malcom, vol. i. p. 287 sq.; and Saugermano, p. 80 sq.

(2) Encyclopædia Metropolitana, vol. iii. Miscellaneous, p. 55.

some strenuous attempts that he finally combated all the arguments of his antagonists. This is not the place to go into the numerous disputes concerning this person, and I shall content myself with presenting the reader with the remarks of a writer in the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana*. (1)

“The Indian fable, therefore, may be assumed as the basis of the rest; and the truth, concealed under this mass of fiction, seems to be simply this: that a son of the king of Mágad’ha, whose rank and austerities had secured the veneration of his countrymen, had sense enough to perceive the absurdity of the Bráhmancial system, and ability enough to persuade his countrymen to adopt his. The success of his new doctrine was such, that at one period it had nearly suppressed the ancient faith of the Hindùs; but when events, which we cannot now trace, had re-established the authority of the Bráhmans, they showed that they were not behindhand in retaliation; the followers of Budd’ha were persecuted without mercy, and scarcely an individual of that faith can now be found in Hindustan. Some of the fugitives appear to have taken refuge in Ceylon, while others fled into the mountains of Tibet. From Ceylon they conveyed their doctrine to the eastern peninsula of India. From Tibet it travelled over Tátary to the north and west, into China on the east, and from thence into Cochin-China and the other regions on the south, where it is only divided by a lofty chain of mountains from its kindred faith, imported from the south and west into the kingdoms of Ava and Siam.”

He obtained Nieban, or died, B.C. 543.(2) At his death he advised that his relics and image should be worshipped and his law obeyed, until the appearance of the next Boodh or Budd’ha. This event is to take place in five or six thousand years. The ordinances of Gaudama are still in existence, although all the sayings of his three predecessors are lost. Gaudama’s laws were handed down by tradition until four hundred and fifty years after his obtaining Nieban, when they were written down in A.D. 94. The work, which is divided into three sections, having similar subdivisions, is called the *Bedagat*, and is written in Pali. The book in an entire state is rare,

(1) Vol. iii. p. 56.

(2) Prinsep’s *Tibet, Tartary, and Mongolia*, p. 136 and 162 n.

though parts are not very scarce. The cosmography, of which I have given a specimen, is contained in them.

The following hymns, translated by Csoma de Korös, will give a good idea of the Buddhistic ritual. (1)

Priest. "There has arisen the Illuminator of the world! the world's Protector! the Maker of light! who gives eyes to the world, that is blind,—to cast away the burden of sin."

Congregation. "Thou hast been victorious in the fight: thy aim is accomplished by thy moral excellence: thy virtues are perfect: Thou shalt satisfy men with good things."

P. "Gotama (Sakhya) is without sin: He is out of the miry pit. He stands on dry ground."

C. "Yes, He is out of the mire; and he will save other animate beings, that are carried off by the mighty stream."

P. "The living world has long suffered the disease of corruption. The Prince of physicians is come to cure men from all diseases."

C. "Protector of the world! by thy appearance all the mansions of distress shall be made empty. Henceforth, angels and men shall enjoy happiness," &c. &c.

P. "To Thee, whose virtue is immaculate, whose understanding is pure and brilliant, who hast the thirty-two characteristic signs complete, and who hast memory of all things, with discernments and foreknowledge."

C. "Reverence be to Thee: we adore Thee; bending our heads to our feet."

P. "To Thee, who art clean and pure from all taint of sin; who art immaculate, and celebrated in the three worlds; who being possessed of the three kinds of science, givest to animated beings the eye to discern the three degrees of emancipation from sin."

C. "Reverence be to Thee!"

P. "To Thee, who with tranquil mind clearest the troubles of evil times: who, with loving kindness, teachest all living things to walk in the path designed for them."

C. "Reverence be to Thee!"

P. "Muni! (Sage!) whose heart is at rest, and who delightest to explain the doubts and perplexities of men: who hast suffered much for the good of living beings: Thy intention is pure! Thy practices are perfect!"

(1) My immediate authority is Prinsep, in Tibet, &c. pp. 142-144.

C. "Reverence be to Thee!"

P. "Teacher of the four truths; rejoice in salvation! who, being thyself free from sin, desirest to free the world from sin."

C. "Reverence be to Thee!"

Such is the strain in which the believers in Gaudama address their Saviour; and its similarity to the Roman Catholic services, noticed by so many writers, is extreme. Prinsep well assigns the origin of the legend of Prester John to the accounts which the early missionaries heard of the Dalai Lama of Tibet.(1)

The reformation which led to the establishment of Buddhism in the place of the ancient Hindū creed, was important in many respects, but in none so much as in the grand principle which it instilled into the minds of its votaries; the unity and indivisibility of the object of adoration, substituted for the gross polytheism of Hindūstan. But it has this fault, if it be a fault, that no clear conception of the object of adoration is presented in the place of the numerous divinities the creed displaces. Gaudama, like Confucius in China, is to be venerated, and not adored. The perfect Buddha whence Gaudama and his predecessors proceeded can alone be confided in. Even this, however, admits of some palliation. The vulgar, perhaps, could not understand, and certainly not appreciate, the mystery which the ministers of religion cherish and preserve. Consequently a scale has been instituted, like that in Tibet, for the capacity of the several classes of believers.

The general principles of the practical creed have been thus summed up by Csoma de Korös:(2)—

1. To take refuge only with Buddha. 2. To be steadfast in the determination of aiming at the highest pitch of excellence, in order thus to arrive at the proper state of Nicban. 3. To be obedient and reverent toward Buddha. 4. To make pleasing offerings. 5. To glorify and exalt Buddha by music and singing, and constant praise. 6. To confess sin truly and humbly, with a fixed resolution to repent. 7. To wish well toward all. 8. To encourage the ministers of the faith in their mission.

Teong-kha-pa, an eminent Buddhist reformer of the

(1) Tibet, Tartary, and Mongolia, p. 145.

(2) Prinsep, p. 167.

fourteenth century, defined the duty of the different classes of Buddhists in the following manner.(1)

“Men of the lowest order of mind must believe that there is a God; and that there is a future life, in which they will receive the reward or punishment of their actions and conduct in this life.

“Men of the middle degree of mental capacity must add to the above, the knowledge that all things in this world are perishable; that imperfection is a pain and degradation; and that deliverance from existence is a deliverance from pain, and, consequently, a final beatitude.

“Men of the third, or highest order, must believe in further addition: that nothing exists, or will continue always, or cease absolutely, except through dependence on a causal connection, or concatenation. So will they arrive at the true knowledge of God.”

“What is this,” exclaims Prinsep, enthusiastically, “but Christianity, wanting only the name of Christ as its preacher, and the Mosaic faith for its antecedent? It is these that the missionary must seek to add.”

The foundation of Buddhism is certainly rotten, and yet we cannot deny that in its recognised principles, the religion is far from being so debasing as many others. Prejudice, that great foe to toleration and peace, has prevented the perception of this fact. Of course, the lamentable truth of the generally lax administration of every faith, is no less false with regard to Buddhism; and by the carelessness of its ministers, and indifference of the laymen, it is in as bad odour as any other faith. Thus much for Buddhism in general; now I shall proceed to give a short account of Burman Buddhism.

Gaudama(2) declares himself God and Lord for 5,000 years, during which time his ordinances must be kept. Gaudama declares himself the only true God, and states that there were many false gods of all descriptions. The doctrines of the false gods are called the laws of the six Deitti. Upon the appearance of Gaudama some renounced their errors, and others were conquered. The laws and ordinances of the Burmans are precisely similar to those which I mentioned in another place,(3) and therefore need

(1) I quote Prinsep's summary, p. 168. (2) Sangermano, pp. 80 et sqq.

(3) See my remarks on Buddhism in Peking; Great Cities of the Ancient World, p. 177. It may be interesting to compare the oath of the witness at p. 24, with the Buddhist treatise, translated from the Chinese by myself, in the same work, pp. 181-184.

not be repeated here. The observer of these commandments will finally become a great Nat or spirit. Besides the observation of these laws, there is merit in the deeds called Danà, and Bavanà. The first is charity to the priests, the second, the meditation of the three words Aneizz'a, Doechè, Anattà. The transgressors of the laws will be condemned to Niria, or one of the other places of punishment. In the course of 2,000 years the ordinances of Gaudama, 3,000 years having already elapsed, will no longer be binding, but another god will appear to give laws to the world.

The images of Buddha or Gaudama are generally represented with a pleasant countenance; and, on the whole, his religion cannot be considered a severe one. "It unites," as Dr. Buchanan Hamilton has remarked, (1) "the temporal promises of the Jewish, with the future rewards of the Christian dispensation; all its states of beatitude are represented in the glowing and attractive colouring of the Mohammedan paradise; and its various gradations of future punishment have the plausibility of purgatory; but its priests are not like those of the Roman Church, intrusted with the dangerous power of curtailing their duration." (2)

At Pegu, the deserted capital of the kingdom of that name, there is a celebrated temple, which Symes has well described in the Asiatic Researches, in an elaborate article on the city of Pegu, and it will not be inappropriate to transfer the account to my own pages: (3)—

"The object in Pegu that most attracts and most merits notice is the temple of Shoc-ma-doo, or the *Golden Supreme*. This extraordinary edifice is built on a double terrace, one raised above another; the lower and greater terrace is above ten feet above the natural level of the ground; it is quadrangular. The upper and lesser terrace is of a like shape, raised about twenty feet above the lower terrace, or thirty above the level of the country. I judged a side of the lower terrace to be 1,391 feet, of the upper, 684; the walls that sustained the sides of the terraces, both upper and lower, are in a state of ruin; they were formerly covered with plaster, wrought into various figures; the area of the lower is strewed with the fragments of small decayed buildings, but the upper is kept

(1) As. Res. vol. vi. p. 255.

(2) Encyclopædia Metropolitana, art. Buddhism, p. 60.

(3) As. Res. vol. v. p. 115 sq.

free from filth, and in tolerably good order. These terraces are ascended by flights of stone steps, broken and neglected; on each side are dwellings of the Rahaans or priests, raised on timbers four or five feet from the ground; their houses consist only of a single hall—the wooden pillars that support them are turned with neatness, the roof is of tile, and the sides of sheathing-boards: there are a number of bare benches in every house, on which the Rahaans sleep—we saw no other furniture.

“ Shoemadoo is a pyramid, composed of brick, and plastered with fine shell-mortar, without excavation or aperture of any sort, octagonal at the base and spiral at top—each side of the base measures 162 feet; this immense breadth diminishes abruptly, and a similar building has not inaptly been compared to a large speaking-trumpet.

“ Six feet from the ground there is a wide ledge, which surrounds the base of the building, on the plane of which are fifty-seven small spires of equal size and equidistant; one of them measured twenty-seven feet in height, and forty in circumference at the bottom; on a higher ledge there is another row, consisting of fifty-three spires, of similar shape and measurement. A great variety of mouldings encircle the building, and ornaments, somewhat resembling the fleur-de-lys, surround what may be called the base of the spire; circular mouldings likewise gird this part to a considerable height, above which there are ornaments in stucco, not unlike the leaves of a Corinthian capital, and the whole is crowned by a *tee*, or umbrella of open iron-work, from which rises an iron rod with a gilded pennant. The *tee*, or umbrella, is to be seen on every sacred building in repair, that is of a spiral form. The raising and consecration of this last and indispensable appendage is an act of high religious solemnity, and a season of festivity and relaxation. The circumference of the *tee* is fifty-six feet; it rests on an iron axis fixed in the building, and is further secured by large chains strongly riveted to the spire. Round the lower rim of the umbrella are appended a number of bells, of different sizes, which, agitated by the wind, make a continual jingling. The *tee* is gilt, and it is said to be the intention of the king to gild the whole of the spire; all the lesser pagodas are ornamented with proportionable umbrellas, of similar workmanship, which are likewise encircled by small bells. The extreme height of the

building from the level of the country is 361 feet, and above the interior terrace 331 feet."

I have been thus particular in quoting this curious account, as I wish to impress upon my readers the necessity of comparing this place of worship with those described by myself in another place. (1)

Crawford, the intelligent ambassador, who unfortunately looked with too sinister an eye upon the institutions of the Burmese, has given us an interesting description of the appurtenances of a temple, together with a few remarks upon their endowment, of which I present the reader with a condensed abstract, epitomizing but little:—

"Close to our dwelling," says the judicious observer, (2) "there was the neatest temple which I had yet seen in the country. It was quite unique, being entirely built of hewn sandstone. The workmanship was neat, but the polished stone was most absurdly disfigured by being daubed over with whitewash. The temple itself is a solid structure, at the base of a square form, each face measuring about eighty-eight feet. It is surrounded by a court, paved with large sandstone flags, and inclosed by a brick wall. At each corner of the area there is a large and handsome bell with an inscription. To the eastern face of the temple there are two open wooden sheds, each supported by thirty-eight pillars. These were among the richest things of the kind that I had seen in the country. The pillars, the carved work, the ceiling, the eaves, and a great part of the outer roof, were one blaze of gilding. In one of them only there was a good marble image of Gautama. Buildings of this description are called by the Burmans, *Za-yat*, or, in more correct orthography, (3) *Ja-rat*. On the west side of the temple there is a long, rudely-constructed wooden shed, where are deposited the offerings made by the king and his family to the temple. These consist of two objects only, state palanquins and figures of elephants. The palanquins now alluded to are litters of immense size and weight, with two poles, and each requiring forty men to bear

(1) See my essay on the "Ruins of American Civilisation," pp. 252-259, in *Great Cities of the Ancient World*, by my friend the Rev. T. A. Buckley, B.A.; also Prescott's *Mexico*, vol. i. p. 60; and *Peru*, vol. i. pp. 91-94.

(2) *Ava*, vol. i. p. 392 sq.

(3) Will no one observe that "correct orthography" is tautology, and "false orthography" a contradiction? How can our language be pure under such circumstances?

them. They are all richly gilt and carved, with a high wooden canopy over them. In each of those in the temple there was placed one or more large figures of Gautama or his disciples. The figures of elephants are about a foot and a half high, standing upon wooden pedestals. Why the gifts to this temple in particular consist of elephants, I was not able to learn. On the river face of this temple there are two large houses of brick and mortar, of one story, with flat stone roofs, called Taik, by the Burmans, and purporting to be in imitation of European dwellings. These are also considered Za-yats, or caravanseras. They are comfortless places as can be, the interior being so occupied with stone pillars that there is hardly room to move about. The guardian Nat of the temple now described, is Tha-kya-men, or, more correctly, Sa-kya-men, or the lord Sakya. He is, according to the Burmans, the second in power of the two kings of the Nats. Of this personage there is, in a small temple, a standing figure, in white marble, not however of a very good description, measuring not less than nine feet eleven inches high. The statue seems to be of one entire block."

This temple is named Aong-mrø-lo-ka, a title signifying the "place of victory."—It was built by King Men-ta-ragyi, in the year 1144 of the Burman era, or A.D. 1782, in the second year of his reign. He was the fourth son of the energetic Alompra, the founder of the dynasty which still occupies the throne. Alompra was succeeded by his first and second brother, and by his nephew, Senku-sa, son of the latter. His uncle, however, conspired against him, raised the son of the elder brother, Maong-maong, to the regal dignity, who had been excluded from the throne, partly by reason of the law of succession, and partly by the ambition of his uncle. In a few days, however, he, after drowning Senku-sa, and probably disposing in a like manner of Maong-maong, assumed the government, and, in thanks to heaven for the success of his ambitious schemes, he built this temple on the spot whence he had commenced his successful agitation. (1)

I shall have occasion hereafter to return to the subject of the Burmese temples, in connection with the Golden Dagon temple at Rangoon; I shall, therefore, say no more

(1) I am indebted to Crawford, vol. i. p. 397.

of them in this place. Two curious monuments, however, deserve mentioning, as they have evidently some connection with the ancient religion of Burmah. I shall again use the words of an eye-witness : (1)—

“On the summit of a steep tongue of land I found a large circular opening, about fifty feet deep, caused by the earth having given way; there being no apparent reason for this, unless an excavation existed, I immediately descended into the valley, in hopes of finding an opening at the side of the hill. After a short search, I discovered three small brick arches, about four feet high, leading into the hill; having crept into one of these, I perceived, by a ray of light issuing from the aperture above, that there were several more passages branching off from the spot where I remained; and I therefore determined on returning at some future period with a lantern, to examine the cavern. On subsequently renewing my search, I found that after creeping along the passage from the arch for about five yards, the communication entered a small chamber, sufficiently high to enable me to stand erect, whence four other passages led off in different directions; and it was from one of these having given way that the chasm had been formed in the hill. As the quantity of earth requisite to fill up the passage could not have caused such a large hollow above, it may be concluded that a room of considerable dimensions must have existed there. Notwithstanding the annoyance I experienced from many bats, which were constantly flying about my face and lantern, and from the heat, which was very oppressive, I proceeded on my hands and knees down the other passages; but, after going a very short distance, was obliged to return, the earth having fallen and filled up the gallery so very much, that it did not seem prudent to proceed further, particularly as, from the closeness of the air, I might have been rather unpleasantly situated.”

This same officer saw another such structure on the plain of Pagahm, among the ruins; but finding that it was used as a robber's cavern, he did not explore it. From what he could see, it was larger, and in better repair.

The priests of Burmah (2) are named Pongyees, meaning “great example,” or “great glory.” The Pali name,

(1) Two Years in Ava, pp. 262 sqq. This most interesting work seems freer from prejudice than many of its more assuming brethren.

(2) I am chiefly indebted to Malcom, vol. i. p. 308 sq.

“Rahan,” or “holy man,” once so much in use among them, is now almost obsolete. The office is not hereditary, for the Burmans are unshackled by castes; and, indeed, a priest may become a layman again, though after re-entering society he may not again assume the sacerdotal position. Thus the convents of Burmah serve as a place where an education superior to that usually obtained in the schools may be received, and the young man, not being bound by any vow, may return to the active scenes of life, and take military or political rank. If the youth find the peaceful pursuits of the convent more to his taste, he can remain, and become a priest. The system of the priesthood is not badly managed. The Burmans have no church-rates, and pluralism, not being worth anything, is, of course, unknown. The priests have no political influence, and are only consulted on ecclesiastical and literary matters; they live on the charity of their parishioners, and, on the whole, they do not appear to be badly off.

The ritual, for which I must refer the reader to my frequently quoted authority Sangermano,(1) is very strict in regard to priests; that, however, is of no consequence, for in the foul and corrupted Burmese empire all these institutions have fallen into disrepute. The priests live as those of the convents of the middle ages did; and the similarity between the Roman Catholic and Buddhist ceremonies, so amply proved by MM. Huc and Gabet,(2) extends equally to the men.

Their dress is of a yellow colour, and is formed by two cloths, which are so wrapped around them as to completely envelop them from the shoulders to the heels. Their heads are shaved, and to shade the bare poll from the burning sun, they carry a talipot or palmyra-leaf in their hands. In M. Dubois de Jancigny's Indo-Chine, and in Malcom, there are plates of the dress, which convey a very tolerable idea of the look of a priest out walking.

The priesthood of Burmah is divided into regular grades, like those of Europe. I shall quote the summary of Malcom in preference to any other.(3) “The highest functionary is the *Tha-thena-byng'*, or archbishop. He resides at Ava, has jurisdiction over all the priests, and appoints the president of every monastery. He stands high at court, and is considered one of the great men of

(1) Pages 89-94; but see also Malcom, *l. c.*

(2) Travels in Tartary.

(3) Malcom, vol. i. p. 315 sq.

the kingdom. Next to him are the *Ponghees*, strictly so called, one of whom presides in each monastery. Next are the *Oo-pe-zíns*, comprising those who have passed the noviciate, sustained a regular examination, and chosen the priesthood for life. Of this class are the teachers or professors in [the monasteries. One of them is generally vice-president, and is most likely to succeed to the headship on the demise of the *Pongyce*. Both these orders are sometimes called *Rahans*, or *Yahans*. They are considered to understand religion so well as to think for themselves, and expound the law out of their own hearts, without being obliged to follow what they have read in books. Next are the *Ko-yen-ga-láy*, who have retired from the world, and wear the yellow cloth, but are not all seeking to pass the examination, and become *Oo-pe-zíns*. They have entered for an education, or a livelihood, or to gain a divorce, or for various objects; and many of such return annually to secular life. Many of this class remain for life without rising a grade. Those who remain five years honourably are called *Tay*, *i.e.* simply, *priests*; and those who remain twenty, are *Maha Tay*, *great or aged priests*. They might have become *Ponghees* at any stage of this period if their talents and acquirements had amounted to the required standard. By courtesy, all who wear the yellow cloth are called *Ponghees*."

In some parts of Burmah there are also nunneries, though the *Bedagat* neither authorizes nor requires them; indeed, manifestoes have been issued by several of the kings of Ava to prevent women under a certain age from entering these institutions.(1) On the subject of the *khyoums*, however, I cannot do better than refer to the works of *MM. Hue and Gabet*, *Mr. Prinsep*, and others.

The most interesting and most characteristic ceremony of these Burmese is the funeral of a priest, as it contains a mixture of solemnity and absurdity rarely to be met with anywhere. I shall proceed, therefore, to describe it. When a Burman priest dies, his body is embalmed. The process of embalming is conducted in the following manner. The body is opened, the intestines taken out, and the spaces filled with various descriptions of spices, the orifice being closed up again, and sewed together. After this the whole body is covered by a layer of wax, to

(1) Encyclopædia Metropolitana, s.v. Buddhism, p. 61.

prevent the air from injuring it; over the wax is placed a layer of lac, together with some bituminous compound, and the whole is covered with leaf gold. The ceremony somewhat reminds one of the description given by Herodotus of ancient Egyptian embalming.(1) The arms are laid across the breast of the body. The preparation of the body takes place at the house.(2)

About a year afterward the body is removed to a house built expressly for such purposes, where it is kept until the other priests order it to be burnt. In this house the body is disposed upon a raised stage of bamboo and wood, and the house itself is ornamented with paper and leaf gold. By the stage, the coffin, overlaid with gold and painted with figures of death in various ways, was placed. In the courtyard of the house two four-wheel carriages await the time fixed for the burning, one being intended for the coffin, the other for the stage, with its apparatus. The carriage on which the corpse is placed has another stage built upon it, similar to the one in the house, with the difference of its being larger, and fixed upon an elephant in a kneeling posture.

The people of the place have to prepare rockets and other fireworks, as well as images of animals to which the rockets are fixed. The images are then drawn through the streets and round the town; all the citizens, when the ceremonies are strictly observed, being compelled to assist. The procession opens with some flags; then a number of dancing girls and boys follow; after this the carriages with the figures, drawn by boys and bullocks; and on the occasion which Mr. Carey describes, there followed, by the express command of the governor, a quantity of young women "dancing and singing, with an older woman between each row to keep them in order." Then came the principal persons of the place under umbrellas, a sign of rank, as in ancient Nineveh, and all modern Asiatic countries. Lastly, the procession was closed by men, dancing and singing in like manner.

The images on the carriages are usually very large, much larger than life, and represented buffaloes, elephants, horses, and men. Each street attends its own carriage in the procession.

(1) Lib. ii. cc. 86-90.

(2) I am indebted to an account by Mr. Carey in *Asiatic Researches*, vol. xvi. p. 186 sq.

The following day the townspeople are divided into two parties, and strange indeed must be the sight of the multitude. The carriage containing the corpse has four large cables attached to it, and the two parties of the townspeople pull against one another, and strive to draw away the carriage and its contents. This contest is continued till superior strength puts an end to it, or till the cable breaks, and the losing party tumble head over heels.

The third day is spent in discharging the rockets. The figures were fixed on carriages, and the rocks were fastened to strong ropes by rattan loops, in such a manner that being passed between the legs of the animals, "so that when discharged, they, sliding on the ropes, ran along the ground." In the evening there is another grand display of fireworks.

The next day the corpse is burnt in a temporary house by small rockets, which, sliding down on to the coffins along ropes in rings of rattan, set the coffin on fire. Sometimes, as we are informed by Crawford, (1) the body is blown from a cannon to convey it more quickly to heaven!

What can be said of such puerility and solemnity joined together? How melancholy is the aspect of such things, and what can we think of the moral or religious condition of a nation who made such seeming fun (for under what other term can a large portion of the ceremony be comprehended?) of the solemnest moment of existence, and that, too, in the burial of a minister of that God to whom, in humility and reverence, they lifted up their hearts in prayer. Very often, however, the most solemn and the most trivial are mingled in very remarkable proportions. We have one example of that, at least, in religion, nearer home.

The Buddhist religion is remarkable in many points, but decidedly the most curious circumstance connected with it, is the vast numbers of believers which own its influence. That the religion is ancient, perhaps more ancient than any other form of eastern worship, except Brahmanism, can scarcely be doubted; but that it extended so far over the earth as some would have us believe, is scarcely credible. Reuben Burrow, a long time ago, called Stonehenge a Buddhist temple; and since then the

(1) Ava, vol. ii. p. 127.

notion has been revived by Higgins in his *Celtic Druids*, as well as in another work. (1)

Mr. Pococke, too, the author of *India in Greece*, would persuade us that the early Greeks were Buddhists, and that Pythagoras, correctly written (according to him) Buddha-gooroo (Buddha's spiritual teacher), was a Buddhist missionary!

However, let the religion be ancient or modern, in principle it is one of the best that man ever made for man. Mr. Malcom, from whom as a missionary one would of course expect rabid intolerance, bears testimony to this:—"There is scarcely a principle, or precept, in the *Bedagat*, which is not found in the Bible. Did the people but act up to its principles of peace and love, oppression and injury would be known no more within their borders. Its deeds of merit are in all cases either really beneficial to mankind, or harmless. It has no mythology of obscene and ferocious deities; no sanguinary or impure observances; no self-inflicted tortures; no tyrannizing priesthood; no confounding of right and wrong, by making certain iniquities laudable in worship. In its moral code, its descriptions of the purity and peace of the first ages, of the shortening of man's life because of its sins, &c., it seems to have followed genuine traditions. In almost every respect it seems to be the best religion which man has ever invented." (2)

It is true there is another side to the picture; but why should we turn the face to the wall, and expose the tattered back? Let us leave it as it is, but let us recollect that the ill side is there, and make the recollection atone for many faults in the character of the worshippers of Buddha.

(1) *The Anacalypsis*, vol. i. p. 93. I may here take occasion to remark, that the author of *India in Greece*, Mr. Pococke, to whose enthusiastic labours I would do all the justice in my power, has not, in any part of that work, acknowledged the manifold obligations under which he lies to the author of the *Anacalypsis*. I make this remark more in self-defence than otherwise, for, upon my attention having been lately turned to Godfrey Higgins's work, I there found my own theory of the population of America anticipated, though not worked out in the manner it might be done. I must own this, as I am anxious to avoid the imputation of plagiarism. However, I find myself amply corroborated in some of my own researches; but the writer's whole feelings merge into a love of every kind of mystical foolery that man has ever imagined.

(2) *Malcom*, vol. i. p. 321 sq.

CHAPTER IV.

Language—Literature—Manuscripts—The Aporazabon—Superstitions—
Divination—The Deitton—Astronomy—Division of time.

OF a literature and language so little known as that of Burmah, a notice, of course, can but be brief. The few particulars with which we are acquainted, I will, however, offer to the reader.

The sacred books are in a language usually called Pali, which denomination, Mr. Wilson contends, should only be applied to the character. He proposes that the name of the language should be Magadeh or Puncrit, corresponding to the terms Magari and Sanscrit. He informs us, also, that the language differs from Sanscrit in enunciation only, being softer, and liquifying all the harsh sounds. (1) With this language we have but little to do, as it is only the language of the priests, and not that of the whole population. A grammar of the Pali has been published at Colombo, with a vocabulary attached. (2)

The Burman language is very different from the other Oriental languages. The character is very simple, and easily written. The vowels are eleven, and the consonants thirty-three, but the combinations are excessively numerous. All pure Burman words are monosyllabic, so pointing to a similar fountain-head as the Chinese; in process of time, however, polysyllables, derived from the Pali, have crept in, and given a somewhat different complexion to the language. Like some other languages, the number, person, mood, and tense, are formed by suffixes, a system of grammar much simpler than the difficult inflected languages. But the great difficulty is in the number of verbs, signifying the same thing with a very slight difference. Malcom well instances the verb *to wash*: “ One

(1) My immediate authority is Malcom, vol. i. p. 278.

(2) Pali Grammar, with a copious vocabulary in the same language. By the Rev. B. Clough, 8vo. Colombo. 1824.

is used for washing the face, another for washing the hands, another for washing linen in mere water, another for washing it with soap, another for washing dishes, &c." (1) The national Mavor is the "Them-bong-gyee," a very ancient and complete work. The books published by Europeans on the subject are, a Dictionary of the Burman Language, with explanations in English; compiled from the MSS. of A. Judson, &c. 8vo. Calcutta, 1826. Carey's Burman Grammar; Serampore, 1815. Laner's Burmese Dictionary; Calcutta, 1841. Latter's Burman Grammar.

"The rudiments of education," observes Malcom, (2) "are widely diffused; and most men, even common labourers, learn to write and read a little. But few go beyond these attainments." What a different picture does this present to the assertions of Lieutenant-Colonel Symes, who exalts the Burmans to such a pitch of mental cultivation. This is, however, in no slight degree owing to the character of their literature, which, however interesting to the observer of the rise of human civilisation, has nothing in it of permanent value to the people, as the account which I shall give of the Museum collection will amply show. I do not mean to say that they have not treatises on many subjects of science, and many interesting histories; but their books, for the most part, consist of ballads, legends of Gaudama, astrology, and cosmography; an idea of the value of which has already been given.

The MSS. in the British Museum of which I shall first give an account, form the Tytler Collection, as it may be called, running from No. 10,548 to No. 10,572 of the Additional MSS., and was presented to the library by John Tytler, Esq., on the 9th July, 1836. Unfortunately, the Museum authorities are not acquainted with the contents of them; for which reasons the reader must be contented with the meagre account I can offer. The MSS., of which we have a magnificent collection in the British Museum, are written upon palm-leaves of fifteen to eighteen inches in length. The writing upon them looks more like a series of scratches with a fine-pointed instrument than anything else. They are written upon both sides, and two spaces are left, in order to admit of strings being passed through the volume to keep the leaves together. These strings

(1) Malcom, vol. i. p. 277.

(2) Vol. i. p. 277.

fasten with wooden tags. Occasionally a large space is left unwritten upon, and a third of the leaf is only used. The book, when closed and fastened with tags, presents a singular appearance. It is outwardly divided into three divisions, of which the two outside are gilt, and the middle painted with a glistening, flary red. A pattern runs along the edge of the red portion. No. 10,548 contains, as nearly as I can judge, three hundred and twelve such leaves, forming a volume of about ten inches in thickness. The Museum carefully preserve these MSS. in a cardboard case, which prevents their being spoiled by dust and dirt. No. 10,550, a very thin MS., consisting of but eleven leaves, appears to contain astrological calculations. It is not nearly in such good preservation as the large one.

The instrument used in writing upon these MSS. is sometimes (as one of those in the British Museum, presented by John Barlow Hay, Esq., in 1839) of brass, and is eighteen inches in length; it has a decorated top, and a very sharp point. The ink-pot used would appear to be somewhat deep, as the *stylus* is covered with ink for two or three inches.

In one of the cases there are several gorgeous MSS., one written on five palm-leaves of about the usual length, in the Burmese character (which differs somewhat from the Pali). It is written on a gold ground, and is adorned(?) with figures of Gaudama. The covers are of wood, and are ornamented. This MS. contains the first book of the Kammavâcâ.

The second is on a silver ground, in the Burmese character, on palm-leaves, and was presented in 1771 by Mrs. Mead. There is another MS., in the same case, of the Kammavâcâ, the first and the fourth books. It is profusely gilded. The character is the square Pali. The Kammavâcâ is one of the most esteemed rituals of the Buddhist priesthood.

The other manuscripts are not so fine as those I have mentioned, and present similar characteristics to the inferior sort that I have described above. It is much to be regretted that we have scarcely an Orientalist in England who can unfold to us the meaning of these MSS. Never, in any institution, was a richer bait held out to the scholar than at the Museum at the present time, and yet there are but one or two gentlemen capable of instructing us upon this interesting and important point. The Museum

authorities themselves regret, with the rest of scholardom, that so large a portion of their Oriental collection is still a dead letter to them. If the present war be productive of no better result, let us hope that it will cause some one able to translate and comment on these MSS. to turn his attention to this subject, and give his researches to an expectant world.(1)

It may not be uninteresting to append a portion of a list, kindly placed at my disposal by Sir Frederick Madden, of some of the ascertained Burmese Buddhistic MSS., among the Additional MSS. in the British Museum. No. 18,753: A Burmese MS. containing the *Sut Silakkham*, a part of the second division, or *Sutrapituka*, of the Buddhistic Scriptures, translated from the Pali. No. 15,240. Burmese translation of a portion of the *Kammavâcâ*, or *Kamma-vâcâ*. This was presented by the earl of Enniskillen on the 10th July, 1844, and is written in dark brown letters, on an ivory plate about fifteen inches in length. No. 17,945: The *Tikâ Kavisâra Nissaza*, a Burmese translation of a Pali commentary on a Buddhistic work called *Kavi-Sara*, or the *Essence of the Poets*. No. 17,700: Part of a Burmese translation of a Buddhistic legend. This MS. is bound in wood, profusely gilt. No. 17,699: A religious treatise in Burmese, on the different sorts of punishment in this life.

“The original,” observes Buchanan,(2) “of most of the Burma books on law and religion is in the Pali, or Pale language, which, undoubtedly, is radically the same with the Sanscrit. I was assured at Amarapura that the Pali of Siam and Pegu differed considerably from that of the Burmas; and an intelligent native of Tavay, who had been at Cingala, or Candy, the present capital of Ceylon, and at the ruins of Anuradapura, the former capital, assured me that the Pali of that island was considerably different from that of Ava.

“In many inscriptions, and in books of ceremony, such as the *Kammua*, the Pali language is written in a square character, somewhat resembling the Bengal Sanscrit, and called *Magata*. Of this a specimen may be seen in the description of the Borgian Museum by Paulinus.(3) But

(1) I must not in this place forget to thank the gentlemen at the Museum for the aid they so courteously and willingly gave me in my examination of their Burmese MSS.

(2) Asiatic Researches, vol. vii. p. 305 sq.

(3) Page 15.

in general it is written in a round character, nearly resembling the Burmah letters. Of this kind is the specimen given by the accurate M. De la Loubère, and which some persons have rashly conceived to be the Burmah. There is no doubt, however, that all the different characters of India, both on the west and on the east of the Ganges, have been derived from a common source; and the Burmah writing on the whole appears to be the most distinct and beautiful.

“In their more elegant books the Burmas write on sheets of ivory, or on very fine white palmira leaves. The ivory is stained black, and the margins are ornamented with gilding, while the characters are enamelled or gilded. On the palmira leaves the characters are in general of black enamel, and the ends of the leaves and margins are painted with flowers in various bright colours. In their more common books, the Burmas, with an iron style, engrave their writings on palmira leaves. A hole through both ends of each leaf, serves to connect the whole into a volume by means of two strings, which also pass through the two wooden boards that serve for binding. In the finer binding of these kind of books the boards are lacquered, the edges of the leaves cut smooth and gilded, and the title is written on the upper board; the two cords are, by a knot or jewel, secured at a little distance from the boards, so as to prevent the book from falling to pieces, but sufficiently distant to admit of the upper leaves being turned back, while the lower ones are read. The more elegant books are in general wrapped up in silk cloth, and bound round by a garter, in which the Burmas have the art to weave the title of the book.”

Like the ancients, almost every Burman “carries with him a *parawaik*, (1) in which he keeps his accounts, copies songs till he can repeat them from memory, and takes memorandums of anything curious. It is on these *parawaiks* that the zares or writers, in all courts and public offices, take down the proceedings and orders of the superior officers, from thence copying such parts as are necessary into books of a more durable and elegant nature. The *parawaik* is made of one sheet of thick and strong paper blackened over. A good one may be about eight feet long and eighteen inches wide. It is folded

(1) I do not know but that this ought to be written *paruæk*.—Buchanan.

up somewhat like a fan, each fold or page being about six inches, and in length the whole breadth of the sheets. Thence, wherever the book is opened, whichever side is uppermost, no part of it can be rubbed but the two outer pages, and it only occupies a table one foot in width by eighteen inches long. The Burmas write on the *parawaik* with a pencil of steatites. When that which has been written on a *parawaik* becomes no longer useful, the pages are rubbed over with charcoal and the leaves of a species of dolichos; they are then clean as if new, and equally fit for the pencil." (1)

It will not be amiss to pursue the usual plan that I have proposed to myself, and in every practicable case to illustrate the literature of a nation by extracts from some one of its approved works. Fortunately, the missionary Sangermano has supplied me with the means of doing so, which would otherwise have failed. I cannot do better, therefore, than quote from that writer his account and extracts from one of their volumes. It will, I suppose, furnish as fair a specimen of their literature as any which can be offered.

"Among these books," says Sangermano, "the one called Aporazabon deserves to be placed the first; it is a species of romance, in which the principal character is Aporazà, an old minister, to whom the emperor, and several mandarins, put a number of questions on the science of government. To give my readers some idea of this work, I will here translate some extracts. (2)

"One day the emperor asked Aporazà what he meant to do to render his kingdom flourishing and populous; the old minister replied, that, in the first place, he must have the success of all his subjects in their affairs at heart, as much as if they were his own. 2. He should diminish the taxes and ciochi. 3. In putting on imposts he should have regard to the means of his subjects. 4. He must be liberal. 5. He must frequently inquire into the affairs of his kingdom, and make himself fully acquainted with them. 6. He must love and esteem his good and faithful servants. 7. Finally, he should show courtesy and affability, both in his manners and words, to all persons. He ought, moreover, to take measures that the population of his kingdom is augmented, and that his government

(1) Buchanan, in Asiatic Researches, vol. vi. p. 307.

(2) Description, p. 141 et sqq.

acquire honour and respect among foreign nations; he should not molest the rich, but, on the contrary, should encourage their industry and promote their interests; he should show a proper regard to his generals and ministers, who govern in the name of the emperor, for it is not seemly that they should be publicly disregarded and ill-treated; he should not despise prudent and careful men; and, finally, he should be just and moderate in exacting tributes, and should always proportion them to the products of agriculture and commerce. As a confirmation of this precept, he refers to the fruits of the earth, when eaten before they are ripe. 'You see,' he says, 'that the fruits which are gathered ripe from the tree, are well-flavoured and pleasant to the taste; but when they are plucked before they have ripened, they are insipid, and sour, and bitter. Rice that is taken at its proper season is excellent food, but if it is collected before its time, it is devoid of substance and nutriment.' He then advises the emperor not to shut up his kingdom; that is to say, that he ought to allow all foreign merchants a free entrance, to encourage their commerce, and make it flourish. Another time, when two petty kings had declared war against each other, they both had recourse to the Burmese monarch for assistance. According to his custom, the emperor sent for Aporazà, who spoke thus on the occasion:—'It once happened that two cocks of equal strength began fighting in the presence of a countryman; after continuing their combat for some time, they were so overcome by their exertions, that they were unable to do anything more, when the countryman sprang upon them, and made himself master of them both. Thus ought you, O king! to do at present. Let these two princes fight with each other till you see that their resources are exhausted, and then, pouncing upon them, seize upon their territories for yourself.'

"A man of mean extraction was raised by the efforts of an old mandarin to the throne. But the mandarin afterwards became overbearing, and even tried to be in some measure the master of the emperor. The latter bore all this for some time, but at length, growing weary of this insolence, he determined to rid himself of his importunate minister. Wherefore, one day that he was surrounded by a number of his mandarins, among whom was the one who had raised him to the throne, he directed his dis-

course to him, and asked him what they do with the zen, which are erected round the pagodas, after the gilding and painting are finished, for which they were raised; for the zen is a scaffolding of bamboo, or thick cane, serving to support the gilders and painters of the pagodas. 'They are taken down and carried away,' replied the old mandarin, 'that they may not obstruct the view of the pagoda, or spoil its beauty.'

" 'Just so,' replied the monarch, 'I have made use of you to ascend the throne, as the gilders and painters make use of the zen; but now that I am firmly seated in it, and am obeyed as emperor by all, and respected by all, you are become useless to me, or rather your presence only disturbs my peace.' He then drove him from his palace, and sent him in banishment to a village. One day, while this mandarin was yet in banishment, a dreadful tempest arose; in the course of which, looking out into the country, he observed that the great trees, which resisted the force of the wind, were not bent, but broken or torn up by its fury; while the grass and the canes, yielding before the blast, returned to their original position the moment it was gone by. 'Oh,' said the mandarin, within himself, 'if I had followed the example of these canes and this grass, I should not now be in so miserable a condition.' "

Among a semi-civilised people (and look on them as we may, the Burmans are no more), superstition ever has a powerful, almost unassailable hold upon the public mind. The vague dread of future existence, the indefinable curiosity which tempts man to search, by his own endeavours, for the ultimate end of all his strivings on earth, is to be found more closely allied to a feeling of scientific appreciation among such a people than anywhere else. The imperfect comprehension of what is passing around, leads the untutored mind ever to trench on the supernatural world, of the existence of which he has an innate perception. But having no clear knowledge, unable perhaps to express his forebodings in a distinct and comprehensible manner, he runs to the priest, or the learned man, and, expecting a knowledge of futurity to be part of his learning, asks what the fate may be to which he is destined. The wise man, anxious to keep up a reputation for superior knowledge, invents something from the circumstances in which he knows the person to be placed.

Subsequently he systematizes and arranges these notions, connecting them with the stars, those high and wonderful lights that unceasingly pass on in an ever-determined cycle above our heads. Such would seem to have been the origin of astrology.

Divination is universally credited by the Burmese, and Dr. Buchanan's picture, so melancholy as showing to what extent priestcraft obtained among them in his time (and it is probably not much decreased in their estimation now), is too interesting to be omitted in this place:—

“No person will commence the building of a house, a journey, or the most trifling undertaking, without consulting some man of skill to find a fortunate day or hour. Friday is a most unlucky day, on which no business must be commenced. I saw several men of some rank, who had got from the king small boxes of *theriac*, or something like it, and which they pretended would render them invulnerable. I was often asked for medicines that would render the body impenetrable to a sword or musket-ball, and on answering that I knew of none such, my medical skill was held in very low estimation. Indeed, every Burman doctor has at the end of his book some charms, and what are called magical squares of figures, which he copies, and gives to be worn by his patients. And although these squares are all of uneven numbers, and consequently of the easiest construction, yet the ignorant multitude repose great confidence in their virtue. Some men, whom we saw, had small bits of gold or jewels introduced under the skin of their arms, in order to render themselves invulnerable; and the tattooing on the legs and thighs of the Burma men they not only think ornamental, but a preservative against the bite of snakes.” (1)

Cheiromancy and oneiromancy are in as great estimation as divination or amulets. With all their skill in astrology, which they practise to a great extent, they are very ignorant of astronomy, and Dr. Buchanan tells us, “Although they sometimes attempt to calculate eclipses, yet they pretend not to ascertain either the hour of their commencement or the extent of the obscuration. It would indeed appear, from a treatise of Mr. Samuel Davis, (2) that the time of the full moon, and the duration of the eclipse, found by the rules given in the *Surya*

(1) *Asiatic Researches*, vol. vi. p. 172.

(2) *Asiat. Res.* vol. ii. p. 285.

Siddhanta, differ considerably from the truth; and that, although the rules given in the *Siddhantá Rahasya*, and other modern books, make a near approach, yet they are far from being correct; so that even the Brahmens of Hindustan are not much further advanced than those of Amrapura, notwithstanding the improvements they have introduced from time to time, perhaps as they were able gradually to procure a little better information from their conquerors, Mohammedans and Christians." (1)

Sangermano has a few remarks on the subject of the superstitions of the Burmese, that it would not be inappropriate to transfer to these pages. (2)

"The Burmese possess a large volume containing a full account of all their superstitious observances, and of the different omens of good or evil fortune to be drawn from an immense number of objects,—as from the wood with which their houses are built, from their boats and carriages, from the aspects of the sun, moon, and planets, from the howling of dogs, and the singing of birds, &c., and also from the involuntary movements of the members of one's own body. We will here translate some portions of this book, as specimens of the superstitions which paganism conducts to.

"This book, which is called *Deitton*, in the treatise on the woods used in building, distinguishes various kinds. Such beams as are equally large at the top as at the bottom are called males; those which are thicker at the bottom than above are females; the neuters are those in which the middle is thickest; and when the greatest thickness is at the top, they are called giants; finally, when a piece of wood, on being cut, and falling to the ground, rebounds from its place, it is called monkey-wood. Whoever lives in a house made of male wood, will be happy in all places, and at all times, and in all circumstances; but if the wood of any person's house be neuter, continual misery will be his lot; and if it be of the gigantic species, he will die. By dividing the two pieces of wood which form the stairs into ten compartments, and observing in which the knots occur, we may also learn a man's fortune. If a knot be found in the first compartment, it is a sign that the master of the house will be honoured by princes; if in the second, that

(1) *Asiat. Res.* vol. vi. p. 174.(2) *Burmese Empire*, p. 111 sq.

he will abound in rice, and all kinds of provisions; but if there be one in the fourth division, then a son, or a nephew, or a slave, or an ox of the master will die; a knot in the sixth division is a sign of riches in oxen and buffaloes; but one in the eighth portends the death of his wife; and finally, one in the tenth, is an augury of great possessions in gold and silver, and such other valuables.

“From the wood used in the construction of the houses, the Deitton passes to the holes in which the poles that support them are fixed; for if these be square, it is a sign of sickness; and divers other prognostics are drawn from the manner in which they are dug, and from the different substances that are met with in making them. Hence various rules are given for choosing a spot of ground for the foundation of houses.

“The next sources of superstition are the boats and carriages; for from the knots that are in them, good or bad success is assigned to the possessors; as also from the different objects they meet with on their progresses on different days of the week.

“All involuntary movements of the eyes, the head, or the forehead, are considered as indications of the lot of those in whom they are observed, as their happiness, or of the honours they will receive, or of a litigious disposition,” &c.

And again, a little after, our missionary continues:—

“In the time of war, or during a law suit, there is a curious way of finding out the success to be expected. Three figures are made of cooked rice, one representing a lion, another an ox, and a third an elephant. These are exposed to the crows, and the augury is taken according to which is eaten. If they fall on the figure of the lion, it is a sign of victory; if they eat that of the ox, things will be made up by accommodation; but if they eat the elephant, then bad success is to be looked for.

“When a dog carries any unclean thing to the top of a house, it is supposed that the master will become rich. If a hen lay her egg upon cotton, its master will become poor. If a person, who is going to conclude a law suit, meet on the road another carrying brooms or spades, the suit will be long, and in the end he will be deceived. If the wind should carry away any of the leaves of the betel, when, according to custom, it is being carried to the house of a newly-married woman, it is a sign

that the marriage will be unhappy, and that separation will ensue.

“ If in going to war, or to prosecute a law suit, a person meet with a fish, there will be no war, and the law-suit will cease; if he see another catching a gnat, the mandarins will exact many presents, the client will be deceived, and the law suit a long one; if he meet any one carrying packages, then everything will succeed to his wishes; if he meet a serpent, the affair will be long; if a dog, or a female elephant, or a person playing on the instrument called zaun, a species of cymbal, all things will go well.”

The good father mentions some more instances of a similar kind, and thus concludes: (1)—“ But we should never finish, were we to extract all the follies of this book, for they are so numerous, and at the same time so inconsistent with common comfort, that, as one of our oldest missionaries has observed, if a man were to be entirely guided by it, he would not have a house to live in, nor a road to walk on, nor clothes to cover him, nor even rice for his food; and yet the blind and ignorant Burmese place the greatest faith in it, and endeavour to regulate their actions according to its directions.” I have not space to speak of all the various superstitious weaknesses which rule this people, or I would tell of the cheiromancy of the Burmans, their amulets and their love-philtres; for these, however, I must refer the reader to Sangermano.

Burman astronomy is similar in most points to that of the Hindoos; but a short account of it, after Buchanan (2) and Sangermano, (3) will not be out of place here.

They recognise eight planets, viz., the Sun, the Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and another named Rahu, which is invisible. Buchanan tells us that some one discovered in it the Georgium Sidus; but if its invisibility be taken into consideration, it is much more likely to be the recently discovered and lost planet Neptune. A description of it from the treatise of Buchanan, will, however, settle any doubts as to this star: (4)—

“ The form of Rahu is thus described. His stature is 48,000 juzana; the breadth of his breast 12,000; of his

(1) Burmese Empire, p. 113.

(2) Asiatic Researches, vol. vi. pp. 188-205. (3) Description, pp. 11-14.

(4) Buchanan, *ubi supra*, p. 191; and Sangermano, p. 13.

head, 900; of his forehead, his nostrils, and mouth, 300; the thickness of his fingers, 50 *juzana*; of his feet and hands, 200. When this monstrous and foul planet, who, like the others, is a *Nat*, (1) is inflamed with envy, at the brightness of the sun or moon, he descends into their path and devours, or rather takes them into his mouth; but he is soon obliged to spit them out, for if he retained them long, they would burst his head by the constant tendency which they have to pursue their course. At other times he covers them with his chin, or licks them with his immense tongue. In this manner the Burmah writings explain eclipses of the sun and moon, both total and partial, making the duration of the eclipse depend on the time that Rahu retains the planet in his mouth or under his chin. The *Raháns* say, that every three years Rahu attacks the sun, and every half-year the moon. The eclipses, however, are not always visible to the inhabitants of this southern island; but although they may be invisible here, they are not so to the inhabitants of the other islands, according as the sun and moon may be opposite to them at the time of the eclipse."

This will serve as a tolerably fair specimen of Burmese abstract astronomy; and as my limits preclude further remark, it will be well to go on to their division of time.

"The Burmas," remarks Dr. Buchanan, (2) "in whatever manner they may have obtained it, have the knowledge of a solar year, consisting of 365 days, and commencing on the 18th of April. Like most nations, they also use a week of seven days, named after the planets. Sunday, *Ta-nayn-ga-nue*; Monday, *Ta-nayn-la*; Tuesday, *Ayn-ga*; Wednesday, *Boud-dha-hu*; Thursday, *Kia-sa-ba-da*; Friday, *Thouk-kia*; Saturday, *Tha-na*.

"The common year, however, of the Burmas, is lunar; and by this year are regulated their holidays and festivals. It is composed of twelve months, which alternately consist of thirty and twenty-nine days, as follows:—

Of Thirty Days.

1. *Ta-goo*. 3. *Na-miaung*. 5. *Wag-goun*. 7. *Sa-deen-giut*. 9. *Na-to*.
11. *Ta-bu-dua*.

Of Twenty-nine Days.

2. *Kas-soon*. 4. *Wa-goo*. 6. *Ta-da-lay*. 8. *Ta-zaung-mo*. 10. *Pyazo*.
12. *Ta-boun*.

(1) See book i. chap. iii. p. 50.

(2) *Asiatic Researches*, vol. vi. p. 169 sq.

“ This being eleven days shorter than their solar year, in order to make the beginning of Ta-goo coincide with our 18th of April, the first day of their solar year, the Burmas every third year add an intercalary moon. This seems to have been the extent of chronological science in Hindustan, during the prevalence of the doctrine of Bouddha, as the Rahans will go no further. But it was soon discovered by the Brahmens, that this contrivance would not make the commencements of the lunar and solar years coincide. They, therefore, wish from time to time to introduce other intercalary moons, in order to make the festivals occur at the proper season. The present king, who is said to be a studious and intelligent prince, was convinced of the propriety of the Brahmens' advice, and persuaded the Rahans of the capital to add an intercalary moon during the year we were there. He had not, however, the same success in the more distant provinces ; for, although very strong measures were taken at Rangoun, such as ordering the people for some days not to supply the Rahans with provisions, yet, in the end, the obstinacy of the clergy prevailed, and they celebrated a great festival a month earlier at Rangoun than was done at Amarapura. To this obstinacy the Rahans were, probably, in a great measure, instigated by a jealousy, which they, not without reason, entertain against such dangerous intruders as the Brahmens ; and they were encouraged to persist by the ignorance of those about the king. Of this ignorance his majesty was very sensible, and was extremely desirous of procuring from Bengal some learned Brahmens, and proper books. None of those I saw in the empire could read Sanscrit, and all their books were in the common dialect of Bengal.

“ The 1st of October, 1795, was at Amarapura, Kiasabada, the 19th of Sadeengiut, in the year of the Burma æra 1157, so that the reckoning, at that place at least, agreed very well with the solar year ; but I observed, that the Burmas in general, if not always, antedated by one day the four phases of the moon, which are their common holidays. I did not, however, learn, whether this proceeded from their being unable to ascertain the true time of the change of the moon, or if it was only an occasional circumstance, arising from some further contrivance used to bring the solar and lunar years to coincide. In the common reckoning of time the Burmas

divide the moon into two parts, the light and the dark moon; the first contained the days, during which the moon is on the increase; and the second, those in which she is in the wane. Thus, for instance, the 14th of Sadeengiut is called the 14th of the light moon Sadeengiut; but the 16th is called the 1st of the dark moon Sadeengiut.

“Whence the Burmans date their æra I could not from them learn. Joannes Moses, Akunwun or collector of the land-tax for the province of Pegu, the most intelligent man with whom we conversed, did not seem to know. He said that whenever the king thought the years of the æra too many, he changed it. The fact, however, I believe is, that this æra, commencing in our year 638, is that used by the astronomers of Siam, and from them, as a more polished nation, it has passed to the Burmas, whose pride hindered them from acknowledging the truth.”(1)

The common lunar year consists, however, only of twelve months; consequently they are obliged to add an intercalary month every three years, as the year is only three hundred and fifty-four days in length. Even this, however, does not supply all deficiencies, and the further rectifications are made by public proclamation. Their worship days are four every month, viz., at the new and the full moon, and half-way between these; so that sometimes the interval is seven days, and sometimes eight. Day and night are divided into four equal parts. At Rangoon, however, the European mode of reckoning the hours is much in use, and timepieces are not wholly unknown.(2)

(1) Loubère, du Royaume de Siam, vol. ii. p. 102.

(2) Malcom, vol. i. p. 275.

CHAPTER V.

Currency—Weights—Commerce—Ports—Teak-wood—Houses—Tanks—
Dress—Food—Marriages—Childbirth—Funerals—Arts—Slavery—The
drama—Chess—Games—Music—Fireworks.

THE Burmese have no coined money. At every payment the money is assayed and weighed, to ascertain its value. When a bargain is to be concluded, very often the seller asks to see the money the purchaser has to offer him. The circulating medium is lead, for small payments. Silver, however, is the standard, although gold is also in use; it is considered seventeen times as valuable as silver. The frequent assaying process that the money undergoes has given rise to a business; the persons following it are named Poë-za, and for a commission of two and a half per cent. they will assay the money. One per cent. is lost in the operation, so that if “that operation be repeated forty times, it follows that the original amount is wholly absorbed,—a fact which shows the enormous waste of the precious metals which attends this rude substitute for a currency.”(1)

Of course, the value of money is continually fluctuating, and Crawford informs us, that the alloy in silver varies from two to twenty-five per cent. ! “The finest gold,” he says, “in circulation is, according to this scale, of nine and three-quarters touch, or twenty-three and a quarter carats fine. Between this and that which is only twelve carats, or contains one-half alloy, is to be found in use almost every intermediate degree of fineness.”

Malcom gives us the following scale of weights, which answers both for goods and money : (2)—

| | | | |
|---------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 2 small ruays | = 1 large ruay | = 1 pice. | |
| 4 large ruays | = 1 bai or ruay | = 1 anna. | |
| 2 bais | = 1 moo | = 2 annas. | |
| 2 moos | = 1 mat | = 4 annas | (62½ gr. troy). |
| 4 mats | = 1 kyat | = 1 tical. | |
| 100 kyats | = 1 piakthah or vis | (3 $\frac{6.5}{10}$ lbs. avoird.). | |

(1) Crawford, vol. ii. p. 188.

(2) Malcom, vol. i. p. 275.

The head-waters of most of the rivers, as before remarked,(1) yield gold; but gold washings are to be found in the Irawadi above Prome, and also near Rangoon.(2) "But the little gold," says the missionary, "that is thus collected is far from being sufficient for the Burmese, who use great quantities of this metal, not only in their bracelets, earrings, and other ornaments, which persons of both sexes are accustomed to wear, but much more for gilding the convents of the Talapoins, the public porticoes, and particularly the pagodas, which, being exposed to the rain and the action of the air, soon lose their gilding, and are, therefore, continually requiring fresh gold to repair them. To supply this demand, gold is imported from the Malay coast, from China, and other places."

The silver is principally procured from the Chinese provinces of Yunnan, and the mines in Burmah are worked by natives of China. The only place in Burmah where silver-mines are worked is at Bor-twang, twelve days' journey from Bamoo.

Burmah has considerable foreign trade. The natives carry on a communication for this purpose with Mergui and Chittagong, and occasionally with Calcutta, Penang, and Madras. Burmah has at present but two good harbours remaining, namely, Rangoon and Bassein. Both of these are good, but foreign vessels never go to the latter, notwithstanding the fact that it is the better of the two.(3) The port of Rangoon is the only one, therefore, of any consideration.

The exports of Burmah are teak-wood, cotton, wax, catch, sticklac, and ivory; also lead, copper, arsenic, tin, birds' nests, amber, indigo, tobacco, honey, tamarinds, gnapée, or napé, gems, orpiment, &c. The most considerable article of commerce, however, is the teak-wood. "Indeed," says Sangermano, "it is for this wood, more than for anything else, that vessels of every nation come to Pegu from all parts of India. It is found also in Bombay, but in small quantities, and is excessively dear; whereas in Pegu and Ava there are such immense forests of it that it can be sold to as many ships as arrive, at a moderate price. This wood, while it does not quickly decay, is very easily wrought, and very light. Cases have occurred of ships made of it, and laden with it, which have been filled with

(1) Book i, chap. i. p. 9.

(2) Sangermano, p. 167.

(3) Sangermano, p. 167.

water, but yet did not sink. Hence, all the ships that come to Pegu return with cargoes of this wood, which is employed in common houses, but particularly in ship-building. Most of the ships that arrive in these ports are here careened and refitted; and there are, besides, two or three English and French shipbuilders established at Rangoon. One reason of this is the prohibition that exists of carrying the specie out of the empire. For, as merchants, after selling their cargo, and taking in another of teak-wood, generally have some money remaining in their hands, they are obliged to employ it in building a new ship. Though, perhaps, this is not the only motive for building vessels in Rangoon; but the quantity of teak and other kinds of wood with which the neighbouring forests abound, may also have a great influence in this way. If the port of Rangoon entices strangers to build ships there, it also obliges them to sail as soon as possible. For there is a species of worm bred in the waters of the river which penetrates into the interior of the wood, and eats it away in such a manner that the vessel is exposed to the greatest danger, since the holes formed by these worms being hidden, cannot easily be stopped up. They attack every species of wood except ebony and tamarind, which are so hard that they are used to make the mallets with which carpenters drive their chisels."

These facts, together with the difficulty of entering into the harbour, should be carefully considered by the rulers of the Company's territories, and they must weigh the importance of the position against the fatal effects of the climate, and when they have the upper fertile territory of Ava almost within their grasp, they should not content themselves with the low flats of Pegu, as some of the public press have advised.

Bassein, however, which has been lately captured, should be the principal port. That it is the better, is plainly to be seen from the fact of its having been so considered at an earlier period of the history of the country; and that the Company thought so, is plain from their first factories having been in that district.

Burman domestic architecture presents many similarities with that of Polynesia, except in the temples, already described in a former chapter, where the difference is, however, very slight.(1) The houses are constructed of

(1) Book i. chap. iii. p. 56.

timbers, and bamboos fastened with lighter pieces placed transversely. If strong posts are used, they are placed at distances of about seven feet, of coarse bamboo, and lighter ones are placed at closer intervals. Pillars made of brick or stone supporting a frame are never seen. The sides are usually covered with mats; but sometimes with thatch fastened by split canes. In the best houses even, the roofs are almost invariably of thatch wrought most skilfully, and forming a perfect security against both wind and rain, but sometimes they are made of thin tiles, turned up at one end.(1) The best kind of thatch is made of attap or denvice leaves, bent over canes, and attached by the same material; a cheaper kind is made of strong grass six or seven feet long. These overlap each other from twelve to eighteen inches, much in the same manner as our tiles: they cost very little and require renewing about every three years.

The floors are elevated a few feet from the earth, which makes them more comfortable than the houses of Bengal, and to render them clean, and secure ventilation, they are made of split cane. Unfortunately, the crevices between the cane often invite carelessness, and dirty liquids are allowed to run through, and not unfrequently the space becomes filled with mud and vermin, particularly among the poorer classes. The doors and windows are merely of matting in bamboo frames; when not closed, they are propped up so as to form a shade. There are of course no chimneys. They cook in a sort of square box of earth. A house does not cost more than from sixty to a hundred rupees; many not nearly so much, and they may be put up in about three days. The houses have only one story. In some of the large towns the houses of the rich are built of wood with plank floors, and panelled doors and shutters, but neither lath, plaster, nor glass. The houses are infested with insects of various descriptions, also with lizards, but they are useful in destroying the former.

The buildings not being of brick, the utmost precaution is taken against fire. The roofs of the houses are loosely thatched, and a long pile of bamboo, with a hook at the end, is provided in every dwelling to pull down the thatch, while another pole is placed ready with a grating at the end of it to put out the flame by means of pressure.

But it is not only in houses and pagodas that the archi-

(1) Sangermano, p. 126.

tektural skill of the Burmans displays itself. The nation, like the ancient Peruvians, also constructs tanks, which are of immense utility in fertilizing the country. One of these, at Montzoboo, the birthplace of Alompra, is a very handsome work. They have also a few bridges, one of which, at Ava, is very long, and which Malcom emphatically says, "I have not seen surpassed in India, and scarcely in Europe." (1) The arrangement of the palace at Ava, it may not be inapposite to remark, is not unlike that of the ancient palaces of Nineveh, as brought to light by Mr. Layard, and restored by Mr. Ferguson.

The Burmese dress is very simple. That of the men consists of a long piece of striped cotton or silk, folded round the middle, and flowing down to the feet. When they are not at work, this is loosed, and is thrown partly over the shoulder, covering the body in no ungraceful manner. It very closely resembles the modern Nubian dress. The higher classes add to this a jacket with sleeves, called *ingee*, of white muslin, or, occasionally, broadcloth or velvet, buttoning at the neck. The turban or *gounboug*, of muslin, is worn by every one. Their shoes or sandals are of wood, or cowhide covered with cloth and strapped on. These are only worn abroad.

The women wear a *te-mine*, or petticoat, of cotton or silk. It is open in front; so that in walking the legs and a part of the thigh are exposed. But in the street, they wear a jacket like that of the men, and a mantle over it.

Both sexes wear cylinders of gold, silver, horn-wood, marble, or paper in their ears. The fashionable diameter of the ear-hole is one inch. At the boring of a boy's ears, a great festival is generally held, as it is considered equal to the assumption of the *toga virilis* among the ancient Romans; yet, the period of youth and dandyism gone by, they care no more for such a decoration, and usually use the ear-hole as a cigar-rack, or flower-stand. The hair is always well taken care of, and is anointed every day with sessamum oil. The men gather it in a bunch on the top of the head, like the North American Indians, while the women tie it into a knot behind. The use of betel, which at one time was very general, is now no longer so much consumed, and the practice of staining the teeth is not so universal.

(1) Malcom, vol. i. p. 211. .

“The men of this nation,” says a good authority,(1) “have a singular custom of tattooing their thighs, which is done by wounding the skin, and then filling the wound with the juice of certain plants, which has the property of producing a black stain. Some, besides both their thighs, will also stain their legs of the same colours, and others paint them all over with representations of tigers, cats, and other animals. The origin of this custom, as well as of the immodest dress of the women, is said to have been the policy of a certain queen; who, observing that the men were deserting their wives, and giving themselves up to abominable vices, persuaded her husband to establish these customs by a royal order; that thus by disfiguring the men, and setting off the beauty of the women, the latter might regain the affections of their husbands.”

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In speaking of the military institutions of the Burmese, I quoted from Sangermano a passage in which the food of the soldiers was mentioned.(2) To the account then given, I have little to add here. The food of the people is mean and bad indeed; in fact, as they eat all kinds of reptiles and insects, we may very well agree with Malcom,(3) and call them omnivorous. They make two meals in a day, one at about nine in the morning, and the other at sunset. The rice, or whatever the dish may be, is placed on a wooden plate, raised upon a foot, and the eaters squat round it on the bare ground, or perchance on a few mats, using their fingers in the feast. Their usual beverage is water.

The bed consists of a simple mat spread on the ground, and a small pillow, or piece of wood, precisely in the manner of the Polynesians. The rich occasionally have a low wooden bedstead and mattresses.

Their mode of kissing is again like that of the Polynesians. Instead of touching the lips, they apply the mouth and nose to the cheek, and draw in the breath, and instead of saying, “Give me a kiss,” they say, “Give me a smell.” Children are carried astride the hips as in some other parts of India.

When a young man has made his choice of a wife, he first sends some old persons to the father to propose the marriage. If the family and the girl are agreed to the match, the bridegroom immediately goes to the house of the

(1) Sangermano, p. 124.

(2) Book i. chap. ii. p. 38.

(3) South-Eastern Asia, vol. i. p. 212.

father-in-law, and resides there for three years. At the expiration of that period, he may, if he choose, take his wife and reside somewhere else. The first night of the marriage is one of considerable hazard, for a large number of persons will collect together and throw stones and logs on to the roof of the house. Sangermano, on whose authority I mention the custom, could obtain no reason for it.(1)

A strange practice attends the birth of a Burmese infant. "No sooner is the infant come to light, than an immense fire is lighted in the apartment, so large that a person can hardly approach it without experiencing considerable hurt. Yet the woman is stretched out before it; and obliged to support its action on her naked skin, which is often blistered from its effects as badly as if the fire had been actually made for this purpose. This treatment is persevered in for ten or fifteen days without intermission, at the end of which time, as it will be easily supposed, the poor woman is quite scorched or blackened."(2)

In their treatment of the sick, they are very absurd and unskilful, but at the same time, some of their remedies are good. Space will not permit me to speak of this subject, and I must refer to the copious accounts of Maleon, Sangermano, Crawford, and others.

At the death of any one, the following ceremonies are observed.(3) The body is immediately washed and laid in a white cloth, and visits of condolence are paid by the connections and friends. While the family give themselves up to lamentation, these friends perform the office of preparing the coffin, assembling the musicians, getting betel and lapech, the pickled tea, which is given to every one on the occasion. Then a great store of fruit, cotton cloths, and money is prepared for distribution among the priests and the poor. This is effected by means of a burial club, which, strangely enough, is one of the institutions of this singular country. The body is then kept a day or two, after which the procession is formed in the following manner. First, the alms destined for the priests and poor are carried along; next, come the baskets of betel and lapech, borne by female priests dressed in white. These are followed by a procession of priests, walking two and two. When there is music, it usually comes next.

(1) Sangermano, p. 129.

(2) Sangermano, *ubi supra*, p. 129.

(3) My principal authority is Sangermano, p. 135.

Then the bier is carried along, borne by friends of the deceased. Immediately behind the bier comes the wives, children, and nearest relations, all dressed in white. The procession is closed by a concourse of people more or less connected with the departed person. Arrived at the place where the body is burnt, the senior priest delivers a sermon, consisting of reflections on the five secular commandments and the ten good works. At the conclusion of the sermon, the coffin is delivered to the burners of the dead, who set fire to it, while others distribute the alms to the priests and people. The burning, however, does not always take place. Persons that have been drowned, or have died of infectious diseases, are immediately interred.

On the third day after the burning, the relations go to the place and collect the ashes, which are placed in an urn and buried, and a cenotaph is erected over the remains. All this time a festival is kept up at the house of the deceased. Readers are engaged, who read out poetry and history. Much feasting and drinking goes on, and this is all done to keep off the thoughts of their loss from the minds of the relations. On the ninth day the concluding feast to the priests is given, and all is over.

The arts of the Burmese are very simple, as may be expected.(1) Their progress in them has been very small, chiefly on account "of the great simplicity of their dress and houses." Every one builds his own house, and the females of the family can manufacture all the apparel that is required by the family. The silkworm is kept in Ava, and the products of the looms of that province, though susceptible of improvement, yet deserve high commendation for the strength of the material and brilliancy of the colours. Carving in wood, an art at which a semi-civilised nation generally soon arrives, has been brought to some degree of perfection; but painting, the kindred art, is here, as among all Oriental nations, in a very languishing condition. Lately, at a meeting of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, a very interesting picture by a Burmese artist was exhibited. Dr. A. Thomas, who presented it to the society, thus describes it:—"On one side of the picture is represented the royal palace and the royal monastery; the priests in their sacerdotal garb, the white elephant, &c. &c. are all shown. On the other side is a grand procession

(1) My chief authority is Sangermano, pp. 144-146.

showing that a lad is about to enter into the order of priesthood." In painting flowers the Burmese are not so bad, but, like the Chinese, they have very imperfect notions of drawing and perspective.

The betel boxes and drinking-cups are exceedingly curious. They are formed of very fine basket-work of bamboo, covered with varnish, which is brought from China in very great quantities. An interesting account of their manufacture is given by Colonel Burney in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal; but the exact volume has escaped me. Working in gold, as among their kindred in America, the Incas and the Mexicans, has been perfected in no slight degree. In casting bells, too, no Oriental nations can compete with them.

"Such are the principal arts," concludes Sangermano, (1) "of the Burmese; and if they are in a low state, this must be attributed more to the destructive despotism of their government than to the want of genius or inclination of the people, for they have in reality a great talent in this way. It is the emperor, with his mandarins, who is the obstacle in the way of the industry of his subjects; for no sooner has any artist distinguished himself for his skill, than he is constrained to work for the emperor or his ministers, and this without any profit, farther than an uncertain patronage."

Can there be the least doubt in the mind of any unprejudiced person, that the British ought to annex the whole of Burmah, and so rescue the flocks that are bleeding under the ruflian claws of the official tigers? Remember Prome under British justice in the last war; and though, in every way, the Indian government is *de facto* a mild despotism, yet is not that better than the present state of things? Besides, it is our interest. If we do not get this country, some other nation will, and we want no European neighbours in the East.

And this is a fitting place for an account of the treatment of slaves among the Burmese, a subject of no little importance to its future interests.

Slavery is very general in Ava and the subdued provinces, and it has not yet been abolished in the territory ceded to the British in 1826. (2) It may be as well to mention this fact, as otherwise the British will get a cha-

(1) Burmese Empire, p. 146.

(2) Malcom, vol. i. p. 272.

rafter for inconsistency, and some one will plead, in extenuation of the African slave-trade, that though such efforts are made in the Atlantic, yet that in the tangible property of Britain, the provinces of Arakhan, Chittagong, Assam, and Tenasserim, the practice is not suppressed, notwithstanding that it might be effected with much more ease than in Africa, or on the Brazilian coast. Naturally, in so recent a possession, the measure cannot be immediately introduced; yet it would be well for the Company to think and act, as it is necessary to be consistent throughout, even if that were the only consideration.

A slight slave-trade appears to be carried on upon the frontiers; and though the Burmans, with somewhat of a Jesuitical spirit, do not actually engage in it themselves, yet they do not hesitate to recognise and support it by purchasing the slaves thus kidnapped from home.

Debtor slaves, Malcom tells us, are very numerous. When persons borrow, they mortgage themselves to their creditors till they can repay the money. In Burmah this is not done by any remuneration for the service thus rendered, but in our possessions it diminishes four pice per day. Their master can sell and chastise them, though he is restrained from ill-using them. However, when they can obtain the money, and tender it to their creditor, he is not at liberty to refuse the payment.

The children of slaves are free; though this is more by usage than by the law. Under that, there would be some redemption-money to be paid. However, custom has ordained that both mother and child are free. Husbands have the power of selling their wives, or rather borrowing money upon them; and of course, unless the person so sold, or pawned, can obtain a sum equal to the amount borrowed, they are condemned to life-servitude.

The condition of slaves, however, is little different from that of a free person. The estimation, too, in which they are held, is high, for they are, in a popular superstition, ranked with "a son, a nephew, and an ox;" and though the last of these appears somewhat ludicrous to the ear of an European, yet we must recollect that the religious value of an ox was high in the land, probably from the tinge of Brahminism with which the Burmans are dashed.

It is interesting to compare the state of the slaves of

Burmah with the condition of the same class among the Visigoths, who may, in some respects, be looked upon as the Burmans of Europe. Prescott has given an able sketch in his "Ferdinand and Isabella:"(1)—

"The lot of the Visigothic slave was sufficiently hard. The oppressions which this unhappy race endured, were such as to lead Mr. Southey, in his excellent introduction to the 'Chronicle of the Cid,' to impute to their co-operation, in part, the easy conquest of the country by the Arabs. But, although the laws in relation to them seem to be taken up with determining their incapacities, rather than their privileges, it is probable that they secured to them, on the whole, quite as great a degree of civil consequence as was enjoyed by similar classes in the rest of Europe. By the *Fuer Juzoo*, the slave was allowed to acquire property for himself, and with it to purchase his own redemption.(2) A certain proportion of every man's slaves were also required to bear arms, and to accompany their master to the field.(3) But their relative rank is better ascertained by the amount of composition (that accurate measurement of civil rights with all the barbarians of the north) prescribed for any personal violence inflicted on them. Thus, by the Salic law, the life of a free Roman was estimated at only one-fifth of that of a Frank,(4) while, by the law of the Visigoths, the life of a slave was valued at half of that of a free man.(5) In the latter code, moreover, the master was prohibited, under the severe penalties of banishment and sequestration of property, from either maiming or murdering his own slave,(6) while, in other codes of the barbarians, the penalty was confined to similar trespasses on the slaves of another; and by the Salic law, no higher mulct was imposed for killing than for kidnapping a slave.(7) The legislation of the Visigoths, in those particulars, seems to have regarded this unhappy race as not merely a distinct species of property; it provided for their personal security, instead of limiting itself to the indemnification of their masters."

It is a curious circumstance that the malefactors, whose punishment has been commuted from death to slavery

(1) Vol. i. p. 7, note.

(2) Lib. v. tit. 4, ley 16.

(3) Lib. ix. tit. 2, ley 8.

(4) Lex Salica, tit. 43, sec. 1, 8.

(5) Lib. vi. tit. 4, ley 1.

(6) Lib. vi, tit. 5, leyes 12, 13.

(7) Lex Salica, tit. 11, sec. 1, 3.

in the pagodas, are better off than the generality of the slave population ; so that, in fact, there is not such indignity and misery in it as some authors have represented. The Mexicans, who formed some portions of their polity on a higher model, esteemed it an honour to serve in the temples of the gods. Let us now turn to a livelier theme—the Burman amusements.

Symes, the energetic envoy, to whose work I have so often referred, gives the following curious description of a dramatic entertainment in Burmah :(1)—

“ The solar year of the Birmans was now drawing to a close, and the three last days are usually spent by them in merriment and feasting. We were invited by the Maywoon to be present on the evening of the 10th of April, at the exhibition of a dramatic representation.

“ At a little before eight o'clock, the hour when the play was to commence, we proceeded to the house of the Maywoon, accompanied by Baba-Sheen, who, on all occasions, acted as master of the ceremonies. The theatre was the open court, splendidly illuminated by lamps and torches ; the Maywoon and his lady sat in a projecting balcony of his house ; we occupied seats below him, raised about two feet from the ground, and covered with carpets ; a crowd of spectators were seated in a circle round the stage. The performance began immediately on our arrival, and far excelled any Indian drama that I had ever seen. The dialogue was spirited without rant, and the action animated without being extravagant ; the dresses of the principal performers were showy and becoming. I was told that the best actors were natives of Siam, a nation which, though unable to contend with the Birmans and Peguers in war, have cultivated with more success the refined arts of peace. By way of interlude between the acts, a clownish buffoon entertained the audience with a recital of different passages ; and by grimace, and frequent alterations of tone and countenance, extorted loud peals of laughter from the spectators. The Birmans seem to delight in mimicry, and are very expert in the practice, possessing uncommon versatility of countenance. An eminent practitioner of this art amused us with a specimen of his skill, at our own house, and, to

(1) Embassy to Ava in the year 1795, vol. ii. p. 41 sqq. ; later ed. vol. i. p. 208 sq.

our no small astonishment, exhibited a masterly display of the passions in pantomimic looks and gestures; the transitions he made, from pain to pleasure; from joy to despair; from rage to madness; from laughter to tears: his expression of terror, and, above all, his look of idiotism, were performances of first-rate merit in their line; and we agreed in opinion, that had his fates decreed him to have been a native of Great Britain, his genius would have rivalled that of any modern comedian of the English stage.

“The plot of the drama performed this evening, I understood, was taken from the sacred text of the Ramayam of Balmicc, a work of high authority amongst the Hindoos. (1) It represented the battles of the holy Ram and the impious Rahwaan, chief of the Ralkuss, or demons, to revenge the rape of Seeta, the wife of Ram, who was forcibly carried away by Rahwaan, and bound under the spells of enchantment. Vicissitudes of fortune took place during the performance, that seemed highly interesting to the audience. Ram was at length wounded by a poisoned arrow; the sages skilled in medicine consulted on his cure; they discovered, that on the mountain Indragurry grew a certain tree that produced a gum, which was a sovereign antidote against the deleterious effects of poison; but the distance was so great that none could be found to undertake the journey: at length, Honymaan, (2) leader of the army of apes, offered to go in quest of it. When he arrived at the place, being uncertain which was the tree, he took up half the mountain, and transported it with ease: thus was the cure of Ram happily effected, the enchantment was broken, and the piece ended with a dance and songs of triumph.”

Dr. Buchanan gives us some farther particulars on this curious subject, which I subjoin: (3)

“Although these entertainments, like the Italian opera, consist of music, dancing, and action, with a dialogue in recitative; yet we understood, that no part but the songs

(1) Called by Sir William Jones, Valmiec.

(2) Honymaan is worshipped by the Hindoos under the form of an ape, and is one of the most frequent objects of their adoration; almost every Hindoo pagoda has this figure delineated in some part of it. Honymaan (Hanuman) is the term used by the Hindoos to denote a large ape. The worship was widely extended even among the Mexicans, who portrayed monkeys in their picture writings. In the Coptic-Egyptian, Haanu signifies monkey.

(3) Asiatic Researches, vol. vi. p. 305.

was previously composed. The subject is generally taken from some of the legends of their heroes, especially of Rama; and the several parts, songs, and actions, being assigned to the different performers, the recitative part or dialogue is left to each actor's ingenuity. If, from the effects on the audience, we might judge of the merit of the performance, it must be very considerable, as some of the performers had the art of keeping the multitude in a roar. I often, however, suspected, that the audience were not difficult to please; for I frequently observed the Myoowun of Haynthawade (the man of high rank whom we most frequently saw), thrown into immoderate laughter by the most childish contrivances. These easterns are indeed a lively, merry people; and, like the former French, dance, laugh, and sing, in the midst of oppression and misfortune."

But by far the most lucid account that we have of the Burmese drama, is in one of the dramas themselves, which Mr. Smith has translated in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*; and he has added much to the value of the work by a few judicious observations, from which I present an extract to the reader:—

"The Ramadzat (Ramahyana), and other ancient fabulous histories, form the groundwork of nearly all the favourite plays, the outline of the story being merely preserved, while the language of the play depends as much upon the fancy of the performer as the taste of the audience. Each company is presided over by a teacher or manager, who drills the actors in their tasks from rough notes, which contain only the songs and the substance of the parts assigned to each performer. In every play, without perhaps a single exception, the following characters are represented,—a king, a queen, a princess, a minister of state, a huntsman, and some kind of monster. (1) The female characters are usually personated by men, it being considered indecorous in a woman to appear as an actress. I have to plead as an apology for the unpolished style of this translation, the acknowledged difficulty of turning the dialogue of a play into a foreign dress; moreover, the original, which was written from the mouth of an actor, was imperfect and ill written. I believe there are books in the palace at Umeraporee, con-

(1) Stock characters seem as prevalent as at the Victoria or Adelphi.

taining the proper reading of all the approved plays, and the costumes of the characters, which are placed near the members of the royal family whenever they call their companies before them; but I have not been able to discover any work of this description here." (1)

Of the play given by Smith, I shall here offer an epitome:—The nine princesses of the silver mountain, which is separated from the abode of mortals by a triple barrier (the first, a belt of prickly cane; the second, a stream of liquid copper; and the third, a Beloo, or devil), gird on their enchanted zones, which give them the power of flying like birds, and visit a pleasant forest of the earth. While bathing, a huntsman snares the youngest with a magic noose, and carries her to the young prince of Pyentsa, who, on account of her beauty, makes her his chief queen, notwithstanding his recent marriage with the daughter of the head astrologer of the palace. During the princess's absence, the astrologer takes the opportunity to misinterpret a dream, which the king calls upon him to explain, and declares that the evil spirit, who is exerting himself against the king's power, is only to be appeased by the sacrifice of the beautiful Manauhurree. The princess's mother, hearing of this, visits the lovely Manauhurree, and restores to her the enchanted zone, which had been picked up, and given to the old queen, by the huntsman. The princess immediately returns to the silver mountain, but on her way stops at the hermitage of a recluse, who lives on the borders of the forest, and gives him a ring and some drugs, by which the possessor of them can pass unharmed through the dangers of the barrier. The young prince having put an end to the war, returns, and finding his favourite queen gone, he instantly sets off to seek her. Being arrived at the forest, he dismisses his followers, visits the recluse, who gives him the ring and drugs; he then enters the frightful barrier, and, after many adventures, arrives at the city of the silver mountain, and makes known his presence to his beautiful bride, by dropping the ring into a vessel of water, which a damsel is conveying to the bath of the princess. The princess, on finding the ring, inquires of one of the damsels what has happened at the lake, who tells her, that they found a young spirit resting himself,

(1) Journal of the As. Soc. of Bengal, vol. viii, p. 535 sq.

and that he assisted one of the maids to place the vessel of water on her head. The princess cries out, "Oh my husband, come and take me." The king, her father, is angry that any mortal should presume to enter his country and claim his daughter, he makes him go through trials of riding elephants and horses, and shooting arrows, in which the prince acquits himself surprisingly, but the king insists on his selecting the little finger of Manauhurree from among those of her sisters, thrust through a screen; this he does by the assistance of the king of the Nats. Then, as in a European play, every one is made happy and comfortable.

Perhaps, indeed, the game of chess does not methodically fall in immediately after the consideration of the drama, yet I cannot allow the Burman game, their chief sedentary amusement, to pass without notice. As their principal in-door game, indeed, it may not seem inopportune to place it here. The form of the chess-board, and the manner of arrangement, will be readily understood by the accompanying diagram: (1) —

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | | | | | | | 3 |
| | 1 | 4 | 5 | 5 | | | |
| | 4 | 2 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| 6 | 6 | 6 | \ | / | | | |
| | | | / | \ | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 2 | 4 | |
| | | | 5 | 5 | 4 | 1 | |
| 3 | | | | | | | 3 |

REFERENCES.

- 1 Meng The king.
 2 Chekoy .. Lient.-General.
 3, 3 Rutha... War chariot.
 4, 4 Chein Elephants.
 5, 5 Mhec Cavalry.
 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6 Yein Foot soldiers.

The Burman name for chess is Chit-tha-reen, a name applied by them to the chief ruler, or leader of an army, or to war itself.

The king has the same powers and moves as in our own game, except that there is no castling, and no stalemate. The *Chekoy*, or general, moves diagonally either way, in advance or retrograde, but only one move at a time. The *Rutha*, or war-chariot, has exactly the same moves and powers as our castle. The *Chein*, or elephants, have five

(1) I am partly indebted to Cox, Asiatic Researches, vol. vii. p. 497 sq.

distinct moves; diagonal in advance, both in fact diagonal retrograde; also, both ways, and direct forward; but in every case they are limited to one check or step at a move. The move direct in advance being only intended to alter the line of their operations, which gives them somewhat of the power of our queen. The *Mhee*, or cavalry, have exactly the same powers as our knights. The *Ycin*, or foot-soldiers, have the same moves and powers as in the English game; they are, however, limited to one check or move at a time, and the right-hand pieces alone are susceptible of promotion to the rank of general, in the event of that piece being taken. It is not necessary, however, that they should have advanced to the last row of the adversary's squares, but to that square which is in a diagonal line with the left-hand square in the last row of the adversary's section; consequently, the right-hand pawn will have to advance four steps to ransom the Chekoy; the next, three; and so on to the fifth pawn, who has to make but one step.

But notwithstanding this manner of disposing the forces, which is generally followed, the arrangement is quite arbitrary; and the player strengthens or exposes his wing according to his own judgment, and the proficiency of his adversary.

"This liberty," as Cox well observes, "added to the names and powers of the pieces, gives the Burmha game more the appearance of a real battle than any other game I know of. The powers of the Chein are well calculated for the defence of each other and the king, where most vulnerable; and the Rutha, or war-chariots, are certainly more analogous to an active state of warfare, than rooks or castles." (1)

There is a game played amongst them, called cog-nento. (2) It resembles very much the popular English game of knock'emdowns. They have also a kind of game of goose and cards of ivory, introduced from Siam. Football is very usual, and is played with much skill. The ball is hollow, and formed of split rattan, from six to ten inches in diameter. It is not struck alone with the instep, but with the head, shoulder, knee, elbow, heel, or sole of the foot. Malcom (3) thinks it has been introduced from China.

(1) Asiatic Researches, vol. vii. p. 499. Comp. Symes, vol. ii. p. 226, small ed.

(2) Saugermano, p. 127.

(3) Vol. i. p. 240.

Boxing and fighting-cocks are well known; and the latter is a favourite amusement with the youth of Burmah, as it used to be in England.

The Burmese never dance themselves, but hire dancers, who make extraordinary efforts in their dancing. No figures are attempted, nor do women and men dance together; indeed, very few females dance at all; the men generally assuming the dress of women, and tying their hair in the manner of women. They cannot understand what the English dance for; they, in common with all Indians, wonder at it.

The musical instruments are the *moung* or *gong*, struck with a mallet covered with leather; the *panma-gyee*, or large drum; the *tseing* or *boundaw*, is a collection of small drums, disposed within a frame in a circle. The size varies in every case. The player sits in the middle, and strikes them with his fingers. The *me-goum* or *me-kyong*, is a kind of guitar, played with the fingers. The *sonng*, is a kind of harp. They have also a kind of violin, called *te-yau*, very disagreeable, with only two strings. The *kyay-wyng* is formed by a number of gongs, of different sizes, struck with small sticks, very pleasant of sound. There are also two or three kinds of wind-instruments, but very inferior in tone.

Malcom (1) remarks it as a curious fact, that the Burmese are totally ignorant of whistling.

In making fireworks, the Burmese display great ingenuity, and their delight is immense at a well-made rocket. Sangermano tells us, (2) that "when the great rockets are let off, if these fireworks ascend straight up into the air without bursting or running obliquely, the makers of them burst out into the wildest shouts and songs, and dance about with the most extravagant contortions, like real madmen."

We will leave them shouting, and turn to the ancient history of the country.

(1) Vol. i. p. 242.

(2) Burmese Empire, p. 128.

CHAPTER VI.

Ancient history—Pegu—Character of the Burmese—Concluding reflections.

THE ancient history of Burmah differs in one remarkable particular from that of almost every other Oriental nation. The historiographers, except where they have been led into speaking of Gaudama and his wondrous career, in effect, present a more coherent chronology than is offered by any other Eastern historians. The simple, almost unadorned tale of their doings in the country, present self-evident proofs of its truthfulness. The reigns of the kings none of them exceed the limits of probability, and what is more, they are shorter than usual, which shows in every way that there was no desire to magnify the doings of their sovereigns. We find the kings of this early period doing just what the kings of the present dynasty have been doing, and there is no undue disguise of facts; though now and then (as in the narrative of the two blind princes of Sagaing) there is a dash of the marvellous; yet one cannot help wondering at the extraordinary simplicity that pervades the whole narrative given by the Burmese historians.

All that the Burmese know of their emigration from India, and of the founding and history of the ancient city of Tagaung, is to be found in the third volume of the *Chronicles of the Kings of Ava*. Here is an abstract of the tale. (1)

Many years before the appearance of Gaudama, a king of Kanthalatt (Oude) and Pinjarát (a kingdom in the Punjab), being desirous of a connection by marriage with the king of Kauliya, sent to him to demand a daughter; but receiving a refusal on the grounds of inferiority of caste, he declared war, and destroyed several cities governed by the Tháki family. These cities were afterwards rebuilt, and

(1) My authority is an interesting article in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. v. p. 159 sq.

the Tháki line re-established ; but one of the Tháki race of kings, Abhiraja, the king of Kappilawot, emigrated with his troops and followers from Central India, and came and built Tagoung, which was then also styled Thengat-the-ratha, and Thengat-the-nago. The place had been inhabited before, during the period of the three preceding Buddhas. In the time of Kekkuthan it was called Thanthaya-púra ; in that of Gounágoun, Ratha-púra ; and in that of Katthaba, Thendwé. On the death of King Abhírájá, his two sons, Kan Yázágyee and Kan Yázangay, disputed the throne, but agreed by the advice of their respective officers to let the question be decided in this way ; that each should construct a large building on the same night, and he whose building should be found completed by the morning, should take the throne. The younger brother used planks and bamboos only, and covered the whole with cloth, to which, by a coat of whitewash, he gave the appearance of a finished building. At dawn of day, Kan Yázágyee, the elder brother, seeing the other's being completed, collected his troops and followers, and came down the Irawadi. He then ascended the Khyendwen, and established himself for six months at Kúle (1) Tounnyo, calling it Yázágyo, and sent his son, Moodoooseitta, to be king over the Thoonaparan Pyoos, Kanyan, and Thet, who then occupied the territory between Pegu, Arakhan, and Pagan, and had applied to him for a prince. Kan Yázágyee then built the city Kyoukpadoung to the east of the Guttshapanadee, and resided there for twenty-four years. From thence he went and took possession of the city of Diniawadee, or Arakhan, which had originally been founded by a King Mayayoo, and having constructed fortifications, a palace, &c., took up his residence there.

The younger brother, Kan Yazangay, took possession of his father's throne at Tagoung, and was followed successively by thirty-three kings, the last of whom was Bheinnaka Yázá. During this monarch's reign, the Chinese and Tartars, from the country of Tsein, in the empire of Gandalareet, attacked and burnt Tagoung. The king and his followers retired up the Malí river, and shortly afterwards died. His people then divided themselves into three portions, one of which established the

(1) A territory to the southward of Manipur.

nineteen Shan states. A second portion allied themselves with the Thunaparanta kingdom, composed of the people of Ranyau and Thet, who were governed by Múdtseitta and other kings of the Tháki race. The last remained near the Malí river, under the command of Nága Zein, the last king's principal wife.

About this time Gaudama appeared in Central India. In that part of Hindustan, also, a dispute arose between King Pethanadí Kauthala of Thawotta(1) and Maha Nansa of Kappílawot. The dispute originated in a matter of marriage again. Pathanadí had sent an embassy to Maha Nama for one of his daughters. Nama, however, sent him the daughter of a slave girl instead. She was received, and had a son, Prince Wit'hat'hoopa. When he had grown, he went to see his relations in Kappílawot, and then first learned the indignity which had been put upon his father. Gaudama stopped his army three times in its passage to Kappílawot, but let him do as he pleased the fourth time, when he took ample vengeance on the perfidious Maha Nama, and he destroyed Kappílawot and two other cities in the country of Thekka, which, not improbably, is the present Dekkan.

This caused another dispersion of the Tháki race, and we find that Daza Yázá(2) established himself at Tagoung, carrying with him the name of his city, Pínjalárit; he assumed the title of Thado Zaboodipa Daza Yázá, which may be translated Emperor Daza, king of Zaboodipa, the name, as we have seen,(3) of the southern island in the Burmese cosmography. Thus he aspired to the government of the world, for Zaboodipa was to the Burmese the whole world. He founded, also, the city of Pagan. Seventeen kings of his race reigned over Tagoung. "None of these kings," says Colonel Burney, "reigned long, the country having been much molested by evil spirits, monsters, and serpents.....In the fortieth year after Gaudama's death, whilst Thado Maha Yázá, the seventeenth king of Tagoung, was reigning, an immense wild boar appeared, and committed great destruction in his country. The crown prince went forth against the animal, and pursued it for several days, until he overtook and killed it near Prome, and then finding himself so far from home,

(1) Sravasti in Oude.—Wilson.

(2) Yázá is the Burmese pronunciation of Rája.

(3) Book i. chap. iii. p. 47.

he determined on remaining where he was as a hermit. Through the recommendation of the hermit prince of Tagoung, the Queen Nan Khan married one of his nephews, Maha Thavibawa, who became king of the Pyús, and established the Prome or Thare Khettara empire, sixty years after Gaudama's death, 484 B.C."

A curious account of the origin of the name Thare Khettara is given by Symes,(1) in whose words I shall relate the legend. "It is related, that a favourite female slave of Tutebongmangee, or the Mighty Sovereign with three eyes, importuned her lord for a gift of some ground; and being asked of what extent, replied in similar terms with the crafty and amorous Elisa, when she projected the site of ancient Carthage. Her request was granted, and she used the same artifice. The resemblance of the stories is curious." It is, however, met with in many parts of the world. Thare Khettara signifies single skin. Symes is mistaken, however, in the town; it is Issay Mew, six leagues from Prome.

Upon the fall of the empire of Prome, Thamauddarit transferred the government to Pagahm, then an inconsiderable place. A young man named Tsauidí destroyed the wild animals of the neighbourhood, and in recompense for this important service he was offered the succession by the king. This, however, he refused, making his former instructor king in his stead; but on the old man's decease he assumed the sovereignty, in the year 89 of the Pagan æra, A.D. 167. This youth, however, was of the royal race of Tagoung.

In the sixth volume of the Chronicles of Ava, further mention is made of Tagoung. We there find it granted to Yahula by Thechapade, *alias* Menbyouk. Yahula assumed the title of Thado-Men-bya; he was afterwards driven from his government by the invading Shan tribes, in the Burmese year 725, A.D. 1363. However, he subsequently retrieved his fortunes, and in 726 (A.D. 1364), he founded the city of Ava, and established the line of the kings of Ava which has lasted to our times.

"The great point," concludes Burney,(2) "with the Burmese historians is to show that their sovereigns are lineally descended from the Thakí race of kings, and are

(1) Ava, vol. i. p. 270, small edition.

(2) Journ. Asiat. Soc. Bengal, vol. v. p. 164.

‘Children of the Sun;’(1) and for this purpose the genealogy of even Alompra, the founder of the present dynasty, is ingeniously traced up to the king of Pagan, Prome, and Tagoung.”

The internal history of Burmah, up to the sixteenth century, is not illustrated by any other documents than the native; (2) but about this time Fitch visited the country, and his descriptions show that the state was on much the same footing as at present. At this period the Burmians first conquered the Peguans, and had almost subdued Siam. But at the close of the seventeenth century the Peguans rose, and in A.D. 1753 carried the Burman king captive to Pegu. But, like the Persians under the Mede governments, the proud Burmans rose, and Alompra, whose adventures will be discussed in the next chapter, beat the Peguans, and restored the Burmans to their ancient supremacy.

Of modern Pegu, or Pegue, the following account by Symes may be interesting:—

“The extent of ancient Pegue may still be accurately traced by the ruins of the ditch and walls that surrounded it; from these it appears to have been a quadrangle, each side measuring nearly a mile and a half; in several places the ditch is choked up by rubbish that has been cast into it, and the falling of its own banks; sufficient, however, still remains to show that it was once no contemptible defence; the breadth I judged to be about sixty yards, and the depth ten or twelve feet; in some parts of it there is water, but in no considerable quantity. I was informed, that when the ditch was in repair, the water seldom, in the hottest season, sunk below the depth of four feet. An injudicious *fausse-braille*, thirty feet wide, did not add to the security of the fortress.

“The fragments of the wall likewise evince that this was a work of magnitude and labour; it is not easy to ascertain precisely what was its height, but we conjectured it at least thirty feet, and in breadth, at the base, not less than forty. It is composed of brick, badly cemented with clay mortar. Small equidistant bastions, about three hundred yards asunder, are still discoverable; and there

(1) One of the king of Ava’s titles is Nedwet bhuyen—Sun-descended monarch. Strange coincidence with the Inca boast!

(2) Mr. Judson has given us a translation of a chronological summary, which is of extreme value. It is now, together with the text, in the British Museum.—(Additional MS., No. 12,400.)

had been a parapet of masonry ; but the whole is in a state so ruinous, and so covered with weeds and briars, as to leave very imperfect vestiges of its former strength.

“ In the centre of each face of the fort there is a gateway about thirty feet wide, and these gateways were the principal entrances. The passage across the ditch is over a causeway raised on a mound of earth, that serves as a bridge, and was formerly defended by a retrenchment, of which there are now no traces.

“ It is impossible to conceive a more striking picture of fallen grandeur and the desolating hand of war, than the inside of these walls displays.....The temples, or praws, which are very numerous, were the only buildings that escaped the fury of the conqueror ; and of these the great pyramid of Shoemadoo has alone been revered and kept in repair.”(1)

About the time when Symes visited Pegu, active exertions were being made to conciliate the Peguers, or Taliens, as the Burmans always called them ; and we may well agree with the energetic traveller, that “ no act of the Burman government is more likely to reconcile the Peguers to the Burman yoke than the restoration of their ancient place of abode, and the preservation and embellishment of the temple of Shoemadoo.”(2) The government were fully sensible of this, and the commands of his Burman majesty went forth, that the governor of Rangoon should transfer the provincial seat of government to the imperial city of Pegu. Notwithstanding these commands, the superior position of Rangoon will ever cause it to remain the more considerable of the two. Even to this day, as it was at the period of Symes’s visit in 1795, the city of Pegu is chiefly inhabited by Râhwans, or priests, *attachés* of the provincial government, and poor Peguese families, who greedily availed themselves of the king’s permission to colonise their deserted, though once magnificent metropolis. Symes estimates the population as not exceeding seven thousand. Melancholy fate of the once proud and glorious capital !

Modern Pegu is built on the ruins of the ancient city, and occupies about half its area. “ It is fenced round by a stockade from ten to twelve feet high ; on the north and east side it borders on the old wall. The plane of the

(1) Symes, vol. ii. p. 51 sqq.

(2) *Ib. id.* p. 55.

town is not yet filled with houses, but a number of new ones are building. There is one main street running east and west, crossed at right angles by two smaller streets not yet finished. At each extremity of the principal street there is a gate in the stockade, which is shut early in the evening; and after that time, entrance during the night is confined to a wicket. Each of these gates is defended by a wretched piece of ordnance, and a few musketeers, who never post sentinels, and are usually asleep in an adjoining shed. There are two inferior gates on the north and south sides of the stockade." (1)

The character of the Burmese, on which we must here say a few words, has its good points as well as its bad. "It differs," according to the testimony of one who knew them well, (2) "in many points from that of the Hindus and other East-Indians. They are more lively, active, and industrious, and though fond of repose, are seldom idle when there is an inducement for exertion. When such inducement offers, they exhibit not only great strength, but courage and perseverance, and often accomplish what we should think scarcely possible. But these valuable traits are rendered nearly useless by the want of a higher grade of civilisation. The poorest classes, furnished by a happy climate with all necessaries, at the price of only occasional labour, and the few who are above that necessity, find no proper pursuits to fill up their leisure. Books are too scarce to enable them to improve by reading, and games grow wearisome. Folly and sensuality find gratification almost without effort, and without expenditure. Sloth, then, must be the repose of the poor, and the business of the rich. Thus, life is wasted in the profitless alternation of sensual ease, rude drudgery, and native sport. No elements exist for the improvement of posterity, and successive generations pass like the crops upon their fields. Were there but a disposition to improve the mind, and distribute benefits, what majesty of piety might we not hope to see in a country so favoured with the means of subsistence, and so cheap in its modes of living! Instead of the many objects of an American's ambition, and the unceasing anxiety to amass property, the Burman sets a limit to his desires, and when that is reached, gives himself to re-

(1) Symes, vol. ii. p. 58.

(2) Malcom, vol. i. p. 220.

pose and enjoyment. Instead of wearing himself out in endeavours to equal or surpass his neighbour in dress, food, furniture, or house, he easily attains the customary standard, beyond which he seldom desires to go."

One hardly knows whether to call this "incurable idleness" (1) or no. It is certainly the same fatal constitution of character, or force of circumstances, which has ever conspired to prevent the Irish from rising in the scale of nations. But these are not the only similarities between the dispositions of the two nations. It is perfectly fair to call the Burmese the Irish of the East.

Yet they go beyond that nation in many of its worst characteristics. Servility, the inevitable consequence of despotism, prevails amongst them to a frightful extent, overcoming, in many instances, the sense of right implanted in their bosoms as men. "Indeed," says an excellent authority, (2) "every Burman considers himself a slave, not merely before the emperor and the mandarins, but before any one who is his superior, either in age or possessions. Hence he never speaks of himself to them in the first person, but always makes use of the word *Chiundò*, that is, your slave. While asking for a favour from the emperor, the mandarins, or any respectable person, he will go through so many humiliations and adorations, that one would imagine he was in the presence of a god. Even if he is desirous of obtaining something from one who is his equal, he will bow, and go on his knees, and adore him, and raise up his hands, &c." Yet gratitude is a virtue of great rarity. There is no such phrase in the language as, "I thank you." The statements of Sangermano contrast strangely with those, I think, of Crawford, whose remarks tend to the conclusion, that they never ask a favour. They consider that it is a favour to you to be allowed to gain merit by giving them something. This is not improbable. We learn, however, from others, that they will occasionally acknowledge an obligation by observing, "It is a favour."

Slavishness naturally leads to the remainder of the catalogue of mean vices. One of their principal precepts forbids lying; but there is no ordinance so universally disregarded. A person who tells the truth is considered a good sort of person, but a fool, and incapable

(1) Sangermano, p. 119.

(2) *Ibid.*

of managing his own affairs. (1) Inseparable from untruthfulness is dissimulation and deceit. They practise these, also, to perfection.

“But, as every rule will have its exceptions,” says the Jesuit, “it is not to be supposed that the Burmese have not some good qualities, and that estimable persons may not be found amongst them. Indeed, there are some persons, whose affability, courtesy and benevolence, gratitude, and other virtues, contrast strongly with the vices of their countrymen. There are instances on record of shipwrecks on their coasts, when the sufferers have been relieved in the villages, and treated with a generous hospitality, which they would probably not have experienced in many Christian countries.” (2)

Yes, let the faults of the Burmese be as they will! let them be bad in every respect! we cannot, will not, imagine these faults to be so deeply rooted, that a moderate and equitable government could not tear them up and destroy them. It is the corrupt administration, the merciless never-ending chancery-like avarice of the officials, that turns their hearts to stone, and makes them callous, and servile, and tyrannical. When the British army were at Prome, in 1825, when the Burmese tasted the blessings of Anglo-Indian justice, they showed as kindly a spirit as any could have done. It was shameful that the kindly Peguers should have been so deserted at the critical time, and that they should have borne what the English army could not be made to feel. We *must* liberate these people, we must wrest the sceptre from the palsied grasp of the cruel Burman kings, even though we retain it ourselves. Then will the blessings of civilisation, and the peaceful arts that elevate man, extend a gentle sway over this misguided and persecuted nation.

(1) Sangermano, p. 120.

(2) *Ibid.*

BOOK II.

BURMAN HISTORY.

CHAPTER I.

1687—1760.

Alompra, the liberator of Burmah.

WE may safely say with Symes, even at the present time, that "there are no countries on the habitable globe, where the arts of civilised life are understood, of which we have so limited a knowledge, as of those that lie between the British possessions in India and the empire of China." (1) And though of late years this knowledge has been materially increased, yet much remains to be told, much valuable information to be collected, ere we can boast of a full and true acquaintance with the country of Burmah and its capabilities. In the preceding pages, an attempt has been made (I am myself aware, how imperfectly and unsatisfactorily), to give a short account of what we actually know of the state of civilisation in which they live: in the following chapters, it will be attempted to present the reader with an account of the historical events that have passed in the Burman peninsula, from the rise of Alompra, the first king of any consequence, and the founder of the reigning dynasty, to the present time. I must here impress the fact of the meagreness of our knowledge of Burman history upon the reader, in order that he may not be disappointed.

The geography of Ptolemy indicates the position of Burmah only by *Aurea Regio*, *Argentea Regio*, and *Aurea*

(1) Symes, *Ava*, vol. i. p. 1.

Chersonesus. The only inference to be drawn from these facts, together with that of Ptolemy distinguishing several places as *Emporia*, is, that which Symes draws, that there was trade to those parts of Burmah and the Peninsula of Malacca at an early period.

Our knowledge of the commercial relations of the ancients with India has lately been extended by an interesting discovery made on the coast of Malabar, of Roman gold coins from Augustus downward. (1)

Early in the sixteenth century we find the Portuguese masters of Malacca, and it is from them only that we can learn anything concerning the habits of the nations then, as now, inhabiting that region. But so meagre and so overlaid with fiction are their accounts, that it would be useless to take up time and space in recounting their marvellous histories.

The Burmans, though formerly subject to the king of Pegu, became afterward masters of Ava, and caused a revolution in Pegu about the middle of the sixteenth century.....The Portuguese assisted the Burmans against the Peguers, and if we may believe Pinto, performed prodigies of valour. But their influence rapidly declined in Burmah and Arakhan; and on the ascendancy of the Dutch being established, they rapidly sunk into insignificance and contempt. The English and Dutch appear both to have had settlements in Burmah in the beginning of the seventeenth century; but on the misconduct of the settlers, they were banished from Ava, and no European of any nation was permitted to enter the country. In 1687, however, we find the English at Syriam and Negrais, trading rather as private adventurers, than as on the part of the India Company. On the latter island, however, the government of Fort St. George had established a settlement. But men and money were wanting, and the colony seemed to have languished on, just keeping, as it were, above high-water mark.

About the year 1740, the Peguers in the provinces of Dalla, Martaban, Tongo, and Prome, raised the standard of revolt, and the nation being split into factions, a civil war ensued. In 1744, the British factory in Syriam was destroyed, and thus an almost fatal blow was given to the

(1) The particulars will be found in Captain Drury's paper in No. V. of the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal for 1851; and in Allen's Indian Mail, vol. x. p. 265.

commercial interests at stake in the country. The war lasted long, and was doubtful enough in its character, till the Peguers, by obtaining some indifferent arms from a few Europeans still in the country, gained some advantages over the Burmans, and pursuing their victorious career, they invested the city of Ava in 1752. It soon surrendered, for the Burmese were sick at heart, and utterly discouraged. The king, whose name, according to Sangermano, (1) was Chioekmen, though Symes states it to have been Dwcepdee, (2) was seized, and, together with the whole court, carried to Pegu, where, after receiving kind treatment for some time, he was barbarously murdered, after witnessing the slaughter of all his wives. Two of his sons, however, escaped into Siam, where they were kindly received.

Bonna Della, or Beinga Della, king of Pegu, assured of the tranquillity of the country under his administration, returned to Pegu, leaving Apporaza in the government of the capital of Burmah. For some time everything seemed at peace, and all seemed to submit to the new government with a good grace; but the lull was only the temporary calm that precedes a furious tempest. The avenger of Burman independence was about to arise, and tumble the now victorious king of Pegu from his triumphal chariot!

The chieftain of Moutzoboo, a small place about twelve miles from the river, had given his allegiance, but he brooded over the wrongs of this race. (3) He felt that the Peguers were as dirt under the feet of the Burmans; and it is not to be doubted, that he foresaw in a rebellion some advantage to himself. He was ambitious, and resolved to set all on the cast of a die. His name, Aoingzaya (jaya), was a good omen to him; (4) and we may well conceive that the resolute chief counted on the aid of the divinity, since we find him assuming the style or regal name of Alaong-B'hura, or "The Vowed to Buddha." (5) Like Charles Edward Stuart, he seemed to resolve on victory or a death, devoted to the God of his country.

When Beinga Della reached Pegu, he caused a proclamation to be made throughout his territories, in which

(1) Burmese Empire, p. 47.

(2) Ava, vol. i. p. 12.

(3) My sketch of the Burmese revolution is derived from Symes.

(4) The first is a Burmese word signifying victory; the second, Pali, for the same.—Crawford, vol. ii. p. 281.

(5) Jaucigny, *Indo-Chine*, p. 255.

he set forth in grandiloquent, and insolent expressions, the results of his campaigns. The proclamation, couched in the most odious and contemptuous words, increased the hatred of the Burmans, and caused them to long the more for the hour of vengeance.

Alompra, or Alaong-B'hura, had at this time about a hundred followers on whom he could depend body and soul. Upon hearing of the proclamation, he judged that it was a favourable juncture for operation; he, therefore, in his capacity of governor of Moutzoboo, strengthened the stockade surrounding the town, and conducted everything so well, that he never caused any suspicion in the minds of the Peguers. Indeed, their attention and force was concentrated on the Burmese frontier, in order to oppose and destroy any force collected by the sons of Chioekmen. It may readily be understood, therefore, that the fifty Peguers at Moutzoboo, were easily overpowered and despatched by Alompra and his adherents. Probably he availed himself of some act of oppression or licentiousness on the part of the careless soldiery, and attacked them when least expected. Not a man escaped.

Alompra now showed himself to be as dexterous a politician, as he was prompt in action. Immediately after this event, he wrote to Apporaza in the most humble terms, expressing the greatest sorrow for the unhappy occurrences that had taken place at Moutzoboo, representing it as a provoked affair wholly unlooked for, and as transitory as it was violent in its effects. It is even probable that he urged upon the governor of Ava to investigate the matter, in order that his attachment to the government of Pegu might be made more apparent. In conclusion, he expressed himself individually obliged to the governor for his forbearance, and professed himself an adherent of Beinga Della. This epistle had the desired effect. Alompra's only object had been to gain time, and in this he perfectly succeeded. Apporaza, deceived by his humility, took no immediate measures against him, and even quitted Ava, leaving the government in the hands of his nephew, Dotachew, with orders to keep Alompra in strict confinement, when, in fact, the Peguers should be able to secure his person.

The troop which had been detached for the arrest of Alompra was considerably astonished at finding their entrance into Moutzoboo disputed. The gates of the

stockade were closed, and on their demanding an entry, they were only laughed at and defied. What could they do? They were ill-armed, and ill-provisioned; their discipline was lax; their cause rotten. If they opposed the Burmans, there was little hope of success; and if they ran away, the dreadful fate which their wives and children would suffer stared them in the face. (1)

Under these circumstances it was plain to them that they could only try the issue of a battle. These thoughts may have passed in quick succession through their minds; and while they were yet uncertain, Alompra and his gallant band burst into the midst, and attacked them furiously with missiles, swords, and spears. The affrighted Peguers, scarcely acquainted with the power of the clumsy muskets they had with them, though most probably they had none or but few of these, feeling that now, indeed, the Devoted to Buddha and his desperate irresistible band were upon them, threw away their arms and fled; Alompra and the rest pursuing them on their way for two miles and more. The number of the Peguers thus routed are estimated at about one thousand. How fearful must the contest have appeared to the victory-drunken soldiers! The Burmese host seeming tenfold the number in the gray dawn of the morning, came down like an avalanche upon them, and swept all away whom it did not destroy.

After an irregular pursuit for some distance, Alompra returned to his fortress, aware of the danger of trusting himself too near to a less panic-struck population. Arrived at that place, he addressed a few words to his comrades, telling them that they had now cast their fortunes together, and that he and they were in as great danger; he called upon them all for assistance, and he invited the Burman towns in the neighbourhood to assist him in the glorious work he had begun so auspiciously. The Burmans were scarcely disposed to lend a willing ear to his exhortations, yet some places gave in their adhesion to his government.

Such was the first decisive combat that was to change the fortunes of Burmah.

Dotachew, with the characteristic irresolution of a deputy, seems to have procrastinated frightfully. Probably

(1) See book i. chap. ii. p. 40.

he was a young man, utterly unacquainted with the art of war, and placed in the responsible position he occupied by his uncle, merely that the important office should not go out of the family; possibly, his very inefficiency, by the strange contradiction that always pervades a court, led to his promotion; at all events he was utterly unfit for his business, and at this time, when a few energetic measures would have crushed the rebellion at once, he was peculiarly unfitted by his disposition for this important duty. He was uncertain whether it would be more advisable to march against Alompra with the forces at his command, not exceeding three thousand, or to wait for reinforcements from Prome; the third course was to retreat, or rather, in this case, to run away. I have not space to enter into a discussion of which the most advisable measure would have been; yet had he set lustily forward, and cheered his men by a good example, he would have led them on to a certain, though perhaps not easy, victory. However, he neither marched forward, or waited at Ava; but discretion seeming to be the better portion of his valour, he ran away, and, terrified at the reports, no doubt exaggerated in every way, of the growing power of the enemy, he never stopped till he reached Pegu, toward the latter end of the autumn in the year 1753. Alompra meanwhile advanced on Ava, and, assisted by the enslaved Burmans in the capital, took the city, and put the few Peguers who had not pursued the valiant fortunes of Dotachew, to death. Alompra, however, hearing that the Peguese governor had fled, did not personally conduct the operations at Ava, but deputed this to his second son, Shembuan, himself remaining, or returning to Moutzoboo.

Thus matters remained until Beinga Della, the king of Pegu, afraid of losing the frontier provinces of Prome, Keounzeik and Tambouterra, assembled a large army at Syriam under the generalship of Apporaza. This force departed up the Irawadi, in the month of January, 1754. Both France and England had established factories at Syriam again, at this time; and, as the English leaned toward the Burman side, that was sufficient reason for the French to espouse the cause of Beinga Della. However, all their aid was secret, and until their neighbourhood became the seat of war, they did not proceed to active measures.

Apporaza, over whom a species of fatality seemed to hang, had again chosen a most improper and unfortunate season for commencing operations. He proceeded with extreme difficulty up the river, and, while his troops were exhausting their strength amid the marshes of the Irawadi, the Burmans were preparing for the worst, and, having possession of a fine country, felt little uneasiness at the approach of the jaded Peguers. No opposition was made to Apporaza, until he arrived near Ava itself, where straggling parties of the Burmans began to harass his army. When near enough to the fort, he sent a message to Shembuan, calling upon him to surrender, in which case his life would be spared; but vengeance of the most frightful kind was in store for him if he resisted. Shembuan, well knowing what value was to be attached to the professions of Apporaza, merely replied, "that he would defend his post to the last extremity."

Apporaza, not willing to waste time in a fruitless siege, determined to throw some cold water on the Burman cause, and particularly on the garrison of Ava, by accomplishing something elsewhere. He thus hoped to restore the drooping spirits of his men, among whom sickness and labour had spread a sad confusion. Therefore he quitted his position at Ava, to oppose Alompra, who had collected a tremendous force at Keoum-meouin, both soldiers and war-boats. Here again, though this was decidedly the most obstinately-contested battle, the Peguers gave way, and a report spreading that Shembuan was coming to attack their rear, they fled hastily. Shembuan presently did come, and the two armies pursued the luckless Peguers for many miles, thus gaining another great and important victory.

Yet the Peguers were not discouraged. Preparations were made to send forth another army to meet the fate of that which Apporaza had led to death, not victory. Furthermore, the Peguers showed themselves devoid of all political sagacity, in taking a measure at this critical time which could not fail to seal the doom of his party. I said before, that the old king of Burmah was among the Peguers, and had received kind treatment; now, they completely changed their tactics, charged him with a conspiracy, a charge probably not without foundation; implicated numbers of the Burman nobility in the neighbourhood, and agreed upon a simultaneous slaughter of the

obnoxious persons. Accordingly, on the 13th of October, the Peguers rose, and first torturing and slaughtering the court of Chioekmen, drowned him in a sack, and proceeded to the slaughter of the principal Burmans. The measure was not without its effects. The Burmans of Prome, Donabew, and the remaining border provinces, retaliated, and deserted to Alompra.

But events were passing in his court of no little significance. The eldest son of the deposed king had joined Alompra with a large force of the Quois or Yoos tribe inhabiting the country of Muddora, east of Ava. But the prince, not having brains enough to see that Alompra was fighting for himself, and not for any prince, as arrogantly as imprudently assumed the style and title of king. However Alompra would not brook two kings in Burmah, and the prince, soon seeing his mistake, fled to Siam. Alompra, enraged that the pseudo-king had escaped, slaughtered above a thousand of the Quois tribe, under pretence of a conspiracy.

Beinga Della, in the beginning of 1755, marched from Pegu upon the city of Prome, then occupied by a garrison of Burmans. Here, however, he met with no degree of success, and when Meinlaw Tzezo, the commander sent by Alompra to relieve the town, approached, they had not the sense to engage him in open fight. After a little skirmishing, therefore, he eluded them, and threw himself into the place.

Forty days passed without the Peguers gaining any advantage, yet they prolonged the siege of Prome with no little obstinacy. But Alompra, with one of those tremendous marches for which he was so celebrated, soon came rushing down upon them, sweeping away men, stockades, war-boats, and everything else. Yet considerable bravery was exhibited in the naval portion of the battle. "Instead of his ineffectual fire from ill-directed musketry," says Symes,(1) "the boats closed, and the highest personal prowess was evinced on both sides; knives, spears, and swords, were their weapons; after a long and bloody contest, victory declared for the Burmans, whilst the vanquished Peguers sought safety in a precipitate flight."

This defeat spread consternation and horror throughout the Peguese part of the population, and while the Bur-

(1) *Ava*, vol. i. p. 34.

mans hailed the approaching change, the others fled in all directions. It was not any transitory panic, like many of those which had taken place before, but an enduring terror, which relaxed both their mental and bodily strength, and drove them from their homes, and they wandered, Orestes-like, through the land, not daring to lay their heads anywhere, for they knew not when the enemy would be upon them.

No wonder, then, if a reconnoitring party of the Burmese discovered, on the 17th of February, 1756, that Bassein was utterly deserted by the Peguese population. The Burmese that were in the place joined Alompra's standard, and the populous emporium of Bassein was left to the English, who still remained under Captain Baker in their factory. On the 23rd, the Burman force returned, and marched up to the British post. Captain Baker received them peacefully, and claimed protection for the servants and property of the India Company, which was granted him. After remaining a short while, and burning the remainder of the town, they retired to Kioukiounee, a town on the opposite side of the river Bassein.

From this time to the 13th March, nothing of much consequence occurred; but on that day Alompra, seeing the advantages likely to result from an alliance with England, sent a deputation to Captain Baker with a letter for Mr. Brooke, the head of the factories, then resident at Negrais. On the return of the captain with an order from Mr. Brooke that the deputies should accompany him to Negrais, the Burmans went to that place to transact the business. The objects of the embassy were not settled until the 26th, when the deputies and Captain Baker went back to Bassein. But what was their astonishment to find it in the hands of the Peguers, who had occupied the place three thousand strong. The captain was therefore obliged to send back the deputies to Negrais. By the 23rd of April, however, the district was again in the hands of the Burmans, as Alompra had again engaged and defeated Apporaza, at Synyangong.

The deputies now returned to Bassein, at which place they arrived on the 3rd of June, leaving it again on the 5th for Dagon, as Rangoon was then called, where Alompra was then staying.

“The French and English factories at Syriam were at this time in a state of rivalry, such as might be expected

from the spirit of national emulation, and the avidity of traders on a narrow scale; the situation of both became at this juncture highly critical; danger approached, from which they could not hope to be entirely exempt. It was not to be expected that they would be suffered to remain in neutral tranquillity, indifferent spectators of so serious a contest: it therefore became necessary to adopt some decided line of conduct, in order to avoid being considered as a common enemy, whilst the contending powers seemed equally anxious to attack them. In this difficult situation, neither the French nor the English seem to have acted with policy or candour; and the imprudence of certain individuals finally involved others, as well as themselves, in fatal consequences.

“ Monsieur Bourno, the chief of the French factory, in the interest of the Peguers, but apprehensive of the power, and dreading the success of the Birmans,⁽¹⁾ had recourse to dissimulation, and endeavoured to steer a middle course. Under pretence of occupying a station where he could more effectually aid the Peguers, he embarked on board a French ship, and with two other vessels belonging to his nation, dropped down from Syriam, and moored in the stream of the Rangoon river. Finding, soon after, that Alompra was likely to be victorious, he determined, if possible, to secure an interest in that quarter. With this intent he quitted his ship, accompanied by two of his countrymen, and proceeded in a boat to Dagon, where Alompra received him with marks of distinction and kindness; but on the second day after the departure of M. Bourno, the officer whom he left in charge of the ship during his absence, in concert with a missionary who had long resided at the factory, either impelled by fear, or prevailed upon by some secret influence, weighed anchor suddenly, and returned to the Peguers at Syriam, without permission from his commander, or even advising him of his intention.

“ So extraordinary a step surprised Alompra exceedingly; he taxed Bourno with deceit; the Frenchman protested his own innocence, and argued the improbability of his assenting to any such measure whilst he remained in the Birman camp. He sent an order to his officers to return immediately; an injunction that was disregarded

(1) So Symes always spells the word. It is now generally spelt Birmans.

by them, under plea of their commander being a prisoner. He then requested leave from Alompra to go in person, and bring back the ship; to this the king consented, on condition of leaving one of his attendants (Savine, a youth) as a hostage for his certain return.

“From the procedure of Mr. Brooke, resident at Negrais, in his reception of the Birman deputies, and the aid of military stores sent by him to the Birmans, the English, when it became necessary to avow the side they meant to espouse, seem to have declared explicitly for the Birmans; and this principle was adopted not only by the resident at Negrais, but also by the factory at Syriam. The *Hunter* schooner, belonging to the India Company; the *Elizabeth*, a country ship, commanded by Captain Swain; and two other vessels, left Syriam in the month of May, and joined the Birmans at Dagon. In the beginning of June the Company’s snow *Arcot*, bound to Negrais, commanded by a Captain Jackson, and having on board Mr. Whitehill, a gentleman in the service of the East-India Company, proceeding to Negrais in an official capacity, put into the Rangoon river through stress of weather. A boat that had been sent in to fetch a pilot returned with an account of the state of affairs; and brought a letter and an invitation from Alompra to Captain Jackson, to carry his vessel up to Dagon, promising him every aid that the place afforded. On the 6th of June the *Arcot* reached Dagon, and Mr. Whitehill went on shore to pay his respects to the Birman king, by whom he was received in a manner that gave no apparent cause for complaint..... Until the arrival of the *Arcot*, with Mr. Jackson and Mr. Whitehill, no subject of offence seems to have been given to the English by the Birmans.”(1)

Apporaza had about this time returned to Syriam, and assumed the command of the Peguese army. He saw, with sorrow and disgust, that the English were turning to the side of the usurper, and he attempted a diversion in favour of his master by a negotiation with Captain Jackson. This gentleman listened readily to the representations of the general, and he attempted in every way to cause a breach between Alompra and the British. That his endeavours met with some success may be judged by the fact, that when, a short time after, the Peguers made

(1) Symes, vol. i. pp. 43-49.

an attack upon Dagon, the English ships maintained a strict neutrality, though they allowed the Peguers to be beaten back. The Burmans became somewhat suspicious, still the assurances of friendship, and the promises of assistance, lulled them to rest again. Alompra quitted the district,—a sufficient guarantee for his trust in the English; and after quelling the insurrection raised by the prince on the Siamese frontier, he does not appear to have returned to Dagon. Meinla-Meingoun was appointed commander of the army.

About this time the English commenced a correspondence with the Peguers, and concerted an attack with them in which they would assist them. Thus were the Peguers to be assisted by both the European fleets! “Confiding in their new allies, and assured of victory, the war-boats of the Peguers during the night dropped down the Pegue river, and, with the French ships, moored in the stream of the Irawadi, waiting the return of tide to carry them to Rangoon. Dawn of day discovered them to the Birmans, whose general immediately sent for the English gentlemen, to consult on the best means of defence. At this interview the Birmans candidly acquainted Mr. Whitehill how ill satisfied they were with the conduct of the English commanders during the late action, and desired a promise of more effective assistance on the present occasion. Mr. Whitehill replied, that without the Company’s orders he was not authorized to commence hostilities on any nation; but if the Peguers fired on the English ships, it would be considered as an act of aggression, and resented accordingly. How much it is to be lamented,” exclaims Symes, “that such prudent and equitable principles were not better observed! the departure from them affixed a stain on the national honour, which the lapse of more than forty years has not been able to expunge.”(1)

The forces of the Peguers were two large French ships, an armed snow, and two hundred teilee, or war-boats. In the afternoon, when within cannon-shot, the French ships came to anchor, and commenced cannonading the Burmese fleet, which, to shelter itself from the fire and the galling musketry from the Peguese boats, had pulled into a creek, under a grove of mango-trees, whence the fire was returned. They had here, too, raised a kind of fortifica-

(1) Ava, vol. i. pp. 53-55.

tion, with a battery of a few ship cannon, which, from the awkwardness of the gunners, were of little use. "At this juncture," continues Symes, (1) "the English ships *Hunter*, *Arcot*, and *Elizabeth* commenced a fire on the Birman fleet. Thus assailed by unexpected foes, the Birmans were obliged to abandon their boats, and take shelter in the grove. Had the Peguers improved the critical opportunity, and pursued their advantage with resolution, this action might have retrieved their declining interests, and restored them to the possession of the lower provinces. In vain the Europeans persuaded them to attempt the capture of the Birman fleet; too timid to expose themselves to a close discharge of musketry from the grove, they were contented with the *éclat* of having compelled the enemy to retreat from their boats, and the rest of the day was spent in distant random firing. During the night the English ships removed out of the reach of small-arms, two men being killed on board the *Arcot*. The Peguers kept their situation for some days, during which much irregular skirmishing passed; when, having exhausted their ammunition without advancing their cause, the Peguers thought fit to return to Syriam, accompanied by the English and French ships, leaving the Birmans in possession of the fortified grove, and the lines of the newly-projected town."

On the arrival of the English, Apporaza, who seems to have been well aware of the utility of such allies, received them with every mark of kindness, and wrote to Mr. Brooke at Negrais, offering him various advantages if he would enter into a compact with them. Mr. Brooke, disguising the feelings of vexation that he must have felt at the conduct of his officers, returned a courteous and friendly answer, but required the presence of Mr. Whitehill and the English vessels. Accordingly, that gentleman, escorted by twenty war-boats, quitted Syriam, and arrived at Negrais on the 26th of August. He was followed by the *Hunter* schooner, and the *Arcot* only remained behind, as it had to undergo some repairs before being seaworthy. All this time Mr. Brooke was continuing his negotiations with Alompra, and he despatched Captain Baker and Lieutenant North to the king. These gentlemen proceeded up the river but slowly, the torrent being

(1) Vol. i. pp. 56-57.

swollen and rapid. Above Prome they met a detachment of Burman troops proceeding to Dagon and the newly-founded city of Rangoon. Captain Baker had an interview with the chief, who was sanguine as to the result of the war. The meeting was embarrassing on both sides; on the part of Captain Baker, because he had the strange occurrences connected with the English vessels to account for; and on the part of the Burman general, as he was certain of the power and influence of the English, and totally ignorant of their intentions. Captain Baker had the farther misfortune to lose his colleague, Lieutenant North, who died of dysentery a day or two after continuing his journey. On the 8th of September, however, he reached Ava, the former metropolis, where he was civilly received by the governor. On the 16th he was summoned to Moutzoboo, to attend on the Golden Foot, for Alompra had now assumed the titles of the empire, as well as the emoluments.

The interview was a characteristic one on both sides. The king, with all the pride of an Eastern potentate elevated to the throne by his own endeavours, swelled with arrogance and vaunted of his successes. He justly censured the duplicity, real or apparent, of the English at Dagon, reminding the envoy that he had treated them kindly during his stay; he said that it was far from grateful thus to break all the promises that had been made.

Captain Baker replied with expressions of regret; he solemnly declared that Mr. Brooke knew nothing of the affair, had been very angry at its occurrence, and that the hostile movement was utterly unauthorized by the English resident. Alompra listened with attention and seeming satisfaction. So ended the first audience.

At a subsequent meeting, permission was granted by the king for the erection of factories at Dagon and Bassein; but the English never are satisfied, and therefore Captain Baker pressed his majesty to cede the island of Negrais. Strange it is, that, when, but a few days previously, the Burman cause had been totally deserted by the English, yet, upon the strength of a few paltry professions, the Burmese were supposed to have had sufficient confidence in them, as to lead to the surrender of an island of some little extent, commanding the finest port in the dominions of Alompra. However, the king showed policy, too; for he neither granted nor denied their request, but left it

for future decision. Baker was then dismissed, and re-embarked for Negrais on the 29th of September.

During this time, the Peguers had attempted the capture of the Burman post at Dagon, with the assistance of the *Arcot*, and two other English ships. Ten thousand Peguers marched round by land, and three hundred war-boats, together with a French vessel, accompanied the English ships. They were again repulsed by the Burmans, who, probably under European direction, constructed fire-rafts, by which the French ship was placed in great peril. The land-forces, weakened by their own numbers, and deprived of the co-operation of the fleet, retreated, and "never dared to hazard another enterprise." (1)

But the Peguers were to suffer more. The Devoted to Buddha was coming, and who could stand against his bands? He attacked the fort of Syriam by land and water, and choosing the time of ebb-tide, when the French ship was aground, he attacked it with gun-boats. Upon this, Bourno desired to change sides again, and sent a letter to Alompra, offering fresh terms of accommodation. But the Peguers suspected him of treachery, and removed him and his adherents into the fort of Syriam, leaving the factory and vessel deserted. These Alompra immediately seized, and he now let famine and disease do its work in the over-crowded place, and never quitted his position until the month of July, 1756. The Peguers were gradually lulled into security, and Alompra seized a favourable opportunity, made a vigorous assault upon the place, and, though most of the garrison escaped, he made all the Europeans prisoners.

"It has already appeared to have been the determined policy of the French to espouse the cause of the Peguers; and had succours from Pondicherry arrived before the state of things became too desperate, affairs would probably have worn a different aspect, and the Peguers obtained such an addition to their strength, as would have enabled them to conclude a peace on advantageous terms. But assistance in war, to be effectual, must be timely; unless applied while the scales hang nearly even, it often comes too late, and is found not only to be useless, but even productive of deeper disappointment. In the present case, the French brought those supplies of which the

(1) Symes, vol. i. p. 67.

Peguers had long buoyed themselves with hopes, at the unfortunate moment when the communication was cut off, when no relief could be conveyed to them, and all prospect of retrieving their disastrous fortunes had completely vanished.

“Mons. Dupleix, governor of Pondicherry, a man whose comprehensive mind perceived with clearness whatever could benefit his nation at this juncture, deeply engaged in the important contest that was ultimately to determine the sovereignty of the East, being aware of the consequence of maintaining an influence in Pegu, (1) had, notwithstanding the exigencies of his own situation, equipped two ships, the *Galathié* and *Diligent*, vessels of force, well manned and armed, and sent them, with a supply of military stores, to the assistance of the Peguers.” (2)

The *Galathié* speedily arrived off the Burmese coast, but in consequence of mistaking the mouth of the Setang for that of the Rangoon embouchement, it did not get there in time. Alompra's spies, however, had already informed him of the approach of the inimical vessel, and when the captain sent up a boat for a pilot, it was seized. Alompra, then, after forcing Bourno to write a letter, encouraging the *Galathié* to come up the river, sent it with a pilot. Unfortunately for the French commander, he fell into the trap, and on arriving at Rangoon, he first learned in what position he was placed, and how fatal the matter had been to him. The *Galathié* was then seized, the arms and ammunition brought on shore, and the papers proved that these supplies were intended for the Peguers. (3) Alompra, upon being assured of this treachery, ordered the instant execution of Bourno, Martine, and the rest of the French prisoners. “This san-

(1) Compare the following observations of a late excellent writer upon India. “M. Dupleix's wonderful talent for diplomacy and intrigue soon obtained signal triumphs. His emissaries were everywhere; and the native princes were all as fickle as faithless. In his intrigues with them he is said to have derived wonderful assistance from his wife, who was born in India, and perfectly understood not only the languages, but also the character of the natives. In his union with this lady, who is described as being even more ambitious than himself, we may probably trace the cause of the essentially Oriental spirit of many of his proceedings.”—Macfarlane's *History of British India*, chap. iii. p. 31. “We shall, hereafter, have occasion to return to this work, in connection with the Burmese war in 1824-26.

(2) Symes, vol. i. pp. 70-72.

(3) Sangermano, however, shows, by the ordinance of the port, that the seizure of the vessel and its contents was nothing remarkable.—See his *Burmese Empire*, p. 170.

guinary mandatè," concludes Symes, (1) "was obeyed with unrelenting promptitude; a few seamen and Lascars alone escaped, and these were preserved for no other purpose than to be rendered of use in the further prosecution of the war, and survived but to experience all the miseries of hopeless bondage."

The *Diligent* was more fortunate. A storm had compelled her to take shelter at the Nicobar islands, where she was obliged to remain some time. Adverse reports spread quickly, and the captain soon heard the sad fate of his countrymen, and he returned to Pondicherry with the evil tidings. The time had now passed, and Peguese supremacy and French ascendancy in Burmah might be numbered among the past events of history.

It is strange, with the savage character that the man ever bore, that the French were the only victims on this occasion; and it certainly argues more in favour of his justice than almost any action of his life. Policy, too, prevented him from offending the English at the time, though it is useless to disguise the fact, that they deserved quite as much, and even more than the French. The measures of Bourno had been infinitely more decided than those of the English, and an open enemy is ever more of a friend than a treacherous, creeping friend. But the tragedy was not at an end.

Though the fall of Syriam "had determined the fate of the Peguers," yet they did not wholly give up hope. I have already in a former chapter given a description of the capital of Pegu,(2) which I need not therefore repeat; but still the following passage from Symes will prove of use in comprehending the details of the siege:(3)—

"Situating on an extensive plain, Pegue was surrounded with a high and solid wall, flanked by small towers, and strengthened on each face by demi-bastions, equidistant; a broad ditch contained about three feet depth of water; wells or reservoirs supplied the town; the stupendous pagoda of Shoemadoo,(4) nearly central, built on an artificial eminence, and inclosed by a substantial wall of brick, served as a citadel, and afforded an enlarged view of the adjacent country. The extent, however, of the works, the troops necessary to defend them, and the number of inhabitants within the walls, operated to the disad-

(1) Vol. i. p. 74.

(3) Symes, vol. i. p. 76.

(2) Book i. chap. vi. p. 103.

(4) Book i. chap. iii. p. 56.

vantage of the besieged, and aggravated the distresses they were shortly to endure."

For Alompra, evidently perceiving the excellence of the plan pursued at Syriam in reducing his foes, again determined to await the natural course of events, and let starvation do its work in the ranks of the enemy. The siege of Pegu by Alompra is not dissimilar to the siege of Mexico by Cortés, and indeed, the whole progress of the movements of Alompra are worthy of comparison with the acts of the conqueror of Mexico. Alike indomitable in character, energetic and swift in action, and fitfully cruel, though not insensible to the gentler voice of remonstrance, they stand as nearly side by side, as the semi-civilised, impulsive, and naturally politic Oriental, and the sternly educated, calculating, though rapidly acting European can. This is not the place for such a discussion, or many interesting coincidences might doubtless be elicited from a comparison of both their lives.

As the Mexicans could look down from their *teocalli*, and behold the relentless band of Spain around their walls, so could the Peguers look from the pagoda of Shoemadoo, and behold the natural foes of their race waiting without, like sheriff's officers, until the beleaguered were too weak to hold the door against the besiegers. Meinla-Mein-goung was sent with a powerful detachment to commence the circumvallation of the town, and in a few days the Devoted to Buddha followed with the remainder of the army, and "sat down before the city," in the month of January, 1757.

For two months the Burmans persevered in this plan, and, ever vigilant, allowed none to escape. The immense multitude of Peguers, though but a small remnant of the nation, caused want to be soon felt; discontent and mutiny were the consequence of the scarcity of provision, and it seemed as if the nation would fly to arms against itself. The danger of open revolt became every day more imminent. The royal family and officers looked wistfully and anxiously from the pagodas, watching for the first intimation of any movement among their relentless besiegers. But it was all in vain. At this juncture, Beinga Della summoned an assembly of all the family and chiefs of any consequence. Apporaza, the king's brother; Chouparea, his son-in-law and nephew; and a general named Talabaan, were among the principal persons in the assembly. The

king, after laying before them the utter hopelessness of resistance; after reminding them of the differences existing between parties in the streets of Pegu itself; after calling upon them to avoid, by the best means in their power, the dreadful consequences of still stubbornly prolonging their own sufferings, and feeding the rage of their enemies, advised a timely submission, and offered to present his unmarried daughter to Alompra as a means of deprecating his anger. Such an act of homage, he concluded, was the only way he perceived of turning away the resentment of the Burman conqueror.

All heard this proposition with sorrow; but there was nothing for it but to acquiesce. One chief present, however, ventured to remonstrate, and this was the valiant general Talabaan. He rose, and inveighing bitterly against such a course, reprobated the idea of submission; he concluded a short but comprehensive speech, "with an offer to sally forth at the head of six hundred chosen followers, and either raise the siege, and procure an honourable peace, or perish in the attempt; provided, in the event of success, the king would promise to bestow on him his daughter as the reward of valour"(1)—for Talabaan secretly loved the maiden.

The king assented to these terms, believing that Talabaan would also perform what he had so well planned, and the council was dismissed. Apporaza, however, always indirectly or directly the cause of misfortune, having grown envious of the growing influence of Talabaan, worked upon the king's mind, representing that an alliance with Alompra was far more glorious than an alliance with such a pitiful, low-born personage as Talabaan. Overcome by the artful representations of Apporaza, seconded by the other chiefs, the king rescinded his assent. At this, Talabaan, disgusted with the ingratitude of Beinga Della, assembled a few faithful attendants, sallied forth from the city, and forced his way through the midst of the Burmans. He then escaped to the Setang river, which he crossed, and then marched to his family estate of Mondimaa or Martaban.

After the secession of Talabaan, the former measure proposed by the king of Pegu was carried out. Arrangements were made between the rival monarchs, and Beinga

(1) Symes, vol. i. p. 81,

Della was reinstated in his position as king of Pegu, being, however, subject to the king of Ava.

“ Some days elapsed in festive ceremonies, during which both the besiegers and the besieged had frequent and almost uninterrupted intercourse ; the guards on both sides relaxed in their vigilance, and small parties of Birman found their way into the city, whilst the Peguers visited the Birman camp without molestation or inquiry. Alompra, who, it appears, had little intention of adhering to the recent compact, privately introduced bodies of armed men, with directions to secrete themselves within the city, until their services should be required ; arms and ammunition were also conveyed and lodged in places of concealment. Matters, however, were not managed with such circumspection as to prevent discovery ; Chouparea, the king’s nephew, received intimation of the meditated treachery ; he instantly ordered the gates of the city to be closed, and having found out the repositories where the weapons were lodged, and detected many Birman in disguise, he gave directions to put to death every man of that nation who should be found within the walls, and opened a fire upon such part of the Birman camp as was most exposed to the artillery of the fort.

“ Hostilities now recommenced with exasperated fury ; Apporaza with his royal niece were detained in the Birman camp ; the uncle under close confinement, whilst the lady was consigned to the guardians of the female apartments. The Peguers having gained no accession to their strength, and added little to their stores, during the short interval of tranquillity, were not in a better condition than before to resist the enemy. The Birman observed the system of warfare which they at first adopted ; so that in six weeks, famine had again reduced the garrison to a deplorable state of wretchedness and want ; the most loathsome reptiles were eagerly sought after and devoured, and the clamours of the soldiers could no longer be appeased. A few secret hoards of grain were by chance discovered, and many more were suspected to exist ; the crowd thronged tumultuously round the quarters of Chouparea, on whom, after the secession of Talabaan, and the imprisonment of Apporaza, the care of defending the fortress entirely devolved. In order to silence and satisfy those whom he could not restrain, he ordered a general search for grain, and granted permission to the soldiers forcibly to enter

whatever houses fell under suspicion. This license was diligently improved, and the house of a near relation of the king was discovered to contain more grain than either the present situation of affairs or his own wants could justify. The deposit was demanded, and as resolutely refused. The crowd, authorized by the permission of Chouparea, proceeded to take by violence what was not to be obtained by entreaty; a riot ensued, in which some lives were lost, and the prince was at length obliged to abandon his house. Repairing to the royal residence, he uttered violent invectives against Chouparea, whom he accused to the king of harbouring an intention to deprive his sovereign of life, and seize upon the imperial throne; and advised his majesty rather to throw himself on the generosity of the besiegers, and obtain the best terms practicable, than hazard the danger to which his person and kingdom were exposed from the perfidy of a faithless and powerful subject. The king, whose imbecility seems to have equalled his ill fortune, lent an ear to the complaints of a man stimulated by sudden rage and personal jealousy: the unhappy and distracted monarch resolved to pursue his counsel; but being too timid openly to avow his weakness and suspicion, he sent secret proposals to Alompra to surrender the city to him, stipulating for life alone, and leaving the rest to the discretion of the conqueror. According to the plan agreed on, the Birmans advanced to the gates, which were immediately deserted: the Peguers fled in the utmost panic; many escaped in the confusion: the Pegue king was made prisoner and the city given up to indiscriminate plunder."(1)

An affecting episode in the fate of the Peguese monarchy was, however, yet to come. Talabaan, it will be recollected, had fled to Martaban, where his family resided. This chief was as obnoxious to Alompra as any one of the Peguese party. His influence was too great to admit of his being spared or forgotten. Therefore, after the reduction of Pegu, and the submission of all the country around, he marched to Martaban with a considerable force. With the few adherents which still clung to the Peguese general, resistance was absurd; he therefore fled to the woods, thinking that against him alone would the resentment of Alompra be directed. Those that remained

(1) Symes, vol. i. pp. 83-85.

were seized by the king, and the unfortunate Talabaan heard in his retreat, that if he himself did not surrender, the innocent members of his family would be sacrificed to the fury of the conqueror. All personal feelings of fear now faded from his bosom; he thought no longer of the vengeance that awaited him, but surrendering himself a voluntary prisoner, he thus preserved the dear relations "whom he loved more than life." Alompra was so much struck with the unexpected heroism of the outcast, that he pardoned him, and subsequently raised him to a high position in his court.

At this time the settlement of Negrais was in a critical position. The actors there had changed, and a Mr. Newton had succeeded Captain Howe, resident of the East-India Company, upon Mr. Brooke's retirement. To this gentleman Alompra sent a message, requiring his presence at Prome. Mr. Newton deputed Ensign Lyster thither. The envoy left Negrais on the 27th of June, 1757, and proceeded to Bassein, where he had to await the arrival of Antonio, a native interpreter descended from a Portuguese family. On the 13th of July, he was again *en route*, and on the 23rd he met Alompra on the Irawadi. He immediately had an audience, which led, as all first audiences do, to nothing. On the 29th, the king halted at Myan-aong, where a second audience took place. Alompra again adverted to the English treachery of Dagon, and, presenting some gifts of little value, in return for the presents from Negrais, he left the remainder to be settled between Lyster, Antonio, and the Acka-woon, or governor of the port of Bassein. After some boggling on both sides, the island of Negrais was ceded to the India Company in perpetuity, together with a piece of ground opposite Bassein, for a factory. The Company were to give arms and military stores in return, and aid against the king of Tavoy. This treaty, the result of bribery, according to Symes, (1) received the sanction of the king. On the 22nd of August, 1757, formal possession was taken by Ensign Lyster.

After these events had taken place, Alompra returned to Moutzoboo, the capital of the kingdom, and commenced an expedition against the inhabitants of Cassay; but he soon returned to the south, on learning that the Peguers had again revolted.

(1) Ava, vol. 1, p. 99,

Many of that nation had fled across the frontier of Siam, whence they now returned in great force, defeated Namdeoda, the Burmese general, and recaptured Rangoon, Dalla, and Syriam. But upon Alompra's dread approach, the fortune of war changed. Namdeoda returned, retook the towns, and after a severe engagement, again overthrew the Peguese force.

At this time, Whitehill, who supposed his treacherous deeds forgotten, went to Rangoon with a small vessel, laden with such things as were fitted for the trade to that port. But Alompra had not forgotten him. His vessel was seized, and he himself was sent to Prome, where he met the king returning from Moutzoboo. Alompra, probably to allay all suspicions on the part of the English as to the desperate game he was about to play, spared Mr Whitehill's life, though he made him pay a heavy ransom, and confiscated his vessel. He was afterwards allowed to return to Negrais in a Dutch ship. At this time, unhappily for Negrais, Captain Newton returned to Bengal, taking with him all the available force. He arrived in Calcutta on the 14th of May, 1759.

The Armenians, the Jews of the East, ever envious and suspicious of the progress of the colonies under European administration, looked with an evil eye upon the settlement of Negrais. Among those at that port, Coja Pochas and Coja Gregory, were particularly hostile to the English. In Laveene, the French youth left by Bourno as a hostage, and who had found favour in Alompra's eyes, Coja Gregory found a fitting instrument to execute the plot that he had contrived for the ruin of English prosperity in Burmah. Whether Alompra knew of the affair long before, is uncertain; but it is to be inferred from the tenor of his actions, that he did not, when it came to his knowledge, condemn it.

Mr. Southby, to whom the government of Bengal had committed the care of the colony, disembarked from the *Victoria* snow, on the 4th of October, 1759. The *Shaftesbury* East-Indiaman was also in harbour, having put in for water. Antonio, the Portuguese-Burman interpreter, came down to receive Southby, and was treated well by Mr. Hope, at that time in charge of Negrais, as well as by the new resident. Antonio's errand was, of course, to superintend the conspiracy that was about to burst on the

heads of the devoted Englishmen; but the pretext was to deliver a letter from Alompra.

“The address and secrecy with which the intended massacre was concerted, gave no room for taking any precaution. Antonio, who had paid a visit to Mr. Southby on the morning of the 6th, was invited by him to dinner on the same day, at a temporary building belonging to the English. Whilst the entertainment was serving up, the treacherous guest withdrew: At that instant a number of armed Birmans rushed into the room, and put Messrs. Southby and Hope to death. This transaction took place in an upper apartment. Messrs. Robertson and Briggs happened to be below with eight Europeans of inferior note; a separate attack was made on these by another set of assassins, in which five Europeans were slain; the rest, with Mr. Robertson and Mr. Briggs, shut themselves in a godown, or storeroom, where they continued on the defensive until the afternoon, when, receiving a solemn assurance that their lives should be spared, they surrendered, and experienced the utmost brutality of treatment from the murderers. Mr. Briggs being wounded, and unable to move with the alertness required of him, was knocked down, and a period put to his sufferings, by having a spear run through his body; the rest were escorted to the water-side, where Antonio, who had retired when the massacre commenced, was waiting with a boat to receive them. This fellow had the humanity to unchain the prisoners, and pursued his journey with them to Dagon or Rangoon, where he expected to find the king, and, doubtless, to receive a reward for the meritorious part he had acted.

“A midshipman, of the crew of the *Shaftesbury*, was about to enter the house when the slaughter commenced; but on hearing the cries of his countrymen, and perceiving the danger, he fled to the water-side, wounded by a spear that was cast at him in his retreat. The *Shaftesbury's* pinnace brought away the midshipman, with several black people belonging to the settlement; the fury of the murderers being indiscriminately levelled against Europeans and their Indian attendants. The long-boat also, that had brought on shore some of Mr. Southby's baggage, was fortunate enough to push off before the Birmans could get possession of her, and letting the ensign fly

with the union downwards, gave intimation to the ship, by that token, of some unexpected mischance." (1)

! In the whole of this diabolical affair, Laveene, the young Frenchman, was actively engaged. The battery being seized, was turned by him against the *Shaftesbury*, and the action continued the whole day. Next morning the Burmese renewed their fire, but the *Shaftesbury* had hauled beyond the range of shot, and the *Victoria* followed her example.

"That Gregory, the Armenian, was the principal instigator, is a fact of which no native of the country, who remembers the transaction, entertains the smallest doubts, as well as that Laveene was the principal agent and instrument of execution. It is said that the former accused Mr. Hope, who commanded after the departure of Lieutenant Newton, of having supplied the Peguers with provisions, and sold to them four or five hundred muskets; that he had taken pains to instil into his majesty's mind a persuasion, that the English were a designing and dangerous people; who, having acquired Indian territory, first by fraud, and afterwards by violence, meditated the practice of similar treachery upon them; and only waited a fit opportunity to wrest from him his empire, and enslave his subjects, as they had recently done in the instance of the unsuspecting and abused Mogul. He also added, that the governor of Negrais prevented vessels from going up to Bassein, by which the royal revenue was defrauded. These arguments, whether groundless or founded, were sufficiently plausible to produce the desired effect; and there is but too much reason to think that some provocation had been given, though, perhaps, of a trivial nature, and certainly not sufficient to warrant a step unjustifiable by every law, human and divine." (2) That Alompra had some share in the matter, can hardly be doubted. He had received too many crosses from the English during his conquest of Burmah, to forget. Besides, the heart of the Oriental despot always rankles with envy and pride. He looked for an opportunity to make the English feel his vengeance, and he seized it. Undoubtedly, the Portuguese and Frenchman had not forgotten the massacre of their own nations; and the latter, invested with a little brief authority, did the most that his spiteful heart could do.

(1) Symes, vol. 1. pp. 106-109.

(2) *Ib.* id. pp. 113-115.

This event forms the last one of any consequence in the life of Alompra, the liberator and conqueror of Burmah and Pegu. The conquest of Tavoy shed a brief light upon this portion of his career, and feeling certain of success, he determined to let the Siamese feel his strength; and he thought to have vengeance for the assistance that country had given to the Peguese, during his reduction of their power. He therefore sent an expedition against Mergui, and on the taking of that place, the army proceeded against Tenasserim, which soon yielded to the victorious Burmese.

He now determined to march against Bangkok, the capital of Siam, and thus complete the conquest of the peninsula. However, disease overtook him; the Devoted to Buddha, who had been a victor in a hundred battles, now succumbed to a single arm; but it was the arm of death, the strong force that assails every conqueror. Alompra, though he perceived that his end was drawing near, did not lose his presence of mind, but ordered a countermarch to his own country, that his arms might not be sullied by a defeat. But he expired about the 15th of May, 1760, when within two days' march of Martaban.

The following sketch of his character, by Symes, will form a fitting conclusion to this chapter:—

“Considering the limited progress that the Birmans had yet made in arts that refine, and science that tends to expand the human mind, Alompra, whether viewed in the light of a politician or a soldier, is undoubtedly entitled to respect. The wisdom of his councils secured what his valour had acquired; he was not more eager for conquest, than attentive to the improvement of his territories and the prosperity of his people; he issued a severe edict against gambling, and prohibited the use of spirituous liquors throughout his dominions; he reformed the rooms or courts of justice; he abridged the power of magistrates, and forbade them to decide at their private houses on criminal causes, or on property where the amount exceeded a specified sum; every process of importance was decided in public, and every decree registered. His reign was short, but vigorous; and had his life been prolonged, it is probable that his country would at this day have been farther advanced in national refinement and the liberal arts.

“Alompra did not live to complete his fiftieth year:

his person, strong and well proportioned, exceeded the middle size; his features were coarse, his complexion dark, and his countenance saturnine; and there was a dignity in his deportment that became his high station. In his temper, he is said to have been prone to anger; in revenge, implacable; and in punishing faults, remorseless and severe. The latter part of his character may, perhaps, have arisen as much from the necessities of his situation as from a disposition by nature cruel. He who acquires a throne by an act of individual boldness, is commonly obliged to maintain it by terror: the right of assumption is guarded with more jealousy than that of prescription. If we except the last act of severity towards the English settlers, his conduct, on most occasions, seemed to be marked by moderation and forbearance; even in that one disgraceful instance, he appeared to have been instigated by the persuasions of others, rather than by the dictates of a vindictive mind; and it is manifest, from the expressions of his successor on a public occasion, that it never was his intention to consign the innocent, with the supposed guilty, to the same indiscriminate and sanguinary fate.

“Be the private character of Alompra what it may, his heroic actions give him an indisputable claim to no mean rank among the most distinguished personages in the page of history. His firmness emancipated a whole nation from servitude, and, inspired by his bravery, the oppressed, in their turn, subdued their oppressors. Like the deliverer of Sweden, with his gallant band of Dalecarlians, he fought for that which experience tells us rouses the human breast above every other stimulant to deeds of daring valour. Private injuries, personal animosities, commercial emulation, wars of regal policy, are petty provocations compared to that which animates the resentment of a people whose liberties are assailed, whose right to govern themselves is wrested from them, and who are forced to bend beneath the tyranny of a foreign yoke.” (1)

(1) Symes, vol. i. p. 120 sqq.

CHAPTER II.

1760—1819.

Anaundopra—Zempiuscien—Chengaza—Paongoza—Men-ta-ra-gyèe.

WHEN the political history of a country commences with one bright and shining event, it is hardly possible to make the continuation of its career otherwise than “stale, flat, and unprofitable.” How true this is, was amply proved by Prescott, in the case of Mexico and Peru, when with all the magical charm of his eloquent pen, he failed to give the History of Peru the same attractive feature that he had presented in Mexico. If it were impossible then for a master-hand like his, to invest the fluctuating events of the civil wars of Peru with the graces of romance, how difficult will it be for me to do the same by those of Burmah!

The great event of Burman history, the elevation of Alompra to the regal or imperial dignity, overshadows all the subsequent occurrences in that history, although, considered by themselves, they form not the least interesting episodes of Oriental story. I shall endeavour, in the following pages, to present them, as they are, to the reader, begging him to bear in mind the first sentence of this chapter.

Alompra, on his death-bed, left the succession unsettled, though, according to Sangermano, (1) he had stipulated for the successive administration of his seven sons. Whether this was really the case, is impossible to say; but the eldest brother seems to have ascended the throne without dispute. His name was Anaundopra; but, as Symes observes, “neither the mandates of law, nor the claims of equity, can curb the career of restless ambition;” (2) and as it had proved insufficient to restrain the father, it was

(1) Burmese Empire, p. 48.

(2) Ava, vol. i. p. 124.

insufficient to restrain the son. Thembuan, or Zempiuscien, whom we have seen in the government of Ava, raised a revolt against his brother's administration. But he had not the solid talent of his father, and his claims were scarcely recognised by his immediate followers; consequently it is not very extraordinary that his rebellion fell to the ground. He hastened to give in his submission, and his brother appears to have been forgiving enough, for he was soon restored to favour.

But the flame of rebellion and revolution was kindled. It wanted but little to fan it into a formidable sheet of fire. During the absence of Zempiuscien at Moutzoboo, the general Meinla Nuttoon, marching through the lower country, raised the standard of revolt, and seizing upon Tongho, marched upon Ava, which, intimidated by the force attached to his interests, immediately surrendered. It were foreign to my purpose to give a detailed account of this insurrection. I will only say, that it required all the strength of the king to quell it. The siege of Ava was protracted for seven months, as Nuttoon expected assistance from Siam.

“These expectations were not realized. Supplies from the country failed, and want began to make ravages within the walls, although the magazines, which at the commencement of the siege were full, had been husbanded with the utmost economy. Discontent is ever the concomitant of distress. The governor of Mayah Oun, who had embraced Nuttoon's fortune, deserted from the fort. Flying to Mayah Oun, he collected his adherents; but not being able to resist the royal forces, they set fire to the town, and betook themselves to the woods and jungles, whence they afterwards withdrew to the eastern provinces, where the authority of the Birman monarch was yet scarcely recognised. The rebels had likewise evacuated the fort of Tongho. Towards the end of the year, the garrison in Ava was reduced to the greatest extremity, and their numbers diminished above one-half by sickness, famine, and desertion. In this helpless state, without any chance of relief, Nuttoon made his escape from the fort in disguise; but had proceeded only the distance of two days' journey, when he was discovered by some peasants, and brought back in fetters. The fort of Ava fell shortly afterwards by the flight of its commandant. Such of their unfortunate adherents as could not effect their escape,

were without mercy put to death. Nuttoon, likewise, suffered the doom of a traitor." (1)

This was, however, not all. Another revolt was raised by the viceroy of Tongho, an uncle of the king's. However, Anaundopra marched to Tongho, and took the place after a siege of three months, and, according to Sangermano, (2) put him to death. Symes, however, informs us, that he was kept a close prisoner in the fort of Ava till his death. (3)

Talabaan, too, raised a rebellion, which was, however, very soon ended by the seizure and execution of that general. "So long as that monarch [Alompra] lived, he conducted himself like a dutiful servant: the death of his sovereign, however, cancelled in Talabaan's breast the bonds of duty and gratitude, and, though faithful to the father, he took the earliest opportunity to revolt against the son." (4) In March, 1764, the king breathed his last, of the same scrofulous complaint that killed his father, leaving behind an infant son named Momien. The numerous rebellions against his government would lead us to expect immense strictness in his character; but he is represented as only severe in matters of religion; except in this particular, his administration was forbearing and moderate. The insurrections were more probably induced by the double reason of ambition on the part of the revolution, and by the necessary restraint which follows the unlicensed liberties of war. The people were accustomed to feel themselves masters of all, and now, the turbulent and unsettled reign of Alompra having closed, they chafed and bit at the cord like irascible dogs.

Zempiuscien, as the nearest relation to the infant monarch, became regent of Burmah, though the authority of the child was probably never recognised, either by regent or people. After some time, indeed, he openly assumed the crown, and, at the petition of a sister of Alompra, sent Momien to the priests, instead of murdering him, as he intended. His reign was warlike, and marked with many rebellions and revolutions, which, though raging for the moment, had no effect beyond the fury of the moment. The principal event and shame of his life, cannot be better told than in the words of Symes. (5)

(1) Symes, vol. i. p. 147 sq.

(2) Burmese Empire, p. 49.

(3) Symes, vol. i. p. 150.

(4) *Ib. id.* p. 151.

(5) *Ib. id.* p. 194 sqq.

“ Whatever respect the glory of conquest, and the wisdom of a well-regulated government, might attach to the reign of Shembuan, it must be wholly obscured by the cruelty exercised on the present occasion [the taking of Rangoon from the Peguers, who had again rebelled] towards his royal prisoner, the unhappy king of Pegue; and this, too, like a more recent and equally inhuman regicide, (1) in a nation professing Christianity and enlightened by science, was perpetrated under the mockery of justice. Shembuan, not content with exhibiting to the humbled Peguers their venerable, and yet venerated monarch, bound in fetters, and bowed down with years and anguish, resolved to take away his life, and render the disgrace still deeper, by exposing him as a public malefactor, to suffer under the stroke of the public executioner..... The process of law in Birman courts of justice, is conducted with as much formality as in any country on earth. Beinga Della was brought before the judges of the Rhoom, among whom the Maywoon of Pegue presided. The late king of Pegue was there accused of having been privy to, and instrumental in exciting the late rebellion. Depositions of several witnesses, supposed to be suborned, were taken; the prisoner denied the charge; but his fate being determined on, his plea availed him nothing. He was found guilty; and the proceedings, according to custom, were laid before the king, who passed sentence of death, and accompanied it by an order for speedy execution. In conformity with this cruel mandate, on the 7th of the increasing moon, in the month of Taboung, (2) the aged victim was led in public procession through an insulting population, to a place called Awabock, three miles without the city, where he met his doom with fortitude, and had no distinction paid him above the meanest criminal, except that all the municipal officers attended in their robes of ceremony to witness his last moments.”

The death of Beinga Della preceded his own by but a short space of time, for Zempiuscien, or Shembuan, died in the spring of 1776.

His son and successor, Zinguza or Chenguza, presented very different traits of character to those of any of Alompra's dynasty. He plunged into the wildest excesses of

(1) Symes alludes to the fate of Louis XVI.

(2) See book i. chap. iv. p. 78.

debauchery, and left the government to the mal-administration of a corrupt court. This proved fatal to him. The excesses of king and ministers did not pass by unheeded. Momien, his cousin, had not forgotten that he had an equal right to the throne, and the disgusting murder committed on the queen, afforded a pretext for revolt. A conspiracy had been formed by one of Alompra's brothers, Men-ta-ra-gyee, the queen's father, and one of the ministers whom Chenguza had insulted; Momien was used as a tool to elevate Men-ta-ra-gyee to the throne. This young man, (1) "taking advantage of his [Chenguza's] absence, advanced by night to Ava, in company with about forty inhabitants of a village called Pongà, and without experiencing any resistance, made himself master of the palace. Upon which the youth of Ava, and the neighbouring places, came eagerly to be enrolled, and take up arms in favour of the new king; who, in the space of five days, was in possession of the person and kingdom of Zinguzà. But the usurper, whose name was Paongozà, from the long abode he had made in Paongà, by these rapid and successful advances, only served as a means to Badonsachen [the former name of Men-ta-ra-gyee], the reigning sovereign, to mount upon the throne. For scarcely had he taken possession of the palace, than he called together all his uncles and made them an offer of the kingdom; saying, that according to the dispositions of Alompra, to them it belonged. But they suspected this ingenuous declaration of Paongozà to be nothing more than a malicious contrivance to pry into their secret thoughts, and upon their accepting his offers, to give him a pretence for their destruction; and therefore not only declined to receive it, but declared themselves, by drinking the water of the oath, his subjects and vassals..... Paongozà then raised them to their former state, and restored all the honours whereof they had been deprived by Zinguzà. But they, a few days later, took that by force, which, when peacefully offered, they had not dared to accept. For on the 10th of February, 1782, they suddenly entered the palace, seized Paongozà, and placed on the throne Badonsachen, third (2) son of Alompra. He, according to custom, caused the deposed monarch to be thrown into the river, calling him in scorn the king of

(1) I continue the narrative in the words of Sangermano, p. 50.

(2) According to Malcom (vol. i. p. 157), the *fourth* son.

seven days. (1) Paongozà at the time of his death, had only reached his twentieth year. On the following day the unfortunate Zinguzà underwent the same fate, in his twenty-sixth year; and all his queens and concubines, holding their babes in their arms, were burnt alive."

The particulars of the taking of Zinguzà by Momien, or Moug-Moug, are as follows: (2)—

Chenguza had gone to Keoptaloum, a place on the banks of the Irawadi, about thirty miles from Ava, to celebrate a festival. As he was never regular in his time of going in or out, no one could tell when he would return; indeed, he was often late. Having obtained a royal dress, Momien presented himself at the portal shoe-dogaa, and demanded admission. But the haste of the conspirators betrayed them to the sentinel, who, opening the wicket, and then attempting to close, called out, "Treason!" However, it was too late, the guards were cut down, and the gate thrown open to the assailants. These, together with a body of men placed in ambuscade, occupied all the approaches to the palace, and kept it in a complete state of blockade. The various court officials, on the approach of the rebels, shut themselves up within the inclosures of the palace. Consternation and fright prevailed through the city all the night; the assailants were expected to attack them, but, in conformity with the Eastern and American custom, they did not attack the place till the morning, when they then blew open one of the palace-gates. They were gallantly met, however, by the guard, commanded by an Armenian, named Gabriel, who caused no small havoc among them, by three discharges of artillery from the guns on the top of the gate. However, the conspirators were too strong, or the defenders too uncertain as to whom they might be contending with, to withstand them long. Gabriel was killed by the thrust of a spear, and then his party fled. Thus Momien obtained a speedy and decisive victory, little dreaming of the speedy fate that awaited him!

Chenguza was now proclaimed an outlaw, and an armed force was detached to arrest him. But he had received timely notice of the fall of his administration, and, leaving

(1) His reign, however, included eleven days.—Symes, vol. i. p. 227.

(2) My chief authority is Symes, vol. i. p. 218 sq.

all his court behind, escaped to Chagaing, where he was immediately besieged. Chenguza at first thought of defending himself; but finding that he was deserted by those on whom he placed his chief reliance, after a resistance of four days the resolution failed, and he determined on flying to the Cassay country, there to throw himself on the protection of the Munnipoora Raja. This intention he privately communicated to his mother, the widow of Shembuan Praw, who resided in his palace in the city of Ava. Instead of encouraging her son to persevere in so pusillanimous a resolve, she earnestly dissuaded him from flight; urging that it was far more glorious to die even by ignoble hands, within the precincts of his own palace, than to preserve life under the ignominious character of a mendicant fed by strangers, and indebted for a precarious asylum to a petty potentate. Chenguza yielded to his mother's counsel, and preferring death to a disgraceful exile, caused a small boat to be privately prepared, and kept in readiness at the gaut or landing-place; disguising himself in the habit of a private gentleman, and attended only by two menials, he left Chagaing by break of day and embarking, rowed towards Ava, on the opposite shore. When the boat approached the principal gaut, at the foot of the walls, he was challenged by the sentinels on duty; no longer desirous of concealing himself, he called out in a loud voice, that he was "Chenguza Namdogy-yeng Praw;—Chenguza, lawful lord of the palace." A conduct at once so unexpected and so resolute, struck the guards with astonishment, who, either overawed by his presence, or at a loss how to act for want of instructions, suffered him to proceed unmolested; the crowd, also, that so extraordinary a circumstance had by this time brought together, respectfully made way for him to pass. Scarcely had he reached the gate of the outer court of the palace, when he was met by the Attawoon, father of the princess whom he had so inhumanly slain; Chenguza, on perceiving him, exclaimed, "Traitor, I am come to take possession of my right, and wreak vengeance on mine enemies!" The Attawoon instantly snatched a sabre from an attendant officer, and at one stroke cut the unhappy Chenguza through the bowels, and laid him breathless at his feet. No person was found to prevent or avenge his death; he fell unla-

mented, as he had lived despised." (1) Such was the end of a monarch, accelerated, probably, by his own daring, which we cannot call heroism, but desperate madness.

Men-ta-ra-gyee, in the forty-fourth year of his age, at a period of life at which men have generally acquired stability of character and estimation, ascended the throne of his father, the Devoted to Buddha, whose spirit seems to have lived on in the bosoms of some of his families. But this king, under the fatal curse that seems to give the race of Alompra no rest, had no quieter reign than any of his predecessors. "Kings," observes the ingenious writer Symes, "have other enemies to guard against, than avowed foes or rival competitors; the wild maniac or fanatical enthusiast, often under the influence of frenzy, directs the poignard to the breasts of monarchs. The Birman king had but a short time enjoyed the crown, when he had nearly been deprived of his life and diadem by a person of this description. Magoung, a low-born man, unconnected with, and it is said, without the privacy of any person of condition, who had always been remarkable for the regularity of his actions, and a gloomy cast of thought, had influence enough to form a confederacy of one hundred men as visionary and desperate as himself. This troop bound themselves in secrecy and fidelity to each other by an oath; their object was to take away the life of the king; but to answer what end, or whom they designed to elevate, is not ascertained. These desperadoes, headed by Magoung, at daybreak in the morning, made an attack on the palace. The customary guard over the king's dwelling consists of seven hundred, who are well appointed and kept about on duty. Notwithstanding that, the attempt had nearly succeeded: bearing down the sentinels, they penetrated into the interior court, and the king escaped, from the casual circumstance of being in the range of apartments belonging to the women, which he was least accustomed to frequent. His guards, who at first shrunk from the fury of the onset, quickly rallied; their courage and numbers overpowered the assassins; and Magoung was slain, with all his associates, within the precincts of the palace." (2)

Another insurrection speedily followed. A fisherman of the name of Natchien, a Peguer of Rangoon, proclaimed

(1) Symes, vol. i. pp. 221-224. Sangermano's account, it will be perceived, is somewhat different.

(2) Ava, vol. i. p. 231.

himself the deliverer of the Peguers, and called upon that nation to rise against the Burmans. He succeeded in raising a tumult, in which some of the officials of the Rhoom were slain; however, the matter was soon put down by the Peter Laurie of the town, and an examination implicated some five hundred of the inhabitants of Rangoon, who were executed. This was the last attempt made by the Peguers to throw off the Burman yoke. From this time forward his actions seem to have been offensive rather than defensive. In 1783 he commenced a war with the independent kingdom of Arakhan, which he subdued, and added to his dominions. In 1786 he made an incursion into Siam, and secured himself in the possession of Tavoy and Mergui. In 1810 he fitted out an enterprise against Junk Ceylon, an island belonging to the Siamese, and to which they were all so unwilling to go.(1) But from this place he was subsequently expelled by the enemy, and many of the Burmans were sent to Bangkok as slaves. This king, after a long, glorious, and cruel reign, of which a considerable part was directed against the priests, expired in his eighty-first year, at the beginning of 1819.

It may here be not uninteresting to give some account of the city of Ava, the capital of Burmah, whence the kingdom has sometimes been so called.(2) It lies in lat. $21^{\circ} 50' N.$, long. $96^{\circ} E.$, and was made the capital of the country for the third time in 1822. The original name of the place is Augwa, corrupted in Awa and Ava; but in public writings it is always named Ratnapura, the City of Gems. Montmorency has given a description of the place, which I epitomize.

The city of Ava is surrounded by a brick wall fifteen and a half feet high, and ten feet thick; there are innumerable embrasures at about the distance of five feet from each other. The south and west faces of the town are defended by a deep and rapid torrent, called the Myit-tha, leading from the Myit-ngé, which is not fordable. On the east the Myit-ngé forms a considerable part of the defence. The Irawadi, opposite Sagaing and Ava, is 1,094 yards broad. The circumference of Ava is about five and a half miles, excluding the suburbs. "In general," says Crawford, "the houses are mere huts, thatched with grass.

(1) See book i. chap. ii. p. 40.

(2) My chief authority is Crawford, vol. ii. pp. 1-9.

Some of the dwellings of the chiefs are constructed of planks, and tiled, and there are probably in all not half a dozen houses constructed of brick and mortar. Poor as the houses are, they are thinly scattered over the extensive area of the place, and some large quarters are, indeed, wholly destitute of habitations, and mere neglected commons. Including one large one in the suburb, lying between the town and the little river, there are eleven markets or bazaars, composed as usual of thatched huts or sheds: the three largest are called Je-kyo, Sara-wadi, and Shan-ze." (1) The temples are very numerous, and present a gorgeous appearance from a distance, "far from being realized," according to Crawford, "on a closer examination. Some of the principal of these may be enumerated: the largest of all is called Lo-ga-thar-bu, and consists of two portions, or rather two distinct temples; one in the ancient, and the other in the modern form. In the former there is an image of Gautama, in the common sitting posture, of enormous magnitude. Colonel Symes imagined this statue to be a block of marble; but this is a mistake, for it is composed of sandstone. A second very large temple is called Angava Sé-kong; and a third, Ph'ra-l'ha, or 'the beautiful.' A fourth temple, of great celebrity, is named Maong-Ratna. This is the one in which the public officers of the government take, with great formality, the oath of allegiance. A fifth temple is named Maha-mrat-muni; I inspected an addition which was made to this temple a short time before our arrival. It was merely a Zayat or chapel, and chiefly constructed of wood: it, however, exceeded in splendour everything we had seen without the palace. The roof was supported by a vast number of pillars: these, as well as the ceilings, were richly gilt throughout. The person, at whose expense all this was done, was a Burman merchant, or rather broker, from whom we learnt that the cost was forty thousand teicals, about £5,000 sterling. When the building was completed, he respectfully presented it to his majesty, not *daring* to take to himself the whole merit of so pious an undertaking." (2) The reader may bear in mind the similarity between these temples and those of the Peruvians.

(1) Ava, vol. II, p. 5,

(2) *Ib.*, id. p. 6.

CHAPTER III.

1760—1824.

British intercourse with Ava—Alves's mission—Symes's mission—Canning—King Nun-Sun—Rise of the Burman war—Its origin in official aggression—Evacuation of Cachar.

WE must now return somewhat upon our steps, to observe the changes which had taken place in European relations with the native kings. We have to look back to the time of the decease of Alompra. Doubtless, had the English force in Burmah been adequate to the execution of such a measure, ample revenge would have been taken, or rather, ample satisfaction would have been enforced, for the brutal massacre of the English at Negrais: but their means were not up to the mark. "Perhaps, also," as Symes remarks, "they were not ignorant that a discussion of the causes might only produce useless explanations: a conjecture that is, in some degree, corroborated by there being no steps taken at any subsequent period when the British superiority in Asia had crushed all rivalry, to vindicate the national honour, and chastise the perpetrators of the cruelty." (1) Most probably, however, the English government was sensible that the part their countrymen had acted had been a treacherous one, and that it would not do to have it thrown in their faces, as it undoubtedly would have been. In this case the French would have succeeded in their darling scheme of shaking the importance of the English in the country, for the accomplishment of which they have never in any way omitted any opportunity, supporting their plans also by that form of assertion, which admits of contradiction, but can never be disproved: and a like system of falsehood had been pursued by the English.

It was, however, necessary to make some appeal in behalf of the remaining Europeans, and Captain Alves,

(1) Ava, vol. i. p. 131.

who had brought the sad news to Bengal, was the man selected for the negotiation. He was charged with letters, which, while they show little desire to uphold the dignity of England, yet manifest a praiseworthy and heartfelt interest in the fate of the British. They were signed by Mr. Holwell, the governor of Bengal, and Mr. Pigot, the governor of Madras. The letter of the latter gentleman, indeed, was of a more independent character, "and intimated expectation that the murderers of the English settlers should be brought to punishment; a requisition that was little attended to, and which the British government of India never manifested any inclination to enforce." (1)

Captain Alves sailed from Madras with these letters on the 10th of May, 1760. He did not steer direct for Negrais, but addressed a letter to Gregory the Armenian, then Ackawoon of Rangoon, whom it was desirable to conciliate, and after exaggerating his influence at court, he entreated his good offices in behalf of the captives. With these letters a present of some value was sent. On the 5th of June, he arrived at Diamond Island, near Negrais, when he reconnoitred the disposition of the natives. However, his fears were removed, and he landed. Upon this, Antony came down, and was received with hypocritical cordiality by Alves, and the interpreter tried all he could to prevent his being considered guilty. In a short time he received a letter from Mungai Narrataw, one of the royal family, inviting him to Rangoon; he thought it politic to go thither, and arrived on the 5th of August. There seemed to be little objection to the release of the prisoners, and Mr. Robertson was permitted to accompany Captain Alves to Bassein. Meanwhile, Gregory the Armenian returned, bearing a letter from Anaundopra, or Namdogee-Praw. "In the translation, which Gregory, as interpreter, delivered to Captain Alves, the crafty Armenian introduced passages favourable to himself, attributing the obtainment of any attention to his intercession; these interpolations were fabricated, as the imperial mandate did not even mention the name of Gregory." (2) Accordingly, on the 22nd of August, Alves took his departure from Bassein, and, though much annoyed by the officials, he arrived at Chagaing, the then

(1) Ava, vol. i. p. 133.

(2) Symes, vol. i. p. 138.

capital, on the 22nd of September, without any important event occurring in the interim.

On the 23rd, Alves had an audience with the king. His majesty seemed surprised that the English should desire any satisfaction for the punishment which had been dealt out against the Company's servants in consequence of their own ill behaviour. At the same time he regretted the accident which had involved Mr. Southby in their fate, yet it was unavoidable; "for," said the king, "I suppose you have seen that in this country, in the wet season, there grows so much useless grass and weeds in the fields, that in dry weather we are forced to burn them to clear the ground: it sometimes happens that there are salubrious herbs amongst these noxious weeds and grass, which, as they cannot easily be distinguished, are indiscriminately consumed with the others; thus it happened to be the new governor's lot." (1) To the other demands, regarding restitution of property, a decided refusal was returned, except as regarded the Company's goods; but the release of the British prisoners was acceded to. "Having given an order for the release of all English subjects that were prisoners in his dominions, he desired that two of the most prudent should remain to take care of the timbers, and reside at Persaim, (2) where he consented to give the Company a grant of as much ground as they might have occasion to occupy, under the stipulation that their chief settlement should be at Persaim, and not at Negrais. He assigned as a reason, that at Negrais they would be exposed to the depredations of the French, or any other nation with whom the English might be at war, without a possibility of his *extending that protection to them that he wished*: but of which they could always have *the full benefit* at Persaim." (3) But at the same time he stipulated for an equivalent in arms and other goods, which were *conditionally* promised him.

Falsehood and treachery rarely go unrewarded. And be it ever so well disguised, some hook *will* tear a hole in the garment and show the nakedness beneath. Suddenly, the interpreter Gregory was discovered in his plans, and his punishment was quick, just, and severe; indeed, he nearly lost his life.

The transactions concluded, Captain Alves at length

(1) Alves in Journal quoted by Symes, vol. i. p. 140.

(2) Bassain.

(3) Symes, vol. i. p. 142.

left Chagaing for Persaim; and leaving Messrs. Robertson and Helass at that place, he proceeded to Rangoon, whence he returned by the 14th of November. Having completed his mission, he then sailed for Bengal, which he reached before the end of the year. From this time down to 1795, under the administration of Men-ta-ra-gyee, nothing of importance occurred in the colony. And here I cannot do better than offer a few remarks of Mr. Macfarlane, the historian of British India, already referred to:—

“Ava and the Burmese empire either held a direct sovereignty or exercised control over nearly one-half of the vast regions described in maps as India beyond the Ganges. . . . By a series of conquests they had overthrown all the adjacent nations, and had advanced their frontier to the shores of the Bay of Bengal, and close to the limits of the Company’s territories. They proved but troublesome and encroaching neighbours. During Lord Wellesley’s administration, in 1799, when the mass of the Anglo-Indian army was engaged in the last war against Tippoo Sul-taun, the Burmese made frequent attacks, and were very troublesome on our then weak eastern frontier. (1) As exclusive and anti-social as the Chinese, and quite as proud and insolent in their bearing towards foreign envoys, and foreigners of all classes, it was difficult to establish any intercourse with them, or to obtain, by pacific representations, any redress of grievances: Their government, too, was subject to frequent and sanguinary revolutions, insurrections, and rebellions; one tyrant being murdered, and succeeded by another.” (2)

In 1795, Symes was deputed to the arrogant Men-ta-ra-gyee, to remonstrate against the incursions of the Burmese troops. “In 1795,” says Macfarlane, “a Burmese army of five thousand men pursued three rebellious chiefs, or, as they termed them (and as they might be), robbers, right into the English district of Chittagong. A strong detachment was sent from Calcutta to oppose these Burmese; but the officer in command had orders to negotiate—not to fight. After some tedious negotiations, which ought not to have been allowed to occupy a single hour, the violators of our frontier condescended to agree to retire; and they retired, accordingly,

(1) Marquis Wellesley’s Indian Despatches, &c.

(2) Macfarlane’s History of British India, p. 355.

into their own country. Nor was this all. These three men, who had taken refuge in our territories, were subsequently given up to the Burmese, and two out of the three were put to death with atrocious tortures.”(1) Little, however, came of the colonel’s embassy, “except,” as our historian goes on to remark,(2) “a very interesting book of travels.” In the year 1809, a French ship attacked a small island belonging to the Burmese, and the Golden Foot, not understanding the difference between French and English,(3) sent a sort of mission to Calcutta to expostulate against the proceeding, and to demand satisfaction. As this seemed to open the door of the jealously-guarded court of Ava to some diplomatic intercourse, Lord Minto despatched Lieutenant Canning on an embassy. This officer reached Rangoon; and the king of Ava, from the midst of his white elephants, decreed that the Englishman should be allowed to proceed to the capital, in all safety and honour; but the incursions into the Company’s territory at Chittagong of a predatory tribe of Burmese, called the Mughs, and other untoward events, broke off an intercourse which never could have promised any very satisfactory result. Both our embassies to Ava appear to have been capital mistakes, for they exhibited to a semi-barbarous and vain-glorious people a number of Englishmen in a very humiliating condition, and in the attitude of supplicants.

“Lieutenant Canning returned to Calcutta, and disputes continued to occur on the frontiers of Chittagong and Tippera. As they were not met by bayonets, the Burmese grew more and more audacious; and at the time when Lord Minto gave up his authority in India to the earl of Moira, the King of the World and the Lord of the White Elephants was threatening to march with forty thousand soldier-pilgrims, from Ava to Benares.”

We will now return to the history of the Burmese monarchy. At the death of Men-ta-ra-gyee, his grandson, Nun-Sun, “The Enjoyer of the Palace,” as-

(1) Macfarlane, *l. c.*

(2) In 1802 Symes again visited Burmah for a diplomatic purpose; but his letters, while they modify his book, add little of value to our knowledge of the country.

(3) This is, however, very problematical. Mr. Macfarlane cannot have forgotten the whole previous history of European intercourse with the country, and how many distinctions and quibblings were brought forward at different times upon that plea.

cended the throne. His father, the heir-apparent, was the idol of the people, but an early death had deprived him of the crown to which he was so justly entitled. Out of policy, Men-ta-ra-gyee, some of whose acts had contributed to render unpopular, adopted Nun-Sun, his son, to the exclusion of the rest of the family. The history of this prince is thus given by Malcom : (1)—

“ He was married in early life to a daughter of his uncle, the Mekaru prince ; but one of his inferior wives, daughter of a comparatively humble officer, early acquired great ascendancy over his mind, and on his coming to the throne, was publicly crowned by his side. On the same day the proper queen was sent out of the palace, and now lives in obscurity. His plan for securing the succession shows that he was aware that even the late king’s will would not secure him from powerful opposition. The king’s death was kept secret for some days, and the interval employed to station a multitude of adherents in different parts of the city, to prevent any gatherings. On announcing the demise, the ceremony of burning was forthwith performed in the palace-yard, at which he appeared as king, with the queen by his side, under the white umbrella, and at once took upon himself all the functions of royalty. Several suspected princes were soon after executed, and many others deprived of all their estates. . . . Two years after his accession, the king resolved to restore the seat of government to Ava. To this he was induced, partly from the great superiority of the latter location ; partly from the devastation of a fire which burnt a great part of Umerapoorra, with the principal public buildings ; partly from a desire to create a more splendid palace ; and partly (perhaps, not least) from the ill omen of a vulture lighting on the royal spire. (2) The greater part of his time, for two years, was spent at Ava, in temporary buildings, and superintending in person the erection of a palace, twice the size of the old one, and other important buildings. During this period, many citizens, especially those who had been burnt out, and numbers of the court, settled in the new city, and the place became populous. On completing the palace (February, 1824), the king returned to Umerapoorra, and, after brilliant parting festivities, came from thence with

(1) Travels, vol. i. p. 159.

(2) See Sangermano, p. 113.

great pomp and ceremony, attended by the various governors, Chobwant, and highest officers. The procession, in which the white elephant, decorated with gold and gems, was conspicuous, displayed the glories of the kingdom, and great rejoicings pervaded all ranks."

It was at this time that the portentous omens that had menaced the Burman monarchy found a corroboration in truth; the glow of enmity, never to be extinguished even in the hearts of civilised men, fanned by the breath of presumption, had burnt into a flame that scorched and scared the weaker party. We must stay a while to consider the causes, and which led to the appeal to arms in 1824.

It may be imagined that an outbreak of some kind was far from being unexpected on the part of the Anglo-Indian government. There were two interests striving against each other and the world—or rather the Indian world—within the territories of Burmah. The first of these, creating more apparent commotion and less real damage, was the struggle between the dog-like royal family for the bone-like tiara; the second, more dangerous and more concealed, was the envious and avaricious passions of the nobles, or more properly, the officials employed by the Burmese government to defeat its wishes and objects; a task which the officials of every administration seldom fail to perform to the complete dissatisfaction of all parties. This has been the true cause of many disturbances in Burmah; and I am compelled to dissent in some degree from that feeling which causes Professor Wilson to say, that, "animated by the reaction, which suddenly elevated the Burmans from a subjugated and humiliated people, into conquerors and sovereigns, the era of their ambition may be dated from the recovery of their political independence; and their liberation from the temporary yoke of the Peguers was the prelude to their conquest of all the surrounding realms." (1) This might be very true of the immediate successors of the great Alompra; but the power of the dignitaries had, by the time of which we now speak, risen to a very great pitch, which insensibly overawed and restrained the holder of the diadem, whoever he might be; and though,

(1) Wilson's Narrative of the Burmese War, p. 1 of the reprint of 1852.

indeed, the "vigorous despotism" of Men-ta-ra-gyee might temporarily set at defiance this incomprehensible power, yet under the government of Nun-sun, the distant viceroys first, and gradually the less remote officers, resumed their former powerful position. And though they acted in subordination to the crown, and showed a species of heroism in defending its interests, yet they had raised the storm; and it was for them, they knew, to battle with it, and uphold that single bond, the destruction of which would have been totally ruinous to them.

The organized forays into our territory of Chittagong hardly assumed any definite form until the end of 1823. "The Burmans," says Professor Wilson, "claimed the right of levying a toll upon all boats entering the mouth of the river, although upon the British side; and on one occasion, in January, 1823, a boat laden with rice, having entered the river on the west or British side of the channel, was challenged by an armed Burman boat, which demanded duty. As the demand was unprecedented, the Mugs, who were British subjects, demurred payment; on which the Burmans fired upon them, killed the manjhee, or steersman, and then retired. This outrage was followed by reports of the assemblage of armed men on the Burman side of the river, for the purpose of destroying the villages on the British territory; and in order to provide against such a contingency, as well as to prevent the repetition of any aggression upon the boats trafficking on the Company's side of the river, the military guard at Tek-naf, or the mouth of the Naf, was strengthened from twenty to fifty men, of whom a few were posted on the adjoining island of Shapurí; a small islet or sand-bank at the mouth of the river on the British side, and only separated from the mainland by a narrow channel, which was fordable at low water." (1)

This act attracted the attention of the Arakhan viceroy, who thereupon demanded its unconditional surrender, claiming it as the property of the Burmese government. This was certainly untrue; and the existence of many documents and facts, favourable to the British claims, caused the resident to propose a friendly discussion of the matter. The fruitless negotiation met an almost decisive blow on the 21th of September, when one thousand

(1) Wilson, p. 25.

Burmans landed and overpowered the British force, "killing three and wounding four of the sipahees stationed there."

"In order, however," observes Wilson, "to avoid till the last possible moment the necessity of hostilities, the government of Bengal, although determined to assert their just pretensions, resolved to afford to the court of Ava an opportunity of avoiding any collision. With this intent, they resolved to consider the forcible occupation of Shapurí as the act of the local authorities alone [as, in the first case, it probably was], and addressed a declaration to the Burman government, recapitulating the past occurrences, and calling upon the court of Ava to disavow its officers in Arakan. The declaration was forwarded by ship to Rangoon, with a letter addressed to the viceroy of Pegu. The tone of this despatch was that of firmness, though of moderation; but when rendered into the Burmese language, it may, probably, have failed to convey the resolved and conciliatory spirit by which it was dictated, as subsequent information, of the most authentic character, established the fact of its having been misunderstood as a pusillanimous attempt to deprecate the resentment of the Burmese; and it was triumphantly appealed to at the court of Ava as a proof that the British government of India was reluctant to enter upon the contest, because it was conscious of possessing neither courage nor resources to engage in it with any prospect of success; it had no other effect, therefore, than that of confirming the court of Ava in their confident expectation of reannexing the eastern provinces of Bengal to the empire, if not of expelling the English from India altogether." (1) However, the British reoccupied Shapurí, and stockaded themselves in that post, while, in retaliation, the Burmese seized upon the master and officers of the Company's vessel *Sophia*, and sent them up the country.

To continue the story in the words of Macfarlane, who has here ably epitomized the history of Wilson:—"More and more confirmed in their idea that we were afraid, from four thousand to five thousand Burmese and Asamese advanced from Asam into the province of Cachar, and began to stockade themselves at a post within five miles of the town of Sylhet, and only two hundred and

(1) Wilson, p. 29 sq.

twenty-six miles from Calcutta. Major Newton, the officer commanding on the Sylhet frontier, concentrated his detachment and marched against the invaders. It was at daybreak on the 17th of January, 1824, that he came in sight of their stockade and of a village adjoining, of which they had taken possession. The Burmese in the village presently gave way, but those in the stockades made a resolute resistance, and were not driven out until they had lost about one hundred men, and had killed six of our sepoys. They then fled to the hills. Shortly after this action, Mr. Scott, our commissioner, arrived at Sylhet, and from that point he advanced to Bhadrappoor, in order to maintain a more ready communication with the Burmese authorities. On the 31st of January, Mr. Scott received a message from the Burmese general, who justified his advance into Cachar, and declared that he had orders to follow and apprehend certain persons wherever they might take refuge. In reply, this Burmese general, who held the chief command in Asam, was told that he must not disturb the frontiers of the Company, nor interfere in the affairs of its allies; and that the Burmese invaders must evacuate Cachar, or the forces of the British government would be compelled to advance both into Cachar and Asam. To this communication no answer was received.

“It was clearly the object of the Burmese to procrastinate the negotiations until they had strengthened themselves in the advanced positions they had occupied. The rajah of Synteea, who had been imperiously summoned to the Burmese camp, and commanded to prostrate himself before the shadow of the Golden Foot, threw himself upon the British government for protection; and various native chiefs, whose territories lay between the frontiers of the Burmese empire and the frontiers of the British dominions, called loudly for English aid. Thus, the south-east frontier of Bengal had in fact been kept in constant dread and danger of invasion for more than a year, while the adjoining and friendly territories had been exposed to the destructive inroads and the overbearing insolence of the Burmese and Asamese, for many years.

“Major Newton did not follow the Burmese he had routed, but, after driving them from their stockade, he

returned to Sylhet, and withdrew the whole of his force from Cachar. Almost as soon as the major was within his own frontier, the Burmese advanced again into the country from which he had driven them, and stockaded some stronger positions. They were joined by another considerable force, while another detachment, 2,000 strong, collected in their rear, as a reserve, or column of support. Still advancing, and stockading as they advanced, the main body of the Burmese pushed their stockades on the north bank of the river Surma, to within 1,000 yards of the British post at Bhadrappoor. Captain Johnstone, who commanded at that post, had but a very small force with him, yet he succeeded in dislodging the invaders from their unfinished works at the point of the bayonet, and in driving them beyond the Surma. This was on the 13th of February. On the following day, Lieutenant-Colonel Bowen joined, and took the command over Captain Johnstone, and instantly marched in pursuit of the retreating enemy. They were found stockading themselves in a strong position on the opposite bank of the Jelingha. As soon as our troops were over, and had fixed their bayonets, the Burmese cleared out of their stockade, and fled to the hills. But there was another division of the army of the Lord of the White Elephant, which had stockaded a much stronger position at Doodpatlee, where their front was covered by the Surma river, and their rear rested on steep hills. The exposed face of this intrenchment was defended by a deep ditch, about fourteen feet wide; a strong fence of bamboo spikes ran along the outer edge of the ditch, and the approach on the land side was through jungle and high grass. Lieutenant-Colonel Bowen, however, marched against this formidable stockade, and attacked it. The Burmese remained passive till our troops advanced to the bamboo spikes, when they poured upon them a destructive and well-maintained fire, which completely checked their advance, although they kept their ground. When Lieutenant Armstrong had been killed, and four other officers wounded, and about 150 of our sepoys killed or wounded, Bowen called off the attacking party, and retired to Jatrapoor, at a short distance. On the 27th of February, Colonel Innes joined the force at Jatrapoor, with four guns and a battalion of fresh troops, and assumed the command. But, in the

mean while, the Burmese had retreated from their formidable position, and retired into their own country, evacuating the whole of Cachar." (1)

Such was the origin and early progress of a war fated to be most disastrous to all parties concerned in it. We must not introduce so great a man as the Maha Bundoola at the close of a chapter ; so we end it here.

(1) Macfarlane's British India, pp. 450-452.

CHAPTER IV.

1824.

Bundoola—Retreat of Captain Noton—Defeat at Ramoo—Repulse of the Burmans—Burmese account of the war—Rangoon expedition—Description of Rangoon.

MAHA MEN-GYEE BUNDOOLA, the Burman general, was one of the best of the subjects of the monarch of Ava. He owed his proud position, not to the empty promoting system of a European court, but, like an adventurer in a brave and warlike country, he rose from the ranks, and, pioneer-like, cut away the overhanging branches between himself and his honourable goal. Such a change of fortune is not uncommon in Oriental countries; but it is uncommon to find little court favour at work in his elevation. He had fought and received honour and solid pudding, yet he had an end to expect, and the culminating point of his fame had now arrived, and cab-like, he would have to take care of the post at the corner. That post was the Anglo-Indian army, and he hazarded himself upon the chance of overthrowing it, with what success will afterwards be seen.

“It has been already noticed,” says Wilson, (1) “that a large Burman force had been assembled in Arakan, under the command of the chief military officer of the state of Ava, Maha Men-gyee Bundoola, an officer who enjoyed a high reputation, and the entire confidence of the court, and who had been one of the most strenuous advisers of the war; in the full confidence that it would add a vast accession of power to his country, and glory to himself. His head-quarters were established at Arakan, where, probably, from ten to twelve thousand Burmans were assembled. Early in May, a division of this force crossed the Naf, and advanced to Rutnapullung, about fourteen miles south from Ramoo, where they took up

(1) Burmese War, p. 52, ed. 1852.

their position, and gradually concentrated their force to the extent of about eight thousand men, under the command of the four rajas of Arakan, Ramree, Sandaway, and Cheduba, assisted by four of the inferior members of the royal council, or atwenwoons, and acting under the orders of Bundoola, who remained at Arakan.

“ Upon information being received of the Burmans having appeared, advancing upon Rutnapullung, Captain Noton moved from Ramoo with the whole of his disposable force, to ascertain the strength and objects of the enemy. On arriving near their position, upon some hills on the left of the road, in which the Burmans had stockaded themselves, they opened a smart fire upon the detachment, which, however, cleared the hills, and formed upon a plain beyond them. In consequence, however, of the mismanagement of the elephant-drivers, and the want of artillery details, the guns accompanying the division could not be brought into action; and as without them it was not possible to make any impression on the enemy, Captain Noton judged it prudent to return to his station at Ramoo, where he was joined by three companies of the 40th native infantry, making his whole force about one thousand strong, of whom less than half were regulars. With these, Captain Noton determined to await at Ramoo the approach of the Burmans, until the arrival of reinforcements from Chittagong.”

In this the captain was most decidedly wrong. It was not only injudicious to retreat before the barbarian Burmans, but it was reprehensible on his part to give them so much encouragement and breathing-time. The Burmans always looked upon the English as “ wild foreigners,” and despised them on account of their creeping, sneaking policy. The first impression made on their minds by the unresented massacre of Negrals was not forgotten; and the mission of Alves, Symes, Cox, and Canning, with their undecided, un-English measures, had added to form the contempt with which they had learnt to regard the Anglo-Indian government into a tangible shape. These considerations, joined with the natural arrogance of a semi-civilised race, with the advantage of a victorious general, with the indecision of a British officer, all tended to prepare the Burmese for the victory which was soon to grace their arms. But, in recounting the events at Ramoo, it must ever be remembered, that the day was lost rather

by British indecision, than gained by Burman valour. Indeed, up to this time, it is remarkable to what extent snail policy had obtained among the Indian authorities ; and how, partly from want of accurate information, partly from this mean and truckling spirit, the Anglo-Indian government had lost consequence in the eyes of the king of Ava. Undoubtedly, the overcharged work of Colonel Symes had led to an incorrect estimate of the resources of the country ; it is well, however, that I shall hardly have occasion to return to this, for soon I shall have to record—welcome task !—the daring scheme of Lord Amherst's administration, and its successful, though less fortunate, accomplishment, by Sir Archibald Campbell. To continue the narrative in the words of the Professor : (1)—

“ On the morning of the 13th of May, the enemy advanced from the south, and occupied, as they arrived, the hills east of Ramoo, being separated from the British force by the Ramoo river. On the evening of the 14th, they made a demonstration of crossing the river, but were prevented by the fire from the two six-pounders with the detachment. On the morning of the 15th, however, they effected their purpose, and crossed the river upon the left of the detachment, when they advanced, and took possession of a tank ; surrounded, as usual, with tanks in this situation, by a high embankment, which protected them from the fire of their opponents.” However, the captain, who saw the necessity of action, soon took up a favourable position, and “ a sharp fire was kept up on the Burmans as they crossed the plain to the tank ; but they availed themselves with such dexterity of every kind of cover, and so expeditiously entrenched themselves, that it was much less effective than was to have been expected.” Honour is certainly due to the officers and men so perilously situated ; and it gives us satisfactory proof that Captain Noton's previous retreat was not caused by want of courage, but by an indecision, as unaccountable as it was finally disastrous.

The Professor proceeds :—“ On the morning of the 17th, the enemy's trenches were advanced within twelve paces of the picquets, and a heavy and destructive fire was kept up by them. At about nine A.M., the provincials and Muglevy abandoned the tank entrusted to their

(1) Burmese War, p. 54.

defence, and it was immediately occupied by the enemy. The position being now untenable, a retreat was ordered, and effected with some regularity for a short distance. The increasing numbers and audacity of the pursuers, and the activity of a small body of horse attached to their force, by whom the men that fell off from the main body were instantly cut to pieces, filled the troops with an ungovernable panic, which rendered the exertions of their officers to preserve order unavailing. These efforts, however, were persisted in until the arrival of the party at a rivulet, when the detachment dispersed; and the siphahis, throwing away their arms and accoutrements, plunged promiscuously into the water. In the retreat, Captains Noton, Trueman, and Pringle, Lieutenant Grigg, Ensign Bennet, and Assistant-surgeon Maysmore, were killed. The other officers engaged, Lieutenants Scott, Campbell, and Codrington, made their escape; but the two former were wounded: the loss in men was not ascertained, as many of them found their way, after some interval and in small numbers, to Chittagong: according to official returns, between six hundred and eight hundred had reached Chittagong by the 23rd of May; so that the whole loss, in killed and taken, did not exceed, probably, two hundred and fifty." (1) This was, however, enough to arouse the slumbering ire in British hearts. Colonels Shapland and James speedily revenged the death of the captain, whose imprudence had cost him so much, and whose courage and endurance had availed him so little; soon the Burmese lost their temporary advantage, and never were they to regain it. At the end of July the enemy fled from all their positions on the Naaf.

The campaign was also speedily terminated in the provinces of Cachar, and the Burmese were much weakened in all their attempts upon the Anglo-Indian army.

"We have thus terminated the first period of the system of defensive operations," observes the Professor, "and shall now proceed to the more important enterprises of an offensive war, to which those we have noticed were wholly subordinate. The results of the operations described were of a mixed description, but such as to leave no question of the issue of the contest. In Asam a considerable advance had been made. In Kachar, also, a forward posi-

(1) Burmese War, p. 56 sq.

tion had been maintained; although the nature of the country, the state of the weather, and the insufficiency of the force, prevented the campaign from closing with the success with which it had begun. The disaster at Ramoo, although it might have been avoided, perhaps, by a more decided conduct on the part of the officer commanding, and would certainly have been prevented by greater promptitude than was shown on the despatch of the expected reinforcements, reflected no imputation upon the courage of the regular troops, and, except in the serious loss of life, was wholly destitute of any important consequences. In all these situations the Burmas had displayed neither personal intrepidity nor military skill. Their whole system of warfare resolved itself into a series of intrenchments, which they threw up with great readiness and ingenuity. Behind these defences, they sometimes displayed considerable steadiness and courage; but as they studiously avoided individual exposure, they were but little formidable in the field as soldiers. Neither was much to be apprehended from the generalship that suffered the victory of Ramoo to pass away, without making the slightest demonstration of a purpose to improve a crisis of such splendid promises, and which restricted the fruits of a battle gained to the construction of a stockade." (1)

There is certainly nothing which better shows the little real self-reliance possessed by the Burmese than the idle manner in which they neglected to pursue an advantage. One thing must, however, be always borne in mind, that up to this time they had always been engaged with enemies whose fate might be decided by a single skirmish, or one complete rout. They had yet to learn how persevering the efforts of a civilised state are in war. They had now indeed met their masters, and were about to feel their inferiority; for the Indian government at Calcutta were already carrying out an excellent and well-conceived idea, the history of the progress of which it is now my office to relate. But first, it were not inapposite to listen to the following account of the Burmese war by the Burmese themselves; it will afford some amusement, though its strict truth cannot fail to be somewhat doubted. "In the years 1186 and 1187," according to

(1) Wilson, p. 61.

the Royal Historiographer, "the Kula-pyee, or white strangers of the West, fastened a quarrel upon the Lord of the Golden Palace. They landed at Rangoon, took that place at Prome, and were permitted to advance as far as Yandabo; for the king, from motives of piety and regard to life, made no effort whatever to oppose them. The strangers had spent vast sums of money in their enterprise; and by the time they reached Yandabo, their resources were exhausted, and they were in great distress. They petitioned the king, who, in his clemency and generosity, sent them large sums of money to pay their expenses back, and ordered them out of the country." (1)

Ere I proceed to give the English account, I think it right to let the Burmans speak for themselves; and therefore I have placed this before the serious history, just as, at Richardson's, a comic song, by way of a *bonne bouche*, is placed before the deep tragedy, "Just a-goin' to begin."

Some little time before the operations in Cachar were brought to a temporary close, Lord Amherst conceived the idea of diverting the attention of the Burmese from our possessions to their own, and of turning what had hitherto been a defensive war, on the part of the English, into an offensive one. Accordingly, after a formal declaration of war, and the promulgation of an address containing the details of the origin of the quarrel, the court commenced active preparations for an expedition into the enemy's territory. The idea was a good one, and it was nobly pursued; yet, though it was successful in its ultimate object, it unfortunately cost the government more than its proceeds in land can possibly repay for many years. The military resources of the Burmese were infinitely over-estimated, while the facilities for obtaining food and proper housing for the troops were also totally unknown, except from the work of Symes, who evidently caused the whole mischief, as far as the inadequate outfit was concerned. The consequences of his hasty views ought to be a warning to all travellers in countries so little known as Burmah was then, and, indeed, in many points is now. Symes sacrificed truth for the sake of making an agreeable and amusing book, which it is to be hoped no one else will do.

(1) Crawford's Ava, vol. i. p. 304.

“The British government was driven into that war by the insolence and aggressions of the court of Ava, intoxicated with the uninterrupted success which had attended all its schemes of aggrandisement from the days of Alompra. The most ambitious of our governors-general had entertained no views of conquest in that quarter. Lord Hastings had anxiously staved off the contest, at the close of his administration, by a political artifice. But Lord Amherst, the most moderate and pacific, was compelled to add vast provinces, covered for the most part with trackless forests, miserably underpeopled, unhealthy, and far beyond our natural boundaries, to our already enormous empire. In this case there was everything to dissuade from appropriation. It was known that the climate of one of the provinces was equally deadly to our European and our native troops; it was known that many years must elapse before any of them could support their own indispensable establishments; but there was no escape. It was absolutely necessary to interpose sufficient barriers between our peaceable subjects, on a frontier where it was impossible to maintain large military establishments, and their barbarous neighbours; to provide places of refuge for the reluctant tributaries, or half-conquered subjects of the Burmese, from whom we had received cordial assistance during the war; and, not less, to inflict upon Ava a chastisement, the smart of which might protect us from future encroachment and annoyance.” (1)

The plan to be pursued in this campaign was to be as follows:—Rangoon, the great trading city, was to be the point assailed in the first instance. This place had its advantages as being the principal maritime (if it may so be called) place in the Burmese dominions; it was also remote from the scene of war, that is, not remote enough to admit of the army remaining where it was in Arakhan, and a fresh levy being made for the defence of the coast: the harbour was likewise good; and there the advantages ceased. These manifest good qualities, in the eyes of the attacking army, were counterbalanced by the extreme unhealthiness of the place, the difficulty of obtaining food there; a disadvantage, however, with which the Indian authorities were not acquainted; and the additional

(1) *Edinburgh Review*, vol. lxxi. p. 361, July, 1840.

nuisance of the Irawadi not being navigable at the time of the year selected for the expedition. Upon the acquirement of Rangoon, the movements of the army were to depend very much upon circumstances, but an advance was to be attempted in any case. The soldiers for the enterprise were to be levied both in the presidency of Bengal and in that of Madras; and the forces were to unite in the harbour of Port Cornwallis, at the Great Andaman Island, whence the whole squadron was to proceed to Rangoon, under the general command of Sir Archibald Campbell.

The observations of an able historian will prove of no little interest:—"The difficulty of collecting a sufficient force for a maritime expedition from Bengal, owing to the repugnance which the saphahis entertain to embarking on board vessels, where their prejudices expose them to many real privations, had early led to a communication with the presidency of Fort Saint George, where there existed no domestic call for a large force, and where the native troops were ready to undertake the voyage without reluctance. The views of the Supreme Government were promptly met by Sir Thomas Munro, the governor of Madras, and a considerable force was speedily equipped. The like activity pervaded the measures of the Bengal authorities, and by the beginning of April the whole was ready for sea.

"The period of the year at which this expedition was fitted out was recommended by various considerations of local or political weight. Agreeably to the information of all nautical men, a more favourable season for navigating the coast to the eastward could not be selected; and from the account given by those who had visited Ava, it appeared that the expedition, upon arriving at Rangoon, would be able to proceed into the interior without delay; the rising of the river, and the prevalence of a south-easterly wind, rendering June or July the most eligible months for an enterprise, which could only be effected by water conveyance, by which it was asserted that a sufficient force might be conveyed to Amrapura, the capital, in the course of a month or five weeks. That no time should be lost in compelling the Burmas to act upon the defensive was also apparent; as, by the extent of their preparations in Arakan, Asam, and Kachar, they were evidently manifesting a design, to invade the frontier with

a force that would require the concentration of a large body of troops for the protection of the British provinces, in situations where mountains, streams, and forests, could not fail to exercise a destructive influence upon the physical energies of the officers and men, and would necessarily prevent the full development of the military resources of the state. To have remained throughout the rains, therefore, wholly on the defensive, would have been attended, it was thought, with a greater expense, and, under ordinary circumstances, with a greater sacrifice of lives than an aggressive movement, as well as with some compromise of national reputation. The armament, therefore, was equipped at once, and was not slow in realizing some of the chief advantages expected from its operations." (1)

The Bengal contingent amounted in all to 2,175 men, consisting of two regiments, the second battalion of the 20th (now 40th) native infantry, and two companies of artillery; that of Madras was much greater, and amounted to 9,300 men, making together the somewhat formidable number of 11,475 men, of whom nearly 5,000 were Europeans. In addition to the transports, there was a Bengal flotilla of twenty gun-brigs and rowing-boats, each carrying an eighteen-pounder. The ships in attendance were H.M.'s sloops *Larne*, Captain Marryatt, and *Sophia*, Captain Reeves; some Company's cruisers, and the *Diana* steam-boat. In the Madras division were comprised H.M.'s ship *Liffey*, Commodore Grant; the *Slaney* sloop of war, and a number of transports and other vessels. Most of these arrived at Port Cornwallis about the 4th of May, and the next day the whole fleet set sail for Rangoon, and arrived off the mouth of that river on the 9th, and anchored within the bar on the following morning; the vessels then proceeded with the flood to the town of Rangoon, situated at about twenty-eight miles from the sea, and thus ably described by a visitor.

"Built on the left bank of the river, by the great Alompra, in commemoration of his victories, Yangoon, or Rangoon, offers but a very poor sample of Burman opulence. Its shape is oval, and round the town is a wooden stockade, formed of teak piles, driven a few

(1) Wilson's Burmese War, p. 63.

feet into the ground, and in some places twenty feet high. The tops of these are joined by beams transversely placed, and at every four feet is an embrasure on the summit of the walls, which gives it a good deal the appearance of an ancient fortification. A wet ditch protects the town on three sides, the other is on the bank of the river.

“The interior consists of four principal streets, intersecting each at right angles, on the sides of which are ranged, with a tolerable degree of regularity, the huts of the inhabitants. These are solely built with mats and bamboos, not a nail being employed in their formation: they are raised invariably two or three feet from the ground, or rather swamp, in which Rangoon is situated, thereby allowing a free passage for the water with which the town is inundated after a shower, and at the same time affording shelter to fowls, ducks, pigs, and pariah dogs, an assemblage which, added to the inmates of the house, place it on a par with an Irish hovel. The few brick houses to be seen are the property of foreigners, who are not restricted in the choice of materials for building, whereas the Burmans are, on the supposition that were they to build brick houses, they might become points of resistance against the government. But even these buildings are erected so very badly, that they have more the appearance of prisons than habitations. Strong iron bars usurp the place of windows, and the only communication between the upper and lower stories is by means of wooden steps placed outside. Only two wooden houses existed much superior to the rest, and these were the palace of the Maywoon, and the Rundaye, or Hall of Justice. The former of these, an old dilapidated building, would have been discreditable as a barn in England, and the latter was as bad.....Two miles north of Rangoon, on the highest point of a low range of hills, stands the stupendous pagoda, called the Shoe Dagon Prah, or Golden Dagon.....It is encircled by two brick terraces, one above the other; and on the summit rises the splendid pagoda, covered with gilding, and dazzling the eyes by the reflection of the rays of the sun. The ascent to the upper terrace is by a flight of stone steps, protected from the weather by an ornamented roof. The sides are defended by a balustrade, representing a huge crocodile, the jaws of which are supported by two colossal figures of a

male and female Pulloo, or evil genius, who, with clubs in their hands, are emblematically supposed to be guarding the entrance of the temple. On the steps the Burmans had placed two guns, to enfilade the road; and, when I first saw this spot, two British soldiers were mounting guard over them, and gave an indescribable interest to the scene: it seemed so extraordinary to view our arms thus domineering amidst all the emblems and idols of idolatry, that, by a stretch of fancy, I could almost suppose I saw the green monsters viewing with anger and humiliation the profanation of their sanctuaries.

“After ascending the steps, which are very dark, you suddenly pass through a small gate, and emerge into the upper terrace, where the great pagoda, at about fifty yards’ distance, rears its lofty head in perfect splendour. This immense octagonal gilt-based monument is surrounded by a vast number of smaller pagodas, griffins, sphinxes, and images of the Burman deities. The height of the tee, (1) three hundred and thirty-six feet from the terrace, and the elegance with which this enormous mass is built, combine to render it one of the grandest and most curious sights a stranger can notice. From the base it assumes the form of a ball or dome, and then gracefully tapers to a point of considerable height, the summit of which is surmounted by a tee, or umbrella, of open iron-work, from whence are suspended a number of small bells, which are set in motion by the slightest breeze, and produce a confused though not unpleasant sound. The pagoda is quite solid, and has been increased to its present bulk by repeated coverings of brick, the work of different kings, who, in pursuance of the national superstitions, imagined that, by so doing, they were performing meritorious acts of devotion.....Facing each of the cardinal points, and united with the pagoda, are small temples of carved wood, filled with colossal images of Gaudma. The eastern temple—or, as we call it, the golden—is a very pretty edifice. The style of building a good deal resembles the Chinese; it is three stories high, and is surmounted by a small spire, bearing a tee; the cornices are covered in the most beautiful manner, and with a variety and neatness of conception scarcely to be surpassed; and the whole is supported by a number of gilt

(1) The gilt umbrella surmounting the highest pinnacle of the pagoda.

pillars.....Round the foot of the pagoda are ranged innumerable small stone pillars, intended to support lamps on days of rejoicing; and in their vicinity are large stone and wooden vases, meant for the purpose of receiving the rice and other offerings made by the pious." (1)

Such is Rangoon and its great temple, and the reader will feel, as Major Snodgrass says, that after "we had been so much accustomed to hear Rangoon spoken of as a place of great trade and commercial importance, that we could not fail to feel disappointed at its mean and poor appearance. We had talked, "continues the gallant author, "of its custom-house, its dock-yards, and its harbour, until our imaginations led us to anticipate, if not splendour, at least some visible signs of a flourishing commercial city; but however humble our expectations might have been, they must still have fallen short of the miserable and desolate picture which the place presented when first occupied by the British troops." (2)

An unpardonable piece of Vandalism was attempted by the English, during their stay at this place. In the temple there was and is a great bell, famous for its inscription, and this bell the English endeavoured to ship for Calcutta; however, they were frustrated by the heeling over of the boat in which it was being conveyed to the ship; the bell sunk to the bottom, but was subsequently raised and replaced. There is no extenuation for such a wanton violation of any place of worship; and though it may be excusable, and indeed proper, to preserve works of ancient art in museums, yet it was grossly wrong to take advantage of a victory, to shock the religious feelings of a people, however far from the truth they may be according to Christian ideas. The action was as reprehensible as the stealing system of that most miserable of all mean pretenders, Napoleon; indeed, it was more so, for the bell was not even an ornament.

(1) Two Years in Ava, p. 26 sqq. This interesting and well-written book seems to be the production of a naval officer attached to the expedition. It is by far the most attractive narrative of the proceedings in 1824, with which I am acquainted.

(2) Snodgrass, Burmese War, p. 12.

CHAPTER V.

1824.

Arrival at Rangoon—Taking of that town—Position of the troops—State of the neighbourhood—Confidence of the king of Ava—Attack of Joazong—Burmese embassy—Capture of Kemendine—Reinforcements from Madras—Sickness of the army—Endurance of the British soldier.

THE country on the way to Rangoon is very flat, and consequently the vessels were easily seen coming up the river; and they did not escape the rayhoon of the city. So unusual a number of vessels (they were forty-five in all) could not fail to arouse some dormant ideas of harm in the minds of the treacherous officials. At the time of their deserial, the principal European inhabitants were assembled at the house of Mr. Sarkies, an Armenian merchant, where they were going to dine. The rayhoon immediately sent for them, and demanded what the ships were. The reply was, that there were some expected, and that these were probably them. As the number of vessels was, however, continually increasing, the governor was not satisfied, and he seized the equally ignorant Europeans, and threatened their immediate execution. He also sent notice of his intention to Sir Archibald Campbell, who declared his determination of destroying the town altogether if the governor carried his menace into effect.(1) Upon this the captives were chained and confined in different places.

The *Liffey* was the first to arrive opposite the king's quay, where a weak battery was planted, and it anchored at that place about twelve o'clock in the forenoon; the other ships took their places in different ways, so as to command the whole neighbourhood. I shall continue in the words of an eye-witness:—

“ Having furled sails and beat to quarters, a pause of some minutes ensued, during which not a shot was fired;

(1) See Two Years in Ava, p. 25.

on our side, humanity forbade that we should be the first aggressors upon an almost defenceless town, containing, as we supposed, a large population of unarmed and inoffensive people; besides, the proclamations and assurances of protection which had been sent on shore the preceding day led us to hope that an offer of capitulation would still be made.”(1) However, all the Burmans did was to pour a feeble, ill-sustained fire into the *Liffey*, which, returning it with tremendous force, forced away the natives.

Upon landing, after the second broadside, the author of *Two Years in Ava* informs us that “three men lying dead, and the broken gun-carriages, were the only vestiges of the injury done by the fire from the frigate. The town was completely deserted. It seemed indeed incredible whither the inhabitants could have fled to within such a short space of time; and, as night was coming on, we could not proceed in search of them; the troops, therefore, remained in and about the town, and the next morning were placed in positions, in two lines, resting on the Great Pagoda and the town. On entering the terrace of the Great Pagoda, the advanced guard discovered in a miserable dark cell four of the European residents at Rangoon, who were ironed, and had been otherwise maltreated; the others had been released by us the evening before; so that we had now the satisfaction of knowing that none of our countrymen were subjected to the cruelty of the Burman chieftains.”(2)

After taking possession of the place, proclamations were immediately sent out among the inhabitants through a few stragglers, assuring the townspeople of protection, in the hope of inducing them to return. “The strictest orders were issued to prevent plunder, and a Burman having claimed several head of cattle which had been seized for the use of the army, they were immediately restored, in order to prove the sincerity of our protestations; but none of the inhabitants availed themselves of our offers, and we understood that the officers of government were driving the women and children into the interior, as hostages for the good conduct of the men.”(3)

The soldiers while at Rangoon were billeted in a long

(1) Snodgrass, p. 6.

(2) *Two Years in Ava*, p. 24.

(3) *Ibid.* p. 29. Cf. book i. chap. ii. p. 40 of this work.

street which leads from the Dagon Pagoda to Rangoon, and in this exposed situation, without fresh supplies, they had to await the arrival of information regarding the position assumed by the Burmese government. Space will not permit me to refer to the many anxieties which had to be considered in regard to the present position of our troops, but the reader will find them amply discussed in Snodgrass ;(1) however, I shall lay before the reader a few remarks of that gentleman, which will amply show the many difficulties which beset the army.

“The enemy’s troops and new-raised levies were gradually collecting in our front from all parts of the kingdom ; a cordon was speedily formed around our cantonments, capable, indeed, of being forced at every point, but possessing, in a remarkable degree, all the qualities requisite for harassing and wearing out in fruitless exertions the strength and energies of European or Indian troops. Hid from our crew on every side in the darkness of a deep, and, to regular bodies, impenetrable forest, far beyond which the inhabitants and all the cattle of the Rangoon district had been driven, the Burmese chiefs carried on their operations and matured their future schemes with vigilance, secrecy, and activity. Neither rumour nor intelligence of what was passing within his posts ever reached us. Beyond the invisible line which circumscribed our position, all was mystery or vague conjecture.(2).....To form a correct idea of the difficulties which opposed the progress of the invading army, even had it been provided with land-carriage and landed at the fine season of the year, it is necessary to make some allusion to the natural obstacles which the country presented, and to the mode of warfare generally practised by the Burmese. Henzawaddy, or the province of Rangoon, is a delta, formed by the mouths of the Irrawaddy, and, with the exception of some considerable plains of rice-grounds, is covered by a thick and tenacious jungle, interspersed by numerous creeks and rivers, from whose wooded banks an enemy may, unseen and unexposed, render their passage difficult and destructive.

“Roads, or anything deserving that name, are wholly unknown in the lower provinces. Footpaths, indeed, lead through the woods in every direction, but requiring great

(1) Burmese War, pp. 15-20.

(2) Page 16.

toil and labour to render them applicable to military purposes: they are impassable during the rains, and are only known and frequented by the Carian tribes, who cultivate the lands, are exempt from military service, and may be considered as the slaves of the soil, living in wretched hamlets by themselves, heavily taxed and oppressed by the Burmese authorities, by whom they are treated as altogether an inferior race of beings from their countrymen of Pegu.....The Burmese, in their usual mode of warfare, rarely meet their enemy in the open field. Instructed and trained from their youth in the formation and defence of stockades, in which they display great skill and judgment, their wars have been for many years a series of conquests: every late attempt of the neighbouring nations to check their victorious career had failed, and the Burmese government, at the time of our landing at Rangoon, had subdued and incorporated into their overgrown empire all the petty states by which it was surrounded, and stood confessedly feared and respected even by the Chinese, as a powerful and warlike nation. When opposed to our small but disciplined body of men, it may easily be conceived with how much more care and caution the system to which they owed their fame and reputation as soldiers was pursued—constructing their defences in the most difficult and inaccessible recesses of the jungle, from which, by constant predatory inroads and nightly attacks, they vainly imagined they would ultimately drive us from their country.”(1)

The confidence which the king of Ava had in his own military resources is amply shown in a speech reported by Snodgrass.(2) “As to Rangoon,” said the king. “I will take such measures as will prevent the English from even disturbing the women of the town in cooking their rice.” This speech, however, only lends additional force to the remark of the Edinburgh Reviewer, that “the Burmese are much too arrogant even to attempt to improve themselves; and such as their rabble of soldiery is now, such it will be found fifty years hence—utterly unable to stand for a moment against British troops, even when protected by stockades.”(3) The events at present passing in the kingdom of Ava are but a practical demon-

(1) Snodgrass, pp. 20-22.

(2) Page 25.

(3) Edinburgh Review, vol. lxxi. p. 358.

stration of the truth of this assertion. However, such preparations as could be made were completed. Armies were stockaded in all directions near Rangoon, nor was the river at all neglected. The boatmen, an enterprising and brave part of the community, all attached to the royal interests, were soon in readiness, and a respectable kind of fleet covered the waters of the Irawadi.

Nothing of consequence occurred for some days. Some boats, sent up by Sir A. Campbell to gather intelligence as to the force and resources of the Burmese, were fired upon on the 15th May, near the village of Kemendine, and to prevent the recurrence of such an event, a body of men were embarked in order to drive the enemy from that place. Accordingly, after some little skirmishing and the loss of some men and officers, the detachment succeeded in their endeavours. Afterward, however, the Burmese returned, and annoyed the Anglo-Indian army very much by attempting to set the fleet on fire. "Our shipping," says an eye-witness, "were now daily and nightly exposed to a great deal of danger and annoyance from an engine of destruction much confided in by our invisible enemy, and which, if properly managed, might have caused us much injury. This was a large raft formed of pieces of wood and beams tied together, but loosely, so that if it came athwart a ship's bows, it would swing round and encircle her. On this were placed every sort of firewood, and other combustibles, such as jars of petroleum or earth oil, which, rising in a flame, created a tremendous blaze, and as this raft extended across the river, it often threatened to burn a great portion of our fleet. Rafts of this description were chiefly launched from Kemendine, where the greater number of them were constructed; but fortunately the river made a bend a little above the anchorage, and the current running strong towards the opposite shore, the rafts were not unfrequently grounded, and thus rendered useless; whilst, on the other hand, the precautions adopted by our naval officers of anchoring a number of beams across the river, in most instances effectually arrested those unwieldy masses in their descent towards Rangoon."(1)

During this time the confidence of the Burmese had increased, and on the 27th they actually advanced within

(1) Two Years in Ava, p. 40.

sight of the picquets, and sat down. This was observed by Major Snodgrass, who, desirous of knowing whether they were merely stragglers, or part of any considerable body, immediately pursued them. He and his men found their way, however, stopped by a small stockade stretching right across the road. After a few shots, the British party, only twenty-two in number, charged the work, and carried it. The natives, sixty in number, immediately fled. The success which had attended this movement determined Sir Archibald Campbell in his resolution to attempt a reconnaissance in person; a measure that was put into execution the next morning. On arriving at the stockade just mentioned, it was found reoccupied by the Burmese, who were repairing it with great rapidity. However, on perceiving the troops, they immediately fled. The same thing took place at a bridge beyond the village of Kokein, "and," observes Snodgrass, "at every turn of the road, breastworks and half-finished stockades, hastily abandoned, proved that so early a visit was neither anticipated nor provided for."(1)

"Our troops," says the author of *Two Years in Ava*,(2) "continued advancing in echelon, the light company of the thirty-eighth on the left skirting the jungle; the grenadiers in the centre, on the plain; and the thirteenth on the right: when, at a sudden turn, the light company observed a stockade about a hundred yards distant, having a ravine full of water in front of it. A dead silence pervaded the work; and Captain Piper, instantly forming his men in line, charged up to the stockade, and through the ravine without firing a shot. When we were within about thirty yards, the Burmans gave a most terrific yell, accompanied by beating of drums, tom-toms, and other instruments, and opened a sharp and well-directed fire, by which we suffered severely. As the enemy was covered by a thick palisade, with loopholes, we saw not a man; and even if we had, our fire could not have proved serviceable, as not a single musket would go off, in consequence of the wet; whereas the Burmans were protected from the weather by sheds, and consequently their arms were uninjured. On arriving at the foot of the work, after forcing the way through a capital abatis, the entrance was found barred up; and the height of the work, and the

(1) *Burmese War*, p. 27.

(2) Page 43 sq.

want of ladders, preventing escalading, the men were for some time, therefore, exposed to the assaults of the enemy, who threw out spears, and tried every effort to drive us off. They were unavailing: the passage was forced, and the troops rushed on with the bayonet. Finding this face of the work carried, a number of Burmans rushed with their spears to the opposite side, and there awaited the approach of the assailants; but a section dashing at them with the bayonets, annihilated almost the whole..... Evening was now coming on fast, we were encumbered with between thirty and forty wounded, without any means of carrying them, except the officers' horses, and three or four doolies;(1) and Sir A. Campbell, therefore, determined on returning without attacking a small stockade a little farther on, having first made a forward movement with his troops to see whether the Burman line, which was still drawn up, would await our approach. It fell back as we advanced, and we then, after burning the two stockades of Joazong, recommenced the march home." In this action several officers were severely, some mortally, wounded. On the Burmese side the loss was about four hundred. The commander on the native side was the former Rayhoon of Rangoon, a man of talent and experience. The enemy retired from the field during the night, after digging up and horribly mutilating the bodies of two soldiers who had fallen there the day before!

The unexpected results of the skirmish opened the eyes of the Burmese commanders to the inefficacy of their system of warfare. Feeling their inferiority, and wishing to gain time for altering and strengthening their defences, the Burmese sent two ambassadors to the English camp. This was on the 9th June. Major Snodgrass thus describes the whole interview:(2)—

"The principal personage of the two, who had formerly been governor of Bassein, was a stout, elderly man, dressed in a long scarlet robe, with a red handkerchief tied round his head, in the usual Burman style. His companion, although dressed more plainly, had much more intelligence in his countenance; and notwithstanding his assumed indifference and humble demeanour, it soon became

(1) A doolie is a species of litter, used in the East to carry the wounded from the field of battle.

(2) Burmese War, pp. 35-37.

evident that to him the management of the interview was intrusted, though his colleague treated him in every respect as an inferior.

“The two chiefs, having entered the house, sat down with all the ease and familiarity of old friends; neither constraint nor any symptom of fear appeared about either; they paid their compliments to the British officers, and made their remarks on what they saw with the utmost freedom and good-humour. The elder chief then opened the subject of their mission, with the question, ‘Why are you come here with ships and soldiers?’ accompanied with many professions of the good faith, sincerity, and friendly disposition of the Burmese government. The causes of the war and the redress that was demanded were again fully explained to them. The consequences of the line of conduct pursued by their generals, in preventing all communication with the court, was also pointed out, and they were brought to acknowledge that a free and unreserved discussion of the points at issue could alone avert the evils and calamities with which their country was threatened. Still they would neither confess that the former remonstrances of the Indian government had reached their king, nor enter into any arrangement for removing the barrier they had placed in the way of negotiation, but urged, with every argument they could think of, that a few days’ delay might be granted, to enable them to confer with an officer of high rank then at some distance up the river: they were, however, given to understand, that delay and procrastination formed no part of our system, and that the war would be vigorously prosecuted, until the king of Ava thought proper to send officers with full authority to enter upon a treaty with the British commissioners.

“The elder chief, who had loudly proclaimed his love of peace, continued chewing his betel-nut with much composure, receiving the intimation of a continuance of hostilities with more of the air and coolness of a soldier who considered war as his trade, than became the pacific character he assumed; while his more shrewd companion vainly endeavoured to conceal his vexation at the unpleasant termination of their mission, and unexpected failure of their arts and protestations. But although the visit had evidently been planned for no other purpose than that of

gaining time, the chiefs did not object to carry with them to their camp a declaration of the terms upon which peace would still be restored; and that they might take their departure with a better grace, expressed their intention of repeating their visit in the course of a few days, for the purpose of opening a direct communication between the British general and the Burmese ministers. The elder chief, again alluding to his being no warrior, hoped that the ships had strict orders not to fire upon him; but while he said so, in stepping into his boat, there was a contemptuous smile upon his own face and the countenances of his men, that had more of defiance than entreaty in it."

The next morning (June 10th) the British intentions regarding Kemendine were put into execution. A breach was soon made in the teak-wood stockade by the cannon, and a column of English and Indian troops stormed the place. Major Sale, with his detachment, had some hot work, for the place at which he entered was full of men, who defended themselves with the bravery of despair. Thirty of the Anglo-Indians fell, though for them one hundred and sixty Burmese perished. Even when this place was taken, little had been accomplished, as the principal stockade, about half a mile distant, had yet to be besieged. "We lost no time," says an eye-witness, and actor in the affair, "in advancing to it; and in order completely to hem the Burmahs in, the flotilla was sent up the river, beyond the works, so as to prevent their escaping by water; whilst the land force proceeded through the jungle. The left of our line rested on the river, and the right was moving round the north of the stockade; thus completing a semicircle; when it was discovered that, in addition to the main work, two smaller ones existed further up, which it was impossible for us with our force to surround; a space of two hundred yards was therefore unavoidably left between our right and the river, it being exposed to the fire of both stockades. Night had already approached; the rain began to pour without intermission, and neither men nor officers were sheltered from it, or had any cover, not even of great coats. The night we passed in this situation was such as may easily be imagined. . . . The shouts of the Burmahs had a curious effect, much heightened by the wild scenery

of the dark, gloomy forest which surrounded us ; first, a low murmur might be heard, rising as it were gradually in tone, and followed by the wild and loud huzza of thousands of voices ; then, again, all was silence, save now and then a straggling shot or challenge from our own sentries ; and soon after, another peal of voices would resound through the trees. This they continued all night ; but towards morning the yells became fainter and fainter, and at daybreak they totally ceased." (1)

In the morning, operations were resumed ; and on the storming parties advancing to the capture, they found, to their astonishment, that the enemy had decamped ! Possession was immediately taken, and a regiment left in garrison, while the rest returned to cantonments, very much irritated by the loss of their opponents. Five pieces of cannon were found in the inclosure, and numbers of jinjals. Outside the upper gate lay a gilt chattah or umbrella of rank, and some distance beyond, the body of the elder chief, who had visited the English camp.

Major Wahab and Brigadier McCreagh returned from Cheduba and Negraís about this time, having accomplished the purpose for which they were detached. The capture of these places had not been completed without some loss and considerable slaughter. Cheduba was expected to have proved of some use, but it was found that, with the exception of a few buffaloes, the supplies were not of any utility. About this time also, the force was augmented by the 89th British regiment from Madras.

The effects of heavy work in the swamps now began to be seen in the fatal form of disease among the Anglo-Indian troops. "Constantly exposed to the vicissitudes of a tropical climate, and exhausted by the necessity of unintermitted exertion, it need not be a matter of surprise that sickness now began to thin the ranks and impair the energies of the invaders. No rank was exempt from the operation of these causes ; and many officers, amongst whom were the senior naval officer, Captain Marryat ; the political commissioner, Major Canning ; and the Commander-in-Chief himself, were attacked with fever, during the month of June. Amongst the privates, the Europeans especially, the sickness incident to fatigue

(1) Two Years in Ava, p. 56. So, too, did the wild shouts and savage songs of the Mexicans strike on the ears of the watching Spaniards.

and exposure was aggravated by the defective quantity and quality of the provisions which had been supplied for their use. Relying upon the reported facility of obtaining cattle and vegetables at Rangoon, it had not been thought necessary to embark stores for protracted consumption on board the transports from Calcutta, and the Madras troops landed with a still more limited stock. As soon as the deficiency was ascertained, arrangements were made to remedy it; but in the mean time, before supplies could reach Rangoon, the troops were dependent for food upon salt meat, much of which was in a state of putrescence, and biscuit, in an equally repulsive condition, under the decomposing influence of heat and moisture. The want of sufficient and wholesome food enhanced the evil effects of the damp soil and atmosphere, and of the malaria from the decaying vegetable matter of the surrounding forests, and the hospitals were rapidly filled with sick, beyond the means available of medical treatment. Fever and dysentery were the principal maladies, and were no more than the ordinary consequences of local causes; but the scurvy and hospital gangrene, which also made their appearance, were ascribable as much to depraved habits and inadequate nourishment as to fatigue and exposure. They were also latterly, in some degree, the consequences of extreme exhaustion, forming a peculiar feature of the prevailing fever, which bore an epidemic type, and which had been felt with equal severity in Bengal. The fatal operation of these causes was enhanced by their continuance; and towards the end of the rainy season, scarcely three thousand men were fit for active duty. The arrival of adequate supplies, and more especially the change in the monsoon, restored the troops to a more healthy condition." (1)

It is, however, worthy of especial notice, that though the army wanted provisions, health, and strength, their natural energy did not fail. In the midst of a crowd of foes, whose numerous force and equipments were alike unknown to the English soldier, his constitutional dominance of will flagged not at all, but seemed rather to become stronger, the more great the odds grew against it. Indeed, one of the authorities I have quoted tells us, that there went a feeling abroad among the Burmese, that it

(1) Wilson, Burmese War, p. 86 sq., and the authorities quoted there.

was of no use to contend with an English soldier ; for, if the arm he had grasped the top of the stockade with were chopped, he never was disconcerted, but immediately applied the other ; even then they were at disadvantage, for the skill of the British doctors was so great, that they could replace the severed limbs upon the trunk ; and for this reason diligent search was always made on the field after the battle, for these legs and arms !

CHAPTER VI.

1824.

Encounters with the Burmese—Capture of Kumeroot—Taking of Syriam—Storming of Dalla—Conquest of Tenasserim province—The Invulnerables.

FROM the time of the taking of the stockades at Kemandine, little of moment occurred up to the 1st of July. About noon on that day the Burmans came out in great force upon the regiments under Majors Dennie and Frith, which were deputed to explore the jungle in front of the Great Pagoda. Then, just as ants flock out of their holes on being disturbed, the Burmese burst forth in every direction, shouting wildly at the same time. They were gallantly opposed by Major Frith's troops. "A column of three thousand of the enemy now advanced from the jungle into the plain, directing their march on Puzendoon, where we had a post; another body moved towards our lines, and began skirmishing with a sepoy picket; and a large force was also seen moving to the right. This was evidently meant as an attack on our position; but it would seem that their courage failed them at the moment for action, as they contented themselves with burning a few houses at Puzendoon." (1) Upon their being driven back, they entered Dalla opposite Rangoon, whence, however, they were driven, though Lieutenant Isaack, 8th Madras N.I., the commanding officer, was shot. Vengeance was, however, more than sufficiently taken in the destruction of the place. Thekia Woongyee, the originator of this plan of attack, met with a sad disgrace in his recall, while Thamba Woongyee was deputed to the command of the army in his place. The ex-general, fearful of a still more dreadful fate should he return to the court, retired to the neighbourhood of Pegu.

The new general showed himself an able tactician, by

(1) Two Years in Ava, p. 60.

seizing upon one of the most impracticable and difficult positions in the vicinage, at a place called Kummerroot, five miles from the Shoe-Dagon Pagoda. This place it was highly necessary should be captured, and accordingly, on the 8th of July, the enterprise was determined upon. The following account, by an eye-witness, is the best that has been given us: (1)—

“ There were two roads leading from the Pagoda in the direction we wished to pursue, one a mere footpath, the other passable for guns. General Macbean preferred the former, and left his artillery behind. The enemy not expecting us by this path, we marched through the jungle for three miles without seeing a soul, although in the wood to our left voices could be distinctly heard, and also the sound of the axe falling on trees, which they were felling to erect their fortifications; but after marching this distance, two stockades were descried a few yards in advance. The general instantly halted, to enable the troops, which were marching in single file (and consequently occupied a great length of ground), to form column, during which time we could observe small parties of Burmahs, armed with muskets, coming from the opposite wood to reinforce the stockades. Firing, also, was heard to the left, which indicated that Sir Archibald Campbell was engaged; and General Macbean, therefore, made his dispositions for an attack. Brigadier McCreagh, with five hundred men from his Majesty's 13th and 38th regiments, commanded by Majors Sale and Frith, were formed in a column of subdivisions, and with unloaded muskets and fixed bayonets directed to advance on the work. This movement was effected with so much rapidity, order, and regularity, that to be in possession of this stockade, and moving on to attack the next, was the affair of a moment. The second was abandoned on the approach of the column, and we then discovered, in a large plain backed by the jungle, a succession of stockades, amounting in all to seven. This did not deter the troops from ascending and capturing a third stockade, and then rushing on to the largest: there the column experienced some loss, in consequence of the delay in bringing up the scaling-ladders through the muddy paddy-fields; but when they arrived, the work was assaulted at all points.....The

(1) Two Years in Ava, p. 66 sq.

panic that now took place among the Burmahs can scarcely be described; rushing in crowds towards the only gate through which they might escape, they completely choked it up: others then attempted to climb over the walls, but were mowed down by our shot, and those at the gate were falling by dozens. Some became quite desperate, and with their long, dishevelled black hair streaming over their shoulders, and giving them the most ferocious appearance, seized their swords with both hands, and dashed on the bayonets of the soldiers, where they met with that death which they seemed alternately to fear and despise; whilst others hid themselves in the trenches, full of water, and there lay motionless, feigning to be dead. The carnage was very great, at least five hundred men being slain in the main stockade, and amongst them was Thumba Woonghee." He, contrary to the usual system of the Burman chiefs, had endeavoured to instil courage into the hearts of his men by his own example. However, nothing could avail before the iron soldiers of the British general.

On the part of Sir Archibald Campbell, too, the movement had been singularly successful. He took the other water path, and proceeded, with a division of about eight hundred men, to ascend the river to the place where the Lyne river and the Rangoon embouchment flow together. At this point they found the Burmese had strongly intrenched themselves. The main stockade was on the tongue of land at the confluence of the waters, while the two others, evidently constructed with an eye to position, were situated on the two banks of the Rangoon river, about eight hundred yards from the principal fortification. But cannon, and good cannon particularly, can make a breach in any fortification so exposed to fire from the river, and the day was lost for the Burmese. The broadside of the *Larne* frigate, supported by the boats and some other vessels under the command of Captain Marryat, covered the landing of the troops, who immediately took the first stockade; this was followed by the immediate capture of the second, and the principal one was abandoned! So much for Burmese self-reliance!

The only force now remaining near Rangoon was that under the former rayhoon of that place, who hovered about in the neighbourhood of Kykloo. All the other Burmese detachments had fled to the general rendezvous of the enemy at Donabew, a place some distance up the

river Irawadi. But as it was necessary that peace should be restored everywhere in the vicinity of the British army, in order that the poor villagers should not be afraid of returning, Sir A. Campbell determined to scatter them, and send them to swell the panic-stricken force at Donabew. Accordingly, on the 19th of July he despatched twelve hundred men by land to that place, whilst, with another division of half that number, he himself went up thither by the Puzendoon creek. However, little came of it; the land army found it impossible to proceed, and so returned, while the only result at which the other party arrived was the liberation of some of the unoffending families of the forced conscripts in the Burmese army. A feeling of confidence, however, seems to have sprung up in the bosoms of the peasantry, who now gradually returned home, and even, we are told, saluted the military as they passed.

The first act which is worthy of mention in August is the dislodgment of the Burmese force in Syriam. The matter was rendered necessary, it would appear, for the same reason that had caused the assault and capture of Kemendine, viz., the annoyance to which our vessels were exposed from the fire-rafts that the natives placed such great reliance in, but which, in reality, were rather annoying than dangerous. It was enough that men were obliged to be on duty to arrest their progress, and strand them. The object of Sir Archibald was to spare these men, who, though enfeebled by disease, yet were bravely bearing up against it. Accordingly, six hundred men, drafted from the 41st, the Madras European, and the 12th Madras N.I., under the command of Brigadier Smelt, were embarked for Syriam, Sir Archibald, it must not be forgotten, accompanying them.

The old Portuguese factory, of which mention has been made in a previous chapter, was found to have been converted into a Burmese fortification; the breaches made in former times by the united efforts of Burmese, Peguers, Portuguese, and English, were repaired by teak-wood palisades, and the old guns, rusty and ill cast, were remounted upon the ramparts.

The Anglo-Indian army was received with a brisk fire, but, as usual, the Burmese stayed not to await the results of their exertions, but fled to a pagoda some distance off, whither they were followed by a detachment under

Lieutenant-Colonel Kelly. Here, again, although the place was fortified and turned into a battery, the Burmese fled away, after discharging the contents of the guns somewhere in the direction of the British. Enough had been done in previous encounters to show the perseverance of the English, and so, as every one does, they supposed that they were invincible, because they had at first conquered.

It seemed, however, that even the preliminary campaign of the British army was never to come to an end, and that, although the enemy was ever being beaten, the Burmese did not even now despair of wearying out the British, and by keeping them engaged at the threshold of their land, they hoped to have time to secure the key, and lock the door in their faces. Therefore, no sooner had operations been satisfactorily concluded at Syriam, than Sir A. Campbell heard of disturbances at Dalla, caused by the orders of the court for a general conscription. Lieutenant-Colonel Kelly, with a detachment of four hundred men, was sent thither to quiet the province. Upon coming near to Dalla creek, they found two stockades, one on either bank, which it was necessary to storm. The mud clogged the movements of the troops to some extent, and entailed, by the delay, some loss upon the British. However, as was ever the case, the intrenchments were in possession of the troops immediately; for the Burmese fled before the English again. Their policy seems all to have been thrown overboard, and it is only on the assumption of each body of the enemy encountering us only once, that I can reconcile the idea of this continual fear to my mind. (1)

“In the impossibility,” says Professor Wilson, “that existed of engaging in any active operations in the direction of Ava, it was judged advisable to employ part of the force in reducing some of the maritime provinces of the Burman kingdom. The district of Tenasserim, comprising the divisions of Tavoy and Mergui, was that selected for attack, as containing a valuable tract of sea-coast, as well as being likely to afford supplies of cattle and grain. Accordingly, an expedition was detached against those places, consisting of details of his Majesty’s 89th and the 7th Madras native infantry, with several

(1) I may here mention, that Major Canning, who had accompanied the expedition as political agent, about this time returned to Calcutta by the *Nereide*, where, debilitated by the marsh fever of Ava, he shortly died.

cruisers and gun-brigs, under command of Lieutenant-Colonel Miles. They sailed from Rangoon on the 20th of August, and reached the mouth of the river leading to Tavoy on the 1st of September: some difficulty occurred in working up the river, in consequence of which the vessels arrived off the town only on the eighth. A conspiracy amongst the garrison facilitated the capture of the place; the second in command making the Maiwoon and his family prisoners, delivered them to the British officer, and the town was occupied without opposition. At Mergui, whither the armament next proceeded, and where it arrived on the 6th of October, a more effective resistance was offered: a heavy fire was opened from the batteries of the town, which was returned by the cruisers with such effect as to silence it in about an hour. The troops then landed, and after wading through miry ground, between the river and a strong stockade which defended the town, and being exposed to a brisk fire from the enemy, they advanced to the stockade, and escaladed it in the most gallant style. The enemy fled. The town, when first occupied, was deserted; but the people soon returned, and both here and at Tavoy showed themselves perfectly indifferent to the change of authorities. After leaving a sufficient garrison of the native troops, and part of the flotilla, Colonel Miles returned with the European portion of his division to Rangoon, in November, in time to take a part in the more important operations about to recur." (1)

We, too, must now go back to Rangoon, or we shall miss the sight of some wondrous strange animals, which the Golden Foot sent down from his capital far away, to oppose and strike terror into the unabashed invaders. These were the far-famed Invulnerables, to which corps I have already alluded; (2) and I cannot now do better than introduce themselves and their deeds to the readers, in the spirited narrative of Mr. Macfarlane. (3)

"The Lord of the White Elephant now sent his two brothers, the prince of Tonghoo and the prince of Sarawaddy, with a whole host of astrologers, and a corps of 'Invulnerables,' to join the army, and to direct the future operations of the war. The astrologers were to fix

(1) Burmese War, p. 96.

(2) Book i. chap. ii. p. 39.

(3) British India, p. 463 sq. Geijer, the historian of Sweden, well compares them to the Bersekkars.

the lucky moments for attacking: the Invulnerables had some points of resemblance to the Turkish Delhis; they were the desperadoes or madmen of the army, and their madness was kept up by enormous doses of opium. The corps of Invulnerables consisted of several thousand men, divided into classes; the most select band of all being called the King's Invulnerables. The prince of Tonghoo established his head-quarters at Pegu, and the prince of Sarrawaddy took post at Donoopeu, upon the great river, about sixty miles from Rangoon.

“ In the beginning of August, the prince of Sarrawaddy sent down a force to occupy a strong post at the mouth of the Pegu river, a few miles below Rangoon, giving his people strict orders to block the channel of the river in our rear, that not one of the ‘wild foreigners,’ or ‘captive strangers,’ might escape the punishment that was about to overtake them. Sir Archibald Campbell presently detached a small corps, under Brigadier Smelt, to dislodge Sarrawaddy's warriors. Our land-troops were brought to a stand-still, when within musket-shot of the place, by a deep and impassable creek; but a party of sailors from his Majesty's ship *Larne*, under Captain Marryat, threw a bridge over the creek; and soon as the column of attack pushed forward, the enemy began to fly, leaving eight guns and a quantity of ammunition in their stockade. A strong pagoda, with a numerous garrison, and with cannons pointing down every approach, was next carried with equal facility. Other posts on the rivers and creeks were successively and successfully attacked. Such of the enemy as had had any experience of our way of fighting seldom stopped to fight in their stockades, but a new set of people from the interior made a good stand in a succession of stockades on one of the rivers, and cost us the loss of a good many brave men. These affairs of posts were very numerous.

“ At last the astrologers told the prince of Sarrawaddy that the stars had told them that the moment was come for a decisive action; and on the night of the 30th of August, a body of the King's Invulnerables promised to attack and carry the Great or Golden Dagon Pagoda, in order that the princes, and the sages and pious men in their train, might celebrate the usual annual festival in the sacred place—a place now crowded, not with Bouges, but with English grenadiers. And, true so far to their

promise, the Invulnerables, at the hour of midnight, rushed in a compact body from the jungle under the pagoda, armed with swords and muskets. A small picquet, thrown out in our front, retired in slow and steady order, skirmishing with the Invulnerables until they reached the flight of steps leading from the road up to the pagoda. The moon was gone down, and the night was so dark that the Burmese could be distinguished only by a few glimmering lanterns in the front; but their noise and clamour, their threats and imprecations upon the impious strangers, if they did not immediately evacuate the sacred temple, proved their number to be very great. In a dense column, they rolled along the narrow pathway leading to the northern gate of the pagoda, wherein all seemed as silent as the grave. But, hark! the muskets crash, the cannons roar along the ramparts of the British posts, drowning the tumult of the advancing column; and see—see by the flash of our guns, the column reels back, the Invulnerables fall mortally wounded, and the rest turn their backs on the holy place, and run with frantic speed for the recovery of the jungle. Invulnerables ventured no more near any of our posts. But the dysentery broke out among our troops, killing many of them, and reducing more to a most emaciated and enfeebled state. Scarcely three thousand duty soldiers were left to guard our line. Floating hospitals were established at the mouth of the river; bread was now furnished in sufficient quantities, but nothing, except change of season or of climate, could restore the sufferers to health. Mergui and Tavoy, portions of our recent conquests on the sea-coast, were represented by the medical officers who visited them as admirable convalescent stations; and thither a number of the people were sent, and with the most beneficial result."

Thus will the personification of plain, blunt valour ever overcome such as have no real courage, and are upheld only by superstition and credulity.

CHAPTER VII.

1824—1825.

Battle of Kykloo—Thautabain—Maha Bundoola—Successes of the British—Discomfiture of Maha Bundoola—Campbell marches into the interior—Arrival at Donabew—Repulse—Death of Bundoola—Capture of Donabew.

OCTOBER began very inauspiciously. Colonel Smith, with about eight hundred men, was detached against Kykloo on the 5th, and at Tadaghee he was successful against a stockade. It was not until he had reached this place that he found the enemy was much stronger than was suspected. The colonel immediately applied for reinforcements, but he obtained only native troops and two Europeans. Two howitzers were sent with the Madras troop, which increased the number of cannon to four. With this force, inadequate enough to anything effectual, Smith arrived before the Burmese stockades at Kykloo on the 7th of October.

The breastworks, which impeded the attack of the principal fortifications, were soon in the hands of the British. The principal stronghold was an intrenchment, with a fortified pagoda. Major Wahab was placed in charge of the storming party. Captain Wilson was directed to assault the stockades in flank; and a division of the 28th native infantry was to carry the pagoda; and Colonel Smith took charge of a reserve party, to act wherever it was most needed.

On the advance of Major Wahab, a volley was fired from the pagoda; but the stockaded Burmese, who seemed to have been superhumanly cunning *for Burmese*, waited until certain destruction might be dealt from their position, when they commenced firing with the greatest precision. Major Wahab and his men were obliged to lie flat on the ground to avoid the peppering. Like ill-fortune attended the efforts of all the other divisions, and on a retreat being sounded, the men took to flight. The

loss on this occasion was twenty-one killed, and seventy-four wounded. However, this reverse was counter-balanced by the success of Major Evans, at Thantabain, where the first minister of state, the Kyee Woongyee, was posted. After skirmishing with the war-boats on the river, the detachment arrived opposite the village, which, after a brisk fire, soon surrendered on the 8th of October. Next morning the principal stockade was attacked, and carried without any opposition. The Burmese having always carried off their dead, it was impossible to find out how many were killed in the encounter; but the place was riddled with shot, and a bungalow in the centre almost destroyed. The detachment returned home without the loss of a man.

Brigadier M'Creagh, too, speedily returned to the charge at Kykloo, and finding the place, he went on, and after doing much damage, he returned to Kykloo and Rangoon. "On their advance," we are told, "they [the soldiers] had an opportunity of witnessing the barbarous character of the enemy, many of the bodies of the sipahis and pioneers, who fell in the former attack, having been fastened to the trunks of trees, and mutilated by imbecile and savage exasperation." (1)

In such operations as these, many months passed away. Every successive encounter with the British troops gave the Burmese an additional hint that they must tax their energies to the utmost in order to bring about a tolerable issue. It might now be seen that the choicest troops of the empire must be opposed to the British invaders who had so coolly taken up their quarters among them; and in the secrecy with which they summoned Bundoola, the great general of the age, in their estimation, from Arakhan, they showed much diplomatic genius; for ere Sir A. Campbell knew he was coming, he was at Donabew, and actively employed in concentrating all the available force of Burmah and Laos. It was about the end of August when he left Arakhan, and in November everything was prepared for a vigorous effort. "No pains nor expense were spared to equip this favourite general for the field, and by the approach of the season for active exertions, it was estimated that fifty thousand men were collected for the advance upon Rangoon, who were to exterminate

(1) Wilson's Burmese War, p. 105.

the invaders, or carry them captives to the capital, where the chiefs were already calculating on the number of slaves who were, from their source of supply, to swell their train. Reports of the return of the Arakhan army soon reached Rangoon, but some period elapsed before any certainty of its movements was obtained. By the end of November, an intercepted despatch from Bundoola, to the governor of Martaban,(1) removed all doubt, and announced the departure of the former from Prome, at the head of a formidable host. His advance was hailed with delight, and preparations were made immediately for his reception.”(2) Gradually and slowly the Burmese posts were stretched close to Rangoon, Dalla, Kemendine, the Shoo Dagon to Puzendown creek, and no opposition was offered to their operations. By the end of December their careful and costly preparations were completed. On our part there was little fear. Determination was the ruling sentiment in every bosom, and extraneously there was also no want of protection by fortifications and shipping.

The enemy commenced by attacking Kemendine on the 1st of December, but were repulsed by Major Yates, and Captain Ryers, of H.M.S. *Sophia*; and though throughout an aggressive skirmishing was carried on, fatiguing our troops considerably, yet the advantage remained on our side. Fire-rafts, sent down in great numbers, had no effect, as our seamen were on the look-out.

From the 1st to the 5th constant sallies were made under able commanders, and many of the posts regained from the enemy. The Burmese showed no want of activity, yet, as a recent writer observes, “little harm was effected by this show of activity; but as the Burman force could no longer be permitted to harass the troops with impunity, and it was not impossible for them to escape from the consequences of a defeat, the commander-in-chief resolved to become the assailant, and terminate the expectations in which they had hitherto been permitted to indulge.”(3) Now, at length, had the time arrived when the primary intentions of the general might be carried out,—now, indeed, was that grand, resistless march to begin which finds

(1) It may be as well to state, that about this time Colonel Godwin, after a gallant resistance, took Martaban for the first time; it has since been given up to the Burmese; but in this last war it was again taken possession of, and it is now in our hands.

(2) Wilson, pp. 106, 107.

(3) Wilson, p. 113.

no parallel in the history of any nation of modern times save our own. Sallies were continually made,—the men spared no nerve,—the officers no thought,—all was bent upon the grand idea of driving the enemy's vast army back into the heart of the land whence it had come. First, the Burmese posts at Puzendown were taken *au point de l'épée* by Majors Sale and Walker, the latter of whom fell during the contest,—then the division at Dalla was routed by Lieut.-Colonel Farrier and Lieut.-Colonel Parlby. Maha Bundoola himself began to be afraid of the redoubtable "foreigners," and retired from the active direction of the battle-field, giving up the executive command to Maha Thilwa, formerly governor of Asam, who stockaded his troops four miles to the north at Kokein. Emissaries were now set at work to destroy Rangoon by fire, and half of it was burnt, including the official quarter of the Madras commissariat. It became necessary to dislodge this body, and it was accordingly done under the direction of General Campbell. In fifteen minutes the strong stockades were in the possession of the British, and thus fifteen hundred determined men put to the rout twenty thousand—for such, it appeared, was the enemy's force—with only the loss of eighteen killed, though many were wounded. During these engagements the greatest terror was excited by the *Diana* steam-packet, by the aid of which many war-boats were captured. "The Burmans," concludes Wilson, "no longer dared attempt offensive operations, but restricted themselves to the defence of their positions along the river; and the road was now open to the British army, which, agreeably to the policy that had been enjoined by the events of the war, prepared to dictate the terms of peace, if necessary, within the walls of the capital."(1)

Maha Bundoola was so dispirited by the events of the last few days, that he retreated to Donabew again, and concentrated his forces at that place. His proud heart was broken, however, and he began to treat with the British residents at Rangoon; however, he would not make any direct advance to the officials, with whom alone

(1) Burmese War, p. 119. My limits do not admit of my speaking much of the war in Arakhan, which was yet undetermined. I shall content myself with referring to Macfarlane, Wilson, and other historians, merely adding, that the conquest of the province was completed by the end of April, 1825.

a formal peace could be concluded. It was intimated to him that he should pursue such a course, but he returned no answer to the letter, probably feeling reassured by an accession of forces. The country being now clear, it appeared to Sir A. Campbell that an immediate advance should be made into the interior; and the arrival of H. M.'s 47th and some other reinforcements placed him in a position of being able to do so without fear of losing anything behind him. On the 11th of February, after the dispersion of the Burmese garrison in the fort of Syriam, the army was at liberty to move. All fear of insurrection on the part of the conquered provinces was at an end, as the Peguers, the principal inhabitants of the district, had deserted to the side of the British.

The preliminary movement of the army was the dislodgment of the advanced guard of the native army at Thantabain, which was effectually done by Colonel Godwin. This done, the army began its march in three divisions; one, under General Campbell himself, was to proceed by land, and left Rangoon on the 13th of February, 1825; the next went by water up the Irawadi, on the 16th; and the third, under the command of Major Sale, set out for Bassein, which it was proposed first to occupy, on the 17th. Brigadier M'Creagh stayed in garrison with the reserve of feeble or invalid men.

The water-column, after having taken and destroyed several stockades in its way, arrived before Donabew on the 6th of March; Brigadier-General Cotton immediately summoned the garrison to surrender, a summons which was of course useless. A party was then sent to reconnoitre; and though the Burmese poured a heavy fire upon our men, a complete knowledge of the neighbourhood was gained.

“The fortified post of Donabew was of considerable extent and breadth, situated on the right bank of the Irawadi, and commanding its whole channel. The main-work was a stockade parallelogram of one thousand by seven hundred yards, which was a little withdrawn from the bed of the river, on a bank rising above its level. The river face mounted fifty pieces of ordnance, of various sizes. The approach to the main structure from the south was defended by two outworks, one about four hundred yards lower down the river, and another about three hundred yards below it. Each was constructed of

square beams of timber, provided with platforms, and pierced for cannon, and was strengthened by an exterior fosse, the outer edge of which was guarded with sharp-pointed timbers, planted obliquely, and a thick abatis of felled trees and brushwood. The lowest outwork was a square of about two hundred yards, with a pagoda in the centre; the highest, of an irregular shape, running along the bank of a rivulet flowing into the main stream; both works were occupied with strong parties of the enemy." (1) The first stockade was attacked by the six hundred men yet at General Cotton's disposal (the rest being in garrison, or with the flotilla), and was gained by the loss of twenty of our men. The faithless Burmese fled, leaving two hundred and eighty of their comrades in the hands of the enemy. But at the second stockade, a determined resistance met the fatigued troops, already clogged and weakened by the care of the numerous prisoners. A destructive fire was opened on them, and the only safe course was in flight, or, as it is named to "ears polite," in a retreat. General Cotton, therefore, receded to Yoong-yoon, where he awaited the answer to his account of the proceedings from General Campbell, who, in the mean time, had arrived at Yuadit, twenty-six miles above Tharawa. That answer was delivered by the general himself, who joined Cotton before Donabew by the 27th of March, after much vexation and toil. (2) Operations were immediately commenced; and notwithstanding numerous sorties (on one occasion, Bundoola himself headed his seventeen elephants and infantry), they advanced their works, and fatal were the effects of the mortars and bombs that were thrown into the thickly-peopled inclosure. The feeling of fear grew strong with the Burmese; and on the evening of the 31st, a soldier brought a laconic letter from Bundoola, couched in these terms:—"In war we find each other's force; the two countries are at war for nothing, and we know not each other's minds!" (3) It seemed from what the soldier knew of the matter, which was very little, that the Burmese general desired peace. Very doubtful is the authenticity of this letter, when compared with the spirited

(1) Wilson, p. 175.

(2) I may here mention, that the author of *Two Years in Ava* has enriched his book by an excellent and complete plan of the fortress and works of Donabew, which I most heartily recommend to the student of military science.

(3) Mac Farlane's *India*, p. 479.

reply sent to General Willoughby Cotton's summons of surrender. "We are each fighting for our country, and you will find me as steady in defending mine, as you in maintaining the honour of yours. If you wish to see Donabew, come as friends, and I will show it you. If you come as enemies, LAND!" (1)

On the 1st of April the batteries opened, and by the 2nd the enemy had decamped. It was discovered that Bundoola had met his death on the preceding day, by the bursting of a shell. All the courage of the Burmese warriors had fled with his departing spirit. The greatest general, since the golden days of Alompra, the devoted to Buddha; he had won his way to the most responsible position in the king's service, only to be singled out, as it were, by some supernatural power, as the victim of the fireballs of the persevering islanders of the far-off ocean. No wonder, then, that the superstitious Burmese, on beholding the fate of their commander, gave themselves up for lost. What a mysterious power the English seemed to have of singling out the head of their army, and destroying him! So they fled, and the British became masters of Donabew, where they found much welcome supply of corn and military stores. Notwithstanding the momentary panic of the Avan government, it soon regained its customary arrogance. The *Edinburgh Review* has some remarks, which, though rather premature for our progress in the history, I shall here introduce.

"But blood and treasure might be still more unprofitably expended. The ignorance and arrogance of the court of Ava are almost beyond occidental credence. When its favourite general, Bundoola, invaded Chittagong, our southernmost district, at the commencement of the last war, he brought with him golden fetters to bind Lord Amherst withal; and had orders, after he had taken Calcutta, to march on to take London! Defeat after defeat seemed to produce little sobering effect upon the drunkenness of Indo-Chinese pride; the officers who were flying before our army in its advance upon the capital, and who must have felt the utter hopelessness of the contest, were obliged, as their intercepted letters vouched, to account in the most absurd manner for their inability to stop us; and

(1) Wilson's Burmese War, p. 191.

the unfortunate wretch who commanded the troops that made the last stand against us, at a place called Pagahm Mew, was trampled to death by elephants on his return with the news of his defeat. It was not until our army arrived within three days' march of the capital that the king's eyes appeared to be opened to any rational sense of his perilous situation; and there was evidence enough, before we evacuated the country, that the effect even of such severe discipline as the exaction of a million sterling towards the expenses of the war, and the cession of some of his most valued provinces, was not likely to be permanent."(1)

(1) Edinburgh Review, vol. lxxi. p. 356.

CHAPTER VIII.

1825—1826.

Arrival at Prome—Prome under English rule—Re-assembly of the Burmese armies—Negotiations for peace—Battle of Meaday—Melloon—Yandabo—Treaty of peace.

THE general did not tarry long at Donabew, but pushed forward toward Prome, where the rainy season was to be passed. On his way to that place, he was joined at Tharawa by McCreagh's reserve column from Rangoon, and the united forces pushed forward for Prome. The charm was now broken, and as the British lines advanced, the prince of Tharawadi, at the head of the opposing army, fell back, and, though strong in numbers, offered no resistance to the progress of the Anglo-Indian army. Prome was reached by the 25th of April, and taken without one round of firing. The indecisive conduct of the prince seems to have arisen partly from a wish to negotiate a peace, which was attempted at Turriss Miu, a few miles below Prome. A native soldier came to the camp with a letter from two of the Atwenwoons, proposing an accommodation; but Sir A. Campbell replied, that at all events he should advance to Prome: and though another letter was received from the Atwenwoons, he continued in his resolve. Luckily for him, he arrived in time to save the place from being stripped of all the necessaries of life, in the same manner as the towns he had before passed had been served. On hearing of the arrival of Campbell, Prince Tharawadi left for Ava, to insist upon a peace being concluded.

The British had only just arrived in time to stand the change of the seasons in this place,—a more favourable spot than the lower country for that purpose. Previous to the setting in of the rainy season, the thermometer had risen in the shade to 110° , but the nights were still cool, and the climate was not unhealthy. The monsoon brought its ordinary effects upon the condition of the

European troops, who, though suffering much less severely than at Rangoon, lost almost one-seventh of their number between June and October; the native troops were much more exempt, although not wholly free, from disease. Although the level of the country was higher than in the coast districts, yet the site of the town was so low as to be under water at the rise of the river, and to the east extended for many miles a plain laid out principally in rice-cultivation; south of the town was a range of low hills, crowned by the principal pagodas, and thither some of the troops were removed, when the suburbs in which they had been quartered were found liable to sudden inundations; supplies were in some abundance, and there was comparatively little demand for the active services of the force; it seems probable, therefore, that much of the disease that still prevailed was the consequence of previous exposure and exhaustion, although ascribable in some measure to the effects of climate and of ill-selected quarters for the troops.(1)

It were almost beyond the limits of this volume to enlarge upon the prosperous state of Prome under British rule, and Mr. Mac Farlane's able sketch will compensate in every way for my own shortcomings. In speaking of an excursion made by Colonel Graham, partly for forage, and partly to calm the fears of the natives themselves, the historian of India continues: (2)—“Almost immediately after their return, the persecuted and dislodged inhabitants of the town poured in from every quarter, some from the woods, bringing their families, their cattle, their waggons, and other property; and some escaped from the military escorts and disjointed corps of the king's fugitive army. Food and covering were given to the starving and naked; and those who had houses and property were secured in the possession of them. Our British soldiers assisted them in rebuilding their wooden houses and their bamboo huts, and in a very short time Prome had risen from its ashes, a greater town than it had been before the war. As the people were punctually paid for whatever they brought, plentiful bazaars were soon established, and our soldiers lived in comfort and abundance, and unmolested ease; while the ill-conducted armies of the king of Ava, unpaid, unsupplied, and driven up the country, were left to the

(1) Wilson, *Burmese War*, p. 134.(2) *British India*, p. 485.

alternative of starvation or dispersion. The towns and districts in our rear followed the example of the provincial capital, and the banks of the Irawaddi below Prome were soon enlivened by the presence of a contented people. An excellent depôt was soon formed at Prome, with supplies sufficient not only for the rainy season, but for the long campaign which possibly might follow. The plains which our soldiers had traversed on their advance up the country without seeing a single bullock were again covered with numerous herds; from every pathway of the deep and extensive forests, which cover far more than half of the country, droves of the finest oxen—the oxen of Pegu—now issued daily. The menthagoes, or hereditary headmen of the districts and chief towns, tendered their allegiance, and were restored to their municipal functions by the British generals. A state of desolation and anarchy once more gave way to order and plenty; and from Rangoon to Prome, from Bassein to Martaban, all classes of natives not only contributed their aid in collecting such supplies as the country afforded, but readily lent their services in facilitating the equipment and movement of military detachments.(1) The only anxiety which the people seemed to find was, that the English would leave them, and give them back to their old masters.”

It was now the rainy season, and the operations of both parties were, to a certain extent, suspended. Little was done by the British, and the Burmese made no preparations against any hostile aggression on our part. The only event that at all did away with the tedium of the period was the discomfiture of the Thekia Wungyee at Old Pegu, where the Taliens, who trusted (a sad reliance, as it afterwards was found) in the British assistance towards the hoped-for object of the recovery of their independence, rose, and seized as many of the officers of his detachment as they could secure; one chief of importance was amongst them,—the Thekia Wungyee himself escaping. Their prize they brought to Rangoon, and delivered to Brigadier Smith.

The successes of the British naturally created the utmost dismay at the metropolis; but the native arrogance

(1) “ In the month of August, Sir Archibald Campbell went down to Rangoon, and returned from that place to Prome, in the steam-vessel the *Diana*, with as much ease and tranquillity as we go from London-bridge to Rainsgate and back again.”—Mac Farlane.

of the people, so common in a semicivilised race, soon caused the usual lofty tone to be assumed, and generals stepped forward, willing to risk a combat with the British army, or pay the hard penalty that awaited an unsuccessful commander. This man was the Pagahm Wungyee, a chief of no little consequence and considerable vanity. A leader found, it was necessary to get an army,—a far more difficult task. It may easily be conceived, that the forces levied in a hasty manner, and without any attention as to their courage, could not be very formidable; and so, indeed, it proved on *reconnoissance*.

But war costs money, as Sir A. Campbell found, and he was now fully sensible of the fact, that little was to be regained from the enemy. Therefore, he gave the Burmese government another opportunity of coming to a peaceful conclusion, by means of a letter addressed to the prince of Tharawadi, and borne by a servant of that person, who had come under English protection to Prome. However, it was totally unavailing; no answer was received, and therefore the hostile preparations of the king of Ava were continued; and to facilitate these, the commander-in-chief went down to Rangoon in the *Diana*, and did not return till the 2nd of August. It was satisfactory to find that, in the lower provinces, “a state of desolation and anarchy once more gave way to order and plenty; and from Bassein to Martaban, and Rangoon to Prome, every class of natives not only contributed their aid to collect such supplies as the country could afford, but readily lent their services to the equipment and march of military detachments.”(1)

Soon after, intelligence was received of the approach of the mighty armament of Burmah, amounting to 40,000 men (so it was said), under the command of Memia-Bo, a brother of the king himself. There were also 12,000 at Tongho, under the prince of Tongho. General Cotton was sent to reconnoitre their force, which he discovered at Meaday, on the 15th, on the west bank of the river. Our forces, it may be observed, amounted to but 3,000 men, though 2,000 more were daily expected. The preparations at Meaday were very energetic, and the force amounted to 16,000 men, at the lowest estimate.

At this juncture, a letter of Sir A. Campbell took effect

(1) Wilson's Burmese War, p. 196.

on the Burmese, and on the 6th September, a boat arrived at Prome, with a flag of truce, and two commissioners presented a reply from the general of the Burmese army. Accounts differ as to the terms of the letter, but Wilson is decidedly the best authority; and according to him, the letter was proud and unconciliating, yet a wish was expressed in it for a lasting peace. "Sir Archibald Campbell lost no time in sending two British officers to Meaday, to offer an armistice, and to propose a meeting of commissioners from the two armies. The Burmese prime minister tried hard to delay the meeting. It was found necessary to allow a delay of nearly two weeks, the Wungees protesting that they must wait until full powers arrived from their court. The Keewongee, or prime minister, agreed to be one of the commissioners, and it was finally settled that the meeting should take place at a spot midway between the two armies, and that each party should be accompanied by 600 men, the rank of the Keewongee not permitting him to move with a smaller escort." (1)

It seemed, however, impossible to come to any determination with this uncivilised, changeable race. On discussing matters, on our demanding compensation, there was much hesitation, and, at last, when the armistice was on the point of expiring, the Wungyee sent these words to Sir A. Campbell:—

"If you wish for peace, you may go away; but if you ask either for money or territory, no friendship can exist between us. This is Burmese custom."

It is, indeed, Burmese custom! Nothing is to be obtained from them without force; not that they do not feel the demand just, but because they will hold doggedly to what they can get, though it benefit them not, nay, even if it be hurtful.

"The court of Ava," observes Wilson, "indignant at the idea of conceding an inch of territory, or submitting to what, in oriental politics, is held a mark of excessive humiliation, payment of any pecuniary indemnification, breathed nothing but defiance, and determined instantly to prosecute the war." (2) It was then that, on the numerous incursions of the Burmese, the definite reply was returned to the British commander-in-chief, proving

(1) Mac Farlane's *British India*, p. 487.

(2) Wilson, p. 209.

that, after all, the advances made by the Burmese were only made to gain time.

The gallant general now determined to advance boldly on the enemy. His forces now amounted to 5,000 men, of whom 3,000 were British. Up to the 1st of December, operations were rather unfavourable than otherwise; on that day, however, fickle fortune again turned over to the English side. I shall give the events of the day in the words of Wilson: (1)

“Leaving four regiments of native infantry for the defence of Prome, General Campbell marched, early on the morning of the 1st of December, against the enemy’s left, while the flotilla, under Sir James Brisbane, and the 26th Madras native infantry, acting in co-operation, by a cannonade of the works upon the river, diverted the attention of the centre from the real attack.

Upon reaching the Nawine river, at the village of Zeonke, the force was divided into two columns. The right, under Brigadier-General Cotton, formed of his Majesty’s 41st and 89th regiments, and the 18th and 28th native infantry, proceeding along the left bank of the river, came in front of the enemy’s intrenchments, consisting of a series of stockades, covered on either flank by thick jungle, and by the river in the rear, and defended by a considerable force, of whom 8,000 were Shans, or people of Laos, under their native chiefs. The post was immediately stormed. The attack was led by Lieutenant-Colonel Godwin, with the advanced guard of the right column, and the stockades were carried in less than ten minutes. The enemy left three hundred dead, including their general, Maha Nemyo, and all their stores and ammunition, and a considerable quantity of arms were taken. The left column, under the commander-in-chief, composed of his Majesty’s 13th, 38th, 47th, and 87th regiments, and 38th Madras infantry, which had crossed the Newine river lower down, came up as the fugitives were crossing, and completed the dispersion of the Burman army.

“Following up the advantage thus gained, General Campbell determined to attack the Kyeo Woongyee in his position, without delay. His force accordingly marched back to Zeonke, where they bivouacked for the night, and resumed their march on the following morning at day-break. The nature of the country admitted of no

approach to the enemy's defences upon the hills, except in front, and that by a narrow pathway, accessible to but a limited number of men in line. Their posts at the foot of the hills were more readily assailable, and from these they were speedily driven; but the attack of the heights was a more formidable task, as the narrow road by which they were approached was commanded by the enemy's artillery and breastworks, numerously manned. After some impression had been apparently made by the artillery and rockets, the first Bengal brigade, consisting of H.M.'s 13th and 38th regiments, advanced to the storm, supported on the right by six companies of H.M.'s 87th. They made good their ascent, in spite of the heavy fire they encountered, and to which scarcely a shot was returned; and when they had gained the summit, they drove the enemy from hill to hill, until they had cleared the whole of the formidable and extensive intrenchments. These brilliant advantages were not gained without loss; and in the affair of the 1st, Lieutenants Sutherland and Gossip, of H.M.'s 41st, and Ensign Campbell, of the royal regiment, were killed; and Lieutenant Proctor, of H.M.'s 38th; Lieutenant Baylee, of the 87th; and Captain Dawson, of H.M.'s ship *Arachne*, in that of the second. The division under General Cotton, which had made a circuitous march to take the enemy in flank, was unable to make its way through the jungle to bear part in the engagement. On the 5th a detachment from it proceeded across the river, and drove the right wing of the enemy, not only from their post upon the river, but from a strong stockade about half a mile in the interior, completely manned and mounting guns. The enemy were dispersed with severe loss in killed and prisoners, and their defences were set on fire."

No time was now lost in advancing upon the retreating army. On the 9th of December the march of the British columns began, and their path lay along "dismal swamps," and jungles, which, overrun with every kind of reeds and elephant-grass, presented a dreary and dispiriting aspect to the troops. Indeed, the effect of the marshy country was soon felt on the army, for on the 12th the cholera broke out among the troops, and, according to Lieutenant-Colonel Tulloch,⁽¹⁾ nearly two regiments were placed in an unfit condition for action. At Meaday the sight was sad enough. "Within and among the

(1) Statistical Report.

stockades," says Mac Farlane,"(1) "the ground was strewed with dead and dying Burmese lying promiscuously together, the victims of wounds, of disease, or of want. Several large gibbets stood about the stockade, each bearing the mouldering remains of three or four crucified Burmese, who had been thus barbarously put to death for having wandered from their posts in search of food, or for having followed the example of their chiefs in flying from the enemy." (2)

I must pass briefly over subsequent events. Conferences for the purpose of settling a peace were sought and obtained by the Burmese; but the negotiations came to nothing. It seemed that all feelings of any kind had left them. They neither sought to conclude a peace, nor, on the other hand, did they prepare for contesting the advance of the army on the capital. At last, after much deliberation and little determination, a treaty of peace was concluded by commissioners appointed for that purpose, through the intervention of a priest. However, after all, it never reached the king for his ratification. "During the conferences," however, "the Burman commissioners repeatedly declared their being furnished with full powers, and their firm persuasion, that whatever they agreed to, the king would ratify; they expressed their entire satisfaction with the spirit in which the negotiations had been conducted by the British commissioners, and their gratification at the prospect of a speedy renewal of friendly relations; they made no secret of their motives, and frankly and unreservedly admitted that the king had been ruined by the war, that the resources of the country were exhausted, and that the road to Ava was open to the British army. There appears every reason to credit their assertions, and all who had an opportunity of exercising personal observation were impressed with this conviction, that the negotiators were honest." (3) I cannot, however, but point out to the reader that there appears to be a singular dash of cunning in their confessions. The king was ruined, at least so they said; thus it was useless ever to require money for expenses. Otherwise, there seems to be simplicity enough.

Still the war was not at an end. The treaty was not

(1) British India, p. 490.

(2) It may not be inapposite here to mention that, according to a writer in the *Times* of the 7th of September, 1852, "letters were found in the stockades at Prome, ordering white slaves to be sent up to Ava, for the use of the Ava ladies."

(3) Wilson, p. 229.

ratified ; nor destined to be. Time was asked, and repeatedly granted ; but treachery was found to be at work again in the Burman hearts. They felt no peace with the wild foreigners. At last they were told, that on their withdrawing from Melloon by the morning of the 20th, and their passage to Ava, hostilities would not be recommenced. But they refused ; therefore they received intimation of an attack on the 18th. "Batteries were accordingly erected with such expedition," says Wilson, "that by ten the next morning, eight and twenty pieces of ordnance were in position on points presenting more than a mile on the eastern bank of the Irawadi, which corresponded with the enemy's line of defence on the opposite shore ; nor had the Burmas been idle, having, in the course of the night, thrown up additional defences of considerable strength and extent, and well adapted to the purposes for which they were constructed."(1)

The heavy cannonade which ensued, soon drove away the fickle Burmese, and crowned the British armies with success. It is to be observed, that the rapidity and precision of the English movements insured our success. Here was it discovered that the treaty had not been sent to Ava at all, and when a note was sent by the British to the chief commissioner, informing him that the treaty had been left behind and would be restored, that official replied, that a large sum of money had also been left behind, which he likewise hoped would be refunded. The whole show of negotiation was a blind for hostile preparations of no avail, as it was afterwards found.

"By this time," says Mr. Mac Farlane,(2) "the Golden Face was completely clouded with despair. Every hope and every promise had failed ; every day fixed upon by his star-gazers as a lucky day had turned out an unlucky day ; and all his astrologers and soothsayers had proved themselves to be but cheats and liars. Sir Archibald assured the two envoys that he was desirous of peace, and that his terms would vary very little from those which had been offered and accepted by the Wongees at Melloon. He furnished them with a statement of his terms, and promised not to pass Pagahm-mew for twelve days. On the following morning, the 1st of February, 1826, the two delegates quitted the English camp to return to Ava, the American missionary being sanguine

(1) Burmese War, p. 235.

(2) British India, p. 492.

in his expectations of returning in a few days with cash, and a treaty of peace, duly signed by the king. Yet, in truth, his Burmese majesty was still undecided, and, in the course of two or three days, it became known in the British camp that he was displaying a determination to try the fortune of war once more ere he submitted. He was probably encouraged herein by a knowledge of the smallness of the force with which Sir Archibald Campbell was advancing upon his capital, and by the intelligence received of the defeat of a weak British detachment, before the strong stockade of Zitoung, in Pegu, where the commanding officer, Colonel Conroy, and another officer, were killed, and several wounded, and where the loss in men was very heavy for so small a force.

“ Sir Archibald Campbell continued his advance. On approaching Pagahm-mew, a town about a hundred miles above Melloon, he obtained positive information that a levy of 40,000 men had been ordered; that the Golden Foot had bestowed upon his new army the flattering appellation of ‘Retrievers of the King’s Glory,’ and that this army had been placed under the command of a savage warrior, styled Nee Woon-Breen, which has been variously translated as ‘Prince of Darkness,’ ‘King of Hell,’ and ‘Prince of the setting Sun.’

“ Upon the 8th of February, when within a few days’ march of Pagahm-mew, Sir Archibald ascertained that the Retrievers of the King’s Glory and the Prince of Darkness were prepared to meet him under the walls of that city.

“ On the 9th, the British column moved forward in order of attack, being much reduced by the absence of two brigades, and considerably under 2,000 fighting men. The advanced guard was met in the jungle by strong bodies of skirmishers; and, after maintaining a running fight for several miles, the column debouched in the open country, and there discovered the Burmese army, from 16,000 to 20,000 strong, drawn up in an inverted crescent, the wings of which threatened the little body of assailants on both their flanks. But Sir Archibald pushed boldly forward upon the point for their centre, threw the whole weight of his column, broke and shattered it in the twinkling of an eye, and left the unconnected wings severed from each other. The Retrievers of the King’s Glory did not fight so well as those who had been accused of forfeiting his majesty’s

glory : they all fled, as fast as their legs could carry them, to a second line of redoubts and stockades, close under the walls of Pagahm-mew ; but the British column followed them so closely, that they had little time for rallying in those works ; and as soon as a few English bayonets got within the stockades, all the Burmese went off screaming like a scared flock of wild geese. Hundreds jumped into the river to escape their assailants, and perished in the water ; and, with the exception of 2,000 or 3,000 men, the whole army dispersed upon the spot :” and from this time no opposition was offered to the British. The Burmese were now wearied out ; their resources, as it has been observed, were exhausted, their spirit broken, and while the court felt that resistance was impossible, the nobles individually saw that the Company was a better ally than the sovereign of Ava ; yet it was still attempted to gain some advantage, and inactive despair, succeeded by active flight, showed the English what the general sentiment of the Burmese nation was. As a means, however, of gaining some little advantage, the European prisoners were retained in custody by the nation ; but at Yandabo it chanced that our troops caught sight of several of the captives, and their misery caused the troops to be more anxious than ever for vengeance upon the Burmese government. The two or three prisoners held out as a bait by the Burmese monarch, were not of much avail. The same sum of twenty-five laes of rupees was demanded, and the Burmans had to pay ; shuffling was of no use.

“ After halting two or three days at Pagahm,” says Wilson,(1) “ General Campbell resumed his march, which now seemed likely to conduct him to the capital of Ava. There, one feeling alone prevailed, and although various reports were thrown out, at one time of the intention of the king to defend the city to the last extremity, and at another to protract the war by flying to the mountains, these purposes, if ever conceived, originated in the anxiety of the moment, and were never seriously entertained. The king and his ministers felt that they were in the power of the British ; and their only anxiety was that the personal dignity and security of the sovereign should not be violated. It was with as much satisfaction as astonishment, therefore, that they learned from Mr. Price, on his

return from Ava, that the British commissioners sought to impose no severer terms than those which had been stipulated in the treaty of Melloon. To these there was now no hesitation to accede, although a lurking suspicion was still entertained that the invaders would not rest satisfied with the conditions they professed to impose. With a mixture of fear and trust, Mr. Price was again despatched to the British camp to signify the consent of the Burman court to the terms of peace; and Mr. Sandford was now set wholly at liberty, and allowed to accompany the negotiator to rejoin his countrymen. These gentlemen returned to camp on the 13th of February; but as the envoy had brought no official ratification of the treaty, Sir A. Campbell declined suspending his march until it should be received."

Thus, at Yandabo the British were met by the returning envoy bearing the money, and the rest of the required despatches. On the 26th of February, the memorable treaty of Yandabo was drawn out, and by it British ascendancy in the farther peninsula of India fully established.

In order that the reader may be fully acquainted with the bearings of our negotiations at Yandabo, I shall here give the treaty *in extenso*, from a late official document.(1)

"TREATY OF PEACE between the Honourable East-India Company on the one part, and his Majesty the king of Ava on the other, settled by Major-General Sir Archibald Campbell, K.C.B. and K.C.T.S., commanding the expedition, and senior commissioner in Pegu and Ava; Thomas Campbell Robertson, Esquire, civil commissioner in Pegu and Ava; and Henry Ducie Chads, Esquire (captain), commanding his Britannic Majesty's and the Honourable Company's naval force on the Irrawaddy river, on the part of the Honourable Company; and by Mengyee-Maha-Men-Klah-Kyan-Ten Woongyee, Lord of Lay-Kaeng, on the part of the king of Ava; who have each communicated to the other their full powers; agreed to and executed at Yandaboo, in the kingdom of Ava, on the 24th day of February, in the year of our Lord 1826, corresponding with the fourth day of the decrease of the moon Taboung, in the year 1187, Mandina era:—

(1) Papers relating to the Hostilities with Burmah. Presented to both Houses of Parliament by her Majesty's command, June 4, 1852, pp. 87-89.

“ARTICLE I.—There shall be perpetual peace and friendship between the Honourable Company, on the one part, and His Majesty the King of Ava on the other.

“ARTICLE II.—His Majesty the King of Ava renounces all claims upon, and will abstain from all future interference with, the Principality of Assam and its dependencies, and also with the contiguous petty states of Cachar and Jyntia. With regard to Manipore, it is stipulated, that should Ghumbheer Singh desire to return to that country, he shall be recognised by the King of Ava as rajah thereof.

“ARTICLE III.—To prevent all future disputes respecting the boundary-line between the two great nations, the British Government will retain the conquered provinces of Arracan, including the four divisions of Arracan, Ramree, Cheduba, and Sandowey, and His Majesty the King of Ava cedes all rights thereto. The Annonpeeteetonmien, or Arracan Mountains (known in Arracan by the name of Yeornabourg or Pokhengloun range), will henceforth form the boundary between the two great nations on that side. Any doubts regarding the said line of demarcation will be settled by Commissioners appointed by the respective Governments for that purpose, such Commissioners from both powers to be of suitable and corresponding rank.

“ARTICLE IV.—His Majesty the King of Ava cedes to the British Government the conquered Provinces of Yeh, Tavoy, Mergui, and Tenasserim, with the islands and dependencies thereunto appertaining, taking the Saluen River as the line of demarcation on the frontier. Any doubts regarding their boundaries will be settled as specified in the concluding part of Article III.

“ARTICLE V.—In proof of the sincere disposition of the Burmese Government to maintain the relations of peace and amity between the nations, and as part indemnification to the British Government for the expenses of the war, His Majesty the King of Ava agrees to pay the sum of one crore of rupees.

“ARTICLE VI.—No person whatever, whether native or foreign, is hereafter to be molested by either party, on account of the part which he may have taken, or have been compelled to take, in the present war.

“ARTICLE VII.—In order to cultivate and improve the relations of amity and peace hereby established between

the two Governments, it is agreed that accredited Ministers, retaining an escort or safeguard of fifty men, from each, shall reside at the Durbar of the other, who shall be permitted to purchase, or to build a suitable place of residence, of permanent materials, and a Commercial Treaty, upon principles of reciprocal advantage, will be entered into by the two High Contracting powers.

“ARTICLE VIII.—All public and private debts contracted by either Government, or by the subjects of either Government, with the other previous to the war, to be recognised and liquidated upon the same principles of honour and good faith as if hostilities had not taken place between the two nations; and no advantage shall be taken by either party of the period that may have elapsed since the debts were incurred, or in consequence of the war; and, according to the universal Law of Nations, it is further stipulated, that the property of all British subjects who may die in the dominions of his Majesty the King of Ava shall, in the absence of legal heirs, be placed in the hands of the British Resident or Consul in the said dominions, who will dispose of the same according to the tenour of the British law. In like manner, the property of Burmese subjects, dying under the same circumstances in any part of the British dominions, shall be made over to the Minister or other authority delegated by his Burmese Majesty to the Supreme Government of India.

“ARTICLE IX.—The King of Ava will abolish all exactions upon British ships or vessels in Burman ports, that are not required from Burman ships or vessels in British ports: nor shall ships or vessels, the property of British subjects, whether European or Indian, entering the Rangoon river, or other Burman ports, be required to land their guns or unship their rudders, or do any other act not required of Burmese ships or vessels in British ports.

“ARTICLE X.—The good and faithful ally of the British Government, his Majesty the King of Siam, having taken a part in the present war, will, to the fullest extent, as far as regards his Majesty and his subjects, be included in the above treaty.

“ARTICLE XI.—This treaty to be ratified by the Burmese authorities competent in the like cases, and the ratification to be accompanied by all British, whether European or native (American), and other prisoners, who

will be delivered over to the British Commissioners; the British Commissioners, on their part, engaging that the said treaty shall be ratified by the Right Honourable the Governor-General in Council, and the ratification shall be delivered to his Majesty the King of Ava in four months, or sooner if possible; and all the Burmese prisoners shall, in like manner, be delivered over to their own Government as soon as they arrive from Bengal."

Subsequently, the following article was added:—

"The British Commissioners being most anxiously desirous to manifest the sincerity of their wish for peace, and to make the immediate execution of the fifth article of this treaty as little irksome or inconvenient as possible to His Majesty the King of Ava, consent to the following arrangements, with respect to the division of the sum total, as specified in the article before referred to, into instalments; viz., upon the payment of twenty-five lacs of rupees, or one-fourth of the sum total (the other articles of the treaty being executed), the army will retire to Rangoon; upon the further payment of a similar sum at that place, within one hundred days from this date, with the proviso as above, the army will evacuate the dominions of His Majesty the King of Ava, with the least possible delay; leaving the remaining moiety of the sum total to be paid by equal annual instalments in two years, from this 24th day of February, 1826, A.D., through the Consul, or Resident in Ava, or Pegu, on the part of the Honourable the East-India Company."

Since the conclusion of this treaty, little has occurred in the kingdom of general interest, as far as we are concerned, until the recent war. From the year 1826 to our own day, revolution has overthrown revolution, and the same spirit is at work at present as in the days of the creator of Burmese importance, Alompra, with this difference, that while at that period the turbulent elements disturbing the peace of the peninsula could in some measure be controlled, as there was a man of consummate talent and great power capable of so doing, there is now no one; and further, that if we do not annex the country, there is not a doubt, but that we shall find a disadvantage in not having done so. In the first place, the trade with the country will be destroyed by the hardness of the officials; and, secondly, it has not been forgotten by the Peguese, that

we foully betrayed them in 1827. They are now giving us another trial: let us show that we are worthy of confidence.

I shall now close this sketch of the fortunes of the Burmese nation with a few remarks made during a former crisis by an Edinburgh reviewer, as they will, no doubt, be found somewhat applicable to the present time: (1)—

“The difficulty of dealing with inflated barbarians, and of resisting the constant provocation to chastise them, not merely into civility, but into the due observance of their federal obligations, and the necessary restraint of the plundering propensities of their subjects upon our borders, is extreme.

“Yet the dire necessity of entering upon another war with such enemies must be contemplated with unmixed dislike. There is nothing, either of honour or profit, to be gained; and the process, from the nature of the country, and the remoteness of its vital parts from the stations of our troops, must always be tedious and expensive. The seat and strength of the government is fixed almost at the upper extremity of the long valley of the Irrawaddy. The capital is six or seven hundred miles from the sea. The lower part of the valley is a pestilential swamp during a considerable portion of the year. Though the shorter route to the capital, over the Arracan mountains, would unquestionably be taken by our main army, the expense of transporting a considerable body of troops, with an adequate supply, not only of military appurtenances, but of provisions (for the Burmese proved, to our cost, in the last war, that they could effectually sweep the country of all resources), through such wildernesses, and by such mere footpaths, would necessarily be great. These were the circumstances which, joined with much ignorance and carelessness, rendered the last war so tedious and costly.”

(1) Edinburgh Review, vol. lxxi. p. 356.

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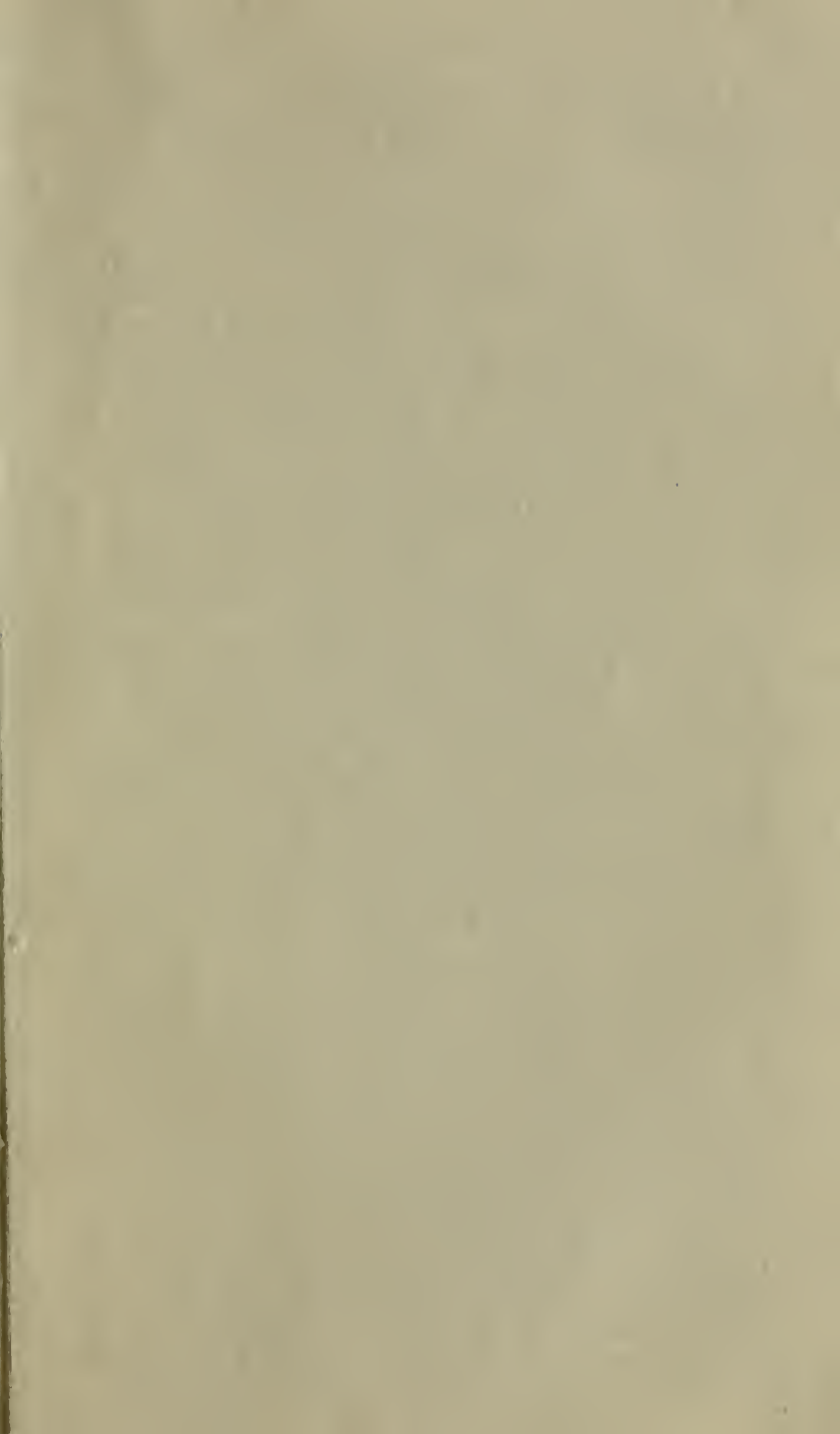
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